



MASKED

*Thankful*

LISSA MATTHEWS

Thankful  
by  
Lissa Matthews

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Smashwords Edition

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Cover Art by Kendra Egert

## Dedication

To all Thor and Bobby fans, I am thankful for you.

"So you're the man my son has taken up with?"

Thor glanced backward to see Bobby's father, Robert, Sr. approaching from the house. The older man, a virtual mirror for what Bobby would look like in about twenty-five years, closed the door from the kitchen and came to stand next to Thor on the porch.

The late autumn weather was chilly but not in the same way as the reception from Bobby's parents. His mother, Jean, had slowly warmed up to Thor throughout the day, but Bobby's father had not.

Thor turned to look the man in the eye. "Yes." There was no need to lie, however Thor wasn't fond of the 'taken up with' terminology. Bobby had wanted them to accept Thor, to accept his relationship with their son, but the instant he and Bobby had walked through the door, they'd been under scrutiny and the object of disapproving stares. "You should know I don't approve," Robert, Sr. stated succinctly.

"I do."

"I could ask you to leave."

"You could." Thor was not going to get into a pissing match with this man. He adored Bobby too much. The rift between Bobby and his father over Bobby being gay wasn't going to be widened because of Thor, at least, not if Thor had anything to say about it.

"Robert would leave with you, I suspect."

There was resignation in the older man's voice and that bothered Thor. "He would."

Thor had no doubt Bobby loved his parents as he should, but Thor was also well aware of Bobby's feelings toward him. Thor was Bobby's guest and should Thor be asked to leave, Bobby would go too. "I don't think you'll do that though."

"No," Robert, Sr. said resolutely. "It would break his mother's heart."

"His choice of partner isn't your up to you." Thor tried to be gentle with his tone and not let his frustration show. He knew that wasn't going to do anyone any good, but he wouldn't let himself be bullied into someone else's belief system and without Bobby on the porch to defend himself, Thor happily took up that position too.

"How dare you tell me how to raise my son." There was pride, indignation, and a touch of sadness in those words. Thor felt for the position Bobby's family found themselves in. They didn't know how to accept a relationship that went against their deep held beliefs.

"There was no disrespect meant. Only, you already raised him. He's a grown man, responsible, and capable of making his own choices. I happen to be one of them."

The man didn't say anything else for a long moment and Thor relished the bit of silence, the chance to simply gaze out at the countryside, the lack of traffic and noise. He cared for his submissive, his lover, his friend. They were all of those things and slowly becoming more to each other as they spent more and more time together. He'd agreed not long ago to make this trip to Bobby's childhood home, to meet his parents. Family was something Thor didn't have, save for the ragtag band of friends he'd accumulated over the years, starting with Aidn.

He knew a person couldn't choose the family they were born into, but they could choose to love beyond religion, belief, faith, right, *and* wrong. He hoped Bobby's father eventually came to accept or at least be able to love Bobby in spite of his choice of lover.

"Robert said you know his friend Aidn."

"Yes, I do. We've been friends for a while now."

"Is he...like you?"

"Like me?" Thor inquired. He knew what was being asked, what was being inferred, but he was going to make the man say it. He wasn't going to be the only uncomfortable one in this conversation.

Bobby's father colored and opened his mouth several times before he actually said anything. "Preferring men."

Thor smiled. Close enough. "No. He prefers women and has a very lovely girlfriend."

"Robert could have had one too if you --"

"If I what? If I hadn't turned him to the dark side?" Thor laughed at the common misconception.

"Yes. Yes if you hadn't come into the picture. If you hadn't...hadn't..." Robert, Sr. blustered

Thor faced the anger head on. "For your information, your son came to me. I had nothing to do with how things began between us. I only accepted his invitation." Bobby's father didn't need to know the circumstances of their first private meeting. "I'm sorry you don't approve, but Bobby and I, we're a couple and he wants nothing more than for you and his mother to accept that, to welcome us as you would if his partner had been a woman. It won't ever be. He wants a man. He wants me and I want him."

"It's an abomination."

"I understand that's how you feel, but it's not how I feel and it's not how Bobby feels," Thor said easily. He didn't care to try to change anyone's mind about him or his relationship with Bobby.

