



LOOSE

Caitlyn Willows

ENDS

## LOOSE ENDS

“What do I have to do to make you change your mind?” Her voice purred as she stalked toward him. When she was within arm’s reach, Allie dropped to her knees and burrowed her face against his crotch.

Matt’s legs buckled with his groan. With one hand he cradled her head, the other fumbled to get his zipper down. Her tongue filled the gap as each link parted, hot fingers peeling his jeans and boxers away as she feathered up and down the opening. His cock brushed against her cheek, its weeping eye searching for her mouth. Allie tugged the clothing down his legs, nailing it to the floor so he could pull his feet free. He yanked his T-shirt over his head. Her fingernails raked over his washboard stomach in homage, around his aching dick, teasing but not touching, down his inner thighs until he quivered from want.

Allie nudged his feet further apart. “You are the most beautiful man I’ve ever met,” she whispered against his calf, then drew rapid circles upward with her tongue.

His breath caught when she reached his hard sac, then rushed out in a pained moan when she darted to the other leg and avoided his balls completely.

“Poor baby,” she said softly. “Does this feel better?”

His body jerked when she cupped his sac. That tongue of hers lashed at the base of his cock, while she kneaded his balls. He widened his stance when he felt a wet finger probing

his asshole. Eyes closed, head tossed back, he thrust into air. She squeezed his balls, pushing against the puckered entrance at the same time. Hot breath scored the head of his cock. It felt like every ounce of cum he'd ever produced was dammed in his testicles, waiting for release...

## ALSO BY CAITLYN WILLOWS

*All Four One*  
*Bad Seed*  
*Body Double*  
*Bring Me To Life*  
*Caitlyn's Kisses,*  
*Volumes I, II & III*  
*The Dating Pool*  
*Do Or Die*  
*Forbidden Fruit*  
*Graduation Day*  
*The Heir*  
*Her Bounty*  
*High Roller*  
*Hired Hand*  
*Hotel California*  
*I Am For You*  
*Inside Man*

*Laying Low*  
*A Little D.A.B.*  
*Love Potion #9*  
*Match To Flame*  
*My Salvation*  
*No Strings*  
*One Touch*  
*Our One True Love*  
*Playtime*  
*Showtime*  
*The Star Series, Books I-V*  
*Teacher's Pet*  
*Thief Of Hearts*  
*Treasure Hunters*  
*Undercover Lover*  
*Warrior Princess*  
*White Lies*

# LOOSE ENDS

---

BY

CAITLYN WILLOWS

AMBER QUILL PRESS, LLC

<http://www.amberquill.com>

LOOSE ENDS  
AN AMBER HEAT BOOK

This book is a work of fiction.  
All names, characters, locations, and incidents are products of  
the author's imagination, or have been used fictitiously.  
Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, locales,  
or events is entirely coincidental.

Amber Quill Press, LLC  
<http://www.amberquill.com>  
<http://www.amberheat.com>

All rights reserved.  
No portion of this book may be transmitted or  
reproduced in any form, or by any means, without permission  
in writing from the publisher, with the exception of brief  
excerpts used for the purposes of review.

Copyright © 2007 by Catherine Snodgrass  
ISBN 978-1-60272-023-7  
Cover Art © 2007 Trace Edward Zaber

Layout and Formatting provided by: [ElementalAlchemy.com](http://ElementalAlchemy.com)

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# CHAPTER 1

Matt Oliver glanced at the woman in the window seat next to him. Even asleep she could give him a hard-on like nobody's business, and this was after forty-eight hours of killer sex.

He'd never met a woman quite like Allie Quinn. Not only was she hot as hell and great in bed, but she had a dedication to her job that matched his. Add every superlative a man could think of, and it all came down to one word—perfection. He wished they'd hooked up years ago, both professionally and personally. Now that they were a team, Matt was going to do everything in his power to see they stayed one.

They'd spent the hours preceding this first leg of their

## *LOOSE ENDS*

extended journey home discussing every aspect of the Sumner investigation he could remember. It was a pity she couldn't review the full case file and subsequent information they'd acquired on the target. But all that was safely tucked away at the FBI offices in New York City. Neither of them had secure computer access to have it forwarded. They'd been on vacation, never anticipating Matt would be called back to continue his undercover assignment so soon.

