

On His Naughty List

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Career-driven Lainey Stewart finally has the position she's worked so hard for but finds herself along and feeling empty at Christmastime. Escaping her work's holiday party, she attempts to forget what—and who—she gave up for her all-important job.

When Ty Sinclair finds Lainey in the hotel bar, it takes little effort to seduce her up to his room. After a passionate encounter, Lainey bolts. But one time in a random hotel room isn't enough for Ty. He isn't about to let Lainey go without a fight and goes after her, determined to make her his...for good, this time.

To Mom—thank you for always supporting and encouraging me to follow my dreams. And, to you and Dad, for always making Christmas the best time of year, no matter what.

To the readers out there looking for a quick, hot holiday story—this one's for you. Happy holidays! And thank you for reading.

To Chris and Kris—sooo happy the two of you are in my corner. Seriously. You rock. Thank you for everything.

And, to Brian. Always

Chapter One

Lainey Stewart swirled the tiny plastic sword around the margarita glass, watching the watered down drink swish. She bit back the sigh that welled up. She should be happy. Really freaking happy. Here it was, two days before Christmas, and everything she'd worked so hard for...she had. Her boss had officially announced her promotion to the entire company at the Christmas party—the promotion that had come with a corner office and a nice bump in salary. So, happy should definitely be on the menu. Instead, feeling empty and unfulfilled, she'd snuck out of the party and now sat at the hotel bar, nursing a drink. Not exactly how she'd pictured this moment.

Her mother would tell her that she needed a man in her life. Lainey snorted at the thought. The last thing in the world she needed was a man. She'd tried that one before, and it had brought nothing but hurt and tears. Getting laid, on the other hand, might just solve her problems. Or ease stress of dealing with them. Letting a man into her bed wasn't the same as letting one into her heart. She shook her head. Hell, she didn't even know where to look for a bed mate. Definitely not at work; and since she spent most of her waking hours on the job, her dilemma was far from solved.

Maybe she just needed a new vibrator. That was nearly as good as the real thing. Sure, she wouldn't feel the warmth of being skin to skin, or the slick wetness of a man's mouth on her breasts, the nip of his teeth on her nipples. The vibe couldn't cover her body with delicious weight or grip her hair as it slid in and out of her pussy... Oh, who the hell was she kidding? It was nowhere near the real thing.

She lifted the glass to her lips and sipped, debating whether to have another. Driving home wasn't an issue. She'd taken a cab to the local hotel where the company holiday party was being held, and would call for another when she decided to leave. Or she could even splurge and just get a room.

“Hey, Lainey, why you sitting all by your lonesome?” Carrie, her co-worker, wound an arm around her shoulders and leaned heavily on her. “C'mon back to the party. Music's playing, and Scott is wanting to dance with you.” She waggled her eyebrows.

Lainey rolled her eyes. Scott? Not in this lifetime. He was a sleaze of the highest order, and she'd rather stab herself in the eyes than get close to him.

“Nah. I think I’m going to head out in a minute.” She smiled.

“All right, but if you change your mind, you know where to find us.” With that, Carrie headed out of the crowded bar.

Lainey drained the rest of her drink and tried to block out the noise around her. With a sigh, she lifted her hand to signal for her bill.

“Enjoying yourself?”

A low, husky male voice slid through the din and along her nerves, awakening each one. Though he didn’t touch her, the man behind her was close enough Lainey could feel heat radiating from him. She lowered her hand and turned, intent on smiling and blowing off him, despite the slither of warmth low in her belly. All from a voice in the crowd. Damn, she was desperate.

Words died on her tongue when her gaze met deep blue eyes framed with insanely long lashes. Her stomach tightened, and she couldn’t grasp a thought. The corner of his mouth quirked up slightly as if he knew he’d rendered her speechless. He reached up and brushed the hair off her forehead before leaning over.

“Can I buy you a drink?” His breath tickled her cheek.

Still unable to speak, she nodded and turned to find the bartender in front of them.

“Uh,” she struggled to find her voice, “a sh-shot of tequila, please.” She prayed silently that the liquor would be enough to calm her nerves. She needed to get a hold of herself.

“The same,” the man said, shifting until his chest pressed against Lainey’s back.

She closed her eyes against the shudder that swept through her at the contact. She imagined running her palms along the muscles of that chest, of leaning over and sliding her tongue along his neck.

When the bartender set the shot glasses in front of them, she snatched up hers and removed the lime wedge from the rim. Her heart stuttered when the man moved beside her and took her free hand. He brought her hand up to his mouth and slowly ran his tongue along the sensitive skin on the inside of her wrist. Lainey’s lips parted slightly, and her breathing sped up. He met her gaze as he grabbed the nearby shaker and shook salt on the damp spot.

“You first,” he said.

Her hand shook as she lifted it to her lips. She licked the salt away and quickly tossed back the tequila. As the liquid burned its way down her throat, she bit into the lime, grimacing

slightly at the sourness.

“My turn,” he murmured, his eyes on her mouth.

Again, he grasped her hand and turned it palm up. Dipping his head, he settled his mouth on her pulse. Lainey’s eyes nearly rolled to the back of her head when he gently sucked the sensitive skin. The pull of his mouth sent spears of desire through her, and her clit throbbed. Lainey pressed her thighs together.

He pulled away slightly and sprinkled on the salt. He flicked his tongue and swept away the tiny grains away. He downed the shot and, instead of sucking on the lime, leaned forward to take her mouth.

Lainey moved to face him fully as his tongue coaxed its way past her lips. The slick invasion pulled a groan from deep inside her. He stepped closer, wedging his hips between her legs. Her dress rode up, exposing the tops of her thigh-highs. She broke away with a gasp and placed one hand on his chest as she pulled at the wayward material with the other. God, she couldn’t be doing this. Here, in the middle of a bar. What if one of her co-workers walked in? Or heaven forbid, her boss? As much as she’d love to squeeze up next to this man and have his sweet tongue back in her mouth, she had to keep a clear head.

He settled his large hand over hers on her thigh, and she lifted her gaze to meet his. The desire clearly evident in the blue depths took her breath away. *Oh God...clear head...clear head.*

The man leaned forward until his lips hovered just above hers. “What’s the matter, baby?”

“N-n-nothing. I just can’t... I mean, I need...” ...*you*, she finished mentally, and nearly cried in frustration.

He straightened and glanced over her shoulder before nodding. “Come on.” Wrapping his fingers around hers, he guided her off the bar stool. Lainey turned her head and watched the bartender walk to the other side of the bar.

“What? I need to pay my tab,” she protested.

“Taken care of. Come on,” he said again, and began pulling her through the crowd toward the hotel lobby.

