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# PLEASURE INN, THE COMPLETE SERIES

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CATHRYN FOX





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## COPYRIGHT

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**All Tied Up, All Worked Up, All Lit Up**

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**ALL TIED UP**

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## PROLOGUE

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**J***ust because we've all sworn off men, certainly doesn't mean we have to lock down the candy shop, girls."*

Summoned by those forlorn words, Pamina, Goddess of Passion and Everything Enchanted, put down her paperback and lifted her long lithe frame from her cozy recliner. With unhurried steps, she padded barefoot to her bay window and peered out. She brushed her golden hair from her shoulders and pulled the morning air into her lungs. The scent of lilac carried in on the breeze and curled around her. A smile touched her mouth as two lovebirds frolicked on the perch of her bird feeder. Ah, such a beautiful autumn day, she mused.

The perfect season for lovers.

Sunlight burst through the clouds and glistened off the crisp red apples weighing down the branches on her fruit tree. Her cat Abracadabra jumped onto the window ledge

beside her, curled himself into a ball and lazily groomed himself.

“I guess it’s that time again, Abra.” She gathered all twenty-five pounds of fur ball into her arms and gave him a knowing wink. As the Goddess of Passion, when a woman, or in this case, three women, uttered the dismal words “sworn off men”, it meant she had work to do. It was time for her to summon a bit of magic, spread a little passion and show these women they were far too young to rely on sex toys for the rest of their lives. Their perfect match was still out there, just waiting to be found, with a little help from her, of course.

Abra huffed, and in that squeaky little cat voice of his said, “Well, it’s about time.” Restless, he pounced back onto the sill. Mystical eyes sparkled with interest as he glanced at the clouds. “Where are we going this time? I hope it’s more exciting than the last place.”

Indulging him for a moment, Pamina asked, “What was wrong with the last place?”

“Nothing if you don’t mind hanging out in Butthole, Pennsylvania. I just so happened to mind it.”

Pamina shook her head, sorry she’d asked. Why she’d gifted him with the ability to speak she’d never know.

“Because you love me,” Abra said, reading her mind. “Everyone loves me.”

Pamina cocked her head. “Yes, and all that loving is what landed you here with me in the first place.”

“You’re such a killjoy,” Abra huffed.

“As God of Lust and Everything Desirous, you were supposed to help other men with women, not help yourself to them.”

“Ah, but now I only have eyes for you, Pamina.”

She resisted the urge to roll her own eyes.

Abra got quiet for a moment before adding, “Come on,



Pamina, turn me back into a man and let me put a little bit, or rather, a *big* bit of joy into your life.”

Pamina bit back a grin, no need to encourage his bad-boy behavior. Ever since Abra had crossed the boundaries while in human form, she'd been gifted—or rather cursed—with taking care of him until he could learn to control his urges. After all, as gods and goddesses they were supposed to be above reproach.

Ignoring him, she leaned out the window and perused the clouds. Her white cotton dress caught a slight breeze and ruffled around her ankles. “It looks like we’re going to a small town called Mason Creek, Connecticut.” She tapped Abra’s nose. “Plenty of mice for you to eat, I’m sure.”

Never one to enjoy her humor, Abra shivered. “Very funny. Caviar yes, mice no.” He twisted around, offering her his back.

Pamina narrowed her eyes and chuckled at her ornery friend. She peered deeper into the clouds, taking in the sight of the three young, jaded women who had unknowingly beckoned her services. Not only had the women been best friends since childhood, they also all owned and operated Styles for Living, Mason Creek’s bustling interior-design shop.

Pamina studied them on this beautiful morning as they window-shopped on Main Street. Dressed in black leather pants with knee high boots to match, Lindsay Bell, the tallest of the three, had an air of *bad girl* about her. She peered through the window of Toys4Gals, an adult-only toy store. Brown eyes wide, she pulled a long strand of chestnut-colored hair from her cheek and turned to face her two friends and business partners. “Like I said, just because we’ve sworn off men, certainly doesn’t mean we have to shut down the candy shop, girls.”

