

PHAZE FLARE

FREE FICTION



SOUL STRANGERS

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By Eden Bradley

The warm water of the Gulf of Mexico swirls around her ankles, soothing the weariness from her bones. It had been a long drive down from Corpus Christi to Veracruz. She hadn't meant to stop here, hadn't really known where she was going; simply going was the important part.

She had wanted to be alone, and here she is, surrounded by the solitude of a nearly empty beach, populated only by a few strangers. And since they are strangers, they don't matter, don't intrude. She has been entirely alone for three days-on the drive, then wandering this beach, taking short swims, sleeping in her hotel room, yet still she's tired. Her limbs are filled with a lambent heaviness she cannot shake. Nothing seems to energize her; not the brilliant Mexican sunsets, the endless hours of sleep, not even the power of the ocean.

What is it she needs?

She moves deeper, looking out to sea. The ocean surges, swells, caresses her knees, her hips, as she walks into the water, like the soft hands of a lover she has never known.

Movement next to her and she finds a man standing nearby, waist-deep. All she can see of him is his torso, his head. Sunlight gleams off his wide, tanned shoulders, one of which is covered by an intricate tattoo, but she can't make out the design. She can see the shadowed planes of a finely muscled back, a narrow waist.

Her body gives a surprising shiver. He turns, almost as though he is aware of her looking at him, and smiles, brilliantly.

She smiles back and suddenly he is moving toward her. She can see now he has a beautiful face, one of those faces which is beautiful and masculine at the same time. His body is all hard-packed muscle and he moves with grace through the weight of the water. He pauses several feet away. But he is still close enough that she can make out the smooth texture of his skin. Her eyes are brought back to his tattoo, which is a tiger drawn against a background of water. She finds herself wanting to touch it.

Water seems elemental to the moment. Except that he is all earth, this man. This stranger. And when he speaks, his voice is a deep rumble that is very much of the earth.

“You’re new here.”

It is a statement, yet she feels the urge to answer.

“I came yesterday.”

He simply nods, moves in closer. She cannot take her eyes off of him. When she does glance up his gaze is focused on her face. The sun is glaring and she can’t tell what color his eyes are, exactly, just that they are dark and earthy and they make her tremble inside.

Why does she feel as though he can see right through her?

She is suddenly very much aware of the water rushing like silk between her thighs as the waves surge, then retreat. The bare skin of her stomach makes her feel naked beneath the stranger’s gaze.

She watches him. He licks his lips, which she can see are wide and lush for a man. She wants to kiss him so much her own mouth waters. He takes another step closer, until he is standing so close she swears she can smell the salt on his skin.

She doesn’t dare move, to break the spell of this moment. They are doing nothing more than watching one another. She doesn’t want to have to speak. Her whole body feels raw with yearning. She just wants to touch his skin. She doesn’t want to think about why.

A wave rolls in, splashing against the small of her back. With his enigmatic eyes still locked on hers, she can imagine it is his hand that caresses the tender flesh there. And again, she feels as though he can see right into her, as though he knows who she is deep inside.

“Swim with me,” he says.

They splash out into the waves, and he dives through them, coming up dripping, like some fantastical merman, like some fantasy creature. But he *is* some fantasy creature. Her mind is making up stories about him already, erotic stories, scenes of sensual fantasy. His hands all over her naked skin, on her breasts, between her thighs.

She dips below the water to cool off. When she comes up, smoothing her long hair from her face, he is right there. He puts a hand on her arm, just a small feathering of fingers she can barely feel, yet it goes through her like an electric shock. Her nipples come up hard beneath the wet fabric of her bikini. Her sex goes warm. She wants him to touch her again.

She moves closer, letting the waves bring her right up against him. His body is every bit as hard and strong as it looks. And his solid erection presses into the soft flesh of her belly. And in her mind is one word: *yes*.

His hand grasps her shoulder, slides down her arm, and the next wave crushes them together, her breasts pressed against his hard chest. She looks up, sees his mouth, wants to kiss him still. And as though reading her mind he lowers his head and his mouth comes down on hers.

