

mystic valley
THAT OLD
BLACK MAGIC



MOIRA ROGERS

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That Old Black Magic



In, smash, grab, out. Max wiped sweat from his forehead and crouched in front of the door, ignoring the way the rickety porch creaked under his weight. He studied the lock in front of him with professional curiosity, then grinned. *Easiest job ever.*

Max didn't usually jinx himself so early in the game, but this wasn't his usual gig. Tracking down black magic users and demon worshipers gave him one hell of a rush – not to mention a decent paycheck – but it did make basic recovery jobs like this boring in comparison.

He could have twisted the doorknob hard enough to pop the lock – maybe even *without* his shapeshifter strength – but he pulled out a slim set of lock picks instead. *Might as well get some practice.*

Of course, the lock didn't offer that much of a challenge, since it was so outdated he probably could have picked it with his belt buckle. In the dark. He felt a tiny jolt of magic when he touched it the first time, and the amulet around his neck warmed slightly. Whatever magical protections the neurotic and paranoid owner of this house had put in place were easily overcome by the magical firepower his client had provided him with.

The lock *clicked* within five seconds, and Max almost sighed. *So much for excitement.* He found himself half hoping the wizard would come back while he was pawing through his belongings, just to liven things up a bit.

"Don't be an idiot," he muttered as he rose to his feet again. He slipped the lock picks into his back pocket and reached for the door. "In, smash, grab –"

The door swung open and he found himself facing the barrel of a handgun. The gun was connected to a pair of pale, delicate hands, which his gaze followed to a pair of dainty wrists, sleekly muscled arms, and a body –

Oh hell, what a body.

"Smash and grab," the woman echoed as one eyebrow curved up in a perfect arch. "That sounds original. Don't suppose it's the television you're after?"

Max blinked. Stupidly. He jerked his gaze back up past her gorgeous hips – and breasts – and studied her face again. Full lips, hazel eyes staring at him with complete disdain from beneath the fall of dark brown hair. He could hear her heartbeat, cool and steady, just like the hand holding that damn gun.

The minute he dragged his brain out of his pants, he knew exactly who he was dealing with. "Little Polly Cassidy. Your legend paints you as taller." *And says absolutely nothing about how fucking hot you are.*

She laughed, the sound entirely too refined for someone wearing low-riding cargo pants and a black tank top. "Legend? You do know how to flatter a girl." Her hips rocked gently as she took a single step away from him. "Hands. Up."

A bullet probably wouldn't kill him unless she put it between his eyes, but he wasn't sure he wanted to chance it. Not this far into the Louisiana bayou. Max rolled his eyes and lifted his hands carefully above his head. "Don't be too flattered, sweetheart. I only know who you are because I have a habit of killing your evil son-of-a-bitch clients."

"That's bad for repeat business," she observed blandly. "What'd they ever do to you? No, let me guess." She smiled, the slow, sultry expression sending another stab of heat through him. "An impotence hex."

If only. Between the danger and the heat caused by the wicked curl of her lips, he was already rock hard and distracted as hell. "Not a big fan of people who use magic for evil, darling. You make big bucks helping them, I make big bucks putting them down. How do you sleep at night?"

There was nothing refined about her husky laugh this time. "Like a baby, *darling.*" She tilted her head and licked her bottom lip as her gaze raked over him. "Get lost, and I won't kill you."

Hot or not, there *were* limits. "I don't think..." A distant rumble caught his attention, and he narrowed his eyes as he tried to catch the sound again. A moment later he heard it; the wizard's car. "Shit. Owner's back early."

She spun and took off down the hall, shoving the pistol into the back of her waistband as she moved. "Great chatting with you. Good luck."

A quick glance around the front room made it plenty clear the magical goodies were stashed somewhere else. Max kicked the front door shut and took off after her.

Polly cast him an irritated look over her shoulder. "You're not invited to come with me, you know." She hit the end of the hallway and shoved open a door to reveal a utility closet. "Besides, only room for one. Sorry."

Magic radiated from the closet, strong enough that charm he was after could very well *be* in there. Which meant she wasn't staying in there by herself.

Nice excuse, he thought wryly as he ignored her protests and crowded her through the door.

Her stammers ceased when her back hit the edge of an ancient soapstone laundry sink. Instead, she glared up at him. "You don't listen to a damn word anybody ever says, do you, smart guy?" Even as she spoke, she reached down and tore open the Velcro fastening on one of the many pockets on her pants.

Max grabbed her hand before she could reach into the pocket. "Uh-uh, honey. No surprises."

She scoffed a little and arched an eyebrow. "If you don't let me get the perimeter down and activated before he gets inside, we're both busted."

"Perimeter?" He tugged the closet door shut with his free hand, but didn't release her. "Explain."

