



# Wicked Ties

SHAYLA BLACK

"A WICKED, SENSUAL THRILL FROM FIRST PAGE TO LAST. I LOVED IT!"

—Lora Leigh, author of *Magin's Mark*

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 1**

Besides, aching for a guy whose real name she didn't even know, whose face she'd never seen—whose lifestyle she shouldn't

even ponder—was just dumb.

*So, Master J, is that what a dominant does?* she typed in response, determined to keep the conversation light. *Dish out fantasies?*

*One of the things,* he responded at length. *But that would be*  
**CHAPTER ONE**

*oversimplifying the relationship. His most important goal is to earn his partner's trust. Trust is important in any relationship, but Have you ever wanted to put yourself in the hands of a man*

*especially in one involving Dominance/submission. Without that, whose sole purpose is to give you pleasure?*

*how can a woman freely put herself in a man's care and know that* The words flashed across Morgan O'Malley's laptop

*her well-being and safety will always be first? How can she know* screen. She sucked in a sharp, shocked breath. She'd met this man

*her master will understand her so he can make her every wicked*

in an online chatroom less than three minutes ago. How could he

*fantasy come true?*

know that?

Dominance wasn't just about tying someone to the bed and

He must have guessed, had to have guessed. She hadn't

screwing them into the mattress? Surprise wrinkled Morgan's

told him anything about herself, not one single thing, except her

brow. Trust, care, understanding—she had to admit, that all name and the fact she wanted to interview him for her cable TV

sounded like a fantasy in itself. Certainly, she'd been lacking those show.

qualities in her relationship with her ex-fiancé, Andrew, especially But even through her stunned silence, he kept peeling back

the understanding.

the layers of her secrets.

*Trust allows a woman to connect with the primitive part of*

*Do you want a man to see inside you, all the way to your*

*her that craves the utter surrender of being at her master's mercy, fantasies, the darkest ones you don't even tell your friends about, despite not knowing if plans for her involve pleasure, pain, or both.*

*and make every one of them come true?*

Morgan couldn't deny that Master J intrigued her even

A surge of arousal coiled in her belly. Her palms began to more now than when one of the production assistants, Reggie, had

sweat. Morgan swallowed hard.

given her his bio.

In the silent living room shadowed with the many colors of Toggling to her email, she opened the bio she'd been given dusk, Morgan squirmed on the black leather sofa, shoving desires

and scanned it again.

she didn't dare admit to the back of her mind.

This was business. *He* was business. It wasn't a good idea  
*A member of the BDSM and D/s scene for nearly*  
to have the hots for the next interview subject for her show. It  
*ten years, Master J is experienced in all facets, but*  
might be late-night cable talk, but *Turn Me On* was her job,  
*her continues to learn. He owns a personal security*  
brainchild, her little rebellion... her life.  
*company and has been bodyguard to senators,*

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 2**

*international diplomats, and athletes. A West Point*  
another, she'd read. Having one or two herself was normal, no  
*graduate, he also served in military Special Forces*  
matter what Andrew said.  
*as a team leader before being honorably*  
Morgan squirmed against the leather cushions again,  
*discharged.*  
ignoring any extra moisture between her legs.  
*But a D/s relationship is also about a lot more, Master J*  
Morgan clicked the email closed. The paragraph revealed a  
typed.  
lot about the man whose words made her shiver with dark  
*How do you put someone in manacles, blindfolds, and dark*  
fantasies. Self-discipline, honor, strength. Yet the blurb said  
*very rooms, but still earn their trust? How do you develop an*  
little at the same time. Who was this guy? Could he really bind  
and *emotionally gratifying relationship when one person has*  
*all the tease a woman into making her beg?*  
*power?*

*Morgan?* Her name flashed across the screen. *You still  
It's not like that.  
there?*

Morgan's gaze stayed riveted to her screen as she waited  
*Sorry. Just thinking. Clearly, I have a lot to learn about in  
for more. For a long, silent moment, she held her breath...but  
order to do the show properly. I guess I thought it was all  
about nothing. Master J wasn't going to reply further. Just like  
in the  
velvet ropes and handcuffs.*

bedroom, she supposed. He had the power to give or withhold.  
*It's about that, too. ☺*

Finally, a longer reply appeared in the little chatroom  
She laughed, pushing down the ache curling in her  
window.

belly...and lower. A little curiosity didn't make her depraved.  
*Sorry, but I've had an urgent call. Have to go. If you feel I  
Definitely not. It was just interesting to see how the other half  
have the background to assist with your show, let's meet. I'll  
lived.*

*answer your questions then. Someplace public, so you don't  
worry But it's also an exchange of power and trust, he typed .  
A I might be a serial killer luring you into danger. I can talk  
faster.*

*woman chooses to give her master dominion over her body  
and her I've mastered a lot, but not typing <g>. I still hunt  
and peck.*

*mind. She surrenders her flesh and free will to anything and  
Morgan scuttled her impatience. Not hard when the man  
everything he desires.*

made her smile at his jokes.

*What sort of surrender?* a voice inside of her demanded to

*I understand*, she answered. *Can we meet tomorrow at 3? I* know. A thousand dark images pushed themselves into her brain

*Googled and found a place that seems to be popular there in* from the depths of her fantasies: her kneeling to this stranger's *Lafayette called La Roux. Know where that is?*

cock, him ordering her to spread her legs wide so he could simply

*Cher, I'm a native. I know every crack in the sidewalk*

look at her, her bound to his bed as he prepared to take whatever

*around here.*

he wanted.

Morgan smiled and typed, *Cher? I'm not that tall or old*

Disturbed by the shocking turn of her thoughts, she shook *enough to have had a singing career since the 60s!*

them away. And ignored her rapid breathing.

*LOL. It means dear in French*, he translated. *I'm Cajun, so* Lots of people had bondage fantasies at one time or

*I grew up speaking the language.*

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 3**

Morgan read his reply and ignored the little flutter in her with a bang. Already, she had a growing cult following. With the

belly. Flirtation was a French thing, and he'd been raised with the right material, the show could skyrocket.

culture. It was as natural to him as breathing, no doubt.

Which meant she had to keep her eye on the prize and

*<blushing> I've lived in Los Angeles too long, I guess. I'll focus on work.*

*see you then?*

But after ten minutes of staring at an empty screen, Morgan

*You will. How will I know you? Lots of pretty girls in*

admitted that Master J wouldn't leave her mind. What was it about

*Louisiana. I want to make sure I reveal my innermost secrets to the him?*

*right one.*

*Other than the fact he lives out the fantasies you've ached*

He was a charmer, Morgan bet. He'd have to be with his *about?*

interest in wielding whips and chains. Certainly, most "normal"

Morgan shook her head, determined to ignore the women would run screaming in the opposite direction at the maddening little voice. She was curious, not deviant. No matter

thought of a little pain and a lot of obedience with their sex.

what Andrew said or her mother would think.

*I'll be wearing a straw hat, sunglasses, and a big, boxy*

With a sigh, she reached for the phone and dialed the *coat*, she answered.

number of the production assistant in Los Angeles.

*Sounds more like a disguise*, Master J returned.

"Reggie," she said when he answered. "Hey, I talked to this

He had no idea. And she wasn't advertising the fact she had

Master J guy you hooked me up with and I read his bio. I'm a stalker. Morgan only hoped the reason she needed a disguise meeting him tomorrow. What's his scoop? Learn anything new?"

would be caught and start rotting in hell soon.

"Yeah," returned the older man, his voice scratchy from his *See you tomorrow*, she jotted back.

two-pack-a-day habit. "I did some calling around Louisiana, asked

*Au revoir.*

people at bondage clubs if they've ever heard of him, just to make

The message on her screen told her moments later that sure he's legit. He checks out."

Master J had left the private chatroom. With a sigh, she moved to

That was a relief—but it wasn't. Reggie had quickly close the chatroom window.

become like a surrogate father to her, and she trusted him. But Her hand trembled. No, her whole body trembled, despite ignoring her curiosity about Master J would have been much easier

the heat snaking under her skin.

if Reggie hadn't been able to vouch for him. If only she could have She was tired, that's all.

written him off as another crackpot who wanted to talk about sex

*Tired doesn't make you ache in very personal places*, the on TV.

voice in her head taunted. *Tired doesn't make you wet.*



Morgan bit her lip...but her inquisitive nature won out.

“Tired makes me hear pesky voices in my head,” she

“What did everyone say about him?”

grumbled.

“A bunch. He’s casual, not heavy into the lifestyle, but

She tried to push Master J, the man, aside and focus on the

fairly regular at a few clubs. Apparently, he has a way with women

questions she’d ask him tomorrow. The show’s outline had to be in

and a reputation to go with it. More than one person I talked to said soon, and she wanted to be prepared to launch her second season

that he could make Mother Teresa beg to be tied down and fucked.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

#### **Page 4**

He definitely wants a woman submissive. Hey, you’re not busy with work. It’ll be fine.”

interested, are you?”

“If anything happens, I think you should call Dad.”

“What?” Morgan’s heart skipped a handful of beats. “Me?”

Morgan gaped at him, holding in a sarcastic scoff. “He may

No!” She scoffed. “Why would I want a bully who gets off on be your dad. He’s my biological father—the one who’s been making a woman feel inferior?”

denying I exist for the last twenty-five years.”

“You sure?” Reggie sounded skeptical.

Brandon sighed. “Morgan, you know how it is with

“Do I seem like the type to get into this sort of stuff?” she  
politics, especially in the south. If people knew he’d had a  
fling

countered.

with a barely-legal volunteer while he had a wife and three  
little

Reggie said nothing. Distress coiled through Morgan.

boys at home...”

A rattling of the lock at the front door had Morgan’s head

“I know it would ruin the senator from the great state of  
zooming in the other direction. She sighed with relief when  
her

Texas.”

half-brother, Brandon, shouldered his way inside.

“They’re talking about a bid for the White House in 2012.”

“Gotta go,” she told Reggie. “I’ll call you after I’ve talked  
Sympathy and regret tangled on his attractive face.

to this guy tomorrow.”

“Exactly why I can’t call him. Not that he’d take my call,

“Hey, little sister,” Brandon greeted as she hung up.

anyway.”

Shoving the conversation with Reggie out of her mind, she

“He would if you were in danger. Dad can protect you.”

rose and stepped up on tip toe to hug him. “Hi. Good day?”

Morgan had her doubts but said nothing. “Too bad we can’t

His aristocratic mouth pursed into a frown. “Not exactly. I  
just tell him I’m your fiancée. It’s working with everyone  
else.”

have to go to Iraq for the next three weeks.”

“Hmm. If our actual relationship ever came to light, we’d  
Surprise, and if Morgan was honest, trepidation punched  
have to admit to incest or lying. Not fun choices.”

her in the stomach. “Iraq? I thought you sat behind a desk  
most of

“Let’s hope it doesn’t come to that. I don’t think my sick  
the time.”

stalker knows I’ve left L.A., so he has no idea where to find  
me.”

“Mostly, but there are exceptions.”

Nodding, Brandon started to sift through the day’s mail.

“Oh, wow... Why Iraq?”

When he came to a big manila envelope, he frowned. “Does

“Classified.” He gave a bitter laugh. “You know the drill...

anyone know you’re here in Houston?”

I can’t say where I’ll be and what I’ll be doing. I won’t be near  
a Other than Master J, whom she’d met online all of fifteen

phone or computer for most of the time. Morgan, I don’t want  
to

minutes ago, Reggie, and a few close friends back home?

“No.”

leave you. It’s dangerous, and I know you’re afraid.”

Anxiety thundered across Brandon’s face. “Someone here

She swallowed. Brandon had already done so much by

knows you. This was in the mailbox. No name, no postage. It  
was

taking her in, despite Daddy Dearest’s ire, protecting her from  
the hand-delivered.”

scum who stalked her. She was afraid, but she couldn’t let  
Brandon

He held out the package to her, and Morgan took it with  
feel guilty for doing his job.

dread boiling in her stomach. She knew that handwriting.

“I’ll be fine.” She’d think of something—she had to. “I’m  
Dear God, how had he found her here? And so quickly?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 5**

*No!*

cops in L.A. Whoever this was hadn’t stolen anything,  
vandalized

Hands shaking, breath short, she opened the envelope and  
anything. He hadn’t hurt anyone—yet. Morgan could feel his  
anger

extracted the contents. As she did, red rose petals with moist  
building in the frequency of his contact, the fact he’d followed  
her centers and dead edges fluttered downward, skittering  
across the

to Texas. And the police wouldn’t care what her gut told her.  
blond hardwood floor. They looked faintly like fat drops of  
blood

Brandon hung up the phone. “They’ll be here soon.”  
splattered all around her.

Morgan just shrugged...and tried to calm the panic

Morgan gasped. *He* knew she was here. How had he found  
bubbling inside her.

her?

With nothing to do but wait, she started to shove the

Then her gaze fell to the photos. Pictures of her, one  
pictures back in the envelope. When she encountered an

arriving at LAX the day she'd fled to Houston. The next of her  
in

obstruction, she realized something else lay inside. She stuck  
her

Brandon's backyard wearing thin sweatpants and a tank top  
with

hand between the layers of paper, perplexed. Usually the  
disturbed

nipples teased hard by a cool morning breeze. The last a photo  
of

bastard only sent pictures—disconcerting, disturbingly private  
her in her sage silk-and-lace shift with matching robe, kissing  
pictures, but nothing more.

Brandon's cheek as they stood in the driveway before he left  
for

Not today.

work. Just this morning.

Out of the benign brownish envelope she yanked a scrap of  
Fear biting at her belly, Morgan didn't protest when  
paper with a scrawl of ugly black writing.

Brandon grabbed the photos from her numb fingers. He  
flipped

*You belong to me. Only to me.*

through them with a snarled curse.

Morgan swallowed a huge lump of fear. Now he was

“These are from your stalker, aren't they? He's been here.

communicating with her. *To her.* Conveying his  
possessiveness, Son of a bitch!” He raked a hand through his  
brown hair, ruffling

his fury that she might have another man in her life. This  
lunatic

the banker's cut. "I'm calling the police."

didn't know that Brandon was her half-brother. He'd bought the

God, she wished it was that simple. "They can't do

cover story Brandon concocted, as much to explain her presence at

anything. The police in L.A. told me he was going to have to do

his house to others, as to warn off her overzealous psycho.

something illegal before they could spend any energy finding him.

While the thought of being alone little scared Morgan, part

Taking pictures isn't against the law."

of her was glad Brandon had to leave tomorrow. If something

"He's been on my property." Brandon held up the photo of

happened to him, it wouldn't be because her stalker had decided to

her in the backyard of his rambling Houston home, his big fingers

get the "competition" out of the way. In the three weeks Brandon

wrinkling the photo. "My backyard is private. The only way he

would be gone, she'd figure something out, find somewhere else to

could take this picture is by trespassing. There's a law broken."

go, so that when he returned, she didn't endanger the only one of

He grabbed the nearest cordless phone and dialed 911.

Senator Ross's sons to give a rip about her.

Morgan just shook her head.

Maybe, like Reggie suggested before she left L.A., she

While Brandon was right, she doubted the Houston police  
needed a bodyguard...

were going to be any more motivated to do something than the

“You really have no idea who this creep is?” Brandon

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 6**

growled, staring at the note over her shoulder.

sultry all around. Fighting off exhaustion after a nearly  
sleepless

“None.” She shook her head. “I wish I did. I have no

night, she glanced at her watch. Three o’clock. She’d made  
good

disgruntled co-workers that I’m aware of. My ex-fiancé left  
me,

time on her drive from Houston. Master J should be here very  
not the other way around.”

soon.

“Someone who’s watched your show? A fan who doesn’t

Her stomach tightened at the thought.

know where to draw the line?”

That wasn’t the only reason, though. She also felt eyes on

Morgan shrugged. “Maybe. I’ve received odd fan mail

her, watching, assessing, probing. The hairs on the back of her  
before, but nothing this threatening or privacy-invading.”

neck stood up. She looked around, scanned the crowd.

Nothing.

“I’m going to find someone to get to the bottom of this,

Morgan took a deep breath, trying to quell her uneasiness. kiddo. I'm not going to let anything happen to you," he vowed.

It wasn't hard to imagine that if a psycho would follow her from

At times like this, Morgan wondered how she and Brandon Los Angeles to Houston, he'd go the extra mile to trail her to were descended from the same loins as Senator Ross's other sons.

Lafayette. She was probably safe sitting here in the middle of a

They were nothing like the man and his other greedy, power-sunny public square, but if he recognized her, he'd see her with

hungry offspring.

Master J and make assumptions that would make him even angrier

"Damn it," he cursed suddenly into the silence. "I wish like than the appearance that she was marrying Brandon. Then when

hell I didn't have to go tomorrow. The car is picking me up at o-

night fell, and she was alone in Brandon's house...

five hundred, and the timing couldn't be worse. Shit! Uncle Sam

No, she couldn't think that now. She would have to keep can be a demanding mistress."

this all business, so that if her stalker identified her and watched Morgan didn't know exactly what Brandon did; he wasn't

this meeting, he wouldn't assume anything sexual between her and



allowed to tell anyone. From things he'd said in the three years  
Master J.

since he'd found the skeleton in their father's closet and  
tracked

She adjusted the scarf and hat to make sure they completely  
her down, she'd guessed he was in Intelligence. She had no  
idea

covered her hair, and pushed the sunglasses up on her face.  
Maybe

who for.

she was being paranoid. No one should be able to recognize  
her

"If you hate the job so much, and you want to run for office  
like this. Maybe after this interview, she would slip away to  
that

as badly as I know you do, why don't you just do it?"

cozy European-looking bed and breakfast she'd seen on her  
way

For the first time she could remember, Brandon wouldn't  
into town and catch up on sleep so she could figure out how to  
meet her gaze. He turned away, fists clenching.

shake this stalker.

He unclenched them with obvious effort, then said, "I  
A waiter came by with a wide smile, white teeth stark  
can't."

against his ebony skin. Morgan did her best to smile back as  
she

#

ordered iced tea.

The following day, Morgan dropped down into a wrought-

Once he'd gone, she tugged the boxy, lightweight coat  
iron chair at a little sidewalk café in a quaint cluster of unique  
she'd dragged out of Brandon's closet down over her hips and  
shops. The February afternoon hung thick, lazy, and  
surprisingly

flipped up the collar. The waiter arrived with her tea. She  
checked **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –  
Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 7**

her watch again. Five after three. She'd give Master J another  
few

*Oh, dear God. . .*

minutes. Sitting here in the open, vulnerable to the sick man  
who'd Fire raced up her arm, turning her heartbeat into a  
staccato

been following her...suddenly it struck her as very unwise.

chug. He lingered, a hot breath caressing the back of her hand,  
his

"You must be Morgan."

fingertips teasing the sensitive center of her palm. Tingles  
burst

The deep whisper came from behind her, delivered right in  
across her skin, up her arm.

her ear. His warm breath cascaded down the side of her neck,  
and

His effect on her didn't end there. Instead, the impact of his  
she gave an involuntary shiver.

presence, his touch, dove deep inside her, where an ache began  
to

She started, turned, stunned anyone had been able to sneak

pulse gently between her legs. As if her clit needed to announce

up on her, as jumpy as she was. But he'd been utterly silent. the fact her libido wanted to get naked with this man.

And he was breathtakingly gorgeous.

*Business, business!* The demand chased itself in her head.

Thick, dark hair teased his broad forehead. An angular jaw

With a discreet tug, Morgan pulled her hand free. Master J

and cleft chin dusted with a five o'clock shadow shouted his smiled as he sat beside her—rather than across—and scooted his

masculinity with all the subtlety of a sonic boom. His wide mouth

chair a few inches closer. She tried to ignore her awareness his curled up with an expression that looked half smile, half challenge.

thigh brushing hers, the tingling under her skin.

But, oh, his eyes. They captured her. Accented by a sweep of black

“Thank you for meeting me here, Mr... What would you

brows, those knowing eyes of his watched her, as if he could see

like me to call you, since I don't know your name?”

deep inside her. As if he knew all her secrets.

That grin seemed to taunt her with her own uncertainty and

Allowing her gaze to wander south didn't help tame her

his wicked knowledge of their forthcoming sexual discussion.

“For

pulse, either. Master J stood about six feet tall, with broad now, just call me sir.”

shoulders and a body of well-honed muscle evident under a tight

“Okay. Yes, sir.”

black T-shirt that made her think of a mountain with its solid, quiet The moment the words were out of her mouth, Morgan permanence. No one could move a mountain. No one was going to

realized how sexual they sounded. How sexual he’d intended they

move this man either, unless he wanted to be moved.

sound. Not just deferential, though they were that, too. But around Just staring at him jolted her with attraction and a healthy

Master J, she just couldn’t seem to muster enough air to power her

dose of lust.

voice beyond a husky murmur.

Thank goodness their time alone would be limited to this

*What would it be like to call him sir in private?*

one meeting in public. Otherwise, Morgan didn’t think she could

Despite the dark sunglasses shielding her, his dark eyes be responsible for her behavior.

seemed to dance with the knowledge of her every thought, every

She swallowed, trying to find her voice. “Yes, I’m

sinful feeling, as he held her gaze, as if he could read the desire all Morgan.”

over her face.

When she stuck out her hand, he didn’t just shake it. Too

Morgan used the untouched tea in front of her as an excuse

simple. Tangling his gaze with hers, he bent and brought her hand

to look away and scoured her brain for a safe, neutral topic. to his mouth, placing a kiss on her fingers.

Hard to do that when she'd invited him here to talk about

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 8**

sex.

thrilled to be renewed. Since the network provides cable

“So, according to the bio I received about you, you’re in programming geared toward women and couples, I think it’s a the personal security business. A bodyguard?”

perfect fit.”

“Exactly.” He shrugged those deliciously massive

“Hmm. Tell me about this season’s shows.”

shoulders. “I guard a lot of politicians and their families,

Again, another subtle command. “Well, we’re still at the diplomats, an occasional athlete.”

ideas stage, but we’re definitely pursuing shows about boudoir

“You meet a lot of interesting people, I’m sure. Do you photography, couples massage, erotic finger painting and—“ work with celebrities?” she asked.

“And Dominance and submission.”

A hint of humor curved his wide mouth to something

Morgan swallowed. She’d been caught up in enthusiasm

nearing a smile. “Too flaky. Politicians are liars, but at least you for her show and almost forgotten they were going to discuss that

know what to expect. You Hollywood types are either paranoid,  
topic. The topic that fueled her shameful late-night fantasies.  
self-absorbed, or as psycho as the people stalking you. No  
thanks.”

“Yes.”

Morgan couldn’t decide if she was annoyed or amused.

He quirked a dark brow at her expectantly, somehow

“I’m none of the above.”

managing to look sharp, displeased, and nonthreatening all at  
once.

“Give it time.” He winked.

Puzzled, Morgan stared. What did he want?

Incorrigible described him perfectly. A hint of arrogance

“Yes, sir,” she ventured.

laced with a healthy dose of sex appeal and teasing humor.  
The

His smile dazzled, rewarded. “Very nice.”

mixture went down real smooth, thanks to his flirtation skills  
and a

“I thought such forms of address were reserved for one’s...”

hint of Southern charm. No doubt, he was lethal to a woman’s

“Submissive? Frequently, but you contacted me for a quick  
common sense. Morgan swallowed.

lesson or two. I thought it best to start with a hint of the  
dynamic The waiter came by, and Master J ordered a cup of  
thick

and see how you do with it.” He leaned forward, an elbow  
braced

Louisiana chicory coffee. She shuddered when the waiter  
brought

on the table. His gaze poured directly into her, molten and  
it to their table moments later.

unrelenting. “Do you understand what it means to submit to a  
“Tell me more about your show.” His words should have  
man? Completely surrender?”

been an invitation, but Morgan heard the subtle command in  
them.

Morgan tried to suck in a breath, stunned to find it ragged  
Not harsh, not driving. But his voice held a note of steel—one  
that beyond her control. His eyes flared hot with approval.  
made her stomach tighten...and her womb clench.

“T—this isn’t about me,” she argued breathlessly. “I just  
“*Turn Me On* combines interviews and facts to explore  
need to relate the concept to the—”

various facets of sexual life for both established couples and  
the

“How can you relate without a taste of it, *cher*? A little  
newly dating, from the vanilla to the way out there. Last  
season, I nibble ain’t gonna hurt you.” The smile he flashed  
her could only

did a show one week about sex etiquette on a first date,  
another

be termed pure sin. “You might even like it.”

about ‘friends with benefits,’ then followed it up with couples  
who That’s exactly what Morgan was afraid of.

had tattoo fantasies. This will be my second season, and I was

She did her best to send him an expression that was all

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 9**

business. “It doesn’t matter if I like it. After all, I managed to read as a book. Easier, even. Morgan closed her eyes, drew in a

finish taping the show about couples’ tattoo fantasies successfully breath. Then another. Her mind raced.

without ever getting a tattoo myself. It’s all about understanding

“Don’t think too hard,” he cautioned. “Lying invokes why it’s important to them.” punishment.”

“Paying someone to imprint a design on your skin while

“Punishment? You have no right!” she returned in a heated your significant other watches is a lot less personal than being whisper.

blindfolded, naked, and bound for your master’s pleasure.”

He stared for a long moment. “I told you yesterday online

With a gulp, Morgan realized he was right. Worse, that

that a relationship of this sort requires a great deal of trust. I trusted nibble he offered was starting to sound like a feast to her neglected that you were who you said you were. In order to earn a little of

sex drive.

your trust, I allowed your production assistant access to some very No. This time around, Adam was offering the apple of

personal information about me. That’s right. No need to look temptation to Eve, and she was smart enough to know better. If she

surprised. I knew the minute he started calling around about me. If seemed interested, it was because he filled her head with

I hadn’t advised my clubs in advance they could give your guy



suggestion. He was hard to ignore. She wasn't depraved, wasn't

information, no one would have even said good morning to the kind of woman to get off on letting a bully chain her down and

Reggie, much less confirmed the details of my sex life."

tell her what to do. The idea was just novel. She had a purely

He shifted in his seat, brushing his thigh against hers again, intellectual curiosity in the concept. Okay, mostly intellectual. That then lifted her chin with his finger. Morgan melted—a combination

didn't mean she should indulge.

of shock and arousal, topped with the delicious thrill of Master J's Even if Master J looked like the kind of man who could overwhelming sex appeal.

have invented the concept of pleasure.

"Trust," he murmured. "I placed some in you. If we're

"What are you afraid of?" he asked.

going to work together, you need to have a bit in me. I'm not going *Myself*.

to ravish you or force you or any other melodramatic scenario

She looked away from his intent gaze. "It's just not my

running through your head. If I'm going to help you understand the

thing."

psychology of Dominance and submission, you have to have

That displeased brow snapped up again. His glare filled enough trust to be honest with me. And with yourself. Do you with impatient demand.

understand what I'm saying?"

“Sir,” she added, almost against her will.

“Y—yes, sir.”

His expression softened. “In the few minutes I’ve been

“Excellent. Now, for the last time, why are you afraid of sitting here, your skin has flushed, the heartbeat pulsing at your

the idea of submitting?”

neck has accelerated, and your nipples have hardened. I know the

A loaded question, one she didn’t know how to answer.

scent of arousal. I can smell yours. I’m going to ask you again;

Rejection. Being ridiculed again. Shame. Fear of pain and what are you afraid of?”

degradation. A stronger fear that she’d love being mastered by

Shock punched her gut. *Oh, my. . .* She’d been as easy to

someone like him and be unable to deal with the shame and guilt.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 10**

She couldn’t admit that—not any of it. She might as well

time her stalker had approached, he’d been as silent as smoke, as

hand him her soul on a silver platter.

invisible as air. Panic ate at her gut.

“Please,” she whispered. “Please...”

“I can’t stay. I’m sorry...”

Master J’s jaw tightened, his eyes narrowed. For some

He grabbed her again, looking determined to shake answers

crazy reason, she hated letting him down. She owed him nothing,

out of her. Instead, he froze, his gaze zeroed in on something damn it. Nothing at all. He was an interview subject and he'd be

across the street.

compensated for his time and information. Period.

Morgan felt the energy burst through his body a second

Fighting the dueling impulses of resisting until hell froze before he pushed her to the ground. "Down!"

over and giving in, it took Morgan a few moments to realize that

He shoved her under a table and covered her body with his their waiter had returned to refill Master J's coffee. Then the young an instant before a gunshot erupted above her head. guy looked at her with a confounded sort of smile.

"Some dude paid me twenty bucks to give this to you."

He handed her a regular mailing envelope—with very familiar handwriting.

The waiter departed.

Her heart started pounding. The speed of light had nothing on her as she opened the envelope to find a handful of red rose petals with soft centers and dead edges. They spilled through her

fingers, and she gasped, feeling all blood drain from her face.

"No..." She looked around the sunny square with panic.

"No!"

"Morgan?" Master J questioned, voice laced with concern.

She looked at him with wild eyes. "He's here. *Here*.

Followed me. Oh, my... I have to go." She sucked in a scared

breath and clenched trembling fists. “Hide. Now!”

Master J grabbed her by the shoulders. “Who is here and where are you going?”

Shrugging free of his touch, she looked around frantically for any face that might be dangerous or familiar. Most other chairs in the square sat empty, as did a few nearby windows and

balconies. Shadowed storefronts held any number of people, but

they all looked like natives. The little coffeehouse’s other patrons either took little notice of her or cared even less. Like every other **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 11**

let Morgan die.

“I’ll get you out of here safely.” He whispered the vow in her ear.

His churning gut demanded he draw his .38 and return fire.

But there were too many people around to take that risk. And he

sensed it would scare the hell out of Morgan.

She was already terrified, damn it. She smiled pretty for the

## CHAPTER TWO

camera for a living, not dodged bullets.

When the waiter had delivered the letter to their table and Jack Cole curled his body protectively over Morgan's tiny he'd seen the sweet flush drain from her face, leaving behind female form and used the small iron table to shield her as another

chalk-white shock as half-dead rose petals spilled into her hands,

shot rang out. People around them screamed and scrambled away

he'd smelled her fear. After catching a glint of gunmetal in the in the melee. He swore as she trembled violently beneath him. sunlight on a roof across the street...Jack'd had no doubt what Damn it! Revenge was *so* close, and now this? He couldn't would happen next.

fuck his enemy's woman until she screamed *his* name if she was He hated to be right about shit like this. dead.

Glancing at the chair Morgan had occupied moments ago, Fury rattled through him, but the fact someone was trying he saw the discolored gouges left by unforgiving bullets. He swore

to thwart his revenge wasn't the only reason. Nope, he was again.

downright pissed that some asshole had filled such a small but Beneath him, Morgan tried to sit up. Jack held her in place. vibrant woman with complete terror.

“Stay down!”

Admittedly, he’d lured Morgan here to use her, but never to

“I need to go. Run. H—hide.”

physically hurt her. Just the opposite. He would find out what

A quick glance over the table at the rooftop across the

made her tick and fulfill every one of her fantasies until her  
body street showed their shooter had fled. Either that, or come  
in for a hummed with satisfaction.

closer shot during the chaos. That meant they were easy  
targets and Until she no longer had any interest in Brandon  
Ross and

he had to get Morgan out of this open area fast.

left the son of a bitch.

“I’ll get you to safety,” Jack emphasized, dragging Morgan

The jackoff currently at the other end of the gun, however,  
to her feet. “Are you hurt?”

had other ideas, like planting a bullet between her eyes.

She shoved the hat back over her head and tightened the

Another shudder went through Morgan. She held in a cry.  
scarf beneath, which covered her hair. “No.”

Jack hugged her tighter, shoving her right against the iron  
table.

“Then let’s run!”

Saving her was instinct. An occupational hazard. A necessity.

He grabbed her small, cold hand in his. Engulfed it. Damn,

Brandon Ross had earned this revenge three years ago, and  
Jack

she was tiny, much smaller than a powerful name like Morgan  
planned to deliver him humiliation in spades. He wasn’t about  
to

implied.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 12**

Taking off as fast as his legs would carry him, Jack tugged  
Raising a fist, he hammered on it with all his might, not caring  
if Morgan behind him, ducking behind upturned tables when  
the

he left a dent. While he waited, he looked over both shoulders  
to

shots rang out again. He dragged her behind the cover of the  
café's see if they were being followed.

coffee bar, then pulled her around the corner of the building,

A blast of gunfire erupted, kicking up chunks of brick not  
silently urging her to keep up. She did, clutching her hat  
against

six inches from Morgan's side.

her head with her spare hand. Jack looked beyond Morgan  
with a

With a quick scan of the alley, he cursed. It was ripe with  
frown. No way to tell if the shooter was following in this  
crowd,

trash bins and overgrown with crawling vines, providing  
plenty of

but he assumed so. Better safe than dead.

places for her shooter to hide.

"Where are we going?"

"Son of a bitch!" he banged on the beat-up metal surface

Jack didn't answer; he was too busy improvising a plan in  
again. "Someone answer the damn door."

his head. In silence, he pulled her up streets, down alleys.  
More

Finally, a familiar bleached blonde wrenched the door  
gun shots rang out. A bullet whizzed past his ear, and he  
swore. If open. "Jesus, Jack. What the hell is wrong?"

this son of a bitch harmed a hair on Morgan's head, Jack was  
going

He pushed Morgan inside, then followed into the back  
to enjoy beating him senseless with his bare hands.

room cluttered with empty beer cans. "Shooter out there. I  
need

Ducking into a busy store, they narrowly avoided crashing  
your help."

into an elderly woman. Stepping aside so the scowling  
grandma

A child's stick pony and a riding crop lay right next to the  
and her walker could pass cost them precious seconds.

stage entrance. Angelique had apparently just performed.

As soon as the path cleared, he took Morgan's small hand

He slammed the door the door behind him and again

in his again and tugged, forcing her to run again. Out the back  
of

scanned the darkened room, illuminated by a single red bulb  
and

the store, down a narrow walkway, into a darkening alley.  
Thank

decorated with peeling black paint. One thin door separated  
this

God he knew this town as well as the shape of his own face.  
area from main stage and the throbbing music in the club  
beyond.



Another series of staccato blasts sounded again, this time in  
“A shooter? Holy... Who have you pissed off now?”  
front of the store they’d just exited.  
“Alyssa, this is Morgan,” he shouted over the music. “She’s  
*Shit!*  
the hostess of a cable TV show—”  
“Run faster, *cher*.”  
“You’re Morgan O’Malley! I love *Turn Me On!*”  
Panting, sweating, she merely nodded. And picked up the  
Morgan, who had doffed her sunglasses, extended her hand  
pace.  
to Alyssa. Hmm. Blue eyes rimmed in red, a smattering of  
At the far end of an alley, they came to a metal door with  
freckles, very fair skin—not Brandon’s usual type. But times  
scarred black paint and red lettering that read Sexy Sirens.  
Even  
changed, he supposed.  
with the door closed, it vibrated with the pounding of raucous  
Jack drawled, “Then I’m assuming you’d like to help me  
music and the rowdy crowd inside—despite the fact it was  
barely  
keep her alive long enough to do more shows. The shooter was  
three in the afternoon.  
aiming at her.” Jack turned to the other woman. “Morgan, this  
is  
From experience, Jack knew the door would be locked.  
Alyssa Devereaux, owner of Sexy Sirens. The most famous—  
or

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## Page 13

infamous—gentleman’s club in southern Louisiana, depending on

“Morgan, tell me what’s going on, *cher*?”

your point of view.”

Her skin still had all the color of a corpse, especially

Brandon’s little woman flashed a weak smile, trying her

framed by the dark coat and the floppy hat, which was too large for damndest not to stare at Alyssa’s inch-thick makeup, near indecent

her small body. She was terrified out of her mind, but still skirt, and fuck-me boots. There was nothing subtle about Alyssa.

managed to nod. Jack breathed a sigh of relief.

She still dressed like a stripper, though she hadn’t danced around a

“A—about three months ago, someone started sending me pole in years. She sucked a cock like a woman trying to ingest the

mail. Pictures of me in different places, mostly public. Weird, but brass off a doorknob. She had worse language than him. But she

not threatening. About five weeks ago, he started taking pictures of also had a big, big heart.

me in and around my house, through windows. O—one he took of

Alyssa would use her wicked tongue to take the skin off his me pulling out of my driveway while he was in my garage. I can

balls if she had any idea that Morgan wasn’t a client but the means tell he’s angry. I don’t know why.

to achieve revenge. She might run an establishment where women

“I came to Houston to be with a...friend and to escape took their clothes off for horny men, but she made sure *no one* him.” She blew out a breath, forged ahead. “He followed me. I crossed the line with any girl under her roof. Jack planned on didn’t know it until yesterday when this arrived.”

crossing every line he could think of.

She unzipped her boxy coat just enough to fish out a

“Why would someone shoot at you?” Alyssa asked Morgan folded-over envelope from the oversized purse bisecting her chest.

with a frown.

Morgan handed it to him with a shaking hand.

“That is a very good question,” Jack answered, piercing

Tension gripping his gut, Jack ripped it open. Pictures

Morgan with an unrelenting gaze, one he hoped like hell would

spilled out. Morgan in an airport, dressed in low-rise jeans, a baggy persuade her to tell him the truth. He hadn’t had the chance yet to T-shirt, and her hair shoved into a baseball cap. He only

establish more than the barest amount of authority. She had little

recognized her profile, her stubborn chin, the freckles across her

reason to trust him. Damn it, another few hours, and he would have

nose that made him wonder how far they extended down her body.

spent time in her bed, deep in her body, establishing his

They gave him an insane urge to play connect the dots.  
dominance. He would have had some assurance that she would  
The next one was of her reading a magazine on a patio  
accept his help. As it was now...he had nothing.  
chair. The magazine covered her face. He saw only her hands,  
the  
Not at all the way he'd planned his revenge.  
cover of *People*, a splattering of delicate freckles on her arms  
—

“Jack?” she said his name experimentally, voice erratic,  
and sweet, unbound breasts, nearly visible through a thin white  
still shaking.

tank top, with ripe cherry nipples that made his mouth water.  
He wasn't pleased to hear the edge of fear and wariness in  
From the instant he'd heard whispers that she was his  
her voice. He much preferred a sultry “sir” coming from that  
former pal Brandon's fiancée, he'd been intrigued. Talking to  
her

pillowy mouth while she pretended indifference.

online had only heightened his interest. Morgan in these  
pictures,

But they'd get back to that, just as soon as he got to the  
in the flesh, engorged his cock. He couldn't wait to get her  
bound

bottom of this shit.

to his bed and begging to come—granting his revenge.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 14**

But there was something else about her...something

up to him to keep her alive. “Morgan, I’m a bodyguard. I won’t

pounded him with familiarity. He felt as if he should know her, watch you die when I can get you out of here in one piece.”

like he’d seen her before and not just her picture on her show’s “How much?”

Web site. Had he ever met her? No, he would have remembered a

Jesus, someone had been shooting at her and she wanted to woman like Morgan. Still, there was something about her. He’d

barter? “On the house.”

figure it out.

Surprise widened her mouth. “Why?”

Swallowing a lump of rising lust, Jack flipped to the last

He sent her a cool shrug. “If you’re dead, there goes my picture and froze. The always-elegant Brandon Ross in a designer

fifteen minutes of fame.”

suit. He had his back to the camera as he leaned down to kiss

She lifted her red-rimmed blue eyes to him and shot him a

Morgan. Jack could see only her half-bare legs covered by a bit of

cynical glare. “Seriously. It’s clear you’re not a famemonger.”

green silk and black lace, and the lightly freckled arms she curled So she had better sense than to fall for his line. But Jack

around the Brandon’s neck. The sight made his gut roll.

still wanted to make her look at him with those innocent blue eyes

And the haphazard scrawl of the note at the bottom of the

while he force-fed her some logic. She couldn't be sane and deny

envelope, with its ominous, possessive tone did nothing to ease his that she needed help. But he understood why she'd try.

tension.

He was a relative stranger—but that wasn't her only

The last picture, the wife-to-be saying goodbye to her man

hesitation. He'd bet every dime in his pocket on that. From their

before he left for a day at the office, also confirmed that Morgan

brief face time before the shooter arrived, he realized Morgan had

O'Malley was Brandon Ross's woman. She was the means to pay

some interest in him. And that she had curiosity about his sexual

his old buddy back for his stab in the back. He had to get Morgan

leanings. More curiosity than someone merely researching a TV

out of here alive and undetected to do it.

show. Her reluctant arousal drew him like nothing had in years.

"So this stalker followed you here from L.A.?" he asked.

"That still doesn't change the fact you need me. The

"Yes." Her voice still shook.

shooter knows you're in this building. You can't just walk out

Jack sighed. "Dedicated and sick. Not a good combination.

now. I can get you out of here."

Clearly, he's smart if he's able to take pictures of you without you Morgan set her jaw. Jack watched her fighting the urge to knowing it or his identity. He knows his way around a gun. I don't

bite off a refusal. She didn't, proving once again that she was think you can just walk out of here on your own unharmed, smart.

Morgan. You need help. I can give it to you."

"How?"

She hesitated, then spoke in a surprisingly smoky voice.

"You'll dress as Alyssa. She'll fix you up with

"You've gotten me out of the path of bullets that would have likely appropriately inappropriate clothes."

killed me. I can't ask you to risk—"

"She'll need help with makeup, too," Alyssa pointed out. "I

"You didn't ask; I'm offering." The asshole clearly knew don't have freckles, Jack."

his way to Brandon's house, and Morgan didn't look like the kind

A quick glance at Morgan proved she had a mere hint of of girl with training in weapons and hand-to-hand combat. It was

cosmetics on her pale face. "Yeah, okay. Do it."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 15**

"No. This plan won't work," Morgan protested.

"Alyssa has a knack for picking out clothes that make any

"You got a better idea, one that doesn't end with you in a woman look bodacious enough to be a centerfold."

pine box?”

“Then what?” Morgan fidgeted nervously, her gaze darting

Waiting for her to process the truth he couldn’t afford to  
to the door, as if expecting her unwanted admirer to burst  
through

soften for her, Jack watched Morgan. Up close, he could see  
well-

it at any second.

proportioned features, a full mouth, a nearly poreless  
complexion

“We’ll need to slip past this bastard and get you to safety.”

that was too fair to be caused by anything but fear. Arched  
brows

“And then?”

in some indiscernible color in this dim light. Without  
Dracula’s

“We’ll cross that bridge once we’ve made our way out of  
complexion, the crappy hat and scarf, or the three-times-too-  
big

here, okay? I’ll get you to someplace safe until this mess can  
be

coat, he suspected that, as an all-around package, she’d be  
sorted out.”

gorgeous. Senator Ross’s son wouldn’t settle for less.

Morgan bit one bee-stung lip, eyes anxious and wary. She

She sighed. “I don’t have any other ideas.”

wanted to agree but didn’t trust him completely. Jack could see

“That’s my point. Alyssa, take Morgan upstairs and put her

that on her face. Still, she hesitated, meeting his gaze squarely,  
as in something scanty. You got any more of those wigs?”



if taking his measure. Jack wondered how much, if any,  
Morgan

“Yep.” The bleached blonde nodded.

knew about the past. Had Brandon ever mentioned him?

Morgan glared. “It still won’t work.”

“This son of a bitch has been tenacious until now, I’m sure,

“Because...?”

but he’s never dealt with me. I’m not going to let him come  
within

“Alyssa and I, we’re not the same...size.”

a hundred yards of you, Morgan.”

Jack scanned the two of them. “She’s taller. But you can

She hesitated an instant longer, then sent him a shaky nod.

wear her stiletto boots to give you some added height. What  
size

“You’re the professional. We’ll deal with what’s next once  
we’re

shoe do you wear?”

away from here.”

She looked startled by the question. “Six and a half.”

What was next would involve her naked and cuffed and

Jack sent Alyssa a questioning look.

open to the complete pleasure he was impatient to give her.

“Hell, no,” said the former stripper. “I wear an eight.”

Repressing a smile, he affixed his gaze to the puffed pout of  
her

“We’ll work around it,” Jack said. “We’ll shove toilet

lower lip. Something about her, even in her awful getup, made  
the

paper in the toes of the boots or something. It’s temporary.”

man in him take notice. Or was it the knowledge that she belonged

“That’s not the biggest problem.” Morgan’s gaze drifted to Brandon?

over Alyssa’s surgically enhanced attributes, currently struggling

No, it was more. Under that ugly hat, scarf, and coat, he to stay within the confines of a bikini top.

could tell Morgan was one damn pretty woman—somehow

Jack let his gaze cascade over Morgan’s small form again.

innocent and fresh, but also sexy, sassy, expressive. Corrupting her He couldn’t see much of her beneath the coat, but the pictures he’d would be a treat. His desire chugged up another notch.

seen told him that what she had under there was a 100 percent

Who knew revenge would be so satisfying in every way?

natural and not on par with Alyssa’s D cups.

#

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 16**

Surrounded by music pulsing so loud that the walls shook, feet. Soft beige walls accented flowing white sheers at the large

Morgan made her way up the club’s narrow stairs, following window. Four black-and-white landscape photographs formed a

Alyssa, the blonde who apparently owned Sexy Sirens. Morgan

grouping above the bed.

had no idea how anyone with decent vision would ever mistake her

“You were expecting a red bedroom with a stripper pole in for the stripper, no matter how much makeup she slathered on. the middle?” Alyssa asked with a cocked brow.

Alyssa had an ingrained sexuality that just about every woman Embarrassment stung Morgan. She had wondered... “I had wished for...and so few possessed.

no idea what to expect. This is lovely.”

Still, Morgan knew she had to try, put on her best act until

Some of the starch bled out of Alyssa. “It’s peaceful.

she could escape Lafayette and the psycho hunting her. The only

C’mon, let’s get you out of that ugly rag.”

alternative was death.

Before she could ask for privacy and a bathrobe, Alyssa

Like it or not, that made Master J—whose real name was was unbuttoning Morgan’s coat and prying it off her shoulders.

apparently Jack and a relative stranger—her only hope for

With a casual toss to the bed, the coat flew away. Like the salvation.

mom of a toddler, Alyssa reached next for Morgan’s purse and

With a few glances and fewer words, Jack had made it clear subdued floral-print T-shirt. Before she could sputter a protest, the he was no saint. Even now, she felt his gaze burn her back. Against stripper had them over her head and tossed them on the floor.

her will, she peered over her shoulder. Jack stared up with an intent

“If you’ll point me to a bathroom, I can undress—”

gaze, eyes looking nearly black, as he watched her ascend the stairs. Alyssa ignored her and plucked at the front clasp of her lacy white bra. With a drag and a tug, it was gone...and Morgan strong-jawed face.

stood nude from the waist up before a total stranger.

She knew absolutely nothing about the man, except that he Alyssa studied Morgan's breasts, lifting one in her hand to had the kind of looks that made women do double takes and drool.

test its weight. "We can work with these."

Oh, and that he liked to dominate in bed. Hard to forget that. But

Morgan tensed, resisting the urge to cover herself like a his smile made her nervous. Why would anyone look happy in the

self-conscious seventh grader in a locker room. "What are you aftermath of a near shooting? doing?"

Finally, she and Alyssa reached the top of the landing. The

"You don't have anything I ain't seen, honey. 34C."

blonde led her through the door at the end of the hall, into a small Another glance over the rest of her body, and Alyssa added, "You

but surprising luxurious suite.

wear a size six. Right?"

Alyssa shut the door behind them, blocking out the loudest

"How did you know?"

of the music's throb. The floor beneath them still shook. The sexy

She smiled. "It's my business. Strip out of everything else tempo resonated around her, stark in its suggestion. and hang tight."

Morgan looked around the room. A large, rumped bed Alyssa disappeared out the door, shutting it gently behind lazed in the center, as a standing lamp cast muted golden light over her. Morgan stared after her. Strip out of everything else? Like it the white sheets. Hardwood floors gleamed cherry beneath her

was easy. Like she took her clothes off every day in front of people **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 17**

she'd never met. Well, Alyssa probably did, so it probably didn't

mother who'd sent her to an all-girls' school, she'd heard little faze her in the least. And Morgan realized that if she wanted to get about sex before turning eighteen. Until she'd gone to college,

out of here without a bullet in the head, she'd better get over her Morgan hadn't really known the difference between her cuticles

modesty quickly.

and her clit.

With a sigh, she took off her jeans and white cotton panties, Pushing away the thought, Morgan fastened the bra and folding them neatly and setting them on the edge of the bed. She

lifted her breasts into the cups—what there was of them. The bra

looked around for a robe or spare blanket. A towel—anything to

was slung low on wire-thin straps. A slash of black lace barely cover herself. Nothing. Morgan was not accustomed to prancing

covered each of her nipples. The gel inserts pushed the top swells

around without a stitch on. Clearly, that didn't trouble Alyssa. of her breasts up and out on display. Instant cleavage.

The blonde returned with a black satin bra and a matching Alyssa whistled and shot her a saucy look. "I'll give you a thong. With her teeth, she ripped the tags off, slipped a pair of gel piece of advice: Don't show Jack your tits unless you want to drive inserts into the bra, and handed it all to Morgan.

him insane with lust."

Before Morgan could ask for privacy, Alyssa disappeared

The blonde turned away, heading back into the bathroom. again, this time into the suite's adjoining bathroom. Grateful for

Morgan stared at the woman's slender back and silky blonde the reprieve from the woman's keen gaze, Morgan wriggled into

strands clinging to her shoulders.

the thong. Not comfortable—who wanted a string up their ass? —

Centerfolds were less attractive than Alyssa. Though but a perfect fit.

probably over thirty, she was still very striking. Morgan knew for a Alyssa emerged from the bathroom, carrying some very fact, based on Reggie's extensive research, Jack wasn't gay. Given

brief garments and her black high-heeled boots. In the doorway,

those facts, it seemed logical that he and Alyssa were... involved.

the blonde paused, waiting. Morgan pretended not to notice her.

From the woman's offhanded comment, it sounded like Alyssa

Instead, she frowned at the gel inserts in the bra. The grown-up

didn't care if she enticed Jack.

version of wadded-up tissues?

Lord, she'd left Los Angeles, where she'd always thought

When Morgan winced, Alyssa laughed. "You gotta do what of life as being somewhat surreal, and landed in Cajun country, a

you gotta do. They're like an instant boob job. With clothes on, no place she began to suspect was the south's version of Oz.

one will know the difference."

"I don't plan to show Jack my breasts," she said, adjusting

Releasing the breath she'd been holding, Morgan realized the bra, wishing for more cover.

that was likely true. She had no business bemoaning the fact she

"Maybe not, but ten bucks says he plans to see them."

wasn't a D cup.

Morgan frowned. "Based on what? I was interviewing Jack

Morgan began to don the bra, acutely aware of Alyssa

for my show. And then, when the shooting started, he offered to

watching her every move. It was damn uncomfortable. She'd kill

protect me—”

to have Alyssa's easy attitude about nudity, but she just hadn't

“And he will. He's the best. But Jack Cole is a breast man, been raised that way. She had been nearly twenty-one before she'd

and you've got a great rack.”

worked up the nerve to masturbate. After all, with a born-again

As if she'd just announced something as mundane as night

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 18**

falling, Alyssa turned and lifted a makeup case off the counter.

man's gaze gets above your tits.”

Setting the case aside, She studied Morgan's face with nothing

Morgan wanted to protest—the words lay on the tip of her more than a mild case of impatience.

tongue. She stilled them. If dressing like a stripper kept her alive,

“That doesn't bother you?” Morgan couldn't resist asking.

well...she could survive embarrassment much better than a bullet

Her gaze strayed to the bedding, looking too rumpled to be to the head.

caused by mere sleep. Morgan wondered if Jack had been here

“Whatever works,” Morgan breathed.

before meeting her—and why the thought bothered her.

“Let's get this hair pinned up and the wig on.”



“That Jack might fuck you?” She shrugged. “He’s not  
“I can manage.” Morgan lifted her fingers to her head and  
mine.”

rubbed.

Morgan frowned. *Too weird.* “Nothing’s going to happen  
“Wigs can be such a bitch. Sorry you’ll have to wear one,  
between us. I have no intention of getting involved with Jack.”  
but to pass for me, you have to look blonde.”

“The road to hell is paved with good intentions,” Alyssa  
Morgan shrugged. The discomfort was a small price to pay  
shot back with a throaty laugh.

to stay safe.

Before Morgan could wade through her confusion and  
“And make sure it’s on good. Jack will want to inspect you  
reply, the blonde switched topics again. “Let’s get your make-  
up

before you leave. He won’t let you set foot outside until he’s  
on.”

convinced you can pass the test. He takes protecting clients  
Alyssa lifted a slender hand and took the straw hat and  
seriously.”

scarf from Morgan’s head.

The idea of Jack inspecting her made her stomach jump.

A moment later, she began her cosmetics frenzy. A thick  
Jack was gorgeous, and the fact he was a dominant man only  
foundation coated Morgan’s face. Concealer came next, and  
intrigued Morgan more, despite her wariness and fear.

Morgan hoped it would cover the worst of the damage  
wrought

Securing the long blonde wig in place, Morgan pushed the  
from missing so much sleep. Next came the bright rosy blush,  
the

thought away. She was just tired. Lord knew she was stressed.  
She

siren-red lipstick painted on thickly with a brush. Dark  
eyeliner

would not be having sex with Jack, so his sexual preferences  
made

and eyeshadow was applied in a quick blur. Black mascara  
absolutely no difference to her.

followed, lifting and separating her lashes. An eyebrow pencil  
and

Someone pounded on the door. Morgan started, her heart  
brown mascara hid the fact that her brows were not the same  
pale

racing. Had the shooter managed to follow her here? She cut  
her

brown as the other woman's.

gaze to the window, hoping it might prove to be an escape  
route.

When Alyssa stepped away and prodded her into the

Then the door opened. Jack entered, wearing a ratty T-shirt  
bathroom before the mirror, Morgan only recognized her blue  
eyes

and faded jeans, a backward baseball cap, and a false  
moustache.

and the basic oval of her face.

Those few external changes made him look considerably  
different.

“You look great. Hell, most everyone out there will

But she still couldn't miss his pissed-off expression.

probably be too drunk to notice whether you're me or not. But just

"Damn it, what are you two doing in here, having a  
in case they're not, the clothes I've picked out will ensure no  
slumber party?"

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 19**

"Bite me, Jack. I worked as fast as I could since I need to  
You do that in public, and people will know you're not  
Alyssa."

get back to business," Alyssa said with a smile, then kissed his  
With every word, Jack made her more aware that he was  
cheek. "And good luck to you," she threw back to Morgan.  
male—all male—and she was female. He had the kind of  
personal

Then she exited, leaving Morgan alone with Jack.

power that drew her. Her stomach flipped when he spoke. Her  
His gaze flew across the room and latched onto her. Black  
breasts swelled. She felt jumpy, unsettled, when he stood too  
close.

eyes scorched her, and a slow, sinful smile spread across his  
Morgan swallowed tension so thick she thought it might choke  
her

mouth. That look made her stomach clench. Quickly realizing  
she

and tried to ease away from him.

wore nothing but a revealing bra and thong, she glanced  
around for

Jack didn't budge—or let her go.

something—anything—to cover her.

Gnashing her teeth, she said, “There must be another way

She darted across the room and reached for the white satin  
out of here besides you pawing me.”

sheet draped off the bed. Jack ripped it out of her hand.

“I wouldn't take that bet. You wanna make it out in one

“No time for modesty, *cher*, ” he whispered in her ear, his  
piece, *cher*, without your stalker recognizing you through your  
voice inflected with a lilt that was decidedly Cajun French.

disguise, you've got to act right. We've got to look real.”

His body buffeted her backside, legs glancing hers, chest

The hand on her stomach started inching slowly north.

brushing her shoulders. The heat he gave off warmed skin she

Morgan's brain buzzed with the intimation in his words. He

hadn't realized was chilled. Despite his heat, goose bumps

would touch her out in public, where complete strangers  
would

multiplied their way across her skin and a shiver ran down her

see. Instantly, her breasts swelled again. Moisture gathered

spine. Her nipples made a sudden, unwelcome appearance.

between her legs.

She swallowed. He might be one of the good guys, but at

*This is impossible*. She wasn't into public displays. And

the moment, his posture was pure predator.

Jack's caveman tendencies shouldn't be arousing her. Having  
such

“I don't need you in here while I get dressed.”

fantasies was one thing. Living them...that was completely

“*Mais* yeah, too bad for you I plan to supervise. We aren’t different. Stupid to indulge, especially with a stranger. leaving here until I’m convinced you can pass for Alyssa.”

Jack interrupted her thoughts by cradling her breast

“I’ve been putting on my own clothes since I was three. I between his thumb and fingers—and continuing to inch up. think I can manage alone.”

Until Morgan slapped her hand around his wrist to stop

“True, but I use Alyssa as cover for cases. We walk around him. “I don’t believe you. You don’t need to touch me that pretending we’re drunk on hurricanes and sex. People are used to intimately to get me out of here.”

seeing me touch her. Often. But you...” He snaked a hand around

He stopped the upward progress of his hand. “Less than an her and laid a palm flat on her belly.

hour with me, and suddenly you’re the security expert?”

She jerked and gasped when his broad hand blanketed her

“This isn’t a game. It’s my life!”

bare midriff, his heat seeping under her skin, insidious,

“Exactly,” he growled into her ear. “Locals, not necessarily unstoppable.

the trustworthy ones, will be out there tonight, seeing me with a

“You,” he murmured in her ear, “jump when I touch you.

woman they think is Alyssa. If you’re gasping and fighting and

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## Page 20

pushing every time I put a hand on you, they'll know you're an

Unable to resist, she arched, pushing her breast into his imposter. And if the man chasing you offers them money for hand.

information about a suspicious female...you'll be an easy target to

"Good girl," he muttered in her ear, then grazed the spot."

sensitive curve of her neck with his lips.

*And an easy one to kill.* Jack didn't say it, but he thought it.

Arousal tightened again, pulsing low and hard. Her heart

Just as Morgan did.

pounded away like a hoard of hammering carpenters. She squeezed

"Couldn't I leave here as a bag lady or a nun or her thighs together.

something?"

His left hand joined the right, taking possession of her other

"Your gun-toting friend is going to be waiting, watching.

breast in a hot swarm of fingers. She didn't jump, but fought the

Don't you think the emergence of a nun from a strip club would

need to squirm, as pleasure battered her senses with the double send up a few red flags?"

assault. It took biting her lip to hold in her groan.

He was right, damn it. She had to get a grip. If dressing like

Why did her body react this way to a man she didn't know

a stripper and letting a good-looking guy fondle her for a few and who practiced a sexual life she didn't participate in? minutes was all it took to keep her safe, she'd survive the It ceased to matter when he pinched the hard pinpoints of embarrassment and the blow to her modesty.

her nipples between his fingers, rolling them slowly with erotic

There was just one problem: She reacted to Jack not like a patience.

decoy, but a woman. Her body heated for him with a few Need spiked in her belly, arrowing straight down between whispered words and a glance. Still, the embarrassment she felt for her legs.

responding to him was short-lived, particularly compared to death.

"Jack..." she protested.

When this fiasco was over and she could find a new place to hide,

"Shh. You're doing fine, *cher*. As long as you don't act like she'd never have to see Jack Cole again or care that he knew he

I'm unfamiliar, we'll be all right."

could arouse her.

All right? If he did that again, she'd be melting.

Taking a deep breath, she let go of his wrist.

He didn't. Instead, his right hand left her breast to glide

"Smart girl," he praised.

down her stomach, lower, lower, until his fingers edged underneath

Morgan sensed him, his watchful gaze over her shoulder as

the damp black lace of her thong and unerringly found her  
he turned his wrist until her entire breast rested in his palm.  
She swelling, hungry clit. She gasped and tightened her thighs  
against

swallowed. God, her flesh felt heavy in his hot hand. He  
hovered

him. God, he'd feel how wet he made her. This was ridiculous.  
He

there, breath scorching the back of her neck. Tension ramped  
up in

wasn't going to touch her there in public.

her stomach...and lower, tightening with an ache she wanted  
to

"Don't do that," he warned, withdrawing his hand. "A  
deny—and couldn't. Her nipples hardened impossibly under  
his

tensing body and outraged gasps will give you away. Relax."  
hot gaze. Morgan squeezed her eyes shut.

"This isn't necessary," she argued, her voice strained.

Then he swiped a thumb over the taut tip. Electric pleasure

He snorted a cynical sound. "Spoken like a girl who's  
shimmied down her spine.

never run from a killer. He followed us here. Did you forget?"

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 21**

"No, and I'm not a girl."

Morgan."

"*Non?* Then stop responding like one. It's going to take a

"No," she snapped and put her hands on the wall high



damn convincing act to get out of here in one piece. I'm trying to

above her head.

save your life, not steal whatever virtue you might have.”

But she wasn't sure she hadn't lied. The idea of bondage

“Wouldn't this kind of behavior simply draw attention?”

sounded primitive and tacky on the surface. Something only people

“New Orleans isn't the only place that celebrates Mardi

who couldn't respond to “normal” sex did. But in a handful of

Gras. The sun is going down now, and the party is about to start.

minutes, Jack had forced her to face her own fantasy.

Being too good would make us stand out in the crowd, *cher*.”

“That's better, but you've got to stop questioning what I

He was probably right. She had to trust him. She had no

say. I tell you, you do it. This isn't a negotiation.”

reason not to, since he'd kept her alive so far. “Sorry.”

That grated against her independent nature...even as it

Behind her, she felt him nod. “Spread your legs.”

made the knot in her belly clench tighter.

Oh, God. Why? What did he have planned?

“You're arrogant.”

Morgan froze in indecision. If one finger brushing her clit

“And that isn't going to change. You better start following

sent shockwaves through her body, what might a whole hand do?

directions, little girl, or there will be consequences.”

Would he laugh if she orgasmed? As it was, she felt closer than she Morgan wanted to rail at him, deny that his power

appealed

would have thought possible...

to her. It would only start a fight they didn't have time to finish. If

"If I need to tie you down to get you accustomed to my she wanted to get out of here with her pride intact, she needed to touch, don't think I won't."

convince him she was ready to leave here and fool her stalker. And

At his warning growl, a fresh wave of moisture gushed she needed to convince the people they'd see that she was from her, coating her already swollen flesh. Oh, how mortifying. If completely familiar and comfortable with Jack touching her.

Jack realized she'd responded to that threat... She shivered.

"You got what you wanted. My hands are against the wall.

With surprising force, Jack wedged a booted foot between

I know you're going to grope me in public. I'll keep any surprise

her bare feet and pried them apart. "Put your hands on the wall or discomfort to myself. Can we end this now?" above your head."

"You're not ready."

"What?"

"I'll be fine."

Morgan struggled to close her legs, only to find Jack's hard

"So, if I do this..."

thigh between them. Lord, would he feel her juices leaking through

His hand slid back inside her thong, fingers circling her clit

the thong and onto his jeans? Think her weak or easy?

before dropping down to her slick opening. He pushed two fingers

“Last time I’m going to tell you,” he swore. “Put your deep inside her. His left hand traveled down her stomach, then hands on the wall or things will get a whole lot more serious.” covered her clit.

More serious? What was left, besides having sex? Her body Unable to help it, she gasped.

jumped in anticipation at that thought.

“See, you’re not ready,” he said and began massaging her

“You’re not listening... I guess you want to be tied down, clit, while the fingers embedded inside her toyed with her until

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 22**

they encountered a bundle of nerves Morgan hadn’t known she ached so badly?

possessed. He rubbed there unmercifully, slow, insistent strokes

“Are you going to question me again?”

ripping a scream of tingles deep inside her.

The tone of his voice told her that would be a very bad

Orgasm raced toward her, like a car speeding through

idea. But leaving her wanting like this was no better. Still, a glance traffic lights to the edge of a cliff. Her channel clenched in

over her shoulder at his suddenly forbidding face stilled the plea on weeping hunger around his fingers, her body begging for release.

her tongue.

His teeth nipped at her neck again. Then he pressed himself against

“No.”

her backside, grinding an unmistakably large erection into the cleft

“And if I—” he reached down, into her thong once more between her ass.

and rubbed her clit with his finger— “did this...”

At least she wasn't the only one affected, she thought as her Pleasure shot through her again, fresh and ferocious. She head lolled back on his shoulder, perspiration breaking out all over whimpered and thrust her hips into his touch. So, so close...

her body as his fingers continued to fill her, toy with her clit. Her Again, he withdrew. “Excellent. Now you don't jerk away chest heaved with every breath. This was insane. Madness! The

when I touch you.”

edge of pleasure was killing her. When had she ever been so “You're going to leave me like this?”

aroused so quickly?

“You inviting me to do something about it later?” His low The feelings built, until she felt pleasure fill her up, nearly voice rumbled like gravel in her ear.

to the exploding point.

Jack liked to tie women down and own them, body and

Then he withdrew his touch, easing his hands out of the soul. The thought screamed through her mind. What the hell had

thong and onto her hips. “No coming, not unless I say so.”  
she done?

Before she could stop it, a whimper escaped her throat.

Let him get away with anything, everything...

Jack kissed her neck again, a brush of lips, a sting of teeth.

“Not a chance in hell.” She stiffened, trying to draw away

“You’ll thank me later.”

from him.

Morgan couldn’t imagine why he thought so. Her body was

“That’s too bad. I like little girls like you, all starch on the

so tightly strung. He’d aroused her so thoroughly, she was  
tense,

outside, all creamy on the inside. The thought of hearing you

her mind racing. If he touched her in public, she’d probably  
climax scream your throat raw while I fuck you turns me on.”

so viciously, she’d black out.

Oh, God. Her, too. “You’re the subject of an interview.

His hands grazed up her abdomen again, to her breasts. He

That’s all.”

fondled them, rolled her aching nipples between his fingertips  
once

“You get that wet for everyone you talk to?” he mocked.

more. She arched into his hand, grinding her ass against the

“Go to hell.”

impressive erection behind her, biting her lip to hold in a  
groan.

With a chuckle, he swatted her bare ass with his wide palm.

He stepped away with a laugh. “Nice try.”

“Get dressed.”

“Jack...” She didn’t want to beg. Really. But how was she Morgan started to whirl on him, take him down for revving supposed to keep her wits around the bad guys when her body her up, but then the sting in her ass turned to pure fire. Instead, she **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 23**

found herself biting her lip to hold another groan inside.

*Just get your clothes on and get out of here. That will make all this go away.*

Stomping past Jack, Morgan shimmied into an indecently tight purple leather skirt. Next she put on a matching leather bustier that emphasized her small waist and shoved her cleavage so

high, it was practically a shelf. All the while, she felt Jack’s gaze boring into her back and the ache of the lust he’d created sizzling her body.

Finally, she wriggled her feet into a pair of black thin-heeled boots with pointed toes. Shockingly, they were actually somewhat comfortable.

“Let’s get out this over with,” she spat.

He eyed her. “You ready for what happens when we walk out this door?”

“We’d be arrested if we did more than we already have in public, so it appears I’ve lived through your worst.”

He led her out the door with a smirk. “You think so?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 24**

back when she disagreed with offered advice, and resisted his

initial offers of assistance. Those facts told him a lot about her

—

and how to deal with her. Patience, persistence, a combination of

tenderness and alpha demands.

Last, if Morgan was Brandon Ross's fiancée, she'd be

wasted on the boring, uptight bastard. Brandon would ignore the

needs he didn't understand and couldn't fulfill, fantasies Jack

## CHAPTER THREE

would bet his eyeteeth she had. Satisfying her fantasies required

someone with more balls, tenderness, and self-control than Jack made his way down the stairs, holding Morgan's hand.

Brandon ever thought of possessing. He almost felt sorry for

He barely refrained from using the other the adjust the length of his Morgan. In fact, he might be doing her a favor in the long run...

hard cock in his jeans. Damn, the woman about made him bust a

But pity wasn't going to stop him from getting his overdue zipper.

revenge against the asshole who'd fucked up his life.

After their episode in Alyssa's bedroom, he knew several

First, though, he had to get Morgan out of the club alive.

undeniable things about Morgan O'Malley: One, she had a body

As they hit the door at the back of the dark strip joint, he

that called to him. The way she looked, felt, smelled—all of it dragged her through a curtain that led to a backstage area.

reached him on a primitive level and urged him to chip away at her

Abruptly, the pounding music stopped and wild clapping began. A

until she surrendered completely. Two, she'd be unbelievable to

slender brunette with large artificial breasts wriggled her hips at fuck. High breasts with sensitive nipples, a beautiful mouth



and an the crowd of men shoving bills in her miniscule G-string. Morgan

unexpected independent streak that told him she would be both a

stared, clearly uncomfortable with that much nudity and touching

trial and a triumph to the man who could tame her. Three, she had

with complete strangers. *Good*. Despite the fact he'd been to a wide submissive streak...and didn't want to admit it. Her wet, dozens of places like this, he wanted a woman willing and eager

nearly orgasmic reactions to his slightly—okay, way-over-the-only for him, not a whole room full of stiff dicks.

top—demands that she become accustomed to his touch were very

Looking away from the dancer, Jack scanned the crowd. He telling. Every time he'd threatened her with bondage, she'd gushed

knew the mood of the clientele, the feel of revelers seeking with fresh moisture. He'd needed a surprising amount of self-hedonistic fun. Across the smoky room, a guy in jeans and a black

control to withhold her orgasm and keep from plunging himself

sweater looked around the room, rather than at the stripper exiting deep inside her cunt while she had it.

the stage and giving the audience a prime view of her ass. A few

He knew a few other things about Morgan: She didn't panic feet from him, another in a suit lurked in the corner, wearing a

or surrender in the face of danger. She was scared, sure. Only an

watchful scowl. He didn't fit in. The bulge inside his jacket hinted idiot wouldn't feel at least a twinge of fear, knowing that a stalker to Jack that the guy might have a shoulder holster full of weapon.

who followed her across the country to end her life stood right

Either of these dudes—or neither—could be Morgan's

outside the door. But Morgan had listened to his logic, pushed would-be shooter. But Jack knew they couldn't afford to take

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 25**

chances.

Given her story, she'd been through a whole lot lately. He

As nonchalantly as possible, he turned Morgan to face him

couldn't help but admire her grit to go on, her strength to fight.

and covered their sudden stop in the crowd by pulling her against

"Let's get out of here, just in case one of them is your gun-

him and planting a series of kisses on her neck. She tensed.

happy nightmare."

"*Cher*," he called.

Morgan nodded, but he felt her trembling. Jack eased back

Others near them would hear an endearment. Morgan's nod

to look at her face. Under the thick makeup, her blue eyes clearly

told him she took it as the warning he intended. She forced the

reflected the knowledge that she was being hunted. But equal parts

tension from her shoulders.

fear and determination tightened her lush mouth. She wasn't giving

"I see a couple of men who look suspicious," he whispered up.

on the soft, soft skin of her neck. "Anyone look familiar?"

Neither was he.

She hesitated, and Jack took advantage of her distraction

"I'm not going to let anything happen to you," he assured and breathed in her sweet raspberry scent, brushed his lips against her. "Take my hand. Smile. Good enough. Now, follow me out the

her soft-as-sin skin.

door."

"I can't think with you doing that," she whispered harshly.

Slowly, Jack wended his way through the crowd, working

He dropped a hand down her spine, over the curve of her the far side of the room as much as possible. He stopped to answer

ass, more because he wanted to than because it was necessary. But

a greeting, endure some backslapping from frat boys he'd helped

it helped with the image that they were lovers who couldn't keep

out of a scrape once, all of whom assumed fucking Alyssa would

their hands to themselves.

be every man's version of paradise.

"You can. You will."

The suspicious characters cast glances over them as they  
Morgan breathed out a four-letter word, and Jack smiled. If  
neared the door. The dude with the suit kept his gaze glued to  
her curse hadn't told him that he was getting to her, the pulse  
Morgan. Jack covertly watched the man assess her, eyes  
narrow

picking up speed at the base of her neck would. The scheming  
part

with speculation. Running would only alert the asshole if he  
was

of him loved knowing he affected her. So did his sexual side.  
Oh,

Morgan's stalker.

he didn't forget that the shooter was probably somewhere near,  
but

Instead, Jack whirled Morgan around and grabbed her. Her  
the asshole was too smart to shoot with so many able to see his  
eyes went wide as he held her face between his palms and  
slanted

face. And the sick jerk had no reason to believe that Morgan  
his mouth over her own.

wasn't Alyssa.

Right away, her softness assaulted him. After a gasp of  
"I can't see. It's smoky, and I'm too short."

protest, Jack sensed Morgan forcing herself to relax. To  
submit. At True on both counts. *Damn!*

the press of his lips, she opened to him slowly, slowly, with  
shy

Curving both arms around her body, Jack anchored Morgan  
hesitance that made him burn with need. A delicious  
uncertainty

against his chest. The top of her head barely reached his shoulder, flavored her kiss, making him hard as a pike. But it wasn't

reminding him how small she was. With her big personality, her

enough—either to convince the assassin chasing her or to assuage

size was easy to forget.

the hunger that churned like a violent storm in his gut.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 26**

He couldn't wait for more.

been followed, he could concentrate on Morgan—and every

A growl erupted from this throat as he dove into the kiss

delicious way he could think of to make her surrender.

and urged her soft lips to part wider. He entered her mouth with a

#

ravaging thrust of his tongue. And groaned as her wet, sugary heat

Within minutes, Jack led her to his truck, parked on a dark

and hot cinnamon-spice flavor exploded across his senses.