Tapping one perfectly manicured nail on the shop window, she pointed to an elongated, battery-operated

device. "Meet Bob," she said with a smirk. "He is going to be my newest best friend."

Pamina grinned at Lindsay's antics, noting that her smart mouth and sassy attitude completed the bad-girl package. Merging their minds as one, Pamina sifted through Lindsay's thoughts, learning that she had a habit of dating men who'd done little more than scrounge off her. Men who wouldn't know a hard day's work if it jumped up and bit them on their asses and who were more than happy to dip into her meager savings.

Anna Deveau raised one brow. "Bob?" she asked. Pamina turned her attention to the petite blonde. She took a moment to study her, gauging Anna's response to Lindsay's carefree sexual attitude. Anna worried her bottom lip, pushed her hands into her jeans pockets, and glanced up and down Main Street, seemingly embarrassed by the whole conversation.

"Bob stands for 'battery-operated boyfriend,'" Candace Steele piped up, perfect white teeth flashing in a smile. "I think I'll get one of those." Toying with her long dark ponytail, she went up on the balls of her gym shoes and pressed her nose to the glass. Her green eyes lit with curiosity. "I wonder if it comes with extra batteries." Then she added, "Now that I'm off men I'm going to need something to increase my heart rate and metabolism."

Lindsay snorted and rolled her eyes heavenward. "Come on, Candace. Not everything has to be about your triathlons. This toy is designed to give you an orgasm, not to help you run faster, or longer."

Candace winked at her friend. "Well, you know how I hate to peter out halfway through a race."

Pamina took a moment to sift through Candace's mind. It appeared the young athletic girl with a penchant for marathon sex attracted guys who were after her daddy's

connections and influence. They claimed to love her, but time and time again, Candace discovered otherwise.

“Um, we should go,” Anna squeaked out, color flooding her cheeks.

Lindsay twisted sideways and ruffled the lapels of Anna’s pristine white shirt. “You need to loosen up, girlfriend. Now that we’re all off men, you’re going to have to take matters into your own hands whether you like it or not.” Lindsay clicked her tongue and snapped her fingers. “And as my mother always said, when you want the job done right, you have to do it yourself.”

When Anna gave her friend a mortified look, Pamina surfed through her mind. Sweet romantic, Anna, a woman who, strangely enough, had a habit of attracting self-serving men. The men she had deemed boyfriends cared only about their own needs and desires, squashing her lifelong belief that she’d be swept off her feet by her very own Prince Charming and live happily ever after.

Pamina gave a resigned shake of her head and absent-mindedly stroked her cat’s black fur. She drew a deep breath and let it out slowly. “Honestly, it’s no wonder they’ve sworn off men, Abra.”

Considering the best approach to help these girls, she scanned Mason Creek and calculated her next move. When she came across an old, rundown Victorian house on the outskirts of town, a plan began to formulate, to take shape and pattern inside her mind.

Pamina reached outside her window and twisted a juicy red apple from the branch. Ah yes, the old house would provide the perfect setting for seduction. With that last thought in mind, she closed her eyes and bit into the apple, preparing herself for the shift. In the next instant, she reopened her lids and found herself standing on the sidewalk staring up at the old Victorian home.

It was time to pair each girl with their match and watch the sexual sparks fly.

With everything in place, she angled her head and glanced at a very disgruntled, very bedraggled, Abra. Much aggrieved, he tossed her a miffed look. Pamina resisted the urge to chuckle. Oops, she'd forgotten to warn him of the shift.

Before Abra had time to go to work on his tattered fur, she hastily smoothed down her white cotton dress and with a lighthearted bounce to her step said, "Come on, Abra. It's not time to be worrying about your appearance. We have a lot of work to do."

Nose crinkled in distaste, Lindsay Bell pushed open the car door and climbed from the passenger seat. She stepped to the curb, shaded the late-afternoon sun from her eyes and perused the huge, rundown Victorian home outside of town. The place looked like a designer's worst nightmare, or a designer's dream come true, depending on whom you were asking. Lips curled in aversion, Lindsay pinched her eyes shut and feigned a shiver.

