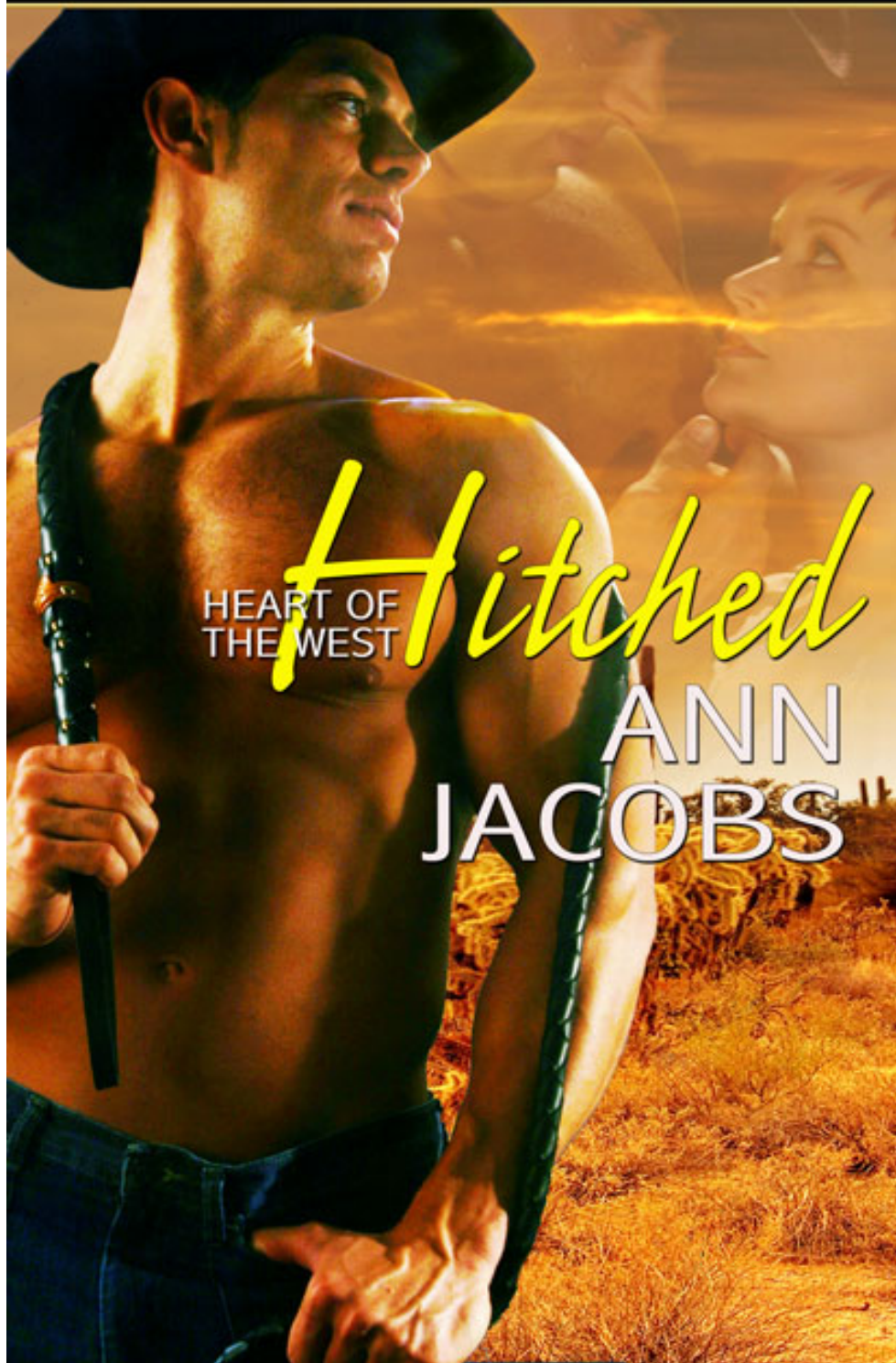


ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



HEART OF
THE WEST

Hitched

ANN
JACOBS

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



www.ellorascave.com

Hitched

ISBN 9781419915635

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Hitched Copyright © 2008 Ann Jacobs

Edited by Sue-Ellen Gower.

Cover art by Syneca.

Electronic book Publication March 2008

With the exception of quotes used in reviews, this book may not be reproduced or used in whole or in part by any means existing without written permission from the publisher, Ellora's Cave Publishing, Inc.® 1056 Home Avenue, Akron OH 44310-3502.

Warning: The unauthorized reproduction or distribution of this copyrighted work is illegal. Criminal copyright infringement, including infringement without monetary gain, is investigated by the FBI and is punishable by up to 5 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000. (<http://www.fbi.gov/ipr/>)

This book is a work of fiction and any resemblance to persons, living or dead, or places, events or locales is purely coincidental. The characters are productions of the authors' imagination and used fictitiously.

HITCHED

Ann Jacobs

Trademarks Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:

Arctic Cat: Arctic Cat Inc.

Bath Bed & Beyond: Bath Bed & Beyond Procurement Co. Inc.

Bearcat: Arctco, Inc.

Beechcraft: Hawker Beechcraft Corporation

Cessna: The Cessna Aircraft Company

Gore-Tex: W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

Velcro: Velcro Industries B.V.

Prologue

Damn. The rigors of a rough rodeo season had left him aching enough that he had little doubt he'd turned thirty-five this year. Brad McTavish shifted positions, managed not to wince when he stretched his legs out on the sofa and tried to focus on the crackling fire. Yeah, he hurt, but the physical aches and pains weren't what had him feeling down.

It was more this sense that life was rushing by all around him while everything about his own life stayed the same. It was almost as if he were on a roller coaster, bumping and sliding, churning his guts over and over before depositing him in the exact same place each time the ride was over.

Brad might as well own up to it. He was bored. Bored with running Roped and Lassoed, Laramie's only BDSM dungeon. Bored with chasing a young boy's dreams that drove him onto the rodeo circuit every summer. Fuck, he'd even gotten tired of looking out this wall of windows at his land, watching the pumpjacks' rhythmic up-down motion as they kept money flowing into his bank account. Just like every year since he could remember, fat red and white cattle munched hay in the pasture closest to the house, having been moved from the high grazing fields in anticipation of an early freeze. Meeting Keely in the observation room at the club every Tuesday and Friday night and giving her the sex fix she seemed to need, pleasurable though it was, wasn't satisfying him anymore, either.

He could always fly down to Denver. Get some new sex toys for the dungeon, maybe even trade his ten-year-old Cessna for a newer one. Or he could go get a tattoo or another piercing. Too bad he didn't cotton much to needles. He remembered how he'd practically jumped out of his skin when he had his cock pierced years ago, even

though he'd been practically dead drunk at the time. *Nope, no tattoo in this guy's future. Besides, no new toy or body art's likely to cure you of this blue funk.*

Those were all things he'd have done ten years ago. Things that now held very little appeal. *Face it, Brad. You've gone and grown up, despite all your best efforts not to. You want more out of life than fun and games and new toys. You want Keely.*

But how was he going to convince Keely he was more than the club Dom always on hand when she needed a friendly fuck? Like everyone else in Laramie, she still thought of him as that wild twenty-some-odd guy every adventurous girl wanted to take on in a scene at the dungeon. None of them, Keely included, wanted anything that smacked of "long-term relationship" with the likes of him.

He sighed. Yep, that was the heart of it. Keely, the five-foot-two redhead who liked her loving rough and took to dungeon scenes. She was the main cause of his black-ass attitude.

Why the fuck was she so eager to be his submissive when she came to the club yet totally stubborn about extending their relationship out into the real world? When Brad thought about her attitude of not mixing sex with friendship or risking putting out emotional ties, it made him feel sort of like a paid stud—and he didn't like that. Not at all.

He ought to dump Keely and find a woman who wouldn't mind devoting her life to meeting his every need, the way his brother Jared's wife Ninia did for him. And who allowed him to reciprocate, loving and cherishing her with everything he had. Brad closed his eyes and imagined himself here with his own sex slave. She'd be kneeling at his feet, naked, resting her cheek on his knee while she waited for his order. Trouble was, the woman in his mental picture had Keely's face. Keely's hot body and the sassy smile she shot him on the rare occasions when their paths crossed on the streets of Laramie.

And that scene he'd just envisioned wasn't likely to happen. Only time Keely got down on her knees was in the dungeon, when the pose was part of a BDSM scene.

Chapter One

Two weeks later

In his office at Roped and Lassoed, Brad watched a trail of steam thin and disperse over his coffee mug. What with the way the wind was blowing outside, he imagined it would be a damn slow day.

Falling Star, the Native American woman who kept them all in line, stuck her head through the door. "Everything's all ready. Dressing rooms are clean. I even scrubbed down the showers. All the furniture's wiped down and sanitized, and the supply cabinets are filled up." She wrinkled her nose as if put off by the "supplies" that included condoms, handcuffs, ball gags and more. "You boys be good, and watch the weather. My old bones tell me bad storm's brewing out in the mountains."

Brad grinned. Star had gone from scowling to smiling in the three years she'd been keeping Roped and Lassoed in order. "Thanks, Star. Is John here yet?" If he weren't, Brad would have to step in if any horny members needed a Dom on the early shift—and he wasn't keen on making it with anybody but Keely.

"Yeah, boss, he's hard at work already. With that little redhead gal."

Any doubts Brad may have had about the evolution of his feelings for Keely into something more evaporated at Star's casually uttered words. He saw red and suddenly knew exactly how a bull calf must feel when the cinch strap is drawn cruelly over his testicles.

"Drive carefully," he said, dismissing Star lest he take his rage out on her. Once he was alone, he exploded out of the chair, tore off his clothes and put on the leather chaps and vest he wore for scenes.

Out of breath by the time he changed, Brad stomped into the dungeon, fists clenched. It pissed hell out of him that Keely had gotten to Roped and Lassoed early

and was in the middle of a scene with John, Brad's day manager. Hell, he'd half expected her to stay home today since it looked like a nasty storm might soon be blowing in from the west.

When he saw her writhing, gagged and blindfolded on a St. Andrew's Cross while his buddy applied the cat -o'-nine, he wanted to drag the whip out of John's hand and use it to stripe his back until it bled.

He must have gotten the love bug bad. He'd never before felt possessive toward a sub, not the way he did now about Keely. "John! Drop the whip. You're out of here."

"But, Boss, I was just doing my job." The other Dom's reasonable tone only served to further incense Brad.

"Out. I don't like other men playing with what's mine." Not that Keely would consider herself his, but that didn't matter. Still he had the grace to realize John had only been doing his job. "Hey, buddy, it's not your fault. Now beat it before I put welts on your skinny ass that make what you did to Keely look like love taps."

"Okay. Didn't mean to encroach on your territory. But she never said a word. Have fun, you two," John said as he beat tracks out the door.

Brad circled the cross, looking at every welt, each sign of submission she'd endured at the hands of another Dom. It made no sense, this feeling of betrayal. He'd hired John to see to the needs of subs who came into Roped and Lassoed without their Masters. So why did he feel she'd been violated? Why did he have this sour taste in his mouth, as if he might be about to retch up whatever kind of doughnut it was that he'd wolfed down with his coffee?

Moving forward and taking the flat of his hand to Keely's reddened bottom, Brad winced at the feel of welts that cut deep into her pale, creamy skin. Welts put there by somebody other than himself. "It's me, Brad. Maybe you should have waited. Hold on now, I'm going to set you loose so you can pay the price—other than the sore bottom which is going to remind you trying out a new Dom was a bad, bad idea."

She strained against the Velcro fasteners as he loosened them. Muffled sounds from her mouth made him pause and get rid of the large ball gag so she could talk. "Pay what kind of price, Master?"

For the first time it bothered him, having her use the generic "master" that could refer to any male Dom controlling her at any moment. "What's my name?"

As soon as he got the blindfold off her, she shot him a puzzled look before lowering her gaze the way a good sub should. "Brad McTavish. Master Brad McTavish. Why did you throw Master John out?"

"His shift was over." That was true, even if it wasn't the reason Brad had gone ballistic and put a quick end to the scene that had been in progress. Quickly, he finished untying her. "Come here. We're going to start again, from scratch."

At Brad's silent order, Keely went on her knees in front of the new fucking machine, a motorized device he'd doubted when he bought it that anybody would like. The subs, male and female alike, had proven him wrong. A shiny stainless steel base, securely bolted to the floor, held a vertical arm and an adjustable piston-like horizontal bar with a two-prong extension that held the brand-new dildo and butt plug of the Dom's choice ready to penetrate his willing sub. The sight of her folding her hands together over her flat belly, a classically submissive pose, made Brad desperate to know Keely's submissiveness was meant for him and him alone.

He stepped in front of her and dug his fingers through her soft auburn curls, breathing in the sweet, somehow innocent smell of her shampoo and conditioner. Her warm breath tickled his cock, tempted him to flex his hips and deliver the punishment she so obviously wanted. "On all fours now. That's right, now back up against the machine and raise your pretty red ass just a little more." With a flick of the machine's remote control switch, he positioned the twin dildos and set them to moving, slowly, in and out, as she thrust her hips back and forth in time with the machine's sensuous, slightly circular motions. "Tell me, slave, who's your Master now?"

“You are, Master Brad.” And he was, for now. Keely leaned forward, ran her tongue over his rigid cock head. He tasted so good, clean and just a little salty. “May I...”

“You want to suck my cock?”

“Please, Master.” She braced herself when he finished adjusting the angle of the double-headed dildo to fit her pussy and ass now that she’d arched her back to give herself access to his cock. Carefully, he set it in motion again. “Please let me taste your long, thick cock. I want to feel it deep in my throat while I run my hands over your tight ass.”

It had been so long since she’d chosen another Master to get her off, but she’d been desperate. Brad kept pushing them to be more, and she just couldn’t. So she’d thought she’d try another, just to see if she could make the same magic happen, and it had been a dismal frustration. Until Brad had come in like a furious warrior, and she’d practically climaxed just to see him. She was in serious trouble. Had a perverse part of her wanted to see how Brad would react to her submitting to another Dom?

He moved closer, took her hands and laid them over his velvety-smooth scrotum. “I want you to play with my balls this time. Take them in your mouth and roll your tongue over them while you jack me with these pretty hands. Do you really think, as naughty as you’ve been, that you deserve to suck my cock?”

“No, Master. I’ve been naughty. Very naughty.” When she pushed her hips back against the machine, it started moving deeper and faster, making her mindless with uncontrolled arousal. It was Brad’s huge pierced cock with the barbell’s two captive beads that she really wanted pressing against the stretched walls of her pussy while the fucking machine did its job on her rear hole, but this punishment had her aching for more. She swirled her tongue over his balls, loving the way they moved and shifted inside their baby-smooth sac.