"I don't like that you call him that. It's a name for a boy. My son is a man."

"I know that and so does he, but he doesn't mind being called Bobby and that's how he first introduced himself to me." Which wasn't the exact truth. When Thor had met him, by way of Aidn, Bobby had been Robert. He stayed that way until the night he presented himself to Thor, asking for a spanking. The memory was enough to make Thor's palm itch.

Another few minutes passed in relative peace. Bobby had gone upstairs soon after dinner for a nap and Thor'd told him he'd be up to check on him after a while. Thor knew the second he stepped out onto the porch that he wouldn't be alone for long.

He'd offered to help with the dishes, but had been shoo'd away with a smile from Bobby's mother and the same scowl Bobby's father had had on his face since he'd been introduced to Thor.

Robert, Sr. cleared his throat. "Robert says you work in construction."

Thor sighed and gave in to the small talk, the shift in topic. "I do. I'm a project manager for one of the building sites in Charlotte."

"Do you enjoy your work?"

"Very much. I like being outside and I like the labor."

"Do you and my son live together?"

The question was awkward and Thor felt for the man. He didn't know what it was like being a parent, but it couldn't be easy, especially when your child turned out so different than how you'd expected they would. "No. He still has his apartment and I still have my house."

"A house?"

Thor smiled a genuine smile for the first time during the conversation. "Yes. I bought an older home and fixed it up. It's actually a work in progress, but I enjoy the do-it-yourself part of home owning. Plus, I keep my music too loud for an apartment building."

"Does Robert help at all?"

Thor thought it an odd question, but didn't let on that he did. "He makes sure I stay fed. He's not much for power tools."

Robert, Sr. laughed. Out loud. And Thor was stunned. For a second he was afraid to breathe, to make any movement or sound at all, thinking if he did, the spell of whatever he said would be broken.

"No. No, my son was more a detriment to himself and others when it came to hammers and drills. He was better off with books and sports."

"He's a smart man."

"I'm very proud of him, despite..." He waved his hand absently and Thor understood what the man couldn't bring himself to say again.

"You should be. He's worked hard at his firm to get where he is."

"Do they know?"

"Not to my knowledge. I don't think he intends to tell anyone either. It's none of their business and if they did find out and have a problem with it, well, he's as good a lawyer as any of them are."

"Look, I'm ah...I'm sure you're a good man too, and I can see that you do care for Robert. I just can't accept that he chose this way."

"Sir, some would tell you that it's not a choice they've made. It's who they are. It's part of their DNA. Who they love isn't up to anyone but them. You might not accept it, but I hope for his sake, you'll respect it."

"I don't believe that. He chose this and that's all there is to it. I don't know why and I'll continue praying that he will come to his senses."

"For everyone involved sir, I think we will have to agree to disagree."

Bobby's father grunted. "To keep the peace, we may well have to. In the meantime, while you're here in my house, you'll respect me and my wife and sleep in the guest room you were shown to."

"I didn't have plans to do otherwise."

"See that you don't." With one final glare, and not a smidge of the man who'd laughed only moments before, Robert, Sr. turned on his heel and went inside, leaving Thor alone on the porch.

The trees at the edge of the large lawn had lost their leaves, but the forest beyond still looked fairly dense and Thor's mind started to wander at the possibilities the area might present.

It probably wouldn't be a good idea to engage in play while visiting Bobby's parents for the Thanksgiving weekend, but the tension inside and clearly, outside the house was getting to Thor. He was an easy going guy and could let most things roll off his back, but judgment wasn't one of them.

He wasn't welcome. He wasn't wanted there by anyone other than Bobby, but he'd spoken the truth when he'd said if he left, Bobby would go with him. Thor didn't want to do that to this family.

He could, on the other hand, order Bobby to stay. It would defuse some of the underlying tension between he and his parents, but it wouldn't solve anything. Thor sighed and let his usually strong shoulders sag, uncertain what to do.

"What was that for?"

"You should be napping," Thor responded without turning around. The porch boards creaked and the closer Bobby came, the knots along his neck and upper back began to ease. There was something incredible and magical about their connection.

