

Paradise Love

3

Fawn
Lowery

Wands

Paradise Cove

By

Fawn Lowery

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Paradise Cove - Tarot: Three of Wands

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Dedication:

To eXtasy Books' talented editors and artists.

TAROT: 3 of Wands

The three of wands is a card of vision and foresight. In readings, the Three of Wands can tell you to take the long view. Don't react to the heat of the moment, but step back and reconsider. See how the present fits into the greater picture. Be a visionary and dream beyond current limitations. Taking the long view is an aspect of leadership. As a leader, his courage is more informed. As an explorer, he moves fearlessly into new areas.

Chapter One

Heidi McCoy almost choked on her hot buttered croissant when she glanced through the obituaries in the morning edition of The Georgia Gazette. Harold Mooney's name was in the listing as having recently passed on. Quickly, she scrambled out of the kitchen chair and raced down the hallway to her cubbyhole office. Harold Mooney's kids were now the owners of the rundown retirement community and a total of twenty-five acres adjacent to her property. Maybe... just maybe, if she crossed her fingers and wished really hard, she could make them a deal to take the old business off their hands.

She jerked open a metal file cabinet and snatched up the manila folder containing the stock portfolio Uncle Matt had left her. Hurriedly, she flipped through the numerous stacks of papers until she found the phone number of the stockbroker.

She drummed her red-polished nails on the desktop while she waited for Stanley Michaels to answer the call. For six years she'd been planning the day when Harold Mooney died. He had refused to talk a deal—insisting his property was worth more than Heidi was willing to offer. But his heirs would

be different. Heidi knew for a fact that both his son and daughter had lives of their own in Wyoming. And, she hoped, they had absolutely no interest in trying to keep their father's failing business afloat. She grimaced as she thought about the initial cost of updating the facility—but then she had a plan, a long thought-out plan.

"Sell everything in my portfolio. Sell immediately and get back to me."

"Heidi McCoy," Stanley Michaels shot back. "You can't be serious."

"I'm serious as hell," Heidi replied, her arched brows drawing together in a frown. Why in hell didn't this idiot man take her seriously?

"You want me to liquidate everything your Uncle Matt left you? Heidi, honey—"

"Listen, Stanley," she cut in, sinking into the worn leather chair flanking her little desk. "I realize you think you have to guard my interests—but I need as much cash as I can get my hands on to invest in some real estate."

"Real estate?" he asked, his tone curious. "Well, real estate is always a worthy trade for stocks. Real estate holds its value quite well in today's market."

Heidi listened to the fatherly advice and smiled. Her suntanned body relaxed in the desk chair as she brought her bare legs up to lay atop the desk. She was twenty-six years old and the owner of Fisherman's Cove, a tiny marina tucked into the Georgia shore that catered to deep-sea fishing expeditions. At present, she only had two boats and captains to take out expeditions, but she had long-term plans to

expand. Purchasing the Mooney property was the first step to realizing her dream.

"Your entire portfolio is probably worth around ten million dollars, Heidi," Stanley continued, his tone now amiable.

"Sell everything and get back to me as fast as you can," she instructed, ending the call. He's probably counting his commission right now, she thought, her lips drawing into a slight smile. Uncle Matt had certainly done her a favor by leaving everything he had to her, almost five years ago. There's something to be said for being an only child. As it happened, she was heir not only to her parent's estate when they died in a boating accident, but Uncle Matt's as well when his airplane went down in the Pacific while trying to set some speed record or other. She still didn't really understand it all, but then she seemed to believe the eccentric weren't to be understood.

She found the phone number for the office of the Sunny Hill Retirement Community and placed the call, learning at once that both the Mooney heirs were present. She conveyed her condolences and got off the phone as soon as she could and went to change clothes. Now was as good a time as any to make the Mooney children an offer.

* * * *

One hour later, Heidi slid behind the wheel of her vintage Mustang, a satisfied smile on her face. She had made Harold Mooney's heirs an offer they couldn't refuse. And they had accepted it.

She let out a long breath, equating the feeling traveling through her to that of orgasm. She chuckled at the simile. But then the thought of orgasm only made her want to find a man and get laid, maybe in celebration of the act she had just accomplished. For a brief moment she thought of another long-term dream—to find a man that she could have incredible sex with, and with whom she could fall head over heels in love. But she hadn't time for that now.

The next part of her plan involved going to the City Hall in Copenhagen to request annexation of the retirement community she had just purchased and Fisherman's Cove. She went over what she would say in her mind as she drove across town.

Mayor Fields was in his office, luckily, and she was allowed to meet with him. He sat behind his desk until she was mid-way in the office before he made a motion to stand and greet her. Heidi made note of his actions. Once before, they had a bit of a dispute over annexation, but that was due to Harold Mooney not knowing his ass from a hole in the ground.

"Miss McCoy," Robert Fields said, offering his hand to Heidi. "What brings you down town this day?"

Fields was a short, squat man with a receding hairline and clothing that was too tight. The sleeves of his white shirt rode up past his wrists and made his fat hands look even fatter. He grunted when he resumed his seat in the office chair and then peered across the desk at Heidi, as though expecting to hear the worse from her.

"I'm here to petition the City Council for

annexation of my property," Heidi said, sliding into the vacant chair facing the Mayor's desk.

Mayor Fields' eyebrows drew downward on his forehead, calling attention to his balding head as he leaned across the desk toward Heidi. "You're not starting that whole thing over again, are you? You know the city can't annex your property because the Mooney retirement community lies between Fisherman's Cove and the city boundary." He sounded quite distressed over the matter.

Heidi smiled a slow grin at him, allowing him to finish his tirade before breaking the news to him. She settled back in her chair and crossed one knee over the other, swinging her foot.

"Harold Mooney died—or didn't you read the newspaper this morning?" She waved one hand at the Mayor. "Well, to cut to the chase, Mayor, I just bought the Mooney property and I'm here to request annexation."

His face immediately broke into a happy smile. "I say," he exclaimed, letting out a breath of relief. "I'll call an emergency Council meeting this evening and we'll put the matter to a vote, Miss McCoy."

Heidi beamed her delight. Somehow, she figured the Mayor would be pleased with her news. But now she had to wait until the council approved her annexation before she made her next request of the city. She stared across the desk at the mayor. Chances were, he wouldn't be as pleased with her once he heard her entire plan.

Chapter Two

The next move in her plan to expand her business was to pay a visit to Chad Thornton, the District Representative for the area. His office was nearby and if she hurried, she might catch him before he left for the day.

Her stiletto heels clicked noisily on the marble tile of the foyer as she hurried through the main entrance of the government building and crossed to the desk of the receptionist. The pit of her stomach tipped nervously as she awaited the woman calling Thornton's office for a meeting. Then, finally, she was given permission to ride the elevator up to the tenth floor and meet with him.

Chad Thornton was seated behind a wide mahogany desk in a room with pale green walls sporting impressive pictures and degrees in gold frames. He was about thirty years old with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He wore a gray pinstriped suit with a dove-gray colored tie. The moment Heidi laid eyes on him, she had the overwhelming desire to see him naked. She stifled a lusty shiver as she crossed the office to shake hands with him. In the back of her mind, she thought his hazel eyes were

pinned to her hips as she walked toward him. Maybe he was having the same kind of thoughts about her, she dared to think, a slight smile coming to her lips.

"What can I do for you, Miss McCoy?" he asked, when she was seated in the chair in front of his desk.

His hazel eyes washed over her figure, pausing a tad too long on her full breasts before lowering to take in her bare knees where her skirt had hiked up.

Heidi began explaining how she had just made a deal to enlarge her property holdings—told him briefly about Fisherman's Cove, then divulged that she had just requested annexation into neighboring Copenhagen, since both the retirement community of Sunny Hill and Fisherman's Cove lay in an unincorporated area.

He sat behind his desk and nodded his head at her while his accessing eyes roved over her body.

"Then once I'm allowed annexation into Copenhagen, I'd like you to help me acquire a federally funded loan so I can build a hotel on my property." Heidi paused and stared at him. *Damn! He is one gorgeous hunk!*

Chad placed his forearms on the desktop and leaned toward her. "Maybe we could discuss this over dinner," he said, smiling at her.

He had a cute little dimple in his right cheek and the second it winked at her, Heidi almost creamed her bikini panties. She never dreamed he'd ask her out to dinner—but now that he had...

"Dinner would be...fine, but...maybe it would be better if you came to my house." She swallowed to ease her suddenly dry throat and consider her words

before continuing. "I could give you a tour of Fisherman's Cove and the adjacent property I just bought."

"And you could fully explain your plans for expansion," he nodded. "I think that would be a fine idea, Miss McCoy."

"Heidi," she corrected, feeling lightheaded suddenly.

"Heidi," he replied, his voice doing strange, sexy things to her name.

The next she knew, she found herself in her car pulling out of the government complex, wondering what in the world she would cook for Chad Thornton, or if she could just substitute sex for the meal. The thought somehow brought a measure of reality to her brain. Her plan was in the works and the fact that the district representative was willing to hear her out was just part of the process.

She decided to serve Chad Thornton her famous fish stew. She had made the dish since she was a kid and it always turned out good. No sense taking risks, not that she was prone to such carelessness—planning ahead had always been her strong suit.

* * * *

Her tiny cottage was situated on the rear of the beach property where Fisherman's Cove sat, with a little private section of beach for her own personal use. There was a back deck off the kitchen where she usually took her meals. She hurried to start the stew and set the wrought-iron table with her best

dinnerware. It was very important that she make a good impression on Chad Thornton.

She chose to wear a red, flowered sundress, strapless and slit up to the thigh on the left side. She piled her sun-bleached blond hair atop her head and secured it with a metal clip, decorated with a red passionflower. Red, strappy sandals finished off the outfit. She thought she looked rather casual and laid back for their dinner, since she usually dressed in such a manner. He'd think it suspicious if he arrived and she was wearing a business suit.