“Oh yeah, don’t stop. That feels incredible.” His deep mesmerizing voice swirled around her brain as she kept on, sucking first one and then the other large, oval testicle

while the fucking machine kept bringing her to the edge of a climax she dared not release. "Stop now. I'll give you ten seconds to get up and climb onto the table in the center of the room."

Keely's pussy and ass still vibrated even after she'd lifted herself off the fucking machine and perched on the edge of the table. Every nerve in her body screamed with arousal, with burning lust that only seemed to ignite with this Dom. What would be her punishment? Would he deny her his beautiful cock, send her away unfulfilled and regretting even more that they couldn't have more together than these few stolen hours every week at Roped and Lassoed?

When he joined her, he had a flogger in his hand. Not the leather one with metal balls on each strand, but a soft one. "I know you want to be punished. I don't know why. There is no way I'm going to put any more welts on your beautiful body." With that he dragged the silky ends over her breasts. "Feels good, doesn't it?"

She managed to let out an ecstatic whimper at the strangely tender punishment he was inflicting. She didn't want kindness, she wanted to come. And she dared not let that happen unless her Master gave her permission. The sharp nip of his gleaming white teeth on her nipple gave her the push that let her know she had no choice, that Brad was her Master and she had no option but to surrender.

"Enough of this, my pretty slave. I'm going to fuck you now, and you can come any time you want to." He laid her flat on the table, knelt between her legs and rolled on a ribbed condom. Slowly, deliberately, he slid his swollen cock into her hot, wet pussy while he bent his head and drew first one nipple and then the other into his mouth. Faster, harder, he plunged into her. With every stroke, she felt not only his rigid flesh but also the twin bites of the beads that secured the bar they held in place just behind his cock head.

When he lifted his upper body and changed the angle of his thrusts, she saw his powerful muscles bulge. A vein in his neck throbbed, and he was breathing hard. Didn't he know he couldn't just give her *permission* to come? He had to *order* it. She

dared not give in, think of him as a partner, not just a Dom who could make her lose her inhibitions for the moment.

“Damn it, I told you to come.” He slammed into her harder, almost as if he desperately needed her to let go. “Do it now, or you’re really going to face some punishment.”

Keely felt it coming, that warm glow that spread through her body like a caressing touch of pure sensation. The congested feeling in her pussy as it contracted around her Master’s rock-hard cock, the sensation of heat building, building...and finally exploding in a fiery climax as he thrust one more time and clutched her to his chest as if he’d never let her go.

He held her there for a long time, his pounding heart beating in time with hers. Two bodies drenched with sweat, in the aftermath of a mind-blowing climax. Finally he raised his head from her shoulder and looked her in the eye.

“You’re mine. Only mine. Whenever you come to this club, I’m the only Dom you’re even going to look at. Guess I’ll have to be satisfied with that for now, but what I really want is to take this thing to the next step.” The look on his face made it clear he’d staked his claim.

But she couldn’t accept it, couldn’t risk losing herself entirely. She wouldn’t take a chance that her neighbors would fail to notice if she were seen with this man who was notorious for his sexual exploits. Not to mention that he was way, way out of her league socially and financially, so much that the few who didn’t see her as a sex freak like her mom would shun her as a social-climbing gold digger.

She tried to quell the tears that wanted to explode inside her head then forced herself to meet his gaze as if they were equals. “It’s not going any farther. It can’t.”

“It can and will. Eventually. I’ll give you time to work through your crazy hang-ups. But not too much time. Get up now and run for cover, my sweet slave, before I decide to show you now how fully I own you.”

As soon as he slid off the table, Keely got up and bolted for the door. He owned her body, that was for certain, but she dared not risk handing him her soul.

* * * * *

You're gonna lose him, Keely girl. Keely shivered as she stood there naked in the dressing room at Roped and Lassoed, her blood still soaring through her body in the wake of the intense scene she'd just enjoyed with the Dom who brought her wildest fantasies to life. She had to admit the other Doms who'd pleased her, no matter how skilled they were, couldn't hold a candle to Master Brad.

Determined not to worry about what might happen in the future, Keely slipped on her jeans, boots and sweater. She had to get out of there lest her determination waver. Shrugging on her sheepskin-lined jacket, she pulled the hood up over her head and made her way downstairs, moving quickly past the swinging door that led to the saloon where half the locals came to enjoy some beer and man-talk. It wouldn't do for any of the customers at the farm implement store where she worked to see her leaving Roped and Lassoed.

Too bad it was such a poorly kept secret Brad had started a BDSM club ten years ago above this roadhouse on the old highway that snaked through the hills between Laramie and Tie Siding. Even worse, almost everybody in Laramie knew Brad was so much into scandalous, kinky sex that he occasionally acted as a club Dom and dipped his wick not only into the few female club members, but—rumor had it—also some of the men.

Actually those rumors were whispered with a good bit of care, as if nobody was anxious to get back to the McTavishes that he or she had originated the rumors.

It didn't help Brad's reputation that he went off every summer, chasing the elusive all-around national rodeo championship, risking his neck to prove he could master even a Brahma bull. Keely shouldn't care. After all, it wasn't as if she was in love. At least she didn't think she was.

Damn it, she wouldn't let herself get tied up emotionally by the Master who'd enslaved her libido. No way. No matter how much he tempted her to get to know the man behind the leather chaps and vest, to learn when and how he'd gotten the various scars that dotted his perfectly sculpted body. She'd wanted to ask him if the one on his inner thigh—a new addition she guessed he'd gotten this summer on the rodeo circuit—still hurt. And she often wondered when and where and why he'd gotten that Ampellang piercing, and if he ever took out the burnished gold barbell he wore through his thick cock head for dungeon scenes. But she'd never asked. If she had, she'd have had to concede she had an interest in her sometimes-master that transcended lust. She wasn't about to admit to herself that their relationship might become any more than strictly sexual.

For a long time Keely had realized vanilla sex didn't cut it for her. Just like her mother. After struggling with memories of a hero Dom—her dad—and villain Vince, she'd finally decided to take care of her needs this way, twice a week at Roped and Lassoed. She wouldn't allow any more than that. And she could rationalize to her guilty conscience that what she was doing was keeping her sexual cravings down to a manageable roar. No way would she risk losing her self-control. No matter how much she wanted those scenes to continue, to have them finally end with her cradled in Brad McTavish's strong arms. To feel totally protected in his keeping. Maybe it was the fact that Brad made her want to make their relationship far more than it was—than it could ever be—that frightened her beyond reason.

* * * * *

Outside, Keely felt fast-falling snowflakes stinging her cheeks. A frigid Wyoming wind invaded her jacket, swirling over her sensitized flesh through her unlined jeans. Shivering, she made her way toward her ancient pickup. She had to get home in a hurry, or she'd be stuck on the road for God only knew how long.

She should have stayed home, ignored the impulse that had driven her to brave the storm. Three hours ago it had only been a lazy snowfall coming down from a sky still

glowing as the sun was setting on the western horizon. Nothing to indicate a blizzard might come of it in such a short time. There was nothing lazy about the hordes of snowflakes that obscured her vision now, or the fierce wind that whipped around her. It came close to catching her up as though she was as light as one of the fallen snowflakes. The wind was forming treacherous drifts like this one that had practically buried her truck.

Maybe. Just maybe she should go back inside, not try to leave until the storm let up. But no, she didn't dare let down her guard. As much as she would like to spend a whole night in Brad's arms, to kneel at his feet and suck his cock before a roaring fire while he tunneled his fingers in her hair and forced her to take him deeper, she mustn't give in. Not even now, while her knees trembled and her pussy still twitched with aftershocks from an orgasm that seemed to go on and on and on.

Especially not now.

And especially when the snow had started to swirl all around her so much she could hardly see to fit the key into the door lock. She had to get home fast, or she wouldn't be going anywhere except into the nearest ditch. That was if the truck decided to start, not just wheeze and sputter into a screeching, silent heap right there in the parking lot the way she imagined it might.

* * * * *

"Snow's coming down mighty fast, boss. Can't hardly see your hands in front of your face. Looks like we may be in for the first real blizzard of the year. Doubt if anybody gets here who isn't already inside. Sure looks worse outside than what the weatherman predicted."

His night manager Eli Thompson's gravelly voice was easy to place even when Brad had his sweater halfway over his head, blocking his vision. "Looks bad, does it?"

"Mighty bad, winds whippin' around the snow. Wouldn't be surprised if it buried whatever cars are still in the parking lot before too long."

Oh, shit. If Brad didn't miss his guess, Keely would already have hightailed it out. His cock twitched at the memory of what they'd been doing over the last two hours. *Why do you always have to run out the minute a scene's over?* He jerked his sweater all the way down and wrestled open the small window in the men's dressing room. There she was, climbing into that worn-out wreck of a truck that he'd have consigned to the junkyard at least ten years ago. Stubborn little bitch! He pictured her freezing her ass off, stranded in one of the deep ditches bordering the highway into Laramie. "Gotta run. Try to stop her."

Shrugging into his Gore-Tex jacket but not taking time to zip it, Brad took the stairs three at a time and sprinted across the icy lot. He grabbed the driver's side door as Keely was trying to start the balky engine, and flung it open. "What the fuck do you think you're doing? Got a death wish?"

"Close the door. Can't you see I'm trying to get home before this storm rolls in?"

"Looks to me like it's already rolled. You're not going anywhere in this rust bucket, even if you can manage to start it."

"Hey, the Master-slave scene's over. Get out of my way." She jerked on the door, but he easily maintained control. Reaching into his jeans pocket, he used the remote control to start his own truck on the other side of the parking lot and turn on the heater.

He grabbed Keely around her narrow waist and lifted her onto the ground, slamming the creaky door behind her. "Well, Keely girl, I've decided it's time to start a new one. Come on, unless you want to get laid right here in the snow." Determined that she wasn't going to get away so easily now, Brad scooped her up in his arms and strode across the lot.

"What are you doing? Where do you think you're taking me?" She punctuated the words with sharp jabs to his chest that might've hurt if it hadn't been for his several layers of winter clothes.

"Here. Get in. Sorry it's cold in here, but you didn't give me much time to start the truck and get it warm."

He tossed her into the cab of a huge red truck and strapped her in. Jerking up the hood of his jacket, he stomped around to the driver's side. Somehow when he crawled in behind the wheel, the air inside seemed to grow warmer just from his presence. Keely shivered when Brad cupped her chin with his icy calloused fingers and made her look into his dark, mesmerizing eyes.

"I'm taking you home with me. It's closer than downtown Laramie, not to mention a much less treacherous drive. If you weren't such a priss about folks seeing you come out of here in the morning we'd just go back upstairs." He paused, shot her the grin that had a way of turning her resistance into jelly. "Relax and think about the hot cocoa and grilled cheese sandwiches I'm going to make you before I tie you to my bed and make you come until you forget all about why it is you're so damn determined not to be seen with me."

Keely could've screamed, and maybe someone would have charged out of the saloon and rescued her if they'd been able to hear her yelling over the raging wind. But for a moment she was taken aback. She'd thought Brad had accepted at face value her very rational explanation of wanting to keep her BDSM life private and confined to the club. She'd assumed the typical conservative reasons for secrecy made sense to him. She could've insisted Brad take her to her place in Laramie, storm or no storm, and she knew instinctively he'd do it. Dom or not, Brad McTavish wouldn't do anything to her that she didn't want.

And there it was again, that niggling sense that maybe, just maybe Brad had more of her dad than Vince in him. Of course she could be only deluding herself, hoping that was the case so she could indulge her repressed desire to learn who he was and how he lived in real time, outside the fantasy world of the dungeon. Could she manage her wayward libido long enough to sample his loving on his own turf without losing perspective?

The temptation was now here, right in front of her, and it was almost as if the storm was conspiring with him, blowing away her choices. Of course every submissive knew how even the illusion of having her choices taken away could ratchet up desire. The battle lost, she lowered her gaze and spoke. "I-I don't mind. Not really. I know you'd never hurt me."

"Hurt you? No, baby, I'll never hurt you, not unless you need a little pain to get off." Brad tilted her head and joined their lips.

He'd never done that before. She'd never allowed it. She must have been crazy all these months, because this simple kiss conveyed more than lust. It spoke of tenderness that touched her deep inside.

He ran his tongue along the seam of her lips, asking entrance. Not demanding it. Keely opened to him, stroked his tongue with hers, felt his warm breath mingle with hers in the dark solitude of his truck's cozy interior. All of a sudden the chill left her bones, replaced by a warm glow that began in her belly and snaked its way through her body. Yeah. She was still afraid of taking their purely sexual relationship to a new level, but not so afraid that she could tell him no. "Please take me home with you," she murmured against his lips when he released her.

"Oh, yeah." He slid over and put the truck in gear then patted the space beside him. "Curl up here and let me keep you warm. But don't think I'm about to forget you need a good old-fashioned spanking for even thinking about taking off by yourself. Look out the window, watch the snow. Feel the wind rattling the windows. And thank God this truck has four-wheel drive and new snow tires, and that it's only a couple of miles to my place."

"Yes, Master." Keely stared out the window, watching the wiper blades send melted snow flying as they made their way out of the parking lot and onto the highway. Brad drove the big, new pickup truck like a pro—the way he drove her to mindless climaxes in every encounter they'd shared at the dungeon. "Your transportation's a far cry from mine."

He turned into a winding country road that led up a steep rise. Though she braced herself for feeling the truck slipping and sliding, instead she listened to the motor's growl become fiercer. The oversize tires dug in, crunching through the newly fallen snow to get to the frozen ground below. Soon Brad drew to a stop inside the garage of a breathtakingly beautiful contemporary house, all angles and expanses of sparkling glass and rough-hewn cedar.

After turning off the motor, Brad came around and opened her door. "I need something rugged and reliable to get myself home on nights like these. You do too," he added, his smile morphing into a scowl. "Come on, let's go inside and get warm."

Chapter Two

“Make yourself at home,” Brad said, helping Keely take off her jacket and hanging it beside his on a rack outside the door from the garage. “Fire or food first?”

Keely’s teeth were chattering so hard she had trouble speaking. “Fire, please,” she said, her voice as shaky as her heartbeat. Now that she’d given in to temptation, no amount of rationalizing could make her believe she’d done the only thing she could have, even considering the rotten weather that had come on so suddenly. The warmth of Brad’s big hand at her waist as he ushered her into the biggest living room she’d ever seen should have made her quit shaking. Instead, she kept on trembling even after he’d started the kindling with some sort of giant lighter.

The warm overhead lights he turned on bathed the room in a cheery glow. “Be right back, Keely girl. Relax and let the fire thaw you out while I fix something to warm your innards.” He bent, framed her face between his hands and kissed her, a gesture more tender than sexual.