Magical. It was a fanciful term and one that he wouldn't normally use, but he didn't know any other way to describe the pull between them. There was comfort in a way Thor hadn't experienced before. It went beyond the sexual lure of submission and dominance, of a man and his lover. It was becoming part of his being, part of his soul.

"Probably, but I couldn't sleep. What happened between you and my dad? What was the reason for that sigh? I've never heard anything like that coming from you."

"What would you say about me going home?" Under normal circumstances, Thor wouldn't have posed the question. He'd have simply told Bobby they were leaving or he'd have kept his mouth shut. He should have now, too, but--

"What do you mean going home?" Bobby interrupted.

Again, under normal circumstances, Thor would have admonished his lover for the tone and misstep, but again, this wasn't normal. They hadn't done anything like this together and they both had to navigate their way through it.

"They are uncomfortable with us, with me."

"They are uncomfortable with me, Thor."

Thor turned his head to look at Bobby who had begun to pace the length of the porch. His loafers made little noise against the wood planks, but Thor could feel the shift in the boards under his own feet as Bobby walked back and forth. "It's not you, per se. It's who you are when you choose to be with a man. If they knew nothing of your sexuality, they wouldn't be tense and agitated and you could all go on as though nothing were out of the ordinary. They do know though, about who you choose, they've met him, me, and it just drives the reality deeper that they aren't the ones in control and they can't make you do what they want or what they see as right."

Bobby nodded. "I know. I'm sorry."

"They love you and want what's best for you."

"They just don't want it to be you."

"I think you were a bit naïve if you thought they would accept me and our relationship. Sweet, but naïve."

"Maybe I should have introduced you as my friend."

"Your mom might have believed you, even if just on the surface, but I don't think your father would have."

"I don't want to you to leave," Bobby said, coming to stand beside Thor at the edge of the porch.

"I know you don't and I don't want to leave you here. I've gotten rather used to having you around on the weekends."

"Then why are we talking about it?"

Thor faced Bobby and waited until Bobby turned to face him as well. "We're talking about it because you need to know why I'm considering it. I won't come between you and your father anymore than you being gay already has."

"I don't know how to bridge the distance between he and I. I'm willing to try and he's not. Whether you're here or not, nothing is going to change those facts."

"He'll be tough. I think he may eventually come around, but keeping it front and center in his home, might not be the best answer."

"So you've already decided to leave?"

"No. I'm still in the process."

"What can I do to convince you to stay? If there's any further trouble or issue, we can leave, together."

"I can't let you do that to your mom," Thor said gently. He watched Bobby as he struggled with what to say next. His lips pursed. His jaw tightened. He kicked at an odd angled nail in a floorboard with the toe of his loafer.

Thor struggled as well not to pull his boy into his arms and hold him. They'd played last night, but in the current environment of upset and uncertainty, it seemed so long ago and he was desperate to reconnect.

"Why can't they understand? Why can't *he* understand?" Bobby asked.

The questions weren't for him, Thor knew. They were simply being tossed into the wind because Bobby didn't see why who he wanted in his life as a partner mattered, as long as he was happy. Thor didn't have anyone to gain approval from. Those who accepted it, great. Those who didn't, well, that was great too. All he expected was to be treated fairly. If he wasn't, he would take it up with the person or persons who seemed to have a problem with him.

Bobby was a little more sensitive to it since he grew up feeling he had to live in the closet. Even though he'd talked to his parents about who he was bringing with him before he and Thor arrived, Robert, Sr. was continuing to take issue with his son's sexual orientation.

"Has he explained why he doesn't?"

"Just says it isn't right, that it's unnatural. He should love me enough to accept me."

"That's just it. He does love you and he wants what's best for you."

"And that person is you."

Thor nodded. "I know. He'll come around or he won't. Either way, he will always love you. You're a different man than what he expected after having raised you and he's having a hard time coming to grips with that. Your mom just wants you here, however that can be accomplished."

"You're right. How is it you're always right?" Bobby smiled and Thor grinned. "So, what do we do now?"

"I was thinking a walk into the woods might be a good idea," Thor answered innocently enough. "A little fresh air, a little exercise." He shrugged and looked out toward the edge of the trees, then locked gazes with Bobby again.

"I can take you out to my favorite spot when I was kid." Bobby jogged down the porch steps and Thor followed. He tried not to marvel at the delicious ass of his lover, but he couldn't help it and he ogled to his heart's content.