"A dinner invitation implies friendship—doesn't it?" she murmured out loud as she lifted the lid of the pot and stirred the stew with a wooden spoon. "Mmmm. It smells delicious," she added, sniffing in the wafting steam.

Chad arrived exactly on time, something Heidi noted with a raised eyebrow. *That's a good sign in a man*, she thought as she opened the front door of her cottage to him. He held out a bouquet of white roses to her as his eyes took in her body, clad in the brightly colored dress.

"Thank you." Heidi accepted the flowers. *That's another good sign*, she thought, bringing the fragrant roses to her nose.

He followed her through the small living room, his hazel eyes taking in the bare white-washed floors and seaside motif of the furnishings, into the cramped little kitchen with its white metal cabinets and onto the weather worn deck, where Heidi poured him a chilled glass of Merlot.

He eased into one of the metal chairs at the table

and Heidi allowed herself the pleasure of accessing him as he turned his dark gaze out over the white sand beach and gentle dunes that stretched down to the blue expanse of ocean at the cove.

He was dressed in tan slacks and brown deck shoes with a cream, printed, cotton shirt. He looked like a tourist transplanted from an expensive city apartment. But yet, on the other hand, he seemed to fit right in with the carefree atmosphere of the sun-kissed beach and the gentle rolling surf. A breath suddenly caught in Heidi's throat as he turned his head and spied her watching him.

"Dinner will be ready in a minute," she quickly said, feeling a blush travel up her neck. She reached for her own glass of wine and brought it to her lips.

"Tell me about Fisherman's Cove," he encouraged, propping his elbows on the table and gazing at her. "And don't leave anything out."

Heidi let a short burst of laughter leap from her mouth. "We could be here until sunrise."

He smiled a slow, heart-stopping smile, his voice tinged with a measure of lust. "I can't think of a nicer place to spend the night,"

Heidi's throat took on that nervous dry feel again and she downed the wine in her glass in a hefty gulp, then she excused herself and went to get the stew. As she dished up the generous bowls, she considered how important Chad Thornton was to her plan. Hell! He was paramount to it all coming together. She needed him to bridge the gap between herself and the government of the state.

While they ate, Heidi began to tell him about the

small business she had built single-handedly six years ago, then went so far as to produce the blueprints she had drawn up for the resort hotel.

"I'm going to change the name to Beach Lover's Paradise, once the hotel is built." She refrained from revealing that one day there would be a golf course where the retirement community sat. "The construction alone will create hundreds of jobs—and then I'll need people to run the facility once it's completed."

Her excitement showed on her face. Her blue eyes were fairly dancing with anticipation. And it didn't go unnoticed by Chad Thornton. Neither did the way her breasts heaved with her rapid intake of breath as she spoke, nor the firm nub of her nipples visible beneath the thin fabric of her sundress.

Momentarily, Heidi took him on a tour of her business, kicking off her sandals on the deck before leading him down the flight of wooden steps to the sandy beach. First, she led him to the small weathered shack perched adjacent to the metal pier, where the two fishing vessels were moored. Everyone had gone for the evening, chased away by the late afternoon storm that had rolled through the area, drenching everything before moving out to sea.

The weathered planks on the floor of the shack creaked underfoot as Heidi gave Chad a glimpse inside. Then they walked out on the pier, past the moored boats to stand a moment and gaze out across the ocean. It was calm now, with a bit of a breeze that lifted the errant blond wisps piled atop Heidi's head and whispered gently across her bare shoulders. She

pulled in a long breath, feeling the calm the area brought to her insides. Then, because she felt his dark eyes on her body, she turned her head in his direction.

He pulled her into his arms and for a second she felt as though she had arrived somewhere—some place foreign to her, yet familiar at the same instant. She didn't object one bit when he began lowering his head toward hers.

His lips were warm and pressed forcefully, though gently, against hers. She wondered how that could be—to feel taken and yet like he had somehow asked her permission. The wet tip of his tongue pushed between her lips, making its way inside her mouth and then began a sensual play with her tongue.

His arms held her securely, his hands splayed across her back, then momentarily lowered to pull her buttocks into the hollow of his hips. His palms pressed her flesh with an urgency that sent her senses reeling. And the growing hardness of his cock pushed against her belly filled her head with erotic thoughts.

His mouth fed on hers. He sucked her full bottom lip between his and lathed it with his tongue. At some point, he brought one hand upward to release her hair, scooped her into his arms and carried her from the pier to lay her down on the beach at the water's edge.

Heidi was helpless to put a halt to any of the love play. But then, she realized, she was not just a toy in his hands, but also a willing partner in the erotic manifestation of emotions dictating their moves.

His hands pulled her dress down, baring her

rounded mounds for his hungry eyes. His palm slid along her silken curves, inching upward to tweak taut rosebud nipples that were sensitive beyond reason.

He shed his shirt at some point, and Heidi quivered with anticipation as he pushed up her dress and placed his hand between her legs. And all the while his mouth melded with hers, sending her thinking to the outer limits of reality and her body heating up to inferno temperatures.

His male, hair-roughened chest pressed against her breasts as he rolled Heidi to her back and stripped off her dress and bikini panties. Momentarily he stood and removed his pants. Then Heidi opened her eyes and glimpsed him rolling on a condom before he returned to her. She opened her legs and coiled her arms around his muscled back as he eased into her cavity.

His mouth found hers again and his tongue broached the warm recesses of her mouth as his hard cock began to pump into her body. His thrusts were deep, filling her cleft with hot male flesh that momentarily brought the first tingling sensations of orgasm to her body. She began to pant as she sought to match her thrusting hips to his intense lunges. Sweat popped out on her forehead and dotted her body.

The heat of the moment exploded inside her, making her moan deep in her throat and tighten her embrace around Chad's shoulders. The climax zinged through her body, making her arch her back to open herself up further to his lunging thrusts.

The surf spilled its white caps upon the sandy

shore, withdrawing in a whisper whispery rustle as the pair found their orgasm, and shared, and panted. His hands caressed her body, intensifying the orgasmic feelings racing through her insides.

It feels so right, Heidi thought, opening her eyes to see the moonlight reflecting off Chad's face. He hovered above her, his cock still snuggled inside her. *It feels so right*, she thought again, as she reached her hand up to caress his cheek, then urge his mouth to hers for another kiss.

"It felt so right," she divulged in a whisper.

"Yes. It did," he returned. "It felt so right."

Chapter Three

They swam in the ocean, then strolled leisurely back up to Heidi's deck carrying their clothes, their sated, naked bodies illuminated by the full moon hanging overhead.

It was almost daybreak before Chad put on his clothes and left the beachfront cottage, leaving Heidi to crawl tiredly into bed. But she was too excited to sleep. She lay there, her hands clasp behind her head, her thoughts filled with plans for her new business and the new man in her life. She had forgotten how much she enjoyed sex, she admitted, reliving the exquisite interlude on the beach.

She had told him all her dreams for the future, all her plans to grow her business, and the means of financing it. For some uncanny reason she had felt she could speak openly, divulge all her intentions—her planned dreams. And he had listened with a smile gracing his lips, his hazel eyes never once leaving her face as she spoke.

They had parted after a long, searching kiss, a kiss that almost caused Heidi to refuse to let him go. And once he had driven away, she realized how empty her arms felt, how his body heat had melded with her

own and seemed to intensify her belief that what had happened between them was so right.

Early that morning, Mayor Fields called to inform her that her bid for annexation had passed overwhelmingly.

"Welcome to Copenhagen, Miss McCoy."

Heidi knew he was counting the tax dollars the city would garner from the addition of the two businesses and she hated to burst his bubble, but —

"Thank you, Mayor. Now that I'm officially a part of Copenhagen, I'd like to apply for tax breaks for the new resort hotel I plan to build."

"Resort hotel?" His tone was wary.

"Yes, Mayor. And I'll be expecting city facilities for both the hotel and the Sunny Hill Retirement Community."

"But Miss McCoy —" he sputtered.

Heidi rolled her blue eyes in a show of impatience.

"Mayor Fields, my expansion will add jobs and commerce to Copenhagen. And I've already applied for a government loan to finance the venture."

"You have?"

"Yes. District Representative Chad Thornton thinks it's an excellent idea and he's forwarding my request today." Her pulse rose in her wrist just speaking Chad's name and suddenly, she was keenly aware of the impulse to relive their sexual interlude of last night.

"Oh, well then, Miss McCoy. If our District Representative is in favor of your new plans to expand —"

"Are there papers I need to submit, Mayor, to get

the tax breaks? Or the utilities for either business?"

"Well, yes. You'll need to come in and fill out the forms."

"Tomorrow, then, Mayor Fields."

"And Miss McCoy," the Mayor rushed to add. "Kindly bring your blueprints for your new resort so that the City Manager can get a look at them, will you?"

"Of course, Mayor." He sounded so cordial suddenly, she noted. Perhaps because she had confided that the District Representative was pleased with her plans for bringing new jobs to the area.

She hung up the phone and made note of her conversation with the Mayor, feeling confident now that her bid to be annexed had been approved. But then, she had thought it might be all along. For years the council had been trying to annex Sunny Hill over Harold Mooney's objections. And he had held them off, not wanting to be required to update the business even though, had he complied with the city codes, he could have been eligible for city facilities. In the long run, annexation played a big part in Heidi's plans.

By noon Heidi had spoken with Stanley Michaels and gotten an update on the liquidation of her stocks. Money had already been deposited in her account. And she had made an appointment with architect Mason Crawford, to go over the hotel plans he had originally drawn up, and to get recommendations for contractors.

She felt giddy with happiness and was just sharing the news with her two boat Captains, Max and Sam, and Ted, the man she paid to tend the Fisherman's

Cove shack, when Chad called with more good news.