"If you've been single-handedly culling my client base, you're not human. The wizard will sense you, and then he'll find you. When he does, I'm fucked." Polly moved slowly, his fingers still wrapped around her wrist, and pulled a silver flask out of her pocket. "But not if I secure the closet." At his dubious look, she rolled her eyes again. "I'm not going to hurt myself just to hurt you. Let go."

It was a rookie mistake, forgetting a wizard would be able to sense his power the second he crossed the threshold. Max ground his teeth and jerked his hand from her wrist. "Fine, set the damn perimeter."

She unscrewed the cap from the flask and squeezed past him. "Try to get as close to the back wall as you can. He has some spell components stored in those boxes by the door. I don't want to risk him missing them and coming to investigate." As she spoke, she bent and began splashing a line of clear liquid on the floor.

The damn charm he was after *had* to be in the closet with them, because the sight of her bent over in front of him shorted out his brain. He forced himself back a step to keep from grabbing her hips, his client's words floating through his head. *It lowers inhibitions. All inhibitions. Anyone within twenty feet will give in to their basest desires.*

His mouth felt dry as his gaze traced the full swell of her hips and the curve of her ass. His basest desires were simple enough: take, possess, pleasure. And he was trapped with her. In a closet. In the sweaty Louisiana bayou.

Most fucked up job ever.



Polly gritted her teeth and tried to pretend she couldn't feel the weight of Mr. Tall, Dark, and Snarly's stare on her ass. *Take a picture, jackass.* Even as the indignant thought formed in her head, her nipples tightened under the thin black cotton of her shirt. He'd wandered into *her* job and screwed up *her* plans. Why did he also have to be hot as hell?

She wasn't a short woman, but he still towered over her, and his dark eyes followed every move she made as she marked off the back half of the closet. She'd have to go back to Atlanta for more of the formula soon, but she didn't mind. It had been a while since she and Gertie had hung out.

Polly finished pouring the potion, careful to leave no gaps in the protective line. "Parsimonious," she whispered as she capped the flask.

Behind her, the man snorted. "That's a hell of a magic word."

She flashed him her middle finger as she slid the flask back into her pocket. "Are you always this pleasant to people who just saved your ass?"

He moved so fast she didn't realize he was coming at her until his hands locked around her waist. She ended up half against the wall, half on the sink, and those dark brown eyes stared at hers in tense silence before a low, sensual laugh rumbled out of his chest. "Is that what you think you're doing?"

"Shifter. Should have known." Polly swallowed hard and gave him a bored look she knew he wouldn't buy for a second. Her pulse pounded hard in her ears, and the vague tingling in her cunt gave way to an insistent throb. "You're all bossy, holier-than-thou bastards."

He laughed again as he inched closer, wedging his hips between her legs. "And we can tell when you like us that way. You're wet already, just thinking about getting bent over this sink and fucked into next week."

She held her breath and watched a drop of sweat roll down his neck and disappear beneath his collar. "Wrong."

"Wrong?" He pressed closer, and she felt the hard ridge of his cock grinding against her. "What, you like to be on top?"

Don't answer, Polly. Her hips arched and she bit her lip, but a whimper escaped. "What's your name?" She couldn't tear her eyes away from the sweat-slicked skin at the base of his throat.

He swallowed, and his voice grew decidedly huskier. "Max."

"Max." She reached up, slipped her fingers into the damp hair at the back of his neck, and yanked his head toward hers. She could think of nothing but the taste and texture of his skin under her tongue, and she whispered his name again, then licked a path over his stubbled jaw to his ear.

"Fuck—" He shifted her just enough to drop her on the edge of the sink, freeing his hands to skim up her back and take her shirt with them. "I like the way you wrap your tongue around my name."

The salt tang of his skin sent a thrill of desire through her, and she shivered. "Wait 'til I wrap it around everything else."

He groaned and tangled his fingers in her hair. His grip tightened and he jerked her head back to bare her throat with a soft growl. "Maybe later." He whispered the words against the pounding pulse in her throat and dragged his tongue over her skin. "I have to be inside you."

The low, rough sound of his voice made her cunt clench, and Polly fidgeted, trying to relieve the wet ache between her thighs. "I'll even let you bite me," she promised, then dug her nails into his scalp and guided his mouth to hers.

His tongue swept across hers with a lazy skill completely at odds with the leashed tension trembling in him. One hand stayed in her hair, but the other cupped her breast, his thumb flicking over the tight nipple. Another shiver wracked her, and he swallowed her sharp, needy moan.

Polly had to let go of his head to tug up his shirt, and she hissed in a breath when her palms glided over the hard, flat planes of his stomach and chest. "God *damn*," she muttered against his lips. "Take it off."

"Not much room in here for stripping," he murmured in reply. His hand dropped from her breast to the button on her cargo pants. "Maybe later."