Was this the stern Master who regularly subjected her to his will? He looked the same, had the same seductive smile, the same woodsy cologne she’d learned to recognize from across the dungeon. But this—this gentle reassurance, this kind, respectful treatment—soothed her trepidations more than any overt action could have done.

Keely sighed as it came to her that he’d touched her many times, many ways. He’d taken her pussy and stimulated her ass. He’d ordered her to service him orally. She’d squirmed under his lips when he sucked her nipples and teased her clit with his tongue. But the simple brushing of his lips on hers...he’d never done that until tonight. And these two brief kisses somehow seemed more intimate than anything they’d ever played out in a scene back at the dungeon.

It boded ill for her resolution to keep their relationship strictly sexual, especially here in the warmth of his home, before a crackling fire that was slowly letting her absorb its heat. The chill in her bones began to dissipate even though the storm raged outside. The scene looked almost like a Christmas card, with snow on the ground in billowing drifts and huge evergreens tipped with a thick coating of snow and ice.

She looked away from the windows, focusing instead on the casual yet elegant lines of the towering peak of the ceiling, the cheerful whistling of a teapot she traced to a spot just past a circular staircase. A mouthwatering smell of melting cheese and hot cocoa reminded her of sleepy winter days when she'd been a little girl, before her dad died.

Sitting there, Keely let her thoughts wander back years. She'd often seen her mom and dad at home, enjoying each other and a stormy night. They'd been happy, and so had she. Had Mom been so desperately lonely after the love of her life had died that she'd grasped at anyone—even Vince—who had made her feel a tenth of the way she'd felt with Daddy? Like the home she remembered from her earliest years, Brad's house had similar homey touches.

She'd expected he'd have a showplace, not a home, but the effects were totally masculine. Oversize, earth-toned leather furniture, inviting stacks of pillows and expansive spaces hinted that he valued casual living. Framed photos looked down from their spots on a wide mantel made of native stone. Not what she'd expected at all when she'd allowed herself to imagine Brad in his personal space. She saw no hints that he was a sexual Dominant...at least down here. She glanced up the staircase, wondered if he had his private dungeon tucked up there where no casual guest would see it.

Suddenly Brad appeared in the doorway where all those good smells were coming from. "The bedrooms are up there. Three of them. And an exercise room. I'll show you after we eat." He set a tray on the table, set out plates, mugs and napkins. "Come on, sit beside me. I won't bite."

Much. The man had a snake charmer's ability with her even when they weren't playing a scene. She couldn't resist joining him at the rough-hewn table then letting him

seat her. The clean citrusy smell of his cologne mingled with aromas of melted cheese and hot cocoa. Homey smells. Not the smells she desperately wanted to associate with him—musk and sweat and sex, and the distinctive odor of those leather chaps and vest he always wore during their scenes at the club on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “I didn’t know you could cook.”

“So how did you think I manage to keep my strength up for the games we’ve been playing?” He lifted an eyebrow, giving him a devilish look before spoiling it by taking a monstrous bite from a sandwich and snaking his tongue out to catch a wayward strand of melted cheese.

“The saloon downstairs? Or maybe a housekeeper in a Parisian maid’s outfit ruling over your kitchen here?” She knew as soon as she said it that she sounded jealous as hell, but she couldn’t call back the words.

He set his cocoa down and shot her a self-satisfied grin. “Well, you’re half right. I grab plenty of burgers and barbecued ribs at the saloon on days when I’m holding down the fort at Roped and Lassoed. As for the housekeeper, she comes to clean in jeans and sweatshirts and leaves as soon as she’s finished. Once in a while she brings me a jar of the chili or soup she’s made for her husband and kids. I don’t need a woman living in unless she’s my lover...my 24/7 slave ready and willing to satisfy all my needs, not just fill my growling stomach with food.”

“You know that wouldn’t be me.” The way butterflies were flitting around her stomach, Keely guessed they were as scared as she was.

“It wouldn’t? Somehow I have no trouble picturing you here, settling down, letting me take care of you. Wearing a frilly apron and nothing else while you see to my body’s needs so I’ll stay in shape to take care of yours.” If that last chauvinist word picture hadn’t been accompanied by a wicked, teasing grin, she’d have had her hackles up, but as it was, all she wanted to do was reach over and wipe the whipped cream froth from the cocoa off his smiling lips.

His expression turned serious. "How about it, Keely girl? God only knows how long we'll be stuck here in this blizzard. We've played scenes together that left us both wrung out to dry. Are you game to take the next logical step, learn a little more about what makes us tick...and find out whether the sexual magic's still there without the BDSM trappings? When it's just us and the storm outside, no one to watch or ask to join us in a ménage?"

"I'd like to, but—"

"You're afraid." Brad took her hand and brought it to his lips. "I'm never going to hurt you, sweetheart. Come on, tell me why it scares you so to think about you and me becoming us out in the real world, when you obviously enjoy the hell out of what we do at the club."

"I'm scared." Keely found it hard to find the words to tell him why. "I'm afraid of turning over complete control to any man, or..." Did it really matter what everybody thought of her? "I've known a good while now that you're looking for more. Dinner dates, weekends out here. Trips to Denver. Stuff like that." Since he'd come back from the rodeo circuit this fall, he'd kept dropping hints about making their Master-slave relationship permanent and binding. "I want to keep our relationship the way it is."

"Why? I don't have leprosy or anything. Are you ashamed to be seen with me?" Brad tilted her chin, made her meet his dark gaze.

Should she tell him? She guessed he deserved that much. "You're a Dom. Everybody knows you run Roped and Lassoed. If we're seen together they'll know. And they'll talk," she blurted. She was so afraid she'd lose him. "They'll whisper about our lifestyle...and the fact that you're filthy rich and I'm not."

He snorted. "So fucking what? I can't help being rich any more than you can help it that you're not. Besides, we are into the BDSM lifestyle. I like the games we play that make you crazy, and I'm pretty damn sure you do, too." His tense expression morphed into a grin. "Filthy rich or not, I'm hardly at the top of any mama's list of eligible fish they'd like to hook for their daughters. You said yourself that you didn't want your

neighbors knowing you were hanging out with Laramie's bad boy, keeper of the local BDSM dungeon."

Keely knew that if she didn't give a little more she was going to lose the only Master she'd ever found who could always sweep away her sexual quirks and bring her to mindless climax. She didn't need him to tell her that. But she had to maintain her pride. The self-respect she'd worked so hard to earn after having grown up the way she did.

How to say this without sounding like a whining ninny? She didn't know, but she had to try. Holding his gaze, she managed to find her voice again. "I can't do the 24/7 Master-slave thing. Ever since I graduated from high school and went out on my own, I've had to avoid giving people things to talk about."

Brad reached up, rubbed a tear that was making its way down her cheek. "What sort of things? If some sonofabitch at the club has said a word about you...about us...I'll take care of him before he knows what hit him."

Covering his hand with hers, Keely spoke again. "No, it's not that. It's—other things—things from when I was a kid and lived with Mom and Vince."

He curled his fingers around her palm, drew it to his lips. "I need you to spell it out for me, sweetheart. Make me understand."

"The last thing I ever want is a full-time Master/slave relationship. It will never work for me because I grew up watching my mom become a walking doormat for Vince. He became her Master after Daddy died."

"Who says that's what I want?" Brad sounded a bit put off.

"Well, you are a Dom. You're into Dominance and submission games."

"Being a Dom doesn't necessarily mean I want to take the games out of the bedroom into our everyday lives. Is that what this Vince did? Did you get teased about it when you were a teenager?"

Could he mean he didn't expect a relationship like his brother had with his wife? "You don't want to humiliate me in public the way Jared does with Ninia?"

"What I want is to bring you pleasure." His deep voice poured over her, made her pussy twitch and her skin rise up in goose bumps. "Jared feels the same way about Ninia, and she needs the full-time BDSM lifestyle to satisfy her. Different strokes..."

"Submission's fine in the bedroom, or at the dungeon. I'm not about to turn control of my entire life over to any man, though." Sometimes Keely wished she hadn't been born a sexual submissive, able only to reach orgasm in the context of a D/s scene. Then she wouldn't be torn between wanting more with Brad and being terrified of taking a chance.

"What if I only want to be the Master of your sex life? Would that work?"

Yes. No. Keely wasn't sure she could take the whispers about her taking up with Laramie's best-known bad boy, or the sly accusations that she was a money-grubbing gold digger for the county's richest bachelor. She broke visual contact with Brad and forced herself to recall the humiliation and taunts she'd lived with through her teen years. "Brad, please. I'll tell you a story, one I probably should have shared with you when I first came and joined Roped and Lassoed."

"Okay, tell me. It's not going to make any difference, and I'm gonna do my damndest to shoot down your arguments." He leaned back in the chair, sipped his cocoa and settled his gaze straight into her eyes.

"My mom's a sexual submissive. Like me. After Daddy died she needed a new Master, so she took up with Vince. He gets off on humiliating her in public. When I was in high school he sometimes made her walk with him holding a leash he'd attached to a thick leather collar with a big silver padlock holding on the leash. My friends saw them, and they made my life hell on earth, so bad I got out the minute I graduated from high school. The taunts followed me for years, until some of the kids grew up and found better things to do than humiliate me.

“It’s still happening sometimes. Last week one of Mom’s neighbors told me Vince was ordering Mom to go around the house naked except for that collar, and sometimes to answer the door that way. At least she hasn’t spread her news all over town. I went to visit and found the neighbor hadn’t been lying.”

“This Vince sounds like a psychopath, not too different from the asshole who married my sister. Jared and I finally talked Diana into pressing charges on him for spousal abuse and assault, but not until he’d nearly killed her.” Setting down his mug, Brad rested his chin on his hands. “Do you seriously believe I’d ever hurt you that way?”

Keely didn’t know. When she thought about the situation with her mother, she wondered sometimes if her mom felt the same all-encompassing sense of helpless, delicious surrender as she felt when she was under Brad’s command. “I don’t want to end up like my mom. Daddy wasn’t like Vince. I don’t think you are, but I can’t be sure.”

“What was your dad like?”

“He was very loving. He never showed his Dominant nature even at home, unless it was in their bedroom behind closed doors. Until I was twelve or thirteen years old, I never realized Dad was Mom’s Master. He never made her flaunt her collar or do demeaning things.”

“What makes you think I would?” Brad’s voice was low, his tone dead serious.

“Damn it, I just don’t know.” Taunts rolled through Keely’s head, years old yet still hurtful. *Take a look at your mom. Bet he has to keep the bitch on a leash so she won’t stray.* Keely clenched her fists, refused to listen to the chorus of even worse invectives that were trying to escape that deeply guarded corner of her memories. “I just know no one will ever say things like that about me. Ever. Not even if I have to go the rest of my life without being forced to the brink of orgasm and held there, only to be granted release when the pressure becomes too much to bear.”

“You don’t need to deny yourself the pleasure of submitting. And you don’t need to be afraid I’d ever put you in position for anybody to talk shit about you. You know, sweetheart, one of the benefits of being on top of the local economic heap is that folks don’t dare sling too many arrows at the McTavishes. Or at anybody we love. They may think I’m Laramie’s perennial bad boy, but they *know* I can extract a good bit of retribution if I get too pissed.”

Brad loved her? The expression in his eyes was fierce, yet deep emotion shimmered behind the mutant anger. “I want...”

“Let go, sweet girl. Trust me to take care of you. Know anybody who dares say a word about you will figure out pretty quickly that they’d better keep their big mouths shut.”

God, how she longed to do just that, hand herself over to Brad with the complete confidence that he’d protect her as well as giving her the kind of kinky sex it took to turn her on.

Keely understood her mom’s need to be punished and humiliated in order to unleash the strong sexual feelings only a strong Dom could force past her inhibitions. She experienced that need and its satisfaction, too, in the dungeon with Brad, opening up a compartment of her deeply buried psyche that could only break free under the sting of the lash. There was something appalling yet arousing, knowing eager eyes in the observation room were looking down on her performing for her Master, seeing her pussy swollen and wet, her every orifice breached for his pleasure. And her own.

* * * * *

So Keely didn’t want her vanilla neighbors to know the owner of the infamous Roped and Lassoed turned her every way but loose. And scars from taunts about her mom’s hard-core submissive lifestyle were still raw now, ten years or more after they’d been uttered. She was also worried she’d be talked about for latching onto Laramie’s richest bachelor.

Yeah right, he might have knocked off her argument about him having too much money to get serious with a girl of modest means. But he'd fortified her first objection by pointing out he wasn't every good conservative mama's idea of an ideal catch. Yeah. He'd been a pretty reckless, crazy guy for a good many years, and it was going to take some doing for him to show a new leaf and overcome his own past.

But he'd realized somewhere along the way that Keely was worth it to him. God, this deciding all of a sudden to become a grownup could be a pain in the ass. As he glanced at Keely, a shaft of unexpected humor twisted his lips. Yeah, he still wanted to dominate his lovers, but his focus had narrowed. He wanted one sub in particular, one who would keep him satisfied longer than a new machine for the dungeon...a kinky scene...even still being aboard a bucking bronc when the whistle blew. He had the feeling that being with Keely would keep him satisfied forever.

Brad glanced outside, saw no evidence that the blizzard was going to pass by anytime soon. He had time. Time to let her work out her own demons, tamp down the fear that kept her holding him at arm's length now that they finally were alone. He got up and held his hands out to Keely. "Come on, sweetheart, let's go to bed. That spanking I promised you can wait 'til next week at the dungeon."

"B-but—"

"But nothing. There's nothing I'd like more than to take you to my bed and snuggle with you while the snow swirls over the skylight in the ceiling. Oh yeah, there is something. I'd love to sample every inch of your sweet, soft skin, twine my fingers in your silky hair. Shit, I'd give a month of my life to fuck you until we both collapse from the pure pleasure of it all. But that's not what you want right now, so you're going to sleep by yourself in one of the guestrooms."

"If you want me, Master..."

He sure as hell wanted her, but not this way. Not with her playing the role of sex slave. Not when she could look back and tell herself he'd forced her to submit. That this was just another scene played out on slightly different turf than in one of the dungeon's

observation rooms. “If you want me, my room’s the second door on the right. The door will be open.” His balls ached, as though they were punishing him for deliberately denying himself satisfaction, but he opened the door to the room where his sister had slept when she came home from the rehab facility, and swung it open. “You’ll find some of Diana—my sister’s—clothes and stuff in here. Feel free to use anything you need. This door locks, in case you’re afraid I’ll join you during the night.”

Before he could change his mind and drag her to his bed, he slid his lips across hers once more then strode down the hall. “Sweet dreams, Keely girl.”