"I've filed papers to get you a no-interest government loan," he said. "Has the Copenhagen Council approved your annexation request yet?"

"Yes. And Chad, I requested tax breaks from the city as well."

"You're quite the business lady," he remarked, his tone lowering to a husky drawl.

Heidi laughed softly into the phone.

"I have papers for you to sign and I'll be back in town day after tomorrow. I want to see you, Heidi," he told her. "Keep your evening free."

"Will do," she assured him, her voice soft as a whisper. She could hardly wait to feel his arms around her and his lips kissing her.

Things were happening so fast she could hardly believe her good fortune. In three days Stanley Michaels had liquidated all her stock holdings and deposited the money into a special account, minus his hefty fee. She had a tidy sum to close the deal with the Mooney heirs and begin breaking ground for the new hotel.

She barely had time to catch her breath, when she was given a long list of details to decide on by the chief of the construction company she had hired. An hour into the phone calls, Chad rang her on his cell phone.

"I'll be at your place in an hour."

Heidi was overjoyed at Chad's news. Everything was on track—just as she hoped it would be. And within the week, the construction crew would arrive to break ground for the new hotel. It was almost more

then she could fathom.

Chad arrived almost to the minute and the moment he was inside her small cottage, she was in his arms. His hands pressed her breasts into his chest as his mouth claimed hers.

Heidi had planned a quiet dinner for two but her emotions got the better of her once Chad's lips met hers. All thoughts, aside from taking him to her bed, suddenly evaporated into thin air.

She couldn't say how long they stood in the center of the small living room and kissed, or when Chad accompanied her into the bedroom, but her senses suddenly came alive once he began stripping away her clothes. Denim short-shorts and a canary yellow halter-top lay at her feet in a matter of seconds. And Chad was running his hands across her buttocks, caressing and exploring her rounded flesh before hooking his thumbs in the narrow band of the thong underwear nestled around her waist and pushing it down.

His hands paused. She heard him draw in a deep breath as he kneeled before her. She quivered with anticipation as her hands came to settle amidst his dark hair. His head leaned toward her bare abdomen and momentarily she felt the warmth of his lips on her belly.

Her head suddenly lolled on her shoulders as she was forced to close her eyes and savor the multitude of heated sensations he was causing her to feel. His lips made their way down the smooth skin of her belly, while his fingers rid her of the imposing thong and then his face settled into the blond triangle at her

crotch.

She pulled in an audible gulp of air.

"I've never met a woman like you, Heidi," Chad whispered between kisses against her softness. "You know exactly what you want and how to get it."

She couldn't think of an answer to voice, only that his mouth was on her and his hands were inching round her bare buttocks, sliding between the fleshy halves and teasing her sensitive hidden parts.

His mouth moved lower. His tongue dipped into the tangle of blond hair and slid lower, until its wet tip found the opening between her hair-roughened lips. Then he teased her clitoris. But it was what his fingers were doing to her that intrigued her to no end. She felt compelled to spread her legs to allow his hands room to explore her womanly slit and anus. A man had never shown an interest in touching her there with his tongue, in that particular place, nor had she ever dreamed being touched like that could produce such delightful sensations.

She squirmed in his grasp as his forefinger massaged the tight opening, and his tongue pressed erotically against her clitoris. She clutched his head in her hands, pressing his face into her crotch.

"Let me love you, Heidi," he murmured, his voice somewhat muffled by her flesh.

That thing he was doing to her anus—it was driving her wild! She had to bite her tongue to keep from shouting her delight. She pressed her hips lower, trying to feel more pressure from his finger, needing something more, but not sure of what.

"Oh, babe," Chad murmured.

Suddenly he was lifting her to the bed and urging her to get on her hands and knees. Then he was hovering over her, his chest brushing her back as he moved to push apart her fleshy, round ass cheeks.

Heidi was burning inside with a lusty heat, a blaze of want and carnal need that somersaulted throughout her body. It was all so new to her. She was keenly aware of every move Chad made, his skin touching and brushing hers, his hands sliding along her flesh. But when she felt the wetness of his mouth press against her opening, she almost lost her balance and fell on her face. His arm at once clamped around her waist, raising her body and pulling her hips back against his abdomen.

Then she felt the hot round head of his cock pressing into her sensitive orifice and she knew that was what she had been waiting for. She let out a little mew and braced her hands on the pillow, pressing her buttocks back, giving Chad complete authority to enter her.

At first it hurt like hell and she didn't really know if she could stand it, but then Chad reached one hand between her legs and stroked her clitoris, and then his long, hard cock gently pushed inside her. She felt filled up in a strange, though erotic way and when she began to move slightly, she found Chad's fingers on her clitoris to increase in speed.

"Oh, my God!" she exclaimed in a breathy tone. "I've never felt anything like that in my life!"

Orgasmic sensations were flooding her body from her pulsating clitoris to the thrusting motion at her anus. And it was incredible! She opened her mouth

and panted loudly, her body pushing and gyrating against Chad's as the sensations skyrocketed through her.

The intensity of the orgasm shook her senses. She'd never experienced such a fulfilling bout of sexual climax, or dreamed one was possible. It was the most incredible thing—

Her knees suddenly felt very weak, but Chad hadn't climaxed yet and she couldn't flop down on her belly and savor the remainder of the orgasm. His fingers were still stroking her clitoris and she was on the verge of coming again. She felt him increase his lunges, plunging deeper into her, and the marvelous sensations started all over again, stronger, mounting into more intense sensations, streaming throughout her.

"Oh my God! Oh my God!" she cried, unable to control her shaking body. She felt as though she couldn't back up against him close enough—couldn't get him inside her deep enough—

"Oh, babe!" Chad breathed, clutching her buttocks in both hands and driving inside her with enough force to make her fall on her belly. "Oh, babe!" He continued to pump into her asshole, even though she was sprawled spread-eagle beneath him. "I'm coming!"

He milked his cock, pumping into her bunghole until the orgasm began to wane. Then he settled his body atop hers, his chest heaving, his mouth finding her nape and kissing his way round to her ear. "That was wonderful, babe," he whispered.

"I've never...had sex like that...before," Heidi

confessed, her pulse still racing and her heart thudding loudly in her chest. "It was... incredible."

He pushed his hips against the pillow of her buttocks, raising himself up so he could dislodge his cock from her butt. Rolling to his side, he lay next to her. He stroked the curve of her back before sliding his hand onto her buttock.

Heidi relaxed against the mattress. Her body felt sated, yet excited, at the thought of further sexual exploration with Chad. She savored the feel of his palm stroking her back, then her bare hip. She listened to his breathing as it changed from a rapid pant to a steady relaxed intake. She felt like sleeping suddenly, relaxed, languid.

Chapter Four

The bright shard of sunlight sliced across the head of the bed as the filmy curtain fluttered in the early morning breeze. The surf licking at the sandy beach beyond the cottage sounded distant and remote. Heidi's eyes flickered open.

Chad was in bed beside her. He had spent the night, though she couldn't say it was a planned stay-over. The last she remembered, they had sex and then stretched out on the bed.

The sex had been the most extraordinary of her life. Anal sex. She had heard of it, even wondered about it, but never experienced it before. But last night, Chad had introduced her to it, given her the most incredible orgasm she had ever experienced. And she had liked it immensely.

He stirred beside her, rolled to his side and opened his eyes. They were an incredible brown, almost the color of rich leather, and the yellow glow of early morning sunshine gave them an intense aura that made her pull in a quick breath. For an instant, she wondered if he could see into her very soul.

"I have to get going," he said in a sleepy voice. He levered himself up on one elbow and kissed her on

the cheek.

"You've got time for a shower," Heidi insisted, rolling to her side and getting up. She extended one hand to him, smiling. Then she giggled when he took her up on the invitation.

They were in the shower in a matter of seconds, their naked bodies being pelted by the spray of hot water. Then his hands were on her, just as she hoped, and she was sliding her palms over his chest, feeling the firm muscles beneath the spray of black hair.

She felt very bold after the exploration of her body last night. She slid her hand lower, across his abdomen, to capture his cock. It was long and hard, and a breath caught in her throat as an idea sprang to mind.

"I've never...had a...man's cock...in my mouth before," she confessed, her hand coiling round his flesh. "I think it could...be a very erotic...experience."

He pushed her down in front of him. The water splashed across her shoulders and onto her blond hair as she got to her knees and brought her head against his crotch. His hand guided her mouth onto his hardness, held her head as he slid his cock along her tongue.

Her mouth was very full and the mere sense of what she was doing gave her a lusty feeling that gathered in her belly and made her nipples taut with want. She placed one palm beneath his hairy balls and wrapped the other around the base of his cock.

He began to move, pumping into her mouth in a slow rhythmic manner that brought the round head

of his cock sliding along her tongue one instant and poking against the back of her neck, the next. Momentarily she became caught up in the pace he set, the sheer lust of it all. She was sucking a man's cock and getting such a rush out of it.

His legs were very muscular and sturdy, and he braced his back against the shower wall as he held Heidi's head in his hands. Heidi gazed at his abdomen as he pumped his hips and slid his cock across her tongue, then it suddenly occurred to her that she was in a position of power over him. She could initiate the play, if only she took the liberty to do so.

On one such thrusting movement, she opened her mouth and grasping the base of his cock, completely pulled her mouth away. For an instant she glimpsed its round girth, engorged, and oh-so-firm, then she licked its round head with the tip of her tongue.

"Mmmm," Chad breathed, his fingers moving round to stroke her cheek. "Play some more, babe."

She trailed her tongue along its hard length, feeling it pulse in her grasp as she reached his balls and traveled back along the hot length until she reached the head. Then she pulled the round tip between her lips, sucking his cock back into her mouth.

She was on fire inside. Her experimental play had whetted her senses for more sex. She wanted to feel him sliding inside her cavity, feel him pumping into her, bringing orgasm to her body. She moaned deep in her throat and raised her gaze up to see Chad's brown eyes pinned on her face.