Tangled

side street. Morgan hesitated. Brandon wouldn't be happy that with the taste of her fear.

she'd left his car behind, but what were her other options? She

Morgan began to kiss him tentatively. Unfurling to him,

couldn't argue with Jack's logic that her stalker would be looking

softening. Soon, she uttered a soft moan and matched his rhythm,

for it on the roads since he'd followed her here.

her tongue seeking his when he retreated. She clasped his

That settled, Jack tucked her into the passenger's seat of his shoulders and clung, slanting her head until their mouths fit sleek black truck. She'd have to be blind not to see his gaze perfectly. Gripping her tightly, he sank deeper into her. The flavor lingering on the length of her exposed thigh and cleavage offered

of fear on her tongue receded. She trembled—but now her reaction

up by Alyssa's purple leather slut garb. The miles of skin it didn't have a damn thing to do with fright.

exposed made her want to find the nearest tent and throw it on Morgan gasped...then surrendered, opening completely.

quickly. Another part of her, though, heated at his look. The arrow Crushing his delight at her lush response, Jack promised of need that shot straight to her still-aching clit, encouraging her to himself there would be plenty of time later to fuck her, screw

inch her skirt a bit more and flash Jack a come-hither glance. She

Brandon out of a bride, and enjoy every moment of her soft, shy

resisted the dangerous temptation.

responses. Later.

The familiar dark desire, coupled with the stress and

Ending the kiss with a nip of his teeth on her plush lower

uncertainty, crashed in on her. How had her life gone downhill so

lip, Jack opened his eyes in time to see the slick in the suit talking quickly? How had she found herself at the mercy of a stranger who

to some of the regulars around him. Jack made sure he blocked made her ache with a longing that shamed her?

Morgan from the view of guys who hung out here at least once a

“Don’t leer,” she snapped.

week. He hoped like hell none of them would remember that Jack looked away in his own good time. “Why not? You they’d never seen him kiss Alyssa like that.

look good.”

Mr. Suit listened, then nodded his thanks. Disappointment

“I look like a whore.”

shadowed his face. The guy in the jeans and sweater had Faster than lightning, he leaned across the cab and crowded disappeared.

her personal space. He smelled like midnight and elemental male.

“I think we’re good to go,” he murmured to Morgan. “Let’s Like danger.

get out of here.”

“You look available and willing. You don’t look for sale.”

Again, he took her hand. He led her right out the front door.

“It’s the same thing.”

The crowd on the street swallowed them up quickly, and Jack

“*Non*, it is not.”

smiled.

Jack said nothing more for long moments. He eased away

Once the danger had passed, once he knew they hadn't  
and started the truck, then pulled away from the tree-lined  
street

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 27**

and took off into the dusk. Then they headed southeast, toward  
the

“But if you were mine, what’s under that skirt would be  
heart of the bayou.

mine, not yours, to show or conceal as I saw fit.”

With another hot glance at her, Jack finally explained,

His words burned her with shock—and terrible,

“When a woman looks for sale, a man checks his wallet before  
unmistakable desire. She gasped.

looking twice. Available and willing just makes a man hot.

“Shocked, *cher*? That’s what submission is all about.

Available and willing for him alone makes a man boil with  
need.

Surrendering control utterly to someone else. Your privacy,  
your

Right now, I’m hard as hell.”

body, your pleasure.”

The night began closing around them finally, dark and

He said nothing for long minutes, and Morgan lost herself  
absolute. Morgan swallowed. The way Jack looked at her  
through

in imagining. Would a dominant man really insist his partner  
show



the inky closeness of the truck's cab gave her pause. And if she

any—or all—of her body to anyone of his choosing?  
Anywhere?

was honest, made her wet. Did he realize that she'd never dressed

At any time? She squirmed in her seat at the thought. It was this provocatively for any man, for any reason, before?

disturbing and exploitative. But some little part of her found his

"If you were my woman," he went on, his voice a words reluctantly provocative. Forbidden. God, she'd gone insane.

sandpaper whisper, "you'd appear elegant in public. But in But curiosity followed close behind. That, she allowed free private..." He smiled, a flash of white teeth, illuminated by the rein. She was interviewing him about this very subject, after all.

moonlight drifting into the shadowed truck; it was a smile that Journalistic integrity and all that.

promised satisfaction. "In private, I'd dress you in less than you're

"What you're saying...it sounds selfish and mean-spirited, wearing now. Much less. Without those useless lace panties you're

to expose someone without regard for their feelings." wearing."

"It might look that way on the surface."

Morgan could barely catch her next breath. She didn't want

"What do you mean, on the surface?"

to dress like this. It had to look cheap and easy.

“Like I told you online, one of the jobs of a good dominant

Yet she could not deny it also made her feel aware of her

is to see inside the soul of his submissive and grant her every

body, of her feminine power. Sexy and wanted and desired.

How

pleasure she desires. Many submissives aren’t aware of their

most

was that possible?

secret desires.” He turned to face her, his chocolate eyes  
piercing,

“You’re awfully direct.”

direct. “Or find them shameful, so they refuse to admit to  
them.”

“I’m honest,” he admitted. “What’s the point of lying?”

He was talking to her. *About her*. With a hot glance, he

“Oh, I don’t know. To be polite.”

made that clear. Her breathing shallowed, her heart beat

Jack simply snorted.

accelerated. She couldn’t ignore the fact that her stomach—  
and her

“And these panties aren’t useless. They cover the

nipples—went achy and tight.

essentials.”

“And you force a woman to engage in acts you believe she

“Exactly. Why would I want those covered?”

secretly desires, even though she may not want to  
acknowledge

She gaped. “I’m not about to flash everyone in the first  
them.”

good breeze that comes along.”

“She has to accept them to find true satisfaction. My role is

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 28**

to help her.”

figure something out.”

“What’s in it for you? I mean, if you’re always trying to

The thought of being anywhere near Jack, even for just a

read her mind and persuade her to do new, unusual things...?”

few days rattled her. “Maybe I should rent a car and drive back  
to

“New things that make her so hot, she’s giving me total

Houston. I’ve already imposed—”

control and is begging me to fuck her however and wherever I

“He’ll catch on quick and follow you, Morgan. This guy

want. I’m sure you see the obvious benefits.”

isn’t stupid. Psycho, but not stupid. You want to be safe or  
dead?

Yeah, hard to miss that point. Was it possible to be so

Besides, it’ll be a good opportunity for you to learn about

aroused that she would beg in such a way? A mental picture of

Dominance and submission. I can ensure you’ll sound like an

Jack tying her down, feeling her up, as she writhed under his  
hand

expert on your show.”

exploded across her brain. A blast of heat sizzled her belly...  
and

“I think I get the picture.”

lower. God knew his aggressive touch earlier today had flooded

“*Cher*, you haven’t even scratched the surface.”

her with arousal so fast, she’d nearly been dizzy with it. And his

“I don’t need you touching me anymore.”

kiss had obliterated most thoughts of fear and hesitation, the

His smile could have melted butter. “You may not think crowd, and her stalker.

you need it, but I know better. You need it every bit as much as

She didn’t doubt he could make a woman beg for anything, you want it.”

everything. If she wasn’t careful, didn’t keep her distance, she

Morgan’s jaw dropped. “You are one arrogant bastard.”

could quickly become another notch on his bedpost. Worse, he

“You’re submissive, and I’m arrogant. See how well we’re

could open her psyche and expose all the hidden fantasies better

getting to know each other already?”

left to the dark corners of her mind.

His quip put her temper in a twist. “I am not— That’s it!

Time for a change of subject. “Thank you for getting me

Take me back to Lafayette.”

out of Lafayette. I would have panicked and run when the bullets

He sent her an amused glance. “Back to your friend’s car,

started flying. On my own, I would never have been able to

the one your stalker probably has his pretty rifle trained on as we concoct this disguise and...distract him.”

speak?”

“That’s my job, Morgan.”

She bit her lip. Damn it. Why did he have to be right?

“You didn’t have to do it.” Then, recalling the way his

“Or maybe I should drop you off at the police station,” he  
hands roamed her body in Alyssa’s bedroom, she shot him a  
taunted. “They’re always so much help in stalker cases.”

suspicious look. “In fact, I think you did more than your job  
Clenching her fists, Morgan said nothing, again knowing  
required.”

spoke the truth.

“Think what you want.” Jack’s smile told Morgan that her

“Or maybe, you could hop a plane back to L.A. How long  
assertion amused him.

do you think it would be before he stopped shooting pictures  
and

“I usually do.” She gritted her teeth, wishing she knew how  
tried again to shoot you between the eyes? You got a death  
wish?”

to wipe that smile off his face. “Where are we going?”

“No.” Her voice vibrated with the anger she felt coursing

“I’ve got a place. It’s safe. We can hide you there until we  
through her body. “You got an off button for your mouth?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 29**

Jack just smiled. “You’re too smart to want to face a killer

Two hours later, Jack stopped the truck at the water’s edge,  
more than your sexuality, Morgan. I’ll ask you the same  
question I

in front of the boat waiting where he'd left it. After he  
scrambled asked before your stalker started shooting: What are  
you afraid

aboard with a groggy Morgan, they cruised down the river for  
a

of?"

while, Jack poling his way down the swamp with Morgan  
drifting

"I'm not having this conversation with you."

in and out of sleep and shivering in the February air. He did  
his

He shrugged, as if he didn't care about her response one  
best to shelter her from the wind with his body. She  
unconsciously

way or the other. "Fine. It's your life. Am I taking you back to  
snuggled into him when he wrapped one arm around her.

Lafayette or are you going to stay safe with me?"

That gave him a hard-on so stiff it hurt.

God, she wanted to shock the bastard. Spit in his face and

They reached their destination shortly before ten. Jack  
verbally cut off his balls by demanding he take her back to

lifted a slumbering Morgan into his arms, settled her in his  
grasp, Brandon's car so she could zoom back to Houston, far  
away from

and headed for the dark cottage.

his challenging words and his wicked touch.

He'd expected to have to talk fast in Lafayette, to hustle

But once again, damn it, he was right. Putting herself back

and sweet-talk her to a hotel room to get his revenge. Having  
her

in the path of a killer because Jack pushed a few of her sexual

here, in his domain, was better—and worse. Her stalker had helped

buttons was flat stupid. She had no place safe to go, and despite

him maneuver Morgan right where he wanted her and never Brandon's suggestion, she was *not* calling Senator Ross. He dreamed he'd have her. He would have Morgan to himself, on his

wouldn't lift a finger to help her.

turf, where he could devote hours to her seduction and his revenge.

"I'll go with you," she said through clenched teeth.

Sweet, yes.

"Good girl. We've got a few hours to travel and it's getting

But Jack couldn't pretend her sick stalker didn't concern late. Try getting some sleep."

him. At least here, with him, he could protect her from the psycho

Morgan wasn't sure she could. Being that vulnerable who'd clearly decided that if he couldn't have Morgan, no one else

around a man like Jack, especially while she still had a stalker on would. He would keep her safe; he owed her that much.

her tail. "I'm fine."

Particularly since it was clear Morgan could no longer fend for

"It wasn't a suggestion. We're not being followed. No one herself and was exhausted beyond her endurance.

is on this road for miles." He gestured to the open road and fields But on a basic physical level, she trusted him. That trust

around them, completely devoid of headlights. "You're safe and

shimmered through his body, both hardening his cock and you're going to need your strength later, *cher*, in case we haven't softening his gut. Why fight it? He liked her, even if he hated her lost your stalker for good."

fiancé's guts. She was by turns feisty and vulnerable, sharp and

She sighed, then shot him a reluctant glance. Again, he was gullible. And for some reason so damned familiar, as if he'd seen

right.

her somewhere before...

Morgan crossed her arms over her chest and shifted her

Shifting Morgan in his grasp, Jack shoved the key in the body toward the passenger window. But soon the rhythmic motion

lock, then thrust open the door. Inside the little Craftsman cottage, of the car lulled her. She closed her eyes and drifted off.

clean lines and pine floors reminded him of his boyhood, of fishing **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 30**

with his *grand-pere* Brice. This place never failed to inspire great

"Boy, you been raised in the bayou, even if the army and memories, even if the old family legends his grandfather told here

big city spoiled you some. A curse is a curse. If you're dreaming

made him laugh.

about a redheaded woman over and over, you're about to meet her



“Ah, so you made it.”

and she’s your heart’s mate.”

Jack started—until he recognized the voice. “Holy shit, old

*Here we go again with this bullshit*, Jack thought with a

man. You trying to scare me to death so you can have your fishing

sigh. If Brice wanted to use the legend to justify his marrying an

hole back?”

underage girl sixty years ago, goody for him. As it was, Jack

Brice waved him away. “You wish. I wouldn’t have this

refused to believe that some faceless woman he’d seen in his place back for nothin’. Rat trap.”

dreams with red hair glinting across bare shoulders in dawn’s light Jack knew better, but Brice was too old to live out here, so

was destined to be his one and only love. There was no such thing.

far away from a hospital.

The redhead was just a fantasy fuck his mind had conjured up.

“The place is stocked with food. The security cameras,

“Well, I haven’t met any redheads lately, so the whole they’s all on and the generator is running. Use it sparingly.” point is moot. Dreams don’t mean a thing.”

“Thanks. I knew I could count on you.”

“You keep tellin’ yourself that, boy. She’ll turn up. Won’t

“This the girl you called about, the one runnin’ for her be long now. Didn’t you say you’d been having those dreams life?” Brice gestured to Morgan, whom Jack still held. about five months?”

“Yeah.”

Six, but who was counting? Jack shrugged.

With narrowed eyes, Brice peered closer and stared at

“She’ll make a believer out of you,” Brice contended.

Morgan. “You sure he’s not just out to bed her? She’s one *jolie*

“Whatever you say, *Grand-pere*.”

*fille*, but she dresses like a whore, that one.”

The old man grunted, knowing that Jack was blowing off

“It’s a disguise, *Grand-pere*.”

the famous family legend he loved so much. The dreams...

they

Brice frowned his gray head, disapproval still shadowing

had to be coincidence, a byproduct of loneliness and the fact  
he

his strong features. Smiling to himself, Jack stepped around  
his

hadn’t had a good lay in forever. Nothing else made sense.

grandfather and headed for the cottage’s lone bedroom. He set

“Well, this old man is taking his body home and going to

Morgan down on the bed, then bent to remove her black boots.  
If

bed. Need anything else, boy?”

his grandfather weren’t watching, he’d pull off the rest of her

“We’ll be fine.”

clothes for the mere pleasure of looking at her...but Brice  
would

“Take care of *ta jolie fille*.”

both disapprove and get an eyeful that could damage his heart  
at

Jack sighed. “She’s not *my* pretty girl.”

eighty-two.

And for some damn reason, it annoyed him to admit that.

“You still been havin’ them dreams?” his grandfather asked

Probably because she was wasted on an asshole like Brandon Ross.

suddenly.

Laughter cackling with both amusement and age, Brice left.

Jack rolled his eyes, ruing the day he’d said anything.

Jack heard the slam of the cottage door and returned to the

“They don’t mean anything.”

bedroom.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 31**

He turned on the kerosene lamp in the bedroom, which emitted a soft glow over Morgan. She looked uncomfortable, as he

watched her twist and mutter in her sleep.

He removed a pair of gaudy earrings he hadn’t noticed before and lay them on the side table. The purple leather...it wasn’t Morgan’s style, but would have to stay for now. Trying to

take it off would surely wake her up. Shrugging, he realized he could only do one other thing to make her comfortable.

Gently, Jack reached under the sleek blonde wig and extracted a pin here and there. She sighed in sleepy appreciation

when he lifted the wig away and tossed it on the table next to the

earrings.

When Jack looked back, he frowned and lifted the lamp over Morgan.

It couldn't be. It couldn't.

But with mellow golden light shining down on her, there was no mistaking the glint of her fiery red hair.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 32**

Morning? His stare touched her through the moonlit inkiness of the room, caressing her cheek, sweeping over her mouth, gliding down her neck to the rise of her breasts above the

leather bustier. With just a glance, heat bloomed inside her. Even

eight feet away, the potency of his sexuality broadcast in blaring

waves. Everything they had done in Alyssa's bedroom came back

to her in a rush...along with a tight, nagging ache between her

## CHAPTER FOUR

legs.

She remembered everything—the way he'd touched her,

Morgan woke to an unfamiliar room pervaded by shadows.

his kiss, his touch, the way he took control. His mysterious scent, Mosquito netting draped the warm, well-used bed.

Beyond that, an

his growled words—they'd intrigued her. Even after a few hours'

old-fashioned kerosene lamp on a nightstand with mission-style

sleep, nothing had changed. Curiosity and desire gnawed at her as

lines dimly lit the room. Where was she?

Jack stared, knowledge hot in his chocolate eyes. The ache

Blinking, she sat up with a creak. She frowned when she

knotting her body tightened.

saw purple leather stretched across her torso and hips. Purple

She couldn't afford that, couldn't afford him. Morgan

leather? Her? It wasn't uncomfortable...but had to be discomfiting

looked away, breaking their visual connection.

to be seen in. Why the hell was she wearing it?

How he felt, how she felt—none of it mattered. She had to

Then she recalled. Her stalker shooting. Master J—no,

focus on staying safe and doing research for her show.

Drooling

Jack—to the rescue, his gaze eating up her flushed skin, his hands

over the heavy slabs of muscles covering Jack's shoulders and on her body.

chest that screamed *virile* and contemplating all the ways he could Still, she had to thank Alyssa for the shocking get up. It, use that power to pleasure her wasn't going to improve her show—

along with Jack and his outrageous behavior, had gotten her out of

or her chances of staying alive.

Lafayette alive.

"How are you? Okay?" he asked.

A downy beige comforter warmed her legs. Black sheers

"I'm fine," she said finally. "What time is it?"

floated at the room's lone window, made transparent by the silvery

He shrugged and glanced out the window. "About five in moonlight. A stout dresser of warm, old cherrywood sprawled the morning. You can go back to sleep. I'll be here to watch over

against most of the wall beside the window.

you."

Turning her head, Morgan skimmed the other half of the Morgan stared back. The knowledge that Jack's eyes were small bedroom. The open door led to beautiful hardwood floors,

on her was really going to induce her to roll over and sink into which gleamed in the dark, empty hallway.

dreamland. *As if*. She could hardly breathe with Jack's gaze all And in the chair wedged between the door and an armoire over her. Sleep would be impossible.

sat Jack, shirtless and tousled, alert—and focused on her.

What was it about this man? Sure, he was yummy, but

“Good morning, Morgan.”

she’d dated good-looking guys before. Something about the way

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 33**

he stared?

“I’m likely to burn in hell for some other things in my life,

The truth finally hit her like a slap. No, it was his intensity, starting with painting my cousin’s G.I. Joe’s fingernails pink when his self-possession, his air of controlled power. She’d always been I was five. I’ll just add that to the list.”

a sucker for men of power. And unlike the other men in her past,

Jack laughed, a scratchy sandpaper sound. “Wow, that is Morgan knew Jack was the real deal.

vile. Satan’s got a special place reserved just for you.”

He wielded one of the ultimate powers, a sexual one. He

Morgan nodded. Then the room turned quiet. The

wouldn’t just tie a woman down; he would dictate her response

momentary banter drifted away, leaving a tense silence in its place.

and his, be in complete control of her body, her orgasms, and in

Still, she felt Jack’s gaze on her, lingering on her hair.

that moment, her very soul.

Self-consciously, she pushed the strands off her shoulders,

The thought appealed to Morgan far more than was wise.  
behind her back. “You took off the wig. I—it’s red,” she  
Easing toward the edge of the bed to put distance between  
stammered. “My hair, I mean.”  
them, she said, “No, I’m awake. Do you want the bed to catch  
He hesitated. “I didn’t expect that.”  
some sleep? I can get up.”  
His stare changed then, turned pensive. Morgan frowned.  
“Stay.”  
What had he expected? Why did the color matter? Maybe he  
only  
The single syllable ricocheted through her body. It was a  
liked blondes. Maybe...but his stare said otherwise.  
command, pure and simple. Every place it bounced around  
inside  
“And I see you took off the boots.”  
her, the heat intensified, confusing her. She didn’t like being  
“They looked uncomfortable.”  
bossed around—by anyone. But Jack barking orders at her  
made  
The idea of Jack touching her as she slept unaware raised  
her uncomfortably achy in all the wrong places.  
the heat coiling in her body another notch. Had he touched  
Hell, maybe she was just horny in general, and it had  
anything more intimate than her head or feet, while she slept?  
nothing to do with Jack. After all, it had been nearly a year  
since That question ratcheted up her body heat again, now  
laser  
she’d split up with Andrew.



focused between her legs. Morgan squirmed, seeking relief. She

“I’ve been sleeping in the chair,” he clarified.

didn’t find it.

“That can’t be comfortable.”

“What do you want to ask me?” she said. Conversation,

He laughed. “*Cher*, go spend a few months in Afghanistan

yes. Much safer than staring.

with the army. This chair will seem like the Ritz.”

Jack’s slouched posture instantly gave way to a taut

Morgan nodded, conceding the point.

awareness. He leaned forward, balancing his elbows on his knees.

“If you’re awake, I want to ask you some questions. You

“How about we start with anyone you can think of who might want

need coffee first?”

to stalk and kill you?”

She shuddered. “I don’t drink the vile brew. Too bitter.”

*Boom*. Direct. Morgan wasn’t really surprised. That really

A flash of white teeth told Morgan that he smiled. “I

was the heart of the matter, after all, and she suspected Jack would wouldn’t say that too loud around here. We’re known for our thick

be a pretty bottom-line man.

chicory coffee. Not drinking that is sacrilege.”

“Honestly, I can’t think of anyone. I’ve had weird fan mail,

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 34**

but not this weird.”

“Three past lovers?” Jack asked, curiosity ripe in his voice.

“It seems as if this guy knows you pretty well, where you

“No more?”

live, where your friends and family live, where you might run to.”

She supposed that having only three lovers by the ripe age

Jack’s eyes narrowed. “Tell me about your relationships.”

of twenty-five made her an anomaly. But she wasn’t going to give

“What do you mean?”

him all the details about her sex life just to appease his curiosity.

“Previous lovers,” Jack’s raspy voice demanded as

The point of this exchange might be to build a list of suspects, but intriguing shadows played across the hard angles of his face and

the low-voiced probing in his tone had a sexual edge that shouted

torso. She could stare at the man for hours and never be bored. Hot *warning*.

and bothered, yes. But never bored.

And he wouldn’t stop staring. With every clinging gaze, he

Damn it, she needed to keep her mind on her safety, her

lashed Morgan with memories of his kiss, his touch, the way he

show, not her protector himself.

took control. Her body kept warming like an oven on pre-heat.

She shook her head. “The last one left me, not the other

“Why does it matter?” Morgan shot back, aware she was

way around, so I doubt he'd suddenly demand that I belonged only

dodging the question. "Aren't the most important facts that this

to him."

monster knows my habits, my friends, family, and the places I'm

"Before him?" he barked.

likely to go?"

Morgan felt a flush creep up her neck. "I was involved with

He shrugged. "*Cher*, there isn't a man alive who isn't

a pro football player a while ago, but when this started happening, willing to kill to get a woman he's truly desperate for. But if she's he would have been on the road, so he couldn't be taking pictures

running from him, thwarting both him and his lust...that man can

and leaving them for me. I dated an ambassador briefly. He's get a hell of lot more ruthless."

currently abroad. So it's not him, either. I hooked up with a guy in With a shiver, Morgan wondered if Jack somehow meant to

college who's married with a daughter now."

imply that description could apply to more than just her stalker.

"Who else?"

Did he include himself in that group? Somehow, she didn't picture

"Who else what?"

Jack needing a lot of excuses to get ruthless, but she also didn't

The line of his jaw hardened. "Who else have you let fuck

picture a lot of women turning him down.

you?”

“He’s especially dangerous if he’s already had a taste of

The intensity of his voice—and the words—suggested that what he’s missing. I need to know all the possibilities so I can he asked for reasons that weren’t strictly professional.

check them out, run them down. Then we’ll get to your other

“You’re getting awfully personal, not to mention crude.”

questions. Now, you’ve had just those three lovers?”

“Just getting a full list of suspects and cutting to the chase,

“Yes.”

*cher*. Answer me.”

“I need names, vital statistics, age, and last known

His no-nonsense tone had returned, and she found it oddly addresses to start digging.”

difficult to argue. “No one else. Actually, I didn’t even sleep with

“This is embarrassing.”

Ambassador Sweeny.”

“This is critical. Start talking.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 35**

Morgan sighed, squirmed in her place, and looked down at

“At a press party. He was doing a reality show about

her hands folded in her lap. “Sean Gardner is...about five-ten, athletes during the off season for the same parent company that

maybe. Sandy hair, brown eyes. I think he's twenty-eight by now.

airs *Turn Me On*. I doubt he's stalking me. We... It was just one Last I heard he's living with his wife and kid in San Diego."

night."

"And he was the first?"

Jack scowled, looking decidedly unhappy about that. "Why

She nodded. "When I was a sophomore in college, yes."

did you let him fuck you?"

"When did you see him last?"

"Do you have to put it like that?"

"About four years ago, just after he graduated. We only

"That's what happened, right? Why did you let him? Did

dated six months or so. It wasn't that serious."

you have feelings for him?"

"But you gave him your virginity?"

Brent had been built like the side of a mountain and the

"I already said that."

supposed leader of his football team. He'd been quiet and

"Why?"

seemingly in control. That illusion had drawn her in, along with his

"I'm not answering that. That goes beyond name and vital

good looks. A night had been all she needed to see how insecure

statistics."

and out of control he'd been.

"I need to establish motivation, *cher*. Maybe he still thinks

"That's really none of your business."

of you as his little virgin and doesn't like the thought that you've Jack stood, approached the bed, towered over her. Morgan

shared the pretty pussy he considers his with other men."

looked up, past the ridged abs and rippling shoulders that screamed Morgan held in a gasp. She wasn't used to those words, not

power. Having him this near...it wasn't good for her mental health.

with a born-again mother. She'd never dated a man like Jack who

He was part aphrodisiac, part beast. And she responded way more

used them so unapologetically. Her mother would have fainted than she wanted to.

dead away...even more than she had after seeing the first

"If you want my help, I need to know your past. It's not installment of *Turn Me On*.

uncommon for previous lovers to turn stalker, since they know

"Not likely. When we split up, he encouraged me to date where you live, who you're close to, and may even know some of

his roommate, who was a major horn dog. Trust me, he was as your friends and can get his information through them. You being

over me as I was over him."

modest and treating me like an auditory voyeur is only giving him

Jack shrugged, some of the tension leaving his shoulders.

more time to hunt you down. Do you have a death wish?"

"Number two?"

“If I did, I would have just sat there in Lafayette and let

“Brent Pherson.”

him use me as target practice,” Morgan grated out. “Do you think

“The Brent Pherson drafted by the Raiders a few years

he followed us here? Did you see anyone follow us on the road?”

ago?”

“No, I don’t think he followed us. We’re dead in the middle

“The same. If you want his vital stats, look them up on  
of a swamp, so he’ll be hard-pressed to find us. But it’s not  
ESPN.com.”

impossible. You can’t afford to underestimate someone like  
this.”

Jaw tight, he asked, “How’d you meet?”

Jack was right. Morgan’s stomach quivered with that truth.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 36**

“I know.”

difficulty climaxing in the bedroom. He’d seemed so worldly,  
like

“Good, then cooperate. You holding back is tempting me to  
a beacon of inner calm in a stormy life, she’d been sure he  
would

put you over my knee and spank your ass.”

be the man to unlock that something inside her that would set  
her

Morgan gaped. “You’re not touching my ass!”

body and heart free. He'd tried often...succeeded rarely.  
Finally,

"Don't challenge me, *cher*. I'll make those pretty cheeks  
he coaxed her into revealing her deepest desires, the ones that  
fire-hot in about three minutes."

involved her being bound and dominated. Thinking it would  
help

A flame of desire burst to life between Morgan's legs. *Bad*,  
them, she'd bared her soul and even revealed her most secret  
*bad, bad. Stop now!* She closed her eyes, blocking out the  
fantasy: being taken by two men at once. Not that she'd really  
do

sensation, the longing. The rampant curiosity and the ache.  
any of the things that spun in the deep recesses of her mind.  
They

"You're a pushy bastard, you know that?"

were just fantasies... A fact lost on Andrew.

"I'm a dominant man who's reached the end of my patience  
He'd called her depraved—and some other less flattering  
with your little-girl games. Now, have you spoken to Pherson  
since

things that seared pain through her gut and a shame that boiled  
her that night?"

temper every time she thought about it.

Her temper fired up a notch. "A few times. He sent me

She'd thrown his ring back at him. He'd taken it and quit  
flowers the week after I spent the night with him. He called  
every

the show. They hadn't spoken since.



few weeks, whenever he was back in town. I just wasn't interested

And not for anything would she share a whisper of that anymore. He finally got the picture and stopped calling." with Jack.

"Nothing since?"

"It just wasn't working out," she hedged.

She shook her head. He let the subject of Brent drop.

"Why?"

"I'm still not ruling him out. And bachelor number three?"

"We...just didn't get along as well as we thought."

"Andrew Cummings. He's about your height. Salt-and-

"You're holding out on me," he growled, grabbing her pepper hair, gray eyes. He just turned thirty-nine. He was the wrist.

producer for *Turn Me On* last year. We started dating shortly after Morgan jerked away from the electric heat of his touch.

the...incident with Brent. Within a month, he asked me to marry

"That's all you're going to get. He left me, and I was happy to him."

have him gone. As I've said, I doubt very much that he suddenly

"You said...?" Jack inched forward, crowding her personal wants me back."

space.

"Until you tell me the truth, I can't comment." He crossed

"Yes. He was good-looking, cultured, connected, seemed his arms over his chest.

intelligent, and funny. Why not?"

"That's all the truth you need."

He tensed—mouth, shoulders, abs. "When did it end?"

Jack's thundercloud of an expression told Morgan he

"About ten months ago."

disagreed. "Time will tell." He took a step back. "Who is your

"Because...?"

'friend' in Houston?"

Because Andrew's male ego had been frustrated by her

Knowing she hadn't heard the last of Jack's questions

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 37**

about her broken engagement with Andrew, Morgan took a  
bracing

my life turned upside down. The sooner we get this over with,  
the

breath and answered, "His name is Brandon Ross."

better."

Jack's jaw tightened. "Is he more than a friend?"

"We'll fix it," he murmured. "Who knew where you went

She hesitated. No one knew she and Brandon were related.

after you left L.A.?"

Keeping the secret had been part of her mother's settlement  
with

A furrow wrinkled her brow as she tried to recall. "Reggie,  
Senator Ross years ago. He would come after her with both  
barrels

my production assistant. My neighbor, who's watching my cat.

if she let the truth out. So she and Brandon had concocted the

Sabrina, who does my makeup for the show. I can't remember.  
I

engagement hoax when she started staying with him.  
left in a blur..."

Maybe...maybe if she used it here, it would ease the  
temperature

"Having some someone uninvited jack off on your bed  
down between her and Jack.  
would throw anyone for a loop."

"Yes. He's my fiancé. My—my current one."

Jack took her hand, sandwiched it between his strong,  
Jack's mouth pressed into a grim line. "Where is he now?"  
calloused palms as he hovered over her in the shadowed  
"Out of the country for a few weeks."

moonlight. Holy cow, he was so good-looking he hurt her  
eyes.

"While some off-kilter psycho is taking shots at your head.  
Strong jaw, chiseled mouth, two days' growth roughening  
what

Sounds like a great guy."

might have been an otherwise pretty face. Wide, muscle-  
capped

"He didn't want to go," she defended. "His job—"  
shoulders topped off a hard, six-packed torso any woman  
would

"Has anything else happened besides you receiving these  
drool over.

pictures? Anyone break into your house?"

Morgan wanted to be unmoved by him, his aura of power,

"Yes, and..." Morgan swallowed, then whispered, "He

his touch. It wasn't in the cards. His gaze roved over her, part masturbated on my bed. That's when I got scared and left L.A."

reassuring, part hot remembrance. God, she couldn't forget either,

Sudden tears scalded her eyes, her cheeks, surprising her.

his breath on her neck, his hands palming her breasts, his fingers

She thought she was more together than that. Tears weren't going

buried inside her, nearly bringing her to orgasm. His mouth on to help this situation. But the reality of it all was hitting her hard.

hers.

Jack sat beside her in a heartbeat, all hint of anger gone.

Survival first, pleasure later. Much later. And not with

Gently, he eased her back and leaned over her, brushing a gentle

Jack.

hand across her cheek, wiping tears away.

Yes, she wanted a self-possessed man, but this one...he

Morgan stared at the man, the contradiction. Tenderness

was too much. Of everything that called to her, of everything she

and compassion from a man who'd forced the truth from her, threw

didn't need at this point in her life. She had no business thinking her arousal at his touch in her face? A man who bound his women?

about him. Jack possessed lethal power, barely concealed by

"You did the right thing, leaving L.A. and agreeing to stay

careful restraint. The primal male animal lurked just under the here. This guy is fixated and dangerous, no question.”

surface of his skin, leashed by his control and air of authority—and Embarrassed by her tears and too conscious of Jack’s a thin façade of civility.

closeness, Morgan looked away. “I hate being afraid and having

A woman didn’t handle a man like Jack. He had all the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 38**

subtlety of a steamroller, and if Morgan gave him the slightest hint between them turned so thick, Morgan couldn’t drag a lungful in.

that his brand of domination interested her, she knew he’d roll over Heat radiated from him, warming her all the way to her bones. His

her fairly inexperienced body and leave her flat. No thanks.

scent hit her with the force of a battering ram—spice, sweat,

Now if only her lust-saturated thoughts would catch on. He swamp, and pure mystery.

was a business contact and the man trying to protect her. Her Damn it, she was so aware of him as a man...

response to him needed to stop there. She was focused on

“Try. You’ve got to keep your strength up.” He sent her a expanding her career, not the need moistening her vagina.

ghost of a smile. “You never know when you might need it.”

But she knew what Jack was and what he wanted from a

#

woman. Curiosity could be almost as powerful as desire. And none

Jack escaped the cottage into the emerging dawn, spitting a  
of her admonishments could douse the arousal that seeped  
through

curse.

her blood.

Four lovers, two of them fiancés, including Brandon. Had  
Morgan took a deep breath. Okay, so he could bring her  
the pansy-ass senator's son ever told Morgan about him? His  
pleasure. Surely lots of other guys could, without all the  
guess: no.

domination and bondage. Without the frightening sense that he  
As far as his revenge went, that was good news. Morgan  
could control a woman's body with little more than a stare, a  
stern had no idea who he was.

word, and a naughty smile. True, Morgan hadn't found such a  
man

And through her entire confessional, her blue eyes had  
yet.

eaten him up with hunger. Damn, he'd never gotten so hard  
from

She sighed at her circular logic. Nothing mattered now  
just a woman's glance.

except that Jack could keep her safe. She needed that so badly

---

He still wanted his pound of flesh, but revenge wasn't all  
assurances that she wasn't going to wind up dead in a ditch  
he wanted anymore. The shitty fact was, Morgan aroused him

somewhere, that she could escape from the nightmare her life had

unbearably. Being in the same room with her and not touching the

become virtually overnight.

pale silk of her skin, or tasting the cinnamon spice of her kiss, the Jack squeezed her hand. "After dawn, I'll call a buddy of musky cream of her pussy, was making him hard enough to drill

mine who has a lot of contacts inside the FBI and see if he can start holes through steel. He barely restrained his impatience at being

a profile."

denied the opportunity to cuff her to his bed and coax her into

"Thank you." She hoped Jack and his pal would get to the submission. Need gnawed at him, demanding he clamp those bottom of this soon so she could get on with her life and on with

pretty, pale nipples and toy with her clit until she begged for a hard her show.

ride. She nearly pushed him past sanity. He was dying to see just

"Why don't you try to go back to sleep?"

how submissive she was, taste her strength as he shoved his cock

Tension rose up like quicksand, threatening to drown her.

so far inside her, she'd never forget him.

"I'm done sleeping. Too worried. Too wired."

Damn it, he had to get control. Feeling more than the need

Jack leaned in and fondled a lock of her hair between his

for revenge was stupid.

fingers and frowned. He turned dark chocolate eyes on her.  
The air

So why was he? The question plagued him like an

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 39**

annoying song he couldn't get out of his head. He'd never  
been

His palm itched at the thought, but he shoved the tempting  
particularly hot for redheads. Or short women. Or women  
already

idea away. After the last thirty minutes—hell, the last few  
hours of claimed by another man. So why her?

watching her sleep—his pike-hard cock was finally getting the  
clue

His grandfather's matter-of-fact voice echoed in his head, *If*  
that he wasn't getting lucky. He welcomed a rest from having  
most

*you're dreaming about a redheaded woman over and over,*  
*you're*

of the blood in his body nowhere near his brain.

*about to meet her and she's your heart's mate.* He'd always In  
fact, he needed to get her some clothes. Preferably made

thought the family "curse" utter bullshit, propagated by the  
of flannel and three sizes too big. If he watched her parade  
around colorful loons and romantics in his family who  
believed it because

in tight purple leather and stiletto boots for too long, he'd be  
too they wanted to.

distracted by wanting to fuck her to protect her in case the  
worst

Now, it still didn't make sense. He still didn't believe it.



happened. The fucking would happen, he reminded himself, but

But he couldn't deny that he'd never responded to a woman not yet. Not until he was sure she was safe. Not until he'd earned a this strongly.

bit more of her trust and figured out how to get under her skin.

Muttering an even uglier curse than the last, he headed

He'd need all that if he wanted her to completely surrender around the left side of the cabin and began walking the perimeter,

to him.

the marshy soil soggy beneath his boots.

He walked on, pulling his cell phone from his belt clip and

He'd seduce Morgan, no question. Not even a blind man dialed Brice. He'd get his grandfather to pick her up a few things.

could miss the curiosity and awakening need in her eyes. He was

But after the sixth ring, he hung up with a curse. The old codger

far from blind. But he also sensed something holding her back.

was probably having coffee with the "boys" at the local diner,

Latent affection for Brandon? Or a fear of being dominated,

playing *Bourée*, and solving all the ills of the world. Too bad he despite her curiosity and submissive nature? There was more to her

couldn't convince Brice to buy an answering machine or a cell

past relationships than she was admitting, particularly her break-up phone. He'd call back later... but that meant waiting to cover

with her former producer.

Morgan's tempting form.

Her reason for denying her desire to submit didn't matter.

At the back of the cabin, Jack paused, listening to the

He'd overcome it and have Morgan bound and hungrily  
accepting

bayou, watching alligators slosh into the water and disappear  
his every demand, gasping as he sank his cock into her mouth,  
her

beneath the murky surface. Cicadas sang the last of the night's  
pussy, her ass. Give her things straight-laced Brandon Ross  
would

song as dawn approached. Even in the February chill, moist air  
never dream of.

clung to everything.

Would that be enough to make her leave Brandon in the

This place had always represented peace to him. Not today.  
end?

In the last few months since Brice had given the cabin to him,  
he'd Jack paused at the bedroom window and peered in.  
Empty.

made some modifications and upgrades—really made it his. It  
was

No Morgan in the bed or anywhere in the room. Damn it,  
she'd

the closest thing to a home he had. He rarely brought anyone  
here.

defied his good advice to rest. No doubt, she needed a strong  
man

He meant to...but in the end, he hid this place from  
submissives

to heat up her ass to keep her in line.

and all but his closest friends. So why had he brought Morgan here

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 40**

so readily?

stopping him from fully taking in the pale temptation of her body

Not looking too hard for the answer, Jack peered at the  
was a lacy bra that did nothing to hide her hard nipples, and a  
video equipment well hidden by the trees and the eaves.  
Looked

teeny-tiny thong.

good, functional, as it scanned the area behind the cottage.  
Then he Damn, was it possible to have a fatal heart attack at  
thirty-continued on, trudging around the corner of the little  
house.

one?

Flickering golden light emanated from the little window in  
He should walk away now. Focus on surveillance until he  
the middle of the wall. Morgan was in the bathroom and had  
found

knew she was safe. Stop fixating on a woman he planned to  
fuck

the candles. What she hadn't done was completely close the  
once...just so Brandon could appreciate the pain and rage a  
man

shutters. She'd tried, but the broken one wouldn't extend over  
the

felt when he knew his woman had surrendered willingly to  
another

window.

hard dick.

On quiet feet, Jack approached the small glass pane. He  
But walking away from Morgan was easier said than done.  
shouldn't look; he knew that. But he didn't have a lot of  
scruples

At this point, he couldn't find the will to try.  
where she was concerned.

Drawing in a shaky breath, he watched as she reached  
Edging closer, Jack peered in, looking into the narrow  
behind her to unclasp the bra. The movement thrust her breasts  
bathroom. Steam rose from the claw-footed tub. Beside it,  
Morgan

forward, accentuating their round, firm shape and those pretty  
ran a hand under the water stream. Apparently satisfied with  
the  
nipples he thirsted to suck into his mouth.

temperature, she set the plug in the tub then backed away.

A moment later, they came into view. Plump, soft, blushing  
Her hands settled on the first button of Alyssa's leather get-  
pink, and swollen, they beckoned like little bits of heaven  
topping up. At a push of her thumb, the button came loose. A  
second

the pale beauty of her breasts, which shimmered with dancing,  
followed suit. The soft, rounded edged of her cleavage and a  
hint

golden candlelight. He grabbed the ledge outside the window  
and

of the black bra he hadn't forgotten peeked out to torment him.  
let out a ragged breath.

A sweat broke out across Jack's chest and back. His cock,

How the hell was he going to keep from fucking her into which he'd just managed to get under control, rose up swiftly to

oblivion in the next ten minutes?

full staff and saluted the view.

Before he could answer that question, she slid the little

But the view only improved. A third button, centered

black thong off and tossed it away, revealing the last of her secrets around her naval, came loose from its mooring. As the fourth and

to him. And boy, was it a doozie.

final button came undone, so did Jack's ability to breathe.

The tiny patch of hair covering Morgan's pussy was fiery

Morgan peeled the garment off and laid it on the counter.

red.

He glued his gaze to her slender torso and high, round breasts as

Now Jack knew how a bull felt when someone waved

she reached behind her to unfasten the tight mini skirt.

something red in its face: enflamed, ready to charge.

With an alluring wriggle, a sexy shimmy, she peeled the

*Toro!*

garment down the sweet curve of her hips and past firm thighs.

He braced his hands against the side of the cabin to steady

When she stood again and set the skirt aside, the only thing

himself as Morgan stepped into the tub and sank into the steaming

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 41**

water, eyes closed.

bad just what she would do next.

Damn, he had to stop spying on her like some loser sicko

As her nipples darkened and swelled from her fondling, she who couldn't persuade a woman to undress for him. And he sank deeper into the tub, until only the twin peaks of her breasts

would...as soon as she stopped slashing water over her shoulders,

rose from the water, wet and tempting. She lifted her right leg and on her breasts. The water beaded up on her creamy skin, running in

rested her heel on the rim of the tub, then bent her left knee and

rivulets that dripped from succulent nipples. He'd love to lick her spread her legs wide.

up with his tongue.

Jack couldn't see Morgan's pussy under the water, but

The sun edged up over the horizon behind Jack, making it glimpsed an occasional flash of red hair. But his imagination filled harder to see inside the little bathroom. It was probably a sign that in the gaps. Fiery curls shielding swollen pink flesh, slick and

he should be noble and stop acting like a peeping Tom.

pouting and ready.

Morgan dragged a thumb over one of her hard nipples, and

If she was his, he'd keep her like that—naked and hot.

her lips parted in a silent gasp.

Always wet. He'd spend mornings lapping at her nipples.

While

Fuck nobility.

she ate breakfast, he'd eat her. They'd shower with her mouth  
He stepped closer to the window to improve his view.

around his cock as she took him deep, all the way to the back  
of

Her nipples responded to their wet state and the cool air,  
her throat. And then he'd get serious, push her to the limits of  
her beading up even tighter, turning a shade darker. She lay  
against the body, her trust. He'd leave no part of her  
untouched. There would

back of the tub and sighed.

be nothing he wouldn't do with her, to her, to hear her scream  
her

Then she lifted her hands from the water—to cup her  
throat raw in pleasure.

breasts. A moment later, Morgan stunned him when she  
dragged

Morgan jolted him out of his reverie when she trailed her  
her thumbs across the rigid peaks deliberately and moaned.  
hand from her breast, down her abdomen and between her  
legs.

A fresh gallon of blood ran south to engorge his cock even  
She began to stroke herself.

more. God, he was going to go insane. He, who had never had  
*Oh, shit...* If he hadn't yet lost his mind, it was going to go  
even a hint of mental illness in his family, would be certifiable  
up in flames now—just like his body.

before Morgan finished her bath.

He shifted his aching cock in his jeans and edged closer to  
Jack held his breath as she pinched her lush nipples, rolling  
the window until his face was nearly pressed against it. Eyes

them between thumb and fingers, pulling at them harder than he

closed, Morgan made lazy circles with the hand between her legs

would have imagined. First one, then the other, finally together,

while the other continued to pluck at her nipples, keep them hard

she worked them with her small fingers. She threw her head back,

and ready.

neck arched, moist lips parted. She looked like a sensual goddess,

Soon, the slow circles of her fingers gained speed. Water like the ultimate fuck.

sloshed in the tub, dousing the ends of her silky hair, which hung

In that moment, he would have charged into the house, wildly about her shoulders. Her hips began to lift to meet her plucked her damp, naked body from the water and plunged his fingers. Jack caught electrifying flashes of red, along with slick, steel-hard cock right into her. But he wanted to know too damn

spread flesh. Lust pooled in his belly, demanding relief, demanding **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 42**

her, as her chest rose and fell with quick, panting breaths. Morgan tightened the circle, moving faster than ever. Her lips, now a deep red, opened on a silent gasp. She squeezed her eyes tightly closed.

Jack stepped closer still to the window for an even better view,



clutching the window ledge with a white-knuckled grip, his own rapid breathing creating circles of damp heat against the glass. Then her legs stiffened, her back bowed. She bit her lip to trap in a cry as orgasm washed over her in a long rush of shuddering sensation. Morgan rubbed at her clit furiously, extending the pleasure, extending Jack's hell. She kept panting, teasing, bucking against her hand, stretching for the next orgasm. Moments later it came, crashing down on her like a tidal wave. She cried out, no longer able to hold in the sound. But the desperate pleasure in her voice stabbed Jack with a fresh bolt of lust. God help her. God help them both. There was no power strong enough on this earth to keep him out of her body right now. Fuck his plans. Fuck the consequences. He was going to fuck her. Now. As Morgan rose to the pinnacle of her peak, arching and flushed, her eyes flew open. Her gaze connected with his.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 43**

Shooting him a venomous glare through the window, Morgan whirled and left the little bathroom, then stalked down the hall, into the kitchen/living room area. She barreled toward the cabin's front door.

Before she reached it, the door opened. Jack stepped in, fierce and silent. And so taut she could probably bounce knives off him. He closed the door behind him with a quiet click that was

## CHAPTER FIVE

nearly lost in the hard stamps of her wet feet across the  
gleaming  
wood floor.

*Oh my God!*

“You son of a bitch!” she yelled, charging toward him until  
Morgan leapt from the tub, grabbed a towel with shaking  
they stood a mere foot apart. “How dare you? Did you think I  
hands and wrapped it around her, covering as much of herself  
as

wouldn’t notice or care? Or maybe you thought—”

she could. He’d seen her—and everything she’d done!

“Enough.” He didn’t raise his voice but it still lashed like  
She turned back to the window, eager to assure herself Jack  
the sting of a whip.

had had the decency to leave and give her privacy, now that  
she’d

“Go to—”

caught him being a voyeur. But Jack still stood there  
unblinking,

“Morgan,” he warned, jaw clenching.

shirtless, his massive chest rising and falling with harsh,  
tightly She started, clutching her towel around her, her chest  
rising

controlled breaths. Worse, he watched her with a hot,  
predatory

and falling with anger. His voice filled the room. A command  
gaze. Completely sexual. Totally lacking in apology. His gaze  
told

burned in his eyes. *He* was angry with *her*? Unbelievable.

her that she aroused him. He wanted her. He meant to have her.

Before she could tell him to pound sand, he said. “I had no Period.

right to watch you, *cher*. I went outside to check the perimeter  
The ache between her thighs she’d tried to quench pulsed

security. You left the partially shutters open, and I couldn’t  
look back to life. Morgan squeezed her eyes shut, struggling  
against the away. I’m sorry.”

morass of feeling swirling inside her. Desire and fury galloped  
in

An apology? That was it? No arguing, no defending

her stomach. They raced neck in neck, mortification a close  
third.

himself?

But at the finish line, fury won.

Fury dissipated—much faster than she wanted it to. Hard to

Damn him! Jack might have saved her life, but that didn’t

stay frothing furious at someone who’d offered an apology,  
damn

entitle him to invade her privacy, to watch...whatever she did  
by

it. Even harder to stay mad at a man who’d been transfixed

herself—and arouse himself doing it. Arrogant. Rude! So like  
a

because he liked the sight of her.

man.

But she was an O’Malley and not nearly ready to give up

The famous O’Malley temper her mother had always talked  
the fight.

about was rising hot and fast inside her, greedily lapping at  
“You didn’t have any right! I—I’m completely  
propriety and calm.  
embarrassed.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 44**

He edged closer. “Of your body? Of being a woman with  
was much better if she didn’t...  
needs?”

“Bite me. I’m not a two year-old or a robot,” she shot back  
“Of being watched! I can’t believe you just stood there and  
and stepped away again.

looked at me like I was the star of some sort of freebie sex  
show.”

Jack reached for her.

“It’s not good behavior for hosts, I agree. It’s not a habit.”

*Run!* she ordered herself. Instead, he encircled her wrist

His eyes sparked truth—and a desire that wasn’t going away.  
with a gentle grip, but she felt its steel beneath. And his heat.

“Morgan, admit something, though: Knowing I watched you,  
that I

*“Stay there. ”*

couldn’t look away, arouses you.”

For some reason, something in his voice... She couldn’t *not*

“No.” She refused to give him the satisfaction, despite her  
listen to him.

awareness that moisture gushed between her legs at his words.

Maybe that’s because Jack embodied every sin she’d ever

“Those sultry blue eyes say yes, *cher*.”

yearned to experience, ever masturbated to in her dark, lonely bed,

“You need glasses. Did you think I would be okay with you only to have frustration douse her satisfaction when she realized

turning my bath into a peepfest? Did you think I’d say, ‘Sure, I none of it was real.

know we just met yesterday, but feel free to spy on the most

He released her slowly and began to pace around her with intimate moments of my life?””

unhurried steps, brushing her shoulder with gentle fingertips as he

“I was only aware of how of beautiful you looked.” He stepped past. Her heartbeat accelerated. Goose bumps erupted leaned in. “If you were mine, you’d have no reason to self-across her arms. She didn’t even want to think about what was pleasure, *cher*.” He quirked a smile. “Of course, I’d love to see you happening to her nipples or how bad they ached.

stroke yourself now and then for the pure viewing fun.”

He stopped behind her. Jack’s hot breath tickled the

Risking a glance down, she couldn’t miss the outline of his sensitive spot between her neck and shoulders. His heat radiated

rigid erection straining the front of his jeans. Morgan felt a flush along her back and legs. Morgan sucked in a breath. God, he was

rise to her skin and that ache tighten between her legs again. *No!*

standing close. Too close to ignore. Too close to deny the effect he She needed her anger, all whipped into a nice, frothy

fury.

had on her.

Instead, she became all too aware of how close he stood. Of  
The ache between her thighs zinged to new heights, as if  
the fact he was half dressed, while she was barely covered at  
all.

she hadn't stroked her way to climax mere minutes ago.

Dangerous territory, especially with Jack looking at her with a  
dark She sent a cautious glance over her shoulder. Jack stood  
flame of want blazing in his eyes. Especially with her body  
right there, waiting, as if he'd known what she would do.  
Their

warming in response.

gazes connected, his full of fire and demand. He hovered a  
mere

Morgan retreated a step.

breath away, tall and towering.

"Stay there."

He was going to touch her.

His quiet tones rang with command, vibrated through her.

A zip of electric thrill raced through her, even as she called

Morgan hesitated, mind racing. She didn't have to listen,  
didn't

herself twenty kinds of stupid. She tore her gaze from his and  
have to stand before him nearly naked and follow orders. In  
fact, it stared at the front door again, clutching the towel  
around her body.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 45**

He said nothing, but Morgan could feel his eyes on her, taking in

mystery, spicy as Cajun food and as hard to fathom as the swamp

her still-wet skin, her rapid, telling breaths.

itself.

Now what? This had gone from an ass-chewing to an ass-

She inched back. "Do you think you know me now?"

viewing in about two minutes. If she didn't want him doing

"I know things about you. I know you're uneasy about your anything else with her ass, she had to get away now.

sexuality. You have desires you don't like to admit to. I see them

"Tell me why you needed that orgasm," he murmured into all in your eyes. A craving to be bound and dominated—"her ear.

"You don't see a damn thing! I'm *not* depraved."

She couldn't. It would only confirm what he must know:

"No, you're not. Anyone who thinks you are is an idiot."

That some deviant, out-of-control part of her wanted him, felt more Jack reached for her again, determination all over the fierce

than journalistic curiosity about what he could give her.

masculine angles of his strong face. She didn't want to know

"It's really none of your business, Jack..."

exactly what he was determined to do. Panic flared, and she batted

"Don't call me that, not when we're alone."

his hand away and leapt out of his reach. Her back hit the door.

He wanted her to call him sir. Trembling, she stood still,



And Jack kept coming for her with soft, slow steps. The thoughts and heart racing between uncertainty and forbidden thrill.

pace of a hunter. She had to get away. Had to. Now.

She felt...claimed by Jack's words. His iron commands reached

Morgan lunged to her left to evade him. He blocked her something inside her and called forth a barrage of need.

way with a strong arm, then anchored it on the door, sealing off

*What would it be like to surrender? To give in to that*

that avenue of escape. He used the same tactic on the right before

*voice?*

she could make a move in that direction.

Dangerous. Bad. Giving into everything Jack represented

Then Jack leaned in, placing one hand on the door, just

and everything she shouldn't want. If she did, she'd only be next to her head. She couldn't look at him, refused to. As if to get forging a new path to hell.

her attention, his body brushed hers, detonating ruthless sparks of

"How about jackass, then? That's appropriate." She dug up desire that burned through her body. Still, that brief contact was

her bravado and turned to face him. "Don't bully me."

enough to light her up like a firecracker.

She waited for his angry comeback, for a growled

"Look at me." He leaned back to put a breath of air command of frustration. It didn't come.

between them.

Instead, he shuffled a heartbeat closer, until a mere whisper  
Something inside her wanted to obey. That smooth, rich  
separated her from the raging heat of his body. “There is no  
reason voice with the hint of French lilt and explicit command  
tugged at

to be embarrassed about your desires.”

her. The thought of surrendering made her stomach clench  
with

“I’m not. Call me repressed, but I am embarrassed about  
anxiety...and desire gnaw at her clit. The man was a giant  
having an audience during orgasm,” she snapped.

contradiction. An aggressive protector. A man who bound  
women

“That’s not true,” he said softly.

was going out of his way to keep her safe.

Swallowing, Morgan tried to tear her gaze from his

It was confusing her. *He* was confusing her.

knowing, sexual stare. His scent assailed her next, full of man  
and Finally, she raised her stormy gaze to clash with his.

“What

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 46**

the hell do you want from me?”

moan.

“Honesty.”

“That’s it.” Jack feathered his lips down her throat as he

“No, you don’t. You want me to give in, to spread my legs

moved in closer. His other hand joined the first in the soft torment like a spineless airhead and give you...whatever it is you want.”

of her nipples with only the thin towel in between.

A half smile curled up the side of his mouth. “You’re half  
“I want to see those pretty nipples. I need to have them in  
right. I do want you to give in, *cher*. I want you to spread your  
legs my mouth, *cher*. Drop the towel.”

when I tell you to. Not because you’re spineless, but because  
Desire bubbled within her, at full boil, even as a last bit of  
you’re not.” He moved in closer, brushing his body against  
hers

sanity screamed somewhere in her head. The memory of his  
touch

again, all hint of a smile gone. “I want you to burn for me. I  
want at the strip club and the jolting pleasure it suffused her  
with still all your fire and independence and sass underneath  
me. I want to

haunted her. The lingering remembrances, coupled with his  
potent

show you what you secretly yearn for and try not to—and how  
command, sent her self-control reeling.

good it can be.”

Of all the men she could desire, why him? Of all times,  
Morgan swallowed, then opened her mouth to speak. How  
while being chased by some whacked-out stalker, why did she  
was she supposed to reply to that? What did a woman say to  
the

have to want him now?

man trying to spoon-feed her every sexual fantasy she’d ever  
Gee, maybe it was because Jack was the embodiment of

denied?

every midnight fantasy that had ever kept her awake. Maybe it was

“I don’t think—”

because he lowered his hand to the part in her towel and swirled

“You think too much. Of all the reasons you shouldn’t. Of his palm across her stomach, over the curve of her hip, then moved

all the reasons I scare you. Try thinking of the ways I could please in to press an impressive erection against her. Certainly, he and all you.”

that testosterone...diverted her mind from the whacked-out stalker

Oh, she’d thought of those.

issues.

One of his hands eased away from the door. He brushed the

Her mother had always said, *You make your choices in life*

back of his fingers down her neck, over her collarbones...and kept

*and live with them.* Could she live with herself if she walked away delving down. He caressed down the terrycloth-covered slope of

from the forbidden allure of Jack Cole without one taste?

her breast, then brushed down over the erect nipple begging for his He curved his hand over the rise of her ass and began to touch.

stroke his way down—fingertips lightly toying with the crease

Even through the towel, she felt that touch all the way to

between her cheeks. A new rush of tingles filled her. Clever move,

her toes. A hot tingle sizzled her insides like bacon in hot grease.

she acknowledged. If she arched into his touch, he had a handful of She gasped, felt her gaze locked in place by his dark stare.

ass. If she arched away from it, she pushed herself right against his He repeated the process again, then once more. Pleasure

erection. How could he lose?

assailed Morgan from the aching points of her tight nipples,

*How could you?* a little voice inside her head dared her.

streaking through her tightly coiled body, straight to her vagina.

In the next moment, his fingers stroked the cleft between

She dropped her head back against the door, unable to hold in her

her cheeks again, this time a little harder, deeper. A dark thrill

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 47**

zoomed up her spine. Without thought, she gasped and arched right

an obvious lie.

into his hand.

He grabbed her jaw in one hand. “You lie to me again, and

“Good girl,” he murmured into her ear, sending the shivers

I’m going to spank you so hard you won’t sit for a week. Tell me

back down her spine.

why you’re resisting what you want.”

His thumb toyed with her nipple, now so hard she could

“Don’t touch me.” She tried to jerk from his grasp.  
feel every brush of skin, every callous. She moaned again.  
Jack held firm. “*Cher*, I’m going to do more than touch  
“*Cher*, drop the towel. *Montre-moi ton joli corps*.” His you.  
Way more. And the longer you hold out on answering me, the  
breath came hard and fast, his voice strained but still in  
control.  
more I’m going to make you beg.”  
“Show me your pretty body.”  
Oh, God. His words alone made Morgan hot as she  
“You’ve already seen it, you peeping Tom.”  
weighed them and the relentless demand in his eyes against  
her  
“Show me,” he growled.  
fears. He could do it; he could make her beg. And the thought  
Oh, God. The command in his voice turned the ache  
raced a shiver down her spine. “Fine. If you have to know, I’m  
not  
between her legs into a throb. She wanted to obey...so bad.  
Sizzle  
some femme fatale. I don’t respond much to sex.”  
coursed through her. Blood rushed everywhere, swelling her  
clit.  
Cajun charm softened pushy arrogance with a mere curl of  
Already wet from orgasm, she felt moisture pooling in her  
most  
his sin-inspiring lips. He placed hot kisses on her neck,  
nibbled at intimate recesses, threatening to overflow. Jack’s  
spicy, earthy  
the curve to her shoulder. “You responded just fine to  
everything I scent was scattering rational thought. The parts of

her body aching threw your way in Lafayette.”

for his touch were in control.

Surprise. That’s all it had been. She’d been too shocked to

*What’s the worst that could happen if you gave in?* a voice really react. To want, then bow to the pressure of self-doubt. Then inside her asked.

clam up until, tense and frustrated, her body gave up. Besides, she More disappointment and frustration. More rejection and might be curious about his...lifestyle, but participating committed

ridicule.

her far more than simply wondering. And she had a bad feeling

Then again, it took her at least a dozen pairs of shoes to that one taste of Jack Cole would be as addicting as heroin to a find the right fit. Were lovers the same way? Maybe three hadn’t

junkie.

been enough.

“We don’t really know each other.”

Confusion spun in her head.

Jack’s fingertips cascaded over her shoulder, leaving

“Jack,” she managed to murmur in between his wicked nothing but anticipation and a fresh crop of goose bumps in their

touches. “I talk to people about sex for a living. I don’t need to wake. “I know enough to know how to make you scream. But that

have it to do the show.”

isn’t what’s stopping you.”

“Forget the show. You need what I can give you. Stop  
He kissed her neck, her jawline, inched up toward her  
denying yourself.”

mouth. She melted under his mouth. God, that felt good. And  
his

“I’m not denying myself anything.” *Stupid!* Morgan bit her  
smell... Did it contain some ingredient that was like  
Kryptonite for

lip, sure that her flushed cheeks and hard nipples made her  
words

her restraint?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 48**

“We don’t like each other much,” she pointed out in a  
fire under a harsh wind, burning her from the inside out. About  
to

desperate gasp, evading his kiss—a kiss she wanted so bad,  
her gut

rage out of control.

clenched with desire.

Moisture threatened to trickle down her legs. She licked her

Again, he smiled, a flash of white teeth visible in the room

dry lips, but when his gaze followed the motion, it only made  
her

bathed with predawn light. “I’m liking you just fine right now,  
temperature spike hotter.

*cher*. I liked you the first time we talked online. I like that  
you’re

“You going to put that pretty pink tongue on me, *cher*?”



smart and gutsy and sexy as hell.”

While I watched you sleep, I pictured you on your knees, my cock

He whispered the words against her mouth, and Morgan in your luscious little mouth.”

felt her resolve fraying around the edges. Back in Lafayette, Jack

Morgan knew next to nothing about oral sex from personal had touched her breasts, stroked her clit, fondled deep inside her, experience. Reading and talking about it to prepare for her show

yes. But his kiss lingered, haunted her. Like the smoothest wine,

didn't make up for that fact. At this moment, with a mountain of

all wrapped in sin and velvet, with a kick of lust that promised man like Jack in front of her, pressed against her, that seemed pleasure. His kiss gave her a preview of his strength and self-irrelevant. Jack inspired an urge to sample everything wicked, control. Almost against her will, she leaned toward him. including his cock.

For a wild moment, Morgan thought he would pull away.

“Ah, I think you like the idea,” he murmured, breath

Tease her, enflame her with what might be. Instead, he grasped the

caressing her tingling lips. “Those blue eyes are turning darker. I sides of her face and kept her gaze locked to his dark one.

wonder what else you like? I know you enjoy this...”

“The memory of you in my arms...it's been keeping me

As he'd done before, Jack stroked her nipples through her

hard all night. Watching you sleep was torture. I kept thinking  
towel, now painfully hard, with brushes of knuckles and  
fingertips.

about lying next to you on the bed, peeling your clothes away  
and

She gasped and couldn't stop herself from arching toward him  
and

devouring everything underneath. I want to get my hands on  
you,

seeking an end to the erotic torment of his touch.

*cher*. My mouth on you. Get inside you, drive deep and sure. I

“Sensitive nipples. I'll enjoy sucking them until I can feel  
want you to scream my name when you come.”

them swell on my tongue.”

Morgan couldn't breathe. The impact of every word did

Would he? The suggestion made her faint with pleasure.

more than rev up her libido; they struck her like body blows,  
every

“Don't presume. I didn't say yes,” she pointed out, trying  
syllable battering her resolve with hot intent. He robbed her of  
air, to hang onto sanity. But the croak in her voice made her  
protest a

of the will to resist. How would he feel? Taste? That terrible  
vise joke.

of desire clamped her clit with need. She hardly contained her

No, no, no! Jack might be thrilling her beyond belief—

whimper with the need to come again. And he'd barely  
touched

beyond bearing—but tomorrow...how messed up would her  
head

her.

and her life be tomorrow if she gave in now? Wasn't having a  
What if she gave him free rein? What would it be like to let  
stalker enough? She'd agreed to meet him to facilitate an  
interview go and give herself to someone with his mastery, just  
this once?

for *Turn Me On*, not to find a dominant looking for a  
plaything.

She exhaled on a ragged sigh. Arousal flared like a forest

“Your body is saying it for you, *cher*. Breath chugging.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 49**

Jackhammer pulse jumping. Your nipples are as hard as

“You want something?” His voice taunted her as his fingers  
diamonds.” Suddenly, he found the fold in her towel down her  
glided like a ghost over her abdomen, her hip. Those dancing  
dark

abdomen again, parted the halves of terrycloth and planted his  
hot

eyes, that playful mouth teased her without mercy.

palm on her skin. He was so warm, it startled her. Stung. She  
She and her resistance were toast.

jumped...closer to him. Now their chests brushed. His mouth  
was

In answer to his question, she grabbed his hand and placed  
only a whisper away from hers as he dragged that hand over  
her

it right over her mound. He swiped a hot finger through the  
hip, across her belly—then started heading down.

swollen folds and swirled around her clit once, twice. She  
gasped,

“You going to say no, *cher*?”

assailed by an urge to spread her legs wider for him.

Morgan hesitated. If she was smart, she’d scream “no”

“If you want something, *cher*, drop the towel. I want all of now. She’d jerk away from him, march back to that claw-footed

you and I want you bare.”

tub of his, fill it up with cold water and dive in. But his fingertips Morgan refused to stop and think, to reconsider again.

whispered swirls and circles across her belly, over her thighs,

Plenty of time for that later. Instead, she tugged at the towel. It fell brushing over her mound just enough to entice.

to the floor in a quiet rush, leaving her covered in goose bumps—

She clenched her thighs together but it only magnified the and nothing else. She shivered—but not from the cold.

ache. It climbed up into her belly, spread down her thighs. The fact Jack looked his fill with hot eyes that promised mind-that she wore nothing but a tiny green bath towel did not comfort shattering pleasure. “I can’t wait to get inside you, so deep you’ll her.

never forget it.”

“Or are you going to say yes?” he whispered. “Are you

His mouth covered hers in a searing kiss. No, he did more going to let me fill you with my fingers and tongue? Are you going

than cover her mouth. He devoured, consumed, possessed. Morgan

to let my cock ride you hard and deep?”

opened to him, accepting the hungry thrust of his tongue, which

God, more of his wicked words that gave her lascivious delivered the spice of his taste and the heat of his need in a ideas—and irresistible pictures to go along with them. devastating dance of seduction. Her knees weakened in seconds.

Morgan threw her head back against the door and closed His passion had the kick of cayenne pepper, balanced with the her eyes. She wanted to say yes, yearned as she never had for the sweetness of honey, caged in control of steel. Unique. Intoxicating.

forbidden pleasure she knew Jack could give her.

She moaned into his mouth, and he swallowed the hungry sound.

*Once. Just once*, whispered a voice in her head. *What could* Jack's hands fell to her hips and grasped her, fitting her *it hurt?*

right against his jeans-clad erection. He gave her a nudge in the

Soon, with any luck, this business with her stalker would be right spot, and her need spiked. The ache in her sex built. He behind her, she'd be back in L.A. taping the next season of *Turn* pressed against her again, compelling Morgan to lift her leg to

*Me On.* Jack Cole would be a hot memory she could drag out on a wrap it around his waist, opening her body to him in a silent plea.

cold night and remember when she needed to warm herself. That

He accepted immediately, taking her thigh and anchoring it simple.

over his hip, bringing him in perfect contact with her clit.  
Morgan

“Jack...”

grasped his bare, steely shoulders, hanging on while she felt dizzy **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 50**

with need.

For the first time ever, she could actually feel the blood

Had she ever been this aroused? No. Ever wanted so bad filling her nipples, swelling them.

she thought her blood would boil if he turned and walked away?

With a last lick, he pulled back to look at his handiwork.

No.

“Very pretty. I should keep them like this always, slightly tender, a It was torture. It was bliss.

rosy pink, standing up and waiting for just one more touch.”

He continued to eat at her mouth, small nibbles of her lips,

He closed thumbs and fingers around them again in a pinch

long swirls of his tongue against hers. Jack left no part of her that made her catch her breath. Then he twisted, just enough to

mouth without his attention, his flavor. In desperation, she rubbed make Morgan cry out—as the moisture gushed between her thighs

her breasts against the hot, hard wall of his chest, threw her arms in a fresh rush. Lord, she’d never been so sensitive, felt as if she around his neck, and pressed deeper into the kiss.

might actually orgasm just from having her nipples toyed with.

When he eased his lips away from hers, she clung to him in

She’d read it was possible but never believed it. Until now.

protest. He lifted her arms away from him and anchored them to

“Are you slick and hot for me?” he asked, his hot breath the door with a warning stare.

teasing her neck.

Their gazes connected, his dark with broiling need,

“Yes,” she gasped.

compelling her to accept whatever came next. Her body too

“Yes, what?”

ravenous, her mind too entangled in his spell, to refuse. The breath

“Yes, sir.”

seesawing in and out of his chest was her only indication that he

Jack swiped a pair of fingers down the valley between her wasn't perfectly in control.

breasts, dragged them down her abdomen, her mound, then dove

Pushing her flat against the door, Jack leaned in, his cock right into her wet heat. He grazed her clit, and she moaned against grinding against her clit again. But now he bent to add a totally

his mouth.

new sensation to the mix: his mouth around her nipples.

“Touch me,” she moaned.

Morgan arched up to Jack, not just eager to give him more,

“You don't give the orders, *cher*. You take what I give you.

but aching to. He started with skillful suction, a teasing lick.

No matter how I give it to you.”

“Jack,” she protested softly. “Jack.”

“But—”

“You know what to call me,” he warned, thumbs and  
Jack took a step back, ending all contact. Morgan stared,  
fingers pinching her sensitive nipples. “Until you come, I  
don’t

wide-eyed. Bastard.

want to hear my name fall from your lips again, *cher*. ”

“We either do this my way, or we don’t do it at all. How is

“Yes, sir,” she chanted. Anything to get her nipples back in  
it going to be?”

his mouth.

“Damn it, you’re arrogant,” she said between gritted teeth

He rewarded her with hot suction over the peaks of her  
as the ache and sizzle smoldered inside her.

breasts, first one, then the other. Back and forth. Over and  
over.

“We’ve already established that. How is this going to go

Hot, swirling tongue, then tender bites that had her gasping  
and

down, *cher*? Your choice.”

clawing.

In the end, Morgan was too far gone, too curious about the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 51**

heights he could take her to, to consider saying anything  
except,

couldn’t clench them together. His fingers toyed again with  
her

“Your way...sir.”



nipples, now slightly sore. And somehow that tiny hint of pain

“Good girl. Spread those pretty thighs.”

only made his every touch more vivid, shot every caress  
straight

Leaning against the door, Morgan stepped wide. Jack  
down to her clit.

trailed his fingers over her puffed, wet folds, toyed with the tip  
of

“Please, sir...”

her clit, trailed moisture down her thighs. Her breathing  
climbed

“Please what, *cher*?” He pinched her nipples and murmured  
higher, along with her heartbeat. Amazing. Jack knew just  
where

the question against her lips. “You want me to fuck you?”  
to touch, when, for how long, to keep her on edge, to grow her  
She’d never said those words to a man in her life. Never  
want but never fulfill it.

imagined saying them. But now, she couldn’t imagine saying  
Soon, she felt a flush suffuse her skin all over. She was one  
anything else. She needed Jack now—hard, fast, pounding.  
giant ache, whimpering, dying for him to fill her, conquer this  
“Yes,” she whispered. “Fuck me.”

monstrous need he’d created in her. Morgan ran greedy hands  
over

He hesitated, dark brow raised expectantly.

his hard shoulders, the incredible lines of his pectorals, his  
ridged

“Sir,” she added hastily, panting. “Fuck me, sir.”

abdomen. He amazed her. Flesh so hard everywhere, but skin so

In reward, he slid a pair of fingers over her clit and rubbed silky soft.

tiny, torturous circles around the hard nubbin. Morgan had thought

He lured her close to the edge of restraint with talented that, surely, her arousal could not climb any higher. She'd been fingers, an occasional nip at her breasts. His long, fevered kisses dead wrong, she thought with a moan.

made her moan, arch, silently plead. He toyed with her, inciting

So close now, Morgan's every breath was audible. A drag her higher and higher until she became dizzy, delirious, willing to in, a rush out, air filled her lungs, but never made it to her head.

do most anything for him to end her torment.