She tried to get hold of her thoughts, and he led her past the front desk to the bank of elevators. After pressing the up button, he drew her to him and settled his hands on her ass. His fingers kneaded as he brushed his lips back and forth against her temple.

Lainey slid her arms around his waist and closed her eyes. *What am I doing?*

“You’re coming up to my room,” he murmured.

Lainey gasped, realizing she’d spoken aloud. The elevator dinged, and the doors slid open. He backed them into the empty car, not easing the embrace. He reached behind her and pressed a button, and the doors closed.

“I’m going to fuck you. Long and hard.” He trailed his lips down to her ear. Moisture pooled between Lainey’s thighs, and her breathing quickened “Then…” he nipped the sensitive lobe, “...I’m going to do it all over again.”

Oh God, oh God...

He shifted and pressed a hard kiss on her mouth. When the doors opened, he released her then grabbed her hand. Lainey struggled to keep up as he strode down the hallway. She bumped into his back when he halted. He pulled a keycard out and unlocked the door then, holding it open, he gestured her inside.

Her entire body shook as she walked past him into the hotel room. She stopped and stared at the king-sized bed. It was unmade, ruffled. Would the sheets, the pillows, smell like him? Or—her stomach clenched—would they smell like another woman? The thought that he’d done this with someone else actually sickened her, though she knew she had no right to feel possessive.

Strong arms wrapped around her waist and pulled her back against hard heat. The length of his cock pressed against her lower back, just above her ass. Her gaze still on the bed, her thoughts dark and moody, she rubbed against him and was rewarded with a deep, drawn out groan.

Gripping her hips, he turned her to face him and lowered his head. She closed her eyes and tilted her face up, anticipation fluttering through her. But the kiss didn’t come. She opened her eyes and jolted at the close up view of his stunning face—the brilliant eyes, the stubble darkening his jaw, the full lips she longed to taste.

“Why the frown, baby?” he asked softly.

Confused, she shook her head then, steeling her resolve, slid her hands into his hair. She gripped the silky strands and pulled. When his mouth met hers, she darted her tongue out and whimpered as his flavor played along her senses. His tongue met hers, and a slippery dance began. God, she missed this. Missed the tasting, the teasing, the exploring. Had she even for one second thought a vibe came remotely close to this? Foolish, foolish girl.

He ran his hands up her back and found the zipper of her dress. Lainey tried to focus on the kiss as he slowly lowered the tab, exposing her flesh inch by agonizing inch. Her head spun as he fucked her mouth, gliding his tongue in, out and around. He continued to torment her deliciously as he lowered the straps of her dress, forcing her to release his hair and bring her arms to her sides. The material slithered down her body and fell to the floor.

He nipped her bottom lip then stepped back. His gaze traveled from her face downward. Her nipples peaked beneath her strapless bra, and she knew her stomach jiggled when she took in a deep breath, but resisted the urge to cover herself with her hands. She might not be model beautiful, but she worked hard for her body and was determined to stand proudly...sexily...in the silky black bra and thong, lace-topped thigh high stockings and heels.

He lifted his eyes, met her stare. Pure male appreciation glinted in the blue depths and—she snuck a look downward—filled his pants nicely.

“On the bed,” he bit out.

Lainey stumbled slightly as she moved to sit on the edge of the mattress. She reached down to remove her shoes.

“No.” The word, though said quietly, echoed through the room and she froze. “Leave them on.”

She didn’t say anything as she straightened. Honestly, she didn’t know if she could even form a single word. Everything in her was so focused on him—his body, his voice, his heated look—and aroused was too pale a description for what she was feeling. She ached for him—a long forgotten sensation.

He gripped the hem of his shirt and peeled it off, exposing hard abs and chiseled chest. Lainey licked her lips and watched, entranced, as he toed off his shoes and removed his socks. He pulled a foil square from his pocket and held it between his fingers as he worked the button of his jeans. He shoved the pants and boxers over his hips and down his legs then kicked them to side.

She clenched the sheet beneath her at the sight before her. He stood a moment, bare and motionless, before tearing open the packet and rolling the condom onto his hard length. Lainey could hardly stand it. She wanted him on her. In her. Now. She opened her mouth to tell him just that but stopped when he shook his head.

“Shhh.” He stepped forward and pressed a finger to her lips. She flicked her tongue along

the digit, reveling, relishing the rough texture. “Lay back,” he ordered and knelt before her.

He ran his hands from her ankles to her knees then pushed them apart. Lainey leaned back, supporting herself on her elbows, unable to look away from him. Leaning forward until his nose was against her silk-covered mound, he inhaled deeply.

“Hmmm,” he hummed, his eyes drifting closed for a moment. Then he lifted his gaze to meet hers. “Are you wet for me?”

“I-uh—” She pulled in a ragged breath. “Yes.”

He smiled and hooked a finger along beneath the edge of her panties by her inner thigh—so close to where she wanted him to touch. She pulsed her hips upwards, hoping he’d take the hint. He wiggled his finger farther beneath the scrap of material, closer and closer to her wet heat, but not quite enough.

“Please,” she choked out, desperate to be filled. With his cock, his finger, anything. She cried out in protest when he pulled his finger away. He chuckled as he gripped the material and pulled it down her legs. Once the garment was tossed aside, he lifted her legs, draped them over his shoulders and, without warning, covered her clit with his mouth and sucked.

The climax hit her, and she fell back fully. She could do nothing but succumb to the sensations crashing through her body. He continued to pull on her swollen, throbbing nub. Every muscle tensed as pleasure—pure, mindless pleasure—skated across every nerve. A scream climbed up her throat, but all that escaped was a series of whimpers. Never had she come so fast and so violently.

He climbed up her body, an intent look set on his features. Lainey tried to will herself to move, to do something...and failed. His mouth covered hers, and he thrust his tongue inside. Her arousal burst in her mouth, tangy and sweet at the same time.

“How long has it been?” He peppered kisses along her jaw then back to her mouth. “Hmmm? How long since you came that hard? Weeks? Months?” He buried a hand in her hair, wrapped the dark curls around his fist. His cock bumped against her slick folds. “Years?”

“God...” she moaned into his mouth. She should be pissed, annoyed at the very least, at his arrogant attitude, but all she wanted was more. That word swirled dizzily around her head.
More...

He reached between them as his other hand flexed in her hair. Grasping his cock, he rubbed the head over her pussy, her arousal easing his movements. When he positioned himself

at her entrance, her body finally cooperated, and she lifted her hips, urging him to take her.

He eased slowly inside, stretching, filling her. Shifting his hand from the base of his erection, he pressed the pad of his thumb to her clit. Her channel tightened in response.