"There *is* no later," she reminded him. She pulled her gun free of her pants and laid it on a shelf beside them. Then her own hand drifted down between them to stroke his cock through his jeans. "Just right now."

He groaned and thrust against her palm before redoubling his efforts. Clever fingers wiggled into her pants and rubbed at her clit through the damp fabric of her panties. "Too bad. You're hot when you moan."

"You hate me and everything I stand for. That's a built-in expiration date." Stars

painted the backs of her eyelids, and she pushed at his chest. When he stepped back, she jumped down and turned around. "Bent over the sink and fucked into next week, right?"

His fingers curled around her hips and he rubbed against her ass as his breath feathered over her ear. "I can hear him on the front porch," he whispered. "Is your little perimeter going to keep sound in? Or do you want him to walk in here and *find* us? Is that what's got you so hot?"

Polly wanted to lie, to tell him it was the danger and nothing else weakening her knees. "It's soundproof," she rasped instead. "It'll hold." She bit off a curse and dug a condom out of her back pocket. "Here."

She heard the package tear open and his deep laughter tickled against her neck again. "Either you pack some weird equipment for your jobs, or you *do* get off on the danger. What were you going to do? Fuck the first guy you put hands on after you got out of here?"

The nonlubricated ones did come in handy, actually, and for a variety of purposes. "Do you have a condom in your wallet?"

His fingers curled into the waistband of her pants and tugged them down. "Don't *you* have a wallet?"

She growled and curled her fingers around the sink. "This is the stupidest conversation I've ever had. And you're a sexist ass."

"Always a critic, huh, sweetheart?" Those strong fingers slid over her hip again, circling her clit as the blunt head of his cock bumped against her teasingly. His other hand trailed up her back and forced her to bend down. Heat exploded through her, an inexplicable, yearning hunger, and she moaned again when her bared nipples brushed the cool stone of the sink. "Fuck me," she demanded, wiggling back against him, then dropped her voice to a whisper. "I'm running out of mean things to say to you."

"All bark." His hand tightened on her hip and she cried out as he thrust home. The hand on her hip hurried up her back to curl in her hair again, and he tugged her head back until his breath fell hot and dangerous against the vulnerable curve of her neck. "No bite."

"Don't make me wish I'd shot you when I had the chance." She didn't wish any such thing, not with his cock huge and deep inside her. Polly pushed off the sink and rocked into him, whimpering when he ground against her.

His laugh turned into a groan, and she felt the sharp bite as he closed his teeth on the side of her neck. He bent over and brought her with him, leaving her trapped between the sink and the hard heat of his body as he pulled back and thrust into her again.

She tried to come up with something else glib and insulting to throw at him. *Don't bruise me up, maybe, or, Better make this good. It's been a while since I had crazy sex in a closet.* Her brain wouldn't cooperate. It was just as well, since she couldn't seem to control the pleading moans that slipped between her lips every time he drew back and drove into her again.

But he seemed to like the moans. He answered each one with a low, growling groan, and his fingers rubbed over her clit in an insistent rhythm as he sped his pace. "Come on, sweetheart—come—"

"Don't rush me." Polly shuddered and pulled his hand out of her hair. She twined her fingers with his and urged his arm around her body, guiding him to cup her breast. Together, they tugged and pinched her nipple, and her head hit his shoulder. "Fuck."

"Workin' on it." He hissed in a breath and thrust into her hard enough to drive a low noise from her lips. "Tell me what you like."

"Harder." She barely recognized her own voice. Her toes curled inside her boots. Her heart pounded, echoing the throbbing tension inside her. "Bite me again. God, *now—*"

Her words dissolved into a shriek as he closed his teeth on the spot where her shoulder curved into her neck. His growl of approval rumbled through his chest, vibrated against her back, and he continued his hard, deep thrusts with a stamina and determination that was outright impressive.

Polly came. Pleasure surged through her with alarming strength, the kind that made her head ache and her knees collapse. She squeezed her eyes shut and chanted his name, her body shaking in the circle of his arm, her nails scratching into his skin.

He hissed again when her nails broke the skin on his arm, and he thrust against her one last time as a ragged moan spilled from his lips, muffled against her neck. His hips rocked against her ass in a desperate grind that finally stilled as he dropped his head to her shoulder and exhaled roughly. "Holy fuck."

She opened her eyes and tried to focus on a water stain in the corner of the ceiling. Her breath came in short, labored pants, and sweat trickled between her breasts. "Can

you hear him?" She needed to get out of the closet. She needed to get away.

"Shh." He eased away, and she heard quiet rustling and the soft click of his belt buckle. A zipper rasped up, and then gentle hands eased her panties and cargo pants back up over her hips. "He's gone," he whispered. His hands coasted up her sides and to her arms, warm, callused fingers rubbing along the skin left bare by her tank top.