Low-slung branches fringed the perimeter of the sunburnt yard, while unkempt vines coiled around the moss-laden veranda like snakes. White paint chips trickled from the tall wooden support posts and settled like snow on the faded blue deck. Overgrown shrubs, weeds, and fallen leaves camouflaged the long, insect-infested walkway. Crickets, grasshoppers and a few other unidentified pests scurried about in their fertile playground.

When Anna stepped onto the curb beside her, Lindsay angled her head to cast her a glance. "Are you sure this is the place?" She cut her hand through the air. "It doesn't look like anyone has lived here for years."

Anna furrowed her brow and nibbled on her bottom lip. She studied the paper in her hand, then read the rusty brass numbers dangling from the cedar shingles. "This is the address she gave."

"Let me see that." Without haste, Candace circled her Honda Civic, grabbed the paper and scanned it. "91 Oak Street." She looked at the house and, with an open hand, gestured toward the front door. Never one to waste precious time, she said, "Then I guess this is it, ladies. Shall we?"

Lindsay pivoted on the ball of her foot and followed. Her very conventional, very *so-not-her* pumps tapped a steady beat as she trailed behind Candace's long, athletic strides. She shifted uncomfortably in her business attire. God, she hated having to play dress-up when interviewing new clients. She much preferred her comfortable leather pants and knee-length boots. She turned to Anna, who kept pace beside her.

"What exactly did this woman say to you when she called yesterday?"

Anna smoothed her short blonde hair behind her ears, a familiar habit of hers. "Not much, just that she was interested in restoring the old Victorian house into an inn and that she wanted to see us ASAP. When I told her we had other clients before her..." Anna stopped to rub her thumb and index finger together, "...she made us an offer we couldn't refuse."

Lindsay dropped her hand from her forehead, giving her eyes time to adjust to the late-afternoon brightness, and then carefully climbed the dilapidated stairs. She tucked her flirty blue skirt around her knees, taking care not to touch the moldy weathered railings.

"Well, no one says we have to take the offer," Lindsay said, already deciding she'd rather pass on the contract. Pulling her toenails off with pliers would be less painful than taking this place from ordinary to extraordinary. They had enough work to last them until Christmas as it was. Exorbitant amounts of

money or not, Lindsay would rather decline. And she was pretty certain no one was going to change her mind on that point, obstinate witch that she was. Of course, they'd all have to consult with one another first and come to a unanimous decision.

Anna adjusted her leather briefcase over her shoulder and longingly ran her hands over the paint-chipped posts. "Are you kidding me, Lindsay? This old house is absolutely fantastic. A designer's gold mine. Just think what we could do to restore it to its natural state."

Lindsay pursed her lips and took a moment to consider things further. Hmm...maybe Anna was on to something. After practicing celibacy for the last two months, a project of this magnitude might help keep her thoughts off men and remedy all her sexual longings. Not that her thoughts were always on men, or sex, or men and sex, mind you. Nope. Not at all.

Hell, who was she kidding? Keeping her mind off men and sex was like nailing jelly to a wall.

The truth was, no matter how much she loved the feel of skin on skin, flesh on flesh, she didn't want to have anything more to do with those lazy, good-for-nothing bastards who were more than happy to separate her from her hard-earned money. Honestly, she didn't care one iota if she ever felt the weight of a man's body on hers, or his fingers caressing her body, his mouth massaging her breasts or the soft blade of his tongue between her quivering thighs.

Lindsay swallowed a tortured moan.

Too bad she wasn't into one-night stands. Sex without relationships. Now that really was the way to go.

Anna's voice pulled her back and helped marshal her thoughts. "I can't wait to dig in," Anna said, with bright-eyed enthusiasm.

Lindsay shook her head to clear it, turned her focus back

to housezilla and joined Candace on the landing. Anna came up behind her, her hand trailing lovingly over the wooden porch, her eyes glazing in heavenly bliss.