At least he wasn't going in alone this time. Allie would be backing him all the way. Other special agents had filtered in and out of his life during his two years with Brian Sumner. Matt had dealt with them cautiously, never knowing what to expect. It wasn't as if you could come right out and ask if they were FBI, and just because they were didn't mean they were all that reliable. After all, it was his life and his investigation at stake. He hadn't put two years into this undercover assignment only to see some jerk screw it all up. The one before Allie was a prime example. The agent was all right, but his loose cannon of an ex-wife had come close to getting both herself and her ex-husband killed, and jeopardized everything in the process. Had she been successful, it would have been a cold day in hell before the FBI ever got near Brian Sumner again, not that Matt would have lived long enough to see them try.

Allie had been different from the instant they'd met, when she'd slinked into Sumner's circle to retrieve the flash drive of data he'd collected. Matt and Allie had meshed with each other as if they'd done it a thousand times. Their instincts



## *LOOSE ENDS*

were synchronous. Something like that happened once in...hell, the odds were too high to measure. And to have them click on a personal level, too? At the risk of sounding cliché, it was priceless.

He'd be the first to admit he was more than hesitant about going back under. Matt had successfully maintained his cover throughout the investigation. He'd even managed to avoid arrest and slipped away incognito when Sumner and the men with him were taken into custody. Proof of his success came from Sumner himself when the man tried to contact Matt's alter-ego, Matteo Lombardi. He was circling the wagons he had remaining, and Matt was one of those few he trusted. God only knew where it would lead this time, or how much more information he'd be able to gather. They'd only scuffed the surface of Sumner's corruption and that of his associates. Getting to those associates while keeping Sumner's trust had been impossible. This could be the chance they'd been looking for. The bigger question for Matt was...could he continue to maintain his façade?

His diligence and wariness had paid off the first time around. But even Matt realized that he'd grown tenser with each passing day he'd had to weigh every word and action. Two years was a hell of a long time to be undercover. He'd started to wonder if his breaking point was near. And then Allie Quinn had walked into his life. Disguised as call girl Samantha Shaw, she'd provided the perfect distraction, helping to bring about the beginning of the end of Sumner's reign.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

It had been Matt's idea for her to go back under with him. He'd like to have said he'd asked for professional reasons—an agent would be stupid not to want someone of her caliber at his back. But he'd been initially driven by personal needs. After two years of isolation, Matt didn't want to be alone any more. After having Allie in his life, he didn't want her out of it...not for one second. No matter how work-oriented he was, Matt knew he wouldn't be able to concentrate on anything but her if she wasn't with him. He couldn't do his job if he was constantly worried about when and if he'd ever see her again.

Then the Special Agent Oliver part of him—as Allie called him—kicked in. Having her there made sense. She already had a cover. Sumner thought she was a call girl Matteo had hooked up with. They could easily slip back in with those identities. She was sharp and quick, knew Matt's mind the second he did. And, like him, Allie would do whatever it took to stay alive and get the job done.

Matt checked his watch. It was almost time to wake her. They'd agreed to split the five-hour flight from Honolulu to Los Angeles—one sleeping while the other one kept watch. He'd let her have the first shift. Maybe they were being over-cautious. The red-eye flight was far from crowded. People had spread apart as much as they could once the 757 was airborne. The seat between them was vacant as were the rows across, in front, and behind. They probably could have both slept for the entire flight. But neither of them had gotten where they were by letting his or her guard down. They kept to what they knew would keep them alive.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

He'd scanned the passengers during a quick trip to the lavatory, while the flight attendants were trying to sell headsets for the in-flight movie. From what he could tell, most people were bedded down. No one had budged since then. He'd spent his time reading a romance novel Allie had bought for beach-time...and shamelessly enjoying it.

Matt breathed in the sight of her once more. She had the airline blanket tucked under her chin, cocooned against the chill in the plane. One strand of her gold-brown hair curled around her breast, like it was seeking her nipple beneath the covering. Scooting into the seat between them, he combed the hair over her shoulder.

Allie stretched, turning a lazy smile his way. "Quiet?" she asked.

"Not a creature was stirring." He loved the way she looked when she woke up. If they were in a bed right now... He smiled and slipped his hand under the blanket. She wore comfortable, lightweight pants with a T-shirt. The loose material now allowed him easy access to give her a proper wake up.

Her eyes widened when he shoved his hand beneath the elastic waistbands in pants and panties, straight to the moist heat in her pussy.

"Matt," she whispered, flashing a quick look around them, "you wouldn't."

Despite the half-hearted protest, she fisted the blanket and parted her thighs. Matt crossed his legs to quell the ache in his cock. It didn't help.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

“Shhh,” he spoke softly against her ear, then indulged himself with a lick around the shell.

