



WELL HUNG

M. L. Rhodes

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by M. L. Rhodes

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## **DEDICATION**

*To M. D., who gave me the idea for this story*

## WELL HUNG

Jen Hunter knew when she pried open her eyes on Friday morning it was going to be a busy day. And she couldn't damn well say she was happy about it.

She'd gotten a call yesterday telling her she'd won a kitchen renovation. It was through one of those local cable TV shows where people took pictures of a hopeless room in their house and wrote up a letter saying why they wanted to change it. Then the show, *Dream Room*, picked one winner each week. They'd arrive with a TV crew, and a carpenter who oversaw all the work, and in one day's time would proceed to make the lucky recipient's renovation dreams come true. Jen had never seen the show herself, but Leslie, the girl who worked for her at the bath and body boutique here in the small, oceanside village of Seaview, always raved over it ... especially over some hunky guy on the program.

There was just one tiny problem with the whole deal. Jen didn't need a kitchen makeover, thank-you-very-much. Granted her little cottage was old, but she thought it was charming. She'd bought it two years ago and had scrubbed and painted every inch of wood, outside and in, all by herself. Something she was quite proud of.

This was all J. P.'s fault. She'd gone out with the guy a couple of times this past spring and he'd gotten cocky, thinking she was going to ask him to move in with her or something. *He* was the one who'd taken the photos and sent

the letter. She hadn't known anything about it until after it was done, the jerk.

And he hadn't cared about her kitchen. All he'd wanted was fifteen minutes of fame ... long enough, he thought, to convince the producers they should give him a show of his own. He worked at a used car dealership and had come up with some lame idea for a TV show that involved luring unsuspecting buyers into thinking they were getting a class automobile, then mounting a hidden camera under the dash to catch their reactions when the cars went to hell out from under them.

Oh, yeah, that was real brilliant. Jen rolled her eyes.

She'd forgotten all about J. P.'s *Dream Room* letter until she'd gotten the call yesterday. So here she was, stuck home from work on the Friday before the first real weekend of summer, one of the busiest retail weekends of the year for the little tourist town on the North Carolina barrier island coast. She'd tried to reason with the bubbly production assistant who'd called from *Dream Room*. Had told her this wasn't her idea and she liked her kitchen fine. But no, nothing would stop them from sending the crew out at 8:00 a.m. sharp just to "look things over and make some suggestions," then she could decide.

Jen's plan was simple. Let the carpenter and his lackeys take a quick peek, tell them she didn't need any new cabinets or countertops, then scoot them right back out the door. With any luck, she could be on her way to the boutique by mid-morning.

A quick glance at the clock over the bay window showed it to be two minutes to eight. And sure enough, was that the rumble of car engines coming up the drive?

Taking one last gulp of coffee and setting her mug in the sink, Jen twisted her mane of unruly chestnut curls atop her head with a scrunchy and squared her shoulders to meet the crew she could now see arriving in two large yellow vans.

The TV crew came first—a man lugging camera equipment, and a twenty-something woman with short perky hair, big perky boobs, and skin-tight jeans stretched over toned perky legs. Jen had barely opened the door when the duo practically ran her over in their haste to get in.

"I'm Delilah Endicott, Ms. Hunter, and you'll need to sign these forms," Miss Perky said with a wide, pink-lipped smile, shoving an inch-high stack of papers into Jen's hand. "It's the usual stuff—waivers and contracts allowing us to work in your home and not be held liable for damages. Quickly now, we need to get this taken care of before Gabe and his crew unload and get in here." A pen was added to the top of the stack, and the woman physically turned Jen around by the elbow and gave her a gentle push toward the counter.

"But, I'm not—"

"Once that's done, we'll set up the camera and sound equipment and film your kitchen from all angles. When Gabe comes in, you'll need to do an initial shoot with him. Nothing major, just a quick meet and greet. Then the focus will go strictly to the room itself and you won't be needed again until the final film of the day is shot, where, of course, we'll want to get you in various states of shock and awe."