A soft metallic *clink* was her only warning. Cool metal encircled one wrist and the handcuffs rattled as he slapped the other end around the pipe behind the sink.

Shock crashed over her, erasing the last vestiges of lazy satisfaction curling through her limbs. "What the hell are you doing?"

Polly twisted around in time to see him tuck her gun into the back of his waistband. He grinned and held up the charm she'd stashed in her pocket before he'd crowded her into the closet, the charm she'd forgotten was there. "Sorry, sweetheart, but I can't let you sell this to anyone."

Max smiled at her as he tucked the charm into his pocket and pulled out a set of lock picks. "But, so you know there's no hard feelings..." He tossed them down, just out of reach, and stepped back to break the perimeter she'd laid down. A quick twist of his wrist opened the closet door, and he winked. "Hope to see you again soon, Polly Cassidy."

With that he was gone.

"Fucked and fucked." She cursed, scuffed the floor and cursed again. *It's your own goddamned fault, Polly. You should have kept your pants on.*

But no. Instead, she'd had sex with a stranger. The hell of it was, if they'd had more time—or room to maneuver—she'd have been begging him to do all kinds of naughty, orgasm-inducing things to her.

Give it up. You still would.

She growled and tugged her hand out of the cuff, wincing when the sharp steel edges scraped her flesh. Fucking men and their fucking bedroom eyes and manly sweat and talented hands...

Polly dragged her fingers through her hair and fixed her clothing. The lock picks lay on the floor, a Siren call of comeuppance. Of revenge.

She bent and picked them up. The case was well-used, creased and worn thin around the corners. "You're hot as hell, Max," she whispered, tapping the soft plastic case against her palm. "But you underestimate me."

She tucked the case into her pocket, then turned to the sink and washed her face and hands. Chasing him was useless; he'd be long gone already. Her best bet was to have Gertie track him down using the energy signature from the lock picks.

Then she could kill him.



Max breezed through the front door of Lena's shop, feeling sunnily pleased with the world and everyone in it. By now pretty little Polly Cassidy should have found someone to do a locator spell using his lock picks, which meant he had a few hours to prepare himself for a gorgeous, angry thief busting down his door.

If there was anything hotter than a furious, talented woman who wasn't sure if she wanted to fuck him or kill him, he'd yet to come across it. *And the sex is going to be good...*

Lena greeted his cheerful appearance with one delicately arched eyebrow. "You can't have possibly gone to Louisiana, broken into a wizard's house, stolen the charm and gotten back to Texas in forty-eight hours. Even you aren't *that* good, Max."

He grinned and tossed her the plastic bag he'd shoved the charm into. "I'm the best, sweetheart. Next time Blake Kendrick comes around, you tell him so."

She upended the bag and spilled the charm out into her hand. The other eyebrow rose, and she glanced up at him. "This is the wrong charm."

"Bullshit." It *had* to be the right charm. He'd fucked a notorious thief in a closet while his target pattered around the living room, which was as clear a sign of the absolute annihilation of inhibitions as he'd ever seen. Not that he wouldn't take fierce pleasure in getting his hands on Polly again, but *not* during a job. Work was work, and play was something else. He never mixed them.

Or he never *had*.

Lena laughed at his expression and dangled the tiny, elaborate disk from its chain. "I know my own work, and this isn't it. It's not even the same type."

Max ground his teeth together. "Yes, it is. It has to be."

"Why?"

He swore. "Because it sure the hell did a number on *my* inhibitions."

She just shook her head and laughed again as she dropped the charm to the table. "Max, the only thing that charm will do is let you walk through magical wards. It didn't

touch your inhibitions.”

“Oh yeah?” He fixed his meanest glare on her. “Then why the hell did I have frantic sex in a closet with the thief who was trying to steal it?”

“Because you’re a horny bastard?” Lena smiled at him, completely unfazed by his mean-alpha-shapeshifter routine. “Your dick and what you do with it is really not my business. You can keep the charm if you want, though. It would probably be useful in your line of work.”

He swore again and spun on his heel before stalking for the door. “Save it. I’m going to go find that damn thing. Now.”

He pretended he didn’t hear her laughter as he stormed out of her shop and across the road. His Jeep sat across the street, and he swung into it and curled his fingers around the steering wheel.

She’d played him. It was the only explanation. Polly Cassidy had played him from the start, and made a fool out of him in the process. She probably had the damn charm now, and was laughing her ass off somewhere as she waited for some jackass to hand over a huge bag of money for it. She wouldn’t care about the massive chaos the thing could cause in the wrong hands, and he’d be chasing it all over the country again, trying to find it before someone did something terrible with it.