There was only her heartbeat, drowning out everything except the

In desperation, she trailed her hands down his stomach and need to feel him deep inside her.

grabbed the ridge of his cock through his jeans. Huge. Thick and

"Unzip my pants."

like iron, he could give her what her body needed. So why wasn't

Morgan didn't hesitate, didn't tease. She rushed to pull the he?

zipper down and shove the hated jeans down his hips. He wore no

With a hiss, Jack grabbed her wrist and anchored it against

underwear, so his cock sprang free into her waiting hands.  
the door, near her head.

She rubbed him. Her technique was fast and inexpert, she  
“You didn’t ask to touch me.”

was sure, driven totally by a need to touch him, feel the man  
who

“I thought you’d like it,” she panted.

would soon be inside her. Fists wrapped around him, one on  
top of

“You thought you’d strip my self-control, Morgan, so you  
the other, she stroked his thick length and gloried.

can get what you want. *Non*. You touch me when you’re told,  
not Until he grabbed her wrists and took her hands away,  
before.”

shoving them against the door again.

Restless, beyond needy, she shifted from one foot to the

“You’re not following directions, *cher*. I said to unzip my  
other. He kept her thighs spread with his feet between hers, so  
she pants, not to take them down, not to stroke my cock. Fail  
again,

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 52**

and you won’t get this fucking.”

inside, the blade of his flesh cutting through her like soft  
butter, She bit her lip, trying to find patience, and nodded. “I  
probing past nerve endings with the wide head of his cock,  
understand...sir.”

awakening them, leaving tingles screaming in his wake. He  
made

Her clit pulsed just from saying those words. God, what her need soar, and it seemed like forever until he was buried to the was wrong with her? She was too far gone to care. Later... hilt. Oh, God, she needed to come.

In silence, he extracted a packet from his pocket and She'd never taken a man this big, this deep. She could feel shoved his jeans down to his knees. Seconds later, he ripped open

him in the back of her tonsils. The width of him stretched her until the foil square and sheathed the purple head of his cock, then

her flesh burned. But it wasn't enough.

rolled it down his long length. Slowly. Too damn slowly. Morgan

That hint of pain fueled something inside her. Her blood resisted the urge to help him, or hurry him up or tap her feet in raced, perspiration burst across her skin. The ache made her impatience.

hyperaware of being alive, of the pleasure roiling beside the sting.

Suddenly, he bent, lifted her by her hips and wedged her "More!" she demanded. "Please..."

body between his and the door. "Put your legs around my waist."

Without warning, he withdrew nearly all the way, then

She hesitated. Could people really have sex standing up? eased back in, much gentler than before. The pain faded, but it had She'd never tried anything more exotic than woman on top.

charged up the tissues in her sex as never before. She swore she

“Do it.” His voice was edged with steel.

could feel every inch, every vein, of his cock rasping across

Without another pause, Morgan lifted both of her legs and suddenly sensitive flesh inside her.

folded them around his hips. Moments later, he rewarded her with

Jack brought agonizing pleasure with every slow stroke, the feel of his cock probing at her entrance, all thick and ready. every rub of the swollen head of his cock right over the flesh inside Breath held, she clung to his shoulders, on the razor’s edge,

that had her gasping. Gasping, burning need took over, receding

waiting.

everything but the feel of him, her need for him.

He eased his tip inside, and even that hard bit of him felt

“*Cher, tu sens si douce,*” he murmured in her ear as he

like heaven, like the magic elixir to cure the ache currently roasting thrust inside her again. “You feel so sweet.”

her alive.

She tried to hold on, hold out against the pleasure

“Say it again,” he demanded, voice strained. “Tell me what threatening to sweep away her sanity. But with those words and the

you want.”

next hard stroke of his cock, orgasm engulfed her like a raging

Morgan never considered holding back. “Fuck me. Now!”

hurricane—swift, strong, unlike anything she’d ever experienced.

With that, he pushed her hips down as he thrust up. Tissues

“Jack!” she screamed, nails biting into his shoulders.

unused to such invasion protested at first, unable to accommodate

Morgan knew then her first instinct was right; she was his girth. She cried out.

never going to be the same again.

“Relax,” he ground out. “Open to me, *cher*.”

#

Morgan did her best to loosen her muscles—hard when she  
With Morgan’s scream ringing in his ears, Jack surged into  
was dying a slow death by desire. Jack kept pushing his way  
the silken heaven of her pussy one more time and lost control  
of

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 53**

the orgasm he held onto by a bare thread.

deserve to be used? Maybe because he’d wanted to believe  
that she

The explosion originated low in his belly, driving pleasure  
wouldn’t betray the man she’d agreed to marry by spreading  
her

out through his cock. It burst out across his body, suffusing  
bliss legs for another.

everywhere. A wave of dizziness crashed over him. His toes  
Stupid him.

tingled. The pulses of Morgan’s second climax fluttered  
around

He zipped up his jeans and turned to Morgan again. Her  
him, milking him of every last drop of semen, leaving heavy

lower lip quivered. Her posture had gone from satiated to guarded

satisfaction in her wake.

in seconds. Something deep in his gut wanted to reach out to her,

When had anything ever felt so good?

reassure her. The other part was scared shitless at the magnitude of Struggling to catch his breath, he opened his eyes to her

his reaction to her.

flushed face, her swollen mouth, the relaxed set of her shoulders.

“Help yourself to anything in the kitchen,” he tossed out,

*Did she look like this after a night in Brandon’s bed?*

then turned away.

The thought slammed Jack out of nowhere. Anger and

Jack strode to the back of the house, to his private domain.

denial sluiced through him in a shock, as if he’d jumped into an icy Fishing the keys from his pocket, he unlocked the door.

stream. He stilled.

*Go in. Shut it. Don’t look at her.*

Anger? Yes, that Brandon had touched her. That she

Impossible.

belonged to the bastard.

Jack turned to face her. Across the length of his cottage, he

*Ah, but you fucked her,* he reminded himself. *Revenge is* could still see the shock on her face, along with the rosy marks of *sweet*.

his whiskers on her bare skin, the swollen nipples so sweet and

True, but his gut, that gnawing spot that had festered like a

succulent they made his mouth water, and the fiery hair covering

wound in acid for three years because of Brandon's betrayal, the slick utopia of her pussy.

wasn't whooping with elation. Instead, he fixated on the feel of

His gut clenched. *Again. Cross the room, lay her out, fuck*

Morgan around him, of her raspberry scent. He'd just come inside

*her again.*

her and already he wanted to do it again.

Ignoring the voice, he slammed and locked the door, then

*Not smart, Jack.*

stalked toward the computer desk in the corner. He plopped down

He'd lured her in to fuck her as payback. First mission in his chair and booted up his machine. But the thoughts and objective accomplished. End of story.

impulses pounding at him were unlike his mundane actions. His

Jack forced himself to withdraw and set Morgan on her instinct told him he'd just made a big mistake by turning his back

feet. She looked at him with wide eyes that both asked for on her. If he'd been thinking beyond his desire to fuck her and the reassurance and wondered what was next between them.

shock of his frenzied reaction to her, he'd have realized that if he He couldn't answer either.

wanted Morgan to leave Brandon, he had to keep her sated and Stifling a curse, he turned away, tore off the condom and



enthralled. Constantly. Nothing else would ensure that she tossed it in a nearby trashcan. Why he should be pissed off all over willingly walked away from his former pal. And if he had any

again, he didn't know. Because he'd liked Morgan and she didn't

sense, he'd get on his feet, march back in there, carry her to his bed **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 54**

and tie her to it.

feel elation, at least not yet. Likely he wouldn't until Morgan left But Jack hesitated. Morgan had been like a match on the the bastard. But he'd known at the start there was a potential flaw tinder of his control. He needed a breath to recover, to think. *She* in his plan: If Morgan didn't tell Brandon about her indiscretion,

and her feelings weren't important; only the fact that he'd achieved Jack had no way of ensuring Brandon found out. No way of

the first part of his revenge was. Deciding how to achieve the other proving it. And proving it—that was important. Everything, in fact.

half, the part where she left Brandon...that ranked up there.

Rising from his chair, Jack paced. How could he prove to

Instead, dangerous fantasies of him laying her out on his

Brandon that he'd gotten deep inside his woman and made her bed and having a leisurely feast assailed him. He'd kill to work his scream his name? He'd gotten irrevocable proof of Brandon's

mouth from the lush heat of her lips, down that silken throat, to the backstabbing via video but—

sweet treats of her berry nipples, over the sleek plain of her

But...he might be able to provide Brandon the same.

abdomen...all the way down to her wet, clenching little pussy  
he

Jack smiled. Paybacks were a bitch...

knew would be like ambrosia.

Ignoring the sting of his conscience, he raced back to his

Damn it, he had to get his mind off his dick and remember

chair and fell into his seat, fingers on the keyboard. A few

that Morgan was the means to an end. She'd cheated on her

commands later, he found what he'd been looking for: the  
security

fiancé—not the kind of woman to get tangled up with. Been  
there,

footage inside the cabin from just a few minutes ago. Clicking  
into done that. He had the scars to prove it.

the file that started at 6 A.M., he watched it in double time

until To top it all off, she still had a stalker who wanted her

Morgan came out stomping and screaming in that little green

dead. She was scared out of her mind, and he'd promised to  
protect

towel.

her and get her some answers. It was the least he could do.

Then he sat back to watch at normal speed and full sound.

Repayment for using her. He needed to focus on keeping her  
safe,

He didn't want to miss a second of this.

not dwell on the feel of her around him. Not on how  
challenging

Hell, she was gorgeous, all that red hair hanging over her

she would be to truly tame.

shoulders like a fiery flag of temptation. That creamy skin,  
lightly He'd find some way to convince her to leave Brandon  
that

freckled and teasing his tongue. He got hard again just  
didn't involve sinking his cock into her body over and over  
until

remembering the way she smelled, like fresh raspberries with  
a

they were both too sated to move.

hint of cinnamon. Morgan was the kind of woman—strong,  
only

A quick glance at his watch told Jack it wasn't quite seven  
bendable with effort—that he loved to dive into and eat. He  
hadn't

in the morning, too early to call Deke, his business partner, or  
found a woman like her in a long time. She was wasted on  
anyone else. Deke had a million connections, from senators to  
Brandon.

janitors. He'd know someone who knew something about her  
On his black-and-white video, he kissed her, touched her  
stalker. But until then, all Jack had to focus on was Morgan or  
nipples. Watching her eyes slide shut, her skin flush, her back  
arch revenge.

to him in offering aroused him all over again. Being there to  
Okay, revenge. He'd think about that, focus on how sweet  
experience her had been...beyond mind-blowing, but watching  
her

it was going to be to pay Brandon back for his perfidy. He  
didn't

this way was like having her again and savoring her every  
reaction.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 55**

She whispered something. He said something back, but the minute, opening wide and begging him to fuck her the next. He

audio on the tape didn't pick it up. It hardly mattered when she liked being a little off balance, and she gave that to him.

dropped the towel. Though his body blocked most of the view of

The video kept playing, second after second, of their hard her body, he saw the plump curve of a breast, a flash of soft, pink ride against the door. He could see the orgasm mounting within

folds guarded by fire-red hair. But he saw more. The lush line of

Morgan. Her sweet lips parted. She groaned and tightened her legs

her hip, the fluid shape of her thighs. The vulnerability on her face.

around him. He watched her gasp and could nearly feel her silken

She was taking a risk with him, and she knew it. And the heat all over him, even now. Erasing the memory of her scent, her

reservation. She wasn't 100 hundred percent committed to this.

reactions—Morgan herself—wasn't going to be easy.

But the aching curiosity had finally overwhelmed her concern. She

Jack shifted, adjusting himself in his pants. He grimaced. was dying for a dominant...and didn't want to accept it.

How often was he rock hard and ready to sink balls deep into a  
There had to be a reason why. He was way more interested  
woman fifteen minutes after taking her? Rarely. How often  
had a

in solving that mystery than he ought to be.

woman lingered in his mind like this after one mere fucking?

Jack swore again, torn between guilt, curiosity, and the hot

Never.

flash of desire, as he watched himself lift her up, brace her  
against He exhaled. Why was she different? Then his  
grandfather's

the door, and fill her with a series of ramming thrusts. He

words hit him like a battering ram in the gut. *If you're  
dreaming* remembered—so well it had him sweating—how  
tight she'd been,

*about a redheaded woman over and over, you're about to meet  
her* how she'd struggled to take him. But she never uttered a  
word,

*and she's your heart's mate.* Impossible. The woman in his  
mind, never complained. A wince of pain crossed her face, and  
Jack

his dreams, was just a fantasy. It wasn't necessarily Morgan.

bunched his hands into fists. Damn it, why hadn't she said

But she'd felt a whole lot like a fantasy come true.

something? Hurting her had been the last thing on his mind.

Next

On screen, she clawed at his back. He could clearly hear

time—

her say, "Yes, more! So good!" She panted once, twice, before  
her

*There may not be a next time,* he reminded himself. He had

lips feverishly brushed his neck. “Never better.”  
what he needed now that he’d found this video. Would the  
Jack shivered in remembrance. Yes, it had been good.  
knowledge that she’d felt utter sensual devastation at the hands  
of Damn good. Spec-fucking-tacular, if he was honest. Damn  
it, he  
a virtual stranger be enough to make her leave Brandon? Too  
early  
had no need to fuck her again. Now that he had proof they’d  
done  
to tell, but he feared getting her to leave the senator’s son  
wouldn’t be the deed, this part of his revenge was complete.  
She’d served her  
be that simple. He’d have to devise something...  
purpose. And there was no such thing as a heart’s mate.  
As he watched her accept the entire length of his cock and  
“Jack!” He watched Morgan scream his name, bounce on  
her face suffuse with pleasure, he hoped like hell that one  
him, taking pleasure, giving it.  
encounter wasn’t enough, that she ached to submit to him  
again.  
Here in his chair, with his gaze fixed on her flushing body,  
And again. Why fight the truth? She called to him. Everything  
his balls tightened, broiling with the need to come again. He  
gritted about her, her skin, her smell, her grit. She was an  
interesting  
his teeth against the urge to stroke his cock through his jeans.  
mixture of naiveté and temptation. Shy and holding back one  
But he could also see her holding something back, keeping  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## Page 56

some part of her separate from him, removed from his touch.  
just to leave Brandon, but to surrender that part of her she  
Something he hadn't picked up on with her tight, wet walls  
closing  
withheld.

around his cock and his heartbeat drumming in his ears. He  
peered

He had to know. This urge wasn't going to go away, and he  
in, fixing his gaze on the grainy screen. It remained a mystery.  
knew himself too well to believe otherwise. Screw everything  
else.

What the hell was that about?

For now, time was on his side. Morgan was safe at the  
moment.

A few buttons later, he'd rewind the footage and played  
Her stalker likely had no idea where she was. It was hard for  
the last few moments again. Still, he couldn't discern what  
Morgan

someone who wasn't Acadian to follow a son of the swamps  
into

had kept inside. He only knew it pissed him off. Filled him  
with an this untamed wilderness.

odd sense of...betrayal. With the need to earn her full  
surrender.

So Jack would seduce and coax Morgan into submission

Cursing, Jack finally spliced the video, just including the  
again. And again. She'd leave Brandon. And he would have  
that

last minute, those few moments of Morgan saying she had  
never

part of her she hadn't given him before. That part he suspected had it better, then shouting his name as she came. Maybe Brandon

she'd never given to any man. Jack planned to make sure she gave

wouldn't notice that she was holding something back.

it to him—whatever it took.

It was a thin maybe. Brandon was a son of a bitch, but not stupid.

Still, this was the best footage he had. It would be more than enough to make his point with Brandon. He could deal with

whatever Morgan was hiding later.

Before he could change his mind, Jack sent the snippet of video straight to Brandon via email, along with a friendly little note.

*How is that career in politics going, old friend?*

*Jack*

How long, he wondered, before his “pal” got an eyeful of his former Army Ranger squadron leader fucking his fiancée? And

what would he do?

He didn't fight the cold smile of satisfaction.

But Morgan crept back into his thoughts. His smile slipped when he fantasized about having her spread out, tied up, on his bed for his taking. Utterly at his mercy and utterly his. Wet. Begging.

Willing and eager to have him fuck her in every way possible.

And he wondered what he'd have to do to persuade her not



**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 57**

a dominant man impale her against a door and drive her to two dizzying orgasms—after inspiring the two she'd given herself—all

in about fifteen minutes' time.

Her desire to submit to him, to obey his raspy voice, thick with need in her ear, was so new—yet felt so natural that she hadn't been able to resist. She'd responded to every whispered command as if he'd poured pure liquid desire all over her skin and

## CHAPTER SIX

let it seep into her blood. In those moments, Jack had made what

they were doing feel...amazing. So perfectly normal. So right that

Twenty minutes after Jack slammed the door in Morgan's she'd ached. She hadn't just been accepted as she was, but needed

face, she stood in front of the antique mirror hanging from the because of it. The sense of connection to Jack had swept common

bedroom wall and studied her appearance. She looked remarkably

sense aside and made her cling to him like a life raft in a hurricane.

calm for a woman whose knees were still shaking from orgasms so

She'd barely been able to keep herself together while the strong, seismic equipment had surely felt the tremors.

pleasure Jack gave tore her barriers down. Something about him

Scrubbed face, hair whisked back in a single, severe braid demanded the surrender of more than her body. She'd refused, down her back. Nothing sexy...if she didn't include Alyssa's tight

clinging to her defenses by her fingernails—barely. He'd left her

purple submissive-maiden leather get-up in the picture. That, reeling and stunned. But not broken.

unfortunately, was hard to ignore.

Then Jack had all but run from her, tearing off her rose-  
She wasn't about to go prowling through Jack's closet for  
colored glasses. She was in the middle of who-knew-where  
with a  
something else to wear. Too intimate. Chewing her lip,  
Morgan  
man she'd only really met yesterday, wearing borrowed  
clothes,  
hesitated. She couldn't afford to have the bastard to think the  
outfit with no end to the nightmare in sight. Yet *he* ran away.  
Gee, she was the closest thing to an engraved invitation for  
sex. Maybe if  
guessed that having sex with a client was a bodyguarding no-  
no.  
she gave off her best *get lost* vibes, he'd buy a clue. If not...  
The more she thought about his behavior, the more it pissed  
She could find herself screwed—literally—again.  
her off. And it hurt—way more than she wanted to admit.  
And worse, she'd probably love it every bit as much as she  
With an impatient huff, she turned away from the mirror.  
had the first time.  
Mr. Cajun Macho had another thing coming if he thought they  
Sighing, Morgan paced the room. What the hell was wrong  
were going to have sex again. So he had a touch that sizzled  
desire with Jack, anyway? They had fabulously mind-blowing  
sex and *he*  
through her blood, intoxicating her like the most potent wine.  
She  
ran away? Of course, if he hadn't beat her to it, she would  
have  
wasn't going to risk addiction with a repeat performance.

darted behind a door and slammed it between them in world-record

But just the thought of it had her body clamoring for more, time. But, still...

turning soft and wet at the prospect of experiencing all his Jack was confusing the crap out of her. She should be the determined sexual fire and tightly controlled power again.

one freaked out. After all, she had a stalker after her. She'd just let So damn stupid. Not only did Jack have *temporary* written

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 58**

all over him, the only message about him that was even more clear

“Oh, biting wit. You are cranky this morning. Get too little was the one that pronounced him a very bad boy. sex lately...or too much?”

Honestly, she didn't need this!

Morgan felt the thick rush of embarrassment flood her skin.

Down the hall, Morgan heard the click of a lock, the

*Please, please don't let Jack have called some friend to do some opening of the door.* From the heavy footsteps, she knew he'd

*locker room bragging.* That would be the final insult to having her emerged into the hall. Maybe it was very thirteen year-old of her,

fantasies exposed, her common sense stripped away in a haze of

but she wasn't in the mood to face him. Not now. Not yet. Let him

desire, then being left naked, wet, and used against a virtual see how the rejection felt.

stranger's door.

Cringing, she dove onto the bed and quickly feigned sleep

Jack growled, "Stop being cute and try being a business as Jack made his way down the hall. He paused at the bedroom partner. I'm out at the swamp cabin. I've got a woman with a door, but Morgan wasn't about to open her eyes. Seeing that too-

stalker. I need you to do some research."

sexy face taunting her with the carnal knowledge of her body or

Morgan breathed a sigh of relief.

annoyance—or both—was not her idea of a good time. Let Romeo

"No shit. A woman with a stalker?" said the man Jack had eat breakfast alone. The thought of food right now held all the identified as Deke. "When did she become a client?"

appeal of dog shit à la mode.

"Yesterday, when he took a shot at her in broad daylight in After a long moment, Jack's footsteps continued down the a crowd. I was sitting less than two feet from her."

hall. She heard a series of electronic beeps, then a ringing. A "Holy... What info do you have?"

speakerphone. Who was he calling at seven-thirty in the morning?

Quickly, Jack ran down the information Morgan had given

She rose and tiptoed across the bedroom to peek around the him at dawn. *All* the information—the minute details of her sexual corner. Jack stood there, cup of coffee in one hand,

making toast

history, thankfully excluding himself. Despite that small favor, the with the other. And standing by the cracked headset with an

rush of mortification returned, along with foot-stomping fury. Gee, annoyed expression.

why not take out a billboard along the highway just to make sure

“Jesus, Jack!” rasped a scratchy male voice. “Is sleeping in everyone knew who she’d done the wild thing with in the past. against your religion or did you just figure that if you’re up, And now she had Jack to add to the list. What on earth had everyone else should be, too?”

she done?

Morgan couldn’t help but overhear the conversation. It

After offering to fax copies of the latest pictures her stalker wasn’t as if he was trying to be quiet. Who in the heck was Jack

had left, Jack hung up. He paced across the long, narrow room talking to and why? And she had to agree with the other guy; why

once, twice, then turned his gaze to the hallway, his face, barely

had he called at this early hour?

visible through the crack in the door, alive with purpose.

“I didn’t sleep at all last night, Deke. So whatever you got Morgan leapt back onto the bed and feigned sleep again as in the way of Z’s is way more than I got. Quit whining.”

his footsteps sounded his approach.

“Have you turned vampire now?”

“*Merde*, ” he snarled, then turned away.

“Want to slit your wrists and make a donation to find out?”

She didn’t know much French, but she knew enough to

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 59**

realize he’d said something that her mother would be happy to  
cabin?”

wash out his mouth with soap for saying.

“This I can do. I’m having lunch with your Aunt Chéré,

Moments later, she heard the dial tone, the beeping and  
then I’ll be out.”

ringing again. Another call? Did he expect everyone to be  
awake at

“Fine. Warm, practical clothes, *Grand-pere*. No surprises.”  
this hour?

“Why you worried about surprises? I’ll bring what you

#

need.”

“*Oui?* ”

#

“*Grand-pere*, good morning.”

Time dragged by. Morgan bathed again. Paced. She

“That it is, dear boy. How is *ta jolie fille*?”

skipped breakfast.

“Her name is Morgan,” he said with forced patience. “I told  
Jack stayed in his locked room at the end of the hall, pacing  
you before, she’s not mine.”

with heavy footsteps she couldn’t help but hear.

“Maybe. Maybe not. Time tells, yeah? She got red hair  
What did he have to be disturbed about? The stalker hadn’t  
under that wig?”

caught up to them yet, and Jack had gotten laid. From his  
angle, it Jack hesitated. Brice was going to make entirely too  
much

had to look like a win-win situation.

of Morgan’s hair color. It didn’t mean anything.

Morgan hadn’t been quite so lucky. She’d managed to hold

*So what was that jolt of connection you felt to her when you*  
a part of herself back from Jack—or thought she had—but as  
time

*were buried balls deep within her slick, wet heat? What was*  
*that* passed and she couldn’t shake this damn yearning for him.  
It sank

*sensation of wanting to crawl inside her and own her?*

deeper, growing, urging her to touch him. Morgan feared she’d

Really good sex and the knowledge that she’d been holding  
given Jack a chunk of her psyche. Not a good development.

something back he was determined to have? Had to be that...  
or

As noon approached, she made herself a sandwich. The  
insanity.

only drinks in Jack’s refrigerator were bottles of water and  
beer.

“I didn’t call to discuss Morgan’s hair.”

Normally, Morgan would opt for the water. Today, she  
gratefully

“She does, doesn’t she!” The old man crowed, then

took a beer and disappeared into the bedroom again, lying  
listlessly laughed.



on the bed. She spent hours trying not to think about Jack, the way

*“Grand-pere...”*

he’d touched her, the way his voice crawled inside her head and

“I told you. Just yesterday, I told you. Those dreams, they her body, then seemed to challenge her, own her. Forgetting the

mean something.”

pleasure that seared her was proving impossible, not when she

The old man was not going to give this up. “Okay, yes. Her could close her eyes and still feel the pull of his mouth at her hair is red. Happy?”

nipple, the width of his cock stretching her. Not when she couldn’t

*“Tres bon,”* Brice said smugly. “She dressing any better forget that demanding, compelling voice, those seducing dark eyes.

today, *ta jolie fille?*”

The thoughts brought on fresh desire. Thick, bubbling

“Actually, that’s why I called you. Can you pick up a few desire, swirling inside her to form an insistent throb. Her clit things for her to wear in a size six and bring them out to the ached, and she could not believe how wet she was, how swollen

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 60**

her folds felt. She’d never been ruled by her hormones. Why now?

touched her, she would only want him more. The scalding desire

Morgan thought about self-pleasuring again, but refrained. Inside her was already too hot, too dangerous. And it made her so

She didn't want to be caught again. The mortification had nearly

angry she could spit.

killed her once, but twice in one day... She grimaced. Still, she

"Don't touch me." She jerked away from him. "I can walk might have risked it if she had believed it would douse the fire on my own."

raging inside her.

"Then get your pretty ass moving before I paddle it."

But the fire was one she feared only Jack could put out.

Her eyes narrowed. "You wouldn't."

A knock at the cottage's front door startled Morgan. She

He snorted. "Wanna try me?"

whirled to the clock on the little cypress bedside table. Nearly four-No. No, she didn't. His hard intent to lift her purple skirt thirty in the afternoon.

and spank her ass was etched into the dark challenge of his eyes,

Jack tore open the door from his hiding place and streaked into the hard lines of his aggressive stance.

down the hall. On his way past, he cast a heated glance into the

The thought outraged her. Unfortunately, it aroused her,

bedroom, right at her, a glance that said he remembered every kiss, too. More of the cream from her arousal soaked the little thong she every touch between them—and that as far as he was concerned,

wore, coating her sex thoroughly with every step she took. She they weren't done. A quick glance down his muscled chest covered

prayed he couldn't tell.

in a tight black T-shirt, past those six-pack abs... Oh, hell. He was

"You're a bastard," she muttered as she walked past Jack hard. There was no mistaking that bulge.

and into the cottage's main room.

Need slammed into her belly. Her gaze flew back to his.

"If you were expecting Prince Charming, I'm sorry. He's

"We'll talk later."

with his boyfriend," Jack quipped as he sailed by her and pulled

About sex. He didn't speak it, but the words hung in the air. the front door open.

"I have nothing to say," she protested automatically.

An old man entered, carrying two shopping bags in hand.

Talking about sex would only make her want to have it

Instantly, she saw what Jack would look like in fifty years. Tall,

with Jack again. Bad idea. Already, she was more fixated on him

lean with thick silver hair and dancing dark eyes, the man ambled

than was smart, more than she'd ever been on a man—even the

into the cottage with a smile teasing the corners of his lips.  
one she'd agreed to marry once upon a time. She just needed  
to  
"Jack," he greeted with a nod. "Your aunt Cheré sends her  
evade this stalker, figure out who it was, and get back to her  
job  
love and a loaf of homemade bread."  
and the sanity of her life in L.A.  
He reached into one of the sacks and retrieved a plastic  
"We have plenty to discuss. Now come meet my  
container. Morgan smelled the yeast of the bread blend with  
the  
grandfather."  
spice of the swamp's vegetation lazing in the temperate  
February  
Morgan crossed her arms over her chest, refusing to budge.  
day. It was unlike anything she'd ever smelled. Which fit.  
Nothing  
Any satisfaction she got out of watching Jack grind his  
about being with Jack was anything like she'd ever  
experienced.  
teeth came to a halt when he stalked across the room, his intent  
to Before she could process the thought, the old man  
grab her and drag her to the door written all over his face. If he  
approached her, wearing a mischievous smile. "Morgan, I'm  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**  
**Page 61**  
Brice Boudreaux, Jack's *grand-pere* on his *maman's* side."  
Brice harrumphed. "Boy forgets I'm eighty-two."

He stuck out his hand, and she clasped his to shake it.

“*Grand-pere* forgets I’m no idiot.” Jack said with a fond

Instead, he brought her hand to his lips and gave her a gallant kiss.

smile.

Despite her discomfort in meeting an old man while wearing

Morgan watched their byplay with an awareness of their

skimpy purple leather, Morgan couldn’t help but smile. She’d bet

love and affection for each other—and not without a bit of envy.

in his day that he had a lot of luck with everything in a skirt.

Her biological father had never wanted anything to do with her, so

“Morgan O’Malley.”

she’d bet his parents knew nothing of her. And her mother’s

His sharp brown gaze lifted to her hair. “A bonny Irish lass  
parents had disowned Mama when she’d become pregnant  
while

with fiery tresses. Jack loves red hair, don’t you?”

unmarried. They’d died shortly before Morgan’s tenth birthday, the

She didn’t dare look at Jack, not when she felt a flush

rift unmended. She’d never had a grandparent, much less a  
climbing up her cheeks. Did he have a thing for redheads?  
That

character like Brice in her family.

would explain the odd conversation she’d overheard earlier.

The old man patted the sofa beside him again and sent her a

“*Grand-pere*...” Jack warned. “Stop making mischief and

hopeful glance. Unable to resist, Morgan gave into the charmer.

give her the bag.”

Jack groaned. “He’s a master fisherman. He just baited,

A glance at the bag told Morgan there were clothes inside hooked, and lured you in.”

it. She itched to get her hands around it, to wear something besides *Must run in the family*, she thought bitterly.

a get-up that encouraged her recklessness and made her more

“Maybe I’m catching her just for you, yeah,” Brice

aware of her sexuality than mere garments should.

countered. “Thanks to the army, those nice manners your *maman*

Brice was in no hurry to hand the bag over.

taught you ain’t what they used to be. Without my help, I don’t

“In due time. Can’t an old man sit down for a minute and think Morgan would let you near her.”

talk to a pretty girl?”

She froze, then forced a relaxing breath. The old man

He cast Jack a challenging glance, then shuffled over to the

couldn’t tell what had happened between her and Jack this

sofa, making a big show of easing his weary bones down onto a

morning? Thank God...

cushion. Then he set the bag on the floor between his feet and

But one glance in Jack’s direction, and Morgan knew she

patted the spot beside him.

was in trouble. He sent her a hard, hot glance that forced her to

“Come,” he said to Morgan. “Sit next to an old man, yeah,

remember and promised more, much more, until she drowned  
in

and let him remember the days he could have asked such a  
*jolie*

pleasure. A ravenous ache resounded in her gut, echoing  
between

*fille* for a dance.”

her legs, and she felt her nipples swell again.

Morgan sliced her gaze to Jack for translation, brow raised

Morgan bit her lip to hold in a gasp. Too bad she couldn’t  
in question.

contain the flush crawling up her cheeks.

“Pretty girl,” he supplied in a long-suffering sigh. “And

Brice glanced away from Jack, over to her. A new smile

don’t be suckered in by his old-man routine. He’s sharp as a  
tack,

danced at his mouth, moving the salt-and-pepper moustache  
above

that one.”

it. He looked mighty pleased. “Are you Catholic, Morgan?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 62**

The question took her aback. “I—I was raised in the  
stopped and stared.

Church. Yes.”

His gaze roved over the golden lace-up camisole, drifted to

Jack groaned. “*Grand-pere*, Morgan’s religion is none of  
the black corset with garter belts and thigh-high stockings,  
then

our business.”

settled on the burgundy bra trimmed in champagne lace—with cut

“Given enough time, it might be.” He slapped his knee and  
outs so her nipples could poke through. It came with matching  
rose to his feet in a surprisingly spry move and handed her the  
bag crotchless panties.

with a Cheshire cat smile.

“Is this all he brought?”

Wondering what the heck he meant by that comment,

“You got it.”

Morgan couldn’t escape the feeling the old man had pulled the

“Son of a bitch.” Jack’s expression showed his inner war  
wool over her eyes. He might be eighty-two, but he wasn’t  
slow—

between annoyance and amusement.

mentally or physically. Jack had warned her...

“These aren’t warm or practical,” she pointed out, sharing

“Put those to good use.” Brice gestured to the bag with a  
his annoyance, but none of the amusement.

jerk of his head and a wink.

With a turn of his head, Jack pinned his stare on her. Oh,

Then with a slap on Jack’s shoulder, the old man

sweet heaven... Heat infused the dark depths of his eyes,  
tempting

practically skipped out the front door.

as melted chocolate, alive like the rich earth. She knew in that

#

moment he was doing his best to picture her in each set of



*Put those to good use*, Jack's grandfather had said.

undergarments.

Fingering the golden silk of the lace-edged camisole and matching

Worse, Morgan could imagine herself wearing them for  
thong, Morgan could take a wild guess at what Brice thought  
good

Jack. Imagine his reaction. If the hearty erection currently  
straining use would entail. And it probably involved indulging  
in lascivious

his jeans was any indication, he was more than a little  
interested.

acts with Jack—acts she'd only vaguely heard about.

The thought aroused her far more than it should. Her vagina  
Cursing under her breath, Morgan stood in Jack's bedroom  
clenched, spasming with need. Beneath the leather, her nipples  
still wearing Alyssa's slut-in-purple costume and tried to  
decide

stabbed at her bra.

what to change into. Brice had brought her three sets of  
“They definitely aren't warm,” he agreed. “Practical...well,  
undergarments, each sexier than the last. Nothing else.  
that depends on the purpose.”

“Damn it, Morgan!” Jack shouted through the door. “I  
“Since I'm not here to reenact a porn flick, they aren't  
called you to dinner ten minutes ago. How long does it take to  
get

practical for my purposes. Was this a joke or a mistake?”  
dressed?”

“Neither.”

“Long enough to figure out how to cover all the essentials  
“He wants us to...” Morgan’s eyes widened even as shock  
with the items your grandfather brought.”

raised her blood pressure.

“What the hell?” Jack flung the door open and barged into  
“Fuck like rabbits? Absolutely. He’s all for anything that  
the room.

might persuade me to remarry.”

When he saw the garments all spread out on the bed, he

*Re marry?* Her first thought was that she’d only met Jack in  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 63**

person twenty-four hours ago, so leaping to the concept of  
between her legs, showcasing the fiery color. It was designed  
to

marriage seemed extreme. Her second thought was that she’d  
make a man’s eyes latch onto a woman’s mound immediately.  
never would have guessed he’d been married before.

Jack’s eyes.

“You’ve been married?”

A hitch of both fear and arousal ticked in her belly.

Beside her, he straightened, tensed. “It was short. We

*No, bad, bad reaction...*

divorced three years ago. End of conversation.”

Chastising herself, Morgan peeled off the bra Alyssa had

She frowned. That might be the end of the conversation,  
given her. This camisole covered less than the bra, if that was  
but that wasn’t the end of the emotions for Jack. Clearly, his

possible. Again, trimmed in golden lace, it dipped low, half an inch above her nipples. It was form-fitting and offered gentle support

let it go. Jack's personal life was none of her business. Digging below her breasts, but was cut low in-between to reveal cleavage.

into the man's past was only going to make her more curious about

Delicate lace decorated the top and bottom edges of the utterly the man as a whole. Still, she couldn't help but wonder what had

sheer garment, and served as the tie in the laces between her happened.

breasts, accentuating her tight nipples poking the thin fabric.

"Choose one of those get-ups," he snapped, gesturing to the

Morgan was pretty sure she'd never looked sexier in her

lingerie on the bed. "I'll give you my robe and a pair of socks, then life. Knowing that Jack could incite her to massive, broiling

come eat. The food is getting cold."

orgasms was surely making her feel hyperaware of herself as a

Morgan wanted to say she'd just wear what she had on, but

woman. Imagining his reaction to this...outfit was arousing the

as the sun had fallen, the temperature had dropped too much for

hell out of her.

that. And it wasn't the best outfit to wear if she wanted to diffuse Her imagination needed to take a vacation.

the awareness between herself and Jack. Not to mention the thong

But it was more than the orgasms, as much as she hated to she currently wore was uncomfortably wet and clinging to her admit it. With Jack, she'd felt a dizzying freedom unlike anything

swollen folds—a constant reminder of her arousal.

she'd ever known with a lover. A freedom to want whatever she

“Thank you,” she murmured.

desired. And utter acceptance of her longings. Despite her head

He grunted as he retrieved his robe and socks from a

telling her that her needs were wrong, her body ached. She could

nearby wardrobe, tossed them her way, and left.

didn't even fully comprehend what she craved, but Jack knew.

Morgan chose the items that seemed the least racy. She

Knowledge sizzled in his eyes, in the things he said to her. Jack

crossed the hall and let herself into the bathroom, golden cami and could give her everything she'd ever fantasized about. All of that

thong in hand, and set about changing.

coupled with the feeling of security she had here with him, as if her The new thong was tiny. All lace as it wound around her stalker was a million miles away, encouraged her to explore her

hips, bisected the cheeks of her ass, and edged the legs of the dark side with her infuriating, enigmatic protector.

garment. The fabric covering everything else...totally sheer. The

She had to get a grip on herself. Fantasies weren't reality,

mirror in the bathroom showed her the explicit way the and she didn't really want to perform all those acts that were outrageously feminine lace framed the red curls over the delta springing deep from her imagination. Really, she didn't.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 64**

With shaking hands, Morgan grabbed Jack's robe. She beside his, right next to his heat and spice.

belted the enormous thing around her waist, put on the sweatsocks

"Yeah, I'm staring. First, I'm male, and you're a gorgeous that were double the size of her feet and marched to the eat-in woman. Second, I'm wondering which of those outfits of teasing

kitchen's bleached wood table, hoping she looked frumpy. torture you decided to put on beneath my robe. Third, I haven't

When she reached the kitchen, she saw that Jack had laid forgotten exactly what you feel like pulsing around my cock." out some thick soup that had an orangish base with lots of rice and Morgan sucked in air as desire slammed into her, leaving chunks of meat, his aunt's homemade bread and a slab of butter. A

her short of breath. Clearly, any restraint exhibited here would be small salad sat in another bowl. A big glass of ice water sat above up to her.

her silverware.

Not good news, since she didn't have much.

Jack, on the other hand, was fisting a bottle of whiskey and

He leaned down and nuzzled the sensitive skin below her eyeing her as if she was a tempting treat, unable to completely ear. Morgan shivered as he said, “You were slick and tight, *cher*.

shield the feral hunger in his eyes that told her he wanted to strip So amazing to fuck. You responded to my commands like you

her, cram her full of himself, and make her scream. Apparently, he

were born to submit. Like it was so natural. I’ve thought about didn’t see the robe as frumpy.

nothing all day long except tying you down and spending morning,

“I made chicken and sausage gumbo,” he rasped as his gaze noon, and night finding ways to make you come until you scream

roved her face, down her bare neck, to the hint of skin visible your throat raw, then beg for more.”

between her breasts. He shifted in his seat. “Ever eat gumbo?”

Blunt. Graphic. Unapologetic. His words should have been

She shook her head, wondering—though she shouldn’t—if a turnoff. The feminist in her thought she should be offended that

he was still incredibly, mouthwateringly hard.

he found her so purely sexual. She wasn’t that lucky.

“It’s thick and spicy.”

Jack was her mind’s nightmare—arrogant, demanding,

Like the air between them. Like the flesh he’d filled her difficult. But he was her psyche’s fantasy—hot, untamed, with this morning.

determined to have her and force her to experience every naughty

Trembling, Morgan looked away and stared into her fantasy her fevered mind had ever conjured up.

gumbo. She had to stop thinking like this, with nothing but her

A fresh rush of moisture dampened her new thong and her

hormones. But she couldn't eat, all too aware of Jack's stare fixed clit began to ache anew.

on her as he held the whiskey bottle in his hand.

Morgan closed her eyes. This had to stop. *Had* to. Or she

Morgan swallowed, feeling her pulse accelerate. "You're was going to give in. She wasn't sure she could live with the staring at me."

repercussions—or herself—if she did.

He inclined his head. "I am, *cher*."

"Jack, I'm interviewing you for a TV show about your

"All you can see is this overlarge bathrobe."

lifestyle, not inviting you to tell me every one of the thoughts

Jack set the whiskey aside. Suddenly, she felt her chair

lurking in the dark corners of your mind. If you can't keep it to

being dragged along the hardwood floors, closer to him. She

yourself, you should take me back to my car. I—I'll return to

looked down to find his foot hooked around the leg as he pulled it

Houston and—"

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 65**

"And wait for your stalker to find you? Rape you? Shoot

he would have touched her anywhere he pleased, demanded a blow

you? Kill you? We've been over this. You're in the middle of a job and, if she look him literally, anal sex, absolutely shouldn't swamp and much safer here, surrounded by sophisticated security

make any part of her leap with excitement. Curiosity and wicked

systems and a bodyguard, than you are anywhere else. My buddy

fantasies were one thing. Actually indulging... No.

Deke is putting together a profile. Once we have it, we can figure

But there was no denying the desire that charged through out who your psycho is and nail him. Until then, I think you'd be

her with the force of an invading army, pulsing need and heat into

wise to stay. Unless you're more afraid of sex than a stalker?" her clit, making her beaded nipples ache.

Damn it, he'd picked the worst possible time to be logical.

Just like there was no denying that if she tried to leave here

"Of course not. You're just making me uncomfortable."

and return to Houston, the person after her would very likely try to

"The truth is making you uncomfortable; I'm merely kill her again. And this time, he might succeed.

making you aware of it. I want you. You want me. It's pretty

She let out a shaky breath. What a hell of a place to be, simple."



trapped by danger with a man capable of giving her amazing  
“It’s oversimplified, big boy.”

pleasure while making her submit to every wicked desire she’d  
He grabbed the bottle of whiskey and took a long swallow.  
ever denied. Damn it, she’d been fighting her wants since  
Morgan watched in fascination as his Adam’s apple bobbed in  
his

Andrew’s rejection, warring against her dark side until she  
hurt.

tight-muscled throat.

She couldn’t just roll over and spread her legs for a dominant  
When it was empty, he set the bottle on the table. “You  
stranger—no matter how appealing her newly awakened body  
can’t lie, *cher*. Your eyes, they tell me you want to be cuffed  
and might find that notion.

clamped and fucked often. And you want me to be the one  
doing

“I grant you that I’m much safer here than in Houston or  
it.”

Los Angeles. I’m not stupid, and I know I can’t fight a man I  
Mind trying to outrace the desire searing her brain, she  
haven’t seen and don’t understand.”

shook her head. “Look, we both had an itch this morning and  
we

“But?”

scratched it. After, you ran as if I was diseased. You couldn’t  
get

“I want things platonic. I’m supposed to interview you.  
away from me fast enough. If you hadn’t, I would have. We’re

You're supposed to protect me. Nowhere in those job descriptions

done with each other."

is the wild thing mentioned. We got *waaaaayyy* off track this

"You think, little girl? What we did, it was powerful, morning."

yeah," he said, those dark eyes boring into her, forcing her to Jack leaned closer, until she felt his breath on her mouth, listen, willing her to understand. "If I hadn't left, I would have smelling faintly of whiskey and something spicy. "Platonic?" carried you to the bed, tied you down, and not let you up until I'd

"You know, polite. Friendly." Morgan tried to scoot her fucked all of your perfect pink entrances and found each of your chair away. "No sex."

hidden sensitive spots and every way possible to drive your body

He wasn't budging. "I know what it means, Morgan. Why insane."

do you think we shouldn't be having the most amazing sex of the

Morgan gasped. That should *not* arouse her. The idea that year with each other?"

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 66**

"I don't want what you want. I'm just not into

"You've been saying it; I just don't believe it." Jack your...scene."

laughed, an ironic chuckle, complete with a mocking smile.

“What

She focused on her gumbo. It would be easier if she could

are you afraid of, *cher*? If I don’t excite you, then, when I touch tell him she thought his desires were twisted and wrong.

Hurting

you, say no. If you’re not interested, that shouldn’t be too hard.”

him might make him go away faster. But having been on the

“I shouldn’t have to!” Morgan gaped. “You’re pissing me receiving end of such slurs, she couldn’t do it to him.

off. Can’t you just be a gentleman and agree?”

*You’re not a talented a liar, either,* a voice in her head

“With chemistry like ours, no. Even if I wanted to keep my whispered. She shut her eyes against it.

hands off you, which I don’t, it would only be a matter of time

“And,” she went on, “despite what happened earlier, I’m before I was balls deep inside you, pounding away.”

not a casual sex person.”

“Stop, damn it! That’s not true. I don’t say yes to every

Jack said nothing for the longest minute. He simply stared, man who snaps his fingers.”

as if trying to decipher her every thought. He didn’t touch her. He He slid his palm up her arm, to her shoulder, then diverted just stared—hard, hot, as if he was picturing and plotting to do to her breast. His thumb encountered a hard nipple and flicked it,

every wicked thing to her she’d ever imagined. The explosive as if to make a point. She gasped, then bit her lip as she realized desire on his face ripped past her defenses, searing her

clear to her her huge error. Jack gave her a long, wicked smile  
—the kind that

unruly imagination, to her throbbing clit still so hungry for  
him, to only made her more wet. Between that and his touch,  
he turned her

the inexplicable draw she felt in her soul to him.

on as easily as he flipped on a light switch. The hard pulse  
between Damn it, she had to get away from him, now. Morgan  
her thighs was something she couldn't ignore.

wrapped the robe's lapels tightly around herself and started to  
rise.

"Sure it is. The street is going both ways, here. I can tell,"

He clamped a hand around her arm, holding her in place.

he said. "As I see it, my job is keeping you safe. But I'm going  
to

"Those are the only reasons? You're not into casual and you're  
show you what your body craves and help you be honest with  
going to keep lying to yourself that you don't like the way I  
fuck

yourself. That," he caressed the hard point of her breast again,  
"is you?"

my pleasure."

"I want you to stop saying such outrageous crap and agree

Then he released her and rose, gumbo bowl in hand.

to keep our interaction professional."

"Maybe you're lying to yourself about what I want," she

"You want me to promise not to touch you?" His grip

blurted to his retreating back. "Did you ever think of that?  
Maybe

tightened on her arm.

you're totally off base."

“I’ve been saying that, yes.”

Jack paused, turned, and pinned her with a blunt stare that Chin high, eyes declaring her resolve, Morgan hoped she made her heart stop. “If that was the case, you wouldn’t be wet looked convincing. She hoped that Jack had no idea that inside, her enough for me to smell, and I wouldn’t know that you’d soaked

heart threatened to beat out of her chest. That his nearness, scent, two thongs in one day.”

and touch just brought back the rush of pleasure and exhilaration

#

she felt when he’d been deep inside her.

Hazy morning. Sunlight slanted across the swamp in lazy

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 67**

golden rays to settle on his porch, illuminating the small figure of a walk away from. End of story.

woman’s fiery tresses as they cascaded down her narrow back,

Jack was perfectly happy with that explanation

covered by a man’s dark shirt. His shirt.

except...why did the woman in his dream have the same hair as

Contentment and yearning. Hope and need. And lust. It all

Morgan if the dream was irrelevant? Why did Morgan feel like hit him as she tilted her head. A corner of her mouth hinted at a

more than the means to his revenge when he touched her?

smile. Happy. He wanted to see her happy, protected.

Shoving the stray thought aside, Jack blinked, trying to rid  
He'd never loved anyone so much in his life.

tired eyes of the grit of exhaustion. Last night, he hadn't slept  
even The woman, a mystery, was his. Jack knew that as well  
as

a handful of hours. Tonight was no different. Having these  
he knew his own name.

nocturnal visions haunting his sleep and Morgan under his  
roof

Just once he wanted to see her face. After six months of  
wasn't helping him catch up on his beauty rest.

futile dreaming and waking up hard with no relief in sight, of  
And judging from the erection throbbing inside his boxers  
feeling this yearning for a woman he'd never seen, he needed  
to

like an insistent toothache, along with vestiges of the dream,  
he

know who she was.

wasn't likely to get much more sleep tonight.

*Turn around!* he silently demanded.

Rising with a stretch, Jack sighed and donned his jeans

Slowly, so damn slowly, she began to turn his way. A

with a grimace. Immediately, his thoughts turned to Morgan.

delicate ear, a graceful neck, a stubborn slope to her jaw, fair  
skin Why couldn't he leave her alone? He'd tackled a big part  
of

like porcelain. That was more than he'd ever seen of this  
woman,

his revenge and emailed Brandon Ross the proof that he'd  
been as

but the greedy part of him wanted more bared to his gaze. He

deep inside his enemy's woman as a man could get. Now, his  
wanted everything. She kept turning. A hint of apple in her  
revenge would be complete as soon as Morgan left the disloyal  
cheek...

asshole she planned to marry.

Jack jolted awake. Damn it! So close this time. So

But what if she didn't? Lots of women wanted to be  
close...but he still couldn't see her face.

married to one of the esteemed Senator Ross's sons. Money.

Stirring from a fitful sleep on the sofa, Jack opened his eyes

Power. Connections. Good looks. Brandon had all that, but  
he'd

and glanced at his watch. Just after midnight. Now what?

never have a political career of his own. Jack had made damn  
sure

He laid back on the couch, breathing hard, gritting his teeth  
of that.

against a steel-inspired erection that always followed the  
dream.

Still, that didn't solve his problem. If Morgan and Brandon

The fucking thing tormented him more frequently these days  
—

didn't part ways, revenge would be incomplete. That had to be  
nearly every night for the past two weeks. Why?

why he didn't feel more victorious now.

Certainly his grandfather and the old man's crazy theories

Jack paced, spearing hands tense with frustration through  
about soul mates and dreaming of destined lovers was all  
bullshit.

his hair too short to be ruffled by such a mauling.

It had to be. If there was any such thing as a woman destined to be Maybe he was looking at this all wrong. After viewing the

his, he wouldn't torture himself with a dream. He'd simply find her little video he'd sent, sooner or later, jealousy would start eating and claim her. And prove she was just another woman he could

Brandon's gut. No question about it. When a man had a woman

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 68**

like Morgan, he wanted to keep her safe and whole and so sated

pleasure... The want was a blast of heat drilling straight through

that the idea of sex with another man never crossed her mind. Once

his erection and his brain. Damned odd, really. He didn't fixate Brandon had time to gnaw on the visual evidence that Morgan had

like this. A willing woman was cause for a good mood and good

strayed—and with his enemy—the idiot's pride would demand he

times, always.

let her go.

This was...more.

Frowning, Jack realized a tactical error in that plan.

His body went wild at the thought of teaching Morgan

Brandon dumping Morgan could cause her pain. The thought of



about her sexuality, about the desires that haunted her to sweating her anguish made him want to flay himself with a whip of self-resistance and whimpering wails of pleasure. He ached to show her

censure.

how to take anything he dished out, give the burn back to him, and

Not only would Brandon leaving Morgan hurt her, it

share in the mind-blowing mental and physical satisfaction.

wouldn't satisfy the writhing mass of hate he had in his gut for

The likelihood of that happening... Jack shook his head.

Brandon. In order for Jack to get closure, Morgan *must* realize that She wasn't going to surrender easily or without a fight, and he

she deserved someone who understood her, a man who could give

wasn't out to break her. Just show her how much satisfaction she'd

her what her mind and body craved. She had to acknowledge that

find in submission.

Brandon couldn't satisfy her. And Jack figured it was his job to

Stalking into the bedroom, Jack lit a few candles

prove that very fact to her.

throughout the room, then dropped himself into the chair in the

How could he tempt her to leave Brandon?

corner and stared, absently adjusting the unyielding length of his

Pacing across the room, toward the cottage's lone bedroom, cock in his jeans.

Jack pushed open the door.

How did he tempt her to take a walk on the wild side with Holy shit. Morgan had pushed off her covers, baring herself him so he could prove to her she could be just as free and to the night. He wished she was bare to him. While that wasn't submissive as she yearned and still be okay with herself—all while

actually the case, it was close. She wore next to nothing, only the convincing her to leave Brandon so he could achieve the golden-lace camisole and thong. Moonlight spilling into the room

vengeance he'd plotted for nearly three fucking years? How did he

bathed the sweet blush-pink nipples and fiery fringe of her pussy in get her to give him that part of herself she'd held back from him

a soft silver light. It called attention to things he loved about her before, the part he was sure she'd never given any man?

body and made him want to howl at the moon, absolutely.

A mischievous smile lifted his lips as an idea occurred to

Coaxing his way into that bed, into her body again, was as him. Simple, direct, effective. Eager to put it in motion, he jogged necessary as drawing his next breath. It was the eye for an eye the back to his locked enclave and retrieved two pairs of heavy velvet

vindictive part of him craved.

ropes.

But his desire hardly stopped there. And he feared it was

Let the games begin...

about more than revenge.

His cock gave a greedy leap at the thought of having

Morgan again, in any way that would bring them both to screaming

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 69**

sharp leaf that curled around her nipple and bit.

Pain faded an instant later, replaced by a merciless need in the tight tips of her breasts. She arched, seeking more, as another leaf drifted down her abdomen and brushed over the top of her mound.

Sensations mounted, one on top of the other, until her body demanded more. She struggled to move, to touch herself—only to

## CHAPTER SEVEN

find she couldn't. Another leaf clamped down on one nipple, this

time harder than before. She cried out. Perspiration dampened the

Morgan woke slowly, drifting on the haze of an erotic skin between her breasts and thick, liquid want converged into a

dream where she lay on the grass naked to the moonlight, arms unending ache between her legs.

tossed above her head in abandon as tender pulls at her nipples

Morgan opened her eyes and threw off the last vestiges of created a pool of sweet pleasure between her legs. She writhed.

sleep.

Silvery moonbeams worshipped her, caressing the underside of her

And quickly discovered that her breasts weren't being arms, her belly, the tops of her thighs with a feathery touch. She

tormented by leaves, but by the smooth slide of Jack's tongue, moaned.

followed by the erotic nibble of his teeth.

Leaves fell from the trees above in a light summery breeze,

Before she even knew what she was doing, Morgan arched drifting down to glide over bare breasts, sensitive nipples. Again

up, her body silently offering her sensitive nipples to a hot-eyed

and again the leaves dropped from their trees and found their way

Jack, overruling anything her mind might have said.

to her body, the gentle abrasion of their texture on her skin slowly

“That’s it. Good girl,” he murmured hotly across her awakening her sensual need.

breasts.

One leaf had a sharp edge as it drifted across her body. A

Candlelight glowed softly as she looked down her body and slight sting in the hard peak of her breast surprised her. She tried to realized that he’d unlaced the camisole and pulled it wide,

dodge the leaf, but it was gone, replaced by a glide of heat, then a completely exposing her twin mounds and their hard peaks.

sudden well of desire between her legs. Another sharp leaf pinched

As if in slow motion, Morgan watched him lower his at the other nipple. Another swelling of desire bloomed inside her.

mouth to her again, his wide, bare shoulders bulged, a pulse-

She arched to the gentle pain and was again rewarded with a fresh

raising shadow in the moonlit room, as he eclipsed everything in

flood of heat and moisture.

the room but him. She pulled at her arms and legs, desperate to

The ache between her thighs became a throb, a drumbeat

embrace him. Instead, she found them bound firmly to the four inside her body calling for release. Morgan moaned, shifted.

posters of Jack's bed.

Beneath her, the grass seemed oddly smooth. She tried to  
God, she was totally at his mercy. That realization jolted  
sit up but was unable to move. Another leaf drifted over her  
left

her with a rush of dark pleasure—and that scared the hell out  
of

breast, smooth, silky, gently rousing. It was quickly followed  
by a her.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 70**

A warning boomed in her belly like thunder. The hard  
He sent her a low, sexy chuckle. His well-muscled torso  
clamp of desire plaguing her drowned it. The man made her  
want,

rippled with every move and made the wicked part of her ache  
to

so badly that dragging in a steady breath was difficult, so  
much

put her hands all over his body and feel his vitality.

that finishing a coherent thought was impossible.

“Your mouth is saying the words, but your body is making

What was it about Jack Cole and the way he touched her?

a liar out of you.” His whisper taunted, challenged. “Are you  
sure

He ignored her writhing and peppered the full sides of her  
you don't want this?”

breast with soft kisses, laved the nerve-heavy tips with a bold

“Are you deaf? I said I didn't agree to this.” She accused,

swipe of his tongue. The hard heat of his chest brushed over her

“You still think I’m submissive.”

belly, and her body fevered for more of the silky burn of his skin,

“No, I don’t.”

his mouth. Her nipples tightened more, until they became pointed

Morgan arched a fiery brow, fighting all the sparks of red nubs that begged him to continue with anything, everything, he

pleasure leaping through her body, burning away her common wanted.

sense. “Good. Finally getting smart?”

In response, Jack pinched her nipples, twisting slightly. A

“*Cher*, I don’t think you’re submissive; I *know* it.”

sharp mix of pain and pleasure had her crying out his name.

She gaped at him, then shut her mouth. Bastard! Fine. He

“I’m here, *cher*, to fulfill every forbidden fantasy

was entitled to his opinion. She had her own, thank you very much.

swimming in your mind.”

He clamped his fingers around her nipples again and

Desire jolted her body, making her buck under his tongue squeezed.

as he resumed the sensual torture on her nipples. She drew in

“Stop it. I didn’t give you permission to touch me.”

another shuddering breath as his tongue curled around the

In an instant, his smile disappeared.

throbbing tip. She whimpered. The man was twisting her inside

“I won’t ask for permission, so stop playing this game. The out, turning her into a wanton stranger. Into a woman nearly brave woman who took a chance with me after being shot at, the

willing to say yes to anything.

woman gutsy enough to alter her appearance to disappear in a Jack didn’t simply want to give her pleasure; he wanted to strange town with the help of a man she’d known for all of a few

control her, addict her, turn her into the depraved wanton Andrew

minutes—hell, the woman who talks about sex on TV... you are

had been so contemptuous of. She’d never been any man’s that woman, not the one who keeps running from herself.”

doormat. She wasn’t starting now.

His words smacked her between the eyes. She bucked

“No,” she panted. “Stop. I didn’t agree to this. I don’t want again, struggling to break free. He’d called her a coward for trying this.”

to be sane! Unreal. “I’m not running from myself. I’m getting

He raked a pair of fingers through the exposed slit of her away from you! I wanted protection, not a mauling.”

sex. Morgan knew she was more than damp. She was

Sending her a sharp smile, Jack eased a hand down her rib embarrassingly wet, swollen. Aching. His touch only ramped up



cage, over her hip, a soft contrast to the unyielding bindings at her the pleasure, made thick moisture gush from her weeping opening

wrists and ankles. Damn him for being so warm and looking so

again.

scrumptious shirtless, so totally male and confusing the hell out of **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 71**

her. He could make her needy and angry at once. And angry Male confidence and the physical power to back it up—all because she felt needy. Damn! He was using his experience to with that smooth control that wreaked havoc on her senses. Heaven

crowd her, cloud her judgment, overpower her good sense. help her. Jack looked so convinced of every word he said. Morgan

And she had to stop her body from falling for it...

trembled. For most of her life, she'd had...urges, curiosities.

"That was me against the door this morning," she ground Fantasies. Didn't everyone? That didn't mean she wanted those

out. "I'm not running and I'm not playing a game. You're just fantasies to become reality.

expecting something that's not me."

She shook her head. "If you'd stop pushing your twisted

"Yeah, that was you this morning, but it wasn't all of you.

needs on me, you'd figure out I'm just a normal girl."

You're capable of deeper submission. You let me touch a part of

His shoulders tensed, arms bunched. He looked ready to  
what's inside you. But you held back. Yeah, I saw that; don't  
look

grind his teeth.

surprised. The deep part, the dark one that wants to be  
dominated

Then his expression smoothed, until no trace of anger, or  
and fucked, that's the part you hid from me. That you deny  
exists.

any emotion, remained. He merely leaned over and worked at  
the

You have the guts to defy this sick asshole trying to stalk you,  
but knots at her left wrist, then her right. He repeated the  
process with not enough to take the pleasure I'm offering.”

her ankles, careful not to touch her anywhere. That quickly,  
she

Morgan ignored the heat wave that flowed in with his  
was unbound and free, no longer at his mercy.

words—and the sight of his thick erection pushing insistently  
at his An odd emotion slammed her, like she was...empty.

jeans. She focused on her anger instead. “Maybe being around  
too

Bereft. Morgan curled her knees up to her chest and watched  
Jack

many female doormats had made you assume all of us live to  
roll

yank on his shirt. He didn't look at her—or avoid her, either. It  
was over and spread our legs for you on command.”

as if she was irrelevant. She felt suddenly alone, even though  
he

“You want to submit because you're strong, because when  
was in the room, gathering up the velvet ropes.

you're fucking, you don't want responsibility. You want a man  
"Jack..." she blurted, without having any idea what she  
who can understand you and give you what you need—all  
without  
was going to say. Morgan only knew his indifference hurt.  
a word."

"Yes?"

"Is that the kinky version of Dr. Phil?"

That expression. He could have been talking to anyone—a

"Watch that mouth, *cher*. I own a ball gag. I know how to  
complete stranger, about nothing more vital than the weather.  
use it," he growled.

The irony of his accusation fired her temper. "Talk about

At his gravelly threat, Morgan's mouth snapped shut. Fury  
playing games! You don't get your way, so I get the cold  
and desire both spiked inside her, threatening to boil up and up  
shoulder?"

until it all exploded.

He ambled back to the bed and eased down on it, a good

"I listened to you. I know you've been looking for a man  
two feet away. No part of him touched her, and she ached for  
his

strong enough to force your surrender in the bedroom. You've  
hands on her.

never explored your dark side, *cher*. I know you'll respond

What the hell was the matter with her?

perfectly to what I want. I sense it in you, see it in you."

"If you're not willing to be who and what I know you are, I

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 72**

can only give you what you asked for: platonic and professional.”

“Why do you think that?”

Morgan knew she ought to be rejoicing. She’s wasn’t

She frowned. “Why shouldn’t I?”

submissive at heart. A few scattered fantasies didn’t make her any

“You’ve never been submissive to any of your previous

dom’s dreamboat. She wasn’t really wired like that.

lovers. How could you know something is not for you without

So why did part of her yearn to call her words back, return

trying it at least once? If you’re having fantasies, the reality may to the moment she’d awakened and discovered his beautifully bare

be even more appealing.”

chest crowding her as he bent over to lap at her nipple with his

Thoughts chased one another in Morgan’s head. He

blazing tongue?

couldn’t be right. She only had to smell cooked cabbage to know

*Yeah, and what would you do if you could, just spread your*

she didn’t like it, right?

*legs like a mindless twit?* Morgan honestly didn’t know the Weak analogy. The fact was, she avoided submitting in part answer. She just knew she couldn’t let the conversation end with

because of the shame Andrew had forced on her, because of the

this chill between them.

horror she knew her mother would express if Morgan gave in to

“You’re angry.”

such wicked urges.

“Resigned,” he corrected. “You’re going to hide from

The other reason...the idea tempted her more than anything yourself, and that’s that. I’ll leave you to go back to sleep.”

had in her life. She feared addiction.

Standing, he sent her a regretful glance, then turned his

Jack leaned closer, making it hard for her to process her wide back on her.

thoughts logically. He smelled amazing. Man and spice, cypress

Morgan stared at the solid breadth of his shoulders

and leather and warm skin all rolled into one incredibly attractive stretching his sleek golden skin. Power, control, intelligence,

package with abs so tight she could probably bounce a quarter off

patience. Everything she’d ever wanted in a man. And she was them. The man was temptation on two legs.

letting him walk away.

What if she tried submitting? To him. Just once.

Did that make her a coward? Or had she just let Jack crawl

If she liked it, Andrew would be right. She

into her head and confuse the hell out of her?

wasn’t...abnormal, was she?

She bit her lip to keep her response inside, but the words

“I can almost hear the thoughts spinning in that pretty head

scorched through her mind and were quickly out of her mouth.  
of yours, *cher*. You're thinking too hard. It's simple."

"Fine. I've had...thoughts about submitting. Nothing serious."

"No, it's not! It's my body, my..." Morgan shook her head,  
Jack paused and turned to look at her again, expression  
trying to put it into words.

carefully blank.

"Your life? The way you see yourself? I know. But would

"Go on."

you rather tell yourself you were adventurous enough to try  
Conscious of her near nudity, Morgan kept her arms tightly  
something once or have to admit that you were so scared you  
ran

curled around her knees, covering her bare breasts. "I'd be  
lying if away before even dipping your toe in the water?"

I said it had never crossed my mind. I just know me. And  
that's not Why the hell was he pushing so hard?

me."

"Stop! This is about you. You just want to get laid."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 73**

He slanted her a self-deprecating smile—one that made her  
read enough to know what it meant. "If I say the word...  
*swamp*, toes curl. "I want you, *mais yeah*. I've made no secret  
about that.

you'll stop everything."

But I also don't want to see you miserable when the truth  
could

He nodded, dark hair skimming his wide forehead. "You

free you.”

say *swamp*, and we’re done. But before you use the word, be

“I’m not miserable. I love my life!”

certain you’re in actual pain beyond your bearing. Mild discomfort

“I’m sure you love every part of your life...except sex. If isn’t good enough. Either physical or mental. I’m going to you have the courage to find the truth, spend one night with me,”

challenge your traditional notions about sex. I will dare you to give he challenged. “Just one, but my way. Tomorrow if you didn’t like

more of yourself than you ever have. There’s no place to hide here, it, no harm done. I’ll never touch you again.”

Morgan. I want to be totally clear. Are you ready for that?”

Lord, there it was—a challenge to find the truth, one that

*No*. “Ready to show you that you’re wrong about me?

could be both simple and ugly.

Sure.”

Morgan sighed. Jack was right. She had never enjoyed sex,

Jack fought a smile tugging at his mouth. “Good.”

never explored the side of her psyche that wracked her with

With that, he stood and tore off his shirt. His rippling

fevered dreams. Maybe...maybe those two facts were related.

shoulders straightened. Expression dissolved from his face. An air

Maybe it was time to assuage her curiosity. She’d indulge her

of authority, impenetrable and intimidating, surrounded him.

As

wicked fantasies once, and when they'd been fulfilled, she'd be

fast as lightning, as forceful as thunder.

over them.

Morgan shivered, even as she told herself to hang tough.

And if Jack was just using her for sex...well, why couldn't

"You know the rules, Morgan. I'm master. Everything I say

she use him, too? A mad sex scientist in decadent bedroom

is absolute. You do what I tell you, when I tell you, how I tell you.

experiment. He was absolutely no hardship to look at, and when he

You don't question. You simply do."

was buried inside her, the pleasure was intense enough to make her

He clutched the velvet ropes in his hand, his thumb

lose her mind. With his help, she could rid herself of the nagging

caressing the soft length of one. She tried to forget the feeling of desire to be dominated by a man when it came to sex. Then she

those soft ropes at her wrists and ankles, holding her down tight,

could go back to a normal life and shake off Andrew's slur and,

keeping her in place to do with her body as he pleased. Even the

someday, move into a new relationship with a clear head.

thought made her gut cramp with lust.

"I'm not a coward and I'm not a submissive. Mount up and

*No, no, no.* It wasn't sexy, just...weird.



I'll prove it."

A ghost of a smile graced his mouth when he caught her. He took her hand. "You need to find this out, once and for all, staring at the velvet bindings. "Very good."

all."

A shiver went down her spine, and she looked away. But it was too late. He'd seen her gaze fixed on the ropes. He'd know he was wrong. She nodded.

His voice, unusually gravelly, rumbled as he demanded, "We need a safe word," Jack said.

"Take off your thong."

"All right." She didn't pretend to misunderstand. She'd

#

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 74**

Jack watched Morgan tense, hesitate, her arms still wrapped around her knees, as she struggled mentally with his like a hot poker, shoving a hot slam of desire up his cock. command. Normally, this sort of faltering would be a punishable

To reward her, he moved to her side and cupped her cheek. She was new to all this, her mind still pushing back from

in his palm. "You need to face yourself, *cher*. I'm not the enemy the mastery her body begged for. For now, he'd stay patient... as

here. I can help you."

much as he could. But the reality that Morgan would soon be under

“I just can’t stop thinking that—”

him, spread wide, his to do with as he pleased, was driving him to

“You know the rules. Don’t think. Just obey.”

the brink of control.

She sighed. “I’ve never been good at obedience, sir. Ask

Swallowing down a lump of choking lust, he regarded her my mother.”

with a hard expression. “When I give a command, I expect it to be

Smiling, he promised, “I’ll never ask you to clean your followed immediately. Take off your thong now or use the safe room or take out the trash. Obeying me will be a lot more word.”

pleasurable.”

She bit that lush lower lip. The sight made his cock throb

Morgan smiled back and sent him a shaky nod, innocence inside his jeans. God, he wanted that mouth of hers around him,

and need both shining from her blue eyes.

those bee-stung lips stretched wide to take him, pull him in deep,

His heart turned over in his chest. Damn, she was so that little tongue darting over the head. *Patience*, he steeled beautiful, so uncertain. Something about her made him want to himself.

fuck her in every way possible and reassure her of her perfection

“I thought... Don’t we at least kiss or something first?”

while he was doing it. Crazy notion...

Damn, she was naïve. She really had so much to learn if

Stepping away, he blanked the soft amusement from his

she was ever going to successfully submit. And he was dying to

face and crossed his arms over his chest. “One last chance.

Take

teach her everything.

off the thong, Morgan.”

Sometimes that meant playing hardball.

She paused a mere instant before she released a deep breath

“You’re questioning me,” he warned. “If I thought now

and eased off the bed, exposing her lush, pale breasts, framed by

was the right time for a kiss, I would have demanded one.

You’re

the golden camisole. Her nipples still stood hard and rosy from his behaving like a *petite fille*, a little girl too scared to face her own sucking.

wants. And you’re wasting my time.” Jack turned his back on her.

Fresh lust kicked him in gut, pulsed in his balls, as she sent

He took a step toward the door, then another, and began to

him a hesitant glance, then hooked her thumbs in the lacy strips

wonder if this gamble was about to explode in his face.

over her hips. Slowly, so damn slowly he tried not to hold his

“Wait! I’m scared. This is new for me,” she said softly.

breath, she began pulling the thong down, displaying more pale-

“I...I don’t want to like it.”

perfect skin dotted with tiny, faint freckles.

Jack turned back to her. Finally, some honesty. That was a

Then she exposed the fiery hair guarding her pussy. Jack  
step in the right direction.

clenched his jaw. He was dying to taste her. She was already  
slick.

“What do you call me in the bedroom?” he challenged.

Totally wet and ready. Knowing that was killing him.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 75**

Finally, her thong made it to the floor. She straightened,  
tight, he could hardly catch a breath.

casting him an uncertain glance, but played brave by throwing  
her

“You’re wet.”

shoulders back and holding her head high. Jack knew from the  
way

Morgan said nothing, just stared with wide blue eyes the  
she squirmed that she was fighting the urge to cover her  
breasts

color of a Caribbean sea, dilating more with each second.  
with the camisole hanging from her shoulders and place a  
hand

“Acknowledge my comment, Morgan. Yes or no.”

over her mound. But she didn’t. His respect for her courage

“Yes,” she breathed.

climbed up a notch—as did his eagerness to have her  
completely at

“Yes, what?” he prompted.

his mercy.

“Yes...sir.”

“Pick up the thong.”

It didn't roll off her tongue yet, but it would. He'd keep at Morgan stared at him, a little frown crinkling between her her until it did. Softly and harshly. Alternating, keeping her off brows as she looked for the logic in his request. He'd break her of balance. Keeping her aroused and uncertain. It would be his

that habit eventually.

pleasure.

“Don't make me repeat myself,” he warned.