“Ooooooh,” she drawled and wrapped her legs around his hips.

“Do you dream about this?” he rasped in her ear. “Fantasize about being filled like this?” He withdrew and slammed back into her. “Fucked like this?”

She gripped his shoulders, nails scoring the skin as each brutal stroke hit her swollen clit. It was too much...just too much. But she couldn't bring herself to ask him to stop. She still wanted more. She wanted to be pushed to her limit. How much could she take? She did fantasize about this, damn him. About being taken, used, but also given such pleasure.

She nearly fell apart when he tightened his grip on her hair and pulled her head back. Lowering his head, he licked, sucked, nibbled along the sensitive skin of her neck.

“So fucking hot, so tight,” he murmured. “Perfect.”

He quickened his strokes and his muscles tightened as he pummeled into her. She knew he was close...and so was she. Tension coiled low in her belly, a teasing promise of pleasure to come.

His hand tight in her hair, he turned her face and kissed her. Hard. Scorching. Conquering. And she fell. He swallowed her scream as she climaxed. Her pussy spasmed around his cock again and again, and waves of ecstasy swept through her body. He wrenched his mouth from hers and, with a guttural cry, emptied inside her. She squeezed her eyes shut against the myriad sensations pounding, pulsating through every inch of her.

She ran her hands over his sweat slick shoulders as he slumped atop her. Lainey relished the weight pressing her into the mattress, the heat he exuded. After a few minutes, he lifted off her and stood. When he strode into the bathroom without a word, panic overwhelmed Lainey. What the hell had she just done? She scrambled off the bed, wiggled into her panties before donning her dress. As she struggled with the zipper, she moved toward the door slowly, quietly. She needed to get her coat from the coat-check downstairs and call a cab from the front desk. Would he come after her? She shook her head and snorted. Why would he? He'd gotten what he wanted, hadn't he?

Zipper up, she reached for the door handle but froze when his low voice floated on the air.

“You really don’t think I’m going to let you walk away again, do you, Lain?”

Chapter Two

Lainey turned from the door stiffly. "Please, Ty, don't."

Ty Sinclair sighed in frustration but pushed it aside. He crossed the room to stand in front of her and cupped her face with both hands. His chest ached when he saw tears well in her dark brown eyes. "Don't what?"

"Don't make this...difficult." She closed her eyes a moment then met his gaze.

"Difficult," he repeated. "I want to talk, baby, that's all."

She gave a short laugh. "Right. That's why we just... No, I don't think talking was on the agenda at all. I don't know why you're here, but if you wanted to talk, we could have done that downstairs. Hell, we could have done that anytime in the last, oh, year and a half."

"Dammit, Lain." He dropped his hands and stepped back.

"What? I don't see or hear from you then suddenly, you're picking me up in hotel bar?"

"Oh yeah, and you were protesting," he snapped. Fuck, this was not how this was supposed to be going. Not by a long shot.

"Could you put some clothes on?" she asked quietly, her gaze over his shoulder.

"Nope. I'm perfectly comfortable."

"Why are you here?" She lifted her chin, though he caught a slight tremble that belied her cold tone.

"For you," he responded simply.

"For what? Sex? Ty, you never had any trouble in that department. Surely you didn't have to come here to get laid."

Cursing under his breath, he stalked away, pacing the floor. "It's not about sex, and you damn well know it. We need to talk and settle some things."

"I think things were settled a while ago."

Her harsh tone had him turning to face her. "I went out of the country and when I got back, you were gone. All I had was a letter. A fucking *letter*! You 'needed time, space'."

"If you wanted to talk so bad, you have a funny way of showing it. A year and a half, Ty." Her voice broke. "After a while, I figured you were done with me."

"Oh for fuck's sake!" He threw his hands in the air. "*You* walked away; *you* told me not to come after you."

“Yes, but I didn’t expect you to lis—” She clamped her mouth shut and crossed her arms under her breasts.

Ty narrowed his eyes. “Wait, you’re pissed because I *didn’t* come after you?”

She shook her head. “Why now?”

He blew out an exasperated breath. How the hell could he explain he’d been biding his time, checking up on her the best he could, waiting for the right moment? Waiting for her to find whatever it was she’d been looking for when she’d walked out. When he’d heard about her upcoming promotion, he figured that was it. She was successful in her own right and had worked damned hard to get where she was. But when he’d seen her sitting at the hotel bar, instead of in the actual party with her co-workers, she’d looked so freaking unhappy.

Well, he’d wiped the frown off her face. His gaze dropped to her mouth. For a little while, at least. He crossed back to stand in front of her. Placing a hand on each cheek, he leaned forward, but before he could touch her lips, she edged away.

Shaking her head, she reached behind her for the door knob. “I can’t do this again.”

Wrenching the door open, she bolted out of the room. Ty sighed and walked to the bed. Flopping down on the mattress, he closed his eyes as Lainey’s scent wafted up, enveloped him.

“Well, fuck.”

“Well, you can hardly blame her.”

Ty glared at his friend, Kyle Reynolds, and set his coffee mug down with a clunk. “Are you fucking kidding me?”

“Ty,” Jennifer, Kyle’s wife, and Lainey’s best friend, chided—for his language, no doubt — as she sat next to her husband. “You show up out of the blue after so long. How exactly did you expect her to react?”

“Not by walking away,” he snapped. “Though why should it surprise me? It’s what she did before.”

“She had good reason to then, or at the very least she believed she did,” Jennifer said.

“And you still aren’t going to tell, are you?” A little insight into what was in Lainey’s head would help him figure out how to approach her now that things had gone to shit.

“Hell no! I’m already on shaky ground because I didn’t tell her you were back.” She lifted a brow. “Maybe things would have gone better last night if I had.”

“No one likes I told you so’s, Jen,” he said.

“Well, I *did* tell you!” she protested. “And what was the result of your little surprise plan? She ran in the other direction as soon as she saw you. Smooth move.”

Well, she hadn’t exactly run right away, but he wasn’t sharing those details. His cock stirred as he thought of the night before, even as his heart ached remembering her walking out. *God, what a clusterfuck.*

“You have to give her time, honey.” Jennifer reached over and squeezed his hand.

“I’ve given her time,” he pointed out, tightly. “Over a year’s worth.”

Staying away, letting Lainey go, had gutted him. The only thing that kept him going was being able to talk to Kyle and Jennifer about how she was doing, knowing she was okay. He could have gone without the updates on her social life, but he’d gotten twisted pleasure out of the fact no guy had gotten past date one with her. That had to mean something, surely.

“I think once she knows that you’re not contracting internationally anymore,” Jennifer said, “she’ll be more likely to listen to what you have to say. It’s a difficult position to be in, watching the one you love jet off to dangerous places. Trust me, I know.” She glanced over at her husband.