And he’d given her his damn lock picks. She could find him now, whenever she wanted. The thought had been amusing when she’d been a hot piece of ass who was *almost* as good as him. Now that she’d proved herself smarter than him... *I am royally fucked.*

Or not. When he tracked her sweet little ass down again, sex would be the last thing on his mind. Well, it would be the first thing on his mind, but he’d ignore it. No woman was worth destroying everything he’d worked for. Not even smoking hot Polly Cassidy.

Fuck.



Polly gritted her teeth and stomped toward the door. “I *said* just a minute, damn it!” She pulled open the door and snorted. “Oh, you’ve *got* to be fucking kidding me.”

Max shouldered past her, wrenching the door out of her hand. He stalked into the room before spinning to pin her with a glare. “So. You made a fool of me, huh? Did you get off on that as much as you got off on me?”

“Excuse me?” She couldn’t begin to wrap her head around his bizarre logic. “You’re the one who picked my pocket and left me handcuffed to a sink. *I’m* not the asshole here.”

He turned again and prowled deeper into the hotel room. “Whatever. Where the fuck is it? The actual charm. The inhibition one? I assume you have it somewhere.”

Polly gaped at him, then crossed her arms over her chest. “Fuck you. You can’t have it.”

“I am *done* playing, little girl. That thing is seriously fucking dangerous, and it needs to be destroyed. The woman who made it did it in a weak moment, and she wants to fix the mistake. And I am damn well going to see it done.”

Ice settled in the pit of her stomach. “Good luck with that.” Polly crossed the room and yanked open a dresser drawer. She untied the knotted belt of her robe and dropped the terrycloth to the floor. “Better get ready for some serious travel, though. Benton sold it last week. I tracked the funds to a shell corporation in Malaysia, but the damn thing could be anywhere. Now get the fuck out.”

He spun around again, and his eyes widened when his gaze settled on her naked form. He opened his mouth as if to say something, then snapped it shut again. His hands curled into fists as he drew in a breath. “Shit. You play dirty. Guess I earned it, though.”

Polly leveled her stoniest glare on Max as she pulled on a pair of panties and snatched a camisole from the drawer. “Go on and take the lead. I’ll stay out of it. The money’s not worth having to run into you again.”

He stepped closer, his eyes narrowing. “So if you weren’t high on magic, why’d you fuck me?”

She didn’t know what was more horrifying—having to admit she’d taken one look at him and wanted to get her hands on him, or the fact that he’d chalked the entire thing up to magical interference. *Pretty much a damn toss-up.*

She put on the camisole and flashed him a defiant look. “I wanted to. But I’m over it, trust me.”

“Over it?” Another step, and he crowded into her personal space. “That’s a shame. The thought that you’d double-crossed me turned me the fuck on.”

The admission drew a startled laugh from her, and she shook her head. “Jesus Christ.” A sharp inhalation filled her nose with his scent, and she bit her lip. She

couldn't be this damn attracted to a crazy man. "That's messed up, Max. Professional help might be in order."

"Because I'm attracted to smart women?" A quick shift to the left and he had her caged, cornered against the dresser. "What can I say? I love a challenge."

Polly exhaled and reached up, curling her fingers into the front of his shirt. "I told you the truth. Now it's your turn. What do you *want*?"

His hand came up and his fingers traced across the bruise he'd left on her neck. "You. Begging for it while I make you come."

Even that bare, tiny touch elicited a shiver, and her nipples hardened instantly. She could keep wondering, analyzing, trying to figure out how and why Max commanded her body so easily.

Or I could just enjoy it, and see if it goes both ways.

"I won't beg." She smiled slowly, then reached down and hooked her fingers under his belt, drawing him closer. "I mean, you can *try* to make me...but I'm not going to be as easy as I was down in Louisiana."

"Like I said..." He bent his head and dragged his tongue over the mark left by his teeth. "I love a challenge."

She lifted her leg and rubbed it along the outside of his, the scratchy denim of his jeans rough against her inner thigh. His shirt yielded to her hands as she tugged it free and touched the bare skin of his stomach. "This time, you *have* to take this off."

He tugged the shirt over his head in an impressive flex of muscles, revealing a hard chest that was every bit as sexy as she'd imagined. Polly moaned, torn between excitement and dismay. "*Why* do you have to be so fucking *hot*?"

Without waiting for his answer, she stroked his chest and touched her tongue to his skin. "I should kick you out," she whispered, then licked his nipple. "I shouldn't reward your terrible behavior with mind-blowing sex."

"You would have done the same thing," he retorted as he slid his fingers into her hair. "You're just mad I did it first."

"That's what you think." She unbuckled his belt, keeping her movements easy and unhurried. "If you'd just asked, I could have told you the damn thing wasn't there. Then we could have gone somewhere and had more orgasms."

"Better late than never." He curled her hair around his hand and tugged her head

back. "You broke my God damned brain, woman."