A slanted smile graced his handsome face and his

dark orbs bore into her with more lust than she'd ever seen in a man's gaze.

"I need to feel you inside me," she confessed, getting to her feet. "I need you to fuck me right now."

He pulled her against his chest, pressed his hard cock into her belly, lifting her around the waist and pressing her against the shower wall. Then he thrust his hard cock between her legs, ramming it inside her and causing her to release a pent-up sigh.

She felt as though he'd stabbed her with a giant hot poker; his cock was so big and hot. And when he began to move, she knew her lust would soon be sated.

Despite the pelting shower, she began to sweat. Their bodies were wet and slippery. His mouth licked and toyed with her lips. His hands were on her breasts, massaging and pinching her nipples. And all the while he pumped into her crevice, setting a rhythm that Heidi couldn't keep up with, only allowing him to pin her against the tile wall, knowing he would bring her to orgasm.

It ripped through her in an instant, assaulting her nerve endings to the point of nearly making her faint from the enormous explosion. She closed her eyes and reveled in all he was doing to her body. She never dreamed sensations as he was giving her existed.

Suddenly his pace increased and Heidi knew he was on the verge of orgasm. She rode out the storm of jabbing thrusts and gyrating hips, then endured being pressed against the wall as he climaxed and drove his cock home for the release.

His mouth was suddenly on hers, wet and

demanding. His tongue tangled with hers and slicked across her gum. His kisses were heated, his breath puffing onto her cheeks, filling her mouth.

He held her against the wall, his big body pressing into hers, his hands and mouth touching and savoring until the orgasm began to wane. Heidi's eyes flickered open and she looked up into his face. His eyelids were heavy, and he was peering at her in a way she didn't quite understand.

"Let's go away for a week...and spend the whole time fucking," he said, his tone low and seductive.

Heidi pulled in a long breath. His invitation was tempting. She reached one hand to his chest and tweaked his nipple, bringing a shiver from him. "I'm busy. Remember?" she whispered in return.

He looked like she'd slapped his face, but he forced a smile to his beautiful male lips. "Me too."

He pulled out of her then and reached for the bar of fragrant soap Heidi kept in the shower stall. He quickly rubbed the bar between his hands, working up lather and bringing his hands to Heidi's breasts.

She suddenly grabbed his hands in hers, giggling. "We both know where this will lead," she informed him, already wishing they didn't have to part.

He leaned his head down and gave her a quick peck on the lips. "Yeah," he replied, smiling and pulling his hand away from her breasts. "And I'm already late this morning." He reached over suddenly and shut off the water. "I'll think about you all day," he called over his shoulder, as he grabbed a towel and exited the shower stall.

"And I'll think about you," Heidi called, watching

his naked backside as he left her. And she would, too. She'd miss him. The admission gave her a funny little feeling in the pit of her stomach.

We've just met, she chastised herself.

She thought about Chad the whole time she dried her body and dressed for the day. He had rushed out of the cottage, promising to call, and she had tried to put her mind back on the building project she had begun. But she was finding it hard to do. He was one distraction she found she rather liked having on her mind.

Always one to think ahead, she reminded herself to get back to the business at hand and just in time too, because she heard the noise of construction machinery arriving on the vacant ground next door. Things were moving along and she needed her wits about her.

She gathered her clipboard with the hotel plans attached and went to meet the construction crew. Presently, there was room for only one project in her mind, and the hotel was top priority.

The ground rose upward from the slope of the beach and the plan was to clear a portion of the area where the hotel would be built facing the ocean. A total of ten acres of the twenty-five acre plot would be cleared in order to allow the construction crew room to maneuver.

Heidi stood on the outskirts of the site and thought about the government funding Chad had arranged for her to build the hotel. She felt a keen sense of satisfaction waft through her. He was indispensable to her plan because there were legalities associated

with the funding that he promised to handle for her. She thought then of the paperwork she must wade through before she kept her appointment the following morning with the bank where the loan would be granted. She grimaced slightly and headed back to the cottage. Paperwork was proving to be the hardest part of the project.

* * * *

Two hours later, she tucked the completed forms into her briefcase and called the bank to confirm her appointment for the next morning at ten o'clock. Satisfied with herself for getting everything in order, she poured herself a cold glass of lemonade and strolled out to sit on the deck, her mind once again returning to thoughts of Chad. It seemed almost impossible to keep from thinking of him.

The bulldozers began plowing through the underbrush around noon and Heidi returned to the construction site. It was then she saw the gathering of senior citizens from the retirement community standing near the portable office belonging to the construction chief. Well, she had been expecting it, she admitted, walking toward them.

"What are you building, Miss McCoy?" an elderly man asked, his eyes pinned on Heidi.

She thought about what she would say before she began speaking. "This is the official groundbreaking for my new resort hotel—Beach Lover's Paradise," she announced, her face beaming.

"And you're going to tear down our home!" an

elderly woman yelled, stepping forward from the gathering.

"No," Heidi said, shaking her head. The nine-hole golf course she envisioned on the site where the retirement community sat was a ways in the future. "I'm going to make some improvements to the building."

The little group of aged people exchanged cautious glances and muttered softly to each other.

Heidi opened her notebook and tore out a sheet of paper, handing it to one man in the front of the group. "Start listing things at the community that you would like to see improved," she said, watching the expressions on their faces change.

Heidi left them then to return to her cottage. The retirement community hadn't always been the best neighbor to Fisherman's Cove, and she didn't need any dissention from them now, not when everything was rolling along so well. She shrugged. She had a whole list of additions to add to Beach Lover's Paradise in the future—none of which included keeping and maintaining the retirement community. "Business is business," she muttered, refusing to feel as though she were cheating anyone out of house and home.

Chapter Five

Heidi drove down to the city building and met with the Zoning Director and the City Manager. They required a set of the plans for the hotel and informed her about periodic site inspections they would be making. And they sold her a building permit.

Heidi smiled at the men and tucked the permit inside her purse. Little did they know groundbreaking had already gotten underway, but she kept quiet, having mentioned Chad's name earlier in the meeting. For some reason, the city of Copenhagen seemed to regard Chad Thornton as some sort of god. Not that she would argue with them. She was beginning to think he was some sort of god, too—especially when he made love to her.

She stifled a shiver of lust as she tried to put her mind back on the subject at hand—the new construction of the hotel. It became quite involved, she had come to find out, once the City Administrators began producing papers for her to fill out. But, if at the end of all the red tape, she wound up with city facilities and tax breaks for the duration of the government loan, she would be happy with her

efforts.

Almost three hours later, she found herself ready to return to Fisherman's Cove and the new construction site, the city now satisfied with her new venture and promising her to expect the necessary inspectors to be turning up.

* * * *

Heidi stood on the outskirts of the construction site and watched the large earthmover push through the dense underbrush; then she caught the glimpse of a delivery van pulling into the parking lot at Fisherman's Cove.

She wasn't expecting any delivery, in fact, she couldn't ever remember needing anything delivered to the shack. She hurried off down the beach, her flip-flops digging into the white sand. As she drew closer, she was able to read the writing on the side of the truck and saw it was a florist's delivery van. She arrived just in time to be given a long white box tied with a bright red ribbon.

Two-dozen red roses were tucked inside the box, along with a handwritten note from Chad. She smiled broadly as she read it, noting he signed the card *'love, Chad.'* *Was it too early in their relationship to be mentioning the word love?* she wondered. Then she considered the time they had spent together —

A short laugh leapt from her throat. They really hadn't done much — aside from have sex. But the sex was memorable. Hot. New. She had learned a few things about herself. She had learned she really truly

enjoyed the act of sex – especially with Chad.

Isn't enjoying life all about finding someone you can love? she questioned, placing the roses in a vase of water. But she never made decisions on the spur of the moment. She always took time to consider the pros and cons.

The phone rang just as she tucked the last rose into the arrangement.

"Hi, babe," Chad murmured.

"The roses are beautiful. Thank you."

He laughed slightly. "I wanted to let you know I'm thinking of you... While I'm up here in the Capitol slaving away."

Heidi grinned at his choice of words. "I'm thinking of you too, Chad." She leaned her nose into the bouquet. "The roses smell wonderful."

"I won't be back in town until Friday," he said, his tone filled with regret. "I'll pay your airfare if you'll come stay with me, Heidi."

"Can't. The construction crew started clearing the site this morning," she told him, her brows drawing across the bridge of her nose. It sounded as though he were discounting the importance of her building project.

"I'll miss you."

"I look forward to seeing you on Friday," she said, then ended the call.

Was it her imagination, or was Chad trying to monopolize her time? She gave her head a shake, making her blond ponytail flip from side to side on the back of her head. Well, she had news for him. The resort hotel was her chief priority – and she'd fit him

in when she found time.

She felt almost irate by the time she hung up the phone and placed the roses on the small coffee table in the living room. Once before, a man had tried to control her life—Rick Mallory, a local attorney. In the beginning, she had thought she might be falling in love with Rick, but then she came to realize that his attorney-like attitude spilled over into their personal relationship. In the end, she had refused to be his little play toy.

She drew in a long breath. But Chad was different in so many ways from any man she had ever known. Chad was a politician and because of that, his life was very visible. Any scandal would ruin his reputation and possibly end his career.

The remainder of the day was spent at the new building site. Dust and debris filled the air, sometimes getting into her throat and making her cough. But she was happy to be there. She had looked forward to it for so long and now that it was actually coming about, she wanted to make certain everything was just as she desired.

John Moss, the construction crew foreman had been watching her since she appeared on the site. Finally, as though he could resist her no longer, he strode over to where she stood on the sidelines.

"Is everything meeting your approval?" he asked, his eyes turned on her.