Ty and Kyle had both worked as security consultants for years. Kyle had left the job almost three years before when he and Jennifer married. Ty regretted not following his friend’s example earlier. He’d continued because the money had been good—hell, better than good—but if that’s what had cost him Lainey...

“That’s why she walked out? Because of the job?”

Jennifer just smiled. Stubborn ass woman. The phone ringing prevented him from pushing the issue. As his wife rose to answer it, Kyle grinned.

“Not going to get her to say anything, my friend.”

Ty sighed. “Damn it.”

“Oh, he’s back in town?” Jennifer cringed as she held the phone to her ear. “Lain, honey, calm down.” She narrowed her eyes at Ty. “No, I understand but—all right. Yeah. See you in a bit. Bye.”

Hanging up, she pointed at the men. “Okay, she’s on her way over, so clear out.”

“Wait a minute,” Kyle protested.

“Nope.” She shook her head. “Both of you get out of here. I’m sure there’s a project or

something Ty could use your help on at his house.”

“Maybe we should stay,” Ty suggested. “It might help Lainey to have the two of you here while we talk?”

“Are you kidding? No way. She’s pissed and feeling betrayed. The last thing she needs is to feel like we’re ganging up on her. Now, out.” She crossed her arms over her chest. “Go on.”

Both men slowly stood. Kyle dropped a kiss on Jennifer’s mouth as he walked toward the door. She stopped Ty as he followed with a hand on his arm, and kissed his cheek.

“It’s good to have you back,” she said softly.

“Says the woman kicking me out,” he said, teasing, then sobered. “I won’t ask you to put in a good word for me or anything, ‘cause I’m sure that’s against the rules, but just...just make sure she’s okay.”

He strode to where Kyle waited at the door and grabbed his thick coat off the hook. Shrugging it on, he eyed his friend. “So wanna help install some cabinets?”

Kyle groaned. “Just how I wanted to spend my Christmas Eve; getting sweaty with you. Christ.”

Ty slapped him on the back and opened the door, cursing as the cold wind penetrated his coat with ease. Some sweat and manual labor might just be what he needed to get Lainey off his mind. He just prayed it worked, because the woman was firmly entrenched in his thoughts. Always had been.

As soon as she pulled off her winter wear, Lainey rounded on her friend. “You knew he was back in town.”

“Um...” Jen pressed her lips together and wouldn’t meet her eyes.

“Oh, give it up.” Lainey walked past her into the living room, flopped onto the couch and shoved a hand through her hair. “Why didn’t you just tell me? Given me a heads up?”

Her friend walked over and fiddled with the ornaments on the Christmas tree. When she didn’t say anything, Lainey closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “Could you just sit down and talk to me?”

Jen sighed and moved to the other side of the couch. Once settled, she finally met Lainey’s gaze. “What difference would it have made? The end result would have been the same either way—you running in the other direction the second you saw him.”

Well, not the second I saw—

“How do you know what happened?” She narrowed her eyes. “He was here, wasn’t he? Is he here now?” Panic bubbled up. She should have asked before just heading off. Kyle was Ty’s best friend; of course, he’d come by at some point.

“He’s not here. He was,” Jen clarified, “but he and Kyle went to his place for a while.”

“His place? But he’s staying at the hotel.” Lainey cursed inwardly when Jen lifted a brow. “Isn’t he?”

“He is, but he bought the old Cummings’ place,” Jen explained. “He’s been fixing it up since he got home, trying to make it livable.”

Lainey nodded then dropped her head back against the couch and closed her eyes. “God, why couldn’t you have just told me?”

“Like I said,” Jen said firmly, “there was no point. Besides, as soon as Ty’s name is brought up, you totally zone out.”

“That’s not true,” she protested, though she knew it was. Even thinking about Ty was damned painful. And now, lucky her, she couldn’t *stop* thinking about him. “What the hell was he thinking just showing up like that anyway? After so long. God! A year and a half of *nothing*. No phone calls, no letters, not a lousy postcard.”

“You told him not to call or try to contact you,” Jen said. “But you thought he would anyway, didn’t you?”

“Well, yeah.” There, she finally admitted out loud. She’d thought Ty would come barreling in when he got home, pissed and insisting she come back. When he hadn’t, she convinced herself that his lack of action proved that she’d made the right move.

“Oh, sweetie.” Jen shook her head. “God, you set him up to be the bad guy either way.”

Lainey jerked back slightly. “What are you talking about?”

“Well, if he swooped in the moment he got home, then he wasn’t respecting your wishes, and by staying away, he proved he didn’t care. So, he lost either way. He failed your test.”

Annoyance flared. “I wasn’t testing him!”

Jen’s mouth lifted in a smile. “Weren’t you?”

Not wanting to examine that, Lainey tried to turn the tables. “If that’s what you really thought, why didn’t you ever say anything?”

“Would you have listened? No…” Jen chuckled. “You would have shut the conversation

down so fast, I'd get whiplash."

She had a point, Lainey thought, but didn't say it a loud.

"Well, all this is beside the point. He didn't try to..." She searched for the right word, and came up short. "He didn't do anything."

"Sure, he did. You just didn't know about it." Jen paused, and when Lainey said nothing, she continued, "When he came home, he was beside himself. I'd never seen him that upset, and neither had Kyle, but despite that he stepped back and allowed you the time and space you asked for. It didn't stop him from asking about you, checking up on you regularly."

Lainey swallowed around the lump in her throat. "Why didn't you tell me? Why'd you let me think—"

"I don't break confidences," Jen snapped. "There are certain things you didn't want me telling him. I never did. He asked us not to tell you he was getting updates on you." She shrugged. "The only reason I'm saying anything now is he's already contacted you. There's no reason to keep it a secret, anymore. And, I think you need to know he didn't just walk away and push you and what you had together out of his mind."

"Like I did, you mean?" Lainey whispered.

"I know why you did what you did, and while I may not agree a hundred percent, I definitely understand why you felt you had to do it. And," she drawled, "I think you need to talk to Ty about it. Explain why."

Lainey pressed her fingertips to her burning eyes. "How can I face him after..." *Last night.*

"Sweetie, he still has feelings for you. Hell, I'd go so far as to say the man still loves you. Talk to him."

"He doesn't even know me, anymore," Lainey said.

"Oh, bullshit."

She choked out a laugh at her friend's outburst.

"You need to talk to him, and preferably soon, 'cause I don't want any arguments at Christmas dinner." Jen poked Lainey's shoulder with her finger.