“Good. I like that you're wet. I plan to keep you that way With an expression torn between confusion and resignation, all night.”

she bent and picked up the thong, then held it against her bare She absorbed his words, tensing slightly. Her eyes dilated breasts. Her fiery hair lay tousled across her shoulders. Her red further. Her areolas puckered tight around the nubs of her nipples.

mouth, which would do Angelina Jolie proud, looked moist, lips

She slicked her tongue over her full bottom lip. His cock jerked in parted. A sweet flush spread across her cheeks. impatience.

Jack sucked in a breath. Damn it, she was so beautiful. And

“Jack—”

so wasted on Brandon Ross. The thought of showering her with

“You don’t call me that in the bedroom. If I have to remind pleasure until she screamed was clawing at his restraint. He was

you again, I’ll paddle your pretty ass.”

getting harder by the second. He had to retain some control here.

A mutinous frown furrowed her brow. Her jaw tensed. She

Otherwise, he couldn’t give her what she needed—what they both

wanted to snap some acid comment back at him. Instead, she needed.

swallowed it.

“Give me the thong, *cher*.”

He kept his smile to himself. She was learning. Slowly, but

Swallowing, she reached out a hesitant hand full of golden surely...

lace and silk. Fear and eagerness to please warred on her face,

“Yes, sir.”

clutched at his heart. He had to both soothe her and push her.

“Good. Take the camisole off.”

Balance his responses. It was the only way to coax her into really

Morgan complied almost without hesitation. Almost. Not letting go.

perfection, but progress.

Jack took the thong from her and bunched it in his hand. It

The gentle chastisement that rose to his mouth died as she

was damp. And even six inches from his nose, he could smell her

exposed the lean line of her torso, a taut belly, graceful shoulders, arousal on the garment. The knot of lust in his gut wrenched so

the full curve of her breasts. Jack hadn't thought it possible, but his **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 76**

cock stiffened with a fresh surge of blood.

consuming desire he couldn't remember ever feeling before. This

“Hand it to me,” he demanded.

went beyond the psychological high of controlling, beyond the Again, a bare pause before she complied. Satisfied for now, pure physical ease of a woman's body. In this moment, he wanted

he tossed the garments in the chair. When he turned back to to own her, inside and out, rule her body and seize her soul. Morgan, he saw her tongue swipe across her pillowy mouth again.

Suddenly, Jack wondered if he'd be able to fuck Morgan

Damn it, the woman tested his patience and self-control.

enough to get her out of his system before he let her go.

Now, this first time under his domination, he had to take total

Finally, she cast her gaze down—and dropped slowly to her charge of Morgan. There could be no vacillation. He could show

knees.

no weakness, no lack of control, only a reassurance that brooked

She was so close, Jack could feel her exhalations on his

no refusal.

jeans-covered cock. It took every ounce of self-control not to rip at Asserting his dominance was key to persuading her to his pants and toss them away, so he could feel her breath, her listen to her body. It was the only way he could take her from that mouth, on him. Lust throbbed even harder through his erection at

bastard Brandon. Then, after a hard fuck, after her complete the thought.

surrender, after she admitted she needed a dominant man and left

“Better. As a reward, you may speak. What is it, Morgan?”

her backstabbing fiancé, he’d be satisfied.

“I don’t know much about oral sex.”

“On your knees, *cher*.”

“How do you know that’s what I want?”

Her gaze flew to his, her blue eyes filled with an interesting

“I assumed. If that is what you want, I think you should

mixture of panic and lust. She was processing his request, trying to know, the one time I did it, he didn’t...”

discern what he wanted...but she knew.

“Come in your mouth?”

Just as he knew she might use the safe word rather than

A fresh flush stole up her cheeks. “No.”

take him in her mouth. The thought chafed him. He wanted—

The information blasted Jack in the gut like a prize fighter’s needed—to feel her tongue caressing his cock, her lips stretching

punch. So even straightlaced Brandon hadn’t availed himself of

wide to take him. To see her bowing, submissive, accepting,



this beauty's sin-inspiring mouth. He knew from this morning's aroused.

encounter against the door that the idea excited her. He wanted "Sir?"

Morgan to experience acts that aroused her. But the notion of being

"I didn't give you permission to speak. Either follow the first man to fill her tongue with his seed made his balls draw up directions or use the safe word."

even tighter, the lust crashing through him even more urgent. It

A pinched mouth and the downward slant of fire-red brows was primitive and possessive and illogical, but something in him

told him without words that she was rebellious and frustrated. But

responded violently to the knowledge that no other man had ever

her eyes, still sharp with desire, told him she was torn. taken her in such a way.

That expression encompassed everything he loved about

A glance down told him that Morgan wasn't repulsed by looking at her, being with her. Her dichotomy—an innocent's his demand, but uncertain. Her anxiety made her lapis eyes stand

experience with a wanton's needs—drove him to dangerous lust. A

out in her pale face. She chewed her bottom lip nervously.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

“My responsibility in dominating is not just to order you moisture. Her gaze never wavered as her lips closed around him

around. It’s to pleasure you. To guide you. It starts with trust. You and her tongue swept across his sensitive underside, sending a

must place yours in me, *cher*. I will see you through, provide blinding jolt of pleasure screaming up his spine. He gritted his whatever you need. Do you understand?”

teeth to capture the moan threatening to spill.

Morgan’s gaze left his face, traveled down his torso, then

She stilled, pulled back a fraction. He allowed it, but

rested on the insistent erection pushing against his jeans, right in tightened his hand at the back of her neck in warning. That pretty

front of her face. Her tongue peeked out to smooth over her bottom

pink tongue laved the head of his cock, then wet her soft lips again.

lip again.

He watched it all, scorched by the sight, by her hot gaze drilling

Jack drew in a sharp breath, reeling back the thoughts that, into him, innocence and wonder and the desire to experience soon, her pretty pink tongue could be laving the head of his cock.

everything finally overshadowing her fear and doubt.

Lust twisted his gut, turning it into unbreakable knots of need.

At the sight, it took every bit of Jack’s control not to start

*Merde!* He was testing her as much as he was torturing himself.

pumping wildly into her mouth. He drew in a sharp breath.

“Yes...sir.”

“Deeper, *cher*. All the way to your throat.”

He barely managed to mumble a reply before he unsnapped

She nodded, her head bobbing, her tongue stroking the

his jeans and eased down the zipper. His cock sprang free, into his blood-engorged tip of his cock. Morgan opened wider, leaned in.

hand. He slowly stroked the length of it for her gaze. Morgan

The hot, slick heaven of her mouth enclosed half his length,

zeroed in on his hard flesh, her expression uncertain and hot.

She

cradled by her exploring tongue. He hissed. She shook her head,

wanted to touch him; her face, like a kid with her face pressed

going down, trying to take more.

against a candy store window, told him that. Fisting his cock, he

The feel of her all around him, the sight of her trying to fill

waited, watching her greedy eyes follow his hand.

her mouth with his flesh, combined to push him dangerously close

When a drop of moisture beaded on the head of his cock

to the edge. His fingers again tightened at her neck as he pushed

and she licked her lips at the sight, Jack eased his free hand around another inch of his cock into the sweet depths of her mouth.

her head, anchoring it under her hair. The soft strands fell over his Morgan pulled back a fraction, then slid her lips even fingers like silk as he cupped her nape. He thumbed the soft skin at farther down his length—nearly to the back of her throat. She

the side of her jaw and slowly urged her forward.

punctuated the motion with a moan. The sound vibrated inside “Suck me, Morgan. Take me deep.”

him. Pleasure streamed up his dick, wrapped around his balls like a Closer, closer, her mouth came to his cock. Her gaze flew

wise. It doubled when she raised her hand to his dangling testicles up to his, connecting, locking with his own as she edged in. Jack

and cupped them with gentle fingers.

held his breath. God, he couldn’t look away from her, couldn’t stop Damn, she had good instincts.

watching those sensual red lips part to take him inside. Felt a

He tensed, again fighting the urge to unleash his lust, to

fucking fever rage through him as he imagined how hot and silky

fuck her mouth in a mindless pursuit of pleasure, let go of the her mouth would be.

come boiling in his scrotum. Her slow exploration was killing him,

Finally, she enveloped the swollen head, still seeping

breaking him down. His toes curled against the hardwood floor.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 78**

How the hell could he stay in control with those swollen lips  
and

her flushed cheeks hollowed as she sucked him in.

tight mouth slowly sucking out his sanity?

Jack wanted to stop the roaring rush toward the cliff, live in

The head of his cock finally bumped the back of her throat,  
this honey-thick throb a bit longer. He withdrew from her  
mouth,

adding a new dimension to his pleasure. Unable to stop  
himself, he

fighting to get a breath without her scent on it, needing a  
moment

closed his eyes and groaned, an admission of his need.

that wasn't totally bombarded with the silk of her tongue  
bathing

“That’s it, *cher*. That’s right. Suck me deep.”

his cock.

Opening his eyes again, Jack found Morgan bowed over his

When he left her mouth with a soft pop, she whimpered.

cock, eyes closed. She was damn near reverent, the way she  
held

Licked her lips. Turned a hot gaze up to him that pleaded and

him, took him so far inside. Then she eased back with a  
leisurely

dared.

swipe of her tongue. Slow. So damn slow, he’d lose his mind,  
his

“Please, sir...” She fixed her hungry stare on his cock,

control, before she fastened her mouth around his length again.

mouth open wide.

And he was leaking, fluids escaping his body in a desperate  
He took his erection in his hand, swiped a thumb over the  
rush to orgasm. Every muscle in his body tense now,  
trembling, he

weeping head, then pushed the wet digit into her waiting  
mouth.

shoved both hands into her hair and demanded more.

“You want more of that?”

“Faster. Put that sweet tongue on me. There you go...”

Her breath came hard and she swiped the moisture from the

With his prompting, Morgan established a more rapid  
pad of his thumb. Her eyes stood wide in her rosy-cheeked  
face.

rhythm, but still slow enough that he swore he could feel every

“Yes, sir.”

groove and bump on her tongue. Still slow enough to  
completely

“Tell me what you want.”

rob him of his ability to think, to remember his own damn  
name.

“I want to suck you, sir.”

Not fucking her mouth was no longer an option. His hands

“What part of me?” he barked, still torturing them both  
fisted in her hair. He thrust past her wide, sleek lips, bumping  
the with long strokes of his hand up and down his length.

back of her throat each time.

Her hungry little gaze was about to eat him alive.

“Swallow,” he demanded, voice broken. “When I’m at the

“Your...cock, sir. Let me suck it.”

back of your throat, swallow on me.”

“You haven’t followed my instructions particularly well so  
Amazingly, she did. Every time he sank deep. Perfect  
far.”

rhythm, as if she was a fucking pro. Nothing had ever felt this  
“I will, sir.”

amazing.

“I’ll hold you to that, Morgan.” He anchored his hand at  
Hell, the woman was going to shatter him with this orgasm.  
her nape again. “Now suck me.”

Sweat broke out at his temples, across his back, as he tried  
*L’aide de ciel me*, he thought as he gave into the urge to  
to resist the growing pressure in his balls. He couldn’t deny the

thrust into Morgan’s mouth again with a loud moan that  
should

pleasure for long. The wave built into a dark, sharp ache,  
have shaken the cottage’s rafters. *Heaven help me.*

demanding he give in. He held it back, gritting his teeth every  
time Again, he couldn’t resist the urge to fuck her mouth. His  
her candy tongue danced over the flared purple head, every  
time

deep, insistent rhythm filled her, demanding she take and take.  
He

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 79**

watched her, lips swollen, cheeks rosy, eyes half-closed as if  
with burning eyes. The short military cut of his hair only  
savoring him. Her nipples were harder than ever. The sight of  
her

accentuated his angular face, his strong jaw dusted with a dark  
five burned into his brain, shredded his control.

o'clock shadow, his cleft chin. The gorgeous sights didn't stop  
He stiffened again, the pressure in his balls nearly painful  
there.

as he held in his breath and held back his climax. Delaying the  
She let her gaze wander down the powerful bulk of his  
earth-shattering inevitable.

shoulders, the solid bulges of his pectorals, the tight abs that  
Morgan's eyes opened, gaze lifting to him, asking and  
showed the delineation of every muscle...and made a treasure  
trail

seducing at once. She wanted reassurance, sweetly begged him  
to

down to his groin.

let go, tempted him with the promise of ecstasy like he'd never  
Even soft, his penis was big. When hard...he'd put most  
known.

men to shame.

With that look, his control broke. The peak of rapture raced

And she had conquered him. Big, bad Jack had totally  
from the base of his spine, burned through his balls, up his  
cock,

succumbed to her. Was that sense of being mighty and  
compelling

until he exploded. Pleasure ripped her name from his lips in a  
the reason he liked to dominate?

hoarse cry. It became a chant as he repeated it over and over  
while Morgan licked her lips, high on power. Despite a  
personal



the sharp edge of bliss seemed to last forever, pounding his body

first, she wasn't pausing to examine. Wouldn't ask if it was right or with one relentless pulse of ecstasy after another.

wrong—plenty of time for that later. Now...

Faintly, through the haze of his roaring heartbeat, he heard

She sent him a kittenish smile. She'd survived his challenge

Morgan gurgling.

to submit with nary a scratch. It hadn't felt like being a mindless

"Swallow," he rasped, rubbing one of his hands along her

blow-up doll and taking orders; it had been more like following his neck. "Swallow, *cher*."

clues until she learned exactly how to seize control and unravel

Sweetly submissive now—for the moment—she did. But him.

Jack didn't kid himself. That smile breaking out across Morgan's

"You look happy with yourself."

face told him her rush of excitement at breaking him down,

Morgan tried to wipe away the smile, but she just couldn't

stripping him of his iron defenses.

suppress it. She didn't want to gloat; that would only spur him on.

He pulled away from the sweet depths of her mouth and

Instead, she just shrugged.

shucked his pants completely. Satiation lazed through him, and

"You're thinking this is a game, Morgan. That you won,

control reasserted itself. Now, he could mow down her barricades

and I lost, and we can call it a night. You think we're done and can and return the favor. Now, he could capture her surrender, strip her forget the fear that you might enjoy submitting to me."

soul, and make sure that having sex with Brandon Ross would

His soft laugh gave her the first clue that she'd misjudged

never be on her wish list again.

the situation. Her smile faltered.

#

"*Cher*, we're just starting. I promise, you'll give me

Still panting, tired yet flying, Morgan stared at Jack as she complete control before we're done."

rose to her feet. He tossed his pants aside and turned back to her

His whisper struck down to her gut, reawakening

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 80**

uncertainty. They weren't done? Every other guy she'd been

In the end, her desire ripped the choice from her. She

with...well, as Andrew put it, after he came once, he needed eight

would submit. Just for tonight. Just as an experiment. Once

hours of sleep and a bowl of Wheaties before he was ready to go

couldn't hurt, right?

again. He'd called himself a sprinter. Did that mean Jack was like a She scrambled onto the bed and knelt, facing him.

marathon runner?

“Turn around. Face the headboard.”

The thought struck an uncomfortable chord of lust in her  
In other words, turn her back to him. Knowing she only had  
belly.

seconds to decide, Morgan scrambled through her thoughts.  
What

“Kneel on the bed.” His voice startled from her  
would he do? He wouldn’t hurt her. Jack had protected her  
when  
ruminations.

her sicko had started shooting. He’d managed to sneak her out  
of

“Wh—why?”

Lafayette in one piece, but—

Any hint of postorgasm softness or relaxation in his

“My patience is wearing thin,” he barked. “Turn around.”  
expression vanished. “Because I said. I dominate, you submit.  
If

The demanding growl startled her. He meant it. Now.

you ask me one more question or hesitate again, I *will* paddle  
your With a last lingering glance at him, one she knew held all  
ass.”

her uncertainty and anxiety, Morgan complied.

*Tick-tock, tick-tock.* Suddenly, Morgan could hear each

“Sit back on your heels.” His voice drifted closer,  
impatient second between them lapse by. She glanced between  
the

punctuated by the military precision of his footsteps on the  
rumpled bed and Jack, whose even breaths and steady gaze  
told her

hardwood floor.

he was completely serious.

The stern note in Jack's voice was something Morgan

She didn't want this; she didn't. But the ache between her  
couldn't overlook. She didn't dare ignore him or hesitate.

legs had become a throb. The salty taste of him still lingered  
on her Once she'd sat back on her heels, Jack trailed a gentle  
tongue, taunting her. Remembered pleasure from their fevered  
fingertip over the slope of one shoulder, as if petting her in  
reward.

encounter against the door earlier bombarded her brain. She  
She gasped. The feathery touch startled—and enflamed. A line  
of

wanted that feeling again, of being taken, of experiencing an  
fire blazed behind that simple caress.

orgasm almost bigger than her body.

Then he flattened his palm between her shoulder blades.

Worse, there was something about Jack himself. His

“Lean down until you're lying with your breasts over your  
knees.

commanding presence, alternating with his teasing smiles. He

Arms above your head, palms flat on the bed.”

reassured her in the oddest way. She felt protected, which  
made

Morgan processed his request, racing to picture it. Child's  
sense. He'd helped her escape a shooter. The fact that he often  
pose, if she'd been doing yoga. It was one she assumed nearly  
seemed able to read her mind, as if he understood her, didn't  
fit.

every time she attended a class. But doing it now meant leaving

He was trying to cast her as a submissive. And she wasn't. her ass and the line of her spine completely vulnerable to Jack. Jack's hands curled into fists, then relaxed. "Morgan..." His fingers between her shoulder blades began asserting He took a menacing step toward her, shadows of a pressure, gently but inexorably pushing her forward. reprimand burning in his eyes.

Finally, she went with it. She could always get out of it if

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 81**

Jack pushed her too far. She had a safe word.

She struggled, pulling at her bonds with a frightened

With her cheek resting on the soft sheet, her arms stretched whimper. God, what had she been thinking? It was one thing to

over her head, while her legs remained tucked beneath her, Jack

fantasize about giving a man utter control of her body. It was removed his hand from her back. She watched as he walked in another completely to actually do it, even if she did trust him with measured footsteps to the head of the bed.

her physical safety. How well did she actually know him?

Her abdomen cramped with the unknown and her total fear

But her bonds weren't budging.

of it. What was he doing? Planning?

When she cried out again, Jack gentled her with a soft

"Sir...?"

touch, curling his palm around the back of her head.

“Morgan, we’ve covered this. You don’t speak unless

“Morgan, take a deep breath.” He waited until she did, then  
you’re given permission.”

whispered in a quiet, hypnotic voice. “You’re safe. You’re  
fine.

“I just want to know what you’re going to do.”

I’ve got you.”

The air in the room seemed to stop. She sensed his stillness,

The calm in his voice reached deep inside her. His tone

the whiplash of displeasure that burst through him. Knowing  
she’d

asked her to be reasonable, not to panic. For a reason her  
logical

disappointed him incited a tart, unwelcome sensation.

Morgan’s

mind could not fathom, that soothed her. She heeded his voice  
and

abdomen churned again. Talking without permission was a no-  
no,

stilled.

as was asking questions. She wasn’t sure why, but she knew

In reward, he smoothed his palm down the exposed length

without a doubt that she’d gone beyond a faux pas.

of her back. “Submission is about trust, Morgan. You trusting  
me

Suddenly, he spurred into action, grabbing her left wrist

not only to keep you safe, but to give you everything you  
want,

with one hand. Within moments, a velvet rope wrapped around

every pleasure you imagine. I can grant you those things, but not

her. A pull, another tug, and a yank later, he stepped away without your help. The pleasure comes, in part, from giving up. Discreetly, Morgan tried to pull at her wrist. total control.”

It was securely bound.

Suddenly, the caress at the small of her back was gone.

Before she could do more than begin to reel with the

Moments later, he replaced it with a sharp *thwack* on her ass.

implications of that, Jack made his way to the other side of the bed, Startled by his action, Morgan bucked against her bonds.

captured her right wrist, and repeated the process.

“Ouch! Stop it.”

Both of her arms were immobilized, tightly but not

No sooner were the words out of her mouth than a peculiar uncomfortably tethered to the posts of the headboard. She gave a

stinging began to prickle her skin. It created a fire that lingered gentle tug, then a not-so-gentle one. Nothing. The bonds didn’t where he’d spanked her.

give so much as an inch. He must have been one hell of a Boy

“You’re not in control, Morgan. Your body is mine to

Scout, since those knots were perfect.

pleasure or punish as I see fit. Right now, you’ve more than earned Panic rushed her like a wave from a tsunami. Oh, no. She

a punishment.”

was in over her head. Way over. Jack was...more. More man, She’d barely recovered from her surprise when he spanked

more disciplined resolve, more iron control than she was ready for.

her again, this time hitting the other cheek with an equal amount of **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 82**

force. Morgan bit her lip as the initial sting assailed her. Then, as

“Do you understand?”

before, the nip of pain gave way to the unexpected heat that spread. That voice, like a sexual drill instructor. Every word was

across her ass.

wrapped in steel, but beneath that, she heard the taunting promise

“There are surprises. That’s intended. I will do things you of what could be, the velvet promise of ecstasy.

don’t always understand or think you want. Or agree with. What’s

Fresh heat crawled across her flesh, swelled her clit,

important is that you trust that I know your body and your limits,

strangled her protests. Her body demanded more.

and that you comply. Because you have trust in me, in my ability

“Yes, sir.”

to get past your mental barriers to give you the pleasure your body

“Much better,” he praised.

craves.”

Only then did Morgan realize she was actually lifting her



He smacked her again, a healthy slap for each cheek.

ass to his hand, anticipating the next blow. She became hyperaware

Morgan gasped. “Go to hell.”

of her empty sex and clawed at the sheet, aching for him to fill it.

The rumble of Jack’s laughter sounded behind her. “You’re

The thrill of sensation took over then. Shivers chased one just digging yourself a deeper hole, *cher*.”

another down her spine. Her entire body felt hot, agitated. She’d

He smoothed a calloused palm over the tingling flesh of her been inflamed by the feel and scent of Jack when she’d taken him

ass. The heat of his skin seeped in, mixing with the burn on her

in her mouth, but this position, his gently punishing touch made

bottom, to create a fire that nearly had her moaning. How could

her aware of the fact that she was a woman and under his control.

she like it? Why should she? It made no sense.

Aware that she was in a position that bared the most secret parts of

“You can’t experience what you want until you learn to

her body to him, and tied down as she was, he could touch her—or

give yourself over to me. Completely,” he whispered in her ear.

not—at any time he chose.

Mentally, she railed against his words, even as she realized  
A scary, heady realization—one that gave her more  
her vagina was completely wet.

pleasure than pushing him to lose control with her had.

*No, no, no!* He was spanking her like a wayward child. She  
He glided the flat of his palm down her back. Morgan  
didn't like it. Really.

curled her spine like a cat, seeking the tingling heat in his  
touch.

But the pain... it was becoming pleasure, thick and  
Immediately, he removed his hand. "You stay still unless I  
throbbing and impossible to ignore.

say otherwise."

Morgan shifted, trying to avoid his hand. No such luck.

His tone made it clear he expected a reply.

Two more smacks, one for each cheek, both with more vigor  
than

"Yes, sir."

the others. She managed a snarl of outrage, but that didn't stop  
the

"Excellent."

spread of fire from bursting across her skin.

No, it wasn't. Morgan could feel her body temperature

Throbbing heat. Bone-deep want. *Oh my God...* Her flesh  
rising, her thoughts beginning to slide in a thick morass to a  
lust-began to ache. Morgan felt blood dancing just under her  
skin,

choked swirl. Right and wrong were slowly being replaced  
with

engorging her clit.

pleasure and pain, with the need to achieve orgasm. And oddly,

Fighting was useless.

with pleasing Jack.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 83**

He turned and walked out the door. Morgan glanced over streaked unmercifully inside her.

her shoulder and watched him leave, his taut, bare ass inciting a

“Your sweet pussy is wet, Morgan. Even more wet than fresh spark of need, even as his disappearance incited fear. Where

this morning. And swollen. You think you’re ready to be fucked?”

was he going? He couldn’t just leave her here like this! How long

Squeezing her eyes shut, Morgan tried to hold her answer did he expect her to remain in this position, waiting?

in. If she said yes, he would only torment her. If she no, he would Morgan turned her head and started watching the clock on

torment her even more. But pretending indifference to the magical

the bedside table. It ticked away in the silence. The only other mastery of his fingers trailing through her juices, between her sound she heard was her own heartbeat.

sensitive folds, just wasn’t possible.

Five minutes slid by. Then another five. Her legs began to

“Yes, sir,” she finally croaked out.

turn numb. She noticed the slight chill in the room his absence  
She ached everywhere. The need beat at her. Everything  
allowed. But something told her not to move. Something told  
her

between her knees and her navel screamed for his mouth, his  
cock.

this was a test.

Anything! She needed him to do something.

She didn't intend to fail.

Jack merely kept playing.

After another eight minutes, he returned with a smallish

"There's too much fight in you. When you completely  
black box in hand and an erection that left her with no doubt of  
his submit...then we'll see."

ability to perform again. Without a word, he set the box on the  
Oh, she wanted to argue that one. This was as damn  
bedside table, then glanced at her.

submissive as she was going to get. He could either accept  
what

"You're still in position. Good. Very good."

she was willing to give or go jump off a—

He trailed a light finger from the small of her back

*Oh my God!*

down...down between the cheeks of her ass. She stiffened,  
gasped,

A pair of his fingers sliced through her moisture, through  
tried to tighten against him. He hesitated, but when she made  
no

her slick folds—and plunged inside. A turn of his wrist, a flick  
of further protest, he continued his quest down to her sex.

his fingers... He found her G-spot and began a firm but leisurely

Then he was there, his fingertips gliding over the slick flesh caress.

pouting into his hand. Back and forth, all around the outer folds,

Almost immediately, the pleasure clamped around her spreading her moisture in a careless, unhurried pattern.

thighs, pierced her clit, darted up her passage. Everything inside

He was toying with her. Just toying! But she was too

her body came alive as he continued an unmerciful press on that

aroused for anger. Morgan thrust her hips back at his hand. *Do* oh-so-sensitive spot.

*something!* her body screamed silently.

She moaned, long, loud, then thrust her hips back at him in

He merely used his other hand to smack her ass again.

invitation once more. He declined, neither invading farther nor “Stay still,” he demanded.

rubbing faster. He simply stayed the course.

He wrapped his fingers around her hip to stop the

Blood began to roar in Morgan’s ears. She became aware

provocative wriggle of her hips. She tensed, trying so hard to do as of her heartbeat vibrating inside her. Her clit throbbed in time with he commanded. Her muscles trembled with effort as pleasure

the rhythm. Perspiration broke out between her aching breasts, at

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## Page 84

her temples and nape, between her rigid thighs.

A touch later, where she least expected it, he answered her Higher, higher the man was driving her. And God, she was question.

almost there, almost to the edge of the cliff. This was going to be a Before Morgan could even protest, one of his fingers, slick

free-fall from unknown heights. Her body tensed, preparing. She

with her own juices, penetrated her ass, pushing past the tight ring panted, wailed, wanting it more than anything...

of muscle. Tingles formed a shocking circle of pleasure around the

Suddenly, he withdrew.

invasion. She gasped.

"I didn't give you permission to come."

"No..." she breathed.

"What?" She could barely catch a breath.

"Yes," he asserted. "You have a beautiful ass. I'm not

"You don't come until I tell you to. Complete control, going to ignore it."

*cher.*"

He invaded her anus with a second finger. Burning

He disappeared around the other side of the bed for a pressure. Something so foreign and forbidden. The pleasure moment and grabbed the black box. What the hell was he doing?

zoomed sky high. Morgan gasped, then bit her lip. How could she

She was dying here, dissolving into a puddle of need, and he was

like such a thing?

digging into a damn box?

Yet, suddenly, it was impossible not to crave more. “That’s

She moaned, aching frustration wracking her body in

it, *cher*. Push back onto my fingers. I’m going to open you up and shivers. Fine, if he wasn’t going to help her, she’d help herself.

fuck you here soon.”

Morgan tried to wiggle back and forth to produce enough

Then Jack burned away anything she might have said and

friction on her clit to send her over the edge. Moments later, Jack sent her closer to the edge, plunging his fingers into her body with stilled her with a sharp slap to her ass. Then he anchored that palm a hypnotizing rhythm. *In, out, in, out...*

on her hip, making it nearly impossible to move under the pressure

The sensations were so new, so unexpected. He’d

of his grip.

awakened so many parts of her and they all screamed with need

“Bad girl. You’ll come when I say so, under my hand,

now. Her nipples were taut nubs that rubbed against the sheets with around my cock. Not because you wiggled your ass for it.”

each penetration. Her clit pulsed with her heartbeat. Her wet sex

With that comment, Jack climbed onto the bed behind her.

still danced from his touch.

He plunged his fingers back into her. But rather that rubbing at that And now his fingers drove her slowly mindless,

awakening

sweet spot inside her, he merely moved about, dousing his fingers.

the senses in a part of her body she'd only considered erotic in her

"Spread your knees," he demanded, fitting his free hand most forbidden midnight fantasies.

between them, urging her thighs apart.

Then the pleasure was too strong for thought. She could

Morgan complied, breathless, mindless, so ready to fall into

only move with his touch, arching to meet his fingers, mewl at the

the swamp of desire pounding at her.

shock of sensation, the thrill. Her entire body was tightening,

Jack removed his fingers from her passage, gave her clit a

focused on reaching the pinnacle that grew and swelled, towering

breath-stealing flick. She stilled, thoughts chasing. What would

above her, engulfing her.

happen next? What would he—

Jack withdrew his fingers from her ass. Morgan whimpered

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 85**

in protest before she could stop herself, before she could even

"Yes, *cher*. You're like heaven," he groaned as he thrust think about what she was doing.

inside her. "Fucking whipped cream and cinnamon-spiced

"I'm not done, *cher*," he soothed.



perfection.”

A pop and a squishy sound later, Morgan felt something

His rhythm quickly escalated to something fast and

new, slightly cold and definitely foreign, probing again at her back focused. The friction and vibrations had tingles screaming inside

entrance. A vibrator. It shook as Jack teased a small circle around her tender openings. She felt her blood rushing south, flooding her her sensitive opening.

sex, her ass. Morgan panted, screamed as the pleasure expanded

Her pleasure was so focused there, so sharp, that Morgan faster than she could assimilate. Her knuckles turned white as she

couldn't imagine anything overtaking it. Especially when he fisted the bedding. Dangerous need threatened to swallow her, pushed the vibrator in a fraction.

steal her sanity, and never return it.

“Push down,” he commanded softly.

Jack was relentless. The climb to the peak came fast. Her

Entranced, Morgan did. The vibrating probe quickly

teeth dug into her lip until she tasted blood. But nothing could hold warmed in her body. She cried out in a sound of pure pleasure at

the pleasure in.

the wicked desire it created. The vibe was about the same size as

Her cries became ear-splitting shouts. Morgan could feel

his fingers, but so smooth as he eased it in and out of her body. She herself tightening around his cock, gripping as if she would never

arched to it, wanting more, feverish with lust. She cried out, let him go, rippling with the impending storm. He continued the

grasping the sheet in her fists.

smooth rhythm, fucking through the clamp of her sex with control

Jack moved directly behind her, covering her back with his and power.

body as he whispered in her ear, “You look so sexy with my vibe

With both passages penetrated, Morgan’s fantasies burst pleasuring your ass. A man could lose control just looking at you.”

free in her mind. The one she denied having in the cold light of day Morgan looked back over her shoulder at Jack. He knelt flooded her, the image haunting her. Two men, each filling her, behind her, his chocolate eyes scorching her already overheated

working together to overwhelm her, own her, fuck her until—skin, his shoulders wide and bulging as he gripped her hips with

“Come, Morgan. Come now!” he shouted hoarsely.

large hands. The breath seesawed out of his wide, muscled chest,

She let out a raw scream out as orgasm blasted through her. now slick with sweat.

Her body shuddered as she gripped him, milked him. And the He looked like a man hanging onto his control by a thread. pleasure... It spiraled beyond anything she’d ever known, She had no time to rejoice when he thrust into her sex, all

annihilating thought or control, the ability to speak. All she knew the way to the hilt in one sizzling stroke. Morgan gasped at the feel was the devastating ecstasy that made black spots dance in her

of him filling her completely, her passage made smaller by the vibe vision, made her body taut, weightless, as Jack hurtled her into the in her ass driving her out of her mind. She felt full, packed. The

kind of ecstasy she had only imagined.

double penetration made her claw at the sheets again, grab them in

His husky cry echoed hers as he came in a fevered rush. desperate fists.

They collapsed together onto the bed. He dislodged the “Jack!”

vibe but kept himself buried deep inside her, slowly stroking her

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 86**

skin, as if he wanted to possess her beyond the orgasm. As if he

found her not only acceptable, but wonderful.

As Jack curled around her, his panting breaths falling on her shoulder, Morgan’s body—worse, her heart—leapt in joy at

those heady thoughts.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 87**

her stalker had started in earnest. But even when she felt safe in her relatively secure apartment, she never slept that deeply.

Next to

Jack, she'd felt cherished, protected—totally able to fall into the black chasm of slumber.

She'd also felt claimed, especially when he awakened her deep in the night. He'd positioned her flat on her back and fitted

his hips between her wide spread thighs, gasping at the silken

## CHAPTER EIGHT

thrust of his cock into her swollen sex.

Despite being half-asleep, the euphoria of his slow, lazy

Eyes closed, Morgan rolled over and stretched in the warm, strokes had sent her into a red haze of need. Within minutes, she'd rumped sheets. Her muscles felt deliciously heavy and relaxed, if

tried to claw at Jack's shoulders in silent plea—only to realize he'd a tad sore in some unusual places. But wow, such hard, dreamless

tied her down again. And blindfolded her.

slumber had rejuvenated her. She couldn't remember the last time

He'd released the ties at her ankles suddenly, she recalled, she felt this rested. Smiling, despite her lingering drowsiness, she then shifted her close to the head of the bed. Keeping her wrists

drew in a deep breath. The scents of leather, male musk, midnight,

tethered, he'd sat her up and, with a grip of controlled fervor, swamp, and sex bombarded her.

guided her down on his cock.

Scents that belonged to Jack.

“Ride me, *cher*. Squeeze me with that pretty pussy and ride

The events of the previous night rushed back. Every bit of me,” he whispered in the midnight air.

it. In sudden, excruciating detail. Gasping, Morgan sat straight up With his hands clutching her hips, Jack dictated the speed in bed, gathering the sheet in her fists. Everything she'd done...

and depth of his penetration. Never too deep, never too fast.  
Never Not just done—reveled in. Lust boomed in her gut and  
her vagina

enough to do anything but reduce her to a panting, pleading  
mass

clenched in fresh hunger as memories besieged her in vivid  
color.

of tingles.

Her mind shook with a mix of shock and disbelief. Dismay  
Morgan had whimpered for more. Perspiration dampened  
wasn't far behind.

her belly, her back, as she strained toward a release he  
wouldn't

And she was still naked. She, who never slept bare, still lay  
give her. Instead, he merely drove her up, up, up to  
mindlessness

in the bed of the man who instigated her downfall into the  
most

with endlessly slow strokes.

forbidden sin and found a way to make her pant for it. And  
now,

“Jack...” she moaned.

she laid in his bed like she was waiting for him to do it all  
again.

“*Non.*” He sat up beneath her, then nipped at the tip of her  
Frowning, Morgan remembered him sleeping beside her  
breast with his teeth, even as one of his hands struck her bare  
ass.

last night. No, not beside her; tangled with her. His solid  
warmth

The double pleasure-pain ricocheted through her body,

curled around her back, his hand splayed over her abdomen.  
The

spiraling sensations through her body like hot lava. She gasped for steady rhythm of his hard male breathing had drifted into her ear.

air as Jack buried himself deep, deep inside her. He thrust up, but She hadn't slept well in weeks, not since the problems with

still in long, lazy strokes that multiplied the friction, exploded

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 88**

shivers of sensation within her.

thumb and fingers, then giving a slight twist. "No, sir."

"Wrong," he chastised, lifting her up, nearly off his cock.

A fresh rush of moisture surged from her passage, wetting

"What should you call me?"

her already-slick folds. Her body's gesture didn't go unnoticed.

Morgan hesitated, teetering on the knife's edge of need.

"Yes, *cher*. I love you wet. You're so perfect to fuck, like Panting, her sex on fire, her bound hands preventing her from you were made for my cock."

touching him, she cried out, "More. Please..."

Jack lowered her on his erection again and poured into her

"You'll get it when you address me properly."

again with a heady, steady rhythm that made her head spin, her

"Sir." She managed to get the word out of her mouth in a

body burn. She met him, thrust for thrust, moan for moan, pinching

rush. "Sir."

her nipples on each downward stroke until they were so hard,  
so

Jack rewarded her with a quick up thrust, his cock  
sensitive.

burrowing deep, filling her completely. Morgan cried out. The  
“Move your hands,” he murmured against her skin.

hand at her hip inched over until his thumb toyed with her clit.

It was almost with reluctance that she released the hard

With a moan, she arched into his touch, seeking the edge of  
the

buds of her breasts. Difficult to admit that, but satisfaction was  
so close that was nearly in front of her. Almost...

close, she tasted it on her tongue. She whimpered for it. Her

With quick fingers, he untied her hands—and made it clear

fingers pinching her nipples added to the pleasure Jack  
swarmed

they would not stay idle. “Play with your nipples, Morgan.  
Show

her with.

me how you like to have them touched.”

She didn’t have to do without the delight for long. He took

She hesitated, apprehension tangling with a jolt of lust. *Put*

one of her stiff tips into his mouth, sucking so hard, he pressed  
it *her hands on herself while he watched?* Oh God, the idea  
excited against the roof of his mouth while his tongue teased  
the underside.

her.

His fingers tormented the other, putting so much sweet  
pressure, so When she didn’t comply, Jack stopped his slow,  
steady



much ache, around the sensitive crests that she nearly screamed.

thrusts. Morgan whimpered.

“You’re tightening on my cock, *cher*. You don’t come until

“Touch them. Now,” he demanded. “Or I will stop fucking I tell you to,” he reminded.

you and spank that pretty little ass red again...”

“I can’t stop it, sir,” she murmured, helpless against the

Morgan didn’t want to think about how much she’d liked rising tide of ecstasy threatening to overtake her.

his broad palm striking the cheeks of her butt. But she wanted his

“You can. You will. Just as you’ll play with your clit for

cock inside her more, as much as she wanted to please him. She

me.” He lifted one of her hands to his mouth and sucked a finger

brought her hands to her breasts and cupped them, wishing more

into the shocking heat. “Lick your finger like this, get it all nice than anything that she could see his face. Was he aroused by what

and wet, then stroke it over your clit for me.”

she was doing? Repulsed?

She wanted to. Oh, God, she wanted to. The mere thought

“And your nipples. You don’t ignore them when you make stabbed her with a fresh surge of need. But... “It will make me yourself come, do you?”

come.”

“No,” she said breathlessly, squeezing them between her

He smacked her ass. “Address me properly.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 89**

Morgan swallowed against her need. “It will make me  
thickening, swelling. He lengthened his strokes, the crest of  
his

come, sir.”

cock hitting her g-spot with every rapid-fire thrust.

“Not until I say so,” he warned. “Now take that finger into

And still Morgan held on, digging her nails into his hip  
your mouth. Yes. Deep. Suck it. Beautiful, *cher*. Good.”

with one hand, stroking the bundle of nerves between her legs  
with

He pistoned her up and down on his cock. Blood rushed in  
the other. Her thighs tightened around him. She cried out,  
trying

flowing rivers toward their joined bodies, flooding every nerve  
desperately to wait for Jack’s consent to release the gigantic  
ending with need, swelling her folds until she felt the slick  
friction explosion swirling inside her with the bright, shining  
promise of

of every thrust inside, outside—everywhere. She squeezed her  
eyes

Nirvana.

shut, trying to focus, but she couldn’t hold back much  
longer...

“*Jouis pour moi*,” he demanded. “Come for me!”

Jack was driving her beyond her ability to endure.

Jack didn’t even finish his sentence before it crashed over

Yet the last thing she wanted to do was use the safe word to  
her over, granting that dazzling dance with the stars as light  
and  
stop him.

color flashed in her head. The beauty had a dark side, though,  
as it

“Squeeze me with your pussy. Yes,” he croaked. “Now put  
poured through her, swirling around her, then pulled her under,  
that finger on your clit and show me how you rub it.”

into a dark morass, like a riptide. It drowned her in violent  
Seared beyond modesty or shame by the flames of pleasure,  
pleasure, a place where only the white-hot sear of satisfaction  
Morgan did as he demanded, sliding her palm down her  
abdomen,

lived. A ringing in her ears and a sting of her throat told her,  
over into the damp nest of her curls and circled her wet finger  
over her the roar of her pulsing heartbeat, that she was  
screaming. Jack’s

clit.

long groan of satisfaction joined her.

“Oh, yes!” She couldn’t hold the sound in. Immediately,  
After that, she remembered nothing, just deep dreamless  
she realized that the hood had pulled back from her clit and  
every

hours of heavenly sleep, cocooned in Jack’s warmth.

drag of her fingertip over the swollen little bud was like fire in  
her Now the bed was empty, the bedroom door closed.

sex, burning down to the passage Jack filled with every thrust.

And the mere thought of him and their night together left

“Don’t stop,” he growled. “Show me how you play with

her aching and wet again.

your clit.”

Morgan buried her face in her hands. God, what had she

Actually, she couldn't have stopped for anything. Her  
done?

saliva mingled with her own juices as she pressed a second  
finger

Before Jack touched her, she'd worried that after one night  
onto her clit and began the motions she knew would rocket her  
with him, she would never be the same again. She'd been right  
to

straight into bliss.

worry.

Still, she strained to hold back her orgasm, waiting for

Worse, after arousing her into panting for everything she

Jack's approval. Somehow needing it. The pressure grew,  
swore she'd never want, couldn't want, then satisfying her  
beyond

mounted. She clenched every muscle, even as she felt  
compelled to

her every erotic imagining, Jack had merely awakened at some  
drive herself higher. And Jack... He was now pounding into  
her, a

point and left. No, she hadn't expected undying devotion or  
moan punctuating his every stroke. Inside her, she could feel  
him

confessions of love. Crazy. Jack Cole didn't seem like the kind  
of

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## Page 90

man to bow to something as soft as emotion. The very notion made

standing in the middle of the living/kitchen area.

her laugh. Or would have, had she been in the mood to see the Built hard with obviously Germanic ancestors, the man humor.

rose about three inches above Jack, who was no midget himself.

As it was, she saw only that she'd given herself—

Hair the color of rich caramel cut military short, a square jaw, and repeatedly—to someone who could turn her inside out, make her

shoulders a mile wide all screamed *male*! But it was the eyes, into something her mother would be horrified by, Andrew would

bright, razor-sharp, deep denim blue...slashing over Jack's scorn. A wanton she wasn't sure she could come to terms with.

shoulder to focus on her with cool assessment—and hot reaction—

Then he would leave her.

that startled Morgan.

It had to end...even if that reckless part of her craved more

This stranger could probably guess that she'd spent the of Jack and the sweet insanity of the pleasure he gave her.

night having sex with Jack. As if her own licentious behavior

That couldn't happen. Other than one night of sex, they

hadn't been bad enough, this new realization sent a fresh flush of

didn't suit. Earthy, laid-back Jack didn't fit in her world. And

mortification rising up her cheeks.

she...didn't belong in his, a world of silken commands that came

Jack turned to find her frozen in the hall. She probably had with velvet bonds and spankings and acts that both horrified and

that deer-in-the-headlights look, she thought, forcing herself to fascinated.

take a deep breath and meet the stranger's gaze.

And why was she even contemplating anything she might "Morgan," Jack called.

share with Jack beyond last night?

She cut her glance to him. My, he looked yummy in the

He had challenged her to give herself to him for a night.

morning. Just his voice, low, gravelly, with a hint of command,

Fine. She had. It wasn't going to happen again. Now they just had

both reassured her and made her wet again. Bad, bad sign.

to divine the identity of this stalker and she could get back to her Her belly jumped, her cheeks flushing again when she

life...and somehow forget Jack before she lost herself in him.

remembered for the second time everything they'd done the night

On the bright side, when it came time to film the episode of before.

*Turn Me On* that dealt with domination, she'd be well prepared.

His dark eyes burned with memories, even as he crossed

With a sour smile at her own bad humor, Morgan rose and

his arms over his massive chest, jaw tense. His posture did not

fished around the room for something to hide her nakedness and

invite morning-after affection, even if she'd been so inclined. Was ward off the morning's chill. A huge sweatshirt of Jack's that hung this remote man the same one who'd tangled his limbs with hers in

to mid-thigh and a pair of socks later, she finger-combed her hair

a warm embrace of protection during the dark of the night? to rid it of the worst of the tangles. Damn, she couldn't even find a

"This is my business partner, Deke Trenton," he simply pair of underwear. And the rest would have to wait. The way her said.

stomach was rumbling, she needed food.

Jack and this newcomer, they might look a bit like day and With a deep breath, Morgan opened the bedroom door and night, light and dark, but with iron bodies and hard eyes, they were stepped into the hall.

cut from the same military cloth. She shivered. Too much The last thing she expected to see was another man testosterone in one room.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 91**

The big warrior stepped around Jack and extended his hand he and Deke were great friends. Jack didn't trust many people, but

with a friendly smile that changed his whole face from forbidding

she'd bet he trusted the big blond guy with his life. At this to surprisingly approachable.

moment, however, Jack was tense, watchful, even a bit angry. He

Haltingly, she held her hand out to him, and they shook. pretended to take Deke's teasing well—but he wasn't.

"Morgan O'Malley."

"Well, you know I never pass up the opportunity to torment

"Jack, you asshole. Hoarding the pretty girls again. I really you. Not that I need the practice."

ought to beat your ass for that."

"Nope, you've got it down to a fine art."

He snorted. "Yeah, you try."

"Years of effort." Deke sighed. "But I did come here for a

Deke grinned. "Later. Outside. You, me, and the gators."

reason." He glanced back at Morgan, all business now. "You might

He turned to Morgan with a conspiratorial whisper. "Ask me, and

want to hear this, too. It's about your stalker."

I'll tell you who to place your money on. Better yet, maybe I can

She sucked in a breath. In all her tangled emotions and the convince you to grant the winner a kiss. Then I promise it won't be easy banter, she'd lost sight of the murderous lunatic. Silly her.

any contest."

"Okay. Um, one minute. I can't face this without something

His gentle teasing set her at ease immediately. Despite the to eat."



awkward situation, she felt herself relax and smile back.

“And coffee, I’m sure,” Deke added.

“I’m not the human equivalent of a poker chip,” Morgan

Morgan made a face. Jack laughed.

teased with a roll of her eyes.

“She doesn’t drink it,” he told Deke.

“Good girl,” Jack praised. “And if my business partner

He raised a tawny brow. “Is she human?”

doesn’t stop messing where he hasn’t been invited, he’s going to

Rolling her eyes, Morgan padded back to the bedroom. If

find his face one bloody blob—uglier than it already is.”

she was going to face the testosterone inquisition, she needed

Deke laughed and sauntered back toward Jack, slapping

something more than a flap of sweatshirt covering her ass.

Once

him on the shoulder. “You’re so damn subtle, Jack.” He cast

she’d retrieved Jack’s oversized bathrobe, she padded to the

another heated look in her direction, gaze lingering on her bare

bathroom and brushed her teeth and hair.

legs and the outline of her unbound breasts through the sweatshirt.

When she made her way down the hall again, Jack and

“And you’re one lucky bastard.”

Deke both sat at the round kitchen table, cups of strong coffee

Morgan bit her lip under his appraising gaze, at once

resting on the smooth pine surface. A piece of toast and a glass of discomfited. And shamefully intrigued. Deke looked like

orange juice waited for her.

something out of a hard-core war film—not at all her type.  
Neither

She glanced at Jack in surprise. He merely guided her into a  
was Jack, for that matter. But... never mind; she wasn't going  
chair without comment.

there.

He'd made dinner last night, and now this? The man who  
“Did you come here for a reason? Or just to torment me?”  
tied her up and told her exactly how to behave in the bedroom  
so

Jack shot back acidly.

he could send her straight to mindless orgasm did something  
as

Morgan saw through the sarcasm immediately. It was clear  
menial as cook for her? Like he was taking care of her?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 92**

“Thanks,” she murmured, totally confused, as she settled  
greener light than he already thought he had to pursue  
whatever

into the chair across from Deke.

sexual arrangement he might want from her. Nope. She was  
Jack sat on her left, then with a nod, turned to his business  
hanging onto to her subterfuge and pleading extreme guilt in  
case

partner. “Deke has some pals at the FBI who have studied  
copies

he came sniffing around again. Next time, she'd have to  
remember

of the photos the sick bastard has been leaving you and the pattern she was supposedly an engaged woman.

of his behavior.”

“L.A. to Houston is a long way for a prank,” she agreed.

Deke gripped his mug of coffee and leaned across the little

“Exactly,” Deke cut in. “But the way this character took table, a formidable presence even in the large, airy room. Morgan

shots at you suggests there’s vengeance on his mind.”

found herself holding her breath, hoping that he knew something,

“He thinks you’re his,” said Jack. “But when he saw you *anything*, to help catch her personal Norman Bates before he having coffee with me, that’s the first time he tried to shoot became a full-fledged Psycho.

you...like he wanted to punish you and keep anyone from having

“Your stalker is likely a man somewhere between the age you if he couldn’t.”

of twenty and forty-five. He’s someone you know. His

“That’s twisted.” Morgan grimaced.

behavior...he functions like an intimate-partner stalker, someone

“Stalkers aren’t nice, normal guys.” Deke shrugged.

who is a little obsessed and can’t let go.”

She sighed. “I still have no idea who this is.”

“But if he’s someone I know, wouldn’t I know who? I

“I’m sure you know him, Morgan. This is someone you’ve mean, wouldn’t he want me to be certain who he is?”

been close with on some level, somewhere between

“The way he withholds his identity is unusual. Either he’s conversationally and sexually. But in your interaction, he believed purposely hiding it from you or he thinks it’s so obvious that you that you connected, that you were meant for him, which gives him must know who you ‘belong to.’ Judging from the bit of evidence the right to punish you for any ‘bad’ behavior you exhibit, like we have, I think it’s the latter. I don’t think this person is into seeing another man. You’ve figured out that he’s tenacious.” subterfuge for the sake of hiding. So that makes him delusional,

“Yeah, I know he’s not going to call it a day anytime too.” soon.” The knot of apprehension in her belly tightened. Morgan sighed, her stomach tightening with fear at Deke’s “Good,” Deke praised. “You and Jack are doing everything every word. “Was there any question of that?” you can. Stay here for now. At this point, don’t try to be Miss “No, but the fact that he followed you to Houston when you Independent.” went to stay with your fiancé tells us he’s serious,” Jack added. Getting away from Jack would be great for her self- Deke glanced back at her, surprise reflected in the raised respect—but terrible for her safety. Morgan sighed. “It chafes me arches of his brows. to need a babysitter, but until I know who and what I’m dealing

*Fiancé?* Morgan searched her memory. Jack's tense jaw with, I feel better with backup."

and black glower suddenly reminded her that she'd told him that

"Good. Does he ever call your cell phone?" Deke

she was engaged to Brandon. The lie hadn't kept him from moving

questioned.

in too close. But correcting Jack now would only give him a

"No. About six months ago, I got a new number. Only three

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 93**

people have the number: My mother, Brandon, and my agent."

quelling glare at Deke.

"Brandon?"

"Or not," said the blond giant.

"Her fiancé."

Morgan's gaze bounced back and forth between the two of

Jack's rancor as he answered his business partner stunned

them. What in the heck was going on? Jack was acting

her. He sounded very unhappy about the "fact" she had a soon-to-

almost...possessive. She held in a snort. Yeah, as if she mattered to be husband. Morgan frowned. He'd gotten what he wanted, right?

a guy like Jack. To him, she'd just be a plaything.

He couldn't possibly be jealous.

"No chance you were too intoxicated to remember having

"Oh, and my production assistant, Reggie, has the number."

sex with Reggie?” Jack asked.

Jack and Deke shot each other an oblique look.

“No. I woke up the next morning with my panty hose still

“How much do you know about Reggie?”  
on.”

They suspected Reggie, clearly. Morgan started to tell them

Jack relaxed a degree or two and looked at his pal.

they were being absurd. Reggie was a cross between a giant teddy

“Anything else, man?”

bear and a father figure. But then she realized that anyone could be Deke’s reply was suddenly very businesslike. “Not at the

a suspect. Anyone at all, no matter how absurd it sounded.

moment. I’ll take the originals of the photos out for forensic

“Reggie has been with me since the show started. He’s  
analysis, to see if this guy left behind any prints or other  
clues.”

somewhere around forty. Divorced. He doesn’t seem like the

“That sounds unlikely,” she said.

type...but I guess no one gets ‘stalker’ tattooed across their

“It is,” Deke admitted with a shrug. “But you never know.  
forehead to make identification easy.”

Maybe he had a careless moment, or never believed you’d try  
to

“Exactly. Do you talk with him about personal things?”

have them analyzed. I won’t know anything for a few days.  
But be

She shrugged. “Some, I guess. He let me cry on his

patient. We’ll get to the bottom of it.” He patted her hand.

shoulder a time or two after my big break-up with Andrew.  
After

Suddenly, Jack stood. His chair scraped across the

*Turn Me On* was renewed, most of the cast went out together to hardwood floors, ripping into the early morning quiet. His entire

this trendy L.A. bar and put down a few too many. Reggie ended

body was tense as he slapped Deke on the back.

up telling me about his divorce and how his ex cheated on him

“Let’s go discuss business.”

before he ordered a pot of coffee and insisted on taking me home

Deke hesitated, appearing to fight a grin. Morgan had the since I couldn’t possibly drive.”

feeling he was completely amused by the demand.

“Did you have sex with him?” Jack prodded.

“Okay.” He turned to Morgan. “Nice to meet you.”

Morgan’s jaw dropped. “No! I told you every bit of my

When he extended his hand across the table, Morgan barely personal past, which I’m sure you shared with Deke.”

had time to shake it before Jack herded him down the hall to the

“He was sketchy about the details at best,” Deke said with door, unlocked it, and pushed him through. She watched them mock regret. “You can feel free to provide details. Or use me to

disappear with a frown. What in the hell was up with Jack? reenact anything particularly juicy.”

#

Jack whipped around in his seat and burned a furious,  
Jack resisted the urge to slam the door behind them. He

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 94**

also resisted the urge to plow his fists into Deke's face—but  
that

He turned his back on Deke. Sighed. Fisted his hands.  
took a lot more effort.

*Merde*, he felt jumpy.

*What in the hell is wrong with me?*

No, it was more than that. Anger—at Brandon for starting  
“Okay, whatever it is, spill it,” Deke demanded, sitting in  
this shit, at himself for feeling the desire to get back at his  
former the chair beside the computer workstation.

pal being dangerously usurped by the desire to have Morgan  
under

Jack didn't pretend to misunderstand.

him again. Anger that Morgan had, all night long, cheated with  
He sighed and plopped down into his own chair. Where  
perfect bliss on her fiancé and appeared not to care a single bit.  
Yet should he start? The tangled tale only got more  
complicated with

she'd still managed to hold back that...something inside her.  
Damn

every minute that passed. Revenge, lust, attempted murder, sex  
it, her body, her face, told him she still hadn't fully fucking  
that didn't just rock his world, but rocked his soul—all in the  
last submitted.

two days.



Then he had to endure Deke's teasing and flirtation with  
But like every story, Jack figured he'd better start at the  
her. That just equaled wanting to rip the big blond giant's head  
off.

beginning.

To top it all off, there was his desire... Jack swallowed  
“My ex-wife was having a fling with another man before  
against the need bubbling in his gut. He'd been inside Morgan  
less

she left.”

than four hours ago, and already he was like a starving man,  
“You mentioned that once after about your sixth hurricane  
panting, salivating. Ready to fight to taste her again. The need  
that weekend in New Orleans.”

raged, like he had no control. It was unacceptable...and

“His name was Brandon Ross.”

undeniable.

Deke frowned. “Brandon Ro— the Brandon that Morgan is

“I don't know,” Jack said finally. “It just... It's not as  
engaged to?”

simple as I thought.”

Jack rested his elbows on his knees and peered up at his

“Did you become her stalker to get her where you wanted  
friend. “The very same.”

her?”

“I'd say it's a huge coincidence that you wound up with

“You know me better than that. I wouldn't have called you  
your enemy's woman under your protection and under your  
roof—

to profile a pretend stalker. I'd just planned to lure Morgan to  
and unless I'm totally off-base here—in your bed. But I know  
you

Lafayette for an afternoon. Nail her enough to persuade her  
that

too well to believe in a coincidence that big.”

Brandon wasn't her one and only, then let her go. There's a  
real

“I planned it,” Jack confirmed. “Everything to the last  
stalker, and when he shot at her in a crowd in broad daylight,  
she

detail. I was going to seduce her, then fuck her, and rub that  
fact in was fucking terrified. I brought her here.”

Brandon's face, the way he rubbed it in mine.”

“That makes sense, except this possessive thing. It's not  
Deke whistled. “Ballsy, man. Crappy but ballsy. So what  
like you. In the past, we've shared—”  
happened?”

“Don't even think it,” Jack growled. “Morgan is very  
Jack stood, paced the small windowless room. When had it  
reserved. Besides, this is a woman running for her life, not  
some

gotten so damn small in here? It had never bothered him  
before.

kitten one of us picked up in a sex club.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 95**

“None of that has stopped you from fucking her, though,  
inside her, read her every desire. And he'd been physically  
inside

has it?”

her to the hilt, but that wasn't enough. He wanted something more

“Drop it, damn it. Now!”

from Morgan, desired the right to give her whatever she needed,

“Okey dokey.” Deke heeded his warning growl with a tilted the freedom to tell him anything she felt or yearned for.

smile and held up his hands in a show of surrender. “All lascivious Instead, she was holding back on him.

thoughts of the luscious redhead in the next room are gone.”

Damn it, he didn't want this. Aching for her wasn't a part Jack rolled his shoulders, trying to release his tension.

of his plan. Fuck her, plant seeds of doubt, encourage her to leave Damn, a night with Morgan had him completely tied up in knots

Brandon. Walk away. Simple, right?

and his head screwed on wrong. He wished he could banish his

Not anymore. Jack didn't just want her to leave Brandon to lascivious thought of her half as easily as Deke supposedly had. It make his revenge complete. Reckless desperation gnawed at him.

wasn't happening. He wanted more of Morgan. And he wanted her

He wasn't sure he could just let her go, walk away. Even though

now.

she'd cheated on Brandon. The knowledge didn't set well with

“My question is, why the jealous lover routine?” Deke

Jack. He'd thought he could steer clear of two-timing women when

skewered him with a piercing stare, as if he knew every damn he divorced Kayla, but Morgan was so much...more than his ex-

thought screaming through his head. "Unless, of course, you really

wife had ever been.

are jealous."

The stupid, hormone-happy part of him wanted to earn

Damn! The sad reality was that the green gremlin was

Morgan's trust, make her his to command. His hard-on demanded

feasting on his gut. No question about it. He had shared a few he claim her.

women with Deke before. Good times were had by all.

Repeating

There, he'd admitted it. Maybe owning up to it was the first that with Morgan... the thought conflicted him. An instinct told

step to recovering from his insanity and getting back to focusing

him that she would love a ménage—if she could wrap her mind

on his revenge.

around it. But he felt oddly proprietary about her. Allowing his

Darting across the room, Jack paced, mind flying as if his

buddy/business partner to get in on the action made him want to

brain had short-circuited. Surely just too much sex on too little spit nails.

sleep.

There was something about Morgan that hit him squarely in

But he knew himself too well. Something in his gut was

the chest, so hard he couldn't breathe. Jack was too  
experienced to shouting at him to abandon his revenge and  
grab the shimmering

play the denial game. His burning want for Brandon's fiancée

perfection of Morgan for himself. Treat her like a woman,  
teach

simply was, had little to do with revenge, and wishing  
otherwise

her to respect her desires, care for her. Seize her and never let  
go.

wasn't going to change it.

That something in his gut also told him emailing Brandon

It went deeper, though. Fucking Morgan for a whole night

the video of him taking Morgan against the door had been a

hadn't satisfied his libido or his desire to betray Brandon.

Rather, mistake. A big one.

something about her had been so perfect. Jack didn't  
remember

With a sigh, Jack sank into his desk chair. He shouldn't be

ever...connecting with a woman so completely, as if he could  
see

troubled at the thought of Brandon seeing him fuck Morgan.

But

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 96**

like a stupid shmuck, he was. Damn it, he wished he hadn't  
shared

His buddy held in a wide grin. “Sure. We can do that. Who a single detail about their first time with anyone, much less a visual among our suspects do you think is Morgan’s stalker?” blow-by-blow.

“Could be anyone.” Jack shrugged, struggling to relax. “I His regret didn’t make a damn lick of sense. Sending that doubt it’s the college boyfriend with the wife and kid. I tend to video to Brandon had been half the point of his revenge! Despite

think she’s right about Brent Pherson. A pro football player on the that, Jack was uncomfortably aware that he’d sent something to

road can’t be taking pictures of her at her house. So that leaves her Brandon that he wanted to keep between him and Morgan alone.

former fiancé, her production assistant, or some random twisted

What did that say about his feelings for her?

fan.”

Worse, if she found out, Morgan wouldn’t understand his

“I suspect ol’ Reggie has all the makings of a sicko.”

revenge, just view his actions as a huge betrayal of her trust. One

“He’s not as loyal as Morgan thinks. Hell, I paid him to get that could undermine any foundation he made with her. And if he

close to her, to pass my info and bio to her for the show. He took

wanted to touch her again, he was going to have to open up, take

my money without asking questions and sent me her personal

her into his care beyond the physical. He would have to show her

email address and IM info. But then he threatened me with that she mattered.

everything short of castration if I so much as looked in her Fuck. He was going to have to choose between Morgan and direction.” Jack grimaced.

revenge because their uninhibited night together had not been

“So he sold her out, then turned on you. Nice.” Deke enough to sate him. Not nearly enough. She’d only dug herself sighed. “Was he more jealous boyfriend than protective father?”

deeper into his psyche.

“Hard to say over the phone. Could have been either.”

How the hell could he just dismiss three years of fury,

“He bears watching. In digging yesterday, I found out he betrayal, hatred, and plotting?

managed to avoid prison time for sexual assault due to a

How the hell could he just let a sweet, submissive technicality.”

firecracker like Morgan go?

Surprise ricocheted through Jack. “Really? Holy shit.”

“Oh.” Deke laughed. “Morgan has you by the balls. You’re

“Yep. I wonder if Morgan knows about Reggie’s past.”

strung out on this woman. Bad. Not that I blame you. She looks

“I doubt it. She says he’s like a surrogate father to her. I

like one sweet little fu—”

don't think she'd feel that way if she knew he might have a hobby

"Shut up. Don't put Morgan in the same gutter as your as a rapist. But we also need to see if we can rule out any creepy

mouth," Jack snarled.

neighbors and fans, just in case but—"

As soon as the words left his mouth, he realized he'd done

"My gut tells me this is someone Morgan knows, someone nothing but confirm every one of Deke's suspicions.

she trusts. That his identity is going to shock her to her toes."

*Shit!*

As he gripped the arms of his chair, concern for Morgan

Deke laughed.

gnawed at Jack's calm. This guy wasn't patient, and Jack was sure

Jack did his best to unclench his rigid jaw. "Let's talk

it would be a whole lot scarier before they finally caught the shop."

bastard and put a stop to his shit.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 97**

"Exactly."

man was a born flirt. He probably had women foaming at the

"So you have to stay close to Morgan, watch her twenty-mouth for his attention, but it was sweet of him to keep the mood

four/seven," Deke pointed out.



light when both her safety and her sex life were weighing heavy on

Wasn't that going to be a big help in unknotting his gut and her mind.

getting his head screwed back on straight?

Another glance at Jack told her that he was not amused.

"Yeah."

Not in the least.

With a toss of his head, Deke howled with laughter. "And

"Thanks," she murmured. "I'll be eager to hear if you you want her again so bad you can't see straight."

found any fingerprints on the photos. Or anything that might help."

Jack sighed. He hated being as transparent as glass. "Yeah."

With another caress of her shoulder, Deke waggled his

The question was, revenge or Morgan? Which should he brows at her. "I'll definitely keep in touch."

choose?

Again, she laughed. Then he waved at Jack and made his #

way out to the sunset-drenched swamp.

"Take care, Morgan." Deke paused at the cottage's front

When the door shut, leaving her alone with Jack, sudden door late that afternoon.

silence thrummed around her. Her smile died. In the distance, she

"Thanks," she murmured.

heard Deke's boat splash away from the little dock. Inside, her

From his lofty height, he looked down, his unusual blue

heartbeat picked up its pace. Tension wrapped around her.  
Morgan

eyes swirling with concern. He cupped her shoulder gently.  
“I’m

had no idea why, but she didn’t question the thick air.

going to have these original photos examined for any forensic

“Thank you for asking him to help. I’m grateful to have any  
evidence we can find. In the meantime, Jack will take care of  
you.”

extra assistance that might identify this stalker so I can have  
my

Morgan had liked Deke right away. His angular face  
life back.”

softened up with a smile. He just seemed...nice. Definitely  
strong

Jack paused a long time before answering. “Deke is smart  
enough to protect. And he was easy to joke with. Probably  
easy to

and well-connected. If there’s any forensic evidence to be  
found on talk to, as well.

those photos, he’ll turn it up.”

Unlike some people.

“Good.” She nodded.

Morgan darted a glance to her right, at Jack. His gaze was

Then the awkward silence fell. She couldn’t read Jack’s

fixed on Deke’s palm caressing her shoulder. His glower  
couldn’t

expression, but she felt his displeasure churning the air.

Morgan

be mistaken for anything else. *What was up with him?*

frowned, completely confused. Did he think her flirtation with

“If Jack doesn’t take care of you, you walk over to that  
Deke meant something? Would he care if it had? Or was he  
just

phone,” Deke pointed to the sleek black unit mounted on the  
wall,

annoyed with her presence now that she’d surrendered to his  
every

“and call me. I’m the second speed dial button. I’ll rush right  
out to whim last night? Maybe he just wished she’d go away.  
give you whatever you need.” He winked.

“And Deke seemed nice,” she murmured, hoping to lighten  
Morgan wagged a chastising finger at him, but she couldn’t  
the tense atmosphere.

completely erase her smile. His teasing flirtation coaxed her.  
The

Jack snorted. “Deke is a lot of things. Thinking he’s nice

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 98**

could be a costly mistake.”

Jack merely smiled. “I’ve barely given you an introduction,

Morgan hesitated, brow furrowed with confusion. “He’s

*cher*. There’s so much more I could show you...”

your business partner. If he’s not honest—”

She believed him. Utterly. The very thought of the

“I didn’t say he wasn’t honest. He is, as the day is long.

sensations and feelings he could introduce her to made  
Morgan

He’s trustworthy and brave and smart, with a never-say-die

shiver and ache. And not just for the stunning release he could give attitude. He's everything the military wants in their elite forces.

her. In his arms, his bed, she'd felt so liberated and alive. It

But where women are concerned, I wouldn't call him nice."

frightened her to think that the only place she could fell completely

"It sounds like you're warning me away from him," she

free to be herself was bound to Jack's bed.

challenged. "Would it matter if I was interested?"

*God, no. Please no.*

Jack shifted, shoulders tensing. "If you're having a hard

"There won't be any more of that," she vowed. "You told

time dealing with a few velvet ropes and silken commands,

Deke

me to give it a night. I did. I know enough now to do the show.

would shatter your delicate sensibilities, *cher*. When it comes to That's all I need."

sex, he plays seriously—but only if there are three people in the

Jack sidled closer. "Are you going to tell me you didn't like room."

it?"

Three people? "He likes to watch?"

Wouldn't it be nice if she could, and he'd believe it?

The gravelly laugh Jack gave in response to her question

Morgan knew better. "No. But that doesn't mean we need an

took her aback. "Sex isn't a spectator sport for Deke."

encore."

*Wow*. The big German-descended warrior with the all-

“What’s holding you back, your fiancé?”

American smile actively engaged in the very French word *ménage*.

Morgan gritted her teeth. Damn it, she’d kept up the

Talk about a newsflash...

pretense of a relationship with Brandon to keep Jack at arm’s

A vision of Jack on one side, Deke on the other, both

length, but her lie was doing a lousy job. In fact, his question

pleasuring her helplessly bound body—it flashed through her

seemed to taunt her for being every bit as naughty as he was.

mind, framed in white heat and red sin. Moisture pooled  
between

“To some degree.” Maybe pretending remorse would turn  
her legs. In an instant, she went from damp to nearly dripping.  
Her him off. “Yes. I feel terrible.”

clit ached without mercy.

“You might, but it has nothing to do with cheating. Why

Stunned, embarrassed, Morgan backed away. “Oh.”

weren’t you wearing your ring when you came to meet me and  
talk

“Oh.” Jack shot back with an acid grin as he followed her  
about sex?”

deeper into the cottage. “Next to him, I look like a choir boy.”

“I—I don’t have one yet. I want to pick it out myself.”

Morgan nearly choked. “You’ve got to be kidding! You, a

Jack studied her with a tilt of his head and knowing dark  
choir boy?”

eyes. “I think you’re more afraid of your wants than cheating  
on

“Hey, I was one until puberty. The choir director at Our

your fiancé. Wanna prove me wrong?”

Lady of Perpetual Hope told me I sang like an angel.”

How could he know that? How could he just look at her

“And you’ve got a mind like the devil.”

and tell?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 99**

“Go to hell. I gave it a night, like I said I would. You’re not taunting me into giving you another. No more domination. No more sex. And no more conversation about this.”

With a determined shake of her head, Morgan turned away.

She half expected Jack to grab her arm, stop her, growl something.

She was nearly to the bedroom door when she started to wonder if

she’d stunned him speechless. To feel both victory and crushing

distress.

His voice stopped her cold...right before it made her blood boil.

“I can fulfill your fantasies, *cher*.”

“Stop.” Hand on the doorknob, Morgan paused. She drew in a ragged breath. “Damn you. Just...just stop.”

“*Non*.” He stepped closer, closer, until he curved his hands around her waist, pressed his erection against her ass, and whispered in her ear. “Every last one of your fantasies. Starting right now.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 100**

brass of the knob. He crowded in behind her, trapping her against

the door. His hand clamped down around hers before she could twist the door knob.

“Are you sure you want to go in there?” He breathed hard against her neck.

*Yes! The door has a lock.* If she could just get inside, put the door between them...

## CHAPTER NINE

But as she fought the shivers brought on by his hot breath,  
his very nearness, Morgan suddenly realized he had the keys  
to

Running into the bedroom seemed like a damn stupid idea  
open the door. Damn it!

for someone trying to avoid the torturous need to have sex  
with the

“I don’t think you do,” he answered for her.  
man chasing her.

“Is this where you keep the dead bodies?” she sneered,  
Holding in a wail of frustration, Morgan’s mind raced.  
hoping to piss him off.

Where the hell else could she go in this three-room shack? The  
Instead, he laughed, and his easy rumble vibrated clear  
swamp was no place for a city girl, especially at night. She  
didn’t through her body. Even now, he was determined to defy  
her

much like alligators or crocs or whatever lurked out there with  
understanding of both men in general and him in particular.  
Damn,

enormous teeth and a not-too-fussy palette.

the man could both infuriate and intrigue her.

The door, the one at the end of the hall. It had been locked  
“You’d probably like that better than the truth,” he warned  
earlier, but she didn’t recall him locking it back up after  
Deke’s

with a silky smile in his voice. “But keep going, and you’ll  
find



visit. Maybe she could dart in and lock it behind her. Shut him out out.”

for a while and see how well that suited him. Make him find some

He was yanking her chain. That’s all. Trying to scare her, way to cool down while staring at the bed they’d nearly combusted

and she wasn’t buying it for a minute.

into flames with the blistering heat between them.

Using all her body weight, Morgan lunged back, hoping to

Spinning away, Morgan sprinted farther down the hall.

throw him off her so she could open the damn door and get on the

God, she couldn’t believe she was running from him, and other side of it.

she’d berate herself for the stupidity of this tactic later. At the With a rumble of laughter in his chest, Jack stepped back a moment, she couldn’t think of any other way to escape the steamy

mere fraction. “Go in. But don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

seduction of his voice luring her to her sanity’s doom. He wanted

Morgan hesitated. What if he wasn’t just toying with her?

her downfall, was playing hardball until she surrendered every

What the hell could he be hiding here? And did she really want to

ounce of her psyche and control to him.

dig herself in any deeper than she was?

No way in hell she was doing that.