"It's beautiful here," he said absently. He hadn't spent much time in the country, always preferring the city and urban areas to suburbia and beyond. He might re-think that notion though. A little place in the woods, maybe even in the mountains to get away, to take Bobby to for a few days of solitude and unencumbered play... Their weekends were pretty private unless they went out for a meal or to the club, but having even that choice taken away, somewhat forced to stay in for food and entertainment... He was going to have to give some serious thought to the idea.

"It is. Spring is the best time around here, though. My mother's flowers bloom all through the summer and it's just a mass of color. The azaleas in every shade available line the borders of the..." Bobby stopped just inside the cover of trees and turned. "Why are you laughing?"

Thor pulled his lips in to stop the smile but it was too late. "No reason other than the way you were playing yard foliage tour guide." He glanced backward to make sure they couldn't be seen from the house, then grabbed hold of Bobby and hauled him in close for a kiss.

Bobby melted and Thor anchored him with an arm around his back. This was what always felt right, just he and Bobby. It lit him up inside and he couldn't get over how much he had come to crave the man in his arms.

He coaxed Bobby's tongue into his mouth and bit down on it, hard, then harder until Bobby moaned and began to writhe. Surrender was inevitable. Bobby may have thought they were simply out for a little walk and hadn't planned on there being any play in the woods but it was about to happen anyway.

Now.

Thor lifted his head and the glassy look in Bobby's blue eyes drove every bit of self control Thor had left to the very edge. "Take me to your favorite spot," Thor whispered. "But make it quick."

Bobby jerked his head in a nod then spun away and took off at a fast clip. Thor kept up but quickly lost his way and sense of direction. Bobby seemed to know where he was going but... "You do know where we are, right?" he called out.

"Yes sir. I know these woods like the back of my hand."

"That's good." He halted a few feet behind Bobby who'd stopped in front of a tree, the bark of which bore vertical knife carvings of the name Robert. The base and surrounding ground were covered in leaves and Bobby stooped to clear some away, then leaned against the tree.

"When I was a kid, I had a small stick fort in these woods. I'd come out there to think, to dream. I had my first girl kiss out here and my first boy kiss too."

"Did you now? How many girls and boys?" Thor liked Bobby's secrets. He liked being privy to them, to have the freedom to use them to his advantage when he wanted, to share in something personal. He didn't give his own secrets over as easily, but when he did, he trusted them only to Bobby.

"Two girls. You know? Just to be sure I had gotten the right reading the first time."

Thor grinned and crossed his arms over his chest. "And boys?"

"You'd be surprised how many boys down here in the South from conservative families are a little sexually confused." Bobby grinned in return and added a flirtatious wink.

"I'm sure I would be, but just to be on the safe side, I think a little refresher course of your sexual preference is in order."

Bobby gulped. "You do?"

Thor was impressed at the split second change in his boy. One minute, Bobby was cute and playful. The next, he was serious, submissive, and eager. "I do. I wouldn't want being home, where your family disapproves of your choice in partner to influence you in a different direction."

"Oh." The one word shuddered out from between Bobby's lips and when he looked Thor in the eye, heat and need mixed.

"Such an agreeable boy. Let's see if you're just as obedient. Turn around, drop your pants and boxers to your ankles, and wrap your arms around the tree as far as you can."

"Sir?"

"Are my instructions unclear?" Thor inquired. He took a few steps around, looking at some of the smaller trees and shrubs. Branches and twigs littered the ground on top of and alongside the leaves that had fallen.

"N-no sir."

Thor removed the band of elastic keeping his long hair contained. He shook it out and went to work on the buttons at the cuffs of his shirt. "Then do as I say." He rolled the sleeves up his forearms, then reached for an eye level branch.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw his orders had been followed. His boy's bare ass glowed pale in the shadowed light of the woods. There were few sights in the world that made him smile

more than that behind. Spankings between them were sacred, special. A form of punishment at times, discipline at others, pleasure for the most part.

There was a chill in the air but not enough for Bobby to be quivering from it. No, the slight tremble he witnessed was from need and anticipation. He knew Bobby well enough to be able to detect his moods, his shifts in attitude, his level of hunger, lust, and desire.