Sweet dreams? What a joke. Every nerve in Keely’s body tingled in unison, screaming for the satisfaction she was denying herself. And Brad. Part of her wanted to leave this beautiful room and take the pleasure she knew she’d find in his embrace. But she couldn’t. If she did, she might never leave, and a full-time D/s relationship would never fit in with the conventional lifestyle she wanted to pursue.

Yes, Brad was right when he’d told her earlier that such relationships could work. Keely had watched his brother Jared do a scene with his wife Ninia. She’d envied the woman the devotion she saw in Jared’s eyes as he slowly, deliberately tied the Japanese rope bondage. She envied Ninia the sublime pleasure of having her Master perform an art obviously less familiar to him than the cat-o’-nine he wielded with such skill. Keely couldn’t deny the envy had come with a twist of sorrow, for the scene had triggered long-suppressed memories of her mom and dad.

Brad had whispered in her ear that his brother had learned the complicated *Karada* bondage only because it gave Ninia such pleasure. Tonight he’d confided that Jared took pains to fulfill Ninia’s every sexual fantasy, even when it meant allowing her to act out fetishes he didn’t completely share. And that he took pains to exercise discretion when handling the nonsexual things like going out to the grocery store, to church—anywhere they’d be around others who didn’t share their lifestyle.

But Jared and Ninia were different. Ninia had no local ties, and Jared had come home a wounded warrior. A hero despite his known status as a sexual Dominant.

Brad was the bad boy personified, a man apparently not caring what his neighbors thought, an anti-hero who did what he wanted, when he wanted, and damn the consequences. Keely herself was no Ninia. While she admired the beautiful gold collar Ninia wore locked around her slender neck, Keely had no desire to wear a collar or become publicly known as Brad's full-time sex slave.

Briefly Keely checked out the room, her gaze stopping to admire the clean lines of the headboard and chests. The natural-finished wood picked up one of the colors in an earth-toned Oriental rug. She stepped to the bed and drew back a goose-down comforter. God, but the pale green sheets felt soft, softer than any she'd ever touched at Bed Bath and Beyond in Cheyenne. Still fighting the urge to join Brad in his bed, she stepped into a large bathroom, found a new toothbrush and toothpaste and looked longingly at the large clawfooted tub. Maybe...

She tore off her clothes and stared at her reflection on the mirrored wall. Minus the utilitarian jeans and sweatshirt, she thought she looked like she might actually fit in this luxurious room. Before she could lose her nerve, she stepped into the tub and turned on the water. *Heaven*. Fragrant bubbles surfaced all around her, soothing tired muscles while sensitizing every inch of her skin. Only when the water began turning lukewarm did she drag herself out and let a thirsty terrycloth robe catch the remnants of her bath.

Warm. Fragrant. More luxurious than any bed had a right to be, it beckoned Keely, but not nearly as much as Brad's room down the hall. But she wasn't about to give in, not unless she could manage to overcome the obstacles in her head. If she did, and it didn't work out, she'd be devastated.

More important, so would Brad. And she couldn't bear the thought of hurting the Master who'd brought her sexual fantasies to life. He was a kind man, a little wild for sure, but when she got to thinking about it, she realized he'd been settling down some

these past couple of years. Yes, he still went on the rodeo circuit, but he was quieter about it once he came home...almost as if he were just going through the motions.

Maybe...maybe she could come to believe he truly wanted more, that his determination to take their BDSM relationship to the next plateau wasn't just a passing phase. That might be part of her fear, too, that she might stick her neck out, give him her heart when he wasn't really in for the long haul.

She wouldn't think about that now. Not when the sheets proved to be every bit as soft as they looked, like warm silk against her sensitized skin. When she pulled the comforter over her, she found it surprisingly light, incredibly warm. Not sleepy, she stared out the window at growing snowdrifts, at the silhouettes of cowboys fighting against the wind, dragging reluctant cows and calves into the huge, sturdy barn.

The sound of the wind echoed in Keely's ears. Falling even harder now, the snow practically obliterated her view out the window. She wouldn't have been able to see anything if not for a strong, bright light that penetrated the snow and gave her an off-and-on view of the activity below. She shivered, despite the warmth of the room. Temperatures had to have been dropping fast, to have brought the ranch hands out from the comfort of their bunkhouse to bring all the cattle inside.

Was Brad out there? Keely imagined him chattering in the cold wind, seeing to his livestock. She sat up, dragging the comforter around her like an Indian blanket, and looked harder for the man whose close proximity was keeping her from sleeping through the storm.

The falling snow, glowing through strong beams from spotlights aimed toward the barnyard, made it difficult to see, but Keely was fairly certain the tall cowboy dragging a reluctant animal into the barn was Brad. Did he need more help getting all the cattle to safety? She started to get up and dress but stopped when she heard muffled footsteps in the hall. "Brad?"

The doorknob turned and he peered inside. "You ought to be asleep, not staring out the window at the snow. Damn it, I should have remembered these spotlights light up

this whole side of the house as well as the barnyard. Sorry we disturbed your beauty sleep.”

“You were out there, getting those cows into the barn.” She didn’t need to ask. The full-body shivering and flushed cheeks framed in a heavy flannel cap with earflaps securely fastened told the story. “Come here, you need to warm up.”

“No, you come here. You’ll never get any sleep on this side of the house with all that light outside. The hands will be out there off and on all night, making sure there are no calves buried under the snow. You sleep with me. Nothing will happen unless you want it to.” When he held out a gloved hand, Keely untangled herself from the covers and headed for the door.

What am I doing? At the moment she didn’t care that she’d promised to keep Brad a sometimes sex scene partner and nothing more. She hadn’t wanted to see how he lived, to know he’d furnished a special room for when his older sister had spent weekends away from the rehab center. Keely hadn’t wanted to find out his kindness extended to the cattle she’d assumed he’d leave to the ranch hands to take care of. Seeing this side of him, his sense of responsibility toward the livestock, was eroding her determination to keep the motivation for their relationship strictly lust. Trying to hold back as much as she could, she still held out her own hand and took those last two steps into Brad’s icy embrace. “Brrrr. You need to get out of those cold, wet clothes.”

“And into a hot shower. Come on, I’ll tuck you into bed first.”

* * * * *

The lingering taste of her lips stayed with Brad as he showered, letting the hot needles of water drive away the worst of the chill from out of doors. He had a feeling Keely’s body warmth would do the job a damn sight better. Just thinking about her in his bed, waiting, had his pulse racing, his cock getting hard.

He tamped down the lust. This was about getting to know Keely, showing her he was more than the club Dom always ready to take her on a hot, wild ride. After all, fortunately timed blizzards like this one didn't come along every day.

Dragging the towel across his chest, he wondered if he should shave again. After all it wasn't that Keely hadn't seen him close to naked, lots of times. Or that she didn't know he shaved his body hair. But that wasn't the point. He didn't want to scratch her pretty face, and he intended to do a lot of sampling of her sweet lips, so he grabbed his electric razor and mowed down the five o'clock shadow. His chest and belly felt smooth enough when he ran his hand down his body. The waxing he'd endured yesterday had apparently done its job. Except for the small tuft of pubic hair above his cock, he was smooth as a baby's ass all over. All for the sake of fitting the stereotypical image of a club Dom.

Taking a towel and wrapping it around his hips, he crossed the room then dropped the towel and slid into bed beautifully, powerfully naked.

When Keely rolled over and put her hand on his thigh, his balls tightened. The sweet smell of her damp hair filled his nostrils, and her soft breath tickled his collarbone. Then she shifted, tossing one long leg over his thigh. One move and he'd have his cock nestled in her soft, neatly trimmed pussy hair. The next step would be to roll her on her back and fuck her until she begged him to make her come.

"Oh, Master. You feel so good. Please, Master, take me."

"Not Master, not now. Tonight I'm just Brad, the guy who wants to make love with you, for real. No whips or chains, no having you service me. Tell me what you want, Keely." He used her name deliberately because names had no place in the dungeon. There it was Masters and slaves, cocks and cunts, mouths and assholes, once in a while a mental whistle at well put together tits and ass. Here was different.

Here in his house, his bed, he wanted to celebrate that he'd found more in Keely than a sexual submissive who needed her pleasure punctuated with pain and occasional humiliation. When they'd talked earlier, he'd discovered a woman with fears

and hope, a woman he hoped was beginning to see him as a man and not just the Dom decked out in leather who could wield a cat-o'-nine or flogger to ensure her pleasure through pain. "Come on, tell me what I can do to make you happy."

"I want to please you. But I don't know how." She traced the line of his jaw then rubbed her thumb along his lower lip, her touch tentative yet incredibly arousing.

"You're doing fine so far." Shifting his hips, he settled against her. "I love the feel of your breasts against me. Of your heart beating next to mine. I like the way your pussy hair tickles my cock when we're lying here like this."

"Would you please, please..." Her voice was hesitant, but the way she writhed against him made it obvious what she wanted.

"Tell me what you want, baby. I need to hear the words, not just feel you getting me so horny it's all I can do to hold back."

"Damn you, I want you to fuck me. Now, before I burst inside."

"And I want you to fuck me. Take what you want, I'm not stopping you and I sure as hell am ready." That was an understatement. His cock was about to explode, being so close yet so far away from her hot, wet cunt.

He couldn't help but feel her tremble as she moved over and straddled him. Her expression reminded him of how the doe he'd almost hit out on the highway a few weeks back had looked when she'd stared into his headlights, certain she was about to die yet hoping for his mercy. It was then he realized he loved Keely, whatever love was.

Somehow he seemed more intimidating lying beneath her, his huge rigid cock probing gently at her pussy, than he ever had cracking the whip over her in one of their dungeon scenes. That was it. This wasn't a scene. This was Keely and Brad, on new territory, mingling emotions with desire. It scared her half to death.

He had to have known she was terrified, because he reached up and cupped her cheeks. "It's all right, baby. Come down here and give me a kiss."

She did, as if she had no choice. Maybe she didn't. She bent, running her fingers through his dark, silky hair as she joined their lips and tasted him. The fresh smell of mouthwash and aftershave reminded her once more that this was no scene. Like it or not, Keely had crossed a line she said she never would. She was making love to Brad, not serving her temporary Master.

Tentatively, she licked his lips, and when he opened to her she plunged her tongue inside. Their tongues tangled, each seeking the other. And what she felt wasn't just lust. He conveyed warmth, affection, all the things that terrified her about giving in to this undeniable attraction. She'd been fighting those deep emotions now for months, since the first time she'd walked into the dungeon and submitted to Brad as her Master.

Tonight she had no will to fight anymore. The incredible feelings swept her away like a strong wave beating on a windswept shore.

Everywhere their bodies touched, she burned. His hands, calloused but oh-so gentle, slid up and down her back, the way she imagined he'd someday comfort his child. Soft swirls of arousal started in her belly, making their way slowly through her body as he raised his hips and joined their bodies, never breaking the intimacy of the kiss.

She wanted to touch him, not just to feel the heat of his cock in her pussy, the slight abrasion of his clean-shaven chin and upper lip on her face. His thrusts, measured yet deep, made her wish she could keep him there forever. Only half aware of her actions, she tightened her inner muscles, caressing and milking his long, thick shaft.

He groaned. His muscles tightened as if he were fighting for control. The veins in his neck bulged, but he kept up the motion until she cried out with her climax.

While the aftershocks were still going through her, he lifted her away.

"You didn't come." Somehow that made Keely feel she'd cheated him, and that made her lift her hands, wipe the sweat off his brow.

“No condoms in the house. I didn’t dare come inside you, maybe force you into a relationship you haven’t quite accepted.” The words came out harsh, guttural, as he obviously tried to slow his racing heartbeat.

“No condoms? You? I can hardly believe it.”

“Believe it or not, you’re the first woman I’ve ever had in my house except my sister and the woman who keeps the place clean. The first I’ve ever had here that would have given me reason to stock some protection.”

His confession shocked her, but what surprised her more was her own realization that she’d gladly have taken his seed. Her traitorous body still wanted that ultimate mating that carried too much risk. A lifetime of responsibility. “Thank you for being a lot more responsible than I was,” she said, dragging her hand down his body until she curled her fingers around his still-pulsating erection.

He smiled, a wry upturning of those sensuous lips she’d sampled moments earlier. “Not that I’d mind you having my kid, but I’m not sure if you’re ready to make the kind of commitment I want before we start our family.”

Was she? Keely didn’t say. Things were apparently moving too fast for her. She swallowed, as if she were trying to stave off the tears that wanted to erupt. But it did no good. She had that deer-in-the-headlights look in her eyes again, and it made him feel incredibly protective.

“Don’t cry, sweetheart. Relax. We’ve got time. The way the weather looks outside, neither of us is going to be going anywhere for the next few days. I’m going to go take care of this little problem myself. Don’t trust myself not to give in to the temptation to come inside you, bare skin to bare skin. But you’re not ready, I can tell.”

Chapter Three

When he finished taking care of his painful hard-on in the bathroom and putting on flannel PJ bottoms, he went back to bed to find Keely sound asleep. He slid in beside her and gathered her in his arms.

She wasn't the sort of sub his brother had married. It was understandable, considering the fact she'd grown up watching her mother fall completely under the control of a cruel Master. Yeah, she liked kinky sex, needed to give up control in the context of dungeon scenes. He had a sneaking suspicion she couldn't come without a certain amount of force or at the very least coercion. But she wasn't likely to go down on her knees and give him head while he watched TV, at least not unless it was her own idea. He didn't imagine she'd take to cooking dinner in the nude either, for that matter. It seemed his pretty sub was mighty concerned about what other people thought of her.

Did that bother him? A few weeks ago Brad would have said yes. Now he wasn't so sure. Spending time tonight with Keely, he'd seen a whole new side of her. A strong side, a caring one not just for him but for the damned stupid cattle they'd had so much trouble forcing into the barn so they wouldn't freeze.

His little brother had lucked into one of the few true slaves. Not that Brad resented Jared. If any Dom had needed a woman like Ninia, Jared had after losing his military career, part of one leg and a good bit of his self-confidence.

But Brad was beginning to think he could do just fine with a woman who needed him to take the lead in bed but wanted to be his equal in all the other aspects of their lives. Keely. Now all he had to do was talk her out of her doubts about him.

There wasn't much he could do to stop the gossips from whispering about what they thought went on at Roped and Lassoed, or what part he took in acting out scenes there. What he needed to do was persuade Keely it didn't matter, that no one cared

what a bunch of old biddies thought. Yes, he'd been a wild rich kid interested only in kinky sex and rodeo, but now he was thirty-five years old, grown up and ready to take on responsibility for a family. Hell, he already took responsibility for his family. Since Diana had gone to rehab more than two years ago, he'd taken care of her part of the family ranching business. He was still doing most of the work of running their cattle operation, even though Diana had come home almost a year ago. If Brad said so himself, he'd handled it all pretty well, between running the dungeon and spending the summer on the rodeo circuit. He even kept an eye on Jared and Ninia, made sure as much as he could that Jared didn't overdo it trying to disprove his disability.