"Really," Jen said, pulling her arm free. "I'm trying to tell you that this is a mistake. I don't want my kitchen changed. I like it—"

"Bud," Delilah called to the cameraman, "be sure to get some shots of that old, out-of-style cabinetry, will you? Look at that godawful color it's painted! Is that supposed to be pink or peach?"

"I happen to like the color!" Jen glared at the woman, who completely ignored her. Delilah was too busy pushing Jen's white farm-style table out of the way so Bud could set up his camera tripod.

An older man wearing overalls entered the kitchen through the side porch bearing two big toolboxes. He was followed by a skinny teenager carrying a giant coil of extension cord. "Gabe'll be ready to roll shortly," the kid said to the camera crew.

"Oh, fab! Gabe'll make quick work of this place," Delilah said, all perky and efficient. "Shouldn't take him longer than an hour or so to rip out this stuff and get started on something new."

*Rip it out?* A red haze of fury began to form over Jen's eyes.

"Excuse me," she called, trying to get the attention of the assembled invaders.

No one so much as spared her a glance.

"Excuse me," she shouted over the din, stomping her foot in a move she knew was worthy of a five-year-old, but didn't damn well care at the moment.

Four startled faces turned to her, mouths open, eyes wide.

"This is my house!" Jen railed. "And no one damn well better be ripping out anything! I didn't ask you people to come here—"

Delilah tried to interrupt at that, but Jen held up her hand for silence and continued. "Contrary to what you think, I did *not* ask for this. It was a misunderstanding. And I certainly don't give you permission to rip out anything whatsoever!" She swiped her hand across the stack of papers on the counter, sending them flying across the floor. "Nothing. Get it? No permission! No *ripping!*"

She stopped long enough to drag in a shaky breath. Then, in a smaller voice she added, "And there's nothing wrong with the color of my cabinets." Her face flushed with heat as the foursome continued to stare at her.

"The color has a certain feminine charm, I agree," said a deep, sandpapery voice from the doorway.

A strange, sensual hum of recognition resonated through Jen. Blinking, heart racing, she slowly turned to face the newcomer.

*Oh, Lord. It can't be.*

"And the cabinets look solid," the man continued, striding into the kitchen, his tight-fitting black Levi's hugging his muscular thighs and taut butt under his leather tool belt. He spread large tanned hands—confident, masterful hands—over the cabinets, opening doors here and there, rubbing the wood lovingly. The forest green T-shirt he wore clung to his broad shoulders like a second skin, while his sun-streaked, light brown hair curled at the nape of his neck.

Jen's mouth went dry, and even if she'd wanted to speak, nothing could have come out.

The man turned toward her. There was no startled surprise on his face like she suspected was on her own. He'd clearly known ahead of time whose house he'd been coming to today. A slow smile curved up one side of his sensuous lips, and his golden-brown gaze raked over her with enough heat to scald her from here to the mainland and back.

"I think we can work with the cabinets as they are, Ms. Hunter ... or may I call you Jen?" The name rolled off his lips like a warm bead of Southern liquid heat. "I find them to be ... well hung. Sturdy. Quality material. It's hard to come by dependable craftsmanship like this anymore. Too many people nowadays are willing to settle for cheap, quickly made throwaways rather than invest time in a product that lasts *forever*." He stared at her pointedly as he spoke the words.

Jen stood frozen, still unable to speak. All she could manage was a gaspy sort of exhale that only caused the man's smile to widen and the fire in his gaze to burn hotter.

Everyone else in the room seemed take his little speech as a sign that all was well. They returned to their yammering and setting-up, completely clueless to the thick undercurrent of tension and double-entendre that had twined through his words.

Delilah gathered up all the papers Jen had flung to the floor, restacked them, and set them on the table. Then she and Bud disappeared out to the van. The older man and his young assistant followed, mumbling something about setting up the saws outside.