Allie sighed, lips pressed tight against any sound. Using his middle finger, Matt dipped juices from the well of her crotch up to her hard clitoris. It felt like it kissed him, thanking him for attention. He circled around it, marveling at the pulsing heat. Her breath quickened. More moisture surged forward. His erection throbbed, protesting its lack of participation. He'd never met a woman more daring, more ready for anything. But they weren't foolish enough to go all out. Still, the thought of ripping off her clothes and yanking her astride his lap sent fire skidding along his skin.

He drew lazy circles around her clit. “My baby likes that, doesn't she?”

She swallowed hard with her nod.

He shoved his fingers into her core and rubbed his palm against her. Allie's eyes flashed open.

“Too much?” he asked on a grin and pulled back to her clit.

She sagged down farther. He wanted to tease her, to make her cry out, but he also didn't want to get them arrested. Slow circles pulled the tension up. He tugged the edge of the blanket over his lap and squeezed his cock. It refused to subside and demanded stroking. He felt her fingers drift over his thigh, aiming right where he needed.

Matt clutched her hand in place. “I don't want to have to explain a cum stain on my jeans, sweetheart.”

She nestled her cheek into his bicep. “I'm going to take

## *LOOSE ENDS*

you in the lavatory, wrap my lips around...” She sucked in a sharp breath when he pinched her clit. It was in self-defense—to keep her words from making him come. His cock reacted anyway, threatening to spill jism everywhere at the sight of her lost in pleasure.

He toyed with her clit, making it slicker, harder, hotter. Her body tensed. Her jaw clenched from the effort to keep quiet. Then she froze. His cock beat in time to her pussy’s orgasmic contractions. She melted into the seat as her climax waned. He slowly pulled his hand free.

Allie laced her fingers through his the second they cleared her pants. “Lavatory...now.”

She didn’t have to give the order twice. Getting there was the tricky part. His cock ridged his jeans very prominently. If any of the passengers woke up and noticed, they’d have more than a clue what he and Allie were getting ready to do.

She picked her way down the aisle, keeping directly in front of him, pausing from time to time as if she were sick and having trouble. As they reached the miniscule bathrooms in the back, the blond flight attendant, whose nametag identified her as Nikki, stopped perusing her magazine and glanced up from her jump seat, questioning their actions with a single look.

“She’s a little queasy and needs my help,” Matt said quickly.

Her gaze dropped to his erection. A barely perceptible smile lifted one corner of her mouth as she returned to her reading.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

Allie sat on the commode, parting her knees to allow him access to the tiny space. He'd barely slid the latch closed when her fingers flicked his belt open. The leather sighed as she freed it. One slice and the zipper was open. She curled her fingers around his waistband and tugged jeans and boxers down. His cock sprang free, right to her waiting mouth. Hands braced on the ceiling, Matt arched into a thrust as her tongue feathered around him.

She cupped his sac, gently kneading his aching balls. Her other hand wandered up and down the crack of his ass, reminding him of all she could do to him if only there were room. The thought of her fingers delving into his ass quivered through him. Allie could definitely give as good as she got.

Fighting each groan back, he watched her through lust-clouded eyes as she took him deeper with every suck. His hips pivoted of their own volition. He grabbed the back of her head, sinking his fingers into her silky hair as he tried to fuck her mouth. A hard pinch to his ass shot fire from his balls to the tip of his cock. She looped her tongue around and around from root to crown over and over. Then she found that oh-so-sensitive spot just behind his balls. Deep circles against it took his breath away. Heat pooled at his lower back. She sucked him deeper. His cock head nudged the back of her throat. Another hard suck yanked the orgasm out of him. Matt thrust forward as hot jets of cum spurted from him.

He heaved in deep breaths, struggling to stay upright while his legs felt like rubber. Allie dotted kisses along his penis as it grew flaccid.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

“Ready for that nap now?”

“A little too ready,” he managed to say. “You might have to carry me. I’m not sure I can move a muscle.”

She helped him tug his clothing into place. “It might be more of a drag than a carry, but I’d do it.”

Matt had no doubt. He was beginning to wonder how he’d managed without her all these years.

Nikki didn’t spare them a glance as they vacated the lavatory. Her legs were crossed, one slowly scissoring over the other seeming to indicate she wasn’t as disinterested as she appeared.

Back at their row, Matt took the window, while Allie guarded him from the aisle seat. In seconds he drifted off, secure in the knowledge that, for the first time in a long time on the job, he could rest and Allie would have his back completely.

## CHAPTER 2

Agreeing to team up with Matt for this job might not have been such a good idea. Normally, Allie was one hundred percent focused on what she had to do and was