All he had to do was show Keely this responsible adult side of him, prove he loved her and that he wanted her the way she was. He had the feeling it wouldn't be nearly as easy as convincing her he didn't give a damn whether she was dirt poor or a millionaire.

He lay there for a long time, looking up through the skylight at the storm raging outside. It showed no sign of letting up anytime soon.

* * * * *

Keely woke up, snuggled closer to the warm muscular body behind her. Brad had put on PJs, she realized when the soft fabric nudged her bottom. It felt good, being close enough to feel his heart beat, listen to the up-and-down cadence of his breathing.

What time is it? She opened her eyes and glanced at the clock on the bedside table. *Oh no! I've got to get to work.* She started to roll over but was held firmly by the arm draped over her waist. "Brad, I have to go."

"Take a look outside, sweetheart. No one's going anywhere now. Not to mention, I doubt your boss will open the store, even if he can manage to get to it." He propped himself up on one elbow and looked out the window. "Power lines are down. You can use my cell phone to call whoever needs to know you're okay."

She picked up the phone and dialed her work number. "Hey, this electric plug for the charger is working. And the bathroom light is on. What..." There was no answer at the store, so she left a message that she wouldn't be in and handed the phone to Brad.

He grinned. "Don't get all bent out of shape. The electricity in the house is coming from a generator. It's not safe this far out not to have backup power. Here, let's see what they're saying on TV about what this blizzard is doing up in Laramie." He flipped on the TV, came up with nothing but a crackling screen. Swearing under his breath about the satellite being out of commission, he got out of bed and disappeared into a walk-in closet. "Here, these sweats will be awful big on you, but at least they'll keep you warm for now. We can go downstairs and rustle up something to eat before I go check on the animals. If you want to come outside with me, you can raid Diana's closet. I'm pretty sure she left some cold-weather gear when she moved back to her house."

"That's all right, I'm sure my own clothes have dried off by now."

He doubted the blue jeans and that short sheepskin-lined jacket she had on last night would do much to keep her warm outside in this mess, but he didn't want to raise her hackles. He was learning fast that Keely had an extra-large dose of pride.

* * * * *

Keely was beginning to view Brad differently every minute she spent with him on the ranch. No way could she keep on seeing him as only a club Dom, a man without a face who had no interests other than giving and taking physical pleasure. Watching him seek the source of a mournful, frightened sound beneath the snow until he found a bedraggled, practically frozen calf and lifted it in his arms, she realized there was much more to her kinky lover than met the eye.

Most of the gossips in Laramie thought Brad was the same old playboy, hiding his goodness under the brash exterior of a carefree rodeo cowboy, a Dom who had no qualms about doing whatever he needed to do, to run Roped and Lassoed. But they hadn't seen Brad up close and personal the way she had, the man who cared for his

family and his animals, accepted responsibility for friends and family when they needed help. It came to Keely that Brad ran Roped and Lassoed as much to meet the needs of others in the lifestyle as to satisfy his own Dominant nature. He'd taken over and managed Diana's as well as his own huge land holdings while she was in rehab. And how could she keep herself from falling in love with a man who'd tromp through hip-deep snow to rescue one small, stubborn calf?

"Come on inside the barn before you freeze out there," he yelled over the shrill sound off the wind as he moved toward the barn door. It wasn't an order, but Keely found herself wanting to obey, and not just because she was getting chilled despite the fact she was wearing several layers of cold-weather clothes. Inside, she grabbed a towel off one of the stall rails and went down on her knees to wipe down the shivering baby.

Brad found another towel and knelt beside her. "Do it a little harder, sweetheart. He's got a tough little hide, and we need to get him warm before he runs off to find his mother." He looked over at her and smiled. "I'm surprised you didn't want to stay in the house out of the cold, but I'm glad you came out with me. You never told me you knew your way around barns and stables."

Putting a little more muscle into rubbing the calf's side, Keely considered how long it had been since she lived with her parents on a small ranch outside Laramie. "I've always loved the outdoors, and being around cattle and horses. But my close-up experience came when I was real young, before Daddy died."

"Doesn't matter about experience. What matters is that you care about animals as well as people." The calf was getting restless by now, but they both kept on rubbing him until he bolted. "Guess the little guy's thawed out enough now. What say we—"

Brad's phone rang, and he snatched it out of his pocket. "Damn it, Jared, I told you to be careful. What the hell are you doing in the stable? Never mind. It doesn't matter. I'll be right over, assuming one of the snowmobiles will start."

He hung up and turned to Keely. "Jared hurt his good leg. Fool doesn't want Ninia to find out. Want to take a ride on a snowmobile?"

“Sure.” Right now she’d go anywhere with Brad, even if it did mean letting yet another group of people know she was actually “seeing” him. Besides, she enjoyed cross-country skiing, and she imagined snowmobiling would be just as much fun. “Then let’s go. Thank God the snow seems to have stopped falling for now.”

He looked at her from head to toe. “We’re not going anywhere until we get you into some clothes that will keep you warm. I’m not going to have you freeze on me. Go back in the house and find some of Diana’s ski gear. I’m going to go start the snowmobile.”

Keely shivered as she stripped down and slithered into a pair of silk long johns. She was almost afraid to step into Brad’s sister’s red and black Gore-Tex ski overalls and turtleneck sweater. Just these two garments had to have cost more than Keely made in a month. The matching Gore-Tex jacket, also black with red trim, would have kept her starving for at least another month, maybe longer. What if she damaged these things?

Brad would replace them, she knew. He’d probably think nothing of it, but it would make her feel like crap. Never mind, she told herself. She’d be very, very careful with the borrowed outfit. Pulling her own scuffed roper boots back on over thick wool socks, she picked up the heavy gloves she’d found in the pocket of the overalls and put them on. As Keely hurried downstairs she heard the roar of a powerful motor running outside the garage.

“Put on this helmet and climb on, sweetheart. If we ride double, we’ll stay warmer.” She wasted no time straddling the black leather seat behind Brad, because the sudden burst of cold air was freezing her nose and sending shivers all the way down her well insulated body. “Ready?”

“I’m ready – oh, wait a minute, I’ve got to pull my scarf up over my face. It’s okay now, let’s go.”

Blanketed in heavy snow, the scenes they passed by looked as if they belonged on a picture postcard. Keely understood why all of the McTavish siblings had chosen to make their homes on this breathtakingly beautiful, rugged land. The sleds on the Arctic

Cat snowmobile dug in to the newly fallen snow, shooting out excess snow and carving a path for them. She hadn't seen this model before, even though the farm implements store ordered in an Arctic Cat from time to time and had the company's catalogs for the few of their customers who could afford the pricey toys. If she wasn't mistaken, this was one of the Bearcat models, undoubtedly the top of that line. As they sped down the drive on the way to the highway, she grabbed Brad around the waist and held on tight.

"Scared?" he yelled over the roar of the engine. "Once we pass the highway we're nearly there."

She wasn't, really, even though she thought she'd been holding her breath for the last two miles, ever since they'd begun the roller-coaster ride down the frozen road. She hadn't even been able to see the tread marks they'd left last night with his truck. "Not scared, just out of breath. I trust you to take care of me. I didn't know part of the ranch was across the highway." A long ribbon of undisturbed snow marked where the highway had been last night, and beyond that she saw a house and outbuildings in the distance. When they got there, Brad paused and looked both ways.

"Never can tell when some fool's gonna try to turn his pickup into a sled," he commented once it became obvious that no one was driving along the road, at least for the moment. "Great-Granddad made a bunch of money when the state decided to put Highway 287 right across his land. Good thing Jared drew the part on the other side, since it's pretty much ideal for the dude ranch he and Ninia opened up there to occupy themselves in the summer. There's a good-sized stream on the western border that the guests seem to like paddling around in. Wouldn't catch me in that water on purpose, because it's snowmelt-off coming down from the mountain by way of Dirty Woman Draw. Even in the heat of summer, it's freezing cold."

"I don't think I'd like to swim there, either, if it's as cold as you say."

"Trust me, it's that cold."

Once they crossed the highway, Brad headed not for the old log cabin with cheery smoke snaking out of the chimney, but for the stable some fifty yards or so farther from

the highway. Keely sensed his urgency, said a silent prayer that Brad's brother wasn't seriously hurt as he pulled up in front of the stable door and shut off the Bearcat.

* * * * *

"So what the hell have you done to yourself?" Brad asked, letting go of Keely's hand and kneeling beside his brother.

Jared's smile looked forced. "Somebody knocked over a bucket of water in here last night, and I took a spill on the ice it turned into while I was trying to hook a bale of hay from up in the rafters. Tell me I haven't broken my leg. If I have, my wife will kill me."

Brad doubted that, but he understood why Jared would worry. Ninia was fiercely protective of her Master—especially when it came to him not always acknowledging the physical limitations put on him because of his injuries in Iraq. "Can you straighten it out, or is it stuck that way?" The angle of the leg didn't look good, but if Jared could move it...

When Jared tried to move his injured leg, it straightened some but not that much. It had to have hurt like hell, because Brad saw the skin around his brother's lips turning chalky white. "Okay, having you try to move it probably isn't a great idea. Where does it hurt the worst?" When Jared pointed to a spot on the outside of his left thigh, Brad turned to Keely. "Get down here and help me shove his pants down far enough that we can see what's going on."

Brad liked the way she wasted no time going on her knees on the other side of Jared, working fasteners loose and gently sliding his pants down, not flinching at all when she encountered the straps that helped Jared hold his prosthesis in place when he was exerting himself more than he should. "Do you want me to pull down his long johns?" she asked while Brad was working the pants past Jared's butt on the left side.

"Sure. Jared won't mind, will you?"

"Just find out what the hell's the matter. It's not as if Keely hasn't seen me naked at the dungeon. I just want you to patch me up so I can get my miserable ass back to the

house before Ninia rips me a new one." Jared lay back and closed his eyes while Brad and Keely kept working his clothes down. He yelped when Brad tugged the pants and underwear over the spot where he'd told them it hurt. "What the hell?"

Brad bent, trying to get a good look in the dim light. The first thing he saw was a nice neat hole that went through both bloody layers of Jared's clothes, right above a nasty-looking laceration that was still bleeding profusely. "Looks to me like you fell right on the grappling hook you were using to pull down hay. It doesn't look like you broke any bones, but I doubt you're going to be walking anytime soon with the mess that hook made out of the muscles inside your thigh. What the hell were you doing? Don't you hire enough hands to take care of your horses and cattle?"

"Would you leave your animals to the ranch hands in a storm like this?"

"No, I wouldn't, but..." How the hell could Brad point out the differences between Jared's physical abilities and his own without fracturing his brother's still shaky self-confidence? He was about to say more when Keely laid a hand on his forearm and smiled.

"Of course you wouldn't. Instead of worrying about what you might not ought to have done, we need to figure out how to get you back to the house so Ninia can take care of this. It's more than either Brad or I can handle." Keely got up and went into the tack room. When she came out, she had a roll of gauze, some adhesive tape and a box of four-by-four sponges. Brad had to admit his woman had common sense as well as the tact he lacked. "I saw some ointment and stuff in there. Do you think we should use it?"

Brad followed her gaze to the gaping wound on Jared's leg. "Let's bandage him up now to slow the bleeding, and get him to the house so Ninia can take care of him." He hoped she could handle whatever needed to be done in the way of emergency care, because it would be nearly impossible for them to get Jared to a hospital in Laramie or Cheyenne. Taking a handful of four-by-fours, Brad laid them over the wound and exerted pressure with the heel of his hand. "This seems to be slowing the bleeding. Let's

wrap the gauze around his leg as tight as we can and figure a way to get him on the Bearcat.”

Jared let out a disgusted growl. “Help me up and I’ll walk to the damned snowmobile,” he told Brad. “You said the leg’s not broken. I’ll be damned if I’ll let you carry me into the house and scare Ninia half to death.”

When Brad was trying to figure out how to tell his brother he wasn’t about to take on Ninia’s fury if he did what Jared asked, Keely took Jared’s hand and looked him in the eye. “Please, Jared. I don’t want your wife to be angry at me.”

“It’s me she’s going to be screaming mad at. Brad, take it easy with the pressure you’re putting on that pad.”

Brad loosened the gauze wrap until blood started seeping to the surface again. He tightened it up again until the bleeding stopped. “Better? Can’t make it much looser than this unless you want to risk bleeding out.”

“It’s okay. Help me up now.” Jared sat up and held out his hands. “No, before you do, toss some hay in those last two stalls and fill up the horses’ feeders. I’d finished up with all the others before I slipped on that goddamn ice.”

“I can do that.” Without waiting for instructions, she got a rake and started loosening the bale Jared had apparently dragged down from the rafters. “About how much?”

“Go ahead and fill the feeders. God knows whether I’ll be able to get out here for the next few days,” Jared told her.

Keely never ceased to surprise Brad with her eagerness to help. It gave him a warm feeling inside, even now, when his hands were freezing without his heavy gloves. “Thanks, sweetheart.”

Securing the grappling hook onto the rail of an empty stall, he tried to figure the best way he could get his brother up without injuring him further. “Jared, sit up if you can.”

Jared did. "Lift me up and let me put some of my weight on the stall rail. That way you can get under my shoulder and be my left leg until we get outside to your snowmobile."

Although Brad didn't think it was a good idea for Jared to stand up, he couldn't see any other way that they could get him out to the snowmobile. As soon as Keely finished filling the feeders, she came back and seemed to size up the situation. "Get on Jared's right side and steady him," he told her.

Brad squatted and caught Jared by the shoulders, pulling up until he was able to grab on to the stall railing. "You okay like that?"

Jared nodded, but it was obvious he was in pain. "Let's hurry and get me out to that snowmobile."

The snow was coming down again, flakes floating slowly to the already heavily blanketed ground. At least the wind had died down for the moment. With Keely driving the snowmobile while Brad held on to Jared, they made a slow journey the fifty yards or so between the stable and Jared's cabin.

* * * * *

An hour later, after Ninia had Brad help get Jared to their bedroom and patched up his hurt leg, Brad and Keely relaxed in front of the fire in the bedroom fireplace. They'd be here quite a while, until their outdoor storm gear dried. Keely didn't mind. She'd thought they'd never get warm again after the long snowmobile ride from Brad's place, but now she was feeling toasty warm in one of the spa robes Ninia had found for them.

Ninia and Jared wore similar robes. Keely had visualized them sleeping in a room equipped with fucking tables, machines and at least one restraining device, but she was wrong. Nothing readily visible in the massive bedroom hinted its owner was a Dominant, that is unless she counted those red silk scarves hanging from each bedpost on the king-size bed.