Shaking her head, she decided it had to be a diversionary

With a crash of footsteps, she made it to the door with Jack  
tactic. He'd run after her too hard and stopped her too quickly  
not in determined pursuit. Her hot, trembling fingers grasped  
the cold

to have any interest in keeping her out.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 101**

“Bite me,” she hissed. “And back off.”

delicious. You fight it, *cher*, but when you give in...you're  
like Jack just smiled as if he didn't have a care in the world  
and

honey to sink into. Thick and hot and so damn sweet. Those  
catchy

gestured for her to step inside.

little moans at the back of your throat, the pretty way you  
finally Refusing to admit any apprehension to what she might  
find,

ripple around my cock when you're on the verge of orgasm...

Morgan yanked on the knob and shoved the door open.

Even the thought of you like that is like fire licking through  
my

And she frowned as she ambled in, somehow both relieved  
balls.”

and totally disappointed at once. “This is it?”

“You just don't know when to shut up, do you?”

Shrugging, Jack tried to pull off an innocent expression.

“Sure, I do. When you're shoved full of my cock and are

Morgan knew better. Jack was about as innocent as Lucifer at  
his

about to come so hard you scream the walls down.” He smiled,

hedonistic worst.

wicked, taunting—turning her legs to jelly.

“Just a little office space where I do paperwork and keep a Morgan drew in a steadying breath, determined to find computer.”

someway—God, any way—to ignore him...and the wetness

She rounded on him. “Then why keep the damn door seeping out of her clenching vagina and drowning her thong. locked? There are no dead bodies. Trying to keep me away from

“Dream on, sweetie. It’s not happening.”

the precious porn on your computer?”

“You mean, not again?” he clarified, crossing his arms over

“Why would I waste time looking at pictures of other his chest.

people fucking when I could be doing it myself?” He paced closer,

It occurred to her then that Jack was blocking the exit. And sliding his finger along the slope of her jaw, then deviating course his expression made it clear she wasn’t getting away until they’d

to rub the lightly calloused pad over her bottom lip. “With you.”

hashed this out. Damn the man!

Morgan sucked in a breath, unable to look away from the

“Fine. You’ve shown that you’re an ass determined to get scorching heat melting his dark chocolate eyes into something that

on my nerves and you have some little computer you like to lock

epitomized sin. She didn't tingle. His words didn't tighten the knot up for reasons unknown. Now move so I can get out of here."

of need growing in her belly by the second. *Damn it, no!* She "Actually, I think I've shown I'm a dominant determined to didn't respond to a man who wanted to subjugate her, to control

make a submissive in denial admit that she likes to be tied and her with orders and ropes and utter submission of her will. fucked until she can't see straight. As for what's in here..."

She wasn't depraved, as Andrew had hurled the slur at her.

He cast his hot gaze across the room. It wasn't until then

She had always been a "good girl," as her mother had raised her to

that Morgan noticed the door in the corner hidden in shadow. be.

"Ah, you see the door now. There's more beyond this

"I'm not some blow-up doll here to do your bidding, oh space." He didn't elaborate. On purpose, she knew. He was testing

arrogant one. You're delusional." Her voice shook as she said the

her. Tantalizing her with the truth. Trying to arouse her curiosity as words.

easily as he did her body. He'd definitely succeeded on the former.

"I'm determined," he corrected. "All that reluctant arousal Damn him! She refused to think for an instant about the latter. and the tender flush that lights up your body—it's nothing short of

"So the dead bodies are in there?" she asked tartly, with a

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 102**

bravado she didn't really feel.

light and shadows. Her gut tightened with apprehension...and  
"Something more sinful." Jack stalked closer, the intent in  
devastating curiosity.

his eyes to have her, to fuck her, blistering his eyes.

"Through that door, you'll find my playroom. In there, I

She swallowed. "Stay where you are. Don't come closer!"

have every means to restrain you, every tool to arouse, every  
toy to In typical Jack fashion, he just kept coming toward her.  
He

fuck you. You take a nice, long look around, *cher*, so you can  
didn't stop until he'd settled his hands on her hips, bent his  
knees, describe it on your show. I'll come back in fifteen  
minutes. If

and pressed her wet, aching sex right against the ridge of his  
you're still here..." He smiled and shifted his weight, clearly  
erection.

displaying the huge bulge pressing against straining denim.  
"Let's

"Hmm. Your pussy is like summer in Louisiana, *cher*.

say you'll get an up close and personal tour."

Sultry. Intriguing. Inviting me to spend the day lazing inside."

Jack turned to leave.

Morgan tried to struggle away—before the hunger gnawing

"And if I'm gone in fifteen minutes?" she blurted.

at her gobbled up her good sense. Already the things he'd  
done to

He stopped. The glance he cast her over his shoulder could  
her in his bed haunted her. She didn't dare give in again and  
make  
have melted steel. "You'll just be delaying the inevitable, *cher*.  
leaving him when the time came even more difficult. And she  
was  
And it'll cost you."

no longer naive enough to believe that being with Jack in his  
way

#

would cure her of the forbidden midnight desires that made  
her

Morgan stood still, trembling. The door to Jack's most  
sweat. She knew now he'd only make her wants sharper, more  
private room stood open not two feet away. She was curious  
about

explicit. More urgent.

what he had in there. God knew she was.

"Let go and leave me alone."

Yet she hesitated.

Jack took his sweet time responding, trailing the flat of his  
Did she want to know those secrets? *Really* want to know?  
large palm over her ass, then lifting her thigh above his hip,  
and

Having the knowledge would haunt her, change her. Would  
leaning in to give her an electric nudge of his cock against her  
knowing exactly what he did in these four walls make him and  
the

aching clit. Then slowly, he released her and stepped away.  
sexuality he could give her more objectionable?

By then, her body was thrumming with need, the desire so  
Or more seductive?

loud inside her, the front row of a heavy metal concert would  
be

Shaking away her thoughts, Morgan knew the clock was  
more sedate. She clasped her hands to stop their trembling.  
ticking. Jack would come back in less than fifteen minutes. If  
she

“You don’t give the orders, *cher*. I do, especially when I’ve  
was still standing in his lair...he’d take that as an unequivocal  
got you all spread out across my bed.”

yes—to anything, everything. The only boundaries between  
them

Digging into the pocket of his jeans, Jack pulled out a set of  
would be his own, coupled with the limits of his imagination.  
keys, strolled across the room, and unlocked the door. He  
flung the In other words, there would be no limits.

door wide and stepped inside long enough to flip a light  
switch.

Morgan swallowed against a flush of heat. Regardless of  
Morgan tried to peer in discreetly, but the light inside was  
whether the room and its contents made her more afraid or  
less,

dim and red against black walls. She couldn’t see much, just  
low

she had to see, and not just out of curiosity. Labeling her  
emotions **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –**  
**Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 103**

mere journalistic or feminine interest was too simple.

of the table's legs, close to the ground. She didn't need a degree in Morgan had to see that room because it would tell her

aerodynamics to see the table was designed so he could lay a about the alluring, mysterious conundrum named Jack.

woman flat, immobile and spread wide. Or bent over the table with

Drawing in a shaky breath, she took a tentative step toward legs and arms restrained. There were probably other positions, but

the red light in the corner that drew her like a siren.

that's as far as her imagination could take her.

*One foot forward. Yes. Then the other. Repeat the process.*

No matter. She could picture Jack bending her naked body

Sheer nerve kept her moving, coaching herself with each

over the table, laying the heat of his broad chest in place as he

step. Finally, she stood at the door and opened her eyes. She hadn't clasped her wrists in the cuffs, then bent to secure her ankles, his even realized she'd closed them.

lips trailing the backs of her thighs as he rose again to fit the broad Air tumbled out of her as her jaw dropped. Shock pounded

head of his erection against her empty, weeping flesh.

her as she stared.

Biting her lip, Morgan exhaled raggedly into the silence.

The question wasn't what *did* Jack have in here. The

Her heartbeat threatened to take over, consume her, it beat so hard.

question was what *didn't* he have. Just from the doorway, she first She had no doubt that she'd ruined another thong over a fantasy



saw something that, with two horizontal bars about two feet apart,

she prayed she wouldn't enjoy in real life.

looked a bit like a standing towel rack. But given the wrist and

Tearing her mind from the image, she whirled around to

ankle cuffs attached to each bar, those lowest to the ground fairly find shelves filled with neat plastic boxes, all clear.

Vibrators and far apart, Morgan knew better. Had he stood a woman in that spot,

dildos, made out of rubber, plastic, glass, some thick, some reed-

restrained her with legs spread and... Finishing the picture

slim, some short, others that clearly intended to stretch the depth disturbed Morgan too much.

and width of a woman's passage. And Jack would know what to do

She put herself in the picture instead. And instantly, fresh

with each of them. The thought staggered her, made her sex clench

moisture seeped from her sex.

in hunger.

Did she honestly like the thought of being restrained and

On the next shelf up, another organized row of containers

toyed with? Of being locked in place, helpless to do anything but

held toys for anal play, she guessed. They tended to be shorter with take the pleasure or pain Jack gave her?

ridges or beads, wide bases. One even looked to inflate with a *Yes.*

small hand pump.

"No," she whispered, squeezing her eyes shut against a

Flushing all over, Morgan remembered Jack filling her with moment's rush of desire.

one of these. Something slim and ridged and vibrating that had

But it was too late.

pushed her beyond her limits—right where she'd always dreamed

Turning away, Morgan spied another table positioned like she'd be.

the crown jewel right in the center of the room. Wide enough to

Then he'd left her to deal with her shame and self-doubt the accommodate someone supine, metal cuffs had been welded on

next day. The same shame and self-doubt that was still roiling in

each side at the top, center, and end. Most unexpectedly, another

her gut.

set of manacles faced outward like giant pinchers from the bottom

Morgan spun away. The row of shelves now in front of her

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 104**

held all manner of blindfolds, lotions, cuffs, and clamps—all

Stunned by her own thoughts, Morgan shook her head. She designed to heighten the senses.

*could* have sex like a normal person, damn it. Being around Jack Cinnamon and peppermint gel snared her attention. She

adversely affected her thinking. She had to get out of this room—

wanted to sniff and taste, figure out what he did with that. She now.

didn't dare. A feather sat next to a sumptuous silken blindfold she Stumbling back, Morgan charged for the door, leaving the stroked with a tentative finger. Soft, like cream, like touching a hazy red light behind, racing past the office chair and computer in cloud. Morgan shivered, imagining that next to her skin.

the corner.

At least until a pair of clamps caught her attention. Tips Jack blocked the door to the hallway, arms across his chest encased in velvet, separated by a short length of chain, these could and looking as moveable as a mountain. "Leaving?" only belong on a woman's nipples. The tips of her breasts His inscrutable expression told her nothing. His tone gave hardened at the thought of them pinching helpless, sensitive buds.

away even less. Yet Morgan sensed his frustration and With hesitant fingers, she reached out, ran a finger over the length disappointment. His reaction collided with her fear, the desire,

of chain, only to realize the clamps lay in their original packaging, whipping through her she wanted so desperately to ignore, clashing

the seal unbroken.

with Andrew's slurs as they reverberated in her head.

She knew an insane urge to take them—the one thing she

Together, it tightened a vise on her heart, ripping a cry knew he'd never used on another woman—and put them on, from her throat. "Let me go."

parade her breasts for him. He'd approve...and show it in ways she

His biceps tightened, bulging with veined muscle. He could barely fathom. Her fingers itched as a heavy ache throbbed

clenched his jaw. And he stared so dead-on at her, Morgan didn't

in her breasts. Their tips stood hard, bursting against the lacy bra know what to do or say. Hurt flashed in his gaze, then disappeared.

she wore.

Finally, he stepped aside.

*Just once*, a voice inside her whispered. *Just this one*

Morgan approached with hesitant steps. When she stood *thing...*

beside him, his stare silently demanded that she meet it. She lifted *That's disgusting!* Andrew's voice invaded her head, her gaze to him, his searing-hot eyes filled with anger, replaying their last conversation. *Morgan, you're too smart and* disappointment, lust—and something else she couldn't identify.

*cultured to want some...caveman to order you around and tie you*

Her breath caught. Her belly clenched. The weight of her breasts,

*down. It's sordid and bizarre. Can't we just have sex like normal* so achingly heavy, and her nipples, so painfully hard, screamed at

*people? You're not so depraved that you need pain and someone*

her. God, he was tearing her in half. Making her want what she *controlling you to get off, are you?*

knew she shouldn't, what society, her mother, her friends, would

"Three minutes," Jack called from the hall in warning.

all scorn her for. What she wasn't sure she could live with herself Gasping, Morgan dragged her hand back from the clamps.

for accepting.

What was she still doing here? Worse, what was she

"Go ahead and run, Morgan," he said, voice disquieting for thinking, imagining modeling a device designed to pinch a its softness. "For now."

sensitive part of her body for him?

But the frightening truth lay between them: It wouldn't be

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 105**

long before she couldn't run anymore.

across his tired face. The truth was, he wanted Morgan more than

#

he hated the fact that been cheating. He was determined to win her What the hell possessed him to keep pursuing a woman

full surrender. Which made him a stupid ass. And with every determined to shut him out?

passing minute, he feared his yearning to possess her had to do

Lying flat on his back, staring at the gleaming wooden

with this strange instinctual urging to claim her as his own, not for ceiling and waiting for the coming dawn, Jack grunted.

Possessed

revenge or even a great submissive fuck, but for emotions he didn't had to be the operative word. He couldn't possibly be in

his right

want to identify. That made him an even stupider ass.

mind to keep chasing Morgan. He'd already achieved the biggest

He clenched his fists in silent frustration. It made no sense, chunk of his revenge, and she had told him with an odd but he needed to go beyond ending her engagement, beyond combination of four-letter words, tears, and darting from his ruining her for Brandon's vanilla touch. He wasn't going to be playroom like a child caught in a nightmare that she didn't want to content until she called him sir naturally and he'd used his body in spend any more nights in his bed, under his dominance.

every possible way to satisfy her. Denying that was self-delusional But Morgan was lying to him—and to herself. Jack felt that

and pointless.

down to the bottom of his toes. She'd had a taste of submission and Was he going to have to hear her say that she was his to be

responded so beautifully...except that little bit of herself she satisfied?

withheld. Still, the knowledge she'd given in at all would haunt

Jack rubbed at gritty eyes as soft gray light eked into the her, drive a wedge between her and Brandon. But that wasn't cottage, heralding the encroaching dawn. Jackknifing up, he sat on

enough anymore. It would be so easy to abandon revenge and the lumpy sofa where he'd spent the previous, mostly sleepless focus on snaring Morgan for his own.

night and scowled. He wasn't sure if he or the sofa were older, but But with every cry of passion, every acceptance of his it didn't matter. No doubt they both looked their age this morning.

demands, she'd been cheating on a man she was about to vow to

He certainly felt his.

love until death parted them. And he wondered if she could ever

Except around Morgan. Anytime he got near her, he felt belong to him.

hornier than a teenager seeing his first naked woman.

Beyond Brandon, there was a reason she hadn't submitted

He'd had dozens of women, most of them eager to please.

herself totally, psyche, free will, and all to him. He had no idea

Hell, he could find one in the next hour, if he wanted. So why what. That bothered Jack—a hell of a lot.

would he keep after a woman who claimed she wasn't interested?

So why couldn't he just accept Morgan actions? She'd

Sighing, Jack rose to his feet, ambled to the kitchen, and cheated on her fiancé, and he'd proven to Brandon—with video—

made a pot of coffee. A glance over his shoulder showed that the

that he'd nailed his former pal's woman. Why couldn't he just door to the bedroom was still closed. No surprise there. The only

walk away from her and let her relationship with Brandon fall surprise was how badly he wanted Morgan to fling it open and

apart on its own? Why get tangled up with another woman not invite him in.

willing to really submit, who was willing to break faith?

He'd like to believe that the challenge she presented

Cursing, something vile and sibilant, he scrubbed a hand

goaded him into pursuing her. An affront to his manly pride

and all **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –**

**Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 106**

that. But he'd been turned down before, accepted it with a shrug,

believed it. Once Brice had learned that Jack had not dreamed and moved on.

about Kayla before marrying her, his grandfather had never

That didn't seem possible with her. Last night as darkness

accepted her. Never treated her like family. Said she didn't suit

fell, his cock rose and the raspberry-spice scent of Morgan flooded him. Hell, he hadn't even attended his only grandson's wedding. A

his senses—and strangled his restraint. If she hadn't already been

silent protest, Jack knew. The hell of it was, Brice had been right; soundly asleep by the time he barged into the bedroom and her tart

he and Kayla hadn't been suited in the least.

refusals hadn't been ringing in his head, Jack wasn't sure what he

But Brice seemed only too eager to throw Morgan at him...

would have done.

Sighing, Jack shoved his thoughts away. It hardly mattered.

Where Morgan was concerned, he'd made an ass out of



The legend was ridiculous. It couldn't be anything but bullshit.  
It himself during Deke's visit. No need to repeat his stupidity.  
He

had no logic. He didn't do hocus-pocus.

had to get control of himself before he approached her again.

Still...it would explain why he wanted Morgan for his own

Grasping his coffee cup in one hand, Jack shuffled outside,  
so badly his teeth hurt.

onto the cottage's wrap-around porch. The sun peeked golden

A noise to his left alerted him to the fact he was no longer

fingers over the shadowy domain of the cypress trees and  
Spanish

alone. Morgan emerged through the screen door, into the hazy

moss. Sitting on a chair in the corner, he breathed in the heavy

morning. Golden sunlight broke through the fog as she stepped

smell of vegetation, rich earth, water, and wildlife. And  
something into the morning breeze. The pure rays slanted in  
bright swaths

spicy that epitomized Louisiana. That's why he loved it out  
here,

across the swamp to settle on her as she strolled to the corner  
of the why he'd bought the old place from Brice when his  
grandfather

railing, clearly unaware that he watched her.

had gotten too old to see to its upkeep and to be so far from a

Soft sunlight lit up her fiery tresses as they tumbled over

hospital. But he knew his grandfather missed the silty swamp

her shoulders, and down her back. She wore a faded brown  
shirt.

mornings, complete with beignets and bullshit.

*His* shirt.

The old man was a character, full of colorful stories. And Jack frowned. He'd seen this scene before. It was oddly of course the family legend.

familiar, but how? The memories were vague, as if he'd seen this a

Jack snorted. According to *Grand-pere*, every male on his long time ago or in a dream—

mother's side of the family dreamed of the woman meant to

That was it, and it hadn't been just any dream. *The* dream.

complete them, be his soul mate, before meeting her.

Supposedly

The one he'd been seeing nearly every night in his sleep for the

one of his long-dead ancestors made the mistake of marrying the

last six months.

wrong woman and found his true love too late. As the legend went,

Holy hell.

the man paid a Voodoo priestess to “curse” all his male

As he sucked in a stunned breath, electric shock arced descendants.

through Jack. Time stopped as he waited.

Jack frowned. He'd been certain Brice had made the entire

Morgan tilted her head and gazed out over the swamp...as

tale up to explain why, at twenty-four, he'd eloped with a girl of

the vision had in his dream.

sixteen. Now, Jack didn't know what to think. His grandfather

Fierce lust, a heart-wrenching ache, pure apprehension, a

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 107**

need he couldn't explain. Everything tripped through him like  
a

The instant he touched her, that feeling sang in his blood,  
livewire, jolting him from fingertips to toes. What the hell was  
settled deep into his bones.

happening to him?

At the moment, he couldn't fight it and didn't try.

A lifted corner of Morgan's mouth seemed to hint at a

*Mine!*

smile. From his angle, the expression looked happy, and the  
need

Everything in his gut told him not to let her get away.

to see her like that—utterly, sublimely happy—kicked him in  
the

Ever.

teeth.

When she buried her chin in her chest, he hooked a finger

Damn. Her feelings shouldn't make a damn bit of

under her chin and lifted her face to his. The pain there jabbed  
into difference to him. In a few days, a week at most, he and  
Deke

his gut.

would likely have solved her case and she'd be gone. If he did

*"Cher,"* he whispered. *"Mon douce amour."*

things right, her engagement to Brandon would be over, too.

*My sweet love?* God, he was so far gone.

But that wouldn't make Morgan his.

She pressed her lips together, blinking, valiantly stopping  
Jack gritted his teeth as he watched Morgan shift, lean over  
her tears. "I have no idea what you're saying. Probably that  
I'm an the nearest rail.

idiot." She let loose a sad, watery laugh. "Which fits. I am an  
The veil of mystery that had always enshrouded the woman  
idiot."

in his dreams suddenly fell away. He knew her face, her quick  
"No. Idiot in French doesn't sound much different. You'd  
temper, the passion she tried to leash under misplaced  
modesty, her be able to pick that up."

unexpected courage and sharp tongue. But he still wanted to  
see

"Good to know," she choked, trying to break away. "I need  
her.

to... Let me go."

*Turn around!* he silently demanded.

An instinct screamed at Jack that that would be the worst  
As if she was so attuned to him that she heard, she slowly  
thing he could do. He didn't fight that gut feeling. "*Jamais.*"  
began to turn his way. A delicate ear, a graceful neck, a  
stubborn

*Never.* The word echoed in his head.

slope to her jaw, lush mouth twisted in an effort to hold back  
the

He had to be out of his mind, because he'd never reacted so  
tears drenching her stormy blue eyes.

strongly to a woman. Never wanted to hold her close for...  
well,

And in that moment, Jack knew that he wanted Morgan

forever. But he couldn't examine the feeling now, not when she  
more than anything else—revenge, riches, power. This woman had  
was still trying to pull away, except to know it was non-  
somehow zoomed to the top of his list.  
negotiable..

Morgan gasped when she saw him. "I—I didn't know  
Instead, Jack anchored his palm on her nape and brought  
you..." Her breathing hitched. "Sorry."  
Morgan against him. "You're not an idiot. You're a challenge.  
She turned and darted for the cottage.

You've got a saucy mouth that makes me crazy. I can't decide  
if I

Jack bounded out of his seat, wrapped his arms around her,  
should spank you, laugh, or get you underneath me so all that  
fire

and turned her to face him.  
can blister me as I sink deep into you."

*Mine!*

"Jack..." Her voice held a pleading note. "I can't... I'm not  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 108**

made for what you have behind that locked door. I can't  
handle..."

Slanting his mouth over the soft pillows of her lips, instinct  
Her stammering uncertainty shredded his composure and  
charged through Jack. With a barely leashed passion, he  
alternately resolve. The way he'd rushed her into facing her

sexuality had

demanded and pleaded his way inside, coaxing her mouth open,

disturbed her, displaced her beliefs about herself. She was still

relieved and revved when she let him in to steal both her objections trying to assimilate. He shouldn't rush her more.

Not now. Or he'd

and her breath.

risk losing her.

He claimed her, pouring the need blazing through his gut

Not losing her was more important than his next breath.

and firing his soul into the kiss. Just touching her drugged him.

Definitely more important than revenge.

Cradling her face in his hands, Jack was amazed anew by the

"Shh. We don't have to talk about the playroom now. I just

silken warmth of her skin. The raspberry scent of her nearly drove

want a kiss, *cher*. I missed holding you last night."

him out of his head.

The tears in her eyes overflowed, spilling down her cheeks.

The sweet taste of her kiss hit him. Cinnamon sugar, hot

The sight of it wrenched at Jack's gut as he wiped them away with

silk, female want. Jack sank into her mouth, her essence. With his thumbs.

every breath, he tasted her confused passion and reluctant need.

"Don't say that."

Jack dove deeper still into her mouth, determined to lap up every

“I’m being honest,” he whispered against her mouth. “Did  
bit of her doubt and warmth and uncertainty he could and give  
it

you miss me, too?”

back to her in reassurance and devotion. With purposeful  
sweeps

“It makes no sense,” she confessed with a nod, then bit her  
through her mouth and soft nibbles on her lower lip, he fed her  
a

lip as if to keep in the rest of her feelings. “I can’t do—can’t  
be—

taste of his greedy lust, and declared his determination to get  
her what you want.”

close and keep her there.

Jack knew better. *Knew* it. And he’d prove it to her.

In his arms, her breath caught. She clasped him tight,

“I didn’t know what half of that...equipment was,” she

pressing her breasts against him. The tears drenching her  
cheeks

added.

moistened his own face, kick-starting his heart all over again.

“And that, along with missing me, made you feel like an

Jack worked a hand through her silky tresses of fire and

idiot.” He tried to smile softly, tried to reassure. Her answer  
sure kissed a hot path across her jaw, working his way to her  
ear.

elated the hell out of him. “*Tsk*. I’m a much bigger idiot than  
you. I

“I... Oh, Jack! I can’t be what you want.”

didn’t just miss you, I ached to hold you. I burned to touch  
you, in

“You already are.” He nibbled on her lobe. Beneath the any way you’d let me. With or without toys.”

onslaught of his lips, Morgan’s breathing picked up speed. Her That need inside him was rising, amplifying, drowning out heartbeat pounded at the base of her neck, chugging with arousal.

all else, including good sense. His hand tightened around her neck, He covered the spot with his mouth, laving it with his tongue. She

fingers tangling in her hair. Normally, his self-control was rewarded him with a moan, arching her throat to him in invitation.

anywhere between stellar and legendary. With Morgan... resisting

Jack could smell the desire on her now, could tell she was a woman he wanted this bad seemed not just pointless, but fucking

wet. The realization made him hard as hell. So hard, it was as if he impossible.

hadn’t been balls deep in her in weeks or months.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 109**

Utterly, sublimely crazy.

He reached around with a light stinging slap to her ass.

Pulling her into the unyielding iron of his erection, Jack

“Who do you obey?”

groaned. He’d intended to wait, woo her, cajole her. No. He had to

Confusion and yearning clashed in her tear-drenched blue



get inside of her. Anything less wasn't an option. He needed to feel eyes. Morgan was struggling to process the needs of her body,

the hot grip of her sweet pussy closing around his cock as he align them with her independent streak. She was over-thinking swallowed her cries with his mouth. He had to see her submission

things...but that was Morgan.

in the softening of her body, the lowering of her gaze, the

Using his other hand, he slapped the other cheek of her invitation of her creaming slit.

backside.

With a single yank, he ripped the tails of the shirt covering

"You, sir."

her apart, halfway down her belly. *Jackpot!* Her firm, pale breasts At least she hadn't denied it. If she had... Jack thought he

bathed in golden light beckoned him. Jack didn't fight it. Instead, might have gone out of his fucking mind. As it was, his control

he bent and captured one puckered nipple in his mouth, sucking

slipped as dangerous determination to drive Morgan to sweating,

hard and strong,

screaming orgasm slammed into him.

Morgan gasped. But she arched to him, silently

With a grunt, he tore the rest of the shirt Morgan wore encouraging him. She tangled her fingers in his hair to anchor him.

apart, exposing every delicate, pale curve of her body.  
Excellent,

No need; he wasn't going anywhere anytime soon. With his  
other

no panties. The wet, pink folds of her sex were covered by a  
thin

hand, he squeezed the plump tip of her other breast, turning,  
dusting of hair. But he wanted to see more. Needed to.

plucking.

With a hand at her back to steady her, Jack spread her legs

"Yes!"

wide with the other. A quick glance down told him she was

He loved her responsive cry, but with a nip of his teeth

drenched in her cream. Yes! Her slick folds swelling and  
flushing

across her sensitive flesh, he reminded her of her lapse.

pink with each passing moment. Gorgeous.

"Yes, sir," she corrected.

*Mine!* the instinctive beast in him snarled silently.

"*Parfaite,*" he said, rewarding her by laving his tongue

"Steady yourself," he ordered, placing her hands on the

across the rapidly-swelling nubs. "So fucking perfect."

edge of the rail on either side of her hips.

Jack moved his fingers on her turgid little nipples. Damn,

"Sir?"

he was hungry for another taste of them. But the man, the

"You don't question, Morgan," he growled. "You take

dominant in him, craved something else even more. She  
smelled

what I give you. You do what I say. You come when I tell you.”

like heaven, got wet for him in a heartbeat. He’d bet money she

“We’re outdoors. If anyone came by in a boat, they...they tasted of pure wicked delight.

would see us.” She eased her legs closed.

“Sit on the railing, Morgan.”

“We’re in the middle of nowhere, but that’s irrelevant.

With only a hint of reluctance, she hopped up on the

Your well-being is my concern. I will keep you safe. Put your trust wooden edge of the wraparound porch. Logic told him not to push

and your body in my care. Can you do that?”

her. But his need wouldn’t allow him to back away.

Morgan wanted to. Jack could see the need in her turbulent

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 110**

blue eyes conflicting with her modesty in her anxious expression.

introduce Morgan to. The exhilarating thought went straight to his

It wasn’t lack of trust in him...but herself.

cock. Was every guy she’d dated a eunuch? He loved this, the

“Nothing bad will happen,” he assured her. “Let me take intimate taste, the immediacy of knowing exactly which touch over.”

affected a woman most. No quicker way to make her putty, to

A ragged breath and a long pause later, she sent him an

make her beg.

unsteady nod.

To make her his.

It was all he could do not to let out a whoop and devour her  
Jack dropped his gaze to her swollen sex. Maybe...maybe  
on the spot. She'd said yes, not because he'd surprised her or  
he could coax her to connect him and pleasure together in her  
taunted her into it. She'd simply said yes. To him.

mind. That alone wouldn't be enough to keep her, but it would  
be a

"Good. Steady yourself. Spread your legs for me."

start. The rest he'd work out hour by hour, day by day, until  
she

With trembling hands, Morgan acceded to his demands,  
agreed not just to leave Brandon but to become his.

leaning back to brace her hands on the rail. Slowly, so damn

"You're going to come for me, Morgan. But not until I tell  
slowly, she drew her thighs apart again.

you to. Understood?"

Fucking beautiful. Perfect.

"Yes, sir."

*Mine!*

Her breathy, perfect reply made his cock tighten to the  
Jack dropped to his knees and kissed the insides of each of  
point of distraction. *Soon...*

her thighs. Her breath hitched, body tensed. With a smooth  
glide of

"*Ma belle, si douce,*" he breathed over her clit. "Sweet,

his palms up her thighs, he held her still, anchored her hips to the beautiful woman.”

railing. Then he just stared, breathing in the addicting musky-sweet

#

scent of her. She was all blushing, slick flesh, and trembling limbs.

Morgan’s heart raced as she stared down her mostly naked

It took every ounce of Jack’s self-control not to dive into

body and saw Jack kneeling between her shaking thighs. The want

her like an all-you-can-eat buffet. He wanted to taste her

coursing through her made her limbs feel heavy, her head feel everywhere, along the glistening folds hiding her deepest secrets,

light. Her sex clenched, ached. Something was different about

up high where her clit played hide-and-seek under its delicate

Jack’s touch; something between the two of them. God, what was

hood, inside the hot, tight channel that held her cream.

happening to her? She swallowed against a whimper of need.

“Show me where you like to be licked. Point for me,” he

He gripped her thighs, pushing them wider, exposing her

demanding, already knowing and planning to save that destination

even more. Then, with his thumbs, opened her sex to his gaze.

for last.

Trembling, Morgan had never felt more vulnerable—or

“I...I don’t know. Anywhere.”

aroused. She dripped, arched to him, held her breath, waited.  
Jack

“No one has ever made you come this way.” Jack didn’t  
could have no doubt that she responded to his demands, to the  
way

make it a question. He was pretty sure he knew the answer.

he forced her legs apart, then stared at her sex as if he intended  
to Morgan shook her head.

eat it like a ripe peach.

Amazing. Another intimate act he would be first to

Sanity—where was it? She was supposed to be engaged,

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 111**

for heaven’s sake. She was not supposed to like his rough  
brand of

wicked zing that seemed to fist around her sex and squeeze.

“Are

domination. She wasn’t the depraved woman Andrew had  
accused

you hoping to deny how good it will feel to have my tongue in  
her of being. She didn’t even know why a shameful part of her  
your pleasure-soaked pussy?”

thrilled to Jack’s orders.

*Yes!* Damn, she had to be as transparent as plastic wrap for  
The chilly morning breeze swept over her skin, but instead

him to read her so easily. Forcing her eyes open, she gazed  
down

of wishing for cover, the contrast of the cool air on her heated  
body at him—just in time to see his tongue dive between her  
folds. The

thrilled her.

sight of his calloused hands cradling the delicate flesh inside her

“I love how wet you are for me. I feel your thighs tremble.

thighs, his skin many times darker than her own, jolted her with a

I see all the folds of your cunt swelling, *cher*.”

pure desire that sizzled up and down her spine and exploded in her

She squeezed her eyes shut, unable to just let go and enjoy.

belly.

“No.”

God help her.

In response, Jack merely dragged his thumb over her clit. It

On that thought, the wet heat of his mouth covered her.

hardened into a pulsing knot of pure need.

Molten pleasure burst inside her as he licked from slit to clit, then A denial might have fallen from her lips, but her body was

swirled his tongue around her as if trying to lap up her cream.

betraying her. Over and over. She’d never responded to anyone the

“*Cher*, you’re like a treat.”

way she did for Jack, flushing, aching, complying with whatever

His voice sounded raspy and rough, half grunt and half

he wanted. Shaking with the need for more.

groan. It dug past her defenses, scraping at what little resolve she The knowledge of everything he kept in his playroom,

had left.

items she'd only vaguely heard of and fantasized about, all just  
He licked her in the same manner again, only this time  
down the hall. All within the grasp of a man who surely knew  
how

hungrier. It wasn't an exploratory stroke of his tongue now; it  
was to use each with devastating skill.

a voracious demand. With a growl, he drew her clit between  
his

"No what?" he taunted. "No, don't make you feel good?  
lips and sucked.

No, don't fuck you in every way I can think of, until you've  
come

She gasped, once, twice—every time he pulled on the  
so many times your body is limp from the pleasure? Is that  
what

sensitive bud. The protests swimming in her head drowned in  
the

you're saying no to?"

face of her body's demands. The exquisite torture of his mouth

His words and the electrically sexual images they conjured  
drove her beyond her inbred decorum. Desperate for more of  
his

up bombarded her brain, denting her resistance like the hood  
of a

touch, for him, she arched, clawing the smooth wooden  
railing, and

car in a vicious hailstorm. But Morgan knew if she let go, Jack  
silently begging by spreading her legs even wider.

would just introduce her to one more touch to crave later, one  
more

"Very pretty," he complimented, voice raspy and midnight



amazing sensation to heat up shameful midnight fantasies after raw. “And so sweet.”

they parted.

His tongue invaded her channel as his thumb pressed down

“Or are you telling yourself no?” he murmured, his lips on her clit. The pleasure converged so hard and fast between her

brushing over the top of her cleft, so light yet charging her with a legs, it was almost painful. She felt her own folds swelling with

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 112**

need, making her flesh sensitive to each dip and swirl of his A violent whip of blistering victory stormed across his face. tongue. The February breeze whipping over her diamond-hard “And?”

nipples did nothing to cool her.

“I...I want to...” She swallowed, panted, trying to find the Jack continued his feast, his moans of appreciation ringing courage and the air necessary to go on.

in her ears. The more he ate at her, the wetter she got.

Jack circled a finger around the small opening of her sex, Then he stopped.

scooped up drops of her cream, and massaged it over her clit. Fire

“If you want me to go on, invite me to taste more.” He shot straight inside her and burst in her belly.

nibbled at her thigh. “Tell me you want to come on my tongue.”

God, she couldn't take more stimulation. Already on the Morgan pressed her lips together to hold the words in. But razor's edge of sanity, of losing control of her body, Morgan everything between her legs ached, throbbed in time with her gasped. Need tightened in her core. Blood raced. Thoughts runaway heartbeat. Every molecule in her body strained toward

vanished.

what Jack wanted to give her. Why the hell was she resisting such

Jack reduced her down to her primal animal element. She'd amazing pleasure? A little tainted modesty and the risk of a bit of always fantasized about such a state but believed it to be humiliation seemed like a small price to pay for such stunning impossible. Not so. Before her knelt a sexy man who should have

sensations.

been a stranger. But he saw every hidden, sinful wish inside her.

Even more, the hot, eager expression on his face slammed He not only understood them, but he could grant them—and make

her with the need to give in. It wasn't tender. He wasn't interested her feel perfectly wonderful both inside and out while doing it.

in hearts and flowers. The wild intensity of his dark eyes in the "I want to come on your tongue," she blurted.

morning's golden light told her he wanted more. Wanted to

"Perfect, *cher*." He rewarded her by lapping off the drops

possess her. On his face was his fierce desire to introduce her to

of fresh cream from her clit. “Such a good girl, with such a sweet

every wanton sensation she’d ever pondered and force her to pussy. I’m going to give you what you want.”

reserve her reactions exclusively for him.

The outrageous notion of belonging to him, of putting her body solely in his care and allowing him anything he wanted —

they wanted—drove her past her limits.

As badly as a part of her mind pushed her to say no, everything else inside her yearned with exquisite pain to say yes.

“Taste me.” Every whispered syllable trembled. “Sir.”

Morgan knew she was taking a giant step that she couldn’t take back. She was agreeing to commit sins that would haunt her.

Jack was replacing her scruples with pure, white-hot need she could no longer deny. Tantalizing her with the idea of being his to command.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 113**

Fresh cream poured from her. A flush rose on her skin as she threw her head back, legs trembling. Her sex swelled even more. Morgan dug her short nails into the aging wood of the railing and moaned.

Idly, Jack wondered how long he could keep her here, right on the edge, feeling the sharp, sweet ache of impending climax...without letting her fall over. The idea of reducing her to

## CHAPTER TEN

incoherent begging held appeal. Not because he'd never heard a

woman beg. He had—frequently. But Morgan and her inbred Morgan looked nothing short of magnificent. The emerging good-girl modesty lit him up like a match to kerosene. And when

morning sun splashed golden light across the pale purity of her he drove her past her inhibitions, she took both of them up in the

skin, illuminating every one of her sexy cinnamon freckles.

flames. Even now, the thick erection pressed uncomfortably

Intriguing shadows danced in the dips and swells of her luscious

against his jeans, growling for the attention of the syrupy, sugary body, tantalizing him to lean in for an up-close look. For a personal flesh under his tongue.

taste.

“Jack,” she panted. “Sir...”

Jack was all too happy to heed the call. Her trembling

Even her voice trembled, signaling that her orgasm was

admission echoed in his head, spurring him to clutch her thighs,

rising up hot and fast inside her. He smiled, easing back from the

spread them even wider and lick the glossy pink flesh in front of

hard knot of her clit to focus on the swollen lips cupping his finger.

him.

“*Cher?*” he returned lazily, swallowing against a lump of God, she was like a drug. Every part of her had some new lust threatening to unravel him.

exotic scent or flavor. The crook of her neck smelled like ripe Before she could answer, he thrust a second digit inside woman with a hint of raspberries. Her mouth soaked him with an

her. Her open-mouthed gasp tore across the porch, across the open

addicting cinnamon sugar taste. But her pussy... Delicate, sweet,

swamp.

clean musk. Ah, she tasted like the want coursing inside her.

Eyes squeezed tightly shut, Morgan said nothing. She

Unique, enthralling. He could spend the morning here, lapping at

focused on pleasure—exactly like he wanted her to.

her, and still be compelled to taste her again in an effort to figure Jack began easing his fingers from her tight channel. She

out just what it was about her that so tempted his tongue.

murmured a protest, but he knew she really meant it when her

Her ragged inhalation caught his attention. Morgan’s thighs

body did its best to clamp down on the digits, cling, and suck him

tensed in his grasp. He smiled against her sex, then worked his back in. God, no wonder she shredded his control so fast when he

tongue about her vulva, laving her clit every now and then. No had his cock inside her.

steady pressure...just enough to take her higher and higher.  
Then,

Shoving the observation aside, he withdrew his hand from  
as he worked in one finger and teased her inner walls, she  
the damp humidity of her sex. His fingers all but dripped with  
her  
trembled.

cream. The sight and scent went straight to his head, like pure

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 114**

grain alcohol, kicking his libido into full gear. He tamped  
down the fingers once more.

urge to shove his pants to his knees and thrust deep inside her.

“*Cher,*” he whispered in her ear. “What do you want?”

Instead, he lifted his fingers over the rosy beads of her

“Now,” she panted as he rubbed the pads of his fingers

nipples and coated them with her own juice. The wind  
whipped

right across that sweet spot inside her. “God, please. I need...”

across her body, tightening the tips of her breasts even more,  
until

“Me to stop?”

they stood long and thick and so damn tempting, he couldn’t  
resist

“No. No, sir!” Her voice came fast, hard, in between

for another second tasting them.

breathless sighs.

Seizing her hips, Jack fit her against the ridge of his cock.

Color bloomed in her cheeks, and the sunshine rained down

Frothing with greed and glee, he loved that for now, in this on her fair skin until she looked like she was glowing.

moment, she and every little gasp, blush, and moan were all his.

God help her, because Jack had every intention of taking

Slowly, he closed his mouth over one of those nipples that

her, not just to his bed, but to his playroom and driving her up and had him salivating with anticipation. Hmm. Raspberries and musk

over so sweetly and so often that she would have no more qualms

together. Velvet-soft skin over deliciously hard nubs begging to be about pleading for what she wanted and turning to him when she

sucked, nibbled, clamped.

needed it.

He lapped at her, laving and biting, lavishing attention on

A savage bolt of lust lurched through his cock at the

her nipples until they swelled in his mouth. If her hitching breath thought he could succeed, that she would surrender her body, her

hadn't indicated the truth, a quick caress from his free hand told

mind, and her will exclusively to him. The thought aroused him

Jack she was as wet as ever. The knowledge—the woman like nothing ever had.

herself—called him like a siren. There was no resisting.

“Tell me what you need,” he murmured into her ear. “You

He forced a pair of fingers inside her sultry depths again, remember what to say.”

then swiped a thumb over her clit. Amazingly, she tightened on his

“I want to come on your tongue. Please, sir.” She grasped fingers immediately, clamping down, beginning to ripple with the

his shoulders, nails digging into his flesh with the urgency of her coming explosion.

need. “*Please.*”

Satisfaction swelled in Jack as he shifted his attention to

“You beg sweetly, *cher*. How can I resist?”

her other nipple and enveloped it in the hot cavern of his mouth.

Her frantic fingers filtered into his hair and she gripped,

He couldn’t wait to feel the magnitude of this climax. And even

little darts of pain exploding across his scalp. God help her when

better, he’d bet she was nearly willing to beg for it.

he finally got her under him. He was going to pound into her with

Taking one last sharp nip at her rock-hard nipple, Jack

the ferocity of a jackhammer, mercilessly plying that sweet pussy

kissed his way up her chest to nuzzle her neck. His fingers played

with his cock until she came over and over—and took him with

with that sensitive spot in her channel, just behind her clit, while her.

his thumb strummed the hard little button in an unhurried rhythm.

“Now!”



Though he wondered if he'd ever feel the blood in his fingers  
Her voice took on a panicked note. Her sex gripped his  
again, satisfaction poured through him when she tightened on  
his  
fingers so tightly he could hardly move them. She dangled at  
the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 115**

edge of the cliff. And she'd been there a while, long enough  
for her against her, into her. Fresh cream gushed into his  
mouth, and he

body to push past her mind.

lapped at her greedily, triumph and a desperate urge to get  
inside

“Demanding minx,” he teased as he nipped at her earlobe  
her, command her, clawed at him. Need clamored.  
and scratched at the sensitive point inside her claspings pussy.  
“I

*Take her. Claim her. She's yours.*

promised I'd give you what you want. Once I have, you're  
going to

*Yeah, and what would Brandon say about that? What*

follow me into the playroom so I can bind, clamp, and fuck  
you

*would Morgan herself say?* He hoped she would say yes,  
because any way I please, aren't you?”

for once in his life, he didn't want to just be someone's good  
fuck.

“Yes,” she sobbed. “Yes, sir!”

He wanted every touch to mean something.

“Good girl. I’m going to bend you over my table and take  
*Why her? Why now? What had happened to the drive for*  
your hot little pussy over and over. You’ll learn to beg readily  
and *revenge that once glowed red hot, like fired metal, down in*  
*my*

come on command, *cher*. Then,” he breathed against her skin  
as he *gut?*

began traveling down the body in a series of caresses and  
biting

Jack frowned against the thought.

kisses, “I’m going to open that pretty ass of yours to my cock  
and

Long moments later, the clasp of her sex eased around  
settle in for a nice, long ride.”

his tongue. Her fists slowly uncurled. Jack took a last, longing  
lick He whispered the words right against her clit. A strangled  
of her, promising himself more later and rose to his feet. She  
moan escaped her. The muscles of her thighs clenched,  
trembled.

looked dazed and flushed and shocked by her own response.

The slick heaven of her sex strangled his fingers. Her hands,  
still in There was untouched sensuality inside her, ripe for a  
man

his hair, tightened into desperate fists.

strong enough to push past her barriers, caring enough to see  
to her Perfect. Like a fantasy. Morgan responded to his touch,  
to

safety and peace of mind. Morgan didn’t know there was  
much

his wicked, whispered suggestions exactly as he dreamed.  
Once he

more inside her.

pushed her past her inhibitions, delving beyond her conscious mind

Yet.

into her untapped sexuality, a wealth of sweet, mind-blowing

And damn, he wanted to be the man to show her.

submission belonged to the man who could master her.

“Good morning,” he murmured.

It was as if she’d been waiting just for him.

He pressed a soft kiss to her trembling mouth, nudging her

The thought charged through his cock like a livewire.

lips apart and sliding his tongue inside in a slow, coaxing glide.

“Come for me,” he demanded against her cream-drenched

For a moment, she recoiled against the taste of herself on his lips.

pussy.

Jack grabbed her, cradling her head in his palms and forced her to

Quickly, he extracted his fingers from her and raked them

taste the sweet perfection of herself all while deepening the swirl over her clit. In the next heartbeat, he shoved his tongue inside her and dance of the kiss. Finally, she relaxed against him, opened her rippling channel, reaching with the tip to manipulate the sensitive mouth to him, and drew his tongue and the taste of herself deep

spot inside.

inside.

She exploded with a scream that echoed across the swamp.

Respect of her quick acceptance surged inside him. No, it

With the tight grip of her fists in his hair, she pushed his face

was flat-out pride—and that was both a joy and a warning.  
Morgan

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 116**

was sweet, and he could bend her, mold her into a submissive  
who

then meet him in the playroom in fifteen minutes. Fuck  
breakfast.

could tempt him beyond his wildest fantasies. In time, he  
could

He'd rather fuck her.

help her accept that part of herself that she struggled so hard to

“*Bonjour*,” a faint, familiar voice rasped from just around

deny. She would never be truly happy until she did.

the corner, near the front door.

But that feeling of pride...it was a step away from

Morgan gasped, stiffening in the circle of his arms. “Is  
ownership. No dominant had pride in a sub he wasn't attached  
to,

that...your grandfather!”

determined to make his. For years, he'd felt a distant respect  
for

*Yes. Who else has such impeccable timing?* Biting back a

women he'd mastered who pushed past their boundaries to  
submit.

nasty curse, he eased Morgan away from his sheltering  
warmth,

Like a teacher to a pupil, he'd praised their progress, punished

shoved the remnants of his shirt in her hands, and urged her  
inside their setbacks, all while assuring them of their abilities.

the cottage through the side door.

With Morgan...it felt deeper, more personal. As if he *had*

“Go. Shower and dress. We’ll finish later.”

to help her. As if he had some personal stake in her blooming

She hesitated, going wide-eyed at his words. Indecision  
sexuality.

spread across her flushed face. “Jack, I—I... Maybe we should  
talk

*As if she’s mine.* The feeling confirmed everything inside  
about this.”

him. This wasn’t a phase, or the heat of the moment. He  
wanted

“*Bonjour?*” Brice’s voice sounded closer.

her. Period.

Time had run out.

“Jack.”

Quickly, he pressed a hard kiss to her mouth, then spun her  
Morgan’s shaky voice pushed into his consciousness,  
around, through the open door. With a sharp slap on her ass, he  
bringing him back. She shivered, and this time not from desire.  
propelled her inside. “If you want. But we *will* finish this  
later.”

Damn, it was cold out here. And yet, she’d endured. No, she’d  
Before she could sputter a reply, he shut the door between  
excelled, outshining anything he’d imagined her capable of in  
that  
them.

moment.

Morgan’s reluctance to continue what they’d started was

He wrapped his arms around her, doing his best to shelter both obvious and frustrating. Just when he thought he'd reached her from the wind. "The air is brisk, huh, *cher*?"

her... Granted she wasn't saying no, but she hadn't given him the

And because he couldn't resist, he tucked her head beneath sweet little "yes" his body craved—and expected after her his chin and stroked her back with one hand. His other fit perfectly response this morning. Disappointment and anger gushed through

over her breast, his thumb lazily flicking the still hard nipple. him, confusing him, as he turned to face his *grand-pere*. She whimpered.

Together all the urges concocted an astonishing brew of Any urgency to shepherd her into his playroom and hoard resolve not to accept another moment of Morgan's hesitation, no

her in there for hours—days—that had left his body zinged back to

doubt equal in strength to her uncertainty. And he wanted to life in that one sound.

understand. What was hanging her up? It was something more than

He reached into his pocket to find his keys with every simple modesty or fear of the unknown.

intent to command her to warm herself with a quick warm shower,

Jack sighed. The question he should be asking was, what

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

the hell was wrong with him, that he was suddenly so determined

“But you have enjoyed the...sights?”

to have this woman? Apparently, he'd lost his mind.

“No comment. Why would you do such a thing? Wave an

But it felt more like he was in danger of losing much

open invitation in my face to have sex with her. I know you want

more...

me to remarry, but you'd never met Morgan before that stunt.”

“Ah, there you are,” Brice said, rounding the corner. He

The old man tapped on his chest. “Live long enough, *yeah*,

shuffled down the long stretch of the wrap-around porch.

and you know things. Them dreams, Jack, they mean something.

“Morning, *Grand-pere*.” Jack offered a seat back on the

Down through the generations, they've always meant love.”

chair in the corner with a wave of his hand. “Coffee?”

“Just because it did for you—”

“*Non*. I came to check up on you and *ta jolie rousse*. ”

“*Non*, not just me. My grandfather, too. He took a job in

His pretty redhead? Not at the moment. She might be one

San Francisco for a few years. No more Acadian country for him,

step closer now if it hadn't been for an untimely interruption. He

says he.” Brice waved a dismissive hand at that. “He started having bit back a curse.

dreams, did he, about a *beau blond*.”

“Morgan is fine,” Jack muttered, sliding into the chair

“Hell, I’ve had a fantasy or two about a gorgeous blonde in  
beside his grandfather.

my lifetime.”

He licked his lips and still tasted her sweetness there. That

“For months straight, *mon garçon*?”

flavor—and the memories of her legs spread wide for him, her

Jack sighed, both because he hated being called anyone’s

uninhibited moans echoing around him—wasn’t doing  
anything to

boy and because reasoning with the old man was never an easy  
reduce his raging erection.

task.

“Have you seen...more of her since my last visit?” Brice

“No,” he finally answered.

cackled and winked. “You were slow to answer my greeting  
and

“You see there, *yeah*. My *grand-pere* had these dreams never  
noticed my knocking on the door, *yeah*.”

about a lady at a ball. He met her and discovered she was his

“I didn’t answer the door because I didn’t hear it. I was out

boss’s young bride. Since his love was already married, he

here. And it’s early. I hardly expected company.”

believed the family legend was wrong. But he kept on  
dreaming of

“What time it is?” Brice frowned.

her. The dreams were hard on his heart.

Jack didn’t buy his grandfather’s innocent act for a minute.

“Two weeks after meeting *son amour*, the big earthquake



“What time *is* it?” he corrected. “It’s way too early for social calls, struck San Francisco. Nineteen-oh-six. The lovely lady’s husband,

but early enough to catch us at something if we liked to start the

he died. And my grandfather married the pretty blonde a year later.

day off right. Isn’t that what you were thinking?”

Six *enfants* and over fifty years later, they was still in love.”

“*Mon petit-fils*, you are suspicious.”

Staring at the old man, Jack wondered if he was serious.

“I think I have a right to be, since the ‘warm and practical’

Was it even possible, even a bit?

clothing you brought Morgan looks like it came from the X-rated

“And his grandfather before him,” Brice went on, “was version of the Victoria’s Secret catalog.”

wounded in battle and captured by the Yanks at the end of the

His grandfather’s laughter made Jack roll his eyes.

Civil War. His bride, she was a Union nurse in the field hospital.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 118**

He kept a journal that said dreams of a faceless beauty kept him

“Listen to your gut, Jack. Follow your instincts.”

sane during months of battle, *yeah*. When he met her, it was a

“They don’t make sense.”

shock. They married three days after the war ended.”

The smile lines bracketing Brice's mouth deepened. "They  
Three men of his blood all dreaming of faceless beauties.  
don't have to. The heart ain't meant to makes sense. You ever  
feel

Jack had dreamed endlessly of one with sparkling red hair  
glowing

this way about anyone else? About Kayla?"

in the sunlight. And just this morning, Morgan had manifested  
The old man all but spit his ex-wife's name.

herself as his dream image. Did that explain his insane desire  
to lay Jack just shook his head. No. Never. Not even close.  
He'd

claim to her, as if she wasn't taken, as if she was more than the  
married her because she was pregnant, and he was very  
Catholic,

instrument of his revenge? As if walking away from her  
wasn't

even if she hadn't been. She'd miscarried in her fifth month.  
The

possible?

marriage ended a few months later when he'd found a  
videotape of

Shock jolted a dizzying bolt through his system. Jack

Brandon Ross fucking her, while she'd supposedly been  
grieving

stroked his chin and tried to regain his balance. The concept of  
the loss of her baby too deeply to have sex with her own  
husband.

predestined mates and dreaming of them was so...  
otherworldly. So

Looking back, his divorce had been a guilty relief. And a bitter

weird. Not that he hadn't grown up with the knowledge; he'd just

humiliation. Brice had been with him, expecting to see an episode

never believed it.

of *CSI* Jack had promised to videotape for him. They'd viewed a

"None of us want to believe that there's any truth to this whole different sort of action instead.

*malédiction*. But facts is facts, *yeah*. It happens to every man in our

"You see now, *yeah*?" Brice murmured.

line. And now, it's your turn, with Morgan."

"It's complicated. Morgan belongs to...to someone else.

"How did you know when it happened to you?" Jack asked, They're engaged."

struggling to accept his grandfather's claim. "What made you sure,

Jack couldn't tell his grandfather that Morgan belonged to besides the dreams, that *Grand-mere* was the one?"

the man who had been with Kayla in the videotape. Brice would

The old man smiled, deepening lines around his eyes and know that he'd lured Morgan under his roof in the name of mouth, leaving no doubt the man had spent a lifetime smiling wide

revenge. He'd have a pretty good idea of what Jack had done to her

and often. "The moment I met her, I fought a crazy urge to grab

to obtain that revenge. And the old man would flay the skin off

her up tight and convince her to be mine. I never wanted to be Jack's back with his old hunting knife and pour Tabasco in the away from her or see her blue. Most of all, *cher garçon*, I wanted wound.

her happy and I knew deep inside here," he pointed to his heart,

Grimacing, Jack couldn't deny an unsettling sense of

"that I could make her so. *Comprenes-tu?*"

shame bubbling in his gut.

Oh, yeah. Jack understood all too well. Hadn't he been

And if Morgan ever found out... Oh God, she *would* find

feeling the same way from nearly the instant he'd met Morgan?

out. The minute she talked to Brandon. And stopping it was damn

The insane desire to touch her, the willingness to do most anything near impossible.

to keep her safe, the snarling anger toward her stalker? He hated

He let loose a vile curse. There was no way he could take her dismay, but the key to her happiness lay in her caged sexuality.

back the email he'd already sent. Damn! He wished he'd heeded

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 119**

his instinct at that moment, which told him emailing the video was

boat...or take èm back with me."

a mistake. And once Morgan and Brandon talked...he'd lose her

Leaving Morgan in nothing but tempting lingerie.

for sure then. The thought filled him with a snarling, towering

Immediately, the memory of her in that golden camisole  
panic.

and thong bombarded his brain, engorging his cock. Oh yeah,

Unless he found some ironclad way to bind her to him

Morgan looked hot in that get-up. But just the visual alone  
couldn't before he told her the truth... Yes! He had to.

fire him up to something between a boil and a blaze that  
quickly.

Brice shrugged. "Now, boy. Why worry? She and this man,  
Hell, he'd seen hundreds of naked women, especially hanging  
they is not married. And why not? Maybe she knows this other  
around Alyssa and her girls. They'd get a rise from him every  
so

man is not for her. *Yeah?* Maybe she gives you a kiss or two  
often, but this feeling scraping at his logic and peace of mind  
until because her heart and her body know what her mind  
don't."

he felt raw... Jack could only term it a caveman urge to claim.

"That she doesn't love her fiancé?"

Like he *had* to know she was his and be secure in the  
knowledge

*"Exactement."*

that he would always keep her safe and happy. The thought of

Was it really that simple? That Morgan was his...soul

succeeding, of being able to convince her to be his in every  
way,

mate, and that she responded to him, had allowed him so much

jacked up his temperature another ten degrees.

liberty over her body because somewhere deep inside her she knew

*Holy shit.*

he was meant for her? It seemed so...surreal. Fucking hocus-

At this point, he couldn't think of a single argument that pocus.

might prove his grandfather wrong.

Was it possible she wasn't a cheating sort of woman, just a

In fact, if he wanted to have Morgan, and keep her, he was confused one? Just as confused as he was?

going to have to form a stronger bond between them right away.

Jack sighed and held his head in his hands.

Something that might shake but wouldn't break when she learned

A slur of disgust rose from Brice's throat. "Ah, you young why he'd agreed to be on her TV show—and that he'd bribed her

now. No sense of romance. Keep resisting. Make yourself buddy Reggie to make it happen. That he'd done it all for revenge.

miserable. Love will wear you down."

And he'd tell her...but not yet. Not until they were solid.

Love? The thought couldn't have been more alien if it was

First, he had to earn her trust on a visceral level, teach her green and sported antennae.

body that he would always put her care first. The bedroom was a

"I want her. I don't love her."

good place to start breaking down her barriers. Once she'd  
"You know that, do you? You already know that you will  
surrendered, then they could talk. The rest would fall into  
place.

always not love her?"

Knowledge, rightness, and a plan clicked into place in that  
Jack slumped back in his chair. Damn the man and his  
moment, like the piece of a puzzle that had been hovering just  
out

questions. "No, I don't know that."

of reach.

Brice sent him an all-knowing nod. "I brought some jeans

Finally, he said, "I don't need time to think about it. Take  
and shirts for Morgan. You can fix me some mornin' grub,  
*yeah*.

her clothes with you, *Grand-pere*. Don't bring them out here  
After that, you tell me if you want me to get them from the  
again."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 120**

Brice smiled wide, showing crooked white teeth against  
Cajun-dark skin. "*Laaissez les bon temps roule!*"

Oh, yeah. Let the good times roll...

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 121**

sensations—and the memories also came complete with Jack's  
sigh-worthy face to haunt her.

On the other hand, she wanted him—and was beginning to

crave having every wild pleasure he could give her. Something about giving in to the impulses he roused in her body made her feel more alive, more...complete. Did that even make sense?

*We will finish this later.* Given the weight of his stare right

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

now, Morgan knew he still meant it.

Should she? Shouldn't she?

*We will finish this later.*

Like everything else about Jack, the promise he'd given her

Jack's vow rang through Morgan's head as Brice charmed

filled her with hot shame, even as it made her ache and shake with

her through breakfast.

need. This morning, on the porch... God, she could still feel his

She chastised the older man for bringing her lingerie and

mouth on her sex, forcing his tongue inside her, taking tender

nothing else. With dark eyes twinkling, he gave her a sanguine grin possession. Driving her out of her mind. He'd suffused every nerve

and a shrug, but wasn't apologetic in the least.

in her body with speech-defying ecstasy, making it impossible to

But Jack...his gaze burned, telegraphing his earlier words.

run away from the sensations he poured over her like sweet, warm

*We will finish this later.*

honey.

Morgan wished she could close off the memory, drown out

But she was so damn curious—and excited—about



the voice in her head. Over scrambled eggs, which both men  
whatever he did on those racks and tables with the cuffs and  
doused with Tabasco, Jack stared at her as if she was a cross  
clamps...and other items she was too naive to name. The more  
she

between a confounding puzzle and a tasty treat. And above all,  
tried to run away from her wants, the more insistent they grew,  
something he coveted. Someone he meant to possess.

slowly overtaking her will like a clinging vine overtaking the  
Damn it, why had she ever said yes to Jack and his  
garden.

playroom? Trying to say no after the exquisite pleasure he'd  
given

What if she let him follow through on his threat to finish  
her seemed nearly impossible.

what they'd started? Would it be *so* terrible if she did? Just for  
But saying yes in that moment had been easy—

now? No one but her and Jack would have to know.

imperative—with his mouth hovering over her and an  
enormous

Biting her lip, she watched Jack's taut posture grow more  
climax pending. Now that pleasure wasn't destroying her  
ability to

tense as Brice lingered for after-breakfast coffee. His dark eyes  
breathe and think, Morgan wasn't sure that giving in, giving  
him

promised pleasure, prepared her for a hint of pain. His vow to  
everything he wanted, was a good idea. It would not only  
change

totally possess her shone in his seductive gaze. She swallowed

everything between them, but change *her* forever. Since being against a belly-tightening mix of fear and thrill and anticipation.

around Jack, her fantasies had become more urgent, more explicit.

Attraction layered over that, luring her directly to him, as if an Impulses she'd always had now came with remembered invisible string lay between them, growing shorter and shorter with **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 122**

every hour.

her lips, pinched her cheeks and shrugged. That was the best she

It made no sense that she could want someone so could do.

desperately who brought out her very worst impulses. Someone

A set of regimented footsteps started down the hall, pulling who would take her places far beyond the norm, into a realm that

her out of her thoughts.

would horrify her mother and sicken men like Andrew. If she let

Jack. He'd be pounding on the door soon, demanding to

Jack, he would ruin her for every other man's touch. Worse, living

pound at her.

with herself after he molded her into a submissive wanton would

Her breath caught. Was she ready? Could she handle it?

be impossible. Doormat wasn't her style. She didn't take orders

She released a shaky breath, torn between her rational mind and

well, didn't like being told what to do. Her mother had started her demanding body. Her mind had always prevailed before, but

calling her an independent hoyden about the time she turned since Jack... game, set, match to her body. twelve.

She was as prepared for a man like Jack as she'd ever be,

But with Jack... Morgan sighed. His commands seeped considering she wore nothing more to shield her from his inside her—not just her body, but her mind, her soul. The things he penetrating gaze than his bathrobe and bloodred undergarments

demanding of her never failed to shock her, and yet, he often with wicked cutouts designed not to cover the essentials.

ordered her to do exactly what she'd been secretly craving.

Instead of being repulsed by the revealing exploitive

Sometimes, she wondered how he could read her mind. It startled

lingerie, Morgan simply felt herself growing ever more wet at the

her. It shamed her. It made her ache for him beyond anything she'd

thought of Jack seeing her in them.

imagined.

“Morgan?” he barked through the thin barrier of the

And she didn't think she had the will to keep fighting what

bathroom door.

they both wanted.

*Showtime.* “Jack?”

Maybe...just maybe she should embrace this time together,  
Anytime he looked at her, she felt sure those dark, knowing  
find out the truth about her desires. Jack wouldn't intentionally  
eyes could see every sinful secret in her soul. But today, her  
voice hurt her beyond a little erotic pain. Her mother's and  
Andrew's

trembled merely because she spoke his name.

opinions wouldn't matter way out here, a world away from  
Before he could say or do anything, the phone rang. He  
civilization. It could be her time, their secret time, before her  
uttered a ripe sibilant curse and stomped back down the hall.  
stalker was caught and she returned to reality.

Morgan sagged with an odd mix of relief and  
disappointment...but

Just after noon, Brice rose to leave. Morgan knew Jack  
she couldn't deny that the ache between her legs had ratcheted  
wanted to pick up where they'd left off earlier this morning.  
Like

higher.

any nervous female, she wanted to look her best. Retreating to  
the

Taking a deep breath, she stepped into the hall and lingered  
bathroom when Jack walked Brice to the dock, she indulged in  
a

in the shadows. And listened.

decadent bath and spent extra time drying her hair. She  
lamented

“What the hell do you want?” she heard Jack snap.

the fact that she had no makeup, which gave her absolutely no way

A rumbling laugh over the speakerphone in the cottage’s

to soften the smattering of freckles on her too-fair face. She licked front room echoed down the hall.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 123**

“I’ll take three guesses as to why you’re so crabby. And I

“Yeah. We weren’t able to lift any prints off the photos.

don’t need the last two.”

I’m sorry. But we did learn some interesting information about

Deke. She recognized his teasing voice, could picture the

them, so I have a few questions.”

crinkles of laughter around those dancing denim-blue eyes...

so

Disappointment trembled within her. When would this

seemingly at odds with that tall, hard body.

nightmare be over? And how would it ever end if Deke couldn’t

“Did you call just to annoy me?”

track this lunatic down? She wanted to feel normal again, return

“Hell, no. You know I never go for anything easy. Where’s

home and not worry that someone had breached her personal space

the challenge in that?”

and violated her bed with semen. She wanted her old life back.

“So you called because...?”

Clearly, she wasn't going to get it anytime soon.

"I need to talk to Morgan."

To her surprise, Jack eased beside her and curled her

Jack hesitated, his hands curling into fists. "Why?"

suddenly cold hand into this larger, warmer one. Warm. Solid.

In that one syllable, he sounded somewhere between

Secure. He enveloped her in that simple embrace, and instantly

suspicious and downright pissed.

Morgan felt stronger.

"Did that hard cock of yours make you forget all about the

Until she realized that getting her old life back meant losing

stalker trailing her sweet ass?"

Jack. The disappointment that crashed in on her stunned her.

She

"No, you SOB, I haven't forgotten. And you get your mind

clung tighter to him. Why didn't the thought of getting away  
from

off her ass."

him make her want to celebrate? She ought to be  
contemplating

"It's not as if I've perfected the ability to reach my cock

how many margaritas she could get out of her blender. Getting

through the phone line and fuck her, Jack. It's a conversation.

back to her old life would mean no more stalker, no more

Lighten up."

questioning herself. Instead, she latched onto Jack's hand and

Morgan frowned. Deke acted as if he thought Jack was

refused to let go.

jealous. The thought would have made her burst out laughing if she

“What do you want to know?” Morgan asked Deke.

hadn’t observed Jack’s odd behavior around Deke before and he

“Anyone you know really into photography, like it’s a big-hadn’t looked so...tense.

time hobby?”

With a deep sigh, Jack uncurled his fists. “I’ll get her.”

“Reggie, my production assistant. He mostly dabbles but

“I’m here.” Morgan took those few steps out of the shadow, he’s very good. He’s had a few shows in the past.” Morgan into the light, then down the hall toward Jack.

frowned. “You don’t think Reggie would...?”

He whirled to face her, his eyes grasping onto her like a

He hesitated. “After my FBI buddies analyzed these vise. Morgan felt her nipples, bare from the cutouts in the bra, beat pictures, we discovered they were taken by someone who knows

against the soft, thin jersey knit of his robe. Based on the way his their way around a camera. They weren’t developed in a standard

eyes widened and his nostrils flared, she guessed he noticed. lab, like someone had taken them to a one-hour photo place. They

“Morgan,” Deke greeted over the speakerphone. “Hi, doll.”

weren’t printed from a digital image to a photo printer. This is old

“Hi, Deke. Do you have news?”

school, likely developed at home, using a pretty rare set of

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 124**

chemicals and printed on photo paper that's made in Europe.  
This

trembling hand to keep a scream in. "Wh... I don't... Why? I  
is someone who takes photography seriously. And while you  
may

trusted Reggie. Completely."

feel just threatened when you look at these, a couple of the  
psych

As she staggered, Jack wound his arm around her waist.

profilers felt like he was trying to...make it art. He didn't just  
snap

"Steady," he murmured.

pictures. He looked for symmetry, lighting, interesting angles.

She stared at Jack in sudden horror. If she couldn't trust

There's no sloppy work here."

Reggie, a man she'd known for three years as the protective  
lout

Reggie? Her *friend*, Reggie? No...

with a heart of gold, could she trust Jack, a man she'd only  
known

But she didn't know anyone else with a passion for  
for days?

photography, who thoroughly disdained the photo printers  
popular

"Morgan?" Deke's concern resounded through the phone  
for digital cameras. Total crap, he called them. Not worth  
wasting

wire.



an image on. She didn't know anyone else who had a darkroom in

She turned to look at Jack through wide eyes, pouring out their apartment.

uncertainty and panic. What did she know about him? Just what

Morgan went numb. Breath rushed from her body. Reggie, Reggie had told her...and that he'd tried to twist her sexuality into who was like a father?

something she didn't want to accept.

*No!*

She struggled to escape Jack's hold. Flee. Squirming and Not many people knew her address in Los Angeles. Reggie writhing, she tried to break free. Now. Go someplace where no one

did—along with her schedule. He could have snuck in and could find her.

masturbated on her bed in her absence. Reggie was one of the few

“Steady.” Jack used that patient but commanding voice people who knew exactly when she'd gone to Houston and exactly

Morgan knew so well.

where.

Something deep inside her responded instantly, wanted to

She rubbed her forehead against a sudden ache. Reggie?

heed that voice. Another part of her feared... She didn't know

Could he have been in Texas to take pictures of her in Brandon's

what exactly. That virtually anyone could wish her harm,

backyard a few days ago? She always talked to Reggie via cell especially someone she trusted. Reggie only proved she couldn't

phone...so she didn't know exactly where he was. Anything was

judge the character of those around her. What if she'd mistakenly

possible. And if Reggie had come that far to stalk her, well, he trusted a stranger, not just with her safety, but with her body, her alone had known she intended to go to Lafayette to meet Jack.

soul?

Following her a bit farther wouldn't have been that difficult.

The stranger she only knew because Reggie had passed

Had Reggie, the father she'd never had, taken secret, sexual Jack's information her way.

pictures of her? Had Reggie stalked her, masturbated on her bed,

An icy chill of fear blasted through Morgan. She kicked at tried to shoot her? No! But...who else could it be?

Jack's shins, throwing an elbow into his stomach. He clasped her

Just Reggie.

tighter and dodged her sharp jabs.

"Oh, God." Shock hummed through her body, buzzed in

"I'll call you later," Jack growled into the phone. Then he her brain. Morgan's knees buckled. She covered her mouth with a

slammed a finger on the button and ended the connection with

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

Deke.

Her voice sounded breathy, trembling. Morgan hated the Jack picked her up around the waist. Morgan struggled fact that her voice shook. On TV, she was the sexy bleached-harder, panic streaking through her belly, down her legs. He blonde show hostess, professional with a hint of a wild streak. It

grunted when she managed to land a heel in his shin. Hope sprang

worked. Out on the middle of the Louisiana swamps, under Jack's

inside that he'd let her go.

roof, she was a terrified natural redhead who hated this crappy, He held tighter.

helpless feeling, hated being out of her element physically, Jack backed into the bedroom, dragging her with him. mentally, environmentally...sexually.

Morgan tried to grab the doorknob and use it as an anchor, but he

Jack frowned, concern etching the furrow between his was too fast, too strong.

brows. "You're thinking with adrenaline, Morgan, not logic.

"Damn you, put me down!" Morgan shouted. "Put me the Don't. We've been here alone for two days. At any time, I could

hell down!"

have hurt you, if that was my intent."

"I know what you're thinking," he growled, ignoring her

Morgan paused, panting. Her mind raced. Jack'd had a

demand. “Stop it now.”

million opportunities to rape or kill her—or both. He’d done

“You can’t tell me what to think, asshole.”

neither. But coming down off the ledge wasn’t that simple.

“Think logically, *cher*.”

“How do I know you’re not toying with me, waiting for me

Moments later, she found herself tossed onto the rumped

to lower my guard and completely trust you before you move  
in for

bed, flat on her back. Faster than a flash of lightning, he  
covered the kill? What do I know about you at all?”

her chilled, frantic body and pinned her to the mattress. His  
arms

Jack paused, those endless chocolate eyes drilling into her,  
stretched out over hers, hot fingers clasped around her wrists  
in a breathtaking in their stark sincerity and tight with  
frustration. “I am gentle but unyielding vice. The weight of his  
longer legs secured

*not* your stalker. Nor am I in league with the scumbag. If  
you’d her own against the soft sheets.

listen to your gut, you would know that.”

*No*. The word burned across Morgan’s brain as she

“You never had any sort of plan to harm me?”

struggled, the need to escape and find an isolated hole to hide  
in

“Harm you?” He pinned her with a stare stripped of  
overriding all else. Jack tightened above until he held her  
everything except resentment and honesty. “Who helped you  
completely immobile. *No!*

escape the shooter? Who brought you to safety?”

“Relax.” His dark stare slammed into her, penetrating her  
She answered with a pregnant pause, her mind racing.  
fear with a calm, commanding stare.