"You okay, boy?" Thor knew the answer before he asked the question, but he wanted the voiced confirmation from his submissive.

"Yes sir."

"Excellent. We're going to try something a little different today. I think the tension from the current situation requires it, plus we don't have our normal array of implements."

"Yes sir."

Thor rolled the thin switch in his palm. He'd snapped it off from the branch he'd taken off the nearby tree. "You're not going to ask what I've got in mind? You're just going to accept it? Whatever I decide?"

"Yes sir." Hesitation was absent from the affirmative answer.

Pride filled Thor followed by a strong sense of humility. Bobby placed all his trust in Thor to care for him, to keep him safe, to help him grow in his submission. It was more than Thor had ever expected, but when it came right down to it, it was everything he'd ever wanted. "You might come to regret that, boy," he teased. Sort of.

He whipped at the air with the switch and witnessed Bobby's ass cheeks clench. He grinned to himself and took a step forward. "A little nervous?" he whispered just before he closed his teeth on his boy's right earlobe.

Bobby groaned and pushed his hips back into Thor. "N-no."

"Liar," Thor chuckled. He moved back and tapped the thin reed of wood against his pants leg. "Were you ever sent out here to cut your own punishment switch?"

"No," Bobby croaked out.

Thor was very pleased by that answer. It gave him a sadistic little thrill to know he would be the first to give Bobby this particularly wicked experience. "Are you hard?"

"V-very. Please sir..."

"Please sir? Mmmm. I do love hearing those words from you, boy. Just what would you like me to please do?"

"T-touch me."

"I plan on it." Thor whipped the switch through the air once more away from Bobby and after witnessing the clenching of Bobby's ass cheeks a second time, Thor swished it closer until he could touch Bobby with the end. "If you need me to stop, I want you to let go of the tree with one arm and hold up three fingers. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir." Bobby's voice was full of impatience, hunger, and arousal. Silence reigned between them for a few moments other than the wind blowing through the branches. Thor kept up the caress of the switch, trailing it between Bobby's thighs, tapping it against his balls, easy at first, then harder until Bobby's breath shuddered out. "God sir, please."

"God? Well, if that's how you feel..." Thor lifted the switch, let it fly through the air, and the mark it left against Bobby's creamy skin was beautiful; a long, thin, bright pink line. He quickly chased one strike with another, and another. Bobby's back arched and more, long, thin lines appeared on his ass. He was breathing heavily; the muscles in his arms tight as he held them around the tree. Thor thought Bobby was the most beautiful man when he was this vulnerable,

submissive, and giving. Outside of that part of him, he was still beautiful to Thor, only in a different way. Capable, powerful, handsome. "Are you all right, boy?"

"I...am." The words were broken, slightly off, and Thor knew it was affecting Bobby on a level they hadn't been across yet.

"I've never used a switch like this on anyone. Light and wispy." Thor lifted his arm and let the whip-like reed fly again, whoosh and crackle through the air, connecting with Bobby's behind. It wasn't heavy enough to echo, but it made a sweet, yet evil snapping sound. "It's a crude instrument. Spare the rod and all that. I like it, boy. I like it a lot."

Thor spanked Bobby with the switch twice more on the ass, and once on each hip for good measure. He started to raise it again, but Bobby moved, slowly, lifting his arm from the tree and held up three fingers. Thor smiled. It was the first time he'd pushed Bobby to the limit in such a short time. "Good boy," he whispered. "Good boy. Open your mouth."

When Thor stepped to Bobby's side, his mouth was open just like he'd been told. Thor placed the piece of wood between Bobby's teeth. "Hold this for me."

Bobby nodded and Thor looked at him closely. His cheeks were flushed, his normally bright blue eyes were dark and dilated, the pulse in his neck was still throbbing rapidly. Thor dropped his gaze and found Bobby's cock hard, as hard as he'd ever seen it, and leaking pre-cum in a near constant drip. He met Bobby's stare again. "The pain? It was too much for you?" he asked, while carefully, placing his palm against the shaft of Bobby's penis. The flesh was hot in the cool autumn afternoon. Bobby nodded his response.