Keely smiled at Jared, whom Ninia had settled comfortably on the bed, his upper body propped up by a stack of pillows. Minus his prosthesis and the black leather chaps and vest he'd worn in the dungeon exhibition she'd seen, Jared hardly projected the image of absolute power, complete control. When Ninia perched cross-legged beside him and held his hand, Jared smiled at her.

The obvious devotion the other couple shared made Keely wish she dared enjoy a similar sort of relationship with Brad. Until Jared ordered Ninia to shed her shoulder-length blonde wig, revealing less than a quarter-inch of pale stubble. When Keely would have let out a yelp, Brad pinched her ass and hissed, "Shhh. Don't let them know you're shocked."

"Yes, Master."

Keely could barely hear Ninia's whispered apology for having failed to shave her head completely smooth this morning. "Would it please you if I went in and shaved now?"

Not in a million years, Master. No way would Keely walk around bald as a cueball because some man told her to. But Ninia seemed okay with it, even eager.

"Not now. If you're very good, I'll shave you myself. Later. Right now I want to enjoy the silky feeling of this baby fuzz." Jared bent and drew his tongue across the nape of his slave's neck then traced around her earlobe before dipping inside the ear and tongue-fucking it while Ninia whimpered in apparent delight. "Join us," he said to Keely and Brad, a broad grin on his rugged face.

Could she? Could Brad? The memory of watching the couple demonstrating *Karada* bondage at the dungeon titillated Keely. Brad squeezed her hand. "Watch all you want, they're into exhibitionism. Are you?"

Keely wasn't sure, even though her nipples had tightened and she longed for Brad's touch. She couldn't help seeing the love in Jared's eyes as he caressed Ninia's scalp, or the possessive way he stroked beneath the engraved gold collar with its tiny ring above the large topaz center stone that nestled in the hollow of her throat.

A slave collar, with a ring to attach a leash. Not just a piece of jewelry but an unmistakable symbol that Ninia had given herself to her Master. Irrevocably. Keely imagined the emotions that must have gone through Ninia when Jared put it on her, the finality of the sound of the collar closing permanently, binding her to her Master for all eternity. The collar was beautiful, not an ugly black leather one with spikes and a heavy padlock like the one her mother wore. No one who wasn't into the BDSM lifestyle would recognize Ninia's collar as anything other than a unique necklace she wore all the time.

But it was still a collar. A symbol of his total possession, her total submission. A sign that Ninia belonged to Jared, as obvious to those in the BDSM lifestyle as the large, elegant set of rings she wore on her left hand was to those in the vanilla world.

When Jared straightened, he rubbed his palm in a circular motion over the crown of Ninia's head. Keely watched Ninia shudder as though her Master's gentle touch aroused her almost beyond control. "Take off your clothes and suck my cock like a good slave."

Keely turned to meet Brad's hot gaze. "I guess I must be ready. Feel how hot I am." Taking his hand, she drew it first to her lips then settled it between her legs. As soon as he slipped a finger up her pussy, she started to pant.

"You're wet, too. Undress for me." Brad undid the tie on her robe and spread it open then stood and took off his boxer shorts. "Well?"

The sight of his hard, muscular chest made her ignore the voice in her head that said sex play should be between one man, one woman unless you were inside Roped and Lassoed or some other BDSM club. Still she hesitated.

"Come on, now. It's not like we're about to switch partners. Not here, not now. Watch Ninia and Jared. Focus on them while I take care of you. By the way, I grabbed some of Jared's condoms in case we need them once we go home.

"Look. Ninia's got pierced nipples. Imagine the feeling when Jared tugs on the chain between them. Have you ever thought about—"

“No!” Keely said it so emphatically, Brad knew she’d thought about it, just as she most likely had pictured how it would feel if she shaved off the curly mop insulating her scalp from his sensual touch. Not that he entertained the idea that she’d ever shave it off, or let him do it. And not that he could imagine himself wanting her to do it. Different strokes...

“You know you do.” He pulled her down on his lap and dug his fingers between strands of her hair. “You wonder whether having rings jingling from your nipples would keep you wet all the time, wanting sex with the Master who had them put there.”

Keely shot a questioning look Brad’s way. “Does having that bar through your cock keep you horny all the time?”

“It did when I first got the piercing, and each time I switched to thicker gauge jewelry—that is, after the swelling and pain went down. But now it’s almost like another part of me.”

“Then why not take it out?”

He bit her earlobe, hard. “Because you seem to like the way it feels inside your sweet pussy. And because it adds to my pleasure when you play with it with your tongue.”

“Oh.”

He loved it when she couldn’t think of a proper comeback. “The Ampellang’s not going anywhere, baby. Not as long as it gives you pleasure.”

She sighed as she watched Ninia kneel between Jared’s legs and go down on his large, impressive and unpierced cock. Deep, fast, her shaved head bobbed up and down until Brad was so hard it was all he could do to stop himself from grabbing Keely and fucking her mouth, her cunt...

He fished a condom out of a deep pocket in his robe, ripped it open and peeled it carefully over his cock. "Have you ever been fucked in the ass?" he asked, shifting her so her rear hole was within easy reach.

"Not except by the machine at the dungeon." He thought he felt her tremble, hoped it was with excitement, not fear, as he smeared the contents of a tube of lubricant as far up her anal passage as the applicator nozzle could reach, and over his sheathed erection.

Slipping her robe off, he squeezed her breasts then set her on his lap. His sheathed sex twitched when it came in contact with the crack of her taut, inviting ass. "I want you to watch Ninia and Jared. Meanwhile I'm gonna introduce your tight rear end to its personal fucking machine." With that Brad lifted Keely, rolling her swollen nipples between his thumbs and forefingers as he slowly lowered her backside onto his rampant erection.

Fuck but her ass was tight. If it hadn't been for the condom, he figured he'd have come as soon as he worked his way past her anal sphincter and seated himself balls-deep in her rear hole. As it was he had to fight to maintain control. "Be still, baby. Watch Ninia and Jared. See how they're both damp with sweat. Tell me what you're seeing, what turns you on." Brad reached around and tugged on Keely's nipples, his motion rhythmic—in time with the way Jared twisted his wrist, jiggling the chain between his wife's breasts while he used the other hand to force her bare head up and down on his cock. Ninia's cheeks rose and fell as though they'd choreographed the motion, perfected it as only long-time lovers could. "Come on, don't be shy."

Keely wiggled her butt, and Brad punished her by pushing two fingers in her cunt and rubbing his thumb over her throbbing clit. "Oh yes, Master. Hurt me. Hurt me the way Jared's hurting Ninia."

"Like this, my sweet slave?" Tensing his thigh muscles, Brad pushed himself deeper into her ass. He finger-fucked her cunt until she screamed and a stream of hot pussy

juices pooled in his palm. "Not very obedient, are you? I didn't give you permission to come."

"I'm sorry, Master." Keely spoke so softly he could hardly hear her, but her excited yelp reverberated around the large room. Obviously it wasn't only his fucking that had pushed her over the edge, he decided when he looked over at the bed and noticed Ninia now straddled his brother's face while she deep-throated him.

Ninia's practically bald head bobbed up and down while Jared's strained up off the pillows so he could tongue-fuck her bald cunt. He dug his fingers into her plump buttocks. Controlling her the way Brad longed to control Keely and bring her to ever-deepening orgasms. How could Keely not have tumbled over the edge when she was watching Jared's show while Brad was fucking her ass, stimulating every highly erogenous spot on her delectable body?

"You're forgiven, this time. Down on your knees now and close your eyes. Don't say a word, and don't move. I'll make your punishment light, but you're gonna come again when I say it's time." While Keely positioned herself on all fours in front of the fireplace, Brad peeled off the condom and replaced it with another one. Good thing he'd spotted one of Jared's floggers in the bathroom closet, he thought, eyeing the faint marks John had left on Keely's tender skin last night at the dungeon. He raised the small whip and started to inflict the pain she seemed to need then changed his mind.

Keely's skin was creamy smooth and redhead-pale, with a few freckles he could hardly distinguish from the slight bruises on her back and buttocks. They fascinated him, and he couldn't resist running the metal-tipped silk ribbons of the flogger along the length of her spine, watching her muscles twitch despite his order for her not to move. "Be still." He set the flogger aside and went on his knees behind her submissively raised butt. "I'm going to take you in the pussy, doggy-style. You're not to come until I tell you to."

The musky smells of sex surrounded them. Jared's terse order for Ninia to ride him reminded Brad that two pairs of ears could hear every command he voiced to Keely. It

didn't bother him—he'd been in the dungeon business too long not to have experienced public sex, even ménages—but it brought home the fact that when he was with Keely he didn't need a scene. For the first time he realized he'd be just as happy to have her for himself, claim the intimacy that two people in love would sometimes want to have...their most physical moments between just the two of them.

Right now he saw that Keely's cunt lips glistened with the dampness of arousal. His own cock ached for release. He grabbed her butt cheeks and positioned her, stopping to caress the taut twin mounds before pulling her cunt in line with his cock and thrusting home. "Be a good slave now. Squeeze my cock. Imagine me claiming you like this in front of everybody in the dungeon one Saturday night." Her tensing beneath him hinted she wasn't all that much into voyeurism, at least right now. "Come on, fuck me now. Jared and Ninia are so tied up with each other, they wouldn't notice if a hundred other couples were fucking each other on their bedroom floor."

"Mmmm." Apparently Keely was taking to heart his order not to speak. Her cunt spoke clearly enough, though, squeezing and releasing his cock with every thrust, coaxing out the orgasm he'd been fighting for what seemed like hours.

He fucked her hard, feeling the mouth of her womb on his cock head with each inward motion. His balls bounced against her hot, wet outer lips. The slapping sounds of flesh on flesh surrounded them. He had to come. Couldn't wait much longer.

Leaning over her, he thrust two fingers into Keely's mouth, felt her begin to suckle him. "Now, baby. Feel me coming into your hot, wet cunt and let go all that pent-up energy. Scream if you want to. It's okay."

"God, yes, Master Brad. Oh yes, I'm coming. Hurts so good." She sucked hard on his fingers then bit down on them when her climax began.

He lost it. Letting out a scream, he started to come. Felt so good. So fucking good. Burying himself deep inside her, he held her there until she stopped trembling. Then he rolled onto his back, taking her with him while the strongest orgasm he'd ever had kept on going, leaving him sweating and sexually drained.

It was the best fuck he could recall ever having.

Chapter Four

By the time Brad pulled the Bearcat into the garage beside his big red truck, snow had started falling again and the wind had practically blown them off the pathway. There'd be no getting home tonight for Keely.

That didn't bother her nearly as much as it had last night, before she'd learned a lot more about Brad than that he was a skilled Dom she dared not see outside the dungeon. She followed him into the house, eager despite her lingering reservations to learn more, see if she might actually trust him enough to give him her full-time submission. At least when they were at home alone.

"Hmmm. Smells like the bunkhouse cook brought us over some of his famous chili and cornbread," he said once she stepped inside and started peeling off Diana's ski togs. "Shall we have some before we go upstairs?"

Part of Keely wanted to skip the food and go upstairs, but then her stomach gave a very unladylike growl. She grinned. "Guess that means I think we should try some of that chili first."

"Good. Sit over there at the table and I'll serve it up. Hope you like it hot."

"Yes. Just so long as it doesn't burn my throat so much I won't be able to suck you off." The picture of Ninia servicing Jared that way had kept Keely's pussy wet all the way home. It had also cemented the image of Jared's slave with her shaved head and pussy, and that pair of good-sized nipple rings with a gold chain dangling between them.

"Jared won't let her go out without a wig." Brad rubbed his nose through Keely's hair while setting two glasses and a carton of milk onto the table.

He must have been psychic. "How did you know I was thinking about your brother and his wife?"

Brad looked back at her from the stove, where he was ladling soup into two huge mugs. "Because I thought the same thing when I first found out about their fetishes. And I talked to Jared about it." Setting the mugs, a pan of cornbread and the butter dish from the refrigerator onto a tray, he brought it all to the table and took a seat across from Keely. "Eat up."

Keely observed the steam coming off her soup mug. Too hot. "Why does he make her shave her head?" The pussy she could understand, lots of submissive women shaved their pubes for their Masters' pleasure. If Brad wanted her to, she'd shave her pussy every day. She might even consent to having her nipples pierced, though she wasn't at all sure about hanging a chain between them. But her head?

"Jared isn't the one who wants her to keep her head shaved. But it's apparently a turn-on for Ninia. Before Jared she'd had a Master who trained her to expect and want the darker sides of bondage and submission. He was another military guy. He died in Afghanistan several years before she met Jared, but he left her with a real taste for voyeurism, ménages, public humiliation—and *Karada* bondage. Jared's a Dom, never doubt that. But if not for his slave's need for kink, he'd satisfy his need to dominate with an occasional club scene, a few good sex toys and a cat-o'-nine."

"You're saying he humiliates her because she wants it?" Keely tested the chili again, smiled. "I think the chili's cool enough to eat now. Ooh, it's delicious."

Brad grinned and lifted his mug. "Mmmm. Charley does know how to make chili." He buttered a slice of cornbread and devoured it in four bites. "Did you know the job of a Master is to bring pleasure to his slave, no matter what it takes?"

Keely had never thought of it quite that way, but she guessed Brad was right. "Are you a good Master?"

"I hope so." He took her hand and brought it to his lips. "I aim to please you, that's for sure."

Keely met his gaze then stared out at the snow blowing outside the expanse of windows in the large, cozy kitchen. "I never thought before today that there could be

anything erotic about having a shaved head. When my mother is shaved, it's because Vince is punishing her for something."

"I saw that kind of punishment, too, when Diana was with her bastard ex-husband. From what you've told me about your stepfather, he sounds a lot like Gareth. By the time I got enough evidence on him to get him tossed in jail, he'd practically destroyed my sister. She spent nearly a year in rehab, getting him out of her system. She couldn't give up the lifestyle, so she made a switch."

"Your sister's a Domme?" Keely had trouble picturing a woman obviously as submissive as Ninia or more so, suddenly switching, that is unless she'd taken so much abuse for so long that she wanted to turn the tables.

"That's one I have a hard time believing, but she swears she is. Even takes a turn at the dungeon once a week, servicing two male subs who seem to thrive on pain. Makes no sense to me, getting off on having your balls walked on with a woman's stiletto heels or wearing a cock cage that jabs spikes into you if you dare to get a hard-on." Brad shook his head then reached over and stroked Keely's forearm. "Come on, enough of this. Even thinking about what my sister does to her submissives makes my cock start to shrivel up. Not a good thing if we're going to spend the next few days riding out the storm, seeing if we can make this work. Let's go to bed."