Clearly, Jack hadn’t harmed her, despite constant  
opportunities. He

“Let me go!” Morgan tensed against him, arms, legs, doing  
had saved her that day in Lafayette; she knew that. She just  
didn’t her best to remain unyielding.  
understand why.

“I know what’s running through that pretty head of yours,

“Damn you, what have I done to earn your distrust?” he  
*cher*. Stop. I’m not going to hurt you.”

demanding. “Not one fucking thing except try to make you see  
who

“If Reggie is guilty, then...then anyone—you—could want  
you really are and what you pretend not to want.”  
me bleeding, dead...”

“Three days ago I’d barely heard your name,” Morgan

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 126**

shouted into his tense face. “Now I’m supposed to place my  
should say.

sexuality and my entire life in your hands and think nothing of  
it?

“You want me, too.”

How many men would just...risk their lives to help a  
stranger?”

His pronouncement, stated like arrogant fact, startled her.

“That’s what a soldier does every day, Morgan.” He

But she couldn't deny it. Of course she wanted Jack. Even as he  
clutched at her wrists, holding her tight. "He puts his ass on the  
hovered over her and anchored her wrists to the bed again, a  
line to protect the citizens of his country, most of whom he'll  
never decidedly sexual question in his chocolate eyes, her  
nipples  
know. I was a soldier for too many years to change. Then I  
became  
hardened. She felt herself getting wet once more.  
a bodyguard. I wasn't going to stand there and watch you die."  
He dropped a kiss on her forehead, another on her jaw.  
The white haze of panic began to lift from her mind as  
"You know I'm not going to hurt you, right?"  
Morgan processed his words. Jack had saved her because  
that's  
Slowly, she nodded. "You... You're right."  
who he was. Maybe his behavior was part instinct, part  
chivalry. If  
"And your friend Reggie. He might be guilty, yes. He  
he was working with Reggie to kill her, he was taking his  
sweet  
might not. Until we know more, don't assume anything."  
time. And that didn't seem Jack's style.  
Morgan shook her head. "But he's totally into photography.  
Okay, so it wasn't likely that he was Reggie's partner in  
No one else—"  
some grand scheme, but something still niggled at her.  
Something  
"I understand. Just wait. Deke will keep digging. For now, I

didn't feel quite right.

think it's important that you don't talk to Reggie, not until we

"So helping me in Lafayette had nothing to do with being

know more. Had you planned to call him, check in?"

on TV?"

"I tried yesterday. I can't get a cell signal out here."

Braced on his elbows that now framed her face, he shook

"No." Jack shook his head. "Most people can't. Will he

his head. "I could give a shit about being on TV. Honestly, I  
saved raise some red flag if you don't call?"

you because I had to. That's my job. But I also did it because I

"Not for a while; a few more days probably."

wanted to touch you. The first time I talked to you

"Hopefully, we'll have this sorted out by then. Until then,

online...something was there between us." He kissed his way

don't assume the worst. We have one fact that doesn't make  
things

down her jaw. "I sensed your innocence, your curiosity and

look good for Reggie, but nothing is absolute. And even if he  
is

uncertainty. That day we had coffee on the Square, the sight of  
you guilty, you know he can't find you here, right?"

was like a punch to my gut. You and your aroused reluctance  
made

Wherever here was... "Right."

me want you so bad I couldn't breathe. Within five seconds of

"In the meantime, I'm here to protect you."

meeting you, I was looking for ways to stretch out our  
meeting, to

"Why?" Why would he go so far out in a limb for her?

touch you. I want you still.”

“You don’t have to keep that promise.”

Her pulse leapt as if it had found a trampoline. Wow, he’d

“Yes, I do.” He nuzzled her neck, teeth nipping at her lobe just...laid it all out on the table. Shock tumbled through her, as his hot breath fanned in her ear. “Besides, with you, it’s about causing words and thoughts to trip over one another. *Yes. No.* She more than protection.”

wanted. She shouldn’t. Instead, she swallowed, uncertain what she

Morgan shivered. She became aware of his fingers sliding

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 127**

up her arms to clamp around her wrists again, his legs pinning her

You’re not wired for that, *cher*.”

own beneath him once more, the heat transferring between them,

“I’ve got to be. I want to be!”

down the line of their bodies. And the stalk of his erection, thick, Before Jack, she’d never had a man bring her to multiple long, insistent.

orgasms. It didn’t seem possible that he was only able to because

“So much more,” he whispered. “You amaze me. You are he tied her down and filled her head with wicked suggestions of

smart enough to stay one step ahead of a very determined psycho.



submission and other dirty deeds she had only fantasized about.

Sweet enough to addict me. Stubborn enough to defy me.  
Strong

That wasn't it. Any way he touched her would be mind-blowing

enough to work to break into TV, which I know is a tough because she found the man himself irresistible. The pleasure he

business.”

gave her had nothing to do with his domination.

The nicest compliment Andrew had ever paid her was to

“I know you wish you were.” He smoothed a tangle of claim she was dazzling. Great, so she filled out a dress well. wild, flame-colored hair back from her face. “But if you'd let me,

Whoopee. But Jack's words drizzled onto her one at a time like hot

I'd help you. I want to show you that your desires are not only fudge on a sundae, coating her fear with something soothing and

perfectly normal, but totally wonderful.”

wonderful

“You're out of your mind.”

A man out to hurt her wouldn't care if she was smart,

“You're burying your head in the sand and wasting sweet, stubborn, or strong. Even more, he'd paid attention to her.

yourself on what you want to be true, rather than what *is*,” he Her—the deep-down person she was.

growled, frustration tightening his mouth.

Jack was getting to her, slowly making her melt. With a Morgan shook her head. *No. A thousand times no.*

press of his hips against her sex, she melted a bit more. A flare of But she feared he was right. Something deep inside her arousal ignited and spread through her body. With a sharp flowered at his words. Hope, need, yearning. It was all there, every inhalation, she took the scent of him into her nose. He lingered

bit she'd tried to push down, block from her conscious mind. A

there: leather, man, cypress, mystery. The urge—the ache—to part of her—a big part—wanted to gobble up everything he had to

press up and meet him gripped her.

offer.

“You puzzle me, too,” he murmured against her skin,

“Why are you running from yourself?”

pretending not to notice how she tensed against him. “You took a

Andrew's ugly slurs replayed in Morgan's head, slashing big risk in digging beyond your own uncertainty and starting a TV

deep at her self-confidence. *You're depraved. Only a whore wants* show that encourages people to explore their sexuality, whatever it *that!*

is. But you hesitate to explore your own. Why?”

As the tension ramped up in her body, so did Jack's grip on

“I explored. I'm just not sure I want to be...held down or her wrists. He drew one hand from her own to slide against her restrained or—”

naked cheek. The warmth of his palm against her cool skin brought

“Tied to my bed? You like being at my mercy.”

her completely back to the present. Back to the fact that Jack lay

“I don’t want to work that way! It’s not normal.”

on top of her, his big body taut and tense and spread out,

“It’s perfectly ‘normal’ not to want straight vanilla sex.

completely covering her.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 128**

“Why are you the way you are?” she challenged. “Does  
be between them. Still, some weird stab of disappointment  
ached

there have to be a reason?”

like a pain in her gut that he’d acquiesced so easily.

“I can cuff you to this bed,” he growled. “Order your sweet  
Gosh, did she ever sound contrary. She’d won her way. She  
submission, fuck you half the night and get you off half a  
dozen

ought to be thrilled.

times.”

“Thank you,” Morgan whispered.

Desire gouged her belly like a hot sword at his terrible,

He shrugged and shot her an ironic smile. “I aim to please.”

provocative words. Morgan closed her eyes, gritted her teeth,

Ignoring the hitch of disquiet brewing inside her, she

ignoring her dampening sex, and shook her head. “The only  
thing I

smiled back as Jack released her wrists, moved his legs to allow

want you to get is the hell off me.”

her own more freedom. The taut coil of his spine relaxed and he

She bucked beneath him, trying to throw him off her body.

settled on top of her, elbows bracing him on either side of her

He didn't budge.

head.

“I can feel your nipples stabbing my chest and your pussy

Jack glided gentle thumbs down her cheekbones and

getting all sweet and damp for me. I'm right, and you know it.”

lowered his mouth to hers. Soft. Like a ghost, his lips whispered

“I know you're pushy! Maybe I don't want to be ordered or over her own, neither giving nor taking. Merely existing, soothing

bound or made to submit. Maybe I just want to be touched. Held.

with a sweet press of lips, of breaths.

In the regular way.”

Morgan closed her eyes and tried to sink into the tender

He raised a dark brow. “You think you want vanilla sex?”

rhythm of the kiss that flowed and lulled and seduced.

“Traditional,” she corrected. “Absolutely.”

Nice. Wonderful, even. But she wanted...more of it.

Jack hesitated, his dark eyes scanning her face. The

It took two to tango, so she could fix that. Reaching around

disbelief etched there played havoc with her composure.

Jack's head, she filtered her fingers through the soft spikes of his

"We have some...chemistry. I'm not denying that," she short hair and pressed his lips down on hers. He gave her more

---

rattled. "I just think we'd find plenty of pleasure together without pressure, access, passion. She moaned in the back of her throat.

the ropes and commands."

The kiss was timeless, endless. The sweet exchange of Staring, Jack appeared to be sorting through the sighs, the gentle slide of tongues, the total immersion of her senses possibilities. Quickly, he came to a conclusion. And he smiled.

in him as a man all filled her. Desire rose in lilting waves to wash a She didn't trust that wide, white-teethed Cajun grin for an

soothing sort of want over her. She couldn't wait to be closer, to

instant.

touch him...but it wasn't exactly sexual.

"As you wish," he purred. "Vanilla it is, *cher*."

Minutes slid by, one into the other. Still, Jack did nothing

His capitulation was too easy. Now she really didn't trust more than kiss her, sweep his palms across her cheek, her shoulder.

him. "You mean that?"

The want inside her began to build to a soft crescendo. Something

"*Oui*. You'll get nothing but kisses, gentle fondling, and in her demanded more. Again, she took it.

straight missionary penetration.”

Nudging Jack to her side, Morgan nipped her way down his  
Jack made it sound dull, damn it, and it wasn’t. It wouldn’t  
jaw, then pulled away to tug at the belt of his knit robe. She  
parted **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –  
Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 129**

the gray jersey material parted. It landed in a heap on the floor.  
uncooperative.”

Beneath, she wore the naughty bloodred lingerie with  
“I’m deferring to your wishes.” Annoyance tinged his  
cutouts that revealed both her nipples and sex. What would  
Jack

voice. “Tell me what you want, and I’ll do my best.”  
think?

“Touch my body, kiss me—anything you’d normally do  
A mental image of his growl of lust fired her. She pictured  
without ropes or demands or pain.”

his fierce need overtaking him, compelling him to pin her  
down,

Jack looked up at the ceiling, appearing to ponder her  
clutch her thighs, spread her open as he thrust his way deep  
inside words. “That gives me a range of activities to choose  
from. I’ll

her with a lot of passion and very little mercy...  
try.”

No! No, they were here for traditional sex.

Mollified by his seeming willingness, Morgan leaned

Shaken by her wayward thoughts, she sent him an uncertain

forward and peeled off Jack's shirt, revealing the hard slabs of his glance. Jack sucked in a sharp breath and his eyes heated from a

pectorals and the firm ridges of his washboard abs sheathed in soft, warm hearth fire to a toasty bonfire.

golden brown skin. Unable to resist, she sucked his flat male

"You're beautiful, *cher*." He caressed the slope of her

nipple into her mouth. She laved it with her tongue, pulled past her breast with the back of his fingers, toying with the lace around the lips to nip at it with her teeth.

bra's cutouts, skirting around her nipple.

He sucked in a sudden breath, and she smiled to see the

"Do you like it?"

erection beneath his jeans take shape again. But as she backed

"Very much." He leaned in to drop one sweet kiss on her

away to gauge his reaction, he merely stared at her with a heated

shoulder.

question.

Morgan frowned. "You're not touching me."

"Doing something like that to me would be great," she said,

Jack knew what she wanted. He had to. The ability to read trying to answer.

her body was one reason she found him virtually irresistible.

Nodding, Jack reached out and plucked her nipple with his

Besides the fact that he was brave, could be charming, daring, thumb and finger. Gentle swirls of sensation made their way from

funny, or tender. But he *always* knew just how to turn her on.

her breast to her abdomen. When he repeated the process with her

“How would you like me to touch you?”

other breast, he garnered the same results.

“Don’t play games,” she bit out.

Standing hard now, the nubs of her breasts demanded

“Never. I want your happiness. I’m trying to make sure you attention.

get the experience you need.”

“Jack...” she entreated.

“Just...touch me. Make love to me. You understand that.”

Without a word, he closed his mouth around one nipple,

He grinned. “My understanding and yours are different. I’m

circled it with his tongue, sucked the bead past his lips...then

in somewhat unfamiliar territory. I haven’t done...

*traditional*,” he released it. Again, he did the same to her other breast. Sensation

said, using her word, “in years. And never with you. You’ll have to began to tighten inside her. Yes, she wanted. Jack made her

help me out.”

want—like crazy usually.

Morgan crossed her arms over her chest. “You’re being

This wasn’t usual. It was...slow. But slow was good. Long

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 130**

rampup to an excellent climax, right? A little delayed gratification.

nothing else. Did nothing else.



Except it felt isolating since he wasn't talking to her.  
So she pumped him, stroking her hand up and down the  
Frowning, she placed more kisses down the line bisecting  
thick erection in her hand. He grew, hardened. Another pass of  
her  
his amazing abs and headed straight for his fly. He made no  
sound,  
thumb over the head of his penis proved he was still dry.  
Usually  
neither moan nor protest, when she eased his zipper down and  
the slit in the head wept with need almost from the instant she  
slipped his jeans off his hips and onto the floor.  
touched him.  
Morgan moaned. He looked unbelievable naked—a sex god  
Biting the inside of her lip, Morgan came up with a plan  
come to life, just for her.  
to...engage him in the process.  
Once she'd divested him of his clothes, Jack did the same  
She rolled him to his back. Leaving a trail of demanding  
for her, easing the bra straps off her shoulders, then unclasping  
the kisses across Jack's skin, Morgan made her way from his  
nipples,  
garment at the back. He planted tiny, hungry kisses on her  
belly as sucking and nipping them again, down his abdomen,  
which tensed  
he pulled her crotchless panties off her body and tossed them  
beneath her lips, all the way to his cock. She lifted the  
appendage across the room.  
with her hand, swiping her tongue across the purple tip,  
tracing the Finally, they were both gloriously naked. Now the  
real

thick veins decorating the shaft with her fingers, then sliding her pleasure would begin.

palm down to cup his balls.

Jack kissed her once more, trailing his finger through her

Jack tensed, moaned almost silently, and closed his eyes.

cleavage, then tracing her nipple. Sensation tingled its way through What the heck was he thinking? What did he want? Given

her breast. Morgan arched into his touch. It felt good, Jack's their lack of interaction, Morgan wondered if Jack would care if

fingers on her flesh. She wanted...more.

she left the bed and meandered into the kitchen.

Easing down her body, Jack captured the tip of her other

"Does that feel good?" she whispered against his stiff sex.

breast in his mouth and gave it a loving lick as his palm smoothed

"Hmmm." He nodded.

its way across her abdomen. He stopped short of her sex,

Then he answered again by stealing her nipple into his

seemingly contented by fondling the curve of her waist and the mouth and giving it a gentle tug with his lips. Pleasant...but not

slope of her hips.

earth shattering. Not what Jack usually did for her.

He couldn't possibly be contented. Who would be? And the

When Morgan would have cupped her hand behind his

silence—it was really getting to her. She felt closed off from him, head to force more pressure to the embrace, Jack rolled her to her

without any idea of what he wanted, what he was thinking, feeling

back and slid his fingers through her sex. She was damp, not afraid to communicate her needs to him in the midst of the hush.

dripping.

Frustrated, Morgan reached down between them to grab his

With gentle fingers, he administered a careful brush across cock. Mostly hard, always thick, it filled her hand and then some.

her clit, then slipped slowly into her folds.

She gave a hard little tug on it, rubbing her thumb across the dry. That was nice. No denying his touch made her melt. It just sensitive head.

wasn't...mind-stealingly, toe-tinglingly wonderful, like usual.

He closed his eyes and pressed into her fist. But said

What was going on here?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 131**

His fingers played inside her, thumb manipulating that rocking her world like he usually did. And she couldn't say that it button of sensation at the top of her sex. Arousal climbed another

wasn't because he wasn't trying. He'd stimulated her nipples and

sweet notch at the thought of Jack's hands on her pussy. He liked

continued to plunge his fingers inside her sex, trail the pad of his that word. And when he said it to her in bed, a part of her mind

thumb across her clit. Desire was building...but something was

revolted against the crudity but...she always melted. missing.

“Am I wet?” she asked.

“You inside me,” she whispered. “That’s what I need.”

“Yes.”

“Always my favorite place to be.”

“What part of me?” she asked coyly, wishing he would talk

With a smile, Jack sheathed himself with a condom from in that low rumble of a voice that held all the sexuality of a wild the nightstand, then rolled on top of her, a steamy kiss on his lips midnight coupling enshrouded in lust.

as he covered her mouth. A new swell of desire rolled in her belly

“Shhh.”

as Jack probed at her entrance.

Then he closed his eyes, shutting her out again. At least she

In one smooth stroke, Jack eased in, gliding all the way to felt that way, despite the fact that his fingers teased her inner walls the end of her channel, filling her completely. Morgan sucked in a

with a slide of his fingertips and the caress of his thumb.

breath as the length and girth of his erection caressed sensitive

Under his stimulation, she grew wetter. Her body tingled in nerve endings inside her.

some great places. Usually, her very skin screamed for Jack—all of

Slowly, he withdrew, easing out all the way to the tip, then

him to come to her, invade her, drive her up the mountain of need

stroked inside again in one smooth glide. Yes, that was nice.

and pleasure until she fell off the cliff. Now, she wanted

Heavenly. Desire inched up a notch.

something—anything, damn it—more intense. Something that

Did he enjoy this? Was he feeling pleasure? Morgan

provided a deeper connection to him.

wished he'd say something, moan—anything to let her know.

“Talk to me.” She pouted.

Silence.

“You look gorgeous, and you feel wonderful,” he

In, out, in, out with soft, even slides of his cock. The ache murmured.

built slowly, spiraling up. She clamped down on him as pressure

“What do you want?”

built and need mounted. Morgan strained to meet Jack thrust for

“To please you.” He rubbed her clit with his thumb again. thrust.

“Does that feel good?”

Yummy...except, damn, she wished he'd say something.

Morgan didn't answer, didn't know what to say. It felt fine,

Usually she felt him swell inside her, saw him grapple to keep his

just not as fine as Jack usually made her feel. In fact, it felt control as his body tensed and sweat rolled down his temple. alarmingly like the times she'd had sex with Sean and Brent and

Today, just smooth strokes building to a soft peak.

Andrew. Good...just not great.

Why wouldn't Jack say something? She'd had more

He opened his eyes and sliced a stare of hot challenge at interaction with the vibrator she'd reluctantly bought.

her. "Or did you need something else?"

She shoved the thought out of her mind and clutched the

The jerk was challenging her, as if he knew this wasn't hard bunch of muscles along his spine, pressing needy fingers into

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 132**

his damp back until she gripped his ass and pulled him in deeper,

her mind and body felt weary and sated and beyond happy. trying to make his flesh crash into hers with urgency and force.

What the hell was wrong with her?

Almost...almost there. But not quite. She let out a Jack withdrew from her, disposed of the condom, then lay frustrated moan, which he swallowed with his kiss. down beside her again, taking her hand in his.

"Jack," she panted. "Jack."

"You enjoy your traditional sex, *cher*?"

"You need to come?"

Too quick for her liking, Morgan remembered Jack telling

"Please," she moaned, nails digging into the cheeks of his her that she wasn't wired for traditional. He'd only gone along

ass.

with this now to prove his point. And she'd known that from the

Bending his knees, he widened the part of her legs and

beginning, refusing to accept that maybe...just maybe, he'd been

pushed himself on his elbows, changing the angle of his thrust. The right.

fat head of his cock rubbed against that sensitive spot on her inner

"Did you?" he prodded.

walls.

Morgan sighed. It was time to make a decision: Either keep

Need spiked, closing into a ball of sensation centered

running, keep denying how much she craved and responded to

behind her clit. Sweet with a sharp edge or two, it should have

Jack's domination or accept that, at least when she was with him,

been enough to send her over. But still she couldn't come.

she needed more than traditional.

Jack reached for her nipples and fondled them with gentle

She drew in a ragged breath and brushed away the scald of

fingers, adding to the downpour of sensations scattering over her.

her hot tears. His dark gaze was at once approachable,

As his stiff sex continued to rub and press on that sensitive spot, understanding—and blistering with explicit desire.

her grip on him tightened. Pressure built inside her, her

heartbeat Everything inside Morgan leapt in response.

Suddenly, she

began to echo in her head. *Now, now, now*, it demanded.

knew she had no choice. “Please take me to your playroom and

And still she couldn’t come.

fuck me as you see fit.” She swallowed. “Sir.”

Then Jack said the magic words. “Come now, sweetheart.”

She released, the ball of tension lifting, shimmering, then dissipating. It wasn’t a burst or a rush of explosion. It was a soft cresting, a smooth dissolving of the buildup. Above her, he tensed

and moaned gently in her ear.

As a climax, it felt...anticlimatic. Better than she’d

achieved with any previous lover, yes. But not the amazing, bone-

grinding, mind-blowing starbursts of sensation Jack had never previously failed to give her.

Damn it, she felt like crying. Like stomping her hands and fists all over the rumpled bed until all the tension inside of her erupted and she spewed the lava of her lust and frustration. Until

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 133**

vanilla sex. I—I didn’t want to believe it, but I think that just proved your point.”

Damn. She’d just made two admissions he had to deal

with—and he had to tread carefully. Easy first, with a slide into the more difficult.

“How did I prove my point?”

Those arched ginger brows of hers snapped together to



## CHAPTER TWELVE

form a scowl, which questioned his sanity. “Did our sex just blow

your socks off?”

Jack stilled, everything inside him froze. Shock, relief,

He smiled, doing his best to keep the mood light while he jubilation, and something like warm, sweet honey spreading could. “I’m not wearing any.”

through his chest all tumbled over one another in a rush of emotion Morgan wasn’t amused. “So you think this is funny now?”

he wasn’t accustomed to. Despite all that, he paused.

“No, *cher*,” he soothed. “It did not blow my socks off, but I Morgan’s eyes misted with tears. Her chin trembled.

didn’t expect it to. I accepted long ago that I don’t like vanilla

Sighing, Jack restrained himself from snatching her into his anything, even ice cream. Tell me what it was like for you.”

arms and darting down the hall to lock her behind his playroom

A subtle command. Morgan hesitated, grappled. Then she door. But not without great effort. He wasn’t naïve enough to capitulated.

believe that one mediocre vanilla fuck had convinced Morgan she

“What we did...it was nice. Pleasant, like a picnic. I liked was a born submissive. She had layers and layers of guilt about

just being close to you more than I liked the actual sex.” Tears

something he didn't understand. And she wouldn't reach her full

pooled in her eyes, and her blue eyes reflected turmoil. "I didn't

potential or full happiness until she got through it.

expect that. I kept wishing for...more. For a word or command

---

Since he planned to make her his—and would happily kill

some indication of what you wanted, how you felt. Something that

Brandon or any other son of a bitch who thought she belonged to

connected us. Something more intense."

them—Jack figured he'd better get to the bottom of Morgan's

The relief and jubilation rushed back over Jack. When he'd

issues now. He hoped, right now, so she could begin to

agreed to sex without domination, he'd hoped this would be

acknowledge him as her master, her lover, the man she could

Morgan's response...but he hadn't known for sure. She was

depend on to care for her in all ways.

turning out to be everything he'd believed, wanted to find for

Jack leaned in and kissed her forehead. "Why?"

years. Still, he had to tread carefully.

She didn't answer for a long time. Instead, she sat up, drew

"Your past vanilla experiences, were they satisfying?"

her legs up to her naked chest, and set her head on her knees.

He

She cast him a vaguely guilty expression. "No. I...no."

didn't prod, didn't touch, just waited.

Ah. There was a wealth of meaning there. He could have

Finally, she lifted her misty gaze to him again, proving chastised her for imagining that she could enjoy simple sex, but she'd been shedding silent tears. "You said I wasn't wired for she had to experience the difference for herself. One of the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 134**

qualities he adored about her was that she had a strong mind and supposed to know exactly who or what he studies."

will, and she wanted to use them. Even if it made waiting for her to Interesting information Jack filed away for later. "And sex catch on to this discovery frustrating. with him...?"

"Why did you think it would be different with me?"

He had to grit his teeth to keep the snarl out of his voice. Morgan lifted one shoulder in a halfhearted shrug. "You The thought of Brandon touching Morgan... Brandon might be affect me more than anyone else. I just thought...it was you. That taller than him, but in the army Jack had never failed once to kick it would be different with you. Before, I rarely reached orgasm. If I his ass at anything. He was tempted to remind his former pal of hadn't been with you, you know, in the other way, I would have that fact again. been elated by what just happened. But since I know how

Morgan shook her head, fiery tresses spreading out across explosive we can be when...”

her pale shoulders. Her auburn lashes fluttered, hiding her “I dominate you?” he prompted.

expression. “We’ve never...”

“Yes.” She flushed.” I realized that it was about you, at

*Never?* Jack exhaled in a shocked rush. He’d fucked

least in part. Just being near you turns me on. It’s also about the Morgan before her own fiancé had? Sweet revenge had just gotten

way you are with me: demanding, so knowledgeable about my sweeter, yes. But the thrill rushing through Jack had nothing to do mind and body. You manage to wrap my mind up around a million

with revenge and everything to do with the knowledge that fantasies until I’m so hot...”

Brandon had never touched the woman he felt was his and his Jack forced himself to rein in the I-told-you-so smile alone.

threatening to break across his face. Too early to smile. He had to And she would be his...but first, he had to get through the make sure he’d really reached her. “Because you need your biggest

hard part of the conversation.

sex organ, your brain, involved. Vanilla doesn’t really do that.

“I don’t think you really believed that vanilla would be

Dominance and submission can be a game or a way or life, better with me. You hoped. The question is, why? I know nothing

depending on how seriously you play. But it absolutely keeps your  
about your college boyfriend, but your choice of a pro football  
mind engaged with your body. The promise of pleasure can be  
player and a TV producer tells me you were, even  
unconsciously,  
every bit as arousing as the pleasure itself—maybe more, as  
you  
seeking a man of some power and self-possession. Right?”  
found out from doing without a mind fuck tonight.”  
Her little gasp told Jack that he’d both guessed correctly  
She hesitated, bit that lush, puffed lip that never failed to  
and surprised her. “Yes.”  
make the man in him notice. Then understanding brightened  
her  
“So you ended your engagement with the TV  
sultry blue gaze. “Yeah. I kept missing the mental piece.  
Knowing  
producer...when?”  
what you were thinking, hearing your voice urging me on.”  
“Andrew and I split up because...”  
Now she was getting it. Jack smiled. “What does your  
Her voice trembled. She looked away with a grimace.  
current fiancé do for a living?”  
Definitely something here. After he’d brought Morgan here  
and  
Morgan frowned at the out-of-nowhere question. Hesitated.  
questioned her on her sexual past, she’d refused to answer  
“He’s an analyst for some organization in the government. I’m  
not

questions about Andrew or why it had ended.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 135**

“Because?”

thoughts out of my head.”

She looked at him with tormented blue eyes, and Jack felt

Professional help? Where was Andrew right now? Never

that look like a punch in the gut. Yes, he was going to finally  
get mind hurting the asshole, Jack wanted to kill the bastard  
who’d

some answers. But it was going to cost Morgan to say this. He  
made Morgan doubt herself and cry.

grabbed her hand and squeezed, hoping she’d understand his  
silent

“I hope you called him every kind of a prick and told him  
support.

to get fucked,” he growled.

“A lot of reasons. But sex... That wasn’t going well

“Not in those words. I threw his ring back at him and told  
between us. I couldn’t orgasm with him.” She faltered, shook  
her

him to keep it.” She bit her lip, and a hint of mischief lit her  
blue head. “I remember thinking that I enjoyed his sense of  
humor and

eyes. “I think I may have indicated that he needed to grow a  
real

his intelligence, but when he touched me, it was as if he  
thought I penis.”

would break. It was always so soft and sweet. And silent. We  
Jack’s laughter was filled with relief. He brought her

didn't...connect. I didn't feel much of anything."

closer, tumbling her across his lap. "Good girl. There's nothing

Jack cradled a hand behind her head and stroked the

wrong with you, *cher*." He looked right into her eyes, hoping like tangled silk of her fiery hair. He wanted to reassure her now, make hell she believed him. "Andrew is the one with problems, stupid

her understand that not responding to soft and sweet and silent jerkoff. He didn't like that you challenged his manhood, that you

didn't make her wrong or a bad person. But he couldn't interrupt

were stronger, that you wanted something he wasn't man enough

her. She had more to get out.

to provide. You're not depraved. You need someone you can trust

"Go on."

with your safety and pleasure, mind, body, and soul. I think that

Morgan sighed. "He asked me what was wrong, how he makes you wonderful and perfect."

could make it better. I trusted him. He seemed worldly and open-

Morgan's jaw tightened. She fought more tears. And he minded. So I told him some of my fantasies I'd never told anyone,

didn't want her to fight them. Time to get them out, once and for

fantasies of...you know being manhandled and commanded. I told

all. He hoped like hell they'd be too busy fucking later to succumb him I thought about—”

to more of them.

“Being bound and fucked and made to submit,” Jack

“Tell me,” he coaxed. “It’s okay.”

finished for her, even as his fists clenched at his sides. He’d bet

“I just couldn’t get his voice out of my head.” She broke everything he owned that he knew what Morgan would say next.

then, tears cresting from her eyes, down her cheeks, one crystal

“What was his response?”

tear after another. She inhaled raggedly. “Over and over, I could

This time she swallowed. Hard. And squeezed her eyes

hear his voice telling me how depraved I was. That I was abnormal

shut. A shimmering teardrop squeezed out of one corner. Jack and—and disturbed. That I was a whore.”

wanted to hit something. No, someone—Andrew.

If the little prick was standing here now, even God couldn’t

“He told me I was depraved. That only a dirty whore would have saved him from Jack’s rage. Andrew had nearly destroyed

want such things. He said he wouldn’t stay in the relationship this beautiful woman’s sexuality to preserve his own delusions unless I got professional help and learned to drive those sorts of

about his adequacy. He’d be dealt with later. Jack would make sure



**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 136**

of that. Morgan needed him now.

hand on the back of her ass for it later, not because he didn't

"You're nothing of the kind." He dried her tears with his  
understand her feeling or her need to think things through, but  
thumbs, then kissed each damp cheek. "Did you like your  
pizza the

because she had to start associating her guilt with unpleasant  
same way he did?"

consequences.

She frowned. "He didn't even like pizza."

But she finally nodded in agreement.

"There was something definitely wrong with this guy."

"Are you ready to show yourself that you accept who and  
Morgan laughed through her tears, and Jack kissed her  
what you are?"

sweet, swollen mouth.

Morgan hesitated again. Swallowed. But she nodded once

"My point is, *cher*, not everyone has the same taste. Pizza  
more. "Yes."

may be oversimplified, but you understand. Don't let his voice

Jack eased off the bed and stood beside it, drilling her with  
play in your head for another moment."

a hot stare that demanded understanding and obedience before  
he

Another command, a stern one. He didn't expect her to

bent to retrieve the lingerie they'd discarded earlier with the

heed it completely right now. But if he could get his voice in her

intriguing cutouts he was dying to explore. He thrust the garments

head to compete with asshole Andrew's, his own voice would into her hands.

eventually replace it.

Her wide, wet eyes were a blue beacon, drawing him to the

“A—and my mother. Shortly after my engagement ended, vulnerability shining there. She looked so fucking young with bare, she came to visit me, to console me. She found some of tear-stained cheeks. Damn, he'd done his best to bring her out my...books. Erotic ones with bondage and—”

gently, break her just a bit. Now it was time to remake her, if she

“*Cher*, mamas don't want to think about their daughters could just trust him.

having sex, much less good sex.”

Morgan reached out and grabbed his hand, squeezing as she

Morgan looked at him with tear-drenched eyes and nodded.

tangled her fingers with his. As he reached out to stroke her cheek,

“It was terrible. I grew up in a religious house. Sex was dirty to

Jack saw something new on her face. He saw resolve.

her. Evil. To say she was shocked by my private library would be

Now, he permitted himself the smile he'd held in earlier.

an understatement.” She bit her lip as fresh tears threatened.

“She

“Put these back on, along with the black stockings. Knock  
shouted the same things as Andrew. Abnormal, d—depraved.”  
on the door of my playroom. Ten minutes. I’ll be waiting.”

And hearing that from her own mother had hurt. Jack saw  
#

the pale torment all over her face.

Squaring her shoulders, Morgan lifted her hand to the  
“They’re ignorant and misguided,” he vowed. “Neither  
closed black door and knocked. As the sound echoed down the  
understands the deep bond of trust and understanding a  
dominant

shadowed hall. She pushed what she was, or rather wasn’t,  
wearing

and his submissive forms. You do. You’ve been looking for it  
out of her mind. No more thoughts of Andrew or her mother.  
Their

subconsciously for years. Now that you have it, you’re too  
smart to opinions couldn’t matter. She wouldn’t let them.

let it get away, aren’t you?”

Jack had opened her eyes.

A bare hesitation. A tiny one. She’d feel a not-so-gentle

Her mother had been a shriveled woman, bitter toward all

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 137**

men, thanks to Senator John Morgan Ross breaking her young  
His gaze walked all over her, starting at the swollen mouth  
heart. And her former fiancé, she realized, focused his energy  
on

she’d been chewing on for the past ten minutes, down the pale

frustration. Andrew had elevated angst to an art form. He didn't

slope of her breasts, gliding over the flat of her bared tummy, then want to be happy or fulfilled. Their relationship had always been

zooming in right between her thighs, framed by lace, silk, and an emotional roller-coaster ride, towering highs and crashing lows

fishnet.

all in one day—one hour, if Andrew could swing it. People on the

She watched his face. The heat raced to his eyes. The firm

*Turn Me On* set had called him a drama king. He'd been threatened lines of his jaw grew tight. Her gaze skipped down past the

by any show of strength on her part, any strong opinion she bunched golden muscles of his wide chest and shoulders, down

expressed. Rejecting her sexuality had been his way of creating the farther to the thick erection that grew at record speed.

next calamity and making her every bit as frustrated as he'd been.

Despite her nerves, Morgan smiled.

Yes, she could still hear their voices, their slurs, in her

"I wouldn't be too happy yet. I'm going to make your earn head. She just wasn't going to give either of them the power to my cock and your orgasms tonight."

make her miserable anymore. If she was still not completely

Her smile faltered. If he noticed it, Jack said nothing.

comfortable with her sexuality, Morgan suspected time and

“Come in and sit on the table.”

another man like Jack—he wasn’t hers to keep—would turn

“But—”

around her reluctance.

“No speaking unless I give you permission. Is that clear?

She pushed aside a sharp pang at the thought of no longer

Either nod or shake your head.”

having Jack.

Stern, intense, beautiful. Morgan supposed she should have

Instead, she concentrated on her body, the cool air on her

been furious with his high-handed attitude. Instead, she was

exposed nipples, the bra lifting up her breasts like a proud offering.

curious and wet and wanting. And filled with an electric thrill.

She focused on the crotchless panties that didn’t quite cover her

She nodded and made her way into the room.

ass or stop the gush of moisture rushing from her vagina to coat

Jack swung the door wider to accommodate her, and it felt

her inner thighs. She felt the thigh-high stockings hugging her in

symbolic. A door opening. She would just embrace this part of her

every way, emphasizing the small square of cloth covering her

without judging it, without dwelling on what others would say.

damp curls.

“Sit,” he barked. “I won’t repeat myself again.”

Nervous, yes. But far more aroused. And determined not to

Morgan snapped to attention and brought herself back to

examine what she and Jack did or judge their actions. If it aroused the present. There would be time for thinking later. The time for

her and felt good, she'd just do it.

obeying was now. With quick steps, she made her way to the

That all sounded good, but without any idea what Jack

center of the room and perched her ass on the table, scooting back

might want—demand—from her, Morgan waited, aware of the

until she was fully seated. She crossed her legs, clenching her

ache of erotic fear and need building, building inside her.

thighs together to relieve the ache, and waited.

Jack opened the door wearing black leather pants—and

With a hot challenge lighting his eyes, Jack placed a hand

nothing else.

on each knee and pried her thighs apart, then wide. “Don’t cross

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 138**

your legs to me. When we’re alone, they’re open wide, signaling

“You may speak. Ask me questions before you answer.”

your availability and showing me your sweet, wet pussy.

Be his? For tonight? That had to be what he meant. No way

Understood?”

was the man talking forever.

She wanted to be angry that he was going to tell her how to

Morgan licked her dry lips, aroused, oh-so-needy. “I have

sit now. It was damn demanding. Overbearing. And arousing as his

no questions, sir. I want to be yours.”

stare made its way down to the wet flesh he exposed, and he

The pulse jumped at the base of his neck. He swallowed.

caressed her with his stare. A fresh ache tightened behind her clit, His Adam’s apple bobbed. This meant something to him, and the

gently pulsing in time with her heartbeat.

fact that he couldn’t quite conceal it touched her heart. But her

And she understood. This was why she thrilled to Jack’s

eyes didn’t stop their visual dessert. Her stare moved onto the domination. He was so focused on her, so concentrated on taking

veins roping his heavy forearms, bulged as he formed fists. His flat her in with each sense, in every way he could. He enveloped her

belly taut, as if he was poised to spring into action. And his cock.

mind in the sexual experience so thoroughly, she couldn’t possibly

She hadn’t thought it possible but he seemed to lengthen another

think, much less think about anything else. Soon, she would have

inch.

all his power, testosterone, and self-control directed at her

“I want that, too, *cher*.” His stare seduced and revered her pleasure. At the thought, she felt flushed, faint.

at once.

And Jack hadn’t really even touched her.

Palms sweating, Morgan longed to press her thighs together

“Do you understand?” Jack asked between gritted teeth.

to relieve the fresh, heavy ache he’d created...but she didn’t dare.

Morgan answered him with a nod.

“You understand that, once I put this on you, you are mine

He turned away to open a few boxes on the counter behind

to tease, punish, torment, and fuck at will?”

him. He stuffed something she couldn’t see in the pocket of his

*Yes. Fine. Hurry.* The waiting was killing her. Quickly, she pants, then turned back to her with something long and sparkling

nodded.

and golden. When he held it up for her, she saw it was a thick gold

“You know that your entire body will belong to me?”

chain with a dangling ruby-studded heart. It was beautiful.

Again, she nodded.

Stunning. Too big to be a bracelet, certainly. Too short to fit

“That anytime I indicate I want to make use of your mouth, around her neck and have the pendant dangle between her breasts.

your cunt, or your ass, you assume the position I request, no matter What did he intend?

what?”

“If you agree to wear this, you agree to be mine. Only

Morgan hesitated for a moment, then nodded. The

mine. Sexually, you do what I say, when I say, how I say, and unknown, anal sex, and anything else he could dream up, wouldn’t



where I say. If you put this on, the word *no* leaves your worry her. She had to trust Jack to make everything good. God vocabulary. You answer me with a polite ‘Yes, sir.’”

knew his words alone were reaching into her deepest fantasies, He stroked the ruby pendant across one exposed nipple, pushing her past caution, past her inhibitions.

then the other. The cold of the gems, the riot of sensations, forced She shot a deferential gaze up to him, her nipples hard as

her to draw in a trembling breath.

diamonds. “Yes, sir.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 139**

“I will take care of you. Trust me to know when and how table, legs parted. She wanted to ask what he had planned for her,

you need my cock. Trust me to understand your fantasies and make

for them. But she knew that wasn’t allowed. She had to trust him.

each of them come true. Trust me to know when you need a good

So far she had—with her life. And she was still alive.

spanking and when you just need me to wrap my arms around

Maybe for the first time, totally alive.

you.”

For a long moment, he did nothing but gaze at her, his dark

Wrap his arms around her? As if he would, what? Support

stare penetrating her body, her mind. She couldn’t have looked

her? Love her? He talked like he meant this to be beyond tonight.

away, even if she had wanted. But breaking the connection

Like he did mean it to be forever...

between them was the last thing she desired. The jolt of it was like

“Understand?” His voice was soft, but no less demanding.

a livewire, stunning her, shaking her to her core. Breathless.

Not really. But she was too impatient to ask. “Yes, sir.”

Suspended. Tormented with anticipation. She waited.

Without another word, he stepped behind her and clasped

“Close your eyes.”

the jeweled pendant around her neck. It clung to her like a choker, Oh, what did he have planned? Not seeing what he was

snug but not restrictive. The pendant of rubies pooled in the hollow doing... Morgan wasn't sure she could handle it. But the weight of

at the base of her throat, rapidly warming to her skin. He walked

the choker around her neck reminded her of all she'd agreed to.

around the table again for a peek.

The twin slashes of Jack's black brows warned her against further

“It looks perfect on you.” With a gentle finger skimming hesitation.

her skin, Jack outlined the pendant.

Stomach jumping, heart pumping, Morgan allowed her lids

His gaze never left hers. Never wavered. A world of

to flutter shut, concealing Jack and anything he might do from her

promise and sinful mastery lay in his eyes. Morgan had seen Jack

view.

in a lot of ways in the past few days: angry, asleep, protective,

A moment later, a scrap of something soft and silky fell

aroused. But never like this: possessive and totally determined.

over her face. Jack adjusted it over her eyes, then tied it off at the Morgan exhaled a ragged, aroused breath.

back of her head. A blindfold. She gulped. God, he meant for her

“Perfect,” he murmured. “Lie back and keep your legs

to go into this totally blind and give him total trust.

spread so I can see that sweet pussy.”

Morgan took a calming breath. She was up for this. She

She only hesitated long enough to remind herself that she’d

could do it, even if she had to disregard the wild thump of her

come here to be with Jack, to experience the ways he could make

pulse to believe it.

her feel. To embrace her sexuality.

Jack leaned closer. She could feel his heat, scent his

Dark, hungry, his gaze roamed over Morgan, heating her up

heavenly musk as he approached. It soothed her, even as it made

from the inside out. He looked so big, so...male standing over her,

her even more aware of herself as a woman, even more wet.

the hard ridges of his torso taut, defined, rippling with every

His lips settled over hers like a whisper. A brush of heaven,  
breath. Her mouth went dry.

a slide of hot taste, a forbidden brush of his tongue. “Thank  
you for Now all she had to do was trust him with her pleasure.  
your trust.”

Slowly, Morgan did as he commanded and laid back on the  
She relaxed into the table and arched her neck to receive

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 140**

more of his kisses.

her beating heart, her pounding pussy, and that line that  
seemed to Instead, she felt the grip of his fingers around her  
right

run between them with some link she didn’t understand.

wrist. He lifted her hand, easing it a few inches to her right.  
She Finally, she realized that Jack was waiting for an answer.

felt cold metal around it a click later. Not tight...but not giving  
She nodded.

either. There was no way she was moving this arm. He  
repeated

“Good. Tonight, I’d rather pleasure you than punish you.”

the process with her other wrist. Then he bound her ankles in  
the

Footsteps across the hardwood floor told her he’d turned  
same way he had her wrists, locking them on either side of the  
away, crossed the room. Was he leaving? No! She’d pushed  
away

table, knees bent, thighs wide.

her inhibitions, resolved to embrace what he wanted to share  
with

“In time,” he murmured, “and, I’m sure, after your fair  
her. Dismay stole over her, and she tried to fight the cuffs at  
her share of punishments, you’ll learn to trust me as you  
should.”

wrists and ankles.

The soft note of censure reverberated through her belly like  
Then the footsteps announced his return, measured in a  
a warning. Without being told, she knew she had punishment  
precise militarylike cadence.  
coming now.

“You aren’t going anywhere. Neither am I,” he vowed and  
Still, the sharp rap of his fingers slapping the mound of her  
placed his palm in the center of her stomach. His skin was like  
a

pussy shocked Morgan. The sensation vibrated through her,  
down

hot brand, promising more, vowing to make her completely  
his.

her nether lips. Then the ache centered right under her clit—  
but it Morgan stilled, more relieved than she would have  
thought

wasn’t pain. Pushing past the alarm and desire flooding her  
mind at possible.

once, a ferocious need seized her body, concentrated between  
her

The wet slide of Jack’s tongue brushed across the swell of  
legs.

her breast. His finger trailed a gentle path down the inside,  
then

Jack repeated the process this time, just a fraction harder.  
around, tracing the naughty cutout in her bra, so close to her

The ferocious ache became monstrous, gripping her in its  
clutches

sensitive areola. She arched in invitation.

with an unavoidable grasp. Morgan bit her lip to hold in her  
moan.

He ignored her.

Then once more, the flat of his hand struck the pad of her

“Your nipples are the palest blushing pink,” he whispered,  
pussy, with more force. Sensation zinged through her,  
ricocheting

his hot breath fanning right against one of the tight beads.

“They

through her vagina. Equal parts pain and pleasure. The vise of  
need turn a sweet, pale rose when you’re aroused.”

tightened until it strangled her thoughts. The moan lodged in  
her

Even as he teased her with the possibility of his mouth over  
throat broke past her resistance and filled the silence between  
her breast, his finger was on the move again, drawing in a  
them.

seemingly random pattern across her chest, down her  
abdomen,

“One more like that, and the pain will outweigh the

then back up. “Your freckles are fascinating to trace, and one  
day, pleasure. I’ll reserve that...unless you hesitate again.  
Understood?

I’ll spend hours finding each and every one and licking them  
until

Shake your head or nod.”

you beg me to fuck you. But not now.”

The rumble of his voice dug down inside her, inciting a

God, his words were like throwing gas on a bonfire. The fresh wave of want. He'd already reduced her entire existence to

ache he'd started between her thighs still gripped her in its

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 141**

unyielding clutch, so strong, sweat broke out on her forehead. Her

A moment later, Morgan felt the grip of his fingers toes curled against the need. And now her breasts were tight, tormenting her other nipple in a tight press. He twisted the hard

screaming for him to do something—anything—to ease the bud, wrenching another moan out of her. A tight pinch coincided

unforgiving pleasure demanding release inside her.

with an erotic bite on her other nipple.

And she'd barely been here five minutes.

She gasped.

“Tonight, my mission is to see how dark I can make those

“That’s it,” he coaxed, easing away. “Pretty.”

sweet pink nipples.”

He teased the wet nipple with the soft pad of his thumb.

Before Morgan could even ponder what that meant, Jack’s

Pleasure, pain, pleasure again. The lines blurred. All she knew was tongue slid over a hard point, once, twice. He primed it with

how much she wanted Jack to cover her, fill her, make her come.

unhurried strokes, sending her heart rate into turmoil. Certain he

Make her his, God help her, for more than tonight.

meant to slowly kill her, Morgan moaned.

Lifting her hips, Morgan wriggled them, enticing him,

Jack sucked the peak without mercy, as if he could inhale silently pleading.

her at once. The clasp of his teeth both above and below her nipple Laughter rumbled from his chest. “Oh, I’m tempted. But

anchored her in place for the hot suction of his mouth. Equal parts not yet, *cher*. Not for a long while.”

pleasure and pain exploded sensation through her breasts, darting

She sounded a fresh moan of protest—until something out in all directions through her body until, like a flash, it burst sharp with little metal teeth bit into her damp nipple. A gasp tore between her legs.

past her moan and shoved its way past her throat.

She gasped. In response, he bit harder, sucked more

“Oh, God!” she breathed against the pain.

strongly in seemingly endless draws. Fresh pain bombarded her

“I know. Take a deep breath. I have a feeling you’ll come like icy pinpricks, drawing her nipples tighter. She whimpered. to appreciate the bite of the clamp...sooner rather than later.”

“Take the pain, *cher*. Take it for me. You can.”

No. It was horrendously painful, bordering on cruel. She

Disappointing him was not an option for some reason.

took a deep breath. It didn’t help. Another breath.



Nodding, Morgan pressed her lips together.

Jack lowered his mouth to the other nipple, the one his

Jack swept the same nipple back in his mouth, clamping

fingers had toyed with previously. A soft suck, a gentle lave.

The

down tightly with his teeth again as he drew on her breast with

contrasts between sensations sent her soaring. Pain balanced  
with

remorseless suction. The pain shot through her system again.

This

pleasure. The ache behind her clit tightened again, so intense.

Her time, a thick slice of pleasure followed, shocking and  
scrumptious.

vagina clenched, so achingly empty. Morgan arched up. Her  
hips

The whimper that had escaped her once before became a  
moan.

moved restlessly. What was happening to her?

Her nipples would be sore tomorrow—and she didn't care.

She had never been so aroused in her life.

What he was doing made her body achy yet soar, made her  
tremble

The pain biting into her clamped nipple began to ease as

with erotic fear and sexual need all at once.

she grew accustomed to the sensation. The sting turned to a

This was everything she'd ever dreamed in her deep, dark

pressurized numbness. And Jack's attention to the hard little  
point midnight desires.

in his mouth grew rougher.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

“Jack!” she cried out, her fingers digging into the table’s Beautiful,” he murmured.

black leather and the padding beneath.

Every breath was between a pant and a moan when Jack

For a split second, his mouth left her breast. He slapped the uncuffed her wrists and ankles. He helped her rubbery legs to the

flat of his fingers across her mound again. Sensation ratcheted floor. In passing, she wondered what he had planned, but realized

through her body. A crescendo of tingles rose in her body like a

it didn’t matter. He would give her amazing pleasure. And sooner

scream. A pending climax bubbled between her legs, and she or later, he would detonate this awesome ache roiling inside her.

raised her hips in offering again.

Willingly, she folded herself into his arms. He dipped her

“That’s not what you call me,” he growled.

head back and dove into her mouth, devouring. It was a kiss of

“Sir,” she panted. “Sir, please...”

hunger, a kiss of possession. Morgan responded, meeting him

“I’ll fuck you, but not until I’m ready. Not until *you’re*

halfway, tangling her tongue with his.

ready. Now be quiet before I turn you over and spank your ass.”

“You challenge my self-control, *cher*, just by being so

His words dashed her hopes for relief. She sank her teeth

fucking beautiful and submissive. No one has ever pushed me so

deep into her lip, trying to hold in a groan of protest. It was soon hard, so fast,” he rasped against her throat, then moved up to nip at forgotten as Jack returned his teeth to her nipple, nipped down,

her lobe. “I can’t wait to get deep inside you and open you up to all sucked hard, and groaned.

new pleasures.”

His voice vibrated deep inside her, shooting all the way to

Restlessly, Morgan shifted her weight from one foot to the her clit. She was on a torture rack of pleasure. Amazing sensations other. She could hardly wait for Jack to get deep inside of her, too.

piled one on top of the other, smothering anything that resembled

She hoped now. Right now.

thought or dissent. She ached beyond anything she’d ever

He spun her around and grabbed the strappy edges of her dreamed, anything she thought possible. And he had yet to even

crotchless panties. The moisture pooling inside her and drenching

touch her vagina, much less penetrate it.

the delicate fabric gushed out, spreading wetness down the insides

Then another clamp bit into her other nipple, digging into of her thighs.

skin, dredging up even more response. A fireball of pleasure darted

“You’re so juicy, like a sweet ripe peach,” he praised as he straight from her breasts, down between her legs, adding to the

bent her over the table.

conflagration already burning. If Jack touched her there, even  
She whimpered as her clamped nipples made contact with  
once, she feared she would launch like a rocket, no matter how  
the surface of the table and a fresh jolt of pleasure-pain  
screamed much he demanded she hold it back. The orgasm  
was huge, so

down her spine, into her drenched channel. She tensed,  
wanting to

enormous, it would swallow her whole. Morgan fought against  
it,

fight, wanting to reach her own hand between her legs and  
give her

shaking her head in desperation. Sweat poured off her. She  
gripped

clit a furious rub until she exploded. Instinct told her such an  
the table tighter.

action would bring down enormous punishment. With another

The ache just kept building and building. When would it  
moan, she managed to refrain.

crest?

“Such a good girl. So beautifully submissive, *cher*. Do you

“And now those nipples are a deep, demanding red.

want me to fuck you?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 143**

Morgan didn't even care what she said anymore as long as  
enveloped her. The strong, thick column of his cock nudged its  
Jack made the ache go away. “Yes,” she gasped. “Yes, sir.

way between her cheeks. Morgan clawed at the padded table again.

Please...”

Only to have Jack grab her wrists and cuff them again.

With her feet flat on the floor, Jack removed her thong,

Before the echo of the last *click* finished resounding in the peeling the damp fabric from her flesh. Then he cuffed one ankle

room, the sound of his hearty smack on her ass took its place.

at the corner of the table and licked his way up her thigh.

Closer, Fire heated her cheek, then seeped down toward her needy

closer he strayed to the heart of her ache. She burned, yearned,

pussy. He was going to tease her some more? Damn it, she’d had

moaned as his mouth neared her pussy.

enough.

He only laughed and bent to cuff her other ankle, then

“Jack. Sir...” she corrected. “I—I can’t take it anymore.

laved off the juice coating that thigh—still providing no relief to Please, fuck me.”

her weeping vagina. Instead, he stepped away for a moment, his

“In my time, in my way,” he growled, then punctuated the footsteps alerting her to his retreat. Movement, the soft clash of

statement with another smack to her ass.

plastic on plastic, the opening of a drawer. God, why wouldn’t he

Fresh heat bloomed inside her, pushing past her sudden hurry?

rush of temper.

“Ah, yes,” he muttered, seemingly satisfied. Then he turned

Suddenly, she felt his fingers probing her ass, wriggling

back to her. “You’ve earned a reward.”

between her cheeks, bringing something cold and liquid with them.

*Yes! Thrill and need and longing all twined together at his Lube? Oh, God.*

words, wrapping around her clit, spreading a new warmth to her

Her heartbeat revved up like an Indy 500 winner’s engine.

heart. She was absurdly glad that she’d pleased him, and insanely

He’d said just this morning that he intended to bury himself in her proud of herself for submitting so totally. And she absolutely

ass and settle in for a nice long ride. Did he—?

wanted that reward.

The press of two lubricated fingers inside her ass cut off the

The rustle of clothes came next, brushing against her

rest of the question. The stretching and burning of tight, virgin

anticipation. Naked. He had to be naked. She wriggled her ass,

flesh hit her first. The pressure followed, along with a sense of praying it would entice him.

fullness. And when he manipulated the fingers in and out of her

“The minute I praise you, you turn naughty.” His mock

body with a slow drag, then, oh hell, the pleasure completely shut

chastisement came accompanied with a playful swat to her

her brain down.

backside.

“That’s it.” He gripped her hip with his free hand and

The laughter in his voice had her gritting her teeth.

encouraged her hips back, down onto his invading fingers.

“I’m losing my patience, and I’ve already lost my sense of

She moaned.

humor,” she bitched, knowing it would piss him off. But she

“You like that?”

couldn’t stop herself. He’d pushed her too far.

Almost without thought, almost against her will, she

Jack said nothing, merely stepped up behind her and

gasped, “Yes.”

blanketed her backside. An inferno of male muscle and musky skin

His fingers stilled. “Yes...?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 144**

“Yes, sir.”

each new inch into her body, deeper, deeper, in a seemingly

“Excellent. Let’s find out just how wet you are.”

endless, pleasure pain-filled slide.

Jack lifted his hand from her hip and brought it around

When she stood on her tiptoes, certain she couldn’t take a

Morgan’s body...right onto the swollen, hard knot of her clit.

centimeter more of his cock, she felt the gentle slap of his balls

She shouted as tingles tore through her belly with his first

against her. He was in to the hilt.

touch.

“You’re so fucking tight,” he groaned. “You’re going to rip  
Fingers pumping in her ass, swirling on her clit, sensation  
at my composure every time you breathe.”

overload threatened. She felt the blood surging between her  
legs,

Morgan certainly hoped so. That pending orgasm still  
along with the dangerous ramping-up of pleasure. She  
clamped

bubbled just under the surface of her skin, waiting for one  
more

down, trying to stop, but it was no use. She felt the first  
flutters of touch to her clit, one long stroke of his cock.

orgasm begin.

Instead, Jack gripped her hips with insistent fingers, drew  
So did Jack.

in a harsh breath, then another.

“No coming yet,” he commanded, withdrawing his fingers  
“I’m not going to last long,” he croaked. “Neither are you.”  
from her clit, her ass.

With that, he pulled back, almost to the point of

“Sir, please. Please!”

withdrawal, then sank all the way inside the depths of her ass

“You beg so sweetly, how can I refuse?” he purred in her  
again. The wicked, burning pressure had Morgan pounding a  
fist

ear. “But I must...”

on the table. Pleasure and pain. Forbidden and fabulous. Oh,  
she

He retreated a moment, and she mourned the loss of his



could lose herself in sensation like this. Close. So damn close...

spiced flesh over hers, his body heat seeping into her skin. A tear, a He ripped off the blindfold then. She blinked, trying to get

snap. A condom, she realized. Thank God!

accustomed to the haze of red light over head. Being able to see

But she had only a moment to celebrate before he pried the again didn't blunt her sense of touch or smell at all. Instead she

cheeks of her ass open and she felt the broad tip of his lubricated could see a mirror beside the door, and the strain on Jack's

cock pressing against her anus.

reflection as he held back, all corded muscles in his shoulders, the

"Push down and take me inside you. I'll make you come so strain of restraint in his neck. Veins bulged in his forearms as hard you'll scream the walls down."

white-knuckled fingers gripped her hips.

*Yes. Please, yes!*

"Watch us," he commanded. "Watch me fuck your tight Morgan tilted her hips back and pushed with her muscles. virgin ass."

The fat head of his cock slid in, pressing, burning. The pain. Oh,

Morgan watched, helpless to do anything else as he pushed God... It wouldn't work, wouldn't fit. Every time he moved, even

in, pulled out, in long, strong glides, filling her with mind-numbing breath, the pain rushed over her. In desperation, she clawed at

pleasure so hot, so huge, she could barely take it in. She the table again, moaning.

whimpered, transfixed by the sight, by the feel of him inside her.

Then he glided past the tight ring of muscle and tunneled

“One last thing and I’ll let you come, *cher*.”

his way inside, slowly. So slowly. Morgan gasped as he forged Morgan licked dry lips. “Yes. Anything, sir.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 145**

“In the fantasies you told Andrew, did you mention being her body’s needs and her fears. Would he judge her harshly? tied down?”

Would he think she was a depraved whore, too?

“Yes, sir.”

“Tell me,” he cajoled.

“Did you tell him you wanted to have your nipples

With a gentle pinch, Jack removed the clamps from her clamped?”

nipples. Blood rushed back into them, swelling them with a burst

“No.”

of need. Yes! Then the sensation rocketed down to her clit.

“Do you like it?” He reached up and gave a gentle tug on

Just as it hit her there, he reached beneath her again, fingers the chain between the clamps.

hovering so close to her aching bundle of nerves, she could feel the Great swells of pain and ecstasy tumbled through her heat of his hand. But still, he didn't touch her clit. Morgan moaned.

nipples, spun through her body, swelling her clit again. "Yes." All she had to do was be honest about one itty-bitty secret and he'd

"Did you tell him you wanted him to fuck your ass?" give her the best orgasm of her life.

"Yes, sir."

This was Jack. He understood her fantasies. Clearly, he had And Jack did, two more bittersweet, slow, strong thrusts some of his own. He'd given her everything her body secretly into her, all the way to the hilt. Morgan gasped, moaned. She desired so far. He would help her deal with this, too. She had to

couldn't take any more.

believe he would. Had to have trust...

"Please, sir!"

"Two men," she blurted as she opened her eyes to find

"Almost..." he promised. "What else did you tell him you Jack's gaze in the mirror by the door.

wanted?"

Instead, she found Deke standing in the portal, watching *No*. If she told him that... No. What would he think? them.

"Th—that's all," she lied.

Her eyes widened. She bucked under Jack, trying to get He smacked her ass and plunged into her with a series of

away. But cuffed at the wrist and ankle, she wasn't going quick, harsh strokes. Morgan cried out. More heat thrown onto the

anywhere.

ever-burning fire between her legs. Damn, why couldn't she come?

Neither was Deke. He stood and stared as Jack tunneled

The climax burning inside her was bigger than anything she'd ever

into her ass. The heat of brutal arousal on his face, doubled with

felt. She should have tumbled over long ago.

the thick spike of cock in his pants, burned into her. Deke's blue

Had her body already learned to wait for his command?

eyes locked with hers, and pristine, pure need burst through her

"Lie to me again and I'll stroke myself, come at your feet, body.

and leave you to ache all night."

She tore her gaze away, found Jack's in the mirror to

Morgan swallowed, never doubting he'd do it. "Please

Deke's right. Her gaze connected with his dark one. Locked in don't make me say it, sir."

place.

"Last chance," he grated out, stilling his thrusts completely.

"What?" Jack barked.

"Or I'm leaving."

"I want two men." The words tumbled out of her.

She squeezed her eyes shut, grappling helplessly between

Jack grabbed her hips with renewed urgency and shoving  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 146**

his way inside again. “Fucking you at once?”

from the inside out as she burst like a thousand suns.

“Yes,” she managed to squeeze out on a pleased moan.

Morgan screamed as she convulsed around Jack, clamping

A curse slipped out under Deke’s breath as he adjusted the  
down on his cock. The sharp crest of the orgasm slammed into  
her,

very tight fly of his jeans. Morgan’s heart beat so hard, she  
barely and her surroundings disappeared until all she knew  
was Jack and

heard it over the roaring.

pleasure and a release so sublime, so perfect, she lost all sense  
of

“Look at him!” Jack roared, reaching around her to lift her  
hearing, the need to breathe. Vision blurred. Her heart  
threatened

chin, forcing her to meet Deke’s gaze.

to burst from her chest.

And he stared back, his denim blue stare pouring over her

But she felt Jack’s hands tighten on her, felt his teeth in her  
bare flesh like hot acid, scorching her, as Jack tunneled in  
neck, then the hardening of his erection deep inside her. A  
long,

relentless, measured strokes in her sensitive back channel. She  
felt harsh groan tore from his chest.

each hard inch and every vein of his cock, the heavy swell of  
his

He slowed. Stopped. Morgan slumped on the table, beyond glans scraping past all her nerve endings as he shoved his way exhausted. Still, she was conscious of Deke's gaze hot on her home, propelling her teeth-grittingly close to orgasm. body.

"You'd want Deke's cock in your pussy while I'm deep in Worse, she felt every bit of Jack's tension behind her. your ass?" he rasped in her ear.

Suddenly, he withdrew from her body, tore off the condom, Even the words cranked her need up so tight it neared pain. and tossed it in the trashcan in the corner. "Son of a bitch!" "Yes, sir," she sobbed, clawing at the table. The idea turned Jack threw Deke a filthy look as he padded to the door the burn between her legs into an inferno that was about to explode completely naked.

into a conflagration beyond her imagining. "God, yes!"

What...? Morgan watched Jack through stunned eyes.

"Jack, get your fingers on her clit before the poor girl dies. Where was he going?

She needs to come," Deke pointed out, his voice calm and even,

Once he reached the threshold, Jack turned to her with a despite the arousal flaming from him.

fierce, furious stare, as if she'd betrayed him somehow. His pain

"Don't tell me how to fuck my woman," he growled.

and anger singed her in that one glance.

"You're pushing her too far, too fast. She's not used to this.

Then he slammed out the door.

You're about to break her."

Behind her, Jack snarled something distinctly unpleasant to Deke. But he took his friend's suggestion. For that, Morgan thanked God.

The second Jack's fingers touched her clit, the massive ache between her legs converged into a hard, dark ball of fire licking at her restraint, tormenting her very skin.

"Come!" he shouted.

The sensations concentrated, blurred with pain, burned

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 147**

the associated problems wasn't happening again.

Jack himself had been swearing to her that her wants were perfectly normal and nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. *Liar*, she wanted to shout. She saved her breath.

So much for all his assurances.

Damn it, these fantasies kept screwing up her life, wracking her with guilt, chasing men off. She had to move past them, get

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

them out of her head. Somehow.

Deke rounded the table, and Morgan watched his progress,

The silence in the wake of Jack's exit deafened Morgan.

craning her gaze over her shoulder as he settled behind her  
without Down the hall, he slammed the door to the bathroom.

Despite

a word. He could see...everything. The long line of her spine.

The

being strapped to the table, she flinched.

wet heat of her sex swollen by Jack's touch. The bare globes  
of her With a long sigh, Deke shoved away from the wall.

Morgan

ass. A fresh wave of mortification rolled over her, along with

watched him watch her as he drew closer, really understanding  
the

something else she didn't want to name. She closed her eyes.

feeling of a deer in the headlights. What must the man think of  
her, Clamped at wrists and ankles, Morgan could do nothing  
but

after she'd admitted she wanted him buried inside her clinging  
sex

let him look and absorb his heat as he stood directly behind  
her. In while Jack pumped her ass full of his cock? She was  
better off not

exactly the same spot Jack had occupied mere minutes ago.

Her

knowing. Yes, according to Jack, Deke was into *ménage*, but  
still, breath hitched.

what a thing to confess out loud. At least Deke seemed  
incredibly



In silence, Deke leaned over her, blanketing her cooling unruffled by everything...

skin. The soft cotton of his shirt and the hard muscles of his chest Unlike Jack.

covered her bare back. Hard as iron, his jeans-covered cock burned

Her worst nightmare had come true; she'd given in to Jack hot between the cheeks of her ass. A spark of shocking heat, too

and the submissive nature he swore she had, then told him her strong to ignore, blended with her humiliation.

fantasy. And he'd freaked. Not like Andrew had. Jack hadn't

That alone had to prove how twisted she was. Why

called her a depraved whore and suggested she get professional

couldn't she just...turn it off?

help. But he'd been blazingly pissed. He couldn't have made that

His hot palm fell to her waist, settling in the curve with any more clear if he'd drawn her a picture.

warm fingers that soon dipped down the swell of her naked hip. He

God, she'd ruined everything! What the hell was wrong

nuzzled his face in her neck, and Morgan drew in another shaky

with her? If her ultimate fantasy shocked even Jack, she must be

breath. Oh God, what was he going to do? She was already totally, terribly wicked.

stripped, bound—defenseless. The only things keeping him from

Morgan resisted the urge to close her eyes and cry. She'd violating her was a button, a zipper, and his conscience. done that once before, after Andrew slammed her. Tears didn't do

Jack's warning that Deke wasn't a nice guy rang in her any damn good. Shedding them over this particular fantasy and all

head. Morgan panicked.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 148**

This huge blond stranger was going to touch her, seduce She turned to face Deke, crossing her arms over her chest her. Fuck her. She couldn't do a damn thing to stop him. Fantasies

to cover her exposed nipples through the cutouts in the indecent

of *ménage* aside, she didn't want it or him—not without Jack. bra. Deke hadn't touched her...but she still wasn't the sort of siren She tensed against her trembling limbs and warned, who stood basically bare-assed naked in front of virtual strangers.

“Deke...”

“Um, thanks, but you don't look much like a Boy Scout.”

Behind her, his cock only got harder. “Now I know why “I wasn't,” he admitted. “I just meant general principle and Jack is so crazy for you. You smell fantastic.”

all. Besides, you've had enough for the night.”

His voice was like a caress feathering its way down her

In a flash, the evening replayed in her head. Jack coming.

spine in a sensual vibration. She shivered. Broad fingers clamped

Jack cursing. Jack leaving.

harder at her hip to keep her still.

Damn him! Granted, it wasn't Deke's fault—Jack should

“Damn it, get me out of here!” she demanded.

be taking all the blame—but he wasn't here. Deke was the nearest

“Shh,” he whispered into her hair, the pad of his thumb

testosterone-based mammal, so he'd have to do as her temper's

caressing down her hip a fraction. “Patience, doll.”

whipping boy.

“Screw patience! Being used and abandoned doesn't bring

“You think?” she shot back sarcastically as she stepped

out my best virtues. I just want the hell out of here.”

away from the table.

Deke sighed. His free hand caught the latch at her right

Her legs collapsed out from under her. If Deke hadn't been

wrist. He repeated the process on her left. Then he eased back,

quick to reach out and grab her, she would have fallen in an

withdrawing the solid heat of his body away from her back.

He

ignominious heap to the cold cement floor.

knelt and unlatched her ankles.

With a curse, he lifted her into his arms, up against the hard

“Can you stand?” His gaze snagged hers, which shone with

heat of his chest. “You have every right to be pissed at Jack.”

both mischief and concern.

Morgan covered her swollen nipples with her arms and  
He'd let her go? Just like that? Relief fell out of her in a  
glanced up into the unreadable angles of Deke's strong-boned  
face.

shaky breath.

"You're not going to take Jack's side?"

Morgan stood straight up and zipped her gaze over her

He glanced down at her with a scowl. "Hell, no."

shoulder to find Deke adjusting his fly.

Spoken as if that should be obvious. Didn't guys usually

"You're gorgeous, and I'm still a guy." A smile flirted with

have each other's backs, purely for principle?

the corners of his wide mouth. "I'd never fuck you without  
Jack.

With footsteps that barely registered on the hardwood floor,

Scout's honor." He held up three fingers in the Scouting  
symbol.

he carried her down the hall, past that closed bathroom door,  
to the But he'd fuck her *with* Jack? Morgan shook her head at  
the

bedroom, and set her on the rumpled bed. Gently, he drew the  
ridiculous question. After Jack's reaction to that very  
suggestion...

sheet up to her shoulders, covering her exposed nipples.

She had a better chance of being nominated for sainthood. And  
her

"Hang tight. I'll be back."

body leaping at the prospect...damned annoying and totally

Frowning, she watched him turn and leave the room with a  
irrelevant.

sort of military precision that shouted of his years in the army.  
He **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –**  
**Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 149**

was a soldier. A warrior. Big and ready to fight. Ready to protect.

earthquake while my best friend fucked your ass. Do you think we

Ready to fuck, so like Jack. But Deke seemed easier to talk to. could drop the modest virgin routine? I'm trying to take care of

Why did she want enigmatic Jack so much more? you so I can go knock some sense into our mutual pal.”

Morgan sighed. Apparently, Jack flipped her switch

Hmm. Put like that, Deke had a really good point.

because she needed more challenges in her life. She scoffed in the

With a sigh, Morgan stopped fighting and relaxed into the silence. Yeah, that was it exactly...

mattress.

On those same, mostly silent footsteps, Deke returned with Shaking his head, Deke reached for the tube he'd set beside a small tube in his hands. He sank down on the edge of the bed and

her. After a quick turn of the cap, he pulled it off and, with nimble brushed the hair back from her forehead.

fingers, squeezed on the bottle. A puddle of clear oil collected in

“I know you're upset. Jack broke your trust. He made you a his palm. Deke rubbed his big palms together.

promise to care for you and your pleasure. Tonight, he didn't do a

Then he put one on each of her breasts.

great job. There are reasons. Jack will have to share those with

Morgan gasped, tensing, and zipped her gaze up to his face.

you. Not my place to do it." He shrugged and set the tube aside. "I Deke ignored her and focused on his task.

can't do much about how you feel inside, but I can help the

The oil, warmed by his skin, permeated her breasts, coated outside. Sit up."

her sore nipples. Until he soothed them with the liquid balm,

Dazed as she sorted through all of Deke's words, Morgan

Morgan hadn't realized how raw they actually were.

complied, holding the sheet above her breasts. Jack had reasons?

But as he rubbed his palms directly over the aching points,

What the hell reasons could he possibly have for hurtling her high

friction sent a zing of reaction straight through her body. Morgan

into the sphere of pleasure then tossing her into the pit of despair?

closed her eyes, partly in shame. The other part of her reaction she For making her feel like a freak yet again?

didn't want to think about. What the hell was wrong with her?

Before she could sort anything out, Deke reached around

Then he changed the stroke, concentrating the oil just

her back with one hand. With a single pinch of his fingers, her bra above and below the angry red tips, rolling them gently between

with the handy cutouts came unhooked. As Morgan gasped, the thumbs and forefingers, massaging in a slow, hypnotic rhythm. straps fell down her arms. He ignored her and set a gentle hand on

And with every roll, pull, caress, the sensation built into something her shoulder to lay her back, then drew the sheet down to her

uncomfortably but undeniably like arousal. waist.

“Morgan.” His voice was deeper, husky now.

Morgan swallowed hard and raised her hands to cover

She tried to ignore the pull of his voice. But his voice herself. Deke anticipated her and grabbed her wrists, forcing them

echoed in her head, throbbing in time with his tender strokes across back to her sides.

her sore nipples.