Of course, he was going to be there tomorrow. Lainey groaned inwardly. Ty had no family, and had spent Christmases with Kyle and his family since the two had become friends. He'd missed the year before since he'd been stuck somewhere in South America. At least she

thought it was South America—she'd never asked for details, and now she felt like a class-A bitch because of it.

“I promise, there won't be any arguments.” She smiled. Her own parents were on a cruise for the holidays, so Lainey was celebrating with her friend. Frankly, she preferred it to being subjected to the you-need-a-man-to-take-care-of-you lectures her mother regularly treated her to.

“So you're going to talk to him before?” Jen asked.

Lainey sighed heavily. “Yes, I'll talk to him. Clear the air.”

She couldn't imagine it would end well, but for the sake of their friends on the holidays, she would do whatever it took to keep things cordial between her and Ty. Even if it killed her.

“Awesome. No time like the present, right?” Jen jumped up and walked toward the kitchen, saying over her shoulder, “I'll just give Kyle a call and tell him I need him to come home.”

Mouth gaping, Lainey stood and followed her friend. “It doesn't have to be right now. I mean, I can—”

“Hey honey, could you head home? I need you to run me to the store to pick up a few things for tomorrow, and you know how I hate driving in the snow.” She grinned, a contrast to the pouty, pleading tone she used, and gave Lainey a thumbs-up.

Looks like you're off to see Ty. Lainey's heart raced, and her skin heated as she thought of last night. *And there will be none of that.*

Chapter Three

Lainey stared at the old Tudor style home and struggled to control her breathing. Evening was falling, and light spilled out from the first floor through curtain-less windows. It shouldn't be so damned hard to just walk up and knock on the door. Surely, they could handle the situation like adults and agree to be civil to one another. That's what she'd been telling herself since her conversation with Jen, but the closer she got to the old Cummings' place, the more unsure she became. God, even her palms were sweating. She rubbed them on the front of her jeans.

"Just get it over with," she muttered, killing the engine. Another deep breath, and she pushed open the door and got out. Before she could second guess herself any more, she strode to the door and knocked loudly.

And waited.

She lifted her hand to knock again when the door swung open.

"I wondered when you'd finally come in." With that, Ty turned on his heel and walked down the hallway toward the back of the house. "You were out there nearly twenty minutes."

"What?" She hesitated a moment then stepped inside. A whirling noise came from where he'd disappeared. The door firmly closed behind her, she followed the sound. When she entered the brightly lit kitchen, she stopped short.

Ty crouched in front of the lower cabinets, sander in hand, smoothing the unfinished wood. Muscles moved sinuously beneath his sweat-damp T-shirt. Her gaze dropped to where his jeans stretched deliciously across his ass. She licked her lips and clenched her hands tightly at her sides. *Stop it! Focus on why you came. To talk. Just to talk.*

"Ty, can we... Ty!" she yelled trying to be heard over the sander.

He switched it off. Pivoting as he rose, he looked at her questioningly. "What do you want, Lain?"

She supposed she deserved that little bit of coldness after walking out on him. Again. "I just wanted to talk to you—about tomorrow."

Setting the power tool on a makeshift table of saw horses and plywood, he made a go ahead gesture. "What about tomorrow?"

"I know you're going to be at Kyle and Jen's. I'll be there too," she explained. "I just wanted to make sure there wasn't any awkwardness or problems between us."

A sharp laugh escaped. “Why would you think there would be any awkwardness? Have no fear. I think I can manage to control myself around you; it’ll be difficult,” he added with a sneer, “but I’ll do everything in my power to not jump you like a crazed maniac.”

“Damn it, Ty.” She shook her head. So much for behaving like adults. “Can you be serious for a minute? I don’t want to ruin Christmas for Kyle and Jen.”

He stepped toward her, and before she could stop herself, she backed up. He kept coming until she was pressed against the wall. The faint scent of sweat mixed with sawdust filled her nostrils, and she found it strangely arousing. Gripping her forearms, he leaned down until his nose was nearly touching hers.

“I’ll tell you what—I’ll make my excuses and bow out. Then there’s no chance of anything upsetting our friends.”

“Don’t do that,” she whispered.

“It’s the best solution to the problem, darlin’.” He kissed the tip of her nose then straightened and moved to the other side of the room. Crossing his arms over his chest, he watched her.

“You spending Christmas alone isn’t a solution,” she protested. “Let’s just call a truce, okay? I think we can be in the same house without drudging up our issues.”

“You think so, huh?”

“Fine, let’s get it all out now. Out of the way and behind us so we can move on. I’ve got all night. To talk,” she clarified when he smirked.

“Do you really want to do this?” he asked.

A chill ran down her spine, and damn it all, her hands were sweating again. She unzipped her coat, took it and her scarf off and dropped them on the floor beside her. “I think it’s long overdue.” After squirming for a minute under his intense stare, she sighed. “Well? Let me have it.”

“Have what? I thought you wanted to talk about the issues. You’re the one who walked away from me, Lainey. Walked away from us. I’d say the issues stem from you.”

Her face heated as annoyance tightened her jaw. “And you have no issues with that?”

“Of course I do, but my issues stem from your issues, so you start.” He leaned a hip against the wood cabinet.

“Oh, quit being so damned childish!” She paced over to the window above where she

assumed the sink was supposed to be and looked out into the night. “This isn’t just about me.”

“Isn’t it?” He came up behind her and rested his hands on her shoulders. “Why’d you leave, Lainey?”

Closing her eyes, she tried to ignore the tight knot settling in her stomach. “I told you... I needed to focus on me, on my career.”

“Don’t feed me that bullshit line. I didn’t buy it when I read it in your letter, and I’m sure as hell not buying it now. I was in no way stopping you from focusing on your job and working your way to the top.” His fingers worked at the tense muscles in her shoulders and neck. “Why’d you leave me, Lainey? Why’d you run away?”

She spun around, knocking his hands off her. “Because I was scared, all right? I was terrified, and leaving was the only option!”

Ty looked down at her tear-filled eyes, heart beating quickly. “Scared? If you were scared because of my job, all you had to do was talk to me about it.”

“How could I do that?” she protested. “If you left your job because of me, I wouldn’t have been able to live with myself, and you would have ended up resenting me.”

“You still could have come to talk to me about it, instead of just walking out.” He pushed a hand through his hair in frustration.

“It wasn’t just that,” she said softly, scooting around him and crossing the room.

He turned and waited, desperately trying to hold onto his patience. When she spun to face him, her face was pale and she clasped her hands tightly in front of her.

“It wasn’t just the job,” she repeated. “It was everything—the job, you, how fast our relationship was moving.” She shook her head and moved to pick up her coat. “Let’s just forget it, okay? Can we just agree to be nice to each other tomorrow? For Kyle and Jen’s sakes.”