* * * * *

Keely lay on the black leather recliner across from a matching sofa, naked except for one of Brad's dress shirts she'd left open in front. No need for modesty. He'd claimed her pussy, her mouth, even her tight rear passage that had never felt a man's pulsating shaft before today. He'd kissed and nibbled every square inch of her body, and while they'd relaxed in the sunken hot tub he'd set her on its marble edge and made her pussy as soft and smooth as a baby's butt.

He'd ordered her to shave him too, maintaining that iron control of his while she clipped then shaved off every last bit of his dark pubic curls. Funny she hadn't noticed

before that he'd already shaved his cock and balls not too long ago. After she was done, she'd just had to sample his long, thick cock, verify that it and his balls were as velvety soft as they looked. She'd even traced around his baby-smooth asshole with one finger. Amazingly he hadn't punished her.

Finally he emerged from the bathroom, beautifully naked, his face freshly shaved. He took her breath, his cock swollen, his smooth balls pulled taut against his body, powerful muscles rippling beneath the surface of smooth, tanned skin. Hairless skin or close to it, whether by nature or frequent waxing. Keely didn't care. She wanted nothing more than to go on her knees and service her magnificent Master, but he stretched out over her, claiming her mouth in a warm, wet kiss that sent powerful waves of need to every cell of her body. As he tongue-fucked her, she felt him slip a hand between them and attach nipple clips to first one and then the other already aroused nub of flesh. The bite of the clips hurt, but he flailed the tips with his fingers, pulling away and sliding down her body. When he cupped her breasts and pulled them together so he could lick both constricted nipples at once, the pain began to dull, replaced by a glow of desire as her tortured nipples swelled in their restraints and poked at his questing lips.

"I love seeing your nipples like this, all red and swollen and ready to catch between my teeth. I want you to have them pierced for me so they'll be like this all the time without causing you pain," he said, his words sending a shiver all the way to her needy pussy. With that he gently removed the clips and sucked the pain away, leaving her frantic—frantic to have him burst the climactic bubble that already had her aching...throbbing in every hole he might choose to fill.

"Please, Master Brad, I need you to fuck me." She reached up and dragged her hand down the length of his chest and belly, stopping when she curled her fingers around the throbbing length of his smooth, hot sex, using one thumb to sample a drop of creamy lubrication she saw glistening in the slit at its tip. "Why do you keep this shaved?"

He laughed. "I can tell you want my cock, baby. And I want to fuck you so much I'm aching." Cupping her newly bald pussy, he slipped one finger in her cunt, another just past her anal sphincter. "I don't like scratching your sweet cunt with a lot of coarse pubic hair, any more than I like having anything between me and your soft, sexy little body, dulling the sensations."

"You have your body hair waxed?"

"I've kept it that way ever since I first serviced a shy, redheaded sub at Roped and Lassoed and scraped her incredibly soft skin with my wiry chest hair. I'd have kept my groin waxed, too, but it hurt like hell so I started shaving my cock and balls but leaving the rest of the pubes so she wouldn't think I was too kinky for her." Brad looked up at her then bent and drew his tongue along her swollen slit. "Baby, that sub was you."

His serious tone left no doubt he'd wanted to please her a lot more than he'd ever indicated at the club. For some reason that pushed Keely closer to the edge of being his full-time sub than any of the arguments he'd given her before.

Not to mention that what he was doing to her had her ready to come. He kept licking her clit, nibbling at her hairless outer lips, delving his tongue deep into her weeping pussy then inserting a large dildo where his mouth had been. "I hope you like your cunt bare, because I intend to keep it that way."

"Oh yes." Keely liked it, basked in the pure eroticism of his bare flesh caressing hers, the titillating feeling, knowing there'd be nothing between them dulling the sensation of two lovers becoming one. "Please fuck me now," she begged, knowing she was drenching him with pussy juices that bathed them both. "I'm—"

When he raised his head, his cheeks and lips glistened with her juices. "No need to be embarrassed, baby. I love it when you get hot for me. Stand up and I'll fuck you like you've never been fucked before. In my own personal dungeon. I've been waiting for the right woman to initiate it with me."

Her heart beat faster when she saw him open a mirrored door that led not into a closet as she'd thought, but a small yet imaginatively equipped torture chamber.

Creamy walls held a black iron St. Andrew's Cross as well as strategically placed stainless steel handcuffs and leg irons with what looked like soft, faux fur padding. A small, stainless steel table with stirrups and a thick leather pad was centered on the floor, whose red plush carpeting felt springy against her bare feet. Along the other wall was a recessed cabinet whose glass doors revealed all sorts of toys that made her pussy twitch with anticipation. And the ceiling boasted a bevel-edged mirror centered above the table.

He said he'd never used this room before. "This is your first time here? Really?"

"Really. You're the first person besides the contractor to see this room. The first sub I ever wanted to bring into my home. My heart. Come here and climb up on my fucking table. You're gonna give me head while I eat your delicious cunt. Then, maybe, if you're good, I'll take out this dildo and fuck you for real. I grabbed some more condoms from Jared before we left his place."

When he rolled one of the condoms over a large bright blue butt plug, her mouth went slack. The idea of him taking all her holes at once had more pussy juices trickling around the dildo, along her slit and down her thighs. Eager for the triple invasion, desperate to take his big cock in her mouth and suck him dry, she bent over the foot of the table and spread her legs. "Please don't make me wait," she begged, hating the plaintive sound of her voice yet yearning for the punishment her instinctive act should cost her.

He took up a soft flogger and snapped it in the air. "Climb up on the table and put your feet in the stirrups. Don't try to anticipate my wishes again. I'm not the least bit shy about telling you what I want."

When she lay back on the padded table and situated her bare feet in the icy stirrups, she felt him snap the flogger over her belly, experienced the mild stings from those metal beads while she heard a snap and sensed he'd dropped the hinged lower section of the table, fully exposing her sopping pussy to his gaze, and to the flogger whose beads now pummeled her bald mound.

“Oooh.” She loved the feeling of helplessness, made more so when he bound her knees and ankles to the padded bottoms of the stirrups that held her open for his pleasure and her own. Then he worked the butt plug up her ass until its flared head rested provocatively against her wide-open, incredibly sensitive rear entrance.

Her pussy clenched when he set the dildo to vibrating and moved to the end of the table. She wanted him to own her, strip her of every inhibition she’d ever had, force her to come and come until she couldn’t come any more. Holding her breath, she savored the feeling of helplessness, made more intense when he planted one knee in the padded sling to the left of her head and straddled her face, settling his other knee in the matching sling on her right.

“I want you to suck my cock now.” The heat in his deep voice was nothing compared to the feeling of his muscular thighs scalding her cheeks, his throbbing cock nudging her mouth then finding a home between her eager lips. “That’s it. Take me deep. Swallow me. Blow me until I’m wrung dry.”

The musky yet clean scent of him surrounded her.

“Easy now, I’m gonna raise your sweet cunt so I can fuck you right.” Then she felt her ass rising as he pushed a button and raised the table. “There. I want to see you play with your nipples while I’m taking care of your sweet pussy. Pinch them until they’re tight little nubs while you give me head. Oh God, lick me. Yeah, like that,” he rasped out when she ran her tongue up the underside of his rock-hard cock then extended it to taste his balls that pressed so enticingly against her stretched lips. “Take a look at the ceiling. Watch. Tell me seeing us like this doesn’t excite you.”

She couldn’t talk around his pulsating cock, but she couldn’t help looking in the mirror above them, watching her own flesh tense, observing how he’d bent over her, and squirming when he turned up the speed on the two vibrating objects in her cunt and ass while grabbing her clit between his teeth and flailing it with his tongue. Compelled by the escalating feelings inside her, she tugged at her nipples, rubbed them against the smooth, muscular plane of Brad’s lower belly. And she swallowed, lodging

the head of his big cock in her throat, breathing slowly through her nose and tickling his satiny balls as she milked him, taking him deeper down her throat with every delicious swallow.

Her pussy clenched against the dildo. She wished it were his cock instead, but she couldn't imagine losing the incredible sensation of being possessed, filled, driven toward a climax she'd never been able to achieve with vanilla sex or sessions with other Doms. She dragged her nails up his chest, struggled to hold back her climax until he gave permission.

When he pulled out she cried out. She'd failed him, failed to suck him dry. His rock-hard, glistening penis held her gaze, almost made her fail to realize he'd stuffed her mouth again, this time with a firm ball gag. "Keep pretending it's my cock you're loving with your pretty mouth," he ordered as he secured the gag with straps he tightened around her head. "And keep watching. I can tell it turns you on."

Would he fuck her pussy or her ass? Not that Keely cared much at this point. Every cell in her body screamed for release of the intense pressure that kept building up as he moved to the end of the table and slipped on a condom. The vibrating anal plug stayed in, its rhythmic motion keeping her lust at a fever pitch, but he slowly retrieved the dildo from her swollen cunt. "I'm wearing a condom. Blink twice if you want me to take it off and fuck you bareback."

Did she? She knew he was clean and so was she. Everyone who came to Roped and Lassoed had to submit monthly reports from their doctors certifying them free of all kinds of venereal disease, from the fairly benign ones to HIV. It was the wrong time of the month for her to get pregnant. The thought of risking that didn't scare her nearly as much as it might have two days ago.

"Don't you want to feel it all, skin on skin, no barriers?" He stepped closer, so close she felt the heat of him, the pulse of life beneath the rubber barrier. "I could order you to take it off me, you know."

But he wouldn't. He'd leave it up to her. Keely trusted him, far more than she'd ever dreamed she might trust a Master. She looked down at him and blinked twice, then watched him peel the condom off and toss it aside.

"I'll take care of you, my own sweet baby. Not just now but always." The smooth, creamy feel of his cock head against her cunt fueled her flames. His, too, she could tell as he let go his restraint and sank into her all the way, until his cock slammed against the mouth of her womb and his balls rested tightly against her shaved pussy. "I'll never let you grow hair down here again," he told her, and she nodded vigorously. She'd never again deny herself—or him—the incredible sensation of mating, nothing between them. "And the only thing I'll be using condoms for is fucking your delicious little ass. I think we'll keep the butt plug, though. I love the way it feels when you're vibrating around my balls. When my cock can feel the pulsating sensations in your wet, hot cunt."

His thrusts grew harder, faster. She tightened her vaginal walls around him, loving the intense feeling of the rounded ends of the bar he wore in his piercing as they pressed against her. They scraped deliciously on her insides when he moved. More than anything she yearned to feel him come inside her, fill her with the long, hot spurts of milky fluid she'd felt before only when she'd serviced him with her mouth.

She had to come. She dared not do it without her Master's order, so she clenched her muscles and tried to focus on the intent look in his dark eyes, the smoothness of his wide chest, the coppery nubs of his small nipples. When those delicious sights couldn't distract her she closed her eyes, only to feel his calloused fingers settle on her already distended nipples. He plucked them hard then bent and drew one fully into his mouth, lapping at it with his tongue until she was about to explode.

"Now, my sweet submissive. Come with me this time." He slammed into her once more, balls-deep. Her last bit of self-control flew away, and she clamped down her inner muscles on his cock. The first hot, wet spurt surprised her with its intensity,

triggered the most incredible orgasm she'd ever experienced. It only got better as he released burst after burst of his essence deep in her spasming pussy.

He'd never felt so satisfied. So tender toward a woman as he did toward Keely. Gently Brad released her from her bonds and carried her to the bed. "You're going to marry me," he said as he tucked her in and crawled in bed beside her. "I want to sleep with you like this every night, love you for the rest of our lives. I'll never force you to do anything you're afraid of."

Keely glanced up at him, tears in her eyes. "What if I want you to? I was afraid of shaving my pussy until you showed me what I was missing. The idea of making love in front of others or watching others have sex in front of me was pretty disturbing until I saw how beautiful sex could be between two people who're obviously in love. I don't think I'll ever encourage you to shave my head, but the idea doesn't turn me off as much as it did when Jared made Ninia take off her wig and show off her baldness." Her voice trailed off, as if she might be imagining how it would feel to have him rub his hands over her naked scalp.

"I could always say I wanted to come all over your bare head," he said, repeating an experience often related by other Doms who visited Roped and Lassoed and once proven when the biggest braggart of the bunch brought his collared slave with him, shaved her bald and masturbated onto her scalp, massaging his seed into her skin until it shone. "Does that pique your curiosity?"

She wrinkled her nose. "Not really. If you want, you can come on my head, hair and all."

"Fair enough." Wrung out as he was, he still felt his cock coming to life at the idea of coming in her short, auburn curls and using his hands to massage it through her hair. "Seriously, I don't share Ninia's fetish. Neither does Jared, but he loves her so much he keeps her head shaved because he knows it gives her pleasure." He paused then shot her a grin. "Tell you what, sweetheart, I've never seen my little brother as embarrassed

as he was when she insisted on them meeting me for dinner in Denver the night she first went bald. She'd had on a Muslim-style headscarf because the wigmaker had kept the hair he'd cut off her to make a wig. One of Jared's conditions was that she never step outside their house without one, but she'd talked him into letting her cover her head with the scarf until the wigs were ready."

Keely couldn't help guessing what had happened to embarrass Jared. "Are you trying to tell me the scarf slipped off in the restaurant?"

"Worse. She went in the restroom and took it off. Then she sauntered over to our table, just like there wasn't anything wrong with showing off her shiny bald pate in front of everybody there." Raising himself up on one elbow, Brad ran his fingers through Keely's unruly mop. "I like you just like this. Whatever hair fetish I may have is satisfied when we both have smoothly shaved pubes. And waxed-off body hair everywhere else."

She laid a hand on his chest, circling a nipple with her finger as she smiled up at him. "I can't afford a waxing job like this."

"You can once we get married." Brad knew he'd have to go easy, sweep away her pride and lingering feelings of inadequacy so gently she wouldn't realize what he was doing. "While we're snowed in, though, we can treat ourselves to blade shaves all over. Every day." Very gently he ruffled the pale hairs on her forearms, stopping when he saw her smile go away.

She wrinkled her nose. "Will you make me wear your collar?"

"No decent Master would ever let his slave's neck go unadorned. But don't worry. I'll pick you out a pretty one set with your favorite precious stones. No black leather or chain links. No one but you and I will know it's on for keeps, and I'm the only one who'll know how to take it off you. I'm not planning ever to snap a leash on onto it. I promise."

"Does Jared ever put Ninia on a leash?"

"I've only known of him to do it one time, and that was the time she sat down beside him with her shaved head on display. He only made her wear it until they got back to their hotel." Brad hadn't blamed his brother, considering the way Ninia had disobeyed his order to deserve that punishment.

Keely grinned. "Oh, I can see how that might have made Jared pretty angry."

"Yeah. I've got the feeling you won't find the need for showing off your kinks to anybody but me, so I'll save myself the extra bucks Jared paid for that gold chain he calls a leash." Brad traced a line around the base of her neck then lifted her left hand. "You'll wear my rings here, too. I won't have anybody, our BDSM friends or vanilla-type guys who might see you on the street, not be able to tell on sight that you're taken."