"Would you ever want to try it again?" Thor waited for the answer from Bobby's head but found a suitable one in the way the cock against his palm jerked. He closed his fingers around the pulsating flesh and began to slowly stroke.

Back and forth, easy glides urging more liquid from the tip when the circle of digits pressed under the head. Bobby finally nodded. Drool escaped from the corner of his mouth and urgent sounds escaped his throat. His hips, thrusting toward the tree aided the hand job Thor was giving him.

"Good. I know you want to come. I know your nuts are aching, aren't they? Yes, I'm sure they are. You feel hot from the inside out. The perspiration that broke out on your skin when I was using that make-shift bit you now hold in your mouth, still shines on you. You're a needy pup, aren't you?"

Bobby's grunt and another nod was all Thor was granted before Bobby came all over the tree bark and Thor's hand. Thor kept up the jacking but slowed and eased his hold. He took the switch from Bobby's mouth and stole a heated kiss before he presented his hand to Bobby's lips. "It's a bit sticky now," he said.

The hint was taken and Bobby eagerly got to work cleaning Thor's palm and fingers of all orgasmic evidence. Thor pulled his hand back. "Thank you boy. I know you're tender, but pull your pants up, and make yourself as presentable as possible so I can take you back to your parents. You'll need to mind your facial expressions because I imagine you'll find it very uncomfortable to sit."

"What about you sir?" Bobby asked the question and inclined his head toward the bulge in Thor's well fitting trousers. He'd foregone the kilt and leathers for several nice, expensive pants and shirts. He'd wanted to make a good impression visually, even if the impression wasn't as good emotionally or mentally.

"I'll be fine," Thor remarked with more bravado than he actually felt. He wanted to make use of Bobby's mouth, hands, and ass, but they'd been gone from the house long enough. "You'll be allowed to ease my discomfort at a later time."

"Yes sir," Bobby said softly. His disappointment was nearly tangible and that, in and of itself, helped Thor's own hunger to abate some. Bobby wanted Thor's pleasure as much, if not more so, than he wanted his own. Bobby was selfless in his giving and Thor was humbled each time he was reminded of it.

Thor stood back and Bobby took on the task of doing what he'd been told to do. In this headspace, they were one. They saw the same destination, the same intense connection, the same pointed desire to give, to receive, to please, and to pleasure.

Bobby faced him when he was put back together. His cheeks had lost a little of the pink flush and what was left could be passed off as being in the cool air and the exertion of walking around the woods.

"Sir? Thor?"

"Yes boy?"

"Are you going to leave?"

"Not if you don't want me to go. Think on it until we get back to the edge of the trees." Thor bent and picked up the switch from where he'd dropped it on the ground. As he started to walk away, to move past Bobby, Bobby reached out and snagged his hand. Their fingers clasped together, Thor watched in silence as Bobby knelt on the ground, in the midst of leaves and twigs and dirt, grimacing all the way. "Boy? Bobby?"

"Thank you," Bobby said softly.

"For?"

Bobby crossed his wrists against Thor's stomach and laid his head against them. "For letting me be me. For giving me this. Us."

"You've thanked me before, many times and I've told you there's no need." Thor gripped Bobby's hair in his hand and tugged his head up until their gazes locked. "But, you're welcome."

"There is need," Bobby implored. "You've given me freedom. You took me and gave me a chance when you didn't have to. You've come out among friends and acquaintances for me and for us. You've even come here and taken my father's harshness and my mother's embarrassment. You've braved everything and you still care how it all affects me. So, yes, there is need, sir. I am thankful for you."

Thor's breath caught in his chest. Bobby's heartfelt words arrowed directly into the center of his being, into his soul. "Oh boy. You're not supposed to be able to bring me to my knees, but you keep this up and we'll both be on the ground. You're precious to me." He tightened his grip in Bobby's hair for one last second, then let go. "C'mon." He urged. "Let's get back before your father does come looking for us."

Bobby hadn't even gotten to his feet good before Robert, Sr.'s voice traveled through the trees.

"Robert?"

Thor laughed under his breath. "Too late."

"On our way out, Dad," Bobby called back. He took off at a slow jog and as long as Thor could see the top of Bobby's head, he could find his way.

He put his hair back into the ponytail as he walked toward the edge of the woods. He caught up just seconds after Bobby cleared the line of trees.