“Let go,” she snapped.

Surrendering the losing battle, she opened her eyes and shot

He leaned over her and heaved a long-suffering sigh. The him a warning. Red flags of color dusted his cheekbones. His eyes

clasp of his fingers around her wrists was surprisingly gentle. now burned a deep midnight blue. Yet he removed his hands from

“Look, I just watched you come hard enough to cause an her breasts, arched a brow, and flashed her a self-deprecating

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 150**

smile.

to him, when most men would have viewed the first blush of her

“Now I know exactly why Jack is so over the moon for arousal as a green light.

you. Sizzle and submission all in one soft sigh.” He drew in a

Then he tried to soothe her feelings, assure her she was rough breath. “Roll over.”

meaningful to Jack. While Morgan knew he had that part all

“Over the moon for me?” She tossed her hands in the air.

wrong, she appreciated him trying to make her feel better.

“You saw the same man I did, right? The one who cursed at me

Rolling to her stomach, Morgan lay her head on the pillow

and stomped out of the room for telling him... Well, I should have

with a weary sigh. A ragged inhalation later...and she smelled

kept that to myself. But his kind of behavior doesn't say anything

Jack. Musk, leather, mystery, man. His scent never failed to work

except *get lost*.”

through her bloodstream like heady wine and drug her with desire.

“Doll, I've known Jack nearly ten years. We went to Basic

Only this time, it came with a pang of loss.

together. We've fucked women together, and the idea has never

Upon hearing her deepest fantasy, Jack had left her. He

bothered him in the least. Until you.”



probably didn't want her back. And that damn urge to cry now  
Jack had participated in a *ménage* before? With Deke?

tightening her throat was really pissing her off.

Shock punched her in the stomach, stealing her breath. Her  
mind

Footsteps sounded on the hardwood floor. Morgan tensed  
raced back over the conversation she and Jack had once had  
about

until she recognized the cadence of Deke's footfalls, longer  
and

Deke's...preferences. It made sense that Jack knew about  
Deke's

slower than Jack's, a bit more silent. She relaxed, somehow  
sex life because he'd been part of it at some point. Even if the  
idea relieved and disappointed at once.

seared her with jealousy.

With brisk hands, he covered the globes of her ass and

But if he'd participated in the past, why did he suddenly  
parted them. Morgan clenched against him and opened her  
mouth

find the idea so objectionable?

to ask what the hell he thought he was doing. But the warm

"If *ménage* is your fantasy, Jack needed to hear that," Deke  
comfort of a hot washcloth covered her back entrance, and he  
assured.

rubbed gently, wiping away the excess lube.

"But—"

"If you're sore later, a warm bath will help, but you should

"He seemed pissed? Yeah, it's his issue, not yours." He

be okay," he murmured, easing her onto her back again. "Sleep

sighed. “Roll over.”

now.”

She hesitated, but Deke didn’t notice. He rose from the bed  
Morgan nodded, watching with wide eyes as he leaned in.  
and disappeared from the room. With a frown, she stared at his  
Was he going to...? Yes, he was.  
retreating back.

A moment later, Deke laid his mouth over hers. The sweet  
Odd man. Gentle, despite getting quite the floor show  
press of lips lasted through one breath, two. Dry, almost  
chaste.

tonight. Seemingly calm and rational and normal, despite  
having

Still somehow, he managed to convey caring, comfort, a bare  
hint

three in his bed all the time. He was clearly aroused and doing  
of want. Then, with a light brush of his lips over hers, he drew  
nothing more than taking care of the marks another man had  
left on

back.

her body. He never pressed her for more, despite her own  
reaction

“Yeah, now I know exactly why Jack is wild for you,” he

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 151**

said with a bittersweet curl to his mouth as he rose to his feet.  
you shouldn’t settle for less. Jack will come around and he’ll  
help

“Wait!” She grabbed at his hand.

you. I can't tell you when or how it will happen or what will make

"How did you come to terms with it? How did you learn to be okay with your needs. I just know you'll manage."

Morgan tried to rein in her frustration. Why did everyone keep insisting that the answer was inside her, was as simple as shrugged. "At seventeen, the first time I heard a woman scream in

accepting herself? Clearly, if Jack was going to curse her and tear ecstasy under double penetration. There's nothing like knowing the

out of a room as if the hounds of hell were at his back, it wasn't

perfect way to drive a woman absolutely wild."

that simple.

"But it's not exactly what normal, everyday people next Damn it, she'd been feeling so good about her choice to door do."

come to Jack's playroom. The way he'd touched her, the pleasure

Deke crossed his arms over his chest. "Luc and I have in his touch, the praise in every caress, made her feel so accepted, neighbors. I doubt they know we share women, but I don't give a

like everything transpiring in his playroom between them was shit if they do."

right. And then...then, he'd disparaged her wants. That had to "Luc?"

mean there *was* something wrong with her, right?

“My cousin. It’s his place. I crash there now that I’ve been

Damn, had she ever been more confused?

discharged. He’s made it all warm and cozy, and is just waiting  
on

For Deke’s sake, she just nodded. “I... Thanks.”

the right woman to come play house with us.”

A mere word of appreciation seemed inadequate, given that

Morgan doubted a deaf woman would have missed the

he’d seen to her physical comfort, treated her without lust...  
but

mockery in Deke’s voice. “You don’t think it’s possible to find  
still like a woman. Tried to answer her question, but bared his  
soul someone?”

instead. His gentle attention made her feel feminine and cared  
for, She felt sad for him. The regret in his eyes told her how  
and was a balm to Jack’s rejection.

badly he wanted just that.

Smiling, Morgan sat up on her knees and reached for the

“What woman in her right mind wants to live with a

broad planes of his cheeks. “It’s not much, but thank you.”

temperamental chef and a former drill sergeant? Alone, either  
of us Then she settled her mouth over his, a light dusting of  
would drive a woman to drink. Together...” He shrugged. “It  
feminine sighs, warm lips, and thanks before pulling away. It  
was

works for a night or two. It’s enough.”

odd, really, this...bond of understanding sprinkled with a light

Deke was lying. To her. To himself. His wants had cost

dusting of desire. Morgan didn't understand it any more than she  
him a chance at happiness, too.  
understood him. But suddenly she was grateful for both.  
"And right now, it's irrelevant." He busted in on her  
"You're welcome." He stepped away, smoothing a broad  
thoughts. "We were talking about you and Jack..."  
palm down the cascade of her fiery hair. "Try resting now. You  
Clearly, Deke didn't want to talk about himself any more  
should be able to with some assurances, by the way. Hard to  
than she wanted to talk about herself.  
believe after everything that's happened, but I came out here  
"You'll have to accept your own desires to be happy. And  
because no one answered the phone. I wanted to tell you two  
that

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 152**

your stalker appears to have left Louisiana. Tell Jack, because  
I'll for the verbal ass-whipping he knew he deserved.  
be too busy beating his ass, that the creep trashed your fiancé's  
"You don't have to say it," Jack assured him, taking a long  
house three days ago and tried to set fire to your house in L.A.  
swallow of his brew.  
yesterday."

"Oh, but I want to." Deke settled into the chair beside his  
"Oh my..." Poor Brandon. He was so proud of that house,  
and glared. "You behaved like a stupid prick."  
and hadn't asked for any trouble. He'd merely been trying to  
help.

“You’re right. Morgan just...shocked the hell out of me. I  
And her own house... “Damn it!”

had no idea she was harboring fantasies about *ménage*. She  
can

“I know,” Deke soothed. “It sucks, but the good news is,  
barely wrap her mind around the idea of submitting to me.  
That

with anger like his, if the bastard knew where you were right  
now,

she’s thought of servicing two men...” He shrugged. “It blew  
me

he’d be out here hunting you down, not hopping all over the  
away. I reacted before I thought.”

country trying to draw you out by destroying property.”

“You betrayed her trust and made promises you didn’t

Deke had a point, and it seemed to solidify the rationale  
fucking keep.”

that Reggie was her stalker. She hadn’t called him in days, and

“You’re right again.” Jack scrubbed a hand across his tired

he’d been one of the few people who knew she’d made it as  
far as

face. “Shit. It was bad enough that I turned my back on her. I  
damn Louisiana. And he’d never had a good temper on the  
best of days.

near punished her for having the fantasy. She probably feels

Was he disturbed? Obsessed? Probably both of the above. She  
wretched and rejected.”

sighed.

“You don’t want to share her.”

Until now, she’d been safe because she’d been staying with

“No, I don’t,” Jack admitted, imbibing another long  
Jack. But today, everything had changed. Given Jack’s  
rejection—  
swallow of his beer. Absently, he wondered how long it would  
yet another man who had snubbed her after hearing her  
fantasies—  
take him to get drunk and if he could forget about behaving  
like  
and Deke’s information, she was ready to take action.  
such an ass if he did.  
If Reggie had made his move, maybe...maybe it was time  
“Because of Kayla?”  
to make hers.  
Nothing like getting right to the heart of the matter. His ex-  
#  
wife’s betrayal of their marriage vows with one of his closest  
Jack had predicted Deke would make his way onto the  
friends had carved a pit of fury in his gut that had just kept  
filling wraparound porch, where night was settling over the  
swamp and  
up with ire and hate over the years. Now it was thinly lined  
with a the cold February air twisted over his bare skin. After a  
long  
scar that enraged him at the thought of another man touching  
shower, he’d wrapped himself in the robe Morgan had left on  
the  
Morgan. Hell, he hadn’t cared much about Kayla, and  
knowing  
back of the bathroom door. Damn thing smelled like her and  
gave  
she’d fucked around on him had nearly driven him to a killing

him another fucking hard-on.

rage.

Trying to blot out both the feel of her tight ass around his

He cared about Morgan much more.

cock and the stark pain on her face as he'd stomped out of the

"When it comes to Morgan, I want to be a selfish bastard

playroom, Jack gripped his bottle of beer and turned to his friend

and keep all her sass and submission and sweet smiles to myself. I

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 153**

want to be the only man who wraps his hands in that gorgeous hoped... But no. So apparently, he'd hoped in vain. How could he

flame-colored hair and watches while she takes me deep in her make her his if she wouldn't surrender completely?

mouth. I want to be the only man who tastes her pussy, feels the

But then, Deke's words reminded him that she was only bite of her tight ass on my cock." He blew out a long breath. "But

part of the recipe. The other part had to come from him. that's not what she wants."

"C'mon, Jack. You know what I'm talking about. Don't

"You love this girl?"

you? You've seen it? Felt it?"

Jack squeezed his eyes shut and gripped the cold bottle in

"Do you take some perverse pleasure in being right and



his hand so tightly, he wondered if it might break. How could he

throwing that in my face?” Jack sighed and took another long answer that when he’d never experienced love before? If feeling

swallow of his cold beer. “Where is Morgan?”

euphoric at her happiness and somber at her sadness, being willing

“I tucked her into bed, safe and sound, and I’m hoping to kill anyone who threatened her, and kicking himself in the ass

she’s asleep. She looked worn out.”

for cursing her desires and crushing her burgeoning sexuality, “Did you cop a cheap feel?”

then...

Deke smiled at Jack’s growl. “I might have. She’s a hard

“Yeah. I’m pretty sure that’s the case. From the beginning, woman not to want.”

it’s just been...so different with her.” He barked with bitter

Jack knew that too damn well. While he didn’t like Deke

laughter. “Hell, I even dreamed about her *before* I knew her. Her touching her, he had no one to blame but himself for running out

body, her smell, the way she makes me feel. From the first, I felt

on her. So he let it go...this time.

like she had me by the balls, but I’m thinking maybe what she’s

“Morgan is like a soft stroke to the cock and a kick in the holding is a bit farther north.”

teeth all at once,” Jack muttered.

“You’ve got to make this right for her.”

“You’re not the only man who loves her. She’s got a fiancé

“I just don’t...” He heaved a long sigh and started over. “I back in Houston, right?”

intend to claim her, and I know it’s my responsibility to see to her Brandon. Son of a bitch! As if he needed the complication every desire. But I honestly don’t know if I could see someone of that pansy-assed bastard.

else—you—fuck her and not want to rip your balls off.”

“Yes.”

“If you love her and you want to see her happy, you’ve got

“What are you going to do about him? With him in the to give her what she needs. Or she’s never going to be whole. And

picture, she’s not yours to keep.”

what you have is going to be a lie.”

“Thanks for the reminder,” he grunted sarcastically.

So calm, so rational. So perfectly correct. Damn Deke!

Taking Morgan from Brandon would be the best revenge of

“Not only that,” Deke went on, “but whatever it is she’s

all, way better than simply emailing video footage of them fucking

holding back from you is something she’ll never give if you’re not

to her esteemed fiancé. But that wasn’t the reason Jack was fulfilling her.”

determined to win her. Not even close.

“Holding back?” Jack paused. A sick knot twisted his gut

He just wanted her all to himself. Today, tomorrow, every  
with apprehension. He still hadn't reached her, not totally.  
He'd

morning, every night. His.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 154**

Deke rose with a quirk of a smile. "What are friends for?"

*Indeed*, he thought, watching Deke amble down the steps,  
get into his boat and push away from the dock.

For a endless moments, he sat there. And damn it, he  
couldn't even manage to get drunk. Instead, he tried to sort  
through the tangle of shit swirling in his gut: fear, anger,  
possessiveness, jealousy, determination, concern, need...love.

When his feet finally turned to ice, his stomach started  
growling, and he thought Morgan might have rested  
sufficiently to

talk, he stalked into the house, threw his empty beer bottle  
away,

and headed for the bedroom.

Only he didn't find Morgan.

Her scent lingering in the room told him she hadn't been  
gone long. The ruby pendant he'd given her lay abandoned on  
his

pillow and told him more effectively than words that she'd  
left.

He'd lost her before he had her.

And that if he didn't find her fucking fast, he could lose her  
to a stalker's jealous rage for good.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

“You look adorably frustrated, doll. Don’t feel bad. We Special Forces types pay attention to the small details. You never know

when it will keep you alive.” He shrugged. “Jack would have heard

you sneaking out the bedroom window if he hadn’t been sitting on

the porch and drowning his thoughts in beer.”

The wind whipped around her again, and Morgan shivered.

A pair of Jack’s overlarge sweatpants, a cotton shirt with the tails **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

tied at her belly and a thin pair of socks were no match for the cold slice of the humid breeze in forty-degree temperatures.

“You can stop hiding now,” Deke said, laughter lilting his

“I’m not going back.”

voice.

“You don’t have to.”

Morgan stiffened under the tarp on the floor of the little

Morgan wrapped her arms around herself, trying to ward boat. Deke was talking to her. Crap! How on earth had he known

off both the cold and a suspicion that Deke’s answer was intended

she was here?

to mislead.

His rhythmic paddling ceased, and now the boat sat

“Good. I just want to get my purse, find my car, and get as stationary, the thick waters of the swamp splatting against the side far away from here as possible.”

of his small metal vessel. Had they arrived at the little dock outside

“You mean as far away from Jack?”

Lafayette?

“You’re going to blab to him, aren’t you?”

“I know you’re there, Morgan,” Deke said as he lifted the

He shrugged. “Only if he’s too drunk to figure it out tarp off of her.

himself. As it is, I expect to hear from him shortly, so I won’t have The night’s cold breeze suddenly swept across her half-to say a word.”

dressed form as she looked up—way, way up—at Deke. The

“Drunk or sober, he’s not coming after me.”

silvery moon backlit his towering frame, shadowing his angled

“Give him an hour, two tops.” He glanced at his watch.

cheekbones and strong, square chin. Amusement played across his

“My guess is more like forty-five minutes.”

grayed features.

That didn’t seem possible. Was Deke blind? Stupid? “The

“How did you know?”

man walked out on me after I shocked the hell out of him.”

“I had to step over you to get into the boat.” He laughed.

“*You* shock *him*?” Deke laughed. “That’s funny, but not

“The tarp hid you, but the displacement of the boat made it possible. You surprised him. He just walked out to think. If I obvious someone was on board...and not a big someone. That left

believed for a second that he wouldn’t come for you, I would have

you as my only suspect.”

left you with him in the swamp.”

Damn it, she’d tried so hard to get away from Jack, from Deke honestly believed that Jack was coming back for her. the tangled morass her life had become, without anyone knowing.

Tonight. Was he delusional? Convincing himself so that he didn’t

With a chuckle, Deke bent down and helped her to her feet. have to babysit her?

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 156**

It didn’t matter. She had to get out of here, away from the off at Sexy Sirens so I can get my purse and blow this taco stand?”

swamps and Lafayette, and from Jack, before she did anything else

Deke raised a tawny brow. “You know that’s the first place she’d end up regretting.

Jack will look for you.”

“Why? I want to get away. Why would you leave me with a

“Well, then let’s hurry so I can be gone by the time he man who doesn’t want me?”

decides to chase after me.” *If he does.*

A fresh rush of February wind cut through the thin

“Your chariot, my lady.” He gestured to a gleaming black clothing, chilling her to her bones. Morgan huddled further into her Hummer H3 sitting in the dirt-and-gravel lot ten feet ahead,

arms.

perched up on monster truck tires nearly taller than her.

“Doesn’t want you?” Deke asked incredulously as he

Morgan snorted. As if a guy that tall and huge needed such  
ripped his sweatshirt off over his head. “Woman, you know  
shit

an intimidating vehicle to make a statement. Talk about  
overkill.

about men. When he comes, ask Jack why he came after you.  
It

Once he unlocked the doors with the press of a button on  
won’t be long now.”

his key fob, he opened the one on the passenger’s side and  
lifted

Morgan tried to follow the train of his words and not to  
her into the vehicle. She couldn’t call it a car. It was more like  
a swallow her tongue. Every sculpted inch of Deke’s torso was  
tank with leather seats and satellite radio.

blessedly, achingly bare. She took in the angled dips and hard  
Settling into the seat and shutting the door, she was grateful  
swells of his body. The man was enormous! Those  
for the fact that it blocked that terrible cold wind.

shoulders...they had to be damn near three feet wide. Holy  
cow, it

Behind her, a rear door opened and closed. A few moments  
was a good thing she already knew Deke wasn’t going to hurt  
her.

later, Deke climbed into the driver’s seat wearing a West Point  
Otherwise...she’d be terrified to meet the man in a dark alley.  
sweatshirt and a smile.

“Arms up,” he commanded.

On the road to Sexy Sirens, Morgan asked him to drop her

“You’re going to get cold.”

at the back door. The last thing she needed was to crawl through

He shook his head. “I’ve got a spare in my Hummer. Arms the crowd wearing Jack’s too-big sweatpants and Deke’s even up.”

bigger sweatshirt, sans bra and shoes. She probably looked like a

This time, she complied. The allure of warmth was too refugee from an all-night frat party.

strong to resist. The sweatshirt settled over her body like a soft,

“As if I was going to drop you off at the front door.”

warm cloud that extended at least six inches past her fingertips and Deke’s voice dripped sarcasm. “I think your stalker friend is in

nearly down to her knees.

California. I don’t *know* it. Until I know where the bastard is, we Deke laughed. “You’re a little thing, doll. My sweatshirt lay low.”

makes you look like someone’s six-year-old sister.”

Morgan couldn’t argue with that logic. Better safe than

Torn between laughing and screaming, Morgan stomped

sorry. She wanted to believe Reggie was still in California stewing out of the boat and onto the decaying wooden dock. Deke tied the

that she’d given him the slip, but who knew...

boat off and followed her.



Deke parked the Hummer in the alley behind the club, then  
“If we’re done laughing at my expense, can you drop me  
helped her down. He stopped before the back door and  
pounded his

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 157**

fist on the cracking paint. A new blast of arctic wind cut down  
the didn’t recognize you with red hair and... What the hell are  
you

narrow lane of the alley. Morgan’s teeth chattered. Her thin  
L.A.

wearing?”

blood really couldn’t take this.

“Jack’s sweatpants and He-Man’s sweatshirt.”

With a curse, Deke moved his body to block the brunt of  
Alyssa’s expression turned ripe with X-rated questions.  
the wind and he wrapped his arms around her.

Morgan flushed with both embarrassment and anger. “It’s  
Alyssa opened the door and stared at them with a surprised  
not what you’re thinking, but don’t ask. I just want to get my  
purse gaze that quickly turned jaundiced. “Well, if it isn’t He-  
Man.”

and get out of here.”

The sexy club owner was dressed tonight in a black leather  
“Did Jack find your stalker and put him out of his misery?”  
corset just shy of illegal and a matching skirt a breath away  
from

“No, but we think he’s gone to California looking for me  
indecent that emphasized long legs encased in sheer, thigh-  
high

since he set fire to my house there yesterday.”

stockings. She stepped back on black stilettos to let them enter.

A Alyssa grabbed her hand. “I’m not so sure, hon. Come with

wall of throbbing music made the little back room vibrate,

despite

me. You, too, steroid boy.”

the doors closing them off from the club’s main stage. It was

hard

Morgan followed her into a narrow hallway that bloomed

to miss the heavy suggestion of the song, some 1980s tune

about

into an office. Deke trailed behind, grumbling that he’d never

used naughty girls needing love, too.

steroids. She barely paid attention. Alyssa knew something

about

They stepped inside and Deke shut the door behind him.

her stalker that she didn’t?

“It’s my favorite pole dancer. How the hell are you?”

The woman shut the door to the small, cubiclelike office.

Alyssa tossed back a curtain of platinum hair and regarded

Ah, soundproofed. Very nice.

Deke with disdain. “Smart enough to avoid you and your tag-

Hustling behind her desk in a surprisingly long, confident

teaming cousin. The last woman the two of you finished with

stride, despite her staggeringly high stilettos, Alyssa produced

a

didn’t walk for a week.”

big envelope. A familiar manila-style envelope. One without

“You’re in no danger. We’re looking for a *lady*.”

postage marks.

The former stripper stiffened. “Fuck you.”

Morgan’s heart took a nosedive.

Deke gave an easy shrug. “I would, but you’re not Luc’s

“These arrived this morning. Apparently, some homeless type. Thanks, anyway.”

woman said a man paid her to deliver it by hand. I would have

“I wasn’t offering,” she spit out. “Next time you feel the

called Jack to tell him, but I was in New Orleans today. I just got need to be here, send your cousin instead. He’s got charm.”

back and found them.”

Meaning Deke didn’t. What was the problem with these

With shaking hands, Morgan opened the envelope and

two? Morgan watched their byplay with a frown. Alyssa and Deke

extracted the pictures. There were only two, both taken near Sexy

disliked each other. Intensely.

Siren’s main stage the day Jack had brought her here to transform

“I hate to interrupt,” Morgan blurted, lying through her

and hide her. Had that been a mere three days ago? So much had

teeth, “but can I get my purse, Alyssa?”

happened since then, it felt like a lifetime.

The woman looked at her. “Morgan? Oh, shit. I’m sorry. I

The first picture showed Jack in disguise, his fingers curled

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 158**

around her hip, his palm resting on the curve of her ass. His mouth The blonde scoffed. "You wish."

hovered above her ear. Morgan shivered as she remembered his

This conversation was crawling on her last nerve. She had hypnotic voice and five o'clock shadow rasping against her senses.

no idea why Deke was trying so hard to get a rise out of Alyssa's

She swallowed down a tangle of grief and yearning as she temper and she didn't care.

flipped to the next picture. This one knocked the breath from her

"Did you call Jack already?" Morgan demanded.

body.

Alyssa frowned at the sharp tone. "No. I was getting ready Jack seizing her, holding her still for the onslaught of his to."

mouth. Eyes closed, he devoured her. The still picture captured Morgan shook her head. "Wait until I leave. I want to be aggression, possession in the clutch of his fingers on her neck, the good and gone before he shows up."

thrust of his shoulders, as if he was determined to get as close as

"Doll, you can't leave with this guy running around. He possible. His wide mouth utterly devoured hers. Morgan couldn't could be near."

avoid looking at the picture, her arms around Jack's neck, her She tried not to wince at that possibility. "I have to go. I'm

breasts pressed against him, her lips parted in eager readiness to

exhausted and I want space, some sleep. Tomorrow—”

taste every bit of his kiss. Not just accepting, but craving it. She

“Tomorrow could be too late. You have to wait for Jack, tingled just looking at it.

tell him about these pictures. Let him protect you.”

Deke whistled. “That’s one hell of a kiss.”

“I’ll be fine for one night. I’ll call around and hire someone

“Yep, I’ve never known Jack to be so intent on anything to protect me bright and early in the morning.” She turned to that didn’t involve handcuffs,” Alyssa commented baldly.

Alyssa. “Can I just have my purse, please? I need my driver’s Morgan cut a pained glance at her. Of course Alyssa had license, my keys, my money...”

slept with Jack. Probably more than once. What red-blooded

“What about the note?” the blonde asked.

woman wouldn’t, given the opportunity? Still, looking at the exotic

“Note?”

creature in black leather with a waterfall of platinum hair wrapped Alyssa grabbed the envelope from Morgan’s hands and dug

in easy sexuality, Morgan felt like the ugly duckling—all baggy

to the bottom until she retrieved a folded piece of paper.

“Note.”

clothes, freckles, and repression.

Trepidation battered Morgan’s nerves as she took the white

God, she had to get far away from here. If she stayed long  
paper in hand and unfolded it.

enough to watch Jack touch this woman or any other...the  
sight

would crush her. No question. She'd trusted him, opened up to

*You belong to me. Only me. I will kill you before*

reveal herself to Jack in a way she never had with any man.

She

*another man touches you again.*

cared. More than cared. She didn't even want to think about  
how

much more.

The brevity and resolution in those words chilled her.

Twelve kinds of stupid, that's what she'd been.

Reggie meant it. Morgan covered her hand with her mouth and  
felt

"If handcuffs is all it takes to interest you, I'm sure I can

her knees weakening under her.

scrounge up a pair or two." Deke baited Alyssa.

Deke caught her in his strong grasp before her legs gave

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 159**

out. Alyssa moved into her line of vision, concern and  
confusion

"Let me call Jack before you go."

written all over her face.

"I'll be fine. Deke can walk me to my car to help me

"Let me call Jack. He's going to want to hear about this."

retrieve my things and make sure I do it safely. I'll figure out what

"No, he's not." Morgan looked away, fighting the sting of to do from there."

tears that were suddenly like an ice pick in the back of her eyes.

Morgan didn't wait around for either of them to answer.

Alyssa closed the space between them and lifted her chin in

She whirled away and headed for the alley exit. It was dark. She

a surprisingly strong grip, despite her long French-tipped claws.

could stay in the alley's shadows.

"Okay, now I'm really going to call him and ream him out. How

A few moments later, she heard Deke's footsteps behind the hell did he break your heart in three damn days?" her.

"I don't think it's one-sided," Deke offered.

"I'll stay with you tonight, until you can find a new

He was delusional, Morgan decided. And she'd heard bodyguard."

enough from both of them.

And let him call Jack to come and get her and probably

Tearing herself away from both Deke and Alyssa, Morgan spank her ass for running off in the first place? "Just drop me off at made for the door. She was exhausted and sore. She wanted a

my car. I'll grab my stuff and call a cab, just to be on the safe side.

shower, wanted the solace of deep sleep. Until she got out of here, Your responsibility ends there.”

she wasn’t getting any of it.

“If I do, Jack is going to kill me,” he muttered.

If Reggie had arranged for the delivery of this envelope to

“If you don’t, I’m going to kill you first, slowly, and string Alyssa, it meant he was still determined and unhinged. He was you up by the balls.”

probably back in the area. He knew who she’d left the club with

Though Morgan was painfully aware that she couldn’t and when. All the more reason not to stay with Jack, to find a new

make good on that threat, she was relieved when Deke just shook

bodyguard.

his head and sighed.

For every reason she could think of, she had to get out of

He drove her straight to Brandon’s car, stopping beside it. here. Now.

He leaned over the steering wheel.

“Give me my damn purse!” she shouted. “I’m leaving.”

“What Jack did was shitty, Morgan. I won’t deny it. He

Alyssa tossed up her hands in a gesture of surrender and

knows it. But this asshole stalking you is dangerous. And it’s walked back behind her desk. She lifted her super-short black skirt possible he hopped a plane back here. Let me call Jack. He can

and revealed a set of black garters holding up her thigh-high keep you safe until—”



stockings. A small ribbon tied a little desk key to that garter.

“Damn it. What part of no don’t you understand?”

Alyssa plucked on the red satin ribbon, and the key fell into her

“What if this sick freak finds you? He’s tried to kill you hand.

once. He’ll try again. You saw that note.”

With a taunting glance at Deke’s riveted gaze, Alyssa

“I’m a grown woman with a brain. I can manage to hide palmed the key, then straightened her skirt and unlocked her desk.

myself for one night. Then tomorrow, I’ll make other

An open drawer later, she handed Morgan her purse.

arrangements. Jack is not the only person who can keep me safe.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 160**

“He’s the man who cares about you most. He would do request. She nodded.

anything to keep you safe, give his life for yours.”

Deke hopped down and walked around to open her door.

“All bodyguards take that risk.”

He grabbed her around the waist and lifted her out of the vehicle.

Deke nodded. “The difference is, on the job, we risk our

His hands lingered. “Are you sure?”

lives because we’re paid to do it. I have no doubt Jack would

“Yes.” She still had a stalker to contend with but she could simply lay his down to save yours.”

hire someone big and mean and ugly to watch over her, return  
“No, that’s...” Morgan shook her head, disturbed by the  
home, start filming the new episodes of *Turn Me On*.

soaring joy and terror inside her. “He’d have to love me to—”  
A new batch of ice picks seemed to stab at the back of her  
“He does.”

eyes. “I can’t stay.”

Morgan swallowed. It wasn’t possible. Logically, she’d

Morgan fished the keys from her overstuffed little purse,  
known Jack three days. He wasn’t the kind of man to give his  
heart

cursing as Deke bumped her and half the contents spilled out  
onto

easily, if at all.

the dark street. God, couldn’t anything go right?

*Was it possible?* a voice in her head whispered. An

“Sorry. I tripped.” Deke bent and gathered her brush, her  
agreement to an interview had led to an agreement to protect  
her,

wallet, her hand lotion, then put it all back in her purse. “Be  
safe.”

which had led to...so much more. Visions of Jack bombarded  
her:

She opened Brandon’s trunk after Deke checked the vehicle  
Shielding her from bullets, impaling her against his front door,  
inside and out, then gave her an all-clear signal. With a soft  
curse, teasing his grandfather, encouraging her to accept his  
domination,

he called her a cab as she grabbed her belongings from the  
trunk.

cursing at her fantasy.

“Thanks.” She couldn’t seem to make her voice any bigger

Leaving her.

than a whisper.

Jack didn’t love her. Deke must think saying otherwise

“I hope I see you again.”

would persuade her to wait for him. Well, Deke thought wrong.

Sincere. His words weren’t cute. Weren’t a come-on. A

She stripped off Deke’s sweatshirt, handed it back to him,

fresh wave of dejection swarmed her.

and gathered up her purse. “I’ll be fine.”

Morgan nodded and watched him drive away with hot tears

“I don’t think that taking this car is safe. Who knows what scalding her cheeks as the truth hit her: She’d never see Deke the weird-ass did to it. Why don’t you let me drop you somewhere

again. Worse, she’d never see Jack again. She’d known him mere

until we can get the car checked out.”

days and leaving him felt like she was leaving behind a part of

So he could tell Jack where she’d gone the minute his

herself, like she’d dismembered her heart from her body.

Hummer door shut behind her? “Thanks for the offer, but I’ll call a Perfect. How like her. The minute she had to leave Jack cab.”

was the moment she realized she loved him.

With a long sigh of defeat, Deke put his Hummer into park.

The taxi blessedly arrived moments later and whisked her

“At least let me help you down and make sure this bastard hasn’t

away.

tampered with your car.”

#

As much as she wanted to, Morgan couldn’t argue with that

Nearly groaning with every step, Morgan checked into a

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 161**

quaint European-style bed and breakfast on the edge of town with

a small overnight bag in one hand and her laptop in the other. She

took the renovated carriage house out back, which wasn’t visible

from the road and came complete with a Jacuzzi tub and a back

door for a quick exit. The whole place sat alone, the yard surrounded by guard fences. The owner swore they’d never had so

much as a flower disturbed in the twenty years he’d been running

the place. And that sounded like heaven to Morgan. She wanted to

lay down and sleep for a week, and after tonight, she just might.

But she had to take care of a few things first.

Dragging her laptop out, Morgan hunkered down in the plush king-sized bed and dashed off an email to Brandon. She

explained about the damage to his house and promised to return to

Houston and get the repairs started. She told him she was alive and safe, that Jack had been watching over her. She sent him the name

of her hotel tonight in case he could contact her—and not much

more. How could she possibly explain to ultra-responsible Brandon that she had fallen for a stranger in a handful of days?

Then, after beseeching him to stay safe in Iraq, she grabbed her

phone. She'd read on the Internet that sometimes confronting your

stalker with a firm no could make them go away. Maybe that tactic

would work with Reggie. But one glance at her phone told her there'd be no calling Reggie tonight. Her phone was deadlier than

dead. Damn!

Resigned that everything would wait until tomorrow, she headed for the blissful steam of a shower.

Twenty minutes and two travel sized-bottles of shampoo later, Morgan emerged from the charming pedestal-sinked bathroom.

Only she wasn't alone anymore.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 162**

mental note to slap him silly when— No, she wouldn't see him

again.

“He gave you the means to hunt me down,” she spat.

“I would have found you, no matter how long it took. No matter what I had to do. Deke just made it easier. I wasn’t far behind you, anyway.”

Morgan muttered an impossible wish under her breath.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

“No, I won’t leave you the hell alone. In fact, I have a question: Are you out of your fucking mind?”

“J—Jack?” Her stomach clenched into a tight ball, then fell

“For wanting to get away from you after your mortifying to her knees.

exit earlier this evening? Gee, I must be.”

He stood just outside the bathroom door, big and broad and

He flinched. Oh, it was subtle, but she knew Jack well

tense with fight, completely blocking her in and covering both her

enough to catch it.

exits. Morgan licked suddenly dry lips. Most people might mistake

“Fuck!” He raked a hand through dark hair and stalked

that expression on his face for flat. Uh-huh, she knew better.

And

closer. “Alyssa called me when you left the club and told me about

she shivered.

the pictures and the note. Deke confirmed. What the hell were you

“How did you...?”

thinking? Or were you hoping your dangerous admirer would just

She glanced at the clock visible on the wall just above his

pack it up and go home?”

shoulder. Deke had told her Jack would probably catch up with her

“He couldn’t have any way to follow me here. I’m safe for  
in forty-five minutes. He’d done it in thirty-seven.

a night or two. After that...” She shrugged. “You’re not the  
only

All while maintaining tight control over his anger—barely.  
person on the planet capable of helping me stay safe.”

The clenching fists, the thick veins roping his forearms, his  
taut

Apparently not liking that answer, Jack stepped closer,  
jaw, the inky slashes of his brows over reproofing dark eyes,  
she

looking big and dominant and worried as hell under all that  
anger.

could hardly miss all that.

“Know someone else who’s a qualified bodyguard? Who  
Nor could she miss the raging erection pushing against the  
you gonna let protect you?”

front of his jeans. But it was in her best interest to try like hell.

“I don’t think it’s any of your business anymore.”

Jack reached for her purse, dumped it upside down,

“Why, because I behaved like an ass earlier tonight? Don’t  
scattering the contents all over a little round table. He  
extracted a look shocked. I was wrong and I’m saying so. I’m  
sorry.”

little black one-by-one inch plastic device. The little gray  
letters Jack apologizing, just like that? No. It was too simple.

*GPS* on the back told her everything she needed to know.

There had to be a catch...” “You’re only willing to apologize so  
I’ll

Damn! Deke had slipped that into her purse, probably when



be a good little girl, come back, and let you tear me down again.”

she'd dumped its contents everywhere after he'd “accidentally”

“I’m willing to apologize so I don’t lose you. But whether bumped her and he’d “helped” pick it all back up. Morgan made a

you forgive me or not, I’m not letting this sick bastard anywhere

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 163**

near you.”

cry. Or feeling ready to hand you my heart on a platter every time

Morgan gestured around the otherwise uninhabited room.

you do nothing more than fucking smile.”

“As you can see, all’s clear. No psychos here ready to kill me. You Morgan’s breath caught. He didn’t mean it. Impossible can go now.”

after the way he’d treated her tonight. “Let go.”

A muscle in his jaw ticked. “I’m not going anywhere. It’s

Her demand fell on deaf ears. Instead, he growled in her possible this asshole followed you here from Alyssa’s. He could

ear, “When I put that collar around your neck tonight, that meant

have been watching the club, just waiting for you. You don’t something. That dangling heart represented something. I know you

know.”

get it. The symbolism can't be lost on you."

She hated to admit that he could be right...but in this case,

His heart? No... "It meant so much that you cursed at me

he could be. Damn it, she had to start thinking smart, with the brain and stormed out. You're the one pushing, pushing, encouraging me

God gave her, not with her weeping heart.

to open up, let loose, promising me that it's okay. Yeah, it's okay

"And you may think we're done," Jack went on, advancing, as long as it's some fantasy you've been harboring, but when I —"

closer, closer, larger and more insistent with every step.

"Think

"My ex-wife cheated on me," Jack cut in, panting in her

again. I don't want to lose you to this stalker; that's a given.

But I ear, once, twice. "I learned she was fucking my then best friend

don't want to lose you. Period."

when I found their homemade video."

Morgan rolled her eyes. "Lose me, how? As a...little fuck

Gasp, Morgan's jaw dropped. Her tirade stuck in her

toy. That's all I am to you. You enjoyed every minute of tearing

throat. He'd actually *seen* his wife and his best friend together?

away all my misconceptions about myself. Congratulations for

Not just heard gossip about them. Not just listened to their

convincing me I'm submissive. Now get the hell out of my life."

confession. He'd witnessed it in a way he could replay it over and

She whirled away.

over.

Jack snagged her around the waist and hauled her back

To a strong, proud man like Jack that would be the ultimate against his chest. It didn't take more than a second to feel the steel-slap in the face.

inspired cock prodding the small of her back. The knowledge Morgan risked a glance over her shoulder. Defenses shouldn't matter, shouldn't make her sex clench with need, stripped, Jack's gaze seethed anger and begged her forgiveness all

shouldn't make her ache to latch onto him, to surrender everything

at once. "We weren't...close. I tried to give her what she needed—

to him.

money, health insurance, time, and space after she miscarried. I

Shouldn'ts weren't her reality. Morgan did want him, with was faithful, but..."

a desperate craving that made her body tight and achy, a condition

It wasn't enough. He hadn't known what else to do. His she feared only he could ease.

burning eyes and painful silence told her that.

"A fuck toy?" he growled in her ear. "No. A fuck toy I

Jack turned her to face him and released her. "Knowing

could have put back in a box and forgotten. I could have sent one

that she let another man fuck her ate me alive. She *begged* him to of those away without another thought. A fuck toy wouldn't have

touch her." He swallowed. "She could barely stand to be in the me hard every time I hear your voice, or worried when I see you

same room with me. And then she left me. For him."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 164**

The rest of the message shone clear in his tortured gaze. pain. For her. To help her understand why he'd walked out. Morgan mattered, and he wasn't letting her go. He wasn't hiding

"You have everything necessary to make a woman love his intention to have her again.

you." Her voice shook. "After all, I've been fighting the dangerous And she'd staggered him with the fact that she'd fantasized

urge to fall in love with you for three days."

about having two hungry cocks command and possess her at once.

Jack's eyes widened, heated. He stalked closer, against her, He fought the knowledge that she ached for Jack to share her. greedy fingers curling into her hair, hungry gaze eating her up. Another man screwing his ex-wife had pissed him off, hurt "Did you succeed?"

his pride. The hot drill of his stare told Morgan that another man

Morgan hesitated. Answering this question gave him so touching her had the power to turn Jack into a red-hazed, full-much power... Yet, intertwined with a ragged catch of emotion, fledged postal maniac. She could bring him to his knees. she heard that subtle command in this voice, the one that never *Oh, God*. He hadn't stormed out of the playroom because failed to rouse both her body and her instinct to submit. She saw he was shocked; he'd done it because he was scared. Of losing her. apprehension tighten his bold features. And couldn't stay silent. Because he cared. "Not well enough for my peace of mind." "I kept wondering what my ex needed that I didn't give A smile broke across his face, white teeth flashing in her." His voice cracked. He cleared his throat, closed his eyes. Cajun-dark skin. Chocolate eyes melted. That expression...so Looked away. "In ten months of marriage, she never told me she brilliant, so happy. "Good. I shouldn't be in this alone." loved me. On that video, she told him three times in eight minutes. Then he covered her mouth with his, a soft urge for entry Ever since, I've wondered if maybe...maybe I don't have that with a hint of demand beneath. Tender control. Silken mastery. something a woman needs in order to be happy." Her cold lips warmed under his touch, quick as a whip's lash. Her

The way his intense gaze gripped hers made her breath  
body melted, heated, ached. The brush of his lips, the sensual  
catch. In those dark eyes, lurked the fear that she could never  
love dance of his tongue, and suddenly her head swam with  
everything

him. Of all the things she'd expected, this would have been  
dead

Jack—his scent, the hard breadth of his chest, the flavor of his  
last on the list.

mouth, the way he held her, as if she was...everything.

Warm, gooey feelings exploded in Morgan's chest. She

Breathing harsh, he pressed a light kiss to the corner of her  
cupped his stubble-rough cheek in her hand, thumb caressing the  
the

lips and backed away. "This fantasy of yours, it's important to  
you, hard thrust of his cheekbone. His vulnerable frown tore at  
her heart isn't it?"

as he kissed the inside of her palm and watched her with a  
gaze

She could do without it, couldn't she? It wasn't that  
scraped raw by need.

important. After all, she'd been doing without it for years.  
Why

"Have you ever told anybody else about your ex-wife?"

pursue it if was going to cause him more distress? Why risk

"No." His tight voice sounded somewhere between a  
hurting him, a man who'd already known pain?

whisper and a mutter, then he cracked a pained smile. "Well, I  
told

"The truth, Morgan. Not what you think I want to hear."

Deke after one too many hurricanes."

If she lied, even for the sake of his feelings, there would be  
This proud, dominant man had just laid bare his fear and  
hell to pay. That message wouldn't have been any more  
obvious if

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 165**

he'd paid to put it on a neon billboard.

Probably not.

Morgan crossed her arms over her chest. How important

Morgan sighed. "I'm sorry."

was it? Blowing out a breath, she tried to sort out the tangle.

She watched those broad shoulders lift in a shrug. "I

Well, she'd had nothing but miserable relationships since  
wouldn't want you to lie to me." He turned and paced toward  
her

she discovered men. And Jack had known why by looking at  
her

again. "Don't ever lie."

the first time they met: She hadn't been listening to her needs,

But his eyes raged, as if the pain was nearly beyond his

giving her psyche what it required to unlock the key to her

bearing. Morgan ached for him.

pleasure. No denying she'd sacrificed her wants, burying her

"I understand why you can't—"

desires, for the greater good of those lousy relationships.

Instead,

"Shh," he whispered against her mouth. "You're exhausted,

ignoring her submissive nature had killed those relationships.

and I just want to feel you, know you're okay."

Big admission for her, and she had Jack to thank. He'd  
Jack eased her down to the bed and removed the plush robe  
taught her not to hide, forced her to face the fact it was  
impossible the inn had provided to reveal her clean, bare skin.  
He removed all to build happiness on a lie.  
his clothes and slid onto the mattress behind her. He lifted her  
And the truth was, of all her wicked midnight fantasies, the  
breasts into his hands, thumbing her nipples. He settled his  
hard  
idea of two men taking her, at once, had been the most  
explosive.  
cock against the curves of her ass. But he made no demands.  
After  
And yes, she might be able to renounce it now, for a while.  
But  
tonight, she doubted he would.  
how long before denying her desire caught up with them?  
“Sleep,” his whisper demanded.  
“I—I wish I could just make it go away. But I'm afraid I'll  
Was he out of his mind? She pushed back tears, trying to  
never feel truly...settled and satisfied until I have it, at least  
once.”  
relax, trying not to make him feel worse for what he wasn't  
able to He frowned, nodded, turned, and paced to the other  
side of  
give her.  
the room.  
“I'll take care of you.” Jack kissed her shoulder and  
A silent implication that she wanted more than he was  
nuzzled his face into the curve of her neck.  
willing to provide. The truth hurt, ripped her insides like an



He felt good against her. With him, she felt warm,  
industrial paper shredder. But she'd done what she had to do.  
protected, aroused. Even accepted. It was all Morgan could do  
not

Lying wouldn't work. Ultimately, the fall out would only be  
more

to turn and tell the man she loved him, that she could do  
without

painful. She'd be doing them both a disservice. Being engaged  
to

that one fantasy. But with a lie between them, they had no  
Andrew without being honest for too long had proven that.  
tomorrows.

Besides, better that they crossed this bridge now, rather  
“Jack—”

than later, after she convinced herself to stay and lie...and  
surely

“We'll deal with it tomorrow. That's a promise.”

only grow more attached to him.

#

Would she ever be able to move past Jack? Looking at the  
Jack flipped his phone shut just as Morgan emerged from  
tense set of his shoulders, his clenching fists, remembering the  
feel the old-fashioned bathroom wearing a towel and an  
awkward

of that inky hair in her hands and that broad Cajun smile...  
smile. His gut clenched at the sight of her.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 166**

She looked so tempting with an emerald green towel

“He had to be. No one else knew that much about where I  
shielding her fair skin and curves from his eyes. Knowing  
those

lived, where I’d be. Photography is his passion. If he could  
make a blush pink nipples were bare under the scrap of  
terrycloth didn’t

living at it, I think he’d quit *Turn Me On* tomorrow. He has a  
exactly calm his libido. With a dash of black mascara, her blue  
volatile temper sometimes. I’ve heard whispers that he has a  
eyes looked vivid and huge in her uncertain face. A swipe of  
some

record... I’ve never known him to be violent or anything, but  
amber-colored gloss over her lips emphasized the pillowy  
softness

there’s no one else in my life with the ability to follow me here  
and of her lips. That flame hair fell in a silken curtain halfway  
down

take all those pictures in quite that way.”

her back, framing alabaster skin with little cinnamon freckles.  
She It was possible she was right, Jack mused. Probable even.  
glowed.

But he wasn’t about to take chances, especially not with her  
safety.

And Jack wanted her so damn bad, he could barely take a  
He drew her closer, placed a soft kiss on her bare shoulder.  
single breath without thinking about having her bound and  
open

“I’ll know more later. I have an appointment to chat with  
for him, taking him in every way his twisted mind could  
conjure.

him this afternoon. I'm hoping to wring a confession out of him, if Had he made the right choice?

he's our guilty party."

Too late now. What would happen, would happen.

Her shoulders drooped. "I'm grateful to know that I have a  
"Feel better after your shower?"

few hours of peace in order to plan my next move, but it pains me

She nodded, then looked around the room, bed with  
to lose someone I thought was a friend. And..." She stepped out of

sumptuous jewel-toned comforter rumpled from nothing but sleep,

his embrace. "I guess I'll be leaving here, get out of your way. I—

hardwood floors gleaming, little area uncluttered. "They came to

I... Thank you for last night, for keeping me safe again."  
take the breakfast dishes away?"

Leaving? Not if he could help it. Not ever. "You're  
"While you were in the shower."  
welcome."

"Good." She chewed on her lower lip.

Jack waited. She had something more to say. Her pensive  
"I just talked to Deke. He's friends with local police." He  
gaze told him it weighed on her mind. Was she going to ask more

reached for her hand, hoping it would help steady her. "Your  
pal,

questions about Kayla? Recant her fantasy? Tell him to get lost?

Reggie, was arrested at about three this morning for trying to  
Impatience gnawed on his composure like a rabid dog with a  
juicy  
accost Alyssa in her club. Deke's been to see her. From what  
he  
bone. But he waited.  
said, according to Alyssa, Reggie demanded to know where  
you  
"Thank you for telling me about your ex-wife. I know it  
were and was getting pretty physical about it."  
wasn't easy. I appreciate you explaining... It was a relief to  
know  
Morgan gasped. If it was possible, more color slid out of  
you didn't leave the playroom because the idea of a *ménage*  
was her face, leaving behind those blue, blue eyes wide with  
fear,  
too shocking for you."  
disappointment, anger, relief.  
He regretted her thinking that for an instant. Regretted it  
"So I'm not in danger anymore."  
like hell. And he planned to make it up to her.  
"Maybe. Maybe not. He won't be in jail long, a day or two.  
"Cher." He crossed the room and took her shoulders in his  
And we don't know for sure that he's your stalker."  
grasp. "Nothing you say or do can shock me. Or make me stop  
**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**  
**Page 167**  
wanting you."  
Morgan looked up at him, her blue eyes so clear, like a

She lifted her face to his with a sad smile, one that told him bright December day. And just now, they telegraphed her she was holding back tears. And he, the man with control uncertainty tangled with her need to give in. But that overthinking whispered about in hushed tones among D/s circles all over

mind of hers made her hesitate.

Louisiana, couldn't wait another second to touch her.

"Morgan." He dropped his voice an octave, leaned in, Thrusting his hands into her hair, he anchored her pressed his advantage. "Don't say no."

underneath him and captured her mouth in a blistering kiss. He Closing her eyes, the long lashes fluttered down to pale possessed, unable to stop himself, unable to temper his thirst to

cheeks ripe with a hint of a rosy flush. A self-recriminating smile ravage her lips, make her melt and moan...and give in. Hell, he

twisted her full lips. "I've never been able to say no to you." didn't even try to stop.

Jack hoped to erase that word from her vocabulary, starting *Seize, devour, dominate*. It was like a chant in his brain, today. But first... they had to face her ultimate fantasy. over and over, as he slanted his mouth over hers. Sinking deeper

His ultimate nightmare.

into the heaven of her, he allowed his tongue to find hers and Tension raked at him, scraping at his insides until he felt intertwine in an urgent dance of need.

pissed and...what was the right word? Vulnerable. Yeah. His gut

Beneath him, Morgan moaned, the sound vibrating into his clenched. And he started to sweat.

body. When had he not wanted her? When had he ever looked at

Despite all that, he had to know, once and for all, if he and her and not wanted to call her his?

Morgan could make it.

And last night...he'd dreamed of her again. Not as he'd

In the back of Jack's head lurked one haunting fact:

seen her on the wraparound porch of his little swamp cottage with

Morgan's total submission to him would hand him his ultimate the sun glinting on her hair. No. He'd dreamed of tomorrow, of her

revenge on a fucking silver platter—to have Brandon's fiancée in his bed, wearing his pendant, submitting to the burn of his begging him to master her. Telling him that she loved him while

demands, accepting his heart the way he cherished hers.

clawing at his back and coming all over his cock. Sweet...but the

“*Cher,*” he whispered against her lips. “*J’suis fou d’t*e idea of revenge now sat sour in his gut. Nothing about the way he *caresser.*”

wanted Morgan, about the need that turned him inside out and *I’m desperate to touch you.* He’d never said anything more focused with unerring demand on this woman, had a damn thing to

true.

do with retribution. Morgan. Just Morgan.

“Jack, we shouldn’t...”

She’d come to mean everything to him.

He heard the catch in her voice, the regret. Damn, he had to  
And if Morgan returned to Brandon after today, well...then  
change that. Erase it. Replace it with the sharp edge of joy, the  
his former buddy would leave his heart gutted and have the  
last

raging burn of pleasure. With complete submission.

laugh—again.

“This morning,” he murmured against the sweet curves of

Damn, he wished he could avoid telling her the truth for  
her swollen lips. “Give me this morning. We’ll sort everything  
else just a bit, until he had time to assure Morgan of his  
feelings, of  
out later.”

their rightness. She was still skittish, but he had to move fast  
or he **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –**  
**Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 168**

was going to lose her.

With a smooth glide of his palm under her towel, he teased

“Stand in the middle of the room,” he commanded into the  
her inner thigh with whispered fingertips, hovering oh-so-  
close to

soft morning air.

her damp heat, that sweet honey spot he couldn’t wait to taste.  
The Morgan bit into that plump bottom lip with her little white

starch began to leave Morgan's posture, and when he tapped the

teeth. Her sweet pink tongue swiped across the surface next, and

tender flesh just below her pussy in silent demand, she parted her

Jack imagined watching her drag it across the head of his cock. He

legs. He knelt to her and slipped on the matching thigh cuffs, engorged, biting back a curse at the way this woman got to him.

buckling each in place.

"Jack..."

Jack felt Morgan's eyes on him, sharper than before, but he No backing down now. He raised a sharp black brow at her, didn't raise his gaze to her, not yet. He didn't want to give knowing she'd get his displeasure without a word.

anything away, and as fucking aroused as he was now... no telling

"Sir," she corrected.

what she'd read in his expression. Instead, he fished into the bag at

"Give me this morning."

his feet again and withdrew two velvet cords and set them on the

With an obedient nod, she turned and made her way to the hardwood floor between them.

center of the room, near the end of the bed. She faced the

Let her wonder.

disheveled bedding.



Then...he unwrapped the thick green towel from her body,  
“Good girl,” he murmured as he moved toward her, their  
unveiling her lush curves—and sucked in a harsh breath of  
need.

gazes locked, making his cock jerk with impatience, until he  
stood

He left her completely bare, sunlight shafting giant golden  
rays

before her, facing the door. “Give me your wrists.”

through the room, making her fiery hair the color of a living  
flame For once, she complied without pause. And he couldn’t  
and illuminating the alabaster skin of her shoulders,  
translucent

stop a smile from creasing his face. She’d come so damn far in  
just breasts, and soft belly. And her ripe pink nipples.

a few days. Not just admitting her nature, but giving into it.

She didn’t flinch, didn’t protest, being suddenly naked. The  
Morgan knew he intended to bind her, and she just...complied.

only reaction he saw was a adorable rosy flush spreading  
across

With perfect obedience. With trust so pure, it sent a bolt of  
pride, the pale cream of her skin. So damn beautiful, naked  
and

along with a stab of hot need, straight through him.

submissive and surprisingly self-assured. The sight of her  
made his

“Very sweet.”

cock swell more, jerk. He felt strangled by his jeans, by his  
need

He kissed the soft spot where her neck and shoulder joined  
for her touch...

and enjoyed watching her shiver. Kissing his way down her arm,

“Sir, where did that bag come from?”

he nipped at the tender flesh in the crook of her arm. Her breath

And all the equipment. That’s what she wanted to know.

caught, and he smiled against her wrist, feeling her pulse accelerate. He smiled. She shouldn’t be asking, but he’d indulge her this once.

against his lips.

“When I realized you were gone last night, I threw together

Withdrawing a pair of leather hasp-style cuffs from the bag a few things to make sure that, when I found you, you couldn’t

by his feet, which he’d placed there earlier, he attached one to each to get away again.”

wrist. She didn’t say a word.

“Oh.” Her voice fluttered.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 169**

Hell, he could hear the arousal in her voice. That quivering without a word, then wrapped the cord attached to her cuffs around

note, ripe with curiosity, yet a breath away from a needy whimper,

the base of the bed’s solid cherry posts, down low. He secured just about turned him inside out.

them tight.

Jack swallowed against a harsh blast of lust. “Are you

She wasn’t going anywhere now. And she looked gorgeous,

ready for whatever I give you?”

such fairness outlined in black leather, the red velvet cords serving She met his gaze squarely. “Yes, sir.”

to anchor her in place and keep her legs deliciously spread. He’d

Not testing her wasn’t an option. He dug into his bag again never seen anything so fucking sexy.

and produced a pair of padlocks. With them, he attached her wrists

Jack stood, fighting off a shiver of desire searing him and to the cuffs around her thighs. The locks clicked into place, loud in threatening to strip his control.

the room so silent, except the harsh clip of her breathing and the

Eager—hell, shaking—with the need to touch her, Jack pounding of his heart in his ears.

smoothed his palms down her sides, dipping in with the slight

He stood, intentionally crowding her and forcing her gaze curve of her waist, as he dusted kisses down Morgan’s skin. She

to his. “You’re ready for everything I’m going to give you?” swallowed a gasp as his touch drifted down the flare of her hips

“Yes, sir.”

and his mouth found a sensitive spot where hip and thigh met.

So far so good...but did she mean it? He found a set of

Was there anything more perfect than her offering of such ankle cuffs in his bag. The super soft black leather whispered over fair skin, more tempting than palming the firm length of her legs,

his fingers, thrilling him with the idea they’d soon be wrapped

kneeling so close to the heaven of her pussy? Not in his mind.  
around her even softer skin, keeping her in place for  
This...Morgan and everything she offered was everything he'd  
anything...everything he wanted. He lifted the velvet cords  
from  
looked for.

the floor and tied each on the O ring at the front of the cuffs  
that He prayed to hell today proved they both had what it took  
now hugged her trim ankles.

to fulfill one another, be the lover the other needed.

"Be very sure," he demanded.

Reaching around, he trailed his fingers down the slope of  
Morgan hesitated, her soft gaze pointed down, seeking his.  
her buttocks, gripped the back of her thighs. Was she soft  
Yes, she wanted to know what was different, what awaited her.  
But

everywhere? Yeah, and it just tore him up. He, who'd killed in  
she didn't ask, just stared.

battle, taken a bullet, sustained scars from more than one knife  
"I'm sure," she whispered. And the confidence on her face  
fight, learned to tell his enemy to fuck off in eight languages,  
told him she meant it. "Sir."

touched Morgan and her seemingly untouched skin. He glided  
his

"You're amazing, *cher*."

way down clear to her ankles, his mouth following the same  
hot

The sight of those blue eyes, filled with lust and trust was a  
path until she was clenching her thighs, until her legs tensed

kick to his self-control. It was a fucking wonder he didn't tear off beneath his hands and mouth.

his clothes and ram himself inside her sweet body in two seconds

"Are you wet?" he asked.

or less.

"Yes," she gasped, watching his every move with wide

Instead, Jack urged her legs farther apart. Morgan complied eyes. Not stunned or shocked. Aroused. Dilated. Hungry.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 170**

"Morgan?" he growled in warning.

"Yes, I'm wet, sir."

"Better," he said, nibbling at the creamy flesh of her inner thigh before gliding his tongue up her hip.

The sound of her moan resonated in his ears. Damn, how the hell was he going to last, without rising to his feet, tearing off his pants and taking what they both needed?

With gentle tugs on all her bindings, Jack assured himself they were secure. Just one more...

Reaching to his bag again, he pulled out a thick red silk scarf. *Perfect*, he thought, folding the crimson scrap of cloth and settling it over her eyes. Morgan could touch and taste and hear—

and through those senses experience everything she needed. But

she could not move or see, which allowed him the control he wanted and might need...just in case.

For a mere instant, Morgan tensed. But she forced herself

to exhale, to relax. Proud of her calm, dazzled by her show of absolute trust, he kissed her mouth lightly, savoring the flavor of her hot tension and bee-stung berry lips.

Fists clenched, he eased back and stepped past her. A deep breath, a little prayer. Then he forced himself to uncurl his fingers, cross the room and open the hotel room door.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 171**

knuckles swept over the fringe of her pubic hair.

His hand shook.

Morgan held her breath, waiting, wondering... What was going on?

Slowly, he knelt between her feet. His hot breath hit her right— Oh, yes!—there as he parted her slick flesh with his thumbs and exposed her every secret, stripping her bare of

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

uncertainty and inhibitions, ripping out any concept of wrong or

taboo, and replacing it with need. Morgan simply *felt* his eyes Morgan felt Jack walk past her. Behind her, the door

devouring her most secret flesh, hungry, singleminded.

opened. A draft of February air breezed a chill across her skin.

Blood rushed through her body. A rush of tingles scraping

Then footsteps.

across her skin made her feel so totally alive. Cool air against her She tamped down her panic. He wasn't going anywhere.

breasts contrasted with a blast of heat at her back...and the rasp of He couldn't be. The raw tenderness in his eyes and the unrelenting

Jack's hot tongue dragging across her clit.

grip of his hands on her convinced Morgan of that. So what the

Her head fell back on a gasp.

hell was he up to?

"That's it," he murmured. He laved her again. "Cream for

He cupped his hand around her shoulder and settled against me."

her, whispering in her ear, "The safe word is still *swamp*."

He followed the gentle nibble with a firm swipe of his

Even blindfolded, his tension couldn't have been clearer if thumb right there, where she needed it. Once, twice, punctuated by

he drew her a picture. "Okay, but I won't need it."

his seeking tongue again. And again. Then his mouth covered her,

Jack exhaled. Warm breath on her cheek, then the soft skate his tongue lashing her clit, toying, stroking, inflaming.

of his fingertips down the slope of her breast, followed by the hard The rise of pleasure was sharp, beyond fighting—even if pull of his mouth on her nipple.

she'd wanted to. But resisting was the last thing on her mind.

Instantly, a path of fire zinged between her breasts and her Thick desire stormed her...along with a bittersweet curl of clit. Moisture rushed between her folds. The pleasure was so emotion. How was she going to do without Jack after he'd finished

bright, Morgan even felt a curious warmth at her back. She with her?

couldn't squeeze her legs together for relief, since Jack had tied

Shoving the thought aside, Morgan focused on the here and them so far apart. With her wrists attached to her thighs, she now. Desire. She dug her fingernails into her thighs. In the face of couldn't raise her arms to clasp him closer when he shifted to the

her spiraling need, a brief sting was the only sensation she could

other breast, making the second nipple as hard as the first. A moan spare. Everything else was focused on Jack and his mouth. And

slipped free from her throat.

when he worked a pair of fingers into her, she gasped, hanging on

Caressing a hand down her belly, Jack rewarded her with a



the edge by a thread.

soft touch. His fingers made teasing circles across her thighs.  
His

“You can’t come yet, Morgan.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 172**

She whimpered. “Please...”

“Come for us,” Deke demanded in her ear, pressing in on

“Tell me again, do you want everything I can give you?”

her swollen bud as Jack scraped the inflamed nerves inside her

“Yes! Yes, sir. Now.”

channel.

A hesitation, brief, bare. Then Jack sucked her clit into his

“Now!” Jack demanded.

mouth. An ache bit into her belly with unmerciful ruthlessness  
and

A flood of blood and need crashed in on her pussy and

pushed her closer to the abyss of pleasure. She whimpered as  
the

burst, exploding out with pleasure and a scream of shocked

hot swell of need rushed up on her, pushing her close, so close  
to

ecstasy. Her body clamped Jack’s fingers in a vice grip. Deke

the edges of her restraint. Every muscle in her body tensed  
under

groaned as she all but drenched his hand with her cream.

the lash of Jack’s lazy, insistent tongue.

Slowly, they brought her down. Gentle touches, so easy.

“Good,” he murmured against her wet, swollen sex. “Then

They worked in perfect tandem, in silence, both reading the cues of come for us.”

her body perfectly. Stunned, awed, Morgan felt tears prick the “Us?”

back of her eyes. The reality of what had just happened roused a

Shock pinged through her. Had she heard him correctly? fresh ache deep inside her.

As the word fell out of her mouth, the hot press of a huge Jack slipped his digits from her channel’s grip and removed naked chest enveloped her back. And Jack’s still knelt between her

the blindfold. She blinked against the sudden rush of sunlight as

feet, her clit captive of the slow swipes of his tongue, two of his each of the men rounded her shoulder and came to stand in front of

fingers pressed deep inside her.

her.

From behind her, a pair of broad hands reached, cupping

Brown eyes and denim blue, both piercing, questioning, her breasts, squeezing her nipples in a tight grip just short of pain.

scorching. Morgan shivered, and they pressed closer, their wide,

The stranger dropped a tentative kiss just behind her ear, as muscled chests covered in fever-hot skin and nearly eclipsing her.

if testing his welcome. “Hi, doll.”

She didn’t have to look down to know she’d see two hungry cocks

Scratchy, slightly short of breath, yes, but that voice...

intent on giving and taking satisfaction.

Deke.

Morgan drew in a shocked breath. Oh, unreal. She and Jack

*Oh, my... Was this really happening?*

and Deke, mostly naked and in a hotel room... This was actually

As she gasped, he swept a burning palm from her breast, happening. Trepidation, forbidden thrill, a flare of arousal—the

down her belly, delving straight into her damp curls. The rough

feelings bombarded her so quickly, Morgan could barely sort one

skin of his fingertips brushed over her clit, while Jack's fingers from the other.

were lodged tight inside her. Two insistent men, both strumming

Except amazement. Just last night, Jack had poured out his parts of her body that made her scream. The friction and pressure

guts, his heart, his pain, his fear. He'd been afraid that sharing her just about killed her, obliterating everything but the ability to ache meant losing her. What had changed?

with pent-up need. She couldn't breathe, couldn't think. She

Deke thrust his finger in his mouth, sampling the juice of

couldn't do anything but revel in the electric sensation arcing her arousal with a wicked smile. At the sight, a fresh flush swept

through her body.

through her, and Morgan cursed her fair skin. He just laughed.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 173**

Jack's gaze was more serious. "Deke and I are here to grant  
vise on her own gaze. He needed her. The fact he was willing  
to do

your fantasy, *cher*."

this to keep her stunned her utterly. Joy burst through her  
chest.

"We won't hurt you, just give you the good kind of pain,"

"Are *you* sure?" Her voice trembled.

Deke promised with a wink.

"Watching you flush and swell in the sunlight, feeling you

"Why?" Her questioning gaze fell to Jack, and the whisper  
writhe on my fingers, seeing you smile, yeah." Jack sounded  
like

fell out of her mouth.

he'd swallowed a truckload of gravel. "Yeah."

He cupped her face in his hands and stepped closer. "I

A beautiful answer, but still...she had to ask the hard

realized that, if I want to claim you as mine, I had to have the  
balls question. "You're not going to turn into Destructor on  
steroids,

to give you everything you need. Otherwise, I can't truly be  
your

watching Deke touch me? This isn't going to upset you?"

master and I'm no better than that jackoff, Andrew. Tell me  
this is Cupping her cheek, he sighed. "If I don't give this to  
you,

what you want, and you'll have it now. We're both ready to  
devote

I'll lose you anyway. And I believe we belong together, *cher*.  
We today to your pleasure."

have to trust each other to have any tomorrows." A reluctant  
smile

*Claim me as his? As in beyond today?* Her heart picked up  
tugged at his wide mouth. "Besides, you looked hot as hell  
coming

speed at the scary, wonderful thought of having Jack in her life  
for both of us."

forever.

"Jack and I talked about it early this morning. His head is  
She stood, unmoving, struck mute, mind racing.  
in the right place, doll."

"Oh...wow."

"So it's up to you." Jack swallowed. "All it takes is one  
"I'm more than ready." A thread of ironic laughter wove its  
word, and we'll fuck you beyond your every dream. You just  
have

way through Deke's voice.

to accept your needs. Yes or no."

"Do you really want this?" Jack murmured.

The moment stunned her...humbled her. Simply amazing.

Those words pounded a heavy drumbeat of desire between

Seemingly implacable Jack was willing to put aside his every  
her legs...where both of their fingers had possessed her and  
pushed

misgiving to grant her wish. A ballsy move, one that proved he  
her to a searing realm of pleasure.

really didn't want to let her go. Because he cared.

Sensation overload aside, this was a moment of truth: Did

Thank God, because her every attempt to shut him out of  
she want both of them? Could she handle a *ménage*? Could  
she her body and heart had failed miserably.  
take receiving what she'd told Jack she's always wanted?  
Now, all she had to do to fulfill her fantasy was be brave  
An image of Jack and Deke both filling her, fucking her,  
enough to accept her wants, the pleasure, their demand.  
nearly had her moaning. Her breasts ached, her clit already  
A few short days ago, she couldn't have accepted this offer.  
throbbed for attention again. And her heart swelled as she  
realized Oh, she would have wanted to. Ached and yearned to,  
in fact.  
that Jack had put aside his fear and given her his trust so that  
she Jack's words alone would have set her on fire. But shame  
and  
could experience her fantasy.  
worry and fear would have doused it in the end.  
He clenched his jaw, fingers tightening on her cheeks. He  
Now...no embarrassment, no apprehension. Just a whole,  
needed her answer. She searched his familiar dark eyes, now  
like a  
open acceptance of who she was and what she wanted.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 174**

Jack had set her free. For that alone, she loved him.  
That need resonated in his moan as he took her mouth and  
Fresh tears pooled in her eyes as she looked at Jack. "I'd  
pushed his way inside. Deft, seductive, his clever tongue  
danced

hug you, if I could.”

around hers, flirting, tasting, then backing away. He taunted,  
She wiggled her hands beneath her wrists bound to her  
giving her brief taste of his rich flavor, tinged with something  
thighs as dual tones of male laughter filled the room.  
minty.

“Is that a yes?”

She was drowning in a sea of need. The feel of Deke’s

“Yes.” She pressed her body against his. “Please, yes.”

mouth over hers as Jack toyed with her nipple was making for  
one

“*Cher*, it will be our pleasure.”

hell of a riptide.

He sealed the deal with a kiss, slanting his hungry mouth

Her ability to tread the waters of heavy desire didn’t

over her and urging her lips apart for him. Immediately, he  
filled

improve any when Deke nipped his way down to her other  
nipple

her mouth with his unique flavor, something dark, spiced with  
and both men each worked at a sensitive nub. If she hadn’t  
already

Cajun coffee, whiskey, and mystery. She’d know the addictive  
been incredibly wet, the sight of two male heads, one like  
tawny

taste of Jack anywhere. She also tasted just a hint of her own  
light, the other like silken midnight, would have had her juices  
juices. But the gentle note of his kiss was new, infused with  
not

running like a leaky faucet. Blood rushed through her body.  
Desire

just desire, but hope and promise. Morgan melted.

burned achy and tight just under her skin, pooling between her

Deke wasn't content to be idle, though. He pressed his hot  
legs, creating a sea of need.

mouth to the sensitive curve between her neck and shoulder,

The tugs of their mouths, different times, different

skimming his fingers up her body, from hip to navel, up again  
to

pressures, produced a unified result: arousal that had her  
sweating.

swirl around her taut nipple begging for attention.

Sensations darted from her nipples to her clit in a rapid-fire

His thumb brushed across it once. Just once. She gasped  
sequence her body could barely process.

into Jack's mouth. Then she moaned when her sexy Cajun  
hottie

"Feel good?" Jack lifted his head, lips wet and red and so  
pinched its mate.

damn kissable.

The two of them together were going to be pure

She whimpered in answer.

combustion.

"I think that's a yes," Deke whispered beside him.

A rush of hot desire blasted her, and her knees damn near

Standing at her side now, Jack urged her toward the bed.

turned liquid as Jack pressed kisses down her jaw, her  
shoulder,

Deke helped, one hand guiding her by the shoulder, the other



working his way straight to the nipple he still gripped between his palming her ass. She waited for them to help her onto it.

thumb and forefinger.

They didn't.

Deke apparently took that as a sign because he curled huge

When her thighs bumped the mattress, they bent her over palms around her cheeks and lifted her face to his, eyes burning.

the rumpled bed, then disappeared behind her. Morgan closed her

All traces of the teasing big guy who called her "doll" had been

eyes, aware of being naked and vulnerable and exposed. And of

replaced by one hard, hungry man. A fresh bolt of lust crashed in

two sets of eyes devouring her.

her belly.

Zipper rasped, clothes rustled. Someone dipped a hand

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 175**

into that little bag of tricks near her feet. Foil ripped. Her heart her lip, wriggled her hips. Jack merely kept her in place, stretched picked up speed. What were they doing? No anxiety in the request,

out on a torturous rack of denial.

just dying-to-know curiosity. A million forbidden images flooded

"You want me to fuck you?" he demanded.

her brain, each sexier than the last. And all because Jack wanted to

“Yes, sir.”

fulfill her so he could claim her.

“I will,” he whispered in her ear. “When you suck his

She’d barely recovered from the thought when Deke eased  
cock.”

around the side of the bed again, this time completely naked.  
She’d His words lashed her with like a whip of desire, stinging  
seen the hard muscles that slabbed his chest and rippled across  
his across her senses. Morgan tossed a wide-eyed stare over  
her

abdomen. Even more solid, lean flesh roped his thighs and  
framed

shoulder.

a thick, heavily veined cock. Her gaze flew from it to his face,  
and

“I want to watch your mouth on him while I fuck you. Do it  
he shot her a wry smile as he climbed on the bed.  
now.”

Behind her, Jack grabbed her hips and leaned over her

A heavy craving gnawed at her, pulsing low in her belly.

back, the hair dusting his chest rasping over sensitive skin. She  
She wanted to. And she wanted Jack to watch—and get hot as  
hell.

shivered.

Turning back to Deke, Morgan focused on his erection. He

“I’m the director here, Morgan. What I say goes. Are you  
was definitely in proportion with the rest of his gargantuan  
body.

clear?”

There was no way she was going to be able to take him all in her

She swallowed, nodded. “Yes, sir.”

mouth. Ever.