She reached up, her fingertips tracing the veins that stood out on his hand from all the years of holding on to cinch straps wrapped around the middles of nasty-tempered bulls and broncs. Her touch had him hot, hard and very much aware he wanted her for a lifetime. When she spoke, her soft breath tickled his wrist. "All right. I just don't ever want everybody knowing about the collar. About its significance, anyhow. I can't take more of the teasing I endured when I was a kid."

"Fair enough. Now come snuggle up and keep me warm. We're gonna need our strength until the weather breaks." With any kind of luck the storm would keep them snowbound for at least three more days. Brad intended to make the most of this time, seduce Keely so completely she'd never backslide from the promises she'd made.

* * * * *

It took a week for the road department to clear two avalanches that had blocked Highway 287 in both directions. A week of seeing to the cattle and horses, preparing food and clean outerwear for the ranch hands. Charley helped with those things while Brad kept the wranglers busy outside from sunup until noon when he and the hands came in the kitchen and put down the fuel that kept their bodies going. The rest of

Brad's days belonged to Keely, and she loved it. Loved him as much as she constantly lusted after him.

"Come on now. You can give me a bath, warm me up. I've got some news." Cupping her buttocks, Brad lifted her and ground his fully clothed but obviously aroused cock into her mound that never had been so sensitive before he'd shaved it.

She purred, tucking her head into the hollow above his collarbone and wondering what today might bring.

As if she were the most precious bundle he'd ever held, he undressed her and laid her out on a hot, thirsty towel he'd placed on the shower floor. Her squirming while he spread foam from the hot lather machine on her from neck to toe earned her a sharp slap. Needles of hot arousal radiated from where his hand fell on her thigh, once, then twice, then once more before he knelt beside her and ran a new razor over her legs, her cunt, even over the practically hairless expanse of her belly and rib cage. "Raise your arms," he told her after shaving her aching breasts, and when she obeyed he scraped away the little underarm stubble that had grown back since this time yesterday. Then he shaved her arms before moving back to her trunk and carefully denuding her neck and throat. "Roll over so I can take care of those fine, silky hairs on your back," he told her while inserting a new blade into the razor.

She shuddered when Brad lifted her hair and shaved the skin just below her hairline. It felt so good, made her so horny she almost begged him to shave it all off, let her feel for herself the erotic sensations Ninia must experience when Jared shaved her first in one direction and then in the other, reducing her head to a shiny, smooth scalp stretched taut against her perfectly rounded skull. Keely bit her lip to keep from saying the words she knew Brad didn't want to hear. Then her breath caught in her throat when she felt him take the blade higher. Not much higher but enough that she felt the slightly longer curls just above her hairline slide down her back, a breeze from a forced air vent chilling the newly bare skin.

Brad was raising her hairline in the back. Not enough that anybody might notice, but just enough to make her pussy cream at the prospect of him stroking that highly sensitive strip of skin, blowing on it, running his tongue over the smooth surface until she came in a shivering mass of sensation while he shot spurt after fiery spurt of his hot, slippery seed into her hungry pussy. "Hold still. I'm about to do your back."

It felt incredible, this feeling of almost total nakedness that came over her as he shaved the fine fuzz off her back before paying particular attention to her buttocks and ass crack. She almost came when he inserted two fingers up her rear hole and scissored them back and forth, stretching her for what she hoped would be his next step in their afternoon play. He took them out but replaced them with the anal plug he often had her wear all day. "That's to keep my naughty sweetheart hot while I finish you off," he whispered in her ear, blowing his breath on the newly shaved skin. "And while you take care of me."

The motion of her hair bouncing against her raised hairline felt incredibly erotic. She barely noticed Brad spreading her legs until he'd shaved her again from ass to cunt, taking short strokes to ensure that no stray hairs had popped up to mar her smoothness. "There, you're done."

She shaved him neck to toe, just as thoroughly as he'd shaved her, taking special care not to nick his beautiful cock and balls. When she finished and turned on the showerheads, she knelt and started to take him in her mouth.

But he pulled her away and onto her feet. "Come on, I've got a surprise for you," he said, wrapping them both in a thirsty bath sheet and dragging her along to the recliner beside the fireplace.

"Well?" Curious, she let him drag her down until she impaled herself on his cock. Unusual. Their previous afternoon lovemaking had been everything but conventional yet no more erotic than now, as she felt him throbbing against the walls of her pussy. "I love surprises."

As if he knew it would drive her crazy, he cradled her head in both hands, settling his thumbs over each side of what used to be her hairline and rubbing in a circular motion. "They've cleared the highway. You've got two choices. I can take you back to pick up your truck and you'll never see me again, or..."

His words panicked her. "Or what?" she croaked, not able to draw away, yet not certain now that what they'd lived here during the storm hadn't all been a figment of her fertile imagination.

"Or you can come with me to Denver and we'll get married. Right now."

"Oh, yesss," she hissed as she tightened her pussy around his cock and milked out his seed. "Shouldn't you ask your family to come?" Keely didn't need witnesses. Brad was all she needed to make her life complete.

"They'll be pissed if I don't," he said, frowning at the prospect of having to delay his plans. "Don't you want to invite your mom and Vince, too?"

"They're my past. You're my future." Keely felt a load drop from her shoulders when Brad didn't push it. The only kind of BDSM relationships she ever wanted to see were ones like theirs...like Jared and Ninia's. Relationships based on mutual love and the Doms' need to ensure their submissives' pleasure, whatever that might entail. "If you want to do it in Denver, why not ask Jared and Ninia—and your sister—to join us?"

He grinned. "I'll call Jared now. His Beechcraft's newer and bigger than my Cessna. He bought it last summer to ferry his dude ranch guests to and from the airport in Denver. If he's in shape to fly it now, with his gimpy leg, we're a go. Diana will jump at the chance to show off her new sub, I'm sure. She says he's no sissy boy but he lets her take control of their relationship."

He talked with Jared a few minutes then set the phone down and kissed Keely deep and hard, until both of them were out of breath. "He says he's fine as long as I sit up front as copilot. He and Ninia are calling Diana now. We'd better dress and get going if we're gonna get off the ground before the wind kicks up again."

“Dress?”

“As in, wear clothes. Grab something of Diana’s. She won’t mind since she never bothered to pick up the things I got for her when she was here on furloughs from rehab. Her taste’s a lot different, now that she’s made the switch to Domme. You can shop for your wedding stuff while I’m picking out your collar and rings.”

Chapter Five

The penthouse suite Brad had booked consumed half the top floor of a downtown hotel. Keely shuddered at the thought of what this place must cost. She'd never have dared even to inquire about rates for these accommodations.

Glittering chandeliers, plush carpeting, and gleaming Victorian-style furniture spoke of years gone by, of gentlemen in top hats and ladies sporting outlandish hats. Setting the clothes she'd bought onto the king-size bed in one of the three sumptuously decorated bedrooms, she looked around, imagining herself dropping to her knees, stroking the length of her lover's smooth, muscular legs, taking his cock in her mouth, rolling the Ampellang jewelry he wore around in its tight hole. At his command she'd grasp her ankles and brace herself for his first delicious thrust inside her. Imagining him fucking her ass while he worked a dildo in and out of her pussy had her sweating, longing for him to come and make her come in the many ways he'd shown her while they'd ridden out the storm.

Sounds of sex bombarded her from all around, traveling through walls that couldn't quite seal off Ninia's whimpers or Jared's shout of triumph when he came. From Diana's room came muffled sounds of a cat-o'-nine grazing her rancher lover's flesh.

Certain it would be hours before Brad returned from the jeweler with those scary, obvious symbols of his possession, Keely unpacked the sex toys they'd brought and inserted the plug in her butt, fiddling with the remote until the vibrations felt just right, not so strong as to hurt her yet strong enough that they reverberated through her body, driving her to a fever pitch of need.

Grabbing the dildo, she worked it up her cunt and began to slide it in and out. She'd just worked herself into a moaning, shivering mess of desire when Brad stepped

through the door she'd left unlocked, two small packages in his hand. "I see you're being naughty again, using those toys that belong to me. The tight, wet holes that are also mine. Come sit over here. Maybe when you feel the weight of my collar around your neck you'll realize you belong to me. Only me."

Moving awkwardly, she got out of bed and sat in front of an antique washstand, her gaze downcast the way a good sub's should always be. The plug still vibrated, even after she removed the dildo and set it aside. "You're my much-loved Master. I'm your obedient sub. I can't imagine being hotter than I am now, waiting eagerly to wear your symbol of ownership."

She wasn't so sure when she felt Brad wrap a wide metal choker around her neck and join the two ends with a click that sounded ominously final. The sensation of a metal ring brushing the hollow of her throat made her visualize Brad hooking a slender chain on it someday, threading it through the small gold nipple rings he'd personally inserted in holes made by a master piercer on their first stop after landing in Denver. Her whole breasts hurt, the pain a throbbing numbness that had started when Brad clamped her nipples then worsened after he ordered the piercer to push through sterilized needles that looked and felt as thick as the long wooden cocktail picks she'd seen Brad—her Master now—use to skewer olives off the appetizer tray the hotel chef had sent up to their suite. His gentle handling as he'd fitted the rings through the bloody holes had soothed her, reassured her that the pain would soon yield to incredible pleasure.

"Look, my darling." Her Master turned her head until she had a clear view in the mirror. She gasped. The collar he'd chosen left little doubt she was a rich man's sex slave, but it suited her perfectly. Her open robe obscured her vision, so she slid it off to get the full effect of the glittering choker fastened around her neck, the slender rings dangling from her reddened nipples.

Brad cupped her breasts, being careful not to irritate her piercings. "They look as red as cherries and nearly as swollen. I can hardly wait until they heal and I can play to

my heart's content." Shifting his hot, possessive gaze to the collar that felt the tiniest bit snug against her throat, he slipped a finger into the oval ring that hung, a delicate ring beneath a large square-cut emerald. "I couldn't pick just one stone so I had the jeweler use a lot of them. They're real, and they're set in platinum. Nothing but the best for this Master's most prized possession."

The collar was a work of art, its smooth surface embedded with rubies, then diamonds, and finally brilliant blue sapphires in different shapes. She realized now why it felt so thick and heavy. It had to have been, so the craftsman who'd made it could secure all the beautiful stones. "It's beautiful, Master. I love it almost as much as I love you." She held her head high, and the collar seemed less oppressive than when he'd put it on her and locked it in place.

It felt right to go down on her knees, free Brad from his dark jeans and take him in her mouth. It didn't take him long to stiffen and fill her greedy mouth with his creamy essence.

"Next time we do it right," he growled. "I want us to make a baby."

* * * * *

The wedding the following day was everything Keely could have asked for, candlelight and roses, soft music, and a minister with a mellow voice admonishing them to love, honor and cherish each other for always. Afterwards there were sensual finger foods and rich desserts. All happy memories to cherish, nothing sad to mar their wedding day. Jared was up once more, albeit on wobbly legs, standing beside Brad while they spoke their vows. Ninia stood beside him, dressed in pale blue and wearing a matching scarf over a long-haired light brown wig. She held herself proudly, a slave clearly content with her dotting Master. Diana and Matt, her supposedly submissive rancher, abandoned their public BDSM play and held hands conventionally during the ceremony and the sumptuous feast that followed.

Brad came up behind her when they were finally left alone. “You’re my beloved woman. The one I’ll spend the rest of my life giving the pleasure you deserve,” he whispered, taking her left hand and laying it over the collar that by now felt light, easy to bear as proof that she belonged to Him, her awesome Master who had no desire to enslave her. Only to love her and see to every one of her needs, sexual and otherwise.

“I love you, wife.” Tenderly Brad brought her hand to his lips, sucked the massive diamond solitaire and its glittering platinum band between his full, sensuous lips.

“I love you too, Master. Husband,” she added, liking the sound of the words—both of them. Keely was finding it easy to think of herself as slave, submissive, and lover. Her value as a person was neatly tied up in what Brad had made it, yet more precious now that he’d pledged not only his protection but his unconditional love.

As if he realized she’d turned a corner, Brad smiled down at her and squeezed her hand. He’d given her the gift of free will as well as all his love and support, and the moment she thought it might please him, she’d accept the role of slave to his Master. He’d done more, and she couldn’t have been happier than she was today, when he’d taken her as she was, as an equal emotionally, a sub he’d cherish for life. Brad McTavish was the beginning and end of all she needed. All she wanted.

About the Author

Ann Jacobs is a sucker for lusty Alpha heroes and happy endings, which makes Ellora's Cave an ideal publisher for her work. Romantica®, to her, is the perfect combination of sex, sensuality, deep emotional involvement and lifelong commitment—the elusive fantasy women often dream about but seldom achieve.

First published in 1996, Jacobs has sold over forty books and novellas, some of which have earned awards including the Passionate Plume (best novella, 2006), the Desert Rose (best hot and spicy romance, 2004) and More Than Magic (best erotic romance, 2004). She has been a double finalist in separate categories of the EPPIES and From the Heart RWA Chapter's contest. Three of her books have been translated and sold in several European countries.

A CPA and former hospital financial manager, Jacobs now writes full-time, with the help of Mr. Blue, the family cat who sometimes likes to perch on the back of her desk chair and lend his sage advice. He sometimes even contributes a few random letters when he decides he wants to try out the keyboard. She loves to hear from readers, and to put faces with names at signings and conventions.

Ann welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

Tell Us What You Think

We appreciate hearing reader opinions about our books. You can email us at Comments@EllorasCave.com.

Also by Ann Jacobs

A Gift of Gold
A Mutual Favor
Another Love
Awakenings
Black Gold: Dallas Heat
Black Gold: Firestorm
Black Gold: Forever Enslaved
Black Gold: Love Slave
Captured *anthology*
Colors of Love
Colors of Magic
D'Argent Honor 1: Vampire Justice
D'Argent Honor 2: Eternally His
D'Argent Honor 3: Eternal Surrender
D'Argent Honor 4: Eternal Victory
Dark Side of the Moon
Enchained *anthology*
Gates of Hell
Haunted
He Calls Her Jasmine
Lawyers In Love: Bittersweet Homecoming
Lawyers In Love: Gettin' It On
Lawyers In Love: In His Own Defense
Love Magic
Mystic Visions *anthology*
Out of Bounds
Roped
Storm Warnings *anthology*
Tip of the Iceberg
Wrong Place, Wrong Time?



Discover for yourself why readers can't get enough of the multiple award-winning publisher Ellora's Cave. Whether you prefer e-books or paperbacks, be sure to visit EC on the web at www.ellorascave.com for an erotic reading experience that will leave you breathless.

www.ellorascave.com