She swayed closer and brushed her breasts against his chest, the contact stealing her breath even though a thin layer of cotton separated them. "So break mine," she urged. "Kiss me. Touch me. Make me come."

Max released her hair and reached down to cup her ass. He lifted her with a laugh, dropped her on the dresser and wedged his body between her legs. "This was so not part of my plan for the day. Why do *you* have to be so hot?"

"Not part of your plan?" Polly licked his neck and blew softly across his skin. "You're a liar." She teased him with a quick press of her teeth before biting him, hard.

He groaned and fisted his hands in her camisole. The fabric gave way with a tear, and he lowered his head and bit the swell of her breast. Polly clutched his shoulders and arched up toward his mouth.

His impatience stoked her ardor, which flared from a smolder to a roar, licking along her nerve endings. She locked her legs around his hips and cried out when his cock ground against her, hot even through their clothes.

Please. She opened her mouth, then sank her teeth into her lip. "I said I wasn't going to beg, didn't I?"

"Might have." His tongue curled around her nipple before he sucked it between his lips with an approving rumble. He worked a hand between their bodies and rubbed his thumb against her clit with another soft growl.

The sensations, both simultaneous and sudden, nearly brought her off the dresser. He turned her on, fast and hard, and with a skill that overwhelmed her.

"Wait—" She pushed him back a little and fumbled with the dresser drawer. Metal *clinked* as she pulled out his handcuffs. "Remember these?" she asked him, then nodded at the bed.

He lifted his head and raised an eyebrow. "You want me to handcuff you to the bed?"

"Uh-uh, baby." A low laugh rasped out of her, and she kissed his jaw. "You owe me." He owed her big time, and she was ready to collect.



If he tried really hard, Max could probably come up with an idea stupider than letting Polly Cassidy handcuff him to her bed. None came to mind, granted, but that

could be due to the fact that most of his blood had migrated south the moment he'd gotten an eyeful of her naked body.

Of course, telling her *no* might put an end to the imminent hot sex, and he wasn't in a hurry to do that. Not when his cock ached and the smell of her desire had driven him so close to the edge already. *And they're just handcuffs. I can break them if I need to.*

He took a step back and reached down to unbutton his pants. "If that's how you want to play it...you're on, sweetheart."

Polly smiled and hopped down from the dresser. She let the tattered camisole fall down her arms and flutter to the floor as she walked slowly toward the bed, his handcuffs dangling from one finger. "You know I'm going to tease you mercilessly, right? You're going to be half crazy by the time I'm done with you."

"Then I'm going to be full-on crazy, because I'm halfway there already." He kicked off his boots and let his gaze caress the curve of her hips and ass as he tugged off his socks. The only thing hotter than the idea of pushing her over the bed and driving into her was the image of those full, lush lips wrapping around his cock. *That* would be worth getting handcuffed for.

She propped a knee on the bed and stroked her belly absently as she watched him undress. "You're slow." She edged her fingers just under the lace waistband of her panties and licked her lips.

"Enjoying the view." He unzipped his pants and shoved them down past his hips. "You are one sexy woman, Polly Cassidy."

A pleased look warmed her eyes, and her grin turned wicked. "I bet you say that to all the naked thieves you meet."

"Nope. Just you." He took a step closer, his gaze dropping to her hand again. "You gonna take those off?"

Polly tossed the handcuffs on the bed and pushed the scrap of white cotton slowly off the lush, rounded swell of her hips. Then she backed away from the bed and let them drop. "Lie down, Max."

There was nothing to do but obey.

She crawled up beside him and snapped one cuff around his wrist, then looped the chain around the headboard and repeated the action with his other wrist. "How's that?" she rasped, leaning over him to rattle the iron headboard.

With her breasts so close, he couldn't stop himself from lifting his head and

dragging his tongue across one nipple. "Perfect."

Polly sat up with a soft laugh and rubbed a hand over her neck and shoulder as she studied him. "What first?" She winked at him and walked her fingers down his chest and stomach, then traced them lightly over his erect cock, which jerked under her touch. "I could get you off, or myself, or both of us. So many choices..."

He had a hard time not thrusting up into her hand. "You want suggestions? I might have a few."

"By all means." She kissed his chest and trailed her tongue down to his belly and back up. "As long as you recognize that I might discard them in favor of my own." Her fingers wrapped firmly around his shaft and squeezed.

Max groaned and curled his hands into fists, making the cuffs rattle against the headboard. "That's a pretty damn good start."

"I know what you want," she said in a sing-song whisper. She straddled one of his thighs and scratched her nails over his hip. "I've seen you watching my mouth. You want me to suck your cock."

"Fuck, yeah." He lifted his thigh and rubbed against her, stifling a groan at how wet she was. "But I can't promise I'll stay in control once you wrap those gorgeous lips around me."