Despite herself, Lindsay smiled as she watched her friend in mute fascination. Sweet, adorable Anna. She'd been a dreamer since high school, a girl who believed in fairy tales and Prince Charming. Well, a girl who *used* to believe in fairy tales and Prince Charming. Until that last self-serving jerk she'd dated had finally broken her of that delusion. Despite having completely different views on life, Lindsay loved Anna with all her heart. Which was why she'd nearly ripped that last asshole a new one after he'd hurt her. No one hurt her girls and got away with it.

When all three reached the door, Candace raised her hand to knock. Before she had a chance, the big old door swung wide open. The rusty brass hinges creaked and moaned like a wounded animal.

“Good afternoon, ladies.”

“Good afternoon,” they all responded in kind.

After a round of handshakes and an exchange of names, they all fell silent. Even the resident insects stopped chirping. For a long moment the woman—Pamina, as she'd introduced herself—said nothing, she just stood there taking her time to peruse each girl in turn as though assessing them. They, too, did the same.

Lindsay's gaze panned the woman before them. Tall and gorgeous, with a knee-length dress hanging loosely over her perfect slim body, Pamina had flawless skin and mystical green eyes. Her long golden hair was haphazardly piled on her head like a halo, making her look angelic. Undoubtedly, the same 'do on Lindsay would have the hair police hunting her down with a bottle of hairspray and pair of scissors. But this woman, with her heart-shaped face and creamy complexion, could likely pull off bald—and make it fashionable.



As Lindsay scrutinized Pamina, her hand went to her windblown, temperamental curls and in that instant she made up her mind.

She hated her.

Those magnificent eyes of hers, however, continued to draw Lindsay's attention. They looked as though they could read her every secret, her every dark fantasy.

Lindsay shivered, pretty damn sure that her deepest darkest fantasies would offend this sweet woman's sensibilities.

Pamina broke the silence, waved a delicate hand. "Where are my manners? Please come in. I've made lemonade and apple muffins."

*Lemonade and apple muffins?*

"I've been waiting for you lovely and talented ladies."

*Lovely and talented?*

Lindsay planted her hands on her hips. Ah hell, how could she possibly hate someone so adorable, someone so considerate, and someone so bang-on with her observations?

The oak floorboards creaked with each step as they all followed her into the kitchen. Returning to professional mode, Lindsay analyzed the interior, admiring the large rooms with their high ceilings, and the gorgeous winding staircase. Taken by the home's inner beauty, her designer's eye lit with passion, and her mind began racing with a million ideas. As Candace and Anna seated themselves, she took an extra moment to study the home, envisioning it as a bustling Victorian inn. Interest piqued, she wondered what ideas Pamina had in mind for its restoration.

"I'm sure you're all wondering what restoration ideas I have in mind."

Lindsay narrowed her gaze. Not only was the woman perfect in every way imaginable, it now appeared she could read minds too. Lindsay was leaning toward hate again until

she caught the scent of freshly baked apple muffins. Yummy.

“You read my mind,” Lindsay piped up, joining Candace and Anna at the long table.

Once they were all seated, Pamina pulled a fresh tray of muffins from the oven and handed them out. “Please enjoy.” Without preamble she picked up her fat black cat, took a seat at the head of the table and got right to the point. “As I mentioned to Anna on the phone, I’m interested in turning this place into an inn.”

Lindsay mulled the idea over again, still certain they’d decline the offer, especially with all the work piling up on their desks. They had quite a few contracted jobs that just could not wait.

Redirecting her focus, Lindsay bit into her delicious muffin and moaned, offering Pamina only half her attention.

“An inn for lovers,” Pamina added, a mischievous glint in her eye.

*Lovers?*

Lindsay chewed, her interest picking up.

“With fantasy-inspired theme rooms.”

*Fantasy-inspired theme rooms?*

Lindsay choked. *O-kay*, now that gained her full concentration.

Was the sweet, angelic woman talking about *sexually* inspired fantasy theme rooms? Obviously she’d been too busy making love to her muffin to understand correctly.

Before she could ask, Pamina clarified, “Yes, sexually inspired fantasy theme rooms.”