But for Jen, everything else had ceased to exist except the man who'd just walked straight out of her past. Just as she thought her quaking knees might give out from under her, he slid a chair from the table and gently pressed her into it. Where his palm touched her bare shoulder, the skin tingled, and a slow curl of sexual awareness slid through her stomach and settled into an aching pull deep within her. After all these years, he still made her *feel* in a way no one else ever had.

"Gabe," she finally managed to whisper, drowning in the sultry depths of his eyes.

"Jen." His breath brushed dangerously close to her ear. He smelled like sandalwood soap and freshly cut sawdust. Her senses swam at the familiar scent, and the pull in her belly became a full-fledged, sweet-hot clench between her legs.

He dropped a hand onto the stack of papers on the table and leaned closer to her. "Sign them, darlin', and I'll take care of your damned kitchen and make this worth your while," he rumbled in that gravelly voice she'd almost, but not quite, forgotten.

"I..."

"You do trust me, don't you?" One eyebrow rose in challenge. "You did ... once."

Trust *him*? Had he forgotten? Had he forgiven her? My God, Gabriel Jackson was standing in her kitchen, leaning over her chair. Gabriel from her long ago hometown of Rock Creek.

Another realization shot through her. *This* was the man Leslie and all the other women in North Carolina drooled over? The famous *Dream Room*, hard-bodied carpenter, who

sawed and sweated with his shirt off on TV every week? That hunk was her Gabe?

"Well?" he pressed, his steady stare daring her to refuse.

"I ... I trust you."

"So tell me," he said as she numbly scrawled her name across the numerous forms and contracts. "Do you still prefer big city men and big city excitement over us poor, small town folk who won't ever 'make anything' of ourselves?"

She swallowed hard. *No, he hasn't forgotten anything.* "I was young, Gabe. I made mistakes. I thought—"

"I know exactly what you thought." He crouched in front of her chair and one of his big, warm, calloused hands smoothed over her bare knee, then slowly, slowly, inched up on her thigh under her sheer, flowery sundress. "You thought a guy like me, a hometown boy, could never measure up to those city guys you met in college and afterward."

"I didn't mean to hurt you," she whispered.

"Do you remember what you told me, Jen? That last night before you left Rock Creek?" His hand worked in slow, smooth circles, creeping ever upward, and it was all she could do to concentrate on what he was saying. "You told me you loved me. Do you remember that?" His thumb briefly grazed the damp mound beneath her panties.

"I—yes," she gasped. "I remember."

"You said you'd always love me."

She closed her eyes and waited for his questing finger again.

"You said you'd visit during school breaks."

He caressed her panties once more and a small moan escaped her.

"But you never *came*, Jen." His voice dropped to a husky whisper. "Not even once."

His thumb brushed her again. Unable to stop herself, she parted her legs a little farther, giving him easier access.

"All those years I waited. All those holidays." *Brush*. "Summer vacations." *Brush*. "But you never came."

Jen shuddered, aching at the sadness in his words, but also at the power his touch still had over her. The fact there were four other people outside who could walk in at any moment barely registered. All that mattered was that Gabe was here. That his hand was working a simple but powerful magic between her legs. And that all those years of missing him had somehow gotten balled up in her heart and throat until she wanted to cry.

"A man gets lonely, Jen. So I went up to Boston to see you just before you graduated. Remember that little apartment you lived in with the bed that almost filled up the whole room? We enjoyed that bed while I was there, didn't we? And you liked my touch well enough then, too." His thumb had slipped inside her panties now and gently probed at her wet slit. "You liked me to touch your pussy like this. Begged me to, as I recall."

Jen gasped as his thumb hit her hot button, then slithered away.

"Oh, yeah, babe. You liked me to taste it, too. I remember that you liked me to tongue you and screw you real slow with

my fingers at the same time. That always made you lose it. Made you scream."