"Your mother sent me out here to see if you and...Thor would like some pie."

"She have pumpkin?" Bobby asked, falling into step beside his father on the way up to the house. Thor hung back and kept a small distance behind them. Father and son were very much alike in build and stature. Their voices were along the same timbre as well.

"She always has pumpkin even though you're the only one who eats it."

Bobby glanced over his shoulder and smiled at Thor. "Do you like pumpkin pie?"

"Not a chance."

"Oh."

Thor grinned at the dejected look Bobby gave him before turning back around. "But if she's got apple pie, I'll be all over it." That comment had Robert, Sr. glancing back at him for a split second before looking forward again.

"A good man to like apple pie," the man commented. "My wife has two this year. She said one has cheese in the crust. I don't know about all that. She says I'm too unadventurous for that sort of thing and got a normal pie with a normal crust for me. You'll have to eat the cheese one."

"I don't mind sir. Apple and cheddar are pretty good together."

Robert, Sr. scoffed and Bobby laughed. When they got up to the house, Bobby's mother was waiting. "Do you boys want pie?"

"Yes, we would and the pumpkin is all for me again. You have whipped cream too, right?"

She looked at Bobby as though he'd grown two heads. Thor had to bite back a smile.

"When have you ever had to eat pumpkin pie without whipped cream?" she asked indignantly. "Never. That's when." She looked over Bobby's shoulder to Thor. "What kind of pie did you want?"

Her question and tone were pleasant. She was trying and Thor knew that. He--

"He's having that new fangled apple one you bought," Robert, Sr. answered for Thor quickly and ushered his wife into the kitchen before she could say anything else. Bobby's father might be a hard-ass, but he didn't doubt that Bobby's mother got her way more times than not.

On the porch steps, Bobby turned to Thor. "Pie? Pie will convince you to stay?"

"That, and you laughing with your father."

"Thank you, sir."

Thor nodded. "What you said out in the woods, boy? I'm thankful for you too. I hope you know that."

"Yes sir."

"Good. Now, what say we go inside and see about that pie, hmm?"

Bobby shook his head and headed for the kitchen door. "Pie. My boyfriend can be won over with pie," he murmured.

"And you can be won over with a strip of leather. Keep it up, boy and you'll be back in the woods later tonight."

Bobby stopped in his tracks, his hand on the doorknob. "Yes sir," he said softly.

Yes, Thor thought. Thankful. He was very, very thankful.

## About the Author

Living in North Carolina, talented, multi-published author, Lissa Matthews, has many loves in her life: Family, friends, NASCAR, football, music of all kinds, cooking, BDSM, and last, but not least, coffee. She loves it so much she and those who know her are surprised she hasn't floated away on a caffeine-induced cloud while giving life to feisty heroines and hunky heroes.

Lissa's love of romance came from every book she has ever picked up. No matter what she read, she fell in love with the written word. The promise of escape, the deep, intriguing characters, and the winding journey from beginning to end, constantly drew her into bookstores and libraries as she was growing up.

Her first stories were written in junior high and she kept it up through college. She would stay up late at night when her kids were little reading romance and still penning her own stories. In 2007 when she and her family moved to North Carolina from Florida, she began pursuing writing as a profession and she couldn't imagine doing anything else... Well, except maybe writing in her own cupcake bakery/coffee shop. But that dream is a ways down the road... Lucky for Lissa, she believes in dreams coming true.

Lissa is married with two children and seven, yes, seven cats. She blames her oldest child for the cats.

Where to find Lissa online:

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**Also by Lissa Matthews**

Simple Need  
Carnal Ecstasy  
Ink Spots  
The Swing  
The Demon is an Angel  
Stick Shift  
Arrested Holiday  
Pink Buttercream Frosting  
Twisted Up  
Melting Jane  
Double Up

**Series:**

**Blue Jeans and Hard Hats:**

Sweet Caroline  
Cracklin' Rosie  
Forever In Blue Jeans

**Denali Heat:**

Arctic Shift

**Masked:**

Masked  
UnMasked  
Revealed

**The Bar Next Door:**

Malachi's Word

**Coming Soon:**

More Than This  
Trouble In The Making  
Eli's Promise