“You’re kidding?” Lindsay sputtered, glancing at her coworkers. Candace leaned forward, grinning, anxiously awaiting the details. Eyes wide, Anna’s mouth gaped open, color creeping up her neck.

“No, I’m not kidding.” Pamina brushed a golden wisp of

hair from her eyes. “What I want from you ladies is for each of you to take one of the bedrooms and using your deepest, darkest imagination, design a lover’s fantasy theme room that would appeal to your sensibilities. Your budget is as unlimited as your creativity.”

Lindsay’s mind raced. Leather wrist cuffs, tether restraints, pleasure whips, nipple clamps. What a wickedly delicious idea for an inn.

Candace spoke up. “Our room can be anything we desire?”

Pamina nodded. “Yes.”

Hell yeah!

Lindsay fought a grin. She could hardly believe this woman was going to pay her to create the perfect BDSM room, something she’d always longed to do for herself, but never had the space in her small condo, or the funds needed to purchase the equipment. Not to mention the right man to share it with.

Lindsay arched one brow. This was like her designer dream job come true. “Are you serious?” Surely to God the woman was messing with her mind.

Pamina nodded again. “One hundred percent.”

Hot damn! She was serious. One hundred percent.

That settled it. She loved this woman.

Pamina waited a moment, as though letting them digest the information. “So what do you say, ladies, are you interested in the contract?”

Okay, so maybe the other jobs *could* wait.

Heck, if she wasn’t getting any hot monkey loving, at least she could live vicariously through her imagination and let other couples enjoy the fruits of her labor.

“Well...?” Pamina asked.

Without consulting with her partners, Lindsay blurted, “We’ll take it.”

**H**ands in her pockets, Lindsay walked the perimeter of the upstairs bedroom and wondered why Pamina had chosen such a small room for her to decorate. How she was going to fit an eclectic mix of bondage equipment in such a tight space, she'd never know. She angled her head, envisioning the design and layout. Damn, it just wasn't going to work. The king-sized headboard alone would eat up half the space. Not to mention the padded bench and love swing that she'd ordered earlier that morning. Lord, if two people engaged in a little lighthearted sexual play in such cramped quarters, someone was liable to put an eye out.

Just then Pamina's fat black cat, Abra, sauntered into the room. Purring, he jumped onto the windowsill and with his piercing feline eyes, watched her every movement. His low purr grew louder and louder, as though demanding her undivided attention.

Lindsay stepped up to him. "Okay, okay." Good Lord, how the heck was she supposed to concentrate while he made such a racket? After a couple of quick strokes of his silky fur, she crossed her arms and turned her attention back to the

drab walls, considering her options. Pushing away from the window, she trailed her hand along one papered wall until she came across a tattered seam. Using a long manicured nail, she worked the edge free and ripped, disheartened to find six or more layers underneath. It'd be a bitch to peel, but at least only one of the four walls had paper on it. The other three were painted in a brownish yellow color that reminded her of doggy droppings. Ugh. It had to go. Lindsay envisioned deep, dark earthy tones as a backdrop to soft sconce lighting and mirrored walls and ceilings.

Pondering the task before her, she joined Abra on the windowsill. Although she'd never had an affinity for cats, and this one actually kind of creeped her out with his inquisitive eyes, she scooped him into her arms and sized him up.

Feigning exhaustion after lifting him, she drew a ragged breath. "Good Lord, Abra, I think we're going to have to talk to Candace about getting you on a regular exercise program. Maybe you could go with her on one of her runs." Lindsay reached under his belly and grabbed a fistful of fat cat. "Either that or you're going to have to get out and find yourself a girlfriend and work off some of this extra padding."

Ignoring her, he nestled his chubby little body into her arms, where he lazily proceeded to groom himself. Lindsay shook her head as he thoroughly disregarded her.

Typical male.

Shifting her thoughts to the task at hand, Lindsay inspected the room once again. Her gaze settled on the only piece of furniture, an ugly, yellow oversized recliner, which practically took up the whole space. That had to go too.