Heidi looked up and smiled at him. He was about thirty-five, well over six feet in height, with a muscular build. His face was quite appealing, with sandy blond hair and crystal blue eyes. He looked as

though he spent a good deal of time out in the sun and could easily pass for one of the guys who showed up with their surfboards on any given evening to catch a wave at the cove.

"So far, yes," Heidi answered.

He chuckled and took a step closer to her. "We could discuss anything you have on your mind over dinner."

He was very tall, she realized, having to tip her head to look up into his face. The muscles on his arms bulged out from the short sleeves of his T-shirt. For an instant, Heidi was tempted to reach out her hand and stroke his smooth skin, but she didn't. She turned her errant thoughts to Chad instead and suddenly felt the crotch of her panties become moist.

"I prefer to keep our relationship on a business basis, John."

He shrugged one shoulder. "Maybe later—when the project is finished." He stared at her with one eyebrow raised.

Heidi merely smiled at him and turned her head. It would have been so easy to accept his invitation to dinner—but she knew from the way his eyes caressed her body—he had more in mind than the proverbial meal. A lusty shiver careened through her body.

* * * *

At six o'clock, the crew left the site and Heidi stood looking over the day's progress. If things went as scheduled, given the weather holding and the sub-contractors showing up on time, she should be having

her grand opening at the start of the season next year. The mere thought of seeing the hotel completed and receiving guests made her yelp for joy. Momentarily she did a happy little dance right in the middle of the cleared site, then picked up her clipboard and hurried across the sand to her little cottage.

She ate a hurried dinner, then put on her bikini and went for a swim in the ocean. The water was warm, and before too long she felt relaxed, returning to the cottage with thoughts of going to bed early. She jumped in the shower and shampooed her hair, then emerged from the bathroom just as the phone rang.

"Hello," she said into the receiver.

"Hi, babe."

Chad's voice was whisper-soft coming to her ear. She pulled in a deep breath and greeted him in her most sexy tone.

"I was just going to bed." She pulled the towel from her damp hair, tossing it toward the bathroom door.

"You were? Are you naked?" His voice was a raspy coo. "Are you naked and voluptuous?"

She giggled lightly. "Yes. I'm completely naked...and I'm sliding between the sheets right now." She felt her pulse quicken. The conversation was beginning to take on quite a lusty nuance.

"Mmmm. I wish I was there."

"I wish you were, too."

"I'm not, babe. But lie down and spread your legs for me, and we'll pretend that I'm there."

"Alright." She was starting to feel very aroused. "I'm lying in bed, with my legs spread as wide as

possible.”

“Throw back the sheet. Pretend I’m looking at you, Heidi. I want to see every gorgeous inch of you. Let me see your tits...and your bushy little pussy. Mmmm. I’m getting aroused, babe.”

“I threw back the sheet, Chad...and I’m closing my eyes so I can imagine you’re here with me...doing things to me.”

“Are your nipples hard, Heidi? Touch your nipples. Stroke your palm across the taut buds, slide your fingers along your round mounds. Feel the softness, babe?”

“Oh, yes. I feel the smooth skin. And Chad—”

“Yes, babe?”

“My nipples are so tight—like they get when you suck on them. Oh, Chad! I’m so aroused.” She shivered with lust.

“Lower your hand, Heidi. Lower your hand across your belly and lower, until your fingers delve into the blond bush—Oh, babe. This is doing untold things to me!” He pulled in an audible breath.

“My fingers are...are touching my—Oh, Chad!”

“Feel your fingers inching lower, babe. Feel the sensations you’re bringing to your body. Lower your hand and part those little fleshy pussy lips—” He pulled in another deep breath. “Masturbate, Heidi. Masturbate that cute little clit tucked inside that lush little bush!”

Her fingers began to masturbate. She could hardly keep her body still on the bed. Her fingers pressed and rubbed. Pressed and rubbed.

“Make yourself come, Heidi. And imagine I’m

there with you, making love to you."

Heidi drew in a shaky breath. "It feels so divine. So divine. I'm rubbing and growing very near orgasm, Chad."

"Keep masturbating, babe. Keep masturbating. I'm there with you in spirit—enjoying your lush body—tasting you when you come. Drinking your essence of nectar—"

"Oh, Chad! I'm coming! I'm coming!" she wailed into the phone receiver. Her hand went faster and faster on her clitoris. She arched her back, bucking her hips against the bed.

"Enter your hole, honey! Push your finger inside—Oh, God! Heidi! Pretend I'm there—fucking you, babe!"

Her folds were wet and slippery and she slid her forefinger inside herself, catching her breath as the sensations intensified throughout her body. Then she raised her hips and pushed her clitoris against her hand while her finger slid in and out.

"Oh, Chad! Oh, Chad! It feels marvelous! It feels marvelous!" she said, her voice quivering.

"Enjoy it, babe. Enjoy it, pretend that I'm there, and it's my cock that is giving you that glorious orgasm."

Chapter Six

She had never had phone sex before, and now that she had experienced it, she thought it was simply wonderful. Of course, she couldn't be certain how it had affected Chad—but her experience was one she certainly enjoyed to the fullest.

She bit on her bottom lip as she rolled out of bed. Sexual exploration was quite interesting, to say the least. She stretched her naked body, raising her arms over her head and peering at herself in the full-length mirror sitting across the room. Her eyes skimmed over her bare body. Her breasts were globular, with pert, rose-colored nipples. And her hips were round and shapely.

She had never shared an experience with a man such as she had with Chad last night. In fact, there weren't too many men who had seen her naked, for that matter. And especially, there wasn't one whom she had considered falling in love with.

Maybe she was ready for a steady man in her life—maybe she was ready to fall in love. She gave herself a final look in the mirror, turning her backside round for a last peek, and then began dressing. She had to admit, Chad was in her thoughts a great deal.

The construction crew was in full swing by the time Heidi finished breakfast and gathered her clipboard to go to the site. She had written a number of suggestions for John Moss, the lead man, and wanted to get the list to him as soon as possible. Then it was off to the bank to discuss the funds Chad had arranged to pay for the construction. She assumed there would be a lot of paperwork involved and she probably wouldn't be back before the afternoon.

John Moss appeared happy to see her until she produced the list she had compiled and gave it to him. Then his expression changed immediately to one of annoyance. He halted his feet and read what she had written while Heidi waited.

"We'll begin the hotel foundation this week," he informed her. "But most of your suggestions won't be possible until the building starts to go up."

"I know," Heidi replied. "I'm just looking ahead."

He forced a grin and she almost laughed in his face. She left him then, standing in the middle of the clearing holding her page of suggestions and went to keep her appointment at the bank.

* * * *

Three hours later, Heidi returned home to find the foundation forms being unloaded at the site. A feeling of great happiness almost overwhelmed her at the sight. It was really happening, her dream was about to be a reality.

She suddenly wanted to share the news with Chad and wished he were there. She felt almost sorry that

he wasn't. Was she missing him?

"Yes," she murmured aloud. "Yes, I think so."

The hours seemed to drag until she thought Chad would be back in town. He didn't call her that night, nor give her any other warning. But suddenly she spied his Cadillac pulling into the driveway. She raced through the front door and straight into his open arms.

"Mmmm. This is the kind of homecoming I like," he said, scooping her into his arms. He took her back inside the cottage and didn't release her until he was seated on the couch and she was nestled in his lap.

"I've missed you," she murmured, pressing her lips to his. She kissed him soundly, making him moan deep in his throat.

"I should have taken you straight to bed," he alleged, his fingers going to the knot in her halter-top.

A gentle tug and he exposed her breasts. Then he began to play with them, stroking them with his fingers, running his thumbs across her nipples until they were tight little buds aching to be suckled.

She was levered across his lap, her rounded hips pressing quite temptingly atop his crotch, so it was no wonder she felt his cock grow hard as he played with her breasts. When he pulled one nipple greedily between his lips, she let out a little mew and clutched both sides of his face with her palms.

Both her breasts were wet from his licking and Heidi was on the verge of going out of her mind with want, before he turned his attentions to her shorts-clad hips. He smoothed one palm along the rounded curve, sliding across the cropped denim fabric to

caress her bare thigh.

"You look hot in shorts," he said, his voice guttural.

His hand slid all the way along her bare leg to her knee, then back again to the hem of her shorts with little effort, for Heidi willingly parted her legs. He pushed one finger inside the leg of her shorts.

"Ooooh!" she exclaimed. "That turns me on." She leaned toward him for a kiss, pressing her naked breasts into the solid wall of his chest.

Her lips were demanding as she began to undress him. His finger had already found her clit inside her panties and began to rub erotically. Heidi couldn't help but squirm atop his lap.

"Take me to bed," Heidi said against his lips.

"That's too conventional," he returned.

Surprised, Heidi drew back slightly, only to see him aim a devil-may-care smile at her. Then he whisked away her shorts and picking up her naked body, strode over to the stuffed armchair in the room. Gently, he positioned her across the arms of the chair, her shoulders on one arm and her hips propped atop the other.

Heidi was intrigued. She giggled slightly and made herself comfortable while he undressed. The moment she got a glimpse of his engorged cock, she caught on to what he had in mind. She reached for him, pulling his cock between her palms and opening her mouth to suck it inside, while he clasped her buttocks and came down on her crotch with his mouth.

Their muffled groans filled the room as they licked and sucked on each other. Heidi gobbled him up,

feeling the hot stick of flesh poke the back of her throat while her curious fingers tried to feel every hairy nuance of his crotch.

Chad's mouth devoured her pussy, his tongue quickly searched out her little sensitive clitoris and pulled it into his mouth. Then he sucked it—until she was a quivering mass in the chair.

Orgasm was gathering in his balls—making his belly tighten. And Heidi was already starting to come when suddenly she tasted cum in her mouth and realized Chad was having an orgasm. She sucked him harder, pulling every hot inch of him inside her mouth, stroking his balls while he savored the climax.