Jen's legs began to quiver. Gabe's touch and his soft, drawling voice had a mastery over her she couldn't fight. Didn't want to fight.

"You also liked it when I slid my cock inside your tight hole, didn't you?" His thumb probed more deeply into her now, thrusting in and out a few times, mimicking his words. "Christ, I remember how good it was, Jen." His voice caught briefly. "I remember how we rode each other hard, me on top, then you, until my balls ached and your velvet pussy squeezed every last drop out of me."

"Oh, Gabe," she breathed, clutching his free hand, pressing it to her breast, feeling her body vibrate from head to toe. They had been good together.

"But we both know what happened then, don't we, Jen?" He kneaded her breast and fingered her pebbled nipple through the thin rayon fabric of her dress, while his other hand continued to alternately thrust and swirl between her legs. "As soon as I left Boston, your sweet cries still in my ears, your scent still on my cock, you got engaged to another man. I never heard from you again. Not a phone call, a letter. Nothing. I had to read about your upcoming wedding in the announcement column of the Rock Creek paper.

"Please," she whispered, a tear leaking from the corner of one of her tightly closed eyes.

"Was he good, Jen? The guy you almost married. Did he touch you like this? Did you tell him you'd love him forever, too, before you dumped him at the altar?"

"Please..."

"Was he as good a fuck as I was, darlin', because that's all I was, wasn't I? Just a hot, convenient, weekend fuck. Good ol' boy from back home with a big dick ready for action?"

"Please, Gabe," she sobbed.

"Please what?" His hand stilled.

"Please ... I'm ... I want..."

"What? What do you want?" His tone, urgent, commanding, forced her to open her eyes and look at him.

New lines that didn't used to be there creased the tanned skin around his eyes. The sexy cleft on his chin begged to be kissed. And the rugged planes of his face had filled out and were even more blatantly masculine than they'd been seven years ago.

"What do you want, Jenni Lynn?"

Her heart twisted in a knot. *I want you to stop bringing back all those old, painful memories. I want you to keep touching me. I want to feel you inside me, right here and now, marking me as yours and only yours! Oh, God, Gabe, I want you! I always have, but I was too proud to admit it.*

"Jen?" he said firmly.

"I want ... more," she cried, lifting her hips to press her drenched folds back against his hand.

The golden light in his eyes faded, like the sun being swallowed by clouds. But his fingers complied with her request, doing a firm, masterful dance on and around her clit. With a sudden, Technicolor spasm that nearly brought her out of the chair, she came undone with an intensity she'd never experienced with anyone except him.



By the time she returned to her senses, Gabe had already stood and stalked away, his back to her. From the stiff line of his spine and his measured breathing, she knew he was angry.

But she wasn't a girl anymore and could no longer fall back on her old excuse of naiveté. He'd just given her an opening for a second chance, and once again, her pride had blown it.

\* \* \* \*

Gabe avoided her for the rest of the morning, except when Delilah and Bud needed him on camera for a short segment with her. Jen forced herself to smile on cue, aching for a glance from him or a brush of an arm against hers ... something. But he was no more and no less than strictly professional with her. Surely he couldn't ignore the awareness that arced between them whenever they were in close proximity. His very confidence both on and off camera, the way his hands stroked the wood as he spoke, the way his strong, masculine body moved with an easy grace were a magnet to her quivering steel. Yet he appeared not to notice and if he felt anything at all, he kept it firmly locked up inside.

The filming was over too quickly, and he went back to work unloading equipment, leaving her standing alone in the midst of chaos.

Now that she'd signed the contracts, she had no choice but to stay home the rest of the day and let *Dream Room* have their way with her kitchen. This wasn't one of those shows where they threw you out of your own house while they

worked their magic, but after the close encounter with Gabe and his subsequent withdrawal, Jen felt even more like an unwanted third wheel. So she left the team to their work and sought refuge on the front porch swing where she had a modicum of privacy, half-hidden from the road behind the richly scented, clinging honeysuckle trellis.