"What do you think, Abra?" She cut her hand through the air. "Too small?" Abra purred and nestled his face against her chest. His whiskers tickled her skin as his rough tongue lapped at her cleavage like it was a saucer of milk. Startled, she leapt from the windowsill and gasped.

“Whoa there, big guy.” She eased his head away, feeling a little perverted at the way her nipples tightened. Okay, obviously it had been far too long since a man had given her breasts a tongue bath.

When she met Abra’s blue almond-shaped eyes, his tongue darted out to lick his lips, and she could have sworn he just winked at her. “You really are a typical male, aren’t you? One-track mind, straight for the milk jugs.”

“Will you never learn?”

Pamina’s voice sounded at the doorway. As if he’d been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, or rather his face buried in Lindsay’s breasts, Abra jumped to the floor and scurried into the hall.

Pamina arched a brow, her lips thinned to a fine line. “Not so fast, pal.” She scooped him up before he could dart down the staircase and cast him a look that suggested he was in all kinds of trouble. For a moment Lindsay pondered their strange relationship.

Suddenly someone stepped up behind Pamina and gained Lindsay’s full attention. A very big, very brawny, very slurpalicious someone. And no longer was Pamina and Abra’s strange relationship of any interest to her.

Pamina moved farther into the room, the mysterious stranger shadowing her movements. Captivated by Pamina’s new friend, Lindsay scraped her teeth over her bottom lip and watched his strong, athletic body move with self-confidence and assuredness. When he circled Pamina and came around to face Lindsay, their gazes connected and locked. In that moment something sparked between them and a weird tingling began in her bloodstream.

Lindsay didn’t believe in love at first sight, nor did she believe in fate or destiny, but this guy, wow, this guy with his mesmerizing blue eyes could suck her under like a tsunami wave and make her believe in anything.

He smiled and Lindsay's pulse leapt in her throat. Her lascivious, sex-deprived body immediately shifted into overdrive. One seductive look from him had her hormones firing at jet speed in record time.

His long athletic gait closed the space between them. As he stood before her, she tipped her head and pulled his spicy, panty-soaking aroma into her lungs, letting it wrap around her, letting it arouse all her senses. Lord, the man just oozed sexuality and testosterone.

Her gaze panned the length of him, stopping to inspect his broad shoulders, trim waist and rock-hard thighs. She wondered for a second if anything else under those snug jeans was rock hard. Damned if she didn't want to find out.

*Whew!*

*Had the temperature in the room suddenly skyrocketed?*

Once again her hungry gaze traveled back to his face, taking in his dark features, unkempt shoulder-length hair, with bangs that swished to the side, square jaw and unshaven face. The guy had bad boy written all over him. Lindsay knew his type well. A Casanova who was, undoubtedly, so very, very good. Just the kind of guy she knew better than to get involved with.

Despite that, lust rose to the surface, clamoring for attention and all she could think of was men. Sex. Men and sex. And not necessarily in that order. Forget nailing jelly to the wall. She wanted this guy to nail *her* to the wall.

Right here.

Right now.

Of course, this is what she got for going without sex for the last two months. It appeared that a quick trip back to Toys4Gals to pick up extra batteries and maybe even a few new gadgets was definitely in order. She made a mental note to put that at the top of her to-do list.

Mr. Slurpalicious gave her a sexy, predatory smile that

screamed of the big bad wolf—and of even bigger and badder things they could do together. Libidinous slut that she was, she pondered for a moment if he would gobble her up like a frosted cupcake. Or if he'd lay her out like a buffet and take his time to savor her like a rich, decadent dessert.

Yummy.

After a thorough inspection of his tall, brawny body, her gaze went to his big hands. Damn, there was just something about a man's hands that got her juices flowing like a broken dam. She noted that he had a working man's hands, different from the soft, pampered hands of the good-for-nothing bastards she had a habit of attracting. Lindsay afforded herself a minute to visualize how those rough, callused palms of his would feel on her naked flesh, on her breasts, between her thighs. Oh yeah! She shivered. Almost violently.