“Good. Deke...” Jack lifted one of the hands from her hips,

But it could be damn fun trying, knowing that with every

just for a moment, apparently giving the other man some sort of

swipe of her tongue, she’d be driving not just Deke out of his head signal.

with lust, but Jack, too.

Clearly, Deke understood it, because he sidled closer as

“Yes, sir.”

Jack edged her away from the bed just enough for his friend to

Before she’d even finished speaking, Deke took her nape in ease in front of her.

a gentle grip with one calloused hand and wrapped a ruthless fist

Morgan’s heart began to pound double time. Deke’s body

around his cock with the other. Then he led her head down.

was so close, she could smell the heady musk rising from his

As she dragged her tongue across the swollen head, Deke

slightly parted legs, see the individual hairs dusting his thighs, see groaned. Jack issued an echo.

every vein bulging under the soft skin of his rigid cock.

Morgan did it again, laving more of Deke’s flared crest

Jack urged her closer to it, grasped her hips in his greedy

with the flat of her tongue. Watching his thighs go taut, she

swirled hands and pressed the swollen head of his erection to her weeping

around the ridge of his cock, then swiped her way across the entrance. He eased in a fraction, but only enough to tease her surface again, gratified at his growl in her ear and the salty-musky His flared flesh burned against hers. She moaned, writhed, taste of him leaking across her tongue. doing her best to tempt him. She ached to feel him impale her, “Jesus, Jack,” Deke moaned. “She’s torture.” stretch her. A jolt of need nearly had her screaming. Morgan bit “She’s just getting started. Aren’t you, *cher*?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 176**

He eased the hot head of his cock out of her aching vagina, as you’re sucking him good, I’ll fuck you good. You stop, I stop. and she moaned in protest, right against the purple crest of Deke’s You come before he does...I’ll give you hell.” engorged erection. A fresh bolt of lust hit her like lightning, white-hot and “Suck him,” Jack demanded. “Don’t toy with him.” electric. Jack wasn’t just getting three people in a room for a But damn it, Jack was toying with her. fuckfest. No. Just like he understood the thoughts that made up her Casting a glance up at Deke’s face, taut lines of strain darkest needs, he dominated her, ordering her to participate, bracketed his mouth. His blue eyes flared with demand and a fiery freeing her from any reins her morality might have put on her.

hunger that tightened the screws of lust inside her, until the power Nodding her assent, Morgan bobbed her head, her tongue

of her need obliterated all but her hunger.

rasping against Deke's cock. The big blond giant hissed in

He gritted his teeth, but still managed to joke, "Can you

appreciation, and his fingers tugged on her hair, sending delicious hurry, doll? You'd really be helping me out here."

pinpoints of pain across her scalp.

Looking back down, she watched with helpless fever as

God, she was burning up. Jack's firm strokes rasping

Deke stroked the stalk of his flesh ruthlessly, his grip so tight and against her wet flesh was short-circuiting her brain. His every push rough, it shocked her. Thrilled her.

sent her bobbing over Deke's cock, and she swirled her tongue all

The heavy knot of desire pulsed between her legs and

over him, moistening, laving, teasing him with every stroke, loving swelled at the sight of him. It jabbed her with hot impatience as

the feel of him heavy on her tongue—and Jack's stare hot on her

Jack fed her two scant inches of his cock and stopped. Sweat broke

back.

out across her back, and she licked her lips, her brain unable to

Between the two of them... The torture rack of pleasure

keep up with the needs of her body. The torment was almost too

stretched her further. She was on fire, seared with lust that much.

agonized. Her nipples ached, her clit screamed for attention.  
She

Deke's fingers tightened on the back of her head, pushing  
imagined pushing Jack and Deke into climax at the same time.  
The

her down again. Yes, she wanted this. To taste him. To know  
that

thought made her insane with need.

Jack watched in approval and arousal.

Morgan tightened around Jack, clamping down on him, as  
Morgan opened her mouth and sucked in as much of  
she dragged her tongue up the slick length of Deke's cock.  
Both

Deke's hard length as she could, coating his hot, dry skin with  
her men groaned, long and guttural. One of Jack's hands  
tightened on

saliva. The moisture eased her way as she drew back, then  
pushed

her hip; the other delved past her damp curls and press-rubbed  
her

down his cock again, taking him to the back of her mouth.

clit until she cried out. Deke upped the pleasure by pinching  
her

He sat heavy on her tongue, salty, so damn hot and spicy.

nipples until the bite of pain, the shocking hedonism of their

His taste ratcheted up her arousal. So did knowing Jack  
watched

demands, nearly thrust her over the edge and sent her  
plummeting

her every move.

into hot satisfaction.

“Good girl,” Jack praised as he plunged his cock deep into

“Not yet,” Jack warned, voice strained nearly beyond

her channel, up against the mouth of her womb, where he  
pressed

recognition.

against a spot that made her moan and squirm and writhe. “As  
long

He eased back on his long, grinding strokes deep inside her.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 177**

“No!” she protested, tearing her mouth away from Deke.

groaned, urging her on.

Damn it, how could Jack do this to her? She throbbed. They’d  
tied

“Oh, that’s it. Holy shit, doll, you’ve got a mouth... That’s

her in knots of need. And wasn’t this her fantasy?

it. So hot, so good. Suck my cock.”

“Jack!”

He thrust up into her, fucking her mouth once, twice.

“That’s sir to you,” he reminded her with a growl—and a

Again, he swelled against her tongue, bulging so that she felt  
every firm whack to her ass and a gentle pinch of her clit.

“Now suck

ridge, every vein, the pulse of semen beneath the skin.

him, make him come. Then you’ll get yours.”

“Jesus, Jack,” he panted. “I’m not going to last.”

With no mercy whatsoever, Deke watched her with raw

“Good girl,” Jack panted in her ears as he covered her back

hunger as he filtered his hands through her hair again and tugged

with sweat-slick flesh and finally began to piston in and out of her down to his cock.

aching pussy. “Swallow him. Every drop.”

Morgan closed her eyes. She ought to be pissed. Flamingly

Morgan bobbed her head in understanding, frantic now

furiously at the way they demanded and controlled and withheld. But

with arousal. She clawed her thighs as desire ballooned inside her.

no. She was more aroused than she’d ever been in her life.

Her belly cramped with need as Deke engorged again. He pulsed

“Suck me hard.”

on her tongue—hard. Then he cried out, the guttural sound ripped

Deke’s voice was like sandpaper on steel wool. The sound

from his chest as if the pleasure was pure agony. His hot seed filled of it made heat flare like a furnace running full throttle, made her mouth, salty, milky. She barely had time to swallow before

pussy clench with need.

Jack stiffened behind her, gripping her hips ruthlessly, and fucked She sucked Deke into her mouth and gave a demanding her with every ounce of power he possessed.

pull on him. He stiffened even more against her tongue and

Up, up, up—she didn’t climb the ladder of arousal. She

gripped her hair in harsh fists. In reward, Jack plunged into her,

rocketed straight to the top with the feel of Jack’s cock stretching prodding at her swollen clit with his fingers, now



coated with her

her, rasping against her every nerve ending. The beginnings of juice. She cried out.

climax fluttered inside her, and Morgan whimpered, so ready to let

God, it was so much. Too much. And even though Jack had go.

backed off the hot pace of his strokes, she still felt the inferno of

“Don’t come,” Jack commanded. “I didn’t give you desire raging, climbing, threatening to lick at her until her body permission.”

exploded into a thousand pleasure-rent pieces and sanity fled.

*Who the hell was he kidding?* Frantically, Morgan shook

As if sensing how close she was, Jack eased away again.

her head. She couldn’t stop it. Couldn’t.

Morgan whimpered. She had to come. *Soon, damn it. Now!*

Jack smacked her ass, and Morgan instinctively jumped to

She rededicated her efforts to Deke’s cock, laving from

obey. Why, damn it? She wanted to come.

root to tip, lingering on the hidden spot just beneath the flared

But she wanted to please him more. So Morgan tensed,

head, wrapping her tongue around the thick root. Then she took

trying to push out sensation, to stop her body’s headlong rush to

him in her mouth, deep, back to her throat and sucked hard.

Her

satisfaction.

cheeks hollowed. Beneath her, Deke got even harder. And he  
“Hold on, doll,” Deke encouraged.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 178**

She raised her eyes to his, pleading, needing. He just shook  
tell him to fuck himself...but ultimately, she couldn't disobey.  
Not

his head, those blue eyes promising more—much more...later.  
when he spoke like that. Not knowing the way she longed to  
please

She railed, whimpered. God, the erotic edge of pleasure-  
him. The submissive in her relented, needing to bow to his  
stronger pain had never been so overpowering.

presence and give herself into his care.

Behind her, Jack gripped her hips as he pounded into her

She trusted that he would give her what she needed.

with jackhammer strokes that had her weak-kneed and  
mewling.

Morgan approached the bed, uncertain exactly how he

The drumbeat of desire pulsed in her clit as he continued to  
ramp

wanted her. Jack didn't let her flounder, but helped her onto  
her

her up and up.

knees—straddling Deke as he lay back with a grin. His searing

Then he swelled, stiffened. And with a savage shout and a  
blue gaze was fixed on the wet curls between her legs, and  
already

last brutal thrust, Jack came, long and hard and powerfully.

his cock stood like a stone column against his belly.

Morgan didn't. Though denying herself had her tense as

Please, please don't let them want her to fuck Deke without hell and crying out. God, she'd almost rather tear the top off of her coming.

head and pour acid inside. The ache was eating her up. So hot. So

On her knees, Jack urged her up Deke's body, past his damn achy. Tears stung her eyes. This couldn't go on...

thighs and to his hips. But he didn't stop. He kept pushing her up

Jack withdrew from her body and tore off his condom with and up, past Deke's abs and chest. Then the blond hulk himself a satisfied smile. Bastard! He just left her here to burn alive.

lifted her, settling her knees on either side of his head.

She glared, making plans to skewer him alive, string him

"I've got to get my mouth on this pussy," he groaned.

up by his balls. This was her fantasy, and nowhere in it did she go He dove into her like a man possessed, tongue spearing at without orgasm!

her drenched channel, then lashing at her clit. Morgan gasped at

"Wow," Deke commented.

the shocking burst of sensation. Any cooldown she'd achieved in

"Fiery, isn't she?"

the last three minutes evaporated at the first touch of Deke's

"Stop talking about me as if I'm not here! You two put me mouth. She squirmed, trying to find relief from the sweet torture of in this...state."

his teeth gently nibbling her. He wasn't about to allow that.

"We'll fix you," Jack assured.

Instead, he wrapped his arms around her thighs anchoring her in

"When? Next month isn't good enough. Even five minutes place.

from now is too long to wait."

Morgan might be on top, but Deke was completely in

Morgan jerked against her bonds, frustration eating at her control.

But she couldn't do anything, especially touch her own clit.

"You look so damn sexy," Jack rumbled in her ear from

Having two pairs of hot male eyes devouring her was only making

behind her, his voice thick with desire. "I can't wait until we're

her hotter, expanding the never-ending need.

both fucking you and you wash us in your cream as you come."

"Get on the bed."

Both fucking her? God, yes. Jack understood what she

Jack's deep voice pinged in the air, telling her he wouldn't

craved. And he'd give it to her. She hoped before she expired from

tolerate any more of her outbursts It was on the tip of her tongue to unfulfilled need.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 179**

Jack fiddled with the locks at her sides, and suddenly her

her back as one finger toyed with the puckered rosette.  
wrists were free—just in time for Deke to suck her clit into his  
“Her taste is fucking addicting, too,” Deke muttered against  
mouth and nearly send her rocketing into the stratosphere.  
Nearly.

her pussy before he dove back in, sucking her clit into his  
mouth.

But he didn’t let her go yet.

The dark ache of desire throbbed harder. The edge rushed  
“Can I come?” She turned pleading eyes on Jack as he bent  
closer, looming huge and unavoidable in its burning grip. God,  
the

to retrieve new items from his bag of tricks. “Please.”

heat blistered her. She couldn’t hold back much longer. Her  
inner

“Not yet. I’ll tell you, *cher*.”

walls fluttered. Her clit throbbed against Deke’s tongue. Just  
one

“I can’t stop...” she panted, gasping for her next breath.  
more sensation, and denying her climax would no longer be  
“It’s too...”

possible.

“You can. You will,” Jack demanded.

Jack seemed oblivious to her sensual distress, taking his  
A fresh coat of perspiration glazed her skin. A new jab of  
sweet time dragging her cream from her weeping entrance to  
the

lust sizzled inside her pussy. The same whimper that failed to  
forbidden hole in back. Morgan found herself pushing back  
toward

move Jack before failed to move him now.

his fingers, whimpering, pleading.

Damn him! She was barely hanging on here... Her folds

“Are you mine?” he whispered right in her ear, so she alone felt swollen to four times the normal size, and still Deke kept could hear.

bringing the heat, the pleasure, leaving her just on the threshold of

“Yes.”

an atomic orgasm. And Jack just kept watching the show, idly

“Completely?”

toying with her nipples, like he had all day to enjoy.

“Yes. God, yes.”

“Lean forward and brace yourself on your hands,” Jack

“You’ll stay with me? Be mine? Wear my collar?”

commanded.

“Yes, yes, yes,” she chanted.

Morgan complied, hoping that they’d let her come and end

He positioned a finger against her back entrance, and every the maelstrom of lust driving her out of her mind. The orgasm nerve ending jumped as he began to press in.

brewing just grew and grew, expanding into something larger than

“Oh, yes!” She could barely get the words out, barely find a she’d ever imagined. When this peak hit, it was going to kill her.

breath to say them. Dizzy, hot, aching tight under her skin, Morgan A moment later, Jack wedged a pair of fingers deep in her

babbled with mindless appreciation.

pussy. He wriggled, reawakening nerves his cock had stroked to

Jack thrust his finger deep in her ass at the moment Deke life. But he didn't stay. No, those fingers of his dragged her juices scraped her clit with this teeth.

back to the smaller hole in back.

"Come!" Jack shouted.

He was going to fuck her there again. And once he did,

But she'd already started. Nothing could stop her from

there was no way she could stop the orgasm bubbling in her gut

flying apart, exploding into a million sizzling pieces, burning from completely overtaking her.

under the pressure of Jack's invading finger, aching at the adroit

"Jack! Sir..."

ministrations of Deke's insistent tongue.

"Your skin is so flushed and pretty," he murmured against

She didn't moan or cry out. She screamed, long and loud,

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 180**

gripping the bed sheets with her hand as the pulses went on and on

thrust inside, driving his way in quickly, pushing past resistance, and on. The climax shattered her, hitting so hard, she lost her

shoving in inch after inch after ruthlessly hard inch inside her.

breath. Her gut cramped. Dizziness assailed her as her heartbeat

*Oh. My. God.* Stretched so full, packed tight. The burn of

pounded in her ears like a staccato drum.  
their cocks put her senses on overload, sent her reeling straight  
God, she was dying. Right here in this little cottage room,  
back to the kind of sharp arousal that had her holding her  
breath,  
bursting into so many flaming little pieces of herself, she'd  
never calling Jack's name, gripping Deke's shoulders to stay  
grounded in  
be able to put them all back together. And she didn't care.  
reality in the midst of this mind-blowing fantasy.  
Deke eased her down his body and reached for something  
And then they began to move, like a well-timed dance  
near his hip. A condom, she realized a moment later, as she  
designed for maximum devastation to her senses. Jack  
withdrew,  
watched him tear open the foil with his teeth, roll it on, and  
grab Deke thrust in. Jack thrust in, Deke withdrew. And  
friction, oh  
her hips in world-record time.  
God... The heat overwhelmed her. She'd never had so many  
nerve  
Again? Oh...She had all the muscle control of a rag doll  
endings screaming all at once, and Deke only made it worse  
when  
right now, had just taken what felt like the first ragged breath  
of air he pressed a thumb to her clit.  
in hours, and they wanted to fuck her into orgasm again?  
"Jesus, she's tight," he ground out.  
Before Deke thrust home, Jack withdrew his finger from  
"And she has a thin membrane between her ass and her  
her ass and replaced it with the searing width of his lubricated



pussy. I feel the head of your cock dragging over me. Damn!”  
cock.

“Yeah,” Deke’s face twisted into a mask of concentration.

“Jack... Sir,” she began to protest.

“She’s killing my control.”

“Take me,” he demanded on a groan. “Take us.”

“What control?” Jack growled. “*Cher*, come when you can,  
And he slid in, dark, ruthless, demanding that she open  
as much as you can.”

wide and accept every inch of him in her ass right now.  
Moaning at

That was all the invitation Morgan needed. At the feel of  
the feel of him stretching her so completely, Morgan pushed  
down

Deke’s cock pressing right against her cervix and the slick pad  
of

until he’d sheathed his entire cock inside and his balls slapped  
at his thumb dragging across her swollen clit, she exploded,  
seeing

her pussy.

light and stars behind her eyes. Hell, she wouldn’t be surprised  
if And there he stayed, completely unmoving.

someone told her the heavens had parted.

Shockingly, the feeling of him tunneling inside her dark,

The explosion was Jack’s to command, and sharp as a  
forbidden passage roused her all over again. She tried to  
wiggle

machete. The two men tore her apart with thick, sublime,  
unearthly

and whimper. Deke’s hands stayed her hips. Her previous  
scream

pleasure.

had stolen most of her voice. The new jolt of demand  
scorching

Jack rewarded her by reaching around her and lifting her  
through her body took the rest.

breast to Deke's mouth. He took the nipple between his lips

They were killing her. Honest to goodness killing her.

hungrily, drawing hard, nipping with his teeth. Sensation  
zinged

Before she could find a way to recover, to cope, Deke  
from her breast to her belly, straight down to where Deke  
impaled

positioned his thick cock at the weeping entrance of her pussy  
and

her with the wicked length of his cock...and lower, to the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 181**

forbidden thrill of Jack lodged deep inside her.

And he was in hell.

Together, they scraped her raw, shoving her up impossibly

Not because Deke touched her. Surprisingly, he'd known

higher, right into something huge and irresistible.

Indescribable.

almost from the moment they laid their hands on Morgan just  
a

She'd barely caught her breath when she felt Jack's flesh

short few hours ago that she might appreciate Deke's touch,  
but

push into her, dragging across all her tingling nerves while he

her heart wasn't involved. After that, Jack had simply enjoyed the  
exhaled on her neck and whispered, "You're mine. I love you."  
fireworks her fantasy had inspired.  
Something cracked in Morgan at his words, deep inside.  
As he'd hoped, Morgan had surrendered utterly, totally,  
The last of her resistance broke free. She sent a helpless glance  
given him every bit of herself, her body, her passion. He'd  
wrung  
over her shoulder at him, knowing her total submission  
showed in  
from her the sort of abiding submission he'd been seeking  
since  
her eyes, and she climaxed again, zooming higher than ever in  
the moment he'd first seen her.  
shuddering surrender.  
She'd told him that she loved him.  
Clamping down on the pair of cocks so hard, both were  
So how the fuck was he going to tell her now that he'd  
trapped deep inside her as the orgasm rolled over her, wave  
after  
arranged their meeting and plotted to fuck her, strictly to get  
wave erupting, bringing utter submission with it.  
revenge against her fiancé? Ex-fiancé. There was no way he  
was  
Tears rolled down her cheeks. In that moment, Morgan  
giving her up to Brandon Ross after today.  
wasn't herself. She didn't worry about whether this choice was  
Problem was, what if she wanted to go back to the pansy-

right or what others would think or if she could live with herself

ass bastard?

later. As they came with her, groaning and gasping, she was at

He was going to have to come clean, explain how and why

peace. Perfect blessed peace in perfect rushing pleasure for the first he'd arranged their meeting, and swear on his life that his every

time in her life.

intent had changed, virtually from the moment he'd touched her.

"Yes!" she cried out, her voice a screech of pain, need,

Hell, he should have done this a long time ago. Jack sighed,

love, and completion.

clenched his fists. When revenge had taken a backseat to winning

"I love you," he panted in her ear. "Tell me..."

Morgan for himself, he should have been honest, laid his cards out

"Yes! Yes, I love you."

on the table. Dreaming up ways to win her trust, only to confess

As the pleasure subsided, Jack wrapped his arms around

that he'd lied, had been the stupidest freakin' idea ever.

her tight, so tight it seemed he'd never let go. That was just the

Shoving down the gut-tightening fear that he was going to

way Morgan wanted it.

lose her, Jack kissed her awake.

#

Please God, don't let this be the last time she let him touch

Noon slanted through the windows on the bed and  
her.

breakfast's quaint cottage, illuminating Morgan's fiery hair  
and

Slowly, her eyes fluttered open. Her languid blue gaze,  
bare, pale skin as she curled up next to him in slumber, her  
head

sated smile and catlike stretch all jabbed at his heart. She  
wasn't pillowed on his shoulder. Deke lay behind her, his hand  
lax in

just beautiful to him, but perfect for him. He loved her like...  
he'd

sleep as he draped it around her waist. They looked so  
peaceful.

never loved any woman. And if he didn't play his cards right,  
she

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 182**

could walk out the door forever.

raised a mean-looking Browning Hi-Power and pointed it at  
Jack.

He held in a biting curse.

“Now!”

“Morgan. *Cher...*” he whispered.

Now what? Where were his suave words. How the hell  
could he phrase this?

“I have to tell you something,” he murmured.

Her ginger brows sloped down in a tired frown. She  
yawned, covering her mouth with the back of her hand in a  
gesture

both womanly and childlike at once.

Tenderness jerked his heart as anxiety kicked him in the teeth. God, he'd almost rather cut his balls off with a dull rusty knife than shatter the bond between them.

"Hmm." She moaned. Her eyes drifted half-closed as she sent him a sleepy smile.

Behind her, Deke shifted, his hand lowering, curling around her hip. Then he let out a snore. Morgan giggled.

Ignoring Deke, Jack took hold of her face, gaze delving down into hers. "I love you, *cher*. I have to know something. You and Brandon..."

That brought her eyes open. Wide open.

She gasped. "Jack, I—"

"Do you love him?" he demanded.

Morgan hesitated, clearly searching for words. Pain stomped his gut. Damn it, this was going to rip his fucking heart

out to hear that she did.

"Yes, but not the way you think. He—"

Something—someone—pounded on the door. A moment later, wood splintered in a deafening sound. The door crashed open, slamming against the wall.

Jack scrambled in front of Morgan and faced the threat that stood in their doorway.

Brandon Ross wearing a business suit and a snarl from hell.

"Get your fucking filthy hands off her, Cole." Brandon

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 183**

“You didn’t tell her?” Brandon said incredulously. “No, of course you didn’t. That would have made getting your revenge much harder. But this way, not only did you get to fuck her and get back at me, you obviously shared her with your GI Joe buddy here

for payback with interest, since it beats the hell out of anything I did to you.”

*Revenge?* “What is going on?” Morgan demanded,

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

frowning.

She couldn't follow the conversation...but what she did

"Brandon!" Morgan cried, peering around Jack's shoulder.

understand seemed damn ugly. Jack had taken her to bed to get

Her half-brother's thin, elegant frame filled the doorway.

back at Brandon? For...?

Fury morphed into shock when he realized she was in bed with two

"Let me explain." Jack turned and took her shoulders in his

men. Mortification blasted open a pit of dark dread in

Morgan's

hands. "This is going to look bad and sound worse, but I swear  
—"

stomach. Too bad she couldn't crawl into it and disappear, she

"He's a sneaky son of a bitch looking for any way to stab

thought as she scrambled to cover herself with a sheet.

me in the back," Brandon spat. "Get away from him, Morgan.

"Put the gun down!" she demanded.

Don't listen."

He ignored her, instead scowling at Jack as if the fires of

"I told you how I felt, *cher*," Jack vowed in a whisper.

hell lurked in his eyes.

"Whatever you hear today, my feelings are real. I didn't lie  
about

On her left, Deke had awakened and leaped in front of her,

that."

beside Jack, to protect her.



Until this moment, she hadn't doubted it. Now, dismay

"This isn't the way it looks, Brandon," Jack assured.

infected every breath Morgan took. She knew, just *knew*,

"Yes, it's *exactly* the way it looks."

something was really wrong. And that she wasn't going to like it.

Morgan couldn't mistake her brother's growl, but it barely

"But you lied about something else?"

registered. Besides that unnerving gun, she was stuck on one

"I told you to get your hands off her!" Brandon waved the

fact...

gun at Jack again.

"You two know each other?"

"Take it easy, man." Jack eased off the bed and slowly

"Oh, shit," Deke muttered and eased off the bed to put on

reached for his jeans. "Let's have a calm conversation about

this

his jeans. "Here we go..."

situation and—"

Even Deke knew what was going on? Morgan frowned and

"No, let's tell Morgan the truth and see if she feels like

shot Jack a questioning glance, scrambling mentally to

understand.

having a calm conversation."

Jack's face tightened with anger, regret. And unmistakable

guilt.

"You don't know the truth!" Jack snarled, tendons standing

What the...? She was having as much success deciphering this

out in his neck, fists clenched. "You know what this looks like,

but situation as she would watching a soap opera in Swedish.

you don't know shit."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 184**

"So you didn't pursue Morgan and bribe her production instant. And he'd done all that for payback? Unforgivable. assistant, Reggie, to forward your name and IM to her for Morgan lifted a trembling hand to her mouth. She was supposed use on the show?"

going to be sick. This was like a nightmare, gut-wrenchingly Morgan looked to Jack for a denial. He said nothing. terrible, something she wished she could just wake up from. But it

"Why would you do that?" she asked.

was too intense and vivid to escape. Brandon and Jack were A muscle ticked in his jaw. "I..."

playing out some drama here, with her squarely in the middle.

"Because he wanted to meet you. No, that's not right. He

"You emailed him a video of us... W—why?"

wanted to lure you to his side, fuck you, then make sure I knew

Jack hesitated, clearly trying to gather his words. Or his about it so he could get his pound of flesh. Literally. Isn't that lies? The question ripped through Morgan. right, Jack?"

"You want to tell her about Kayla, or should I?"

Thick horror slid through Morgan. She turned her gaze to

"Brandon, shut up," Jack snarled. "She knows about

Jack, hoping, praying for his denial. He closed his eyes and bowed

Kayla.”

his head. The guilt on his face came raging back, digging into his

Kayla? Who the hell was... Oh, Jack’s ex-wife. Morgan furrowed brow.

had never heard the woman’s name, but that had to be it. Yes, she

*Oh, God.* Brandon was telling the truth. Morgan’s stomach knew about Kayla, knew that Jack had found his best friend and

lurched as betrayal stung her heart. Shock blanched her blood. his wife having sex on video...

“You did...all this to me? For revenge? How could you?”

The full implication slammed into Morgan, stealing her Jack opened dark eyes swimming in shame. “The way I breath, replacing it with pain so intense, she nearly doubled over.

planned things...that isn’t the way it ended up happening.”

She stared at Jack in dawning horror. “Brandon...he was The pleading on Jack’s face, the seeming sincerity, tore at your friend. He was the one in the video having sex with your ex-

her. But she’d believed him before. And he’d apparently lied. wife.”

“Sure it is.” Brandon kept digging up ugliness. “The video

“While we were married,” Jack snapped. “He betrayed footage you emailed me of you fucking Morgan certainly drove

years of friendship and trust.”

your point home. Thanks for that. I clearly saw her back against

And it had all hurt Jack’s pride.

the door, her nails in your shoulders, while she screamed that she’d Morgan trembled with disbelief, with anger. With pain.

never had it better. Well planned.”

Deke put an arm around her to comfort her. She elbowed him in

Brandon’s sarcasm ripped at the already raw wounds

the gut, clutched the sheet to her chest, and glared at them all.

blistering inside her. Jack had made a video of them? When?

Her

Then she zeroed in on Jack. “You betrayed my trust, too.

back against the door, nails in his shoulders... *Oh, God.* That first The things you persuaded me to do...” Her face flushed hot in

time they had sex, after he’d caught her masturbating in the tub.

remembrance. “The way you made me question everything about

Had to be. Jack had filmed that without her knowledge and sent it

myself... Damn it, I believed in you. In us. God, I was an idiot!

to Brandon? And he’d arranged it all in advance.

Unbelievable.

You must have laughed a hundred times.”

Her happiness curdled, froze. Her trust...evaporated in an

“I never laughed. Morgan... *cher*, I never meant to hurt you.

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

I—”

and after you, she was afraid of every man. I no sooner had her,

“You never even thought whether it would hurt her or not,”  
than she left me.” Wearing a furious, incredulous scowl,  
Brandon

Brandon accused. “You didn’t care.”

grabbed Jack by the arm. “Have you done the same thing to  
“That’s not true.” Jack eased toward her and reached out to  
Morgan, you bastard?”

her.

“No!” Jack insisted. “Morgan *is* wired for what I need in a  
Morgan jerked away from Jack before he could touch her.  
woman. She *is* my woman. I awakened her, which is more  
than

Anger and anguish combined on his face, rolled through the  
taut,

you can say. I gave her everything her body yearned for, even  
a

lean muscles rippling across his chest and shoulders.

*ménage* when the thought of it twisted my guts in two, all  
because No, it was an act. All for revenge. She wouldn’t worry  
if he

I wanted her happiness. What did you do besides ignore her  
actually hurt. As Brandon said, Jack hardly cared whether he’d  
sexuality, then leave her when some sick stalker followed her,  
hurt her.

masturbated on her bed, then shot at her in public? Yeah, that’s  
“Swamp, you son of a bitch. There’s your safe word. Don’t

love for you.”

touch me again.”

“He shot at you, sweetheart?” Concern transformed

Her rebuff slashed pain across Jack’s face, and he turned on  
Brandon’s angry face. He dropped his gun to his side.

Brandon.

“Put that away,” she whispered, nodding toward the

“You’re not exactly Mr. Clean here,” Jack growled at her  
firearm.

brother. “You’re the one who seduced Kayla while I was  
married

With a reluctant sigh, one that communicated just how  
to her, made her believe you loved her—”

pissed he was, Brandon tucked his gun in the waistband of his

“So you seduced me in return?” Morgan shouted at Jack.

slacks at the small of his back and turned to her.

“Pushed me to change my perception of myself and my  
sexuality.

When he tried to cup his hand around her shoulder, Jack

You made me believe you loved me, that I loved you, too. I  
said it

snarled, “Don’t touch her!”

to you while...” She gasped as the awful truth washed through  
her

Then he jumped in and hit Brandon with a right cross to the  
blood in an icy rush. “That must have been the ultimate  
revenge,

chin. Brandon’s head snapped back, and he came up rubbing  
his

having me tell you that I loved you during sex, just like Kayla said chin with one hand and forming a fist with the other.

to Brandon. Did you know it would work out that perfectly, or just

Jack blocked Brandon's incoming punch. "I let you take hope?"

Kayla from me. I didn't love her, and we all knew it. But you'll

"*Cher*, it was nothing like that. I swear. Honest. I—"

have to kill me before I let you take Morgan from me. I love her.

"Dear God! Did you do to Morgan what you did to Kayla?"

I'll always love her." Jack turned to her then, his penitent frown

Brandon broke in, his voice booming with incredulity. "Did you

ripe with a plea. "If you'll let me explain and apologize. You can't mess with her head and try to turn her into some submissive

marry him."

robot?"

"She's not marrying any of you!" screeched a half-wild

"Does she seem like a robot to you?"

voice from the open doorway.

"Kayla couldn't handle what you wanted from a woman,

Brandon turned and Jack leaned around her brother for a

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 186**

look at their new visitor, but Morgan didn't have to see to know

knew each other's minds and shared the joy of quality work, who'd just arrived. She knew that voice.

elevating tawdry sex to art, until you threw it away.”

“Andrew? What are you doing here?” She leaned into his

Brandon leapt toward Andrew, reaching out to swipe the line of vision, still clutching the sheet over her bare body.

gun from his jittery grasp. Andrew roared and scrambled away,

Her blood turned to ice when she saw menace mutating his firing two shots in Brandon's direction. Morgan heard herself cultured face into a snarl and the threat in his stance as he blocked scream as the retort of fire deafened her. Her brother threw himself the door. Fury vibrated off him, zinging around the room like its

to the ground and rolled away from the bullets.

own lethal force. Adrenaline and anger crashed through Andrew,

Breath held, Morgan launched herself from the bed to judging from the way he twitched as he held a gun in his hands —a

check on Brandon.

gun he pointed right at her.

“Back in the bed!” Andrew roared, turning the gun on her

Morgan gasped, her mind racing to comprehend this turn of again. “Now!”

events.

Easing back under the sheets, she covered her nudity again,

“Someone has to stop you.” Andrew stared at her as if he shaking. Her hammering heartbeat nearly deafened her. Andrew



barely knew her, taking in Deke and Jack, both shirtless and was serious. Deadly serious. And Brandon... *Oh, God, had he* disheveled a few feet away...and drawing some accurate *been shot?*

conclusions. "You fucked two men? I knew you were a whore, but

Slowly, Jack bent to help Brandon up. Andrew's grip

this is even beyond what I believed you capable of. I can't believe tightened on the gun, his mouth compressing into a grim white

I nearly married you. You dating Senator Ross's son infuriated me

line.

enough." Andrew tossed his unusually unkempt salt-and-pepper

Once on his feet, her brother turned to send her a reassuring hair as he nodded at Brandon. "You visited him, agreed to marry

glance. "I'm fine. Just do what he says, Morgan."

him. You slept with him. And now you've taken up with yet

"And nobody else do anything stupid or heroic," Andrew another man. Your bodyguard, right? Did you ask him to dominate

snarled, tossing his arms around wildly, still clutching the chilling, you, too?"

shiny weapon.

Andrew's sneer hung in the air, its hostility stinging her

Morgan forced herself to take a deep breath, tried to push

like a harsh slap to the face. She refused to be embarrassed by his calm through her body. She knew Andrew. Hysterics on her part

words. But the gun pointed at her, making her heart pound, scared

would only up his dramatics. And he was an opera fan, a the hell out of her.

performing art where all the central characters frequently died and

“Yes.”

the audience applauded the tragedy of it all.

Jack glanced in her direction, then stared at Deke, some

Please God, no such tragedy for her. She had to save

silent communication between them that she couldn't understand.

herself, and stop Brandon, Jack, and Deke from doing something

Andrew shook his head. “And now a morning spent heroically fatal.

cheating on your fiancé and sandwiched between these two

Morgan sucked in a breath and lowered her voice, trying to testosterone-oozing lugs. For what? A few orgasms? You and I sound much calmer than she was. “Why are you here? My life is

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 187**

no longer your concern, Andrew.”

figured it out, well, the stupid lug went to warn you, but he

“You ignored my notes and photos. You ran when I left my couldn't find you.” Andrew shook his head, contempt twisting his

semen on your bed as a reminder of the place where we once

face. “He upset that stripper whore last night and got himself connected. I tried to make you understand where you belonged and

arrested before he could warn you I was in town.”

to whom you belonged. I could have forgiven you for Mr. Ross in

“You? You’ve been my stalker all along?”

time. You and I argued, and you might have thought I didn’t intend

Jack grimaced at her, then sent another glance to Deke. Out to return for you. But these two...” He waved a shaking fist again,

of the corner of her eye, she saw Deke nod. She tensed.

this time at Jack and Deke, gun clenched tight in his grip. “I should They were going to do something stupid and heroic—and

have shot you at that strip club. I would have if the nasty den of

get themselves killed.

iniquity hadn’t been so crowded.”

“No,” Morgan whispered at them.

Andrew’s words staggered her, making her mind race with

“I am your savior!” Andrew shouted over her, then

implications. “So Reggie didn’t...wasn’t...?”

stiffened, his face darkening to a thunderous scowl. “Someone has

Andrew rolled his eyes and sighed with impatience.

to save you from yourself. When we first dated, you seemed so

“Pursuing you?”

sweetly innocent. I overlooked your impurity because you were

“This is stalking, asshole,” Deke growled.

over twenty-one, and we hadn’t known each other previously.

With a shake of her head, Morgan tried to shush him.

“After we argued about your crude bedroom ideas, I

Thankfully, Andrew ignored him. “Reggie? Of course not.

eventually realized that I might not have given you enough

Didn’t you see me at the strip club? I looked right at you? You

attention, and I started pursuing you again, despite your

almost fooled me with the disguise, but I’d know your eyes

involvement with Mr. Ross. I decided to flatter you, and

believed I anywhere.”

could save you by marrying you. But...” He clicked the  
hammer

“I couldn’t see through the crowded strip club,” she

back on the gun and gave a disdainful toss of his head toward  
Jack.

murmured. “It was you? Given the pictures I received, I  
thought—

“As soon as you met Mr. Cole, you began acting like a bitch in  
the

”

throes of heat. He’s a well-known dominant, and you all but  
licked

Her ex-fiancé rolled his eyes. “Please. He taught me to take  
him up with your gaze.”

pictures and develop them. He had no idea I took pictures of  
you

Morgan drew in a deep breath, resolving to stay calm—

until just the other day.”

despite the fact that she both itched to strangle the bastard and run Andrew sniffed, and Morgan knew he was insulted that screaming from his gun. She ignored her temper and her sweating

she'd believed even for a moment that Reggie could stalk her as

palms.

properly as he had.

"I wanted Jack. He understood my need to submit, Andrew.

"He didn't help you at all?" *Keep him talking, distract him.*

He taught me there's nothing wrong with that." Whatever other

*Stay calm. Find some way out of this damn dangerous mess.*

deceptions lay between them, she'd always had that gift from Jack.

"He's too stupid. For a time, he helped me keep track of

"Your failure to accept me as I am only proves we're ill-suited. Go you, in the interest of flattering and protecting you. And once he

give some other woman your attention. Maybe she'll appreciate the

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 188**

obsessive bit. I don't. Get the hell out of my life."

"You're only proving what I feared. The only way to purge you of your wickedness is to kill you."

Morgan froze. Andrew raised the gun. Andrew—her

former producer, her former fiancé, the mild-mannered artsy type

wasn't just hyped up on momentary anger. He seriously planned to kill her.

"Now!" Jack shouted in the tense, churning air.

Deke grabbed her, yanking her to the floor in a tangle of arms and legs. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Jack grab the

gun at the small of Brandon's back, then push her brother into the

corner behind Andrew, out of harm's way. Then she saw nothing,

as Deke ripped her from the cocoon of the sheets and began to roll

her under the bed.

An explosion thundered through the room. A moment later, something struck her in the chest, whooshing the breath from her

body with the force of the impact. The sting seared fire across her skin. In an instant, her body nearly imploded with pain. She cried

out. But a second blast masked the sound.

She gasped for breath, a strange weightless, nearly floating feeling assailing her.

A cry, a thud, then...

"Morgan!" she heard someone shout as if from a distance.

Jack. It was Jack's voice. He sounded worried.

"Here..." she whispered, frowning against the pain. What was wrong with her?

"Shit!" Deke rumbled behind her. "She's hit!"

She was? Morgan's eyes fluttered open in time to see Deke

put his shirt over her chest and press down. Painful, damn it!

“No...” she wailed.

“Where?” Jack demanded.

“Hell, I don’t know. Her chest, I think. There’s blood everywhere, front and back. Shit, she’s bleeding fast. Call 911!”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 189**

snarled. “Four men, one of them dead, two guns, and one naked

woman all in the same hotel room. They’ll start asking questions

that the son of a man running for president shouldn’t have raised.

You leave, and I can play this like a bodyguard just doing his job.

I’m friends with the locals. It will fly.”

Brandon hesitated. Jack could tell his former friend was torn, and he didn’t give a shit. He focused all his effort on

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

stemming the flow of Morgan's blood.

But nothing helped. The blood just kept running, flowing...

Jack dropped to his knees, watching Morgan's face pale

"Hang on, *cher*. Stay with me. You can't give up, not now.

into something damn near ghostly. The red of her blood gushed

*Je t'aime, mon coeur.*"

through Deke's gray T-shirt, turning it morbidly dark. The coppery

"You love her?" Brandon's voice sounded thin, unsteady.

smell of blood burned into his nostrils, exploding in his brain.

He seemed shaken. "It's not bullshit. You really love her?"

Son of a bitch, he wished he could kill that asshole Andrew

Jack didn't have time to spare him a glance. "Yes, I love

all over again! For making her doubt her sexuality, for even

her, and I'm sure you'll find some way to use it to cut me off at the thinking of hurting Morgan. And this time, he'd enjoy putting a

balls. Right now, I need you to get the fuck out of here."

bullet between the bastard's eyes.

"But she's—"

But now, there wasn't time for anything besides saving

"If this turns into a media circus because of you and she Morgan's life.

dies, I'll make sure they have to pick up your remains with

Yanking the sheet off the bed, he wrapped it around her tweezers!"



wound, applying pressure with one hand and reaching for the  
Brandon fell silent for a moment, then nodded.

phone with the other. The 911 call only took a few moments,  
and

“Wait,” Jack called. “The gun. You’re not registered to  
the dispatcher promised to have someone there within minutes.  
carry in Louisiana, are you?”

Jack only hoped Morgan hung on that long.

And Jack had just killed a man using that weapon.

Now, all he could do was wait...and do a little damage

The elegant senator’s son flinched. “Oh, God.”  
control.

“Nine millimeter?” Deke asked.

Casting a desperate gaze up at Deke, Jack was shocked to

“Yes.” Brandon’s voice shook.

see his own grim concern mirrored there. Morgan had even  
left her

“Jack?” asked Deke.

mark on his hard-ass, tough-as-nails business partner.

“In my duffle bag. Switch out the bullets. Fire a round into

“Take Brandon and get out of here.”

the grass outside the French doors or something. It’s the best  
we

“I’m not leaving her,” Brandon said, now hovering above  
can do, in case they run forensics.”

him, concern tightening his mouth.

“Those good ol’ Cajun boys aren’t going to look too

“You stay, and the press will have a field day,” Jack  
closely. It’ll work.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 190**

Sirens sounded in the distance. Deke swore and poured the  
Wearing a pale blue hospital gown, she looked so still and  
bullets from Brandon's gun, switching them out with those in  
lifeless and even paler than the white-white of her pillow.  
Even her Jack's own. He thrust open the French doors at the  
side and

sexy cinnamon freckles had faded to near nothing. The IV  
pumped

quickly fired a round into the grass.

fluid into her body through a tube stuck to the back of her  
hand. A Jack flinched, heart pounding at the sound, the one  
that

bandage bulked up her right shoulder and, from the bulge in  
her

slammed home the fact he might lose the only woman he'd  
ever

gown, extended down to her rib cage.

loved. The woman he wanted to keep for the rest of his life.

If she died, it was going to be all his fucking fault. If he'd

The woman who wasn't his.

never started this stupid bid for revenge, if he'd just protected  
her,

"I'll call Alyssa. We'll find a place to hide Brandon. Touch  
instead of screwing with her body, her mind...her heart,  
Morgan

base when you can," a shirtless Deke said, herding Brandon  
out the

wouldn't now be fighting for her life.

door.

“What’s the news?” he snapped at Deke, hands shaking as Jack nodded, still applying pressure, afraid to lift the sheet, he entered the room.

afraid to find out the blood was still flowing, afraid the bullet had Brandon stood sulking nearby, arms over his chest, propped

hit some organ and was slowly killing her. Damn it, he’d flunked

against a wall. He looked like a man with a lot of heavy shit on his fucking EMT training.

mind. Jack related.

“Hang on to her, man.”

He sank into an uncomfortable chair the color of baby puke

Jack glanced up. Deke stood solidly on his side, as always.

and couldn’t help but wonder, how on earth they had ended up

No words necessary. No questions asked.

wrestling over the same woman again? And why every time they

“Thanks,” he croaked.

did, the results were always so disastrous.

Now he only hoped that he could keep her alive so he could

“It’s good. They brought her back from surgery about fight for her.

twenty minutes ago and said she’s going to be fine.”

#

Fine. She was going to be fine. That’s all that mattered.

Four long hours later, full of questions and red tape, and his

“*Merci Dieu.*” He let out a ragged breath.

guts shredding under the sharp blade of dread, night was falling.

Deke spoke up. “It’s a flesh wound. Bullet entered and Jack reached the hospital. He had blood all over him—and he exited cleanly, just below her collarbone. They’ve stopped the didn’t give a damn. The police had just finished with all their long, bleeding. They came and asked if any friends or family are AB

annoying questions about Andrew’s death. Through it all, he could

positive and could give her blood.” He shrugged an apology. “I’m

only wonder, with a machete of fear stabbing him over and over,

B negative, man. Rare, but the wrong type of rare. Sorry. I need a

about Morgan’s condition.

cup of coffee. Want one?”

After barking an inquiry at the nurse’s station, he sprinted

Jack shook his head.

to Morgan’s room.

Shit, he couldn’t even help Morgan in this. He hated feeling

Heart pounding, he came to a dead stop in the doorway.

so damn helpless. “I’m A positive.”

*“Mon Dieu.”*

As Deke left the room, Brandon shucked his jacket and

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 191**

rolled up his shirt sleeve. “I’m AB positive. I just told them I’ll minded ideal. You loved Kayla, and when my pride

wouldn't let

give. They're coming to get me in a few minutes."

her go, despite her asking for a divorce, you claimed her the only

A huge stroke of luck that Brandon had Morgan's rare way you could. In your shoes...I might have done the same." blood type. Jack choked on a million replies that sprang to his "I loved her. She broke my fucking heart." Brandon's tongue. He settled on the only one that would do for now. "Thank

monotone reply revealed that he'd never recovered from Kayla.

you."

For the first time in his life, Jack could understand that hit-

"I care about Morgan, too. It's nothing."

by-a-Mack-truck feeling.

It was everything to Jack. Brandon donating meant Jack

"I'm going to lose Morgan over this revenge," Jack

had a shot at a future, even if Morgan never spoke to him again.

muttered, raking tense hands through his hair, "Over something I

Just knowing she was alive and well would sustain him.

should have let go of years ago. And if she rides off into the sunset In fact, Morgan's injury had made him realize a thing or to marry you, I don't want her to have any other reason to hate me.

two. Namely, that this vendetta he'd carried had both nearly made

Just...take care of her."

him and nearly destroyed him. It had to end. It was time to ensure

Brandon rubbed at an apparent pain between his eyebrows  
this sort of shit never happened again. Time give Brandon  
back his

and smiled with bitter irony. “I will, but I’m not going to  
marry

life.

her. Jack, she’s not my fiancée, and I’ve never touched her in  
my

And to free himself.

life. She’s my half-sister.”

Stumbling to his feet, Jack reached his inside coat pocket

If Brandon had said he was really a two-headed rhino in  
and withdrew a video tape. In an old package with a tattered  
white

disguise, Jack couldn’t have been any more stunned. “Sister?”  
cardboard cover, it hung heavy in his hand.

With a tight nod, Brandon began, “This can’t leave the  
“Here.” He held it out to Brandon.

room. You’ve always been a man of your word...even when I

“What is this?” Brandon raised puzzled blue eyes to him.  
haven’t been.”

“You know damn well what it is. I had this one in my

“Your secret is safe.”

office, which is right around the corner. I’ve got the spare in a  
safe

“Thanks.” Brandon sighed, stood and paced. “My father  
deposit box. I’ll get it back to you next week. It’s time I gave  
them impregnated her mother when she worked for him as a

barely-legal

to you.”

intern. He paid her handsomely to go away and never mention his

Recognition dawned across Brandon’s face. “The video name to anyone, not even to Morgan.

with Kayla? No more threatening to blackmail me if I run for

“About three years ago, when my father first started talking office?”

about a bid for the White House, he hired a consultant, who told

“No more,” Jack answered tightly, then turned to sit.

him to dig out every skeleton in his closet and bury it even deeper.

“Seriously?” Brandon grabbed the arm of Jack’s coat.

My father came clean to me about Morgan. I looked her up on his

“Why? Why now?”

orders, with the intent to pay her off. But I liked her too much to Jack faced his nemesis, his old friend, again. “Falling for give up being her brother. We kept in touch, saw each other. I was

Morgan proved to me real quick that self-control is just a high- there when she taped her first show.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 192**

A smile lifted the corners of Brandon’s mouth for a

“No. She just looked around, saw Deke and me, and shut

moment, before he turned pensive again. “When this business with

her eyes again.”

the stalker started, I tried to help her. But protecting her from

She hadn’t asked for him. And why should she? Stupid to

Houston became impossible, and when the asshole masturbated on

hope she would. From her point of view, he’d lied, used her,

her bed, I told her to come stay with me. We floated the story that exploited her. Why should she believe that he loved her?

And if

she was my fiancée as a cover, since I couldn’t tell anyone the

she’d ever thought she loved him...well, his stunning conversation

truth.”

with Brandon earlier today would have cured her of that.

And Jack had believed the lie, believed Morgan was his

Losing Morgan wasn’t anything less than he deserved. But

fiancée, then pursued her all the way to submission because of it.

the fierce urge to stave off the reality fueled a furious denial.

Life was going to hurt like hell without her, but he couldn’t

Knowing he’d never touch her again was like a sharp gouge of

be sorry he’d had her for a brief time. She clearly wasn’t going to pain knifing him right between the ribs.

marry Brandon...but he also doubted she’d speak to him again.

“That’s for the best, I guess. She won’t feel any pain.”

“Bet having Morgan with you pissed your father off.”

“True.”



“You have no idea.” Brandon’s bitter smile spoke volumes.  
And she wouldn’t wake up right now. Even if she did,  
“Anyway, I was terrified when I got orders to go to Iraq for a  
would she really want him there?  
three-week assignment. I knew she was alone and vulnerable.  
It  
No. She’d never want him near her again.  
even crossed my mind to call you, since you’re the best damn  
Jack shuffled his boot against the antiseptically clean floor,  
bodyguard in the business.” He sighed. “But I couldn’t give  
you  
his chest crushingly tight. “I should go. Tell her...”  
that sort of power over me. It never occurred to me that you  
were  
What? What the hell could he say to make this any better?  
waiting for me to get engaged to get your revenge.”  
It would take a fucking miracle to change her mind, and Jack  
“For three years, yes. I wasn’t going to give up.”  
didn’t think he had any such miracle coming to him.  
“I don’t blame you,” Brandon admitted quietly. “I’m just  
In the end, he settled on the simplest. “Tell her I’m sorry.”  
glad that I only got as far as a debriefing in D.C. before the  
trip Shoving clenched fists into his stiff jeans, Jack forced  
was postponed. I hope we’re settled once and for all.”  
himself to turn away from Morgan and walk out of her life.  
“We are.” Jack sighed. “Thanks for the truth.”  
Silence descended. Jack stared at Morgan hard—as if he  
could will her awake.  
She never moved a muscle.

“Is she being sedated?”

“I’m assuming so. She was awake about ten minutes ago, but now...”

Tension and hope gripped Jack’s gut. “Did she say anything?”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 193**

where you are. Already the gossip is dying down. You’re healing

nicely.” His gentle stare probed. “I can only think of one thing that would make you this crazy right now. Or should I say one person?”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“You haven’t wanted to talk about Jack since you left the hospital.”

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

Morgan closed her eyes. “Don’t say his name.”

“You’re being stubborn, little sister.”

Morgan paced across the hardwood floor of Brandon’s

“*I’m* being stubborn?” She poked herself in the chest with

living room. The surface felt cool beneath her bare feet, but didn’t an angry finger. “Excuse me, but I didn’t start this shit. *He* did. But soothe her searing thoughts.

now I’m supposed to live with it.”

“You’re going to wear out the floor, little sister.”

“Live with what, exactly?” Brandon crossed his arms over

She flipped a gaze at Brandon over her shoulder.

his chest. “He shot and killed a man who would have ended your

“Doubtful.”

life without blinking.”

“Okay, then you’re going to wear yourself out. It’s barely

That’s it? That’s all he acknowledged? “Yes, he saved me, been a week since you were shot.”

and I’m grateful. But did you forget the little part where he lied to

“I’ve got to move around or I’m going to get stiff.”

me and took me to bed to get back at you? He sent you a film clip

He sat back on the sofa, legs spread, elbows propped across

of—” She gnashed her teeth. “I still can’t believe that. He...” How

the back. “I might buy that if it looked like mere exercise. This is the hell could she put the betrayal into words? “He acted

like I

nervous pacing. What's eating at you?"

meant something. None of that act was true."

Morgan didn't answer. Admitting the truth was too painful,

"I think it was."

made her look too stupid.

Morgan felt her jaw drop. "Why are you taking up for

"Nothing," she finally murmured.

him?"

Brandon rose to his feet, until he towered over her. He'd

Brandon shot her a self-deprecating smile. "We used to be

definitely gotten the tall genes in the family, damn him. She  
was a friends, until I fucked it up. Jack wasn't going to divorce  
Kayla

midget by Hollywood's standards.

without a good reason. Despite his...lifestyle, he was too  
Catholic.

He grabbed her shoulders and turned her to face him,

I pushed Kayla. And pushed and pushed. God, I wanted that  
effectively ending her agitated waltz across the floor. "I've  
seen

woman. The one thing I never did was level with Jack and just  
tell

you obsess about *Turn Me On* in the past. What you're  
thinking him I was in love with his wife. And that she was in  
love with me.

about today has nothing to do with that, though, does it?  
Reggie

I just took her, and I didn't care how wretched he felt because  
has apologized for selling you out. Andrew's funeral was

holding her made me feel better. I think he was just repaying the

conducted with a minimum of hype, and the press has no idea  
favor, little sister, letting me see how it felt to be on the  
receiving **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black –  
Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

## **Page 194**

end. If you should be pissed at anyone, it's me."

"Deke..." Disappointment stabbed her without mercy.

"Do you have any idea what he did to me? At all?"

"Hi, doll. Don't look too excited to see me."

"I hate to say this, but when I barged into that hotel room,

"I am. I'm sorry." She did her best to paste on a smile.

you didn't look like you were suffering too much."

"How you doing?"

Morgan flushed twenty shades of red, she was sure, from

She tried to shrug, then grimaced. Damn, would that

both fury and embarrassment. "It wasn't the way he touched  
me."

shoulder ever stop hurting?

Though, at times, that had been hard to take, to accept how  
much

Yeah, and probably long before her heart did.

she loved it. "It was the way he pretended to care."

"I'm recovering," she said. "How are you?"

A sudden knock on the door sent them both turning.

"Ready to get a miserable coonass off my back. Want to

Brandon cursed under his breath, then moved to open it.

help me?"

"God, I hope it's not the press," she muttered. "Vultures."

“With Jack? I doubt there’s anything I can do. He’s made  
Brandon cracked the door open, only as far as the security  
my role in his life perfectly clear.”

chain allowed. “What?”

“See, I don’t think he has. Since you left, he snarls and  
No response. The door blocked Morgan’s view, and she  
growls and gets drunk, then sleeps it off and starts over the  
next

could only see Brandon raise his hand to take something from  
the

day. He knows you’re pissed. I told him he’s too chickenshit to  
see visitor’s grasp. Then he breathed what looked like a sigh  
of relief.

you. He told me—”

She looked down at the item in his hand. A videotape. The

“I can imagine what he said.” Morgan grimaced.

other videotape Jack had promised to bring Brandon?

“It’s not pretty. He needs you.”

“Is this what I think it is?”

“He needs a beating,” she shot back.

The person on the other side must have nodded. *Who was*

“If you were dishing it out, he would take it, doll. At least  
*it? Could it be... No.*

then, you’d be talking to him.”

“Thanks. Do you want to come in?”

Morgan didn’t know what to say. Part of her wanted to beat  
Morgan’s heart started to pound. Oh, God. Maybe... Was it  
the hell out of Jack. He’d made peace with Brandon at the  
Jack? Would Jack come here, after a week of total, devastating

hospital...then left her without a single word while believing that  
silence? Despite his betrayal, she ached for him. Her heart was a  
she was unconscious. She'd been groggy and far too  
overwrought  
hollow, gaping wound in her chest. She strained to hear the  
sound  
to respond—but she'd been awake enough to hear Jack's every  
of his voice late at night when she lay in bed, unable to sleep.  
And word.  
her body nearly vibrated at just the thought of him. She  
throbbed.  
That kind of crap didn't put him in the "nice guy" category.  
Overly sensitive and tight in all the wrong places with the  
mere  
Bastard.  
remembrance of him...  
"Forgive me if I don't give a shit that he's annoying you  
God, what if he walked through that door now?  
and giving himself a daily hangover. It's the very least he  
deserves, Brandon drew the door back to admit the stranger,  
but it  
Deke. I paid for his revenge with my heart and a piece of my  
soul."  
wasn't Jack who filled the doorway.  
"For what it's worth, so did he."

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 195**

Deke's words were like a punch to the gut, like poking a

more than the means to fueling a vendetta?

stick at a wild animal. “Bullshit.”

“I can see your thoughts all over your face, doll. Granted,

“He loves you. He just has no idea how to win you back spending one morning inside you doesn’t make me an expert, and doesn’t think he deserves the chance to try.”

but—”

“At least we agree on something,” she snapped.

“I don’t need to hear this.” Brandon grimaced.

But in her heart, hope surged. Was it possible that he stayed

“I’m pretty sure I know where your head is at,” Deke went away, not out of disregard but guilt?

on. “You aren’t going to get answers by hiding here.”

“Just talk to him, doll. You’d be doing me and Grandpa

She mentally recoiled. First, the son of a bitch had to Brice a favor.”

remind her about that awful, wonderful morning she’d spent

Morgan hesitated, so damn tempted. “Why should I want to squeezed between the two of them as they’d given her the ultimate

do a favor for the old man who brought me nearly nonexistent

pleasure. Her ultimate fantasy, despite Jack’s reservations.

Then he lingerie in an underhanded attempt to throw me Jack’s way?”

tells her that she’s being a coward. Lovely.

“Because he thinks you’re perfect for his grandson. We all

She could feel Brandon’s reproofing gaze on her, too, and

do. Even Jack. *Pleasssee*,” Deke wheedled. “Talk to him. Just made a mental note to beat Deke’s ass later.



once.”

Shaking her head to clear it, Morgan forced herself to

“Grown men begging.” She rolled her eyes.

focus. Even if Jack had put his fears aside, so much else had

But she feared she wasn’t fooling anyone. The hunger to  
happened.

see Jack gnawed at her composure, her restraint. Yet the fear  
of

A protest leaped to the tip of her tongue. No way, no how,  
getting sucked into his charisma again, of being duped by her  
own

was she going to talk to Jack.

want, of stupidly clinging to him and giving him the power to  
hurt

But...damn Deke, he was right. No one had the answers  
her again, kept her away.

she wanted except Jack.

Deke shrugged. “Whatever works.”

“Talk to him,” Deke’s quiet command went straight to her

“If he wanted to see me that bad, he knows where to find  
common sense and made mush out of it. “Come with me.”  
me.”

Her thoughts were so tangled, so jumbled. But one reality

“He’s got the Catholic guilt thing down pat, Morgan. He  
stood out for her: Jack was the strong, shrewd, sexual man her  
knows he fucked up, and he’s not going to push his love on  
you.”

body and mind had been searching for all her life. She could  
either

“He doesn’t love me!” she shouted.

stay here and hide and always wonder what could have been.  
Or

“He does,” Brandon cut in. “He told me himself, in two  
she could go talk to the man and find out where his avowals of  
languages. I’ve never seen Jack care too much about any one  
“love” registered on her bullshit meter.

person in his life. I had no doubt when I looked at the man that  
he

“Fine. But no promises that I’ll be nice.”  
loves you.”

“None expected.” Deke grinned, those indigo eyes  
Morgan sucked in a sharp breath. Was it possible she meant  
sparkling with mischief.  
more to Jack than just a revenge fuck? Had she come to mean  
“Give me ten minutes to get myself together.”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 196**

Deke grinned. “Jack was nursing a bottle of Tennessee  
everything around them had been all danger and lies?  
Impossible,  
whiskey when I left. Better make it five.”  
right?

#

So logical...except for the fact she’d fallen totally for Jack  
Climbing into Deke’s enormous Hummer for the long ride  
during their time together. And unlike anything she’d felt for  
any  
out to Jack’s swamp cottage in Louisiana, Morgan reflected  
that, if man previously in her life, this felt strong, unbreakable.

she didn't know better, she'd assume Deke had chosen such a Permanent.

vehicle to compensate for a deficit in masculine proportions.  
But

Damn.

she did know...

Deke blew through a yellow light on the outskirts of

Because of Jack. Because he'd granted her that fantasy.

Houston, then pulled into the parking lot of an extended-stay hotel. It seemed silly to turn the events of the last two weeks over

built like little condos with fresh paint and freshly planted flowers.

and over in her mind. She'd done it a million times. Jack had

"You need to pick up your gear before heading out?" she reeled her in, duped her by tantalizing her with the lure of fantasies asked.

she'd always wanted fulfilled. He'd delivered. No disputing that.

"Not exactly."

But for her, it had gone beyond pleasure. Way beyond.

Deke parked, then turned to face her. "Jack intended to

When she'd been with Jack, Morgan had believed heart and soul

drive the copy of Brandon's incriminating video straight to him. I

that it meant something to him. The knowledge that he'd done it all ended up driving, since I didn't think Jack and Jack made a good

for revenge crushed her until she felt broken, unable to sleep, team on the roads."

eat...breathe. Wondering how the hell she was supposed to go on

“Jack and Jack?”

with this pain.

“Jack Cole full of Jack Daniel’s.”

“You’re thinking too hard. I can almost feel the headache

“So he’s here?” she asked, her heartbeat suddenly zooming  
you’re giving yourself.”

like a woman about to fall from a cliff.

She leveled a reproving stare at him. “As opposed to you

Deke nodded.

men, who think of absolutely nothing but your little vendettas  
and

“He came all the way to Houston to deliver the video and  
your dicks?”

sent you to do it because he was too drunk? The son of a bitch

To his credit, he didn’t wince. “Yes, I knew about Jack’s

chose to cozy up to a bottle, rather than possibly getting close  
to plan. But I think it stopped being about revenge for him  
very

me?”

quickly.”

“No. When we got here, we did a little recon. When he

“Don’t make his case for him. I don’t want to hear it.”

realized you were staying with Brandon, he wouldn’t go. He

Deke’s words only confused her, made her hope. She was  
refused to bother you.”

going to see Jack for answers. Period. If she didn’t get the  
answers Of all the crazy, asinine notions...

she wanted, she'd go on with life—alone. Somehow. Not that she

Before Deke could say more, Jack opened the door of the expected Jack to be able to convince her of his undying love. room in front of him, gorgeously shirtless, dark hair disheveled.

Honestly, how could such a bond form in mere days, when Sunlight glared in his face. He squinted and glared toward the **WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

### **Page 197**

Hummer.

“Getting better. She was up and walking around. She

“Did you deliver the damn video?” Jack shouted, trying to looked good.”

shield his eyes from the sun.

Jack nodded. A simple gesture...but the frown on his face

“Hmm. He's not slurring anymore,” Deke commented.

tore at Morgan. Brows furrowed, eyes closed, jaw tight, he looked

“Maybe he's actually semi-sober.”

so damn sad. Regretful. Destroyed.

“This is ridiculous. Why am I here expecting answers from

The sight took her aback, ripped at her heart. He

a drunk man who only pursued me so he could get back at

actually...cared? That's what it looked like. He couldn't see her,

someone else and get his rocks off at the same time? Take me back

had no reason to act something he wasn't or didn't feel.

to Brandon's."

Morgan swallowed.

"Not yet. Ten minutes. Just give him that much."

"I'll bet she looked beautiful. She always did."

Morgan said nothing.

Deke stopped in front of Jack, lingering on the sidewalk in

"If you don't, I'll have to start pleading again."

the noontime sun. "Yeah, and she looked pissed."

She shot him a stare that should have told him that she was

"I expected that. I made a really stupid fucking choice

totally unmoved. But, as usual, Deke ignored her.

when I didn't come clean with her. I had opportunities and I..." He

"I'll give you extra whine if you don't cave in..."

shook his head, a gesture rife with regret. "I didn't take them."

"Ugh! Fine. Ten minutes, then you're taking me back or

"Yeah, that makes you a stupid putz, but that isn't the main

I'm calling a taxi. And a hit man to finish off both of you.

Pricks!"

thing she's pissed about."

"That's a girl." He planted a smacking kiss her on the

"It's not?" He looked totally confused.

cheek, then flashed her a million-watt smile.

Jack didn't get it? How could he not get it? How could he

Morgan just rolled her eyes. "Let's get this over with."

totally not understand? Amazing.

"I'll come around to get you, but hang tight for just a

Pushed by hope and confusion and her temper, she opened

minute. I don't think he can see you with the sun in his face  
and  
the Hummer door and leaped down. "No, you dumb ass, that's  
not  
these tinted windows. And I want you to hear something."  
Deke  
what I'm pissed about."  
climbed down from the Hummer, then called to Jack, "Yep,  
it's  
"See, I told you I brought you something." Deke flashed  
delivered."  
Jack a smile. "Or someone."  
"You bring me a new bottle?"  
"Morgan," Jack whispered, taking a step toward her, hands  
"I brought you something else. Don't you want to know  
outstretched.  
that I saw Morgan?"  
"Nice of you to remember me."  
"So she *was* there." He blew out a breath. Then he  
The barb in her voice stopped him cold. He dropped his  
swallowed, jaw tensing. "How was she?"  
hands. "You're here to chew my ass out. I deserve it. I swear, I  
"In better shape than you since she wasn't somewhere  
never meant to hurt you. I didn't think we'd really become so  
between drunk and hung over."  
emotionally involved. But the minute I laid eyes on you—"

"Her shoulder?"

"Oh, stop with the romantic drivel. So I was a good lay,

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

nice and submissive and—”

“Overheard every word at the hospital? Yes. But what I

“Kids, why don’t we take this inside so the nice strangers  
never heard was that, if you supposedly loved me, when you  
were

around the motel can’t hear about your sex lives?” Deke  
coming back. It seemed awfully easy for you to write me off.”  
shepherded them into Jack’s room.

He finally breached the distance between them and gripped  
Morgan darted inside, past Jack, shocked that she’d been so  
her uninjured shoulder. His touch slid over her like an electric  
stirred up that shouting in a parking lot about their intimate  
details shock, a jolt of heat, of desire. But more, even. This  
came with a

seemed reasonable. God, that man got under her skin and fried  
her

blast of yearning that exploded from her heart, so strong it  
nearly brain.

brought her to her knees.

Inside, the white walls and nondescript pressed wood

But Jack held her up. “*Cher*, I fucked up. I didn’t have any  
furniture shouted “typical.” The striped beige and ivory  
comforter

right to try to win you back. Would you have believed a word I  
lay strewn with the stiff white sheets across the bed. Brown  
said? No,” he answered for her. “And why should you take me  
indoor/outdoor carpet completed the utilitarian look.  
Thoroughly

back? I don’t deserve it. I know that.”



ugly. So how the hell had she wound up having one of the most

Was it really just as Deke said, that Jack felt too guilty to emotional discussions of her life here?

pursue his feelings for her? Was that the only thing that stopped

She turned to find Deke shutting the door before he leaned him?

against it. Jack hovered close to her, so close she could smell the Maybe the more fundamental question was, did she want mystery of his scent blending with the whiskey he'd been guzzling.

him back? Did she want Jack and all he could give her in her life

But he made no move to touch her.

each and every day.

"You were more than a good lay, Morgan. Way more, and I

Even his fingers around her shoulders made her feel more

knew I should come clean. A dozen times I told myself I should

alive than she had in the last week. A wish burst inside her,

but..." Remorse bled into his gaze, tightened his mouth. "I love

straining against common sense. They were from different places,

you, and I knew once I told you the whole story that I'd lose you. I led different lives... Pointless rumination. If they were to become a couldn't bring myself to say it and make you hate me. It was going

couple, they could compromise, mesh lives, live part-time in to come soon enough."

Louisiana and part-time in Los Angeles. Something.  
Morgan steeled her heart against the admission. But she  
The more important fact was that inside, they shared  
wasn't quick enough. His words were like a surprise attack,  
and  
something special, connected physically and emotionally.  
hope, pain, and yearning all joined the shock to wear her  
resistance Sexually. Without him, Morgan had felt as if she'd  
been missing  
down.  
something significant.  
Tears stung her eyes. "You love me so much that when I  
No, more than that. She felt like she'd been missing half of  
was shot, you visited the hospital, had a nice cozy chat with  
herself.  
Brandon about your ex-wife, then left him to deliver your  
Risk-taking had never been her forte, and taking the one  
apologies to me. And you *never came back*."  
she contemplated now scared the hell out of her. But if there  
was a Jack sucked in a sharp breath. "You..."  
chance, even a remote one, that she and Jack could get beyond  
this

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 199**

revenge of his and have something significant, even lasting...  
senses, igniting her heart.  
She'd be a first-class idiot not to find that out.  
"“I'm sorry' is a good start," she whispered.  
"Just answer me one question," she demanded finally. "If I

“I’m damn sorry. If I had it to do over again...I’d give you  
was able to forgive you for this stupid-ass vendetta you used  
me

your interview, tell you that even though I hated Brandon, I  
wanted for and I said I wanted you to talk to me, what would  
you say?”

you more than anything in the world. Then I’d seduce you  
until

Behind Jack, Deke pumped his fist in the air and nodded in  
leaving me was the last thing on your mind.”

approval. Lord, she’d forgotten he was there. Before she could  
tell

“Better plan.”

him to get his ass out of the room, Jack hauled her against him.

“Smarter, that’s for sure.” Jack shrugged, dropped his

“I’d tell you that you’re what I’ve been searching for my  
hands. “But you’d have to forgive me.”

whole life. I’d confess that I dreamed about you before I ever  
met

“You’d have to promise not to pull something this brainless  
you, and that the first time I got deep inside you I think I knew  
that again.”

you were meant to be mine. I’d tell you I love you.”

“Promising that would be easy.”

The swell of emotion behind those choked words undid

“You’d have to agree to be nice to Brandon.”

nearly her, and Morgan felt her resistance crumbling even  
more.

Jack tensed. “We’ve made our peace. I don’t respect what

The tears rushed back. Her mouth trembled. Her throat  
tightened.

he did...but I didn't do much better. I don't know that we're ever

Her jaw shook with the effort to hold back the tears. How could the going to be great friends again, but we'll get along. I could make

man get to her with a few perfect words? Damn it. that happen."

"*Cher*, I wish I could just growl a command at you and Morgan smiled. Insane, complex, drive-her-crazy man and make you come back. But I can't just control your emotions. It's

his stunningly honest answer. "You'd have to promise to fulfill all more important than growling at you to take off your little wet

my fantasies." panties."

That perked Jack right up. He crashed into her personal He was giving her the power. Totally. He might order her space again and crushed her against his chest. Morgan felt safe, felt around in the bedroom, but he wasn't coercing her to give anything

like she'd come home.

she wasn't willing to. He wasn't going to bully her into

"That's a promise I'll have no trouble keeping," he surrendering her heart. He *wanted* her to give it.

whispered. "You got more fantasies I should know about?"

That fact shone from dark, red-rimmed eyes in a hollow,

"Just one at the moment." She drew in a deep breath, tinged stubble-lined face that looked like he had felt nothing but hell for with the scent of Jack, solid and enigmatic all at once, the scent of days.

hope and tomorrow and great sex to come.

The realization that he loved her and wanted her love in  
“Yeah?” he murmured against her mouth. “Tell me, *mon*  
return slid over her like one of her mother’s quilts, soft,  
*coeur*.”

comforting, warm.

Morgan dropped her gaze, drew in a deep breath, and went  
“I didn’t know what to say or do or how to get out of the  
for broke. “That everything we’ve been talking about could be  
real.

mess I’d created.” His self-deprecating laugh scratched across  
her

I want to forgive you—”

**WICKED TIES – S. Bradley w/a Shayla Black – Berkley  
Heat, Jan. 2007, ISBN 0-425-21361-7**

**Page 200**

“And I want you to wear my pendant.” He fished it out of  
his pocket. “I’ve been keeping it here, close to me...to be  
close to  
you.”

“Jack.” Morgan just about dissolved into tears.

“I want to keep you, love you, have you with me always,”  
he whispered.

In the background, Deke clapped and let loose a stadium-  
worthy whistle.

Jack started at the sound. Then he growled something ugly,  
set Morgan aside, and stomped to the door. He grabbed Deke  
by

the arm. “And some fantasies are meant to be for two.” He  
shoved

Deke out the door into the harsh midday sun. “Go to your own room.”

“And do what? You’re more entertaining than the soap operas on TV right now.”

“Fuck off.” Jack slammed the door in his face, then sidled back to Morgan. “Where were we?”

She couldn’t stop the smile curling up her lips. “With you having the fantasy that you could keep me and love me forever.”

“Still having that fantasy.” He cupped her face in his large, warm hands, and stared at her with dark, hungry eyes. “Can you make it come true, *cher*?”

“Thanks to you, I know who and what I am now.” She brushed a solemn kiss across his mouth. “Your wish is my command...sir.”