After kicking off her sandals, she tucked her bare feet up under her and let the gentle rock of the swing lull her tightly strung body and churning heart. The warm June sun shone down on the vans that had invaded her flower-bordered driveway, and the sounds of hammering, whistling, and an electric drill drowned out the trill of the birds and the faint sound of waves across the road and down on the beach. Still, she managed to find a measure of peace.

Until Gabe strode from around behind one of the vans, his shirt off, his tanned back bunching and rippling as he balanced a load of lumber on his shoulder.

Her heart pounded like waves on the beach during a storm, and several seconds passed before she remembered to breath. Damn, he was sexier and more gut-wrenchingly gorgeous than ever.

He had to be thirty-one now—two years older than she. What was his life like? Obviously he'd made a name for himself on *Dream Room*, but she wondered if he'd also taken over his dad's cabinetry business as he'd always planned. Once upon a time, the thought of him working day after day in a hometown business that had been in his family for a hundred years had sounded so ... unambitious. He'd always been incredibly smart, outgoing, had gotten better grades in

school than she had. Yet he'd not been interested in college or some "high-brow" career.

Back in those days she'd never understood why anyone would want to stay in a place like Rock Creek if they had the means to escape. When she'd earned a scholarship to Boston University, she'd left town and never looked back.

But now, she saw Gabe's dreams back then had been grounded, full of family pride, loyalty, and that damned confidence that had scared her silly, while hers had been self-serving and arrogant. She'd never thought how it might make Gran feel when she left for school and never bothered to come home for holidays. Never thought how Gabe, the best friend she'd had as a teenager, might feel when she callously dumped him for what she thought were bigger, more important people and dreams.

She'd had nothing in Rock Creek to go back for except Gran, and when Gran had died unexpectedly during Jen's sophomore year of college, even that tie had disappeared. So she'd finished her degree in business and had worked as a fashion buyer in New York City for several years. But in the end, after two failed relationships—one of them the broken engagement Gabe knew about—and a job that had grown stale in spite of the six figure income, she realized she missed the peace and quiet of small town life. Missed the warmth of small town people. She couldn't go back to Rock Creek. She'd burned that bridge long ago; her pride had made sure of that. So when she'd returned to North Carolina, she'd headed for the coast. She'd opened her boutique, bought this cottage, and pretended to live happily ever after.

*Until today.*

As Jen watched, enthralled, Gabe, his back to her, tossed the lumber down next to a table saw that had been set up in the driveway. His shoulders and arms stretched taut as he worked one board after another across the blade. His skin was the color of dark honey from the sun, and it gleamed with a fine sheen of sweat. He paused for a moment to swipe the back of an arm across his forehead, then resumed work. If he knew she watched him, he pretended ignorance. But Jen could pretend nothing of the sort. Watching his strong hands work the wood only reminded her of what he'd done to her in the kitchen. Why had she let that happen? She was an intelligent, independent woman. She'd never before let a man so boldly fondle her when she'd been in his presence such a short time.

Except this was Gabe. Gabe she'd known since high school when her parents died and she'd moved in with Gran. Gabe, the boy next door who'd always been able to fill her heart with joy, her days with sunshine.

Raw, physical longing raged through her again. Her leg, which she half sat on, crept closer to her swollen labia until her needy mound pressed lightly against her ankle. She could almost smell the damp scent of her womanly musk, and it aroused her even more.

Suddenly, Gabe paused in his work and turned to look at her.

Jen froze, and felt color creep up her cheeks. He couldn't possibly tell what she was doing with her ankle strategically hidden under the wispy folds of her dress. Yet his gaze, even

from a distance, even behind the safety goggles he wore, hinted that he did know.

Was it her imagination or did the crotch of his jeans suddenly seem fuller? The man had always been thick and well hung even at rest, and with a full-blown erection ... good God. A slow, earthy pulse throbbed in her woman's core at the memory of his jutting shaft and heavy balls, and how brilliantly—and thoroughly—they'd loved her long ago.