His lips are lovely, soft, and salty with the ocean. When he parts her lips and slides his tongue inside, she melts all over. Her sex grows molten with need, and she kisses him back, hungry for whatever he offers. He fills her mouth, his tongue is hot, wet. She needs more.

Pulling away, she presses her lips to his neck, slides her tongue down his throat and hears a small moan from him. Her body pulses in response. Moving her mouth, she licks the tattooed skin of his shoulder, swirls her tongue over the design there. His hands go into her hair, his fingers curling, but he lets her move freely.

She pulls back to see the landscape of his body, the angles and curves of him. She reaches out to touch, finds his nipples hard beneath her fingers. She wants to pull them, one at a time, into her mouth, and she does, while the strength of the ocean moves around them.

His hands slide down her sides and slip beneath her bathing suit top. Finding her nipples with his fingertips, he caresses, pulls, teases, until her sex is throbbing with heat. She moves back to his mouth, licks his lower lip, takes it into her mouth, sucks on it. He pinches her nipples, hard, and she breathes out, "Touch me."

His arm comes around her waist, pulling her into his body. His hand snakes down between them, pushes aside the edge of her bikini bottom. And delves inside, finding her swollen folds. She can hardly stand it, his touch, the warm rush of the water, the heady scent of him in her nostrils. He moves his fingertips over her clit, which is hard and alive and needy. He begins to rub.

She is aching, nearly hurting. She reaches beneath the water, pulls his engorged cock from his trunks, and is thrilled with the size and the weight of it. She strokes him in time with his hand between her legs, which he is taking now with his free hand and wrapping around his waist, so that he is holding her, weightless, in the water.

Sensation builds. Blood pounds through her veins, her pulse beating into his mouth where it is sucking on the flesh of her throat. Her sex beats in time, a low, thrumming rhythm, matched by his

pulsing cock in her hand. She loves the way he fills her palm, that she can barely wrap her fingers around him. But she doesn't want him inside her yet. She wants them to come into each other's hands first.

When he pushes a thumb inside her she almost loses it. She grasps his cock tighter, strokes harder, hangs on until she hears him moan again, feels his body tensing all over. She moves her hips into his hand, trembles as he presses onto her clit, taking her up and over the edge. Pressure is building inside her, like a vessel filled to overflowing. He moves his hand faster. Pleasure swims through her veins, through her head, overtaking her. And as her orgasm washes over her, she pumps his cock, feeling the hot rush as he comes into her palm. She shakes with the force of it, thrusts her hips, presses harder into his fingers. And he doesn't stop, stays with her, while her sex clenches, while pleasure arcs through her sex, through her body.

Her hand is sticky with his come, but soon the cleansing ocean water washes it away, leaving her feeling a little sad. She clings to him, her sex still pulsing and warm, her breath a ragged panting in her own ears.

And all around them, the ocean moves to its own eternal rhythm, like magic on the earth.

She blinks the water from her eyes, looks up at him. He licks her lower lip, smiles. His eyes have a languid cast to them, but they are still dark, bottomless. And still seem to see right through her, into her soul. She shivers again, but this time it is not physical pleasure, but something deeper.

He knows her; she is sure of it. And it is both comforting and terrifying at the same time. It is why they are here together; as though a force that is far beyond them both has determined that this moment should be.

She won't question it further. What ever else may happen doesn't matter. She is satisfied with knowing this much.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eden Bradley has two stories with Phaze. HEATWAVE, a short contemporary erotic novella, and BREAKING SKYE, a short BDSM-themed erotic novella, are both available now at www.Phaze.com!

Her debut print erotic novel, THE DARK GARDEN, will be available at your local bookstores from Bantam in June 2007, followed by SANCTUARY, part of the Berkley Heat EXCLUSIVE anthology in September 2007. In October 2007 Bantam will release her second book, THE DARKER SIDE OF PLEASURE, a three-novella erotic anthology.

Please visit Eden's website for news and updates:
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