“Nuh uh.” He moved forward and, fingers under her chin, gently lifted so she met his gaze. “Out in the open, remember? Explain; make me understand.”

Lainey closed her eyes briefly and took a deep breath. “Every time you left for work, I was lost. I counted the days, the hours—hell, the minutes—until you came back. Then when you got that last assignment and were going to be gone for six months or *more*,” her voice broke, “with limited, if any, contact. I didn’t know how to handle that. I was a mess.”

Ty’s chest tightened, and he cupped her face with both hands. “Lainey—”

“That’s when I realized that I needed to get out.” She stepped back, breaking out of his

hold. “The only way I could do anything with my life was to be on my own. God,” she choked a cry back, “I was ready to give up everything for you. Everything. And that was terrifying, Ty.”

“I wouldn’t have asked you to give up anything,” he bit out.

“You wouldn’t have had to.” Her voice rose, echoed through the bare room. “That’s just it. I would have done it no questions asked, readily. That’s what frightened me the most—the hold you had on me without even knowing it, without trying.”

She brushed the hair back from her face. “I needed to find my own way, who I was, as corny as that sounds. And I know it’s horribly unfair, but I honestly never expected you to listen to me. I thought you’d come home, read my letter and come charging after me. When I heard from Kyle that you’d come home and almost immediately headed out of the country, again, I figured I’d made the right move—your feelings weren’t as strong as mine, and we were really over.”

“Lainey, come here.” He struggled to keep his voice level and calm. He wanted to grab her, shake her, shout at her... Hell, he wanted to just hold her. She shook her head, and in response, he crooked a finger at her and repeated, “Come here.”

Taking a hesitant step forward, she moved within arm’s reach, and he grabbed her hand and pulled. Wrapping his arms around her he rested his chin on the top of her head, and for a moment, he let himself enjoy the feel of her body pressed against him, her sweet, intoxicating scent. When she let out a shaky breath and snaked her arms around his waist, Ty sent up a thankful prayer.

He rubbed his cheek against her hair and rubbed his palm down her back. “You have to know that I wanted to—come after you. I was actually about to, but Kyle stopped me. He and Jen convinced me to let you do what you needed to do.”

She pulled back and frowned at him. “I didn’t know that. They never said anything.”

“Did you ever ask?” he asked gently.

She gave a little shrug and laid her head back on his chest wearily. “No. Even talking about you was hard. It hurt. The only thing they told me was you were out of the country again.”

“I took the first assignment that came up, because if I’d stayed in town, there was no way I was going to stay away from you. Leaving the country was the only way to go,” he joked then sobered, tightening his hold on her. “They let me know how you were doing, you know? I harassed them for details as often as I could talk to them. I needed to know how you were, if you

were ‘finding yourself’. When they told me about your promotion... Well, I figured maybe that was what you were looking for, and it was time.”

“I thought it was what I wanted. I worked hard for that promotion.” She straightened and stepped back again, though she kept her hands on his biceps. “When I heard I got it, I thought this was it. I was finally gonna be happy. But I wasn’t. It’s a very empty feeling not to have anyone to share it with.”

He just stared at her.

“Yeah, I know,” she said slowly. “I walked away. I created the situation. Honestly, Ty, I didn’t know what else to do. It made so much sense at the time. You have to understand what it was like. You were the first serious relationship I’d been in, and I was scared. I thought I was making the right decision at the time.”

“And now?” he asked, eyebrow raised.

“I don’t know.” She pressed her lips together, and her brow furrowed. “I just don’t know. I know the job alone isn’t what I need—or even want, anymore. But where does that leave us?” Letting go of his arms, she lifted her hands in a helpless shrug. “I mean, we don’t even know each other, anymore. It’s been so long.”

“I know you,” he said harshly. “I always have.”

“Ty,” she whispered. “You just got back in the country. Do you even know what *you* want? Or are you just jonesing to get the one walked away.”

“You honestly believe that?” He shook his head. God, how could a woman with the brains Lainey possessed be so bloody stupid. “I wouldn’t have come to you if I didn’t want you.”

“In bed, sure.” She snorted. “I can understand that—you’re angry and need closure on the situation. I kind of denied you that.”

“Fuck, Lainey, would you quit babbling and listen to me. I. Want. You.” He stepped close, crowding her. “You had to figure out what you needed; I already knew. I’ve known since the moment I met you. And yes, I was angry...*then*. I’ve had some time to cool off and to try to understand why you did it. I won’t deny I’m still frustrated about some things, but I’m trying, here. So the question is, have you actually figured it out? Do you know what you want?”

“I...I...I don’t know,” she stammered.

Giving up on words, he leaned down and pressed his mouth to hers. Taking advantage of her surprised gasp, he slid his tongue between her lips and tasted her. God, he’d never get

enough. He gripped her hips and pulled her tightly against him, rocking forward. His cock, hard and aching, nudged her belly, and they both groaned. Her hands lifted to his head, her fingers tangling in his hair.

“I didn’t come here for this,” she murmured against his mouth.

“If you don’t want it, stop it,” he challenged. Running his hands around her, he cupped her ass and lifted. Her legs immediately circled his waist, and she rotated her hips as she settled on his erection. The hot pressure of her body, the abrasion of his clothes, drove him to distraction. Struggling to hold on to a coherent thought, he lost himself in her. She tightened her fingers and bit his lower lip, following the sharp pain with a seductive sweep of her tongue. He turned quickly and leaned back against the wall for support, his knees weakening a bit. God, the hold she had on him. She talked about the hold *he* had on *her* as if he wouldn’t understand. She didn’t even realize she had him by the cock, *and* the heart, and could pretty much lead him anywhere.

He moved his hand between them and flicked the button on her jeans open. She pulled from his mouth but didn’t say a word, holding his gaze as he lowered the zipper.

He shoved his hand inside her panties and cupped her intimately, nearly shouting in triumph as her desire dampened his fingers. Her hands dropped from his head to his shoulders, and he could feel her nails digging into his flesh through the t-shirt. Circling her clit with the pad of his finger, he leaned forward and ran his tongue along the length of her smooth neck. When he nipped the sensitive skin near her collarbone, the tiny nub pulsed, and her hips jerked into his touch.

He kissed his way up to her ear and, as he slid a finger inside her heat, whispered, “Come for me, Lainey. Fall apart.”

With a strangled cry, she stiffened and her muscles clamped around his thrusting hand. Rubbing his lips back and forth against her skin, he marveled at how responsive she was, how passionate. His memories and fantasies didn’t hold a fucking candle to the trembling heat he now held in his grasp. And the hell he was going to let go of it any time soon.