A man like him could make her abandon her vow to stay away from men. She furrowed her brow and sifted through her memories. Why again was it that she'd made that vow?

When Pamina touched his muscular arm and he turned, giving her his undivided attention, a weird pang of jealousy cut through Lindsay.

"I'd like you to meet Lindsay Bell," Pamina said. "She's the brilliant interior designer I hired to turn this space into a BDSM room for lovers."

Lips curved up at the corners, he angled his head, clearly intrigued. "Oh yeah?"

Heat arced between them as he stepped closer and held his arm out. Her body responded to his proximity. Pleasure raced through her and she became hyper-aware of dampness between her thighs. Had she been wearing panties, they'd have been soaked.

She attempted to rein in her desire, to pull herself together and abandon her lusty thoughts, she really did. But so far her efforts were proving futile.



His sensual mouth slanted and the gleam in his eyes held all sorts of promises. "A BDSM room. How interesting. I look forward to seeing the end results."

She made one more attempt to gather control over her wayward thoughts, but his deep sensuous voice shattered all her efforts. In fact his rich tone sent her tortured, hormonal body into convulsions. Her nipples tightened painfully, heat and hunger lapped at her thighs.

It suddenly occurred to her he was waiting for a handshake. With little finesse, she thrust her arm forward and slipped her hand inside his. His huge palm practically swallowed hers up. As her flesh absorbed his heat, her libido roared to life in a way it never had before. Christ, she knew she had a healthy sexual appetite, but the sudden cravings for this man both frightened and excited her.

She schooled her features into polite interest while her hormones danced to the beat of that eighties AC/DC song "You Shook Me All Night Long".

"I'm Lindsay," she said.

He grinned and shot her a wolfish look. Assuring her, that with a huff and a puff he could blow her house down. Except it wasn't a house Lindsay was interested in him blowing. Damn, this celibacy thing was definitely playing havoc with her body...and her mind. She needed to get her thoughts off sex and on to the conversation at hand.

"I'm Lindsay," she repeated.

"I know," he said. "Lindsay Bell."

"How do you know my name?" Looking for a distraction, anything to get her mind off Mr. Sexy Pants, Lindsay grabbed the overstuffed chair and began to slide it toward the doorway. Damn, the thing was heavy.

"Pamina already introduced you." His slow smile licked over her thighs and filled her mind with wild and wicked images.

Right! Damn. She was making a total ass of herself, which was something she never did. Christ, no man had ever had that effect on her before. She'd always maintained a cool, in-charge demeanor.

She strived for normalcy and tried not to stumble over her words. "And you are?" she asked, expecting his name to begin with big and end in wolf. *Expecting?* Okay, okay, maybe *hoping* was a better choice of words.

"I'm Brad Caldwell."

Damn.

His gaze roamed over her and his deep, big-bad-wolf tone sent shivers skittering down her spine, making her suddenly wish she was draped in a red cape and covered in icing.

"Pamina asked me to stop by to chat with you."

"Oh?" Lindsay turned to face Pamina, heavy chair forgotten.

Pamina waved one delicate hand through the air. "I thought Brad could take down that wall and open this room up for you."

Lindsay glanced at the papered wall and considered that option. Not a bad idea. "That would certainly beat the hell out of peeling all that paper off."

Face locked in concentration, Brad stepped up to the wall and ran his fingers over the aged paper. Lindsay's stomach tightened and her knees weakened as she envisioned him running his hands over her body just like that.

Oh my!

Common sense dictated that she decline the offer and make do with the small room. Yeah, that's exactly what she'd do. Decline Pamina's suggestion to take down the wall and just make the best out of the cramped quarters. Because having him around for the next week or so would simply distract her and play havoc with her hormones. And since

she'd sworn off men, it was a distraction she didn't want or need. No way. No how.

Brad turned to face her. "So, what do you say, Lindsay? Would you like me to hang around and take down that wall for you?"

*Hang around.*

*Take down the wall.*

*Strip her naked.*

*Have his wicked way with her.*

With casual nonchalance, he rolled one broad shoulder. "I could even help you out with the bondage equipment, if you'd like."