"If you can't hold back, just come." She rocked down on his leg and shuddered. "I bet you recover quickly."

He licked his lips and gave her his most devastating grin. "A few minutes with my face between your legs and I'd be ready to go again."

Polly threw her head back and moaned. "Jesus Christ. Great minds, baby." Her gaze didn't leave his as she wiggled down, still stroking him, and leaned over to flick her tongue over the head of his cock.

Heat flashed through him at the first touch of her wet tongue. He wanted to drive his fingers into her hair, but not enough to break the handcuffs and risk having her stop. So he groaned and watched her, watched her lips and her tongue as they worked over him with enough skill to make him wonder if he was going to make a fool of himself and come like an overeager teenager.

Polly hummed approvingly and closed her lips around his cock, hesitating for a long, teasing moment. Then she glanced up at him through thick lashes and slid her lips down his shaft, pulling him deep into her mouth with gentle suction.

“Fuck!” He couldn’t stop himself from thrusting up a little, not when she felt like heaven wrapped around his cock. “Jesus. *Jesus*, Polly—”

She raised her head and swirled her gorgeous pink tongue around the tip of his cock. “Do it, baby. Fuck my mouth.” She took him into the hot, wet depths of her mouth again.

His brain short-circuited as he thrust up again, a ragged groan tearing free of him. “*Fuck!*”

She sucked harder, meeting his thrusts with her hand and mouth and fervent moans that vibrated around him, setting him on fire with lust and need. The scent of her arousal grew stronger, and her free hand slid under him to grip his ass.

“Polly—Pol—” His hips pushed up again and he growled. “Fuck, I’m gonna come—” Another almost orgasmic moan feathered up out of her throat and tingled through him. She had to have heard him, but she didn’t stop, just took him again and again, her hands trembling on his skin.

He came with a hoarse shout and a rattle of metal on metal. The cuffs dug into his wrists, but the pain was incidental with pleasure roaring through him, intensified by the low sound of approval she made as she coaxed him through his climax.

After several seconds, Polly raised her head and groaned. “Fuck it all. That was the hottest thing I’ve ever seen.” Her eyes were unfocused, and her hands shook. “Jesus.”

“Get up here and let me go,” he commanded in a soft whisper. “It’s my turn.”

At first, she just stared at him. Then she shook her head and crawled up his body. “I don’t need to let you go for that. I don’t *want* to.” Her knees sank into the bed by his head, her lower legs hooked through the circle of his bound arms. “What about this?” she asked, rocking her hips toward his face.

He inhaled the scent of her arousal and groaned. “Closer, then. Let me taste you.”

She hissed in a breath and did as he asked, moving up until another roll of her hips brushed her cunt against his lips. “Yeah?” Her hands gripped the top of the headboard.

He didn’t answer, not with words. Instead he dragged his tongue along her in one long swipe before teasing between her folds to circle her clit. Her back arched and she cried out, one hand uncurling from the wrought iron to stroke her breasts.

She pinched her nipples and murmured softly as she rode his face, the words quiet but clear. “Max... *God*, you’re good. So good.”

“Fuck yeah, I am.” He whispered the words against her inner thigh before he bit her softly. “You want to come? Or you want *me* to tease *you*?”

Polly laughed. “Tease me, you cocky bastard. Then I’m going to ride you until you beg for mercy.”

He bit her again, harder, then turned his mouth back to her cunt with another low growl that he let vibrate against her. He licked her with teasing intent, reveling in the taste of her, in the smell and feeling of arousal and pleasure. His cock stirred to life again with alarming speed, encouraged by the way she twisted above him.

Even with his easy, leisurely exploration, she started shaking above him in mere minutes. Her helpless moans increased in volume and number until she almost shrieked with pleasure. “Oh, God damn it, Max – fuck, *fuck*...”

He speared his tongue inside her and groaned again. “Come.” He dragged his tongue up, then pulled her clit between his lips and moaned his pleasure when she grabbed a handful of his hair and screamed.

A heartbeat later, she scrambled away, panting and shuddering, and snatched up a small bag on the nightstand. She dragged out a condom and ripped it open. Her hands trembled as she rolled the latex onto his cock. “Like this,” she murmured, moving to sit astride his hips. “Yes?”

“Fuck, yes.” He was hard again, which wasn’t surprising considering the way she’d looked writhing above him. “Ride me.”

She braced her hands on his chest and maneuvered until his body pressed against hers. She leaned down and kissed him, her tongue sliding over his. She moaned into his mouth as she pushed down, impaling herself on his cock.

He thrust up to meet her, his hips pushing up hard enough to lift her knees from the bed. He caught her lower lip between his teeth and did it again, desperate to bury himself in the wet, slick heat of her body, to push her over that edge again so fast and hard she couldn’t think of anyone else.