He stood, not saying a word, just watching her. A minute stretched by. Then two. Jen twitched on the swing, her breasts heavy, her womb clenching, her panties soaking. *Gabe, please. I'm sorry, she silently cried. Please forgive me.*

Swearing softly, but not so softly she couldn't hear every word, he turned back to the saw as suddenly as he'd faced her. He picked up another board and put it on the table, but hesitated. Then, with another colorful curse, he flipped off the switch. The whine of the machine ceased, leaving a startling silence.

Giving Jen one more long, hard look, he unfastened his tool belt and dropped it, ripped off his goggles, and stalked toward the kitchen door.

"Take a lunch break," she heard him tell the crew inside. "Go find someplace to eat."

"It's still early," Delilah said. "Just a little after eleven."

"That's all right. I have a few things I want to get done here that I can do better without everyone underfoot."

Delilah, Bud, and the two other men piled into their respective vans and drove away without giving Jen, in her alcove on the porch, so much as a glance. She might as well

not even exist as far as they were concerned. As far as Gabe was concerned, too, obviously. She hadn't seen him since he'd disappeared into the house.

Her heart racing, she knew this was probably the best chance she was going to get to talk to him. Really talk to him. Yet the thought of facing him up close again, of saying what she needed to say, terrified her. She closed her eyes and buried her face in her hands.

*Okay. Now or never.* Taking a deep breath, she stood.

But just as suddenly, she felt her body being turned, felt the sweaty press of virile male against her, and found herself back in the swing. This time not alone. He'd arranged her so she sat on his lap facing him, her knees on either side of his thighs, her lightly covered breasts scraping against the dark mat of hair on his chest, the firm ridge of his erection nudging her heat.

"Going somewhere?" Gabe said softly, his gaze hard yet scorching.

Jen swallowed to steady herself and met his gaze head on. "I was coming to look for you."

Only a quick lift of an eyebrow gave away his surprise before he hid it. "Looks like you found me. Did you need something?" He held his voice steady, aloof almost, and she hated it. She'd caused this distance between them.

"Yes. Gabe, I..."

The silence dragged out for several seconds.

"You...?"

Jen smoothed a hand over his sculpted cheek. "I'm sorry. I was wrong all those years ago. From the bottom of my heart, I'm sorry."

His breath caught briefly and his nostrils flared. "Apology accepted. Now, if you're done, I should get back to work." He clearly wasn't going to let her off easily.

"No, there's more." Wrapping her fingers through his, she brought one of his hands to her chest. Not her breast, though she burned for his touch, but to her heart. "I left my fiancé because I couldn't imagine ever spending my life with anyone but you. Except I didn't know how to make up for what I'd done to you. I was too scared to find you and tell you. So I ran away again. To New York. I hated it there after a while, hated everything about it, so I moved here. I'd missed small town life. But there was still part of me inside that stayed empty. Until you showed up today."

The golden glint in Gabe's eyes softened. His damp, hard-working-male scent curled around her at the same time his warm fingers curled around her breast. "So you want this?" he whispered hoarsely.

"Yes, but—unhh." His other hand had sought her other breast, this time dipping into the low neckline of her dress to press calloused fingertips to tender flesh.

"And you want this?" He jabbed his swollen, denim-sheathed cock up against her, digging it into her satin panties.

"Yes! But—"

"And what about this?" One big hand hiked up the skirt of her dress to expose her bare leg to the warm, humid air. It

plunged into her panties and two determined fingers dipped into her crease.

"Ahhh.... oh ... yes." Jen's eyes closed and she let her head fall back. Strands of her loosely knotted curls had pulled free and they fluttered around her face as the swing rocked gently back and forth.

Gabe's mouth was suddenly on her nipple through the fabric of her dress, biting, suckling, tugging. His fingers slid inside her, around her, bringing her to the edge of orgasm, then backing off without letting her go over.