Help her out? As in try it out with her?

Hell yeah, she liked.

Brad picked up the overstuffed chair and with little effort moved it into the hallway. "You know, in case you need a strong arm to lift things." His words said one thing but the heat in his eyes told an entirely different story. One that could easily get her into trouble with another bad boy. She quickly reminded herself why she'd sworn off sweet-talking playboys in the first place.

"So what do you say?" he asked again as her mind reeled.

Say no, say no.

"Yes."

Damn!

Brad blew out a breath he hadn't even realized he was holding. Sure he was relieved Lindsay had hired him. The extra funds would come in handy to help pay for his medical-school prep classes. But, he had to admit, there was one other big reason he was pleased he'd gotten the job.

And that reason was Lindsay Bell.

There was something about her. The minute their eyes

met and locked, heat simmered between them. It was a heat unlike anything he'd experienced before. A heat that he was definitely interested in exploring further. He suspected she felt it too. In fact, the way her eyes devoured him with hunger, he was most certain of it.

Lindsay Bell, smart and beautiful, with her curvaceous body, sassy outfit, and desire to create a lovers BDSM room, had bad girl written all over her.

He knew her type all too well. She was the kind of girl who'd undoubtedly see him as someone she'd be interested in delving into a brief, no-strings affair with. He'd come to expect that from women.

He knew people were quick to judge him and dub him a go-nowhere kind of guy just because he worked as a handyman in the family business—a steady, respectable business that had been handed down in the Caldwell family from generation to generation. People really had no idea what went into running such a successful operation.

Even though Brad enjoyed the labor-intensive work, he'd always had a yearning to break away from the pack and do something different with his life. Unfortunately no one in his family, or in his community, had supported his dream to become a doctor. They all thought it was ridiculous really, and even the night classes and correspondence courses he'd taken over the years to get his science degree didn't seem to sway their minds. The women he knew assumed because he swung a hammer, he was all brawn and no brains. They saw him as a great guy to have sex with, and nothing more.

Naturally everyone expected him to follow in his father's footsteps and take over his handyman business. After his father had passed away during Brad's high school years, and his mother had taken sick, Brad had done just that, needing the funds to support his two younger siblings and help take care of household finances. Sure he had to postpone medical

school, but that didn't mean he'd given up his dream, not at all. It just meant he had to work extra hours outside his regular job to get enough funds to pay for his prep course.

Which had led him to Mason Creek.

To Lindsay.

He took a moment to study her. Rays of sunlight streamed through the windowpane and fell over her lush body. Her chestnut hair looked wild and uncontrolled, a little like her, he suspected. Dressed in tight-fitting jeans and a low-cut silky top, his body registered every delicious detail of the woman before him. Her natural feminine scent saturated the small bedroom. Brad inhaled, pulling it into his lungs and letting it arouse all his senses.

When Pamina touched Lindsay's arm, Lindsay turned to her. Brad's body hummed and his blood pressure soared as he glimpsed Lindsay's gorgeous, curvy backside.

Damned if she wasn't the most perfect woman he'd set eyes on.

But even if Brad wanted more with Lindsay, he saw the way she looked at him, the same way every other woman had looked at him. He knew if they hooked up, she'd only be in it for the ride. Not that he had anything against the ride, mind you. He didn't. Hell, he loved the ride. He was a healthy, red-blooded American male after all. But the truth was, he wanted more from a woman. After years of searching for that special someone, he'd given up hope in finding his perfect match. One who'd accepted him for who he really was, a small-town boy with brawn *and* brains. A woman who wanted him for more than just a quick roll in the sack and one who supported his dream to become a doctor.

He leaned back against the doorjamb and watched Lindsay discuss her decorating ideas with Pamina. Her face lit with excitement, and her dark eyes were animated as she described the layout and furniture placement. Her energy and

creative insight impressed him. In fact, he might have just met her, but there were already a lot of things about Lindsay that impressed him.

And for some unfathomable reason, he suspected if he went for a quick heated ride with her, she'd turn his life upside down without even trying.