Her back straightened, and she sat up, offering him a mouthwatering view of her body as she rolled her hips over his. A flush colored her chest, and her teeth dug into her bottom lip. “I wanted you,” she whispered, lowering one hand to touch her clit. “That’s why I fucked you before, and why I’ll do it again. Whenever you want me.”

“You sure about that, sweetheart?” He dug his heels into the bed and met the next roll of her hips with a sharp thrust that made her shriek. “We’d never stop fucking.”

It took her a moment to speak. "We have to work sometime. Shouldn't stop us from blowing off some steam now and then, if you want."

Oh, he wanted. He smiled and thrust up again, lust roaring through him every time her perfect mouth fell open on another moan. "You can blow me any time, darling."

She slapped the side of his ass, but desire darkened her eyes and quickened her movements. "I said I was going to make you beg. Should I stop until you do?"

"Only if you want me to break these cuffs and spank *your* ass." Which was more appealing than he wanted to admit. If release hadn't been riding him so hard, he might have done it, but she seemed to get off on the illusion of power. So he groaned and sped up to match the pace of her rocking hips. "Come on, Polly. Come for me. I want to feel it."

Her husky laugh tickled along his spine as Polly leaned forward and ground her clit against his pubic bone. Then her laughter faded into a shuddering, intoxicating sigh. "Oh—*oh...*" Her body clenched, rippling around him, and his name escaped her on a hoarse moan. "*Max...*"

"That's it." He gritted his teeth against the need to explode, watching her face instead as she lost herself in pleasure. But the steady clenching of her body proved to be too much. His eyes rolled back and he ground up into her one last time, roaring his release.

She dropped against him, still rocking gently while she dusted his damp skin with kisses. "We're loud. We'll have to remember that next time."

"Mmm." His wrists were sore from tugging against the cuffs, so he curled his fingers around the chains and gave them a sharp tug, just hard enough to snap the metal.

Except the metal didn't snap.

Frowning, Max tightened his grip and jerked again, harder this time. The metal clinked loudly against the iron headboard, but the chain, which should have given away easily under his amplified strength, held solid. "What the fuck?"

Polly sat up again and arched an eyebrow. "What's good for the goose, baby." She climbed off him, her movements lithe and unhurried. "The lock picks, remember?" She pulled on her panties and kicked the torn camisole out of her way. "I had a witch I know enchant the cuffs. They'll hold."

"You—" He yanked on the cuffs again, hard enough that the metal cut into his

wrists. "Oh, Jesus fuck, woman. You have *got* to be kidding me."

She made a soothing noise, reached for a pair of jeans slung over a nearby chair and flashed him a grin as she shimmied into them. "Your rules, Max. I'm just playing by them." She selected a tight white T-shirt and put it on, smoothing it down over her breasts. "Just...consider this that arousing double-cross you mentioned earlier."

The worst part was that he *did* find it arousing, in a twisted sort of way. *Because she's a challenge.* Still, being stuck to a hotel bed was killing his afterglow. "C'mon, Polly. You proved your point. Let me go, and we'll go chase down that charm together."

She laughed as she piled her hair on top of her head in a sloppy topknot and slid her delicate feet into a pair of sandals. "Sorry. You lost your chance to partner up when you ditched me in the bayou." She stretched, arching her back, and grinned. "I feel terrific. You're quite a ride, baby. Just as good as you think you are. Maybe better."

Fuck. "Don't you dare leave me like this, Cassidy. I will track your ass down."

"I know. You're half in love with me already." Her grin softened into a smile. "I have a plane to catch. I left the key on the dresser, and I'll call in half an hour so someone can come set you loose." She picked up a bag by the door and slung the strap across her body.

Her hand froze on the doorknob, and she turned and blew him a kiss. "I'll see you in Malaysia, Max." The door closed quietly behind her.

Max stared at the door, then groaned and let his head fall back to the bed. Thinking with his cock had gotten him into trouble in the past, but this took the prize for sheer idiocy. Of course, now he *knew* what she was capable of when backed into a corner...

Which meant he had just about a half an hour to plot the perfect revenge.

Your ass is mine, Polly Cassidy.

THE END

About the Author



How do you make a Moira Rogers? Take a former forensic science and nursing student obsessed with paranormal romance and add a computer programmer with a passion for gritty urban fantasy. Toss in a dash of whimsy and a lot of caffeine, and enjoy with a side of chocolate by the light of the full moon.

By day, Bree and Donna are mild-mannered ladies who reside in the Deep South. At night, when their husbands and children are asleep, they combine forces to unleash the product of their fevered imaginations upon the page. To learn more about this romance writing, crime fighting duo, visit their webpage at <http://www.moirarogers.com>. (Disclaimer: crime fighting abilities may appear only in the aforementioned fevered imaginations.)

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