"Oh, God, Gabe. I want to feel you against me. Please!"

The honeysuckle trellis hid them from sight of any passing eyes on the quiet residential street, yet the thought that the renovation crew might come back any time teased at the edge of Jen's mind. Still, the excitement, the sheer joy of being with Gabe, overrode everything else.

He lifted her up enough to jerk her panties off.

At the same time, she tore at the snap and zipper on his jeans, desperately needing to feel his hard length unencumbered. He helped her ease his Levi's and black boxer briefs over his stiff rod, until they were wadded around his thighs.

Their mouths met with urgency. He held her so he could rub the length of his thick penis against her streaming slit without actually entering her.

Jen's body clenched in expectation. Her tongue tangled with his, her fingers teased the small flat nubs of his nipples, and her throbbing pussy cried out to be filled. Yet still he held off. Still he teased her.



"Please. I'm on the pill, Gabe. Please, take me now," she gasped.

"No, Jen."

The finality of his words caused her heart to squeeze so tight she thought she might pass out. She pulled back to look at him, confusion churning within her, her body crying out in agony. Could he still be so angry he would tease her this way, then cruelly leave her unfulfilled? "I ... I don't understand."

"I know this feels good, doesn't it?" He rubbed his erection along her folds.

"Yes," she whispered, shuddering in reaction, tears stinging her eyes.

"I want it, too, babe. I could fuck you all day and into tomorrow and we'd both love it." His voice dropped to a strained rumble. "But we've done this before. And it wasn't enough."

Jen swallowed back her sorrow and all the years of guilt. "I know," she croaked, barely able to form the words.

"It's not enough for me that you want my hands and mouth on you. It's not enough for me to thrust into you, to feel you milking me with every squeeze, to hear you crying my name, and for me to shoot my come deep inside you. God knows I'd love to do all those things and more. Much, *much* more." His gravelly voice caught, and his eyes devoured her. "But I want everything, Jenni Lynn. I've always wanted everything. And, by God, I won't settle this time."

She stared deeply into Gabe's warm brown gaze and knew she wanted to look into that gaze every day for the rest of her life.

"I'm not willing to settle this time either," she said softly. "I'm done running."

"What do you want then?" His tone was firm, unrelenting.

She kissed him slowly, lovingly, savoring the minty flavor of his breath, the comforting scent of sawdust that lingered on his skin.

When she leaned back, she smiled for the first time all day. "I want *you*, Gabriel. All of you."

He dragged in a deep breath. "Forever?"

"Yes. Forever."

She felt the tightly coiled tension ease from his body to be replaced by something more immediate, more carnal. With a swift, sure movement, he plunged his rod up into her. Jen cried out and clung to him. "I love you," she whispered. "I've always loved you."

"I know, babe. I've always known." Gabe pumped into her again and again, each time seeming to go deeper. With a low groan, he paused and pulled her face up so they could see each other. "You just needed to realize it for yourself."

His smile stole her breath, leaving her gasping for air.

"Now ride me," he growled, a sparkle in his eyes.

Ride him she did, putting every ounce of her love into each slick stroke, burying his thick length greedily in her hot, needy cave over and over. Their pubic bones ground together. His wiry thatch of hair grated against her tender folds. Time seemed to stop but for the dizzying erotic journey that drove them ever onward.

"I can't last much longer." His voice was little more than a tortured rasp. "You're too hot, and it's been too damned

long." He clutched her hips and thrust with renewed intensity. "Jesus! I'm not going over the edge without you. Do it with me, babe."

Jen's muscles trembled hard at his urgent words. "Close," she gasped. "So close..."

"I'm gonna fuck you like this every day, Jen. For the rest of our lives."

"Yes. Oh, God!" Desperate moans clawed their way up out of her throat.