When Lainey stopped shaking, Ty pulled his hand from between her thighs and wrapped her in a tight hug. Then he untangled her legs from his waist and set her on her feet. She gripped his arms and let her head drop against his chest a moment, her breathing ragged.

“Ty,” she murmured, lifting her head. Tears clung to her lashes and a sexy flush colored

her cheeks. “I—”

“Hey, Ty.”

A loud masculine voice echoed through the house, followed by the sound of a slamming door. Lainey gasped and she quickly turned away, fumbling with the closure on her pants. Ty closed his eyes and counted to ten. Seriously? Kyle decided to come back now? He was going to kill him.

Lainey, lower lip caught between her teeth and face flushed prettily, grabbed her jacket and was pulling it on when their friend pushed the door open and strode into the room.

“Oh hey, I didn’t know you were here. Uh,” Kyle shifted his gaze between the pair, “I was just stopping by to see if Ty wanted to join us for dinner. You’re more than welcome to come too, Lain,” he rushed to add. “Jen made plenty.”

“That’s okay,” she replied. “I should head home. Presents to wrap and all that.”

Ty laid a hand on her shoulder. “You don’t have to leave.”

She shook her head and smiled at him. “I really do have things to do, and I have a lot to...think about.” After a moment’s hesitation, she stepped forward and wrapped her arms around his waist. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Ty returned the hug. “Yeah, tomorrow.”

She pulled away and nudged Kyle as she walked by. “Night.”

“Night, Lainey.” After the door closed behind her, he looked at Ty with a wince. “Man, I’m sorry. I didn’t realize—”

“You didn’t see her car in the driveway?” Ty asked pointedly.

“Dude, it’s dark. I couldn’t tell if it was yours or what. I’m sorry.”

Ty laughed in spite of the disappointment sitting sourly in his gut. “Let’s go eat, dumbass. I’ll figure out some way you can make it up to me.”

Chapter Four

“Oh my God, I can’t believe he walked in on you like that.” Jen pressed a hand to her forehead and closed her eyes.

Lainey chuckled. The friends sat on the couch by the Christmas tree, trying to get a quiet moment amidst the chaos in the house. Her gaze was continually drawn to the adjoining dining room, where Ty sat with Kyle, Jen’s brother, and several of their friends at the large table, playing poker.

“Though to be fair,” Jen continued, “I didn’t tell him you were going over there. Of course, I didn’t think he’d stop by. I thought he’d call—”

“Relax,” Lainey said. “It turned out to be a good thing. It was getting...intense, and I needed a breather to really think about things.”

“Yeah? And what conclusions did you draw?” Jen asked.

Ty lifted his head and met Lainey’s gaze. His mouth curved into a smile before he was pulled back into the game. Lainey glanced at Jen and sighed.

“I’ll let you know after I talk to Ty,” she said primly.

“Bitch.” Jen shoved her. “You *always* tell me first.”

“Not this time.” She stuck her tongue out at her friend.

“Whatever. I know you well enough to know what you decided.” Jen lifted her chin haughtily—the gesture completely ruined by the snort of laughter that escaped.

“Really? And what is that exactly?”

“I’ll let you know I’m right later.”

Lainey threw her head back and laughed. “You don’t know.”

“Yes, I do,” Jen said in a sing-song voice as she stood. “Do you want some wine?”

“Sure,” she readily agreed.

“Be right back.”

Lainey smiled and turned to stare into the crackling fire, her thoughts racing. Hell, they hadn’t slowed down since Ty had approached her in the bar. It was exhausting really. She pressed a hand to her belly and closed her eyes. The feelings that had erupted to surface the last couple days overwhelmed her. And not in a bad way, necessarily. She could admit she missed Ty. A lot. She missed the physical, of course, but it wasn’t just that. She missed everything—

their talks, the lazy mornings spent wrapped around each other, sharing their thoughts, dreams. She'd tried to fill that void in her life several times, but she couldn't see herself with any of the guys she'd dated. Honestly, none of them had measured up to Ty.

And that's what it came down to, she realized. The only person who could fit in her life, in her world, was the very guy she'd run away from.

"Hey."

With a jolt, she opened her eyes and looked up. Ty stood over her, holding out a glass of wine.

"Hey," she returned, accepting the drink. As he lowered himself on to the sofa next to her, she looked over at the table. Jen was now sitting in the chair Ty had been, wiggling her fingers in a little wave at Lainey.

"Merry Christmas," Lainey said brightly.

With a small smile, Ty leaned over and dropped a kiss to her cheek.

Impulsively, Lainey turned her head so their lips met. He froze a moment then lifted his hands to cup her face. His fingertips skimmed along her cheekbones as he deepened the kiss slightly. Her belly tightened at the quick swipe of his tongue and the low hum from his throat.

"Merry Christmas to you," he murmured, pulling back. "Did Santa bring you everything you wanted?"

She chuckled. "Not quite. Maybe I was on his naughty list this year?"

Ty ran a finger along the scooped neckline of her sweater. "I bet you were. But sometimes," he dipped under the fabric to brush his knuckle against the swell of her breast, "naughty is rewarded. Whoa!" Pulling his hand away, he grabbed the wine glass from her hand.

Lainey looked down and groaned. Several drops of the red wine beaded on her chest, soaking into the white sweater. She ran her hand over it, only succeeding in smearing the liquid. Shaking her head, she looked at Ty, who was pressing his lips together, clearly trying not to laugh.

"Oh shut up." She nudged him with her shoulder, then laughed herself. It wasn't the first time she'd ended up wearing food or drink because he'd distracted her.

"Looks like I owe you a sweater," he said, like he always did.

"Indeed, you do," she said softly. After a few moments of silence, she blurted out, "I'm going to go home now."

He frowned. “Lain—”

“Come with me.” She bit her lip and waited for his response. When he just stared at her, her chest tightened painfully. “If you don’t want to, I under—”

Still silent, Ty grasped her hand and stood, pulling her to her feet. He set the glass on the coffee table with a clunk.

“Kyle, Jen, thanks for dinner. We’re heading out.” His fingers tightened around Lainey’s. “Catch ya later.”

“Merry Christmas,” Jen said in a sing-song voice as they rushed to the door.

Lainey’s heart raced as she and Ty hurried into her apartment, and focused on removing their outerwear and their shoes. She inhaled deeply, anticipation nearly suffocating her, and met Ty’s gaze. She grabbed his hand and led him through the small apartment to her bedroom.

He released her hand to close the door. When he turned to her, the predatory look in his eyes had her backing up towards the bed. He yanked his shirt up and over his head, tossing it to the side, and his hands went immediately to his belt. Once that was off, he worked the button of his pants and took a step forward, crowding her until she moved as well. He kept going until her knees hit the mattress. Gently, he pushed against her shoulders, and with a startled laugh, she fell back.