Spent, and totally sated, Chad pulled Heidi upright in the chair, then onto his lap. Wrapping her in his arms, he kissed her sweat-dampened forehead.

"I've been thinking," she confided, her fingertips playing amidst the spray of dark hair on his chest.

"So have I," he added, giving her another kiss. "I think I'm falling in love with you, Heidi."

Her heart jumped in her chest. Could she be feeling love for Chad? She felt uncertain and therefore didn't voice her thoughts. The sex is certainly incredible, she dared to think, biting her bottom lip thoughtfully. But was she on the verge of falling in love with him?

Chapter Seven

Heidi was deep in thought. She sat at the kitchen table, pondering her relationship with Chad. He had confessed that he might be falling in love with her, but she was uncertain—uncertain to the point that it bothered her mentally. There wasn't time for a love relationship right now. She had a hotel to build, improvements to oversee at Sunny Hill, and then there were a million other things associated with both projects—not to mention the running of Fisherman's Cove, though the guys usually took care of everything there. Still, she was the owner and expected to pop her head in the door once in a while.

Her thoughts kept retuning to the sex she and Chad had. He was such an exquisite lover—and his ideas on sex amused and intrigued her to no end. She had never actively explored sex before, though her nature was to learn about new things. Sex had always seemed private before, private in the sense that it was between herself and whomever she felt the need to fuck.

She grinned at the notion. She hadn't always been so outspoken about the subject, either. She felt a blush begin at her throat and travel rapidly up to her

cheeks. The mere thought of having phone sex had always sent her shyly refusing—not that she had passed up so many opportunities, but there had been a few.

She thought then about the short time she had dated Matt Collins. He had gotten transferred to New York soon after they met and he would call her nightly, or for a short time he had called—one evening when he insisted she undress and perform masturbation while they talked, she had decided she didn't want to hear from him anymore. It had taken three nights of her hanging up on him before he got the idea.

She shook her head, dashing the thoughts from her brain. Now was no time to relive old flames, especially Matt Collins. For an instant she found herself comparing him to Chad, then realized there was little basis for comparison. Chad was in every sense of the word, a man a woman could fall in love with, a man who could pleasure a woman with his body and mind.

She stifled a shiver. She was turning herself on with her lusty thoughts. She slid out of her chair and walked out on the deck. It was nearing sundown and large dark clouds hung low over the surface of the ocean. The air was moist and smelled of the coming rain. She just hoped it wasn't one of those torrential downpours Georgia was famous for. Too much rain and the construction would be put on hold. She didn't want that. If anything, she wanted the sun to shine brightly and the guys to keep on working as hard as they could, so she could see the final product sitting

majestically on the beach.

She suddenly had the idea to go for a quick dip before the rain set in. She rushed to the bedroom and changed into her bikini, then hurried across the deck. Chad had returned to the Capitol, and wasn't quite sure when he'd be free again. In a way that was good, she needed the time away from him to think.

She trotted across the sand and waded into the cool water, her eyes searching the horizon for clues of when the rain might arrive. She didn't want to be caught in the water when it started, though she didn't see any signs of lightening in any direction. Still, she leaned to the side of safety. She had lived by the ocean too long to take chances, or to think she could outwit Mother Nature.

The water felt good against her body as she stretched out on her stomach and began to swim, propelling herself through the water with long, leisurely strokes. She savored the feel of the water engulfing her skin and penetrating the thin fabric of her swimsuit. Had it been closer to dark, she would have foregone the suit altogether in lieu of skinny dipping, but there were still a few people out along the lower edges of the beach and too, some of the construction crew were still milling about the site.

She swam until she began to feel the rain pelting the surface of the water, then she turned her sites toward the beach and began swimming as hard as she could. Just as soon as she could climb out of the water, she would settle in for the evening and watch a little TV.

She felt the sandy shore beneath her feet and stood

up. Walking toward the beach, she raised her hands and squeezed the water from her hair, and then she spied John Moss cutting across the beach in her direction.

She felt a little skittish about being around him while wearing a swimsuit, and a wet one at that. Her nipples were tight clusters due to the coldness of the water against them and they were jutting quite prominently against the thin fabric of her bikini bra. And John's eyes weren't missing any fraction of her body, she realized, watching him come toward her.

The rain began pelting rather hard as she stepped out onto the beach and met John face to face. All at once he reached out and took her by one arm, propelling her across the sand to the wooden steps of her deck, as though she had asked him to. Together, they raced through the sand, getting drenched in the process.

Hurrying to shelter, Heidi sprinted up the stairs ahead of John, but she felt his hands on her waist as she climbed the steps and when she landed on the deck, his hands slid lower to clasp her bare hips. It made her pull in a quick breath and whirl round to face him as he followed closely behind her into her kitchen.

She meant to say something quite contrary to what he wanted to hear, but he was quicker than she and in the next instant, she was hauled against his chest.

"Damn, you're one hot piece," he said, his hands racing across her back and then clasp her buttocks.

Heidi's swimsuit was drenched and plastered to her body like thin plastic wrap. It clung to every

nuance of her ass and her breasts, making it impossible to hide any of her many attributes from John's hungry devouring eyes.

"What is it you want?" Heidi insisted, trying to twist out of his grasp. She realized too late that she had worded her sentence wrong when John began trying to remove her top.

"You, honey. I want you," he said in a husky tone.

Heidi felt sudden fear rise inside her. *Was she about to be raped?* she wondered, her hands rising to push against John's chest.

He made quick work of pulling off her top and then he started to peel off her bikini bottom, over Heidi's objections. She scuffled with him, only to end up being pressed so tightly against his chest that she could hardly breathe.

"You son-of-a-bitch!" she spat, her heart racing in her chest. It was impossible to cover her naked breasts, or to fight off his hands as he hooked one thumb in her suit bottom and gave a hefty push. "I have no intention of letting you rape me!" she spewed.

"Then hold still," he advised her. "You might just like it."

"I doubt it!"

"Give it a try," he encouraged, halting his hands on her bare back. He gazed down into her frightened face. "I know you're fucking District Representative Chad Thornton at every opportunity. My cock is as big as his." He chuckled deep in his throat as he pinned Heidi with his brown eyes.

The sound of his laughter vibrated through Heidi.

And his words clutched at her nerves. Had he been window-peeking—or what? How did he know what she had been doing with Chad? Or was he just making guesses?

Heidi could feel him getting an erection. His hardness was pressing into her belly and she was growing curious as hell. *It's not right*, she told herself. She had no desire to have sex with John Moss, and besides, the words to fire him from the building project were trying to jump off the tip of her tongue. But then, she figured, he already knew his service to her was at an end.

"I've been watching you for days now," he said. His breath was hot on her face. His hands were growing more intense on her bare back.

"Turn me loose," Heidi ordered, her body going stiff against his.

He laughed at her, and leaned his head toward hers. "One kiss, Heidi," he cocked an eyebrow at her. "One kiss."

"I don't think so," she refused, her stomach knotting. *Was he willing to bargain? Could she possibly gain her freedom with a kiss?*

"I want you. I've never wanted a woman as much as I want you, Heidi," he confessed, his tone low and lust-filled. He drew in a deep breath. "And I know you're scared of me, but there's no reason."

"Ha!" Heidi's hands pushed at his broad chest. It was very muscular, and her protest had little effect on him. "You deliberately grab me and then tell me I have no reason to fear you? Do you think I'm stupid?"

"On the contrary, I think you're the smartest woman I ever met."

"Then you better fear me, you son-of-a-bitch!" she spat, her teeth gritted together.

He laughed at her again, but his hold on her body loosened, as though he were considering releasing her.

The contact with his chest was beginning to have an effect on Heidi's breasts. Her nipples were growing firm and liking the contact, despite her mental objections to the situation. She tried to step back, tried to break the contact, only to draw John's attention to her erect nipples. At once he raised one hand and fingered her right nipple, making her gasp with his touch.

"Don't do that!" she ordered, raising a hand to slap his fingers away. "Don't touch me!"

"Honey, you know you want it," he cooed, his hand not inching away. "I could do things to you that you'd like. I promise."

His erection pressing against her belly suddenly pulsed, making her keenly aware of what he was offering her. Then a mental picture of Chad filled her mind—and she willed her body to resist at all costs. John Moss might rape her, but she wouldn't enjoy it one bit, regardless of how he tried to make her believe otherwise.

"You want me." He lowered his head to kiss her.

Heidi turned her head away, only to have him bring up one hand and clutch the back of her head, forcing her face around. In the next second he was kissing her, his lips tender and soft.

A note of surprise caught in Heidi's throat. She hadn't expected tenderness—not in a million years! But then she hadn't expected his threat to get this far. Held in his hands, her head immovable by his grasp, she tried not to react to his mouth pressing against hers. She didn't want anything to do with John Moss!

"You play while I'm away."

The sound of Chad's voice cut into Heidi's mind and her body suddenly came alert. She twisted her mouth free of John's, only to see Chad's back as he left the room.

"Wait!" She fought her way out of John's arms. "Wait! Chad! It's not what you think!" She fought off John's hands and found herself stumbling backward in the small kitchen, trying desperately to get her footing and her wits about her so she could chase after Chad.

He pulled out of the driveway just as Heidi managed to reach the front door of the cottage. Pausing because of her near-naked state, she felt tears stinging the back of her eyes as she watched his Cadillac turn onto the road.

Chapter Eight

When Heidi stepped back from the front door, she heard her back screen door slam and knew John Moss had taken a hike. Bristling with anger, she grabbed the telephone and called the police. That son-of-a-bitch deserved to spend a night in jail! she vowed as she waited for the dispatcher to pick up the call.

* * * *

The rain beat down on the metal roof of the cottage and Heidi paced the floor of her small living room, her arms folded across her chest. She had filed a report against John Moss for assault, and made it quite clear that he was never to set foot on her property again.

Everything had seemed to tumble around her ears then. She couldn't reach Chad—he wouldn't answer his cell phone, despite Heidi's knowledge that he always had it with him. He just refused to speak with her, believing the worse. *But what else could he think?* she wondered. He had apparently come into the cottage while she was trying to get loose from John Moss and gotten the wrong idea about what he saw.

How was she ever to explain—if he wouldn't take her call? She paced until she realized it was doing little good. The rain began to blow against the side of the cottage so hard that she thought it might be blown off its foundation. Then the lights went out, and she stumbled around in the dark, trying to find a candle.

"Damn!" she cursed when she rammed her toe into the leg of the coffee table. "Damn! Damn! Damn!"

The candle finally found and lit, she settled on the couch, her legs drawn up to her chin. With the firing of John Moss, she needed to find another construction company to build the hotel. She raised one hand and ran it through her hair. It wasn't supposed to be like this, she reminded herself. Everything was going along so smoothly—even her relationship with Chad.

"Especially my relationship with Chad," she said out loud, an exasperated sigh coming from her mouth.

The yellow glow of the candle filled the tiny living room with a soft aura of shimmering radiance. She thought of Chad and felt the sting of tears at the back of her eyes. She hadn't known he was stopping by—she thought he was still out of town on official business. Why hadn't he called to let her know he was coming?

She drew in a deep breath. She had always been one to reason out things, to take the long view—to know what lay ahead before she plunged in. Even with Chad, she had thought things through. Just the other night—when he confessed that he might be falling in love with her—she had remained silent, deciding to be sure before she said anything.

The pain she was feeling inside seemed to say she had fallen in love with the guy. She didn't ever remember feeling the way she did over anyone else. Maybe it was true. Maybe he had found his way into her heart and now she only had to admit it to herself. But he was gone—he had walked out on her and wouldn't give her a chance to explain.

She found her thoughts returning to the sex they had shared. It had been incredible. But now it was over. Or was it? Was there some way she could make him listen to reason? What if she went to his office in the morning? Surely he would listen to the truth—if she went to him.

Or maybe not. She could explain things over the phone. She was certain of it. But then again, there was something to be said about being face to face with a person. There was something to be gained by being able to look into the other person's eyes. She made her mind up to go to his office in the morning and make him listen to her explanation of what he saw. Satisfied with her decision, she got up and went to bed, but she didn't sleep, she thought about Chad and fought the urge to cry.

* * * *

Morning came, with the rain continuing. Everything was drenched. The sky spanned the ocean with huge, angry, black clouds threatening another deluge. The construction site harbored pools of muddy water where the earthmoving machines had ripped away the underbrush. The newly prepared foundation, its

multitude of metal partitions piled in tall heaps about the site, waited for dry weather to bring eager hands to position the forms for the concrete. It was a dreary sight, but one Heidi knew was due to change.

She began the search for a new construction company to pick up where John Moss's company had begun. Heidi had made the necessary calls ending the contract she had signed with Moss and informed the architect that he would be working with another crew. She had called the bank and informed them of her decision to find another construction company and to be ready to change the name on the escrow account. She promised to be in contact.

She made an appointment with another contractor for the afternoon, then she got in her car and drove into town to try to speak to Chad. She had to straighten things out between them. She had barely slept a wink last night over the misunderstanding and it was imperative she get things back on the right track with him.

Once she arrived at the government building, she parked her car, and gathering every bit of strength she could muster, walked into the structure and requested a meeting with him. Only to be turned away by the receptionist.

"Mr. Thornton isn't in today," she said, her youthful face aimed at Heidi.

"His car is in the parking lot," Heidi replied, her temper flaring.

The receptionist merely stared at her, unspeaking.

Coming up with another idea, Heidi grabbed a piece of notepaper from her purse and scribbled a

note to Chad. Handing it to the receptionist, she turned on her heel and exited the foyer.

"Fuck you," she muttered, her angry strides taking her out into the rainy afternoon.

By the time she had driven home, she had just about put aside her anger. If the truth was known, maybe Chad didn't care for her as much as he had said. Maybe he was just sweet-talking her to get her to have sex with him. Such things happened.

A shiver of disgust raced through her insides. She suddenly thought of John Moss and his hands on her naked body. Well, his ass was in jail, and she was all set to go before the judge when the case came up and spill her guts. She'd tell it all—right down to the last nasty little detail. She'd ruin his reputation in Copenhagen—and any other town she could.

"And wreck my own, probably," she muttered.

She raked one hand through her hair, pushing it off her shoulder. Maybe there was a way to keep what happened quiet. She thought of the power Chad had in the town—but then decided he wouldn't go to bat for her if it meant saving her life. He obviously hated her.

She needed to get a grip. She'd always been one to look ahead and feel assured of every decision she ever made. Maybe having sex with Chad was the exception. But then he had been such a breath of fresh air. He had been so inventive. He had been so lusty and sensual that she couldn't resist him even when she tried—which wasn't very often.

She had to laugh at her own thoughts. She hadn't wanted to resist Chad's sexual overtures. Not even

from the very first evening they were together. She had gone willingly into his arms, allowed him to strip off her clothes, to revel when he speared her between the legs with his long hard cock.

It had been heaven, she admitted with a sigh. And she didn't know how to replace him in her life. She felt remorseful for the ending of their relationship. But she needed to face facts. It was over. He wouldn't talk to her. He wouldn't take her calls. He believed the worse. She needed to move on with her life—without Chad.

Chapter Nine

Two days later the rain stopped. Heidi walked out on her back deck and felt as though she had been let out of a cage. Finally, the weather had broke and she could resume life—such as it was. She heaved a heavy sigh, making her breasts jiggle on her chest.

The new construction foreman had just left her house and her mind was filled with their conversation. Luckily, this man, Martin Downs was a local with a good reputation, a family man with six kids to feed and clothe. She thought he would be easy to work with. And not one time while they were talking, did she have to deflect his eyes from her breasts or her bare legs. Yes, maybe this was the right man to build her dream hotel and resort.

Some part of her life was about to resume normalcy. She turned her eyes out over the rolling blue ocean waters. She loved the area, the ocean, and the serenity the setting harbored. She couldn't imagine living anywhere else. Once the hotel was built, and the resort up and running, she'd consider renovating the cottage, enlarging it, perhaps. She sighed and turned toward the kitchen. Or maybe she wouldn't.

She felt down, despite all that was going on around her. She still harbored thoughts of Chad and the time they spent together. She had tried to convince herself that it was of no use thinking about him, but at night, when she lay in her bed alone, she yearned for his hands on her body. She missed his fondling, his tender caresses. He was the only man she had ever really explored sex with—and probably would be the last.

She gave her head a shake, dispelling the silly thought. For Pete's sake, she was only twenty-six. Surely Chad Thornton hadn't ruined her for any man. She jerked her head round to look at the ocean again. *There were a million fish in the sea – there's another man out there for me*, she smirked.

It was hard to get back in the groove, she admitted, since her run-in with John Moss. She supposed he had gotten out of jail on bond, because his crew had arrived to take back all the construction equipment. It was loud and discouraging to see all the men get in the big machines and drive them away, then see the site left barren and open, as though ravaged by an unknown assailant.

* * * *

A week passed and the new construction crew arrived and began work on the site. Heidi took her clipboard and strolled up the hillside to check on the progress. She told herself not to expect too much, at least for the first few days. The new crew had to pick up where the old crew left off and since all the rain

had washed the area so heavily, there had to be more work done with the heavy equipment, new boundaries established and a new foundation begun.

As she stood and watched the men work, she was suddenly aware of the small procession of elderly people traipsing across the open ground between Sunny Hill and the building site. *Were they coming toward her?* she wondered, trying to ignore them. All she needed now was discord from the residents of the community.

"Miss McCoy," an elderly man called.

Heidi turned and braced herself. There were six of them, three men and three women, husbands and wives she guessed, all marching toward her like they had a purpose in mind. She hoped to hell they weren't going to bitch at her about something.

"Afternoon," she said, making her lips stretch into a smile. She clutched the clipboard to her chest and waited for them to come to her.

"We have the list of things we'd like to see improved at Sunny Hill," one man said, extending a shaky hand to Heidi. "The list is quite long, I'm afraid." He smiled. "Harold Mooney never did any upkeep on the property, but I think you know that."

"Yes," Heidi said, shaking her head and accepting the piece of paper. Glancing at it, she wasn't surprised in the least to see a number of things she already had in mind to fix.

"If we can be of any help," one of the women said, smiling sweetly at Heidi. "Don't hesitate to say so."

Heidi gave them her best smile. Having expected animosity from the group, she was startled to hear

their willingness to help.

"The City Inspector will be dropping by to make a list of all the code violations," she told them. "And once those things are taken care of, I intend to start the improvements to the building."

"Wonderful," one woman exclaimed and drew numerous comments from the other members of the group. "And do you suppose you could have that nice District Representative Chad Thornton drop by? We have something rather important to discuss with him."

Heidi's mouth dropped open. She hadn't expected any of the residents of Sunny Hill to mention Chad. She found she didn't know what to say, since Chad wouldn't talk to her.

"Yes," another of the group said. "Or do you suppose we could just call his office and ask him to stop in?"

"That would be best," Heidi answered, then dropped her gaze to the clipboard, just in case any of the group saw the sadness welling up in her eyes at the mention of his name.

They only stayed a few minutes, and Heidi was relieved when they took leave. She glanced over their list and shook her head. Of all the damn things to want updated—the bathrooms. Hell! They were tops on her list, and since attaining city facilities, the workers at Copenhagen's water and sewer departments would be along soon to dig up the yard and install pipes to the building.

She suddenly felt weary of it all, and headed down the hill to her cottage. Her life had been in the pits

lately, and it was all due to John Moss and his overactive libido. She entered the cottage and threw her clipboard on the kitchen table. She needed a drink and opened the fridge to retrieve a bottle of Merlot. Taking a glass from the cabinet, she poured herself a drink, then carried it out onto the deck.

One of the fishing boats was just coming into harbor and she sat down and pinned her eyes on it. It rocked precariously when it entered the churning waters at the pier. She stared at the pilot as he cut the motor and eased the vessel up to the metal dock. At least she didn't have to worry about that aspect of her business. Fisherman's Cove was on solid ground—with employees she could trust and equipment she knew was reliable.

A knock on her front door drew her attention and momentarily she was traipsing through the cottage to greet the little group of senior citizens she had spoken to earlier.

"Miss McCoy, we've invited Mr. Thornton to the center tomorrow afternoon. We'd like you to be there when he arrives," one elderly man said.

Heidi searched her brain for something to say. She hadn't expected the group to call Chad so quickly, or to get a favorable response. And now that they had, and wanted her to be there as well, she didn't know how to tactfully get out of the situation.

"We feel it's important for you to attend, dear," one woman said to Heidi. She stepped through the front door and laid a wrinkled hand on Heidi's arm. "Since we think it's in your best interests."

"My best interests? What are you talking about?"

Her brows drew together questioningly.

"Well, dear," the woman continued. "We think, since Sunny Hill is now a part of Copenhagen, that there should be some sort of government-backed financing available for the improvements."

Heidi's jaw dropped open. Hell! She hadn't even considered that possibility. "What time is Mr. Thornton due tomorrow?" she asked. If there was one person who could shed any light on the matter, it was Chad. And how could he refuse to see her when she'd be attending the meeting called by the residents of Sunny Hill?

Chapter Ten

Heidi was nervous as she dressed for the meeting at Sunny Hill. She hadn't seen Chad in weeks and for some silly reason, she couldn't make up her mind about what to wear. If memory served her right, he liked her in short-shorts, but that mode of dress didn't seem too businesslike for the meeting.

She ran her fingers through her blond hair. She'd dress as though she didn't know he was coming, she decided, her lips drawing upward into a smile. She'd wear her shorts and halter-top and to hell with what Chad thought, or didn't think. Maybe she could manage to distract him.

She laughed out loud at her thoughts. In all seriousness, what he would divulge to the citizens of Sunny Hill would be quite important to her plans for the resort hotel. In fact, she may go overboard with her improvements if the government were helping fund them. She shrugged her shoulders. She would need Chad's help in securing the funds, whatever the outcome of the meeting.

Heidi drove to the retirement community once she thought Chad had arrived—a part of her plan to make sure he didn't leave once he laid eyes on her.

She felt a tremor in the pit of her stomach when she stopped her car at the front of the building and saw Chad's Cadillac. Pulling in a deep breath, she wracked her brain for an excuse for her nervousness. What could go wrong? He either acknowledged her presence and they could talk—or he would act like an ass and ignore her.

Realizing she was on top of things emotionally, Heidi strolled confidentially into the front entrance of the wide yellow brick building and turned in the direction of the main meeting room of the facility. She heard Chad's familiar voice as she entered the doorway and for a moment, all eyes were turned on her. She paused in the doorway, her blue gaze locking with Chad's brown eyes.

A feeling akin to falling off a ten-story building shot through her insides. She had been wrong to think she could face him without reacting to his good looks, or the assessing brown gaze he aimed her way. She crossed the wide floor of the room on shaky legs and slid into a chair in the front row of the audience.

Chad sat on a wooden desk at the front of the group, his eyes lingering on Heidi as she made her way into the room. He held a sheath of papers in one hand and Heidi assumed the group of senior citizens had given him a copy of the improvements they wanted fixed. At any rate, Heidi tried to turn her attention to what Chad was saying in regard to why he had been summoned to the center.

"There is a program that funds such improvements to retirement centers." He aimed his gaze at Heidi. "The property owner should put in a request, and

then a government official from the organization will come visit the site to determine if the improvements are necessary. In the event the improvements are deemed necessary, and there are several restrictions and rules that apply, the necessary papers can be filed and funds can then be allocated for the project."

"That all sounds very confusing," one elderly man said from the gathering. "We thought maybe you and Miss McCoy could get together and take care of things without all the red tape."

Chad smiled and lowered his eyes to the papers he held. "I'm willing to work with Miss McCoy." He raised his eyes and turned his gaze on Heidi seated in the front row. "If Miss McCoy is willing to put forth the effort to see the project through," he said, his tone very businesslike.

The room was silent as everyone waited for Heidi to speak. She pinned her blue gaze on Chad and drew in a long breath. "In terms of government assistance, what could I expect, Mr. Thornton?" she asked, her tone equally businesslike.

Chad cleared his throat, and rose from the edge of the desk. He walked toward Heidi, his gaze wafting over her bare legs. "The list of improvements would have to be gone over in detail, Miss McCoy, for me to answer that question."

Heidi smiled up at him. His eyes were caressing her bare legs, then traveling inspectingly across her breasts. And she was beginning to feel quite aroused under his scrutinizing gaze.

"How soon could we get started?" Her eyes locked onto his. "I do have another project in the works – one

that is keeping me extremely busy."

"We could get started right away," Chad said, his tone softening. He stood right in front of her, his knees only inches from her crossed legs. He handed Heidi the sheath of papers he held. "If you have time now to look over the list of things the citizens are advising—"

Heidi took the papers from Chad. Her fingers touched his slightly and for an instant, she felt a jolt of electricity travel up her arm. Who was he kidding? she thought. He's still as excited to see me as I am to see him. A knowing smile graced her lips. And all at once she could hardly wait to get him alone and undressed. Her crotch was suddenly very moist and she felt her nipples start to knot.

"I think I could spare you an hour."

She recognized the lust his brown eyes harbored and she could hardly wait to be in his arms. She rose from her chair and strolled toward the mouth of the room. Just down the hall, the administrative offices of the business lay and she had plans to whisk Chad inside one of the empty rooms.

She chose the office at the end of the hall, the office that had once belonged to Harold Mooney. She swiveled her shorts-clad hips as she walked slowly ahead of Chad, leading the way. He closed the gap between them once she clasped the doorknob and pushed the door open.

"Heidi," he breathed, hauling her against his chest. "Oh, babe, I've missed you."

Heidi fell into his arms. All the past days didn't seem to matter as she tipped her head for his kiss.

And then his lips were on hers, pressing firmly and moving sensually. Heidi's heart sang with joy for the reunion. Never had she imagined the senior center would play a part in their getting back together. Maybe she owed the citizens a debt of gratitude for their efforts.

His hands were warm on her back and his palms pressed her rounded buttocks against his abdomen. She felt the burgeoning cock at her belly and wished she had insisted they discuss the matter at her cottage, but then —

"I love you," Chad said. "And I've missed you so much I can't find the words to express it."

Heidi pulled back, her mouth separating from his. There were words that needed to be spoken. She needed to say certain things to him—all of which seemed immensely important all of a sudden. But then she was keenly aware of the tears stinging her eyes. Was she crying?

"We need to talk," she managed. She pushed out of his arms and crossed the small office to stand at the window overlooking the acreage she had recently purchased. The sight of the construction crew milling about gave her a confident feeling. "The night you walked into my cottage and...saw me in John Moss's arms —"

"Heidi, I know I jumped to conclusions."

She turned to face him. He was so damned good-looking, she could hardly resist rushing back into his arms. She pulled in a shaky breath. "I wasn't in his arms because I wanted to be, Chad. I was there because he was planning to rape me."

Chad rushed across the room to take her into his arms. "I'm sorry, babe. When I came into the cottage and saw you half-naked in another man's arms—I just lost it. I couldn't think straight. I thought you had been having sex with me so that I would use my position with the state government to get you financing for your construction project."

Heidi was visibly startled. Never in a million years had she dreamed Chad had such thoughts about her.

"The night I told you I thought I might be falling in love with you, Heidi—you didn't return the love I spoke of. You didn't say that you loved me, babe. I thought—"

"Enough thinking, Chad. For Pete's sake! I didn't tell you that I loved you because I wasn't sure if I did or not."

He stared at her, pushing her to arms' length. "And now, Heidi? How do you feel about me now?"

She pulled in a long breath and raised her hands to press against his sturdy chest. She could feel the steady beat of his heart beneath her palm. "I've had time to think since that night, Chad. And I think I really do love you."

Chad's lips crushing down on hers so hard that she felt her teeth clatter together silenced her. His arms wrapped around her body with such force that she thought she would pass out from want of oxygen. But her heart fairly sang with pure joy at his show of love for her.

"Marry me, Heidi, for Pete's sake, marry me and put me out of my misery," he insisted, squeezing her tightly. "I've been half out of my mind, honey. I

didn't want to believe you were just using me—but the proof seemed there, nonetheless."

"Chad, I've never used you—not even for sex, honey." She smiled coyly and lowered her eyes.

Chad hooked one fingertip beneath her chin and tipped her head upward. "Say yes, Heidi. Say you'll marry me and you can use me any damn way you want!" he laughed suddenly, before kissing her again.

"I always think things through." Smiling, she peered up at him through her long eyelashes. "And I think you will be very beneficial to me in every way...in the future. So yes, I'll marry you because I really truly do love you." She pressed her body into his, and then felt herself being pressed back against the solid wood desk in the room. The next she knew, Chad was pushing up her top and grasping her breast with his big warm hand. She knew in her heart that she was making the right decision about becoming his wife. And she knew the old wooden desk where Harold Mooney used to do his paperwork for the senior citizen center was about to become wet with her juices.

The End

About the Author

I've been living my dream of writing for pay for fifteen years, but when I'm not at my desk, I enjoy riding motorcycles with my husband Dave. We've toured the lower forty-eight states and had many wonderful adventures. We have plans to visit Alaska and Hawaii in the next two summers. When I'm not traveling or writing, I enjoy reading and taking long walks with my sweetheart.