"You still like it when I talk dirty to you, don't you, darlin'? Then listen to me ... I want you to swallow me inside you ... deep ... all the way. I want to feel your pussy sucking my dick, sucking hard. I want you to come ... right.... *now!*"

Every muscle, every fiber of Jen's existence, focused in on a tiny pinpoint of flame deep inside. Then, in a violent explosion, she combusted. Her body jerked and jerked and jerked again as shockwaves ripped through her. She clutched Gabe's shoulders, barely holding onto her sanity as another climax surged forth, tugging with an invisible, white-hot thread from her toes, through her writhing womb, and out into her fingertips and the very ends of her hair.

A ragged groan tore from Gabe's throat as he found his own peak. Jen felt the power of his release, hot and desperate, pumping into her like a well too long untapped, and she urged him on, begging for all he could give.

When at last their shudders eased, she clung to him, not wanting him to pull out or leave her. His arms curved around her and held her close, tucking her head into his shoulder.

"I love you, Jen," he breathed against her hair.

Tears fill her eyes at the words she'd longed to hear for so many years. "Forever?" she asked.

"You aren't ever getting rid of me, baby. I'll always be here for you."

They sat like that, pressed together, rocking gently in the swing for she didn't know how long. The aroma of honeysuckle and damp sea air mixed with the scent of their loving, and it was the most at peace Jen had ever felt.

"Aw, shit. Reality invades," Gabe said softly, patting her on the rump.

Jen heard the sound of the van engines coming from up the street. "Oh, damn!" In a panic, she clambered off him, straightening the skirt of her rumpled sundress while looking around for her panties...

...only to find them clutched in his strong, capable hand. "Uh-uh," he said with a wicked grin. "These are mine to keep the rest of the day." He tucked them into the front pocket of his jeans, which he had just worked back up over his lean hips and still half-bulging cock.

"Gabe!" A grin curved her face. She could feel the slippery heat of his seed dripping out of her, and it, coupled with the roguish look on his face, turned her on all over again. "Just what the heck am I supposed to do? They're going to be turning into the driveway any second."

"Nothing at all," he said, his husky voice practically giving her another orgasm all on its own. "I love the idea of knowing you're bare-assed and bare-pussied naked out here under your dress with all those other people around. Christ, I'm getting hard again just thinking about it."

He pulled her up against him and kissed her, his tongue making erotic promises of things yet to come. Then he stroked a gentle hand down her cheek. "Now let me go finish your kitchen so we can get these people the hell out of here and get back to each other. That is ... if you're inviting me to stay for dinner."

"And breakfast?" Jen asked, hope flooding through her.

Gabe's golden-brown eyes grew soft and molten. "Oh, yeah. A lifetime's worth?"

"I wouldn't settle for anything less."

"Then hold that thought, baby." His easy, loving smile filled her with dizzying warmth.

Jen watched him step off the porch and walk toward the vans to greet the crew. Moments later, a soft laugh welled up from her heart when she saw him chatting with the two workmen ... and fingering her panties in his pocket.

## **M. L. Rhodes**

Award-winning author M. L. Rhodes has been writing for a living for nearly ten years. Along with the erotic romance fiction she currently pens for Amber Quill Press, she's also published everything from poetry, to magazine articles, to short stories, to traditional romance, to steamy romantic suspense novels. In her fiction works, her characterization and emotional storytelling have received high critical acclaim from such places as *Romantic Times Magazine* and *Word Weaving*, and have garnered her numerous awards in the writing industry.

Intelligent, empowered heroines and strong-but-tender heroes are her favorites. There's nothing more exciting than putting two spirited people on the page together and watching them navigate the pitfalls and the emotional and sensual delights of falling in love. That is, after all, what romance is all about!

If you'd like to keep up with what's going on in M. L.'s world and find out about her new and upcoming releases, surf on over to her website at [www.mlrhodeswriting.com](http://www.mlrhodeswriting.com). She also loves hearing from readers. You can reach her at: [ML@mlrhodeswriting.com](mailto:ML@mlrhodeswriting.com)

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