His eyes darkened as his gaze swept over her body. “Fuck, Lain, you’re beautiful.”

His harsh voice sent tingles through her body. Ty kept his eyes on her as he removed the rest of his clothes. Licking her lips, Lainey scooted back and shifted her legs apart, allowing him to kneel between them. He glided his palms up her sides, lifting her sweater to expose her midriff. Her breath caught as he pressed his lips to her navel, and satisfaction filled her when his fingers trembled on the waist of her pants. Caressing with his lips and tongue, nipping with his teeth, he made quick work of undoing and stripping her slacks, along with her panties, from her body. Then, pushing the shirt farther and farther up, he followed with his mouth until he nuzzled her breasts through the lace bra.

Lainey grasped the hem and, shifting off the bed slightly, pulled the sweater off. Ty took the opportunity to reach behind her and unclasp her bra. He looked up at her and grinned naughtily, sliding the straps down her arms and removing the garment. Then his mouth was on her breast, sucking the pert tip deep in his mouth. Desire exploded, igniting between her legs and

radiating rapidly through her.

She grasped his head, fingers combing through his hair, as he played her, strummed her desire into a frenzy. He kissed his way to the other nipple and gave it equal treatment. Each pull of his mouth, each flick of his tongue, sent ribbons of pleasure spiraling through her. She squeezed her eyes shut a moment then pulled slightly on his head. As wonderful as he was making her feel, there was something she wanted much, much more at that moment.

He lifted his head and met her gaze.

“Lie on your back,” she demanded, hoping he didn’t hear the quiver in her voice.

He grinned again and rose to his knees. She scrambled to hers as well as he stretched out. As he situated himself, she leaned over and pulled the bedside table drawer open to grab a condom. She set the packet beside him on the bed then moved to straddle one of his hard legs. She couldn’t hold back the low moan as the coarse hair tickled the damp folds of her pussy. Pleasure relentlessly tugged at her core.

She circled the base of his stiff cock with trembling fingers and, eyes fixed on his face, leaned forward to run her tongue around the thick head. His gasp teased her senses, pushed her to take the length of him into her mouth. Her clit twitched deliciously as she lazily fucked Ty with her mouth.

He groaned as his cock swelled. Lainey swirled her tongue around slit, lapping up the pre-come leaking from him. With a muttered curse, Ty pulled her up the length of his body until he could catch her mouth. His tongue darted forward and enticed hers into a sensual, slippery dance. Her lips curved against his as she moved her legs to straddle his hips, causing a guttural moan to rumble deep in his chest.

She reclaimed his cock with her hand and lazily stroked as she broke the kiss. “I shouldn’t have walked away,” she whispered.

His palm slid up her back and cupped the back of her head. “Baby, it’s okay. In the past. We have all the time in the world now.”

Picking up the condom, she gave him a shaky smile and tore open the packaging. Once she had him sheathed, she met his gaze. “I know, but I need you to know something.” She hesitated briefly, but she had to say this. Say what had been in her heart two years before, and every day since. “I love you. I never stopped.”

Every thought disappeared from Ty's mind as Lainey slid his cock head through her silken folds and positioned him at her entrance. His hand fisted in her hair. Before he could muster an answer to her declaration, she continued.

"I finally figured out what I needed. And stupid me, it was what I'd left in the first place." Bracing her arms beside his head, she bent forward and gave him a quick, hard peck on the lips "You. Us. This."

Lainey then slowly lowered her hips, and her sheath encased him. His eyes slid shut, and his muscles tensed. When he was fully seated within her, she shakily cupped his cheek.

"I love you," she said in a breathy whisper then took his mouth.

She stole his breath, his reason, his sanity. It wasn't just kiss, or even her tight pussy spasming around his cock. It was her words that figuratively brought him to his knees.

Lainey pulled away, rose above him. Her legs trembled as she moved, and he met each furious stroke. Her pussy contracted violently, and crying out softly, she seized his hands. Never breaking rhythm or slowing her pace, she brought them up to cup her breasts.

Ty watched as his woman loved his body, completely taken by the beauty before him. He massaged the supple mounds beneath his palms and smiled when her hands trembled on his. Catching her nipples, he pinched and rolled them between his fingers. Hunger and passion consumed Ty, raced through his veins, as Lainey arched into his touch and her breathing quickened.

"Lean back," he ordered, lowering one hand to her hip and flattening the other between her breasts.

She reached behind and braced her hands on his thighs. Running his palm down her torso, he enjoyed the way her muscles quivered beneath his touch. Using his thumb, he circled her clit. Lainey cried out and her nails dug into his skin. Aching and close to release, Ty bolted up and caught a caught a rosy nipple with his lips, sucking then nipping with his teeth.

Sliding his hand to her ass, Ty lifted her slightly off him and used the other hand to bring her leg around. Lainey hummed softly at the change of position and shifted to wrap both legs tightly around his waist. He pulled her down and relished the way her thighs gripped his hips, and he drove deeper into her heat. She curled around him, winding her arms around his neck, surrounding him. Overwhelmed, he buried his face in her neck and, using the hold he had on her ass, quickened the pace—each stroke harder than the one before. Her pussy tightened around

him, squeezing him, milking his cock.

“I love you,” he said against her sweet, slick skin. “Always loved you, baby.”

Her muscles clamped around him, rippling as her orgasm consumed her. Lainey’s soft whimpers filled his ears, and the force of his release washed over him like a tidal wave. With a hoarse cry, he filled her with his seed, his arms locked around her.

Lainey ran her palms up and down his back, pressing kisses to his shoulder. Ty couldn’t put what he was feeling into words. Content, happy, satisfied... Those words paled in comparison to emotions filling him.

When she pulled back, a smile curved her lips. “*Now*, I have everything I wanted for Christmas.”

He brushed her hair back then cupped her face. “Oh, you’re not off the naughty list, quite yet.”

Her smile grew into a grin, and she gave him a soft kiss. “Don’t think I’ll ever be off that list with you,” she murmured against his lips.

“God, I hope not,” he admitted and fully took her mouth.

Jessica Jarman is an author, blogger and rather obsessive fangirl. Having grown up in Upper Michigan and currently living in Minnesota, she is a Midwestern girl through and through, and wouldn't have it any other way. When she's not working to get words on the page, Jessica passes the time with her amazing husband and four children, attempting to be crafty (and failing miserably), squeeing uncontrollably over her favorite shows or curling up with a good book. Jessica loves to hear from readers and can be found at www.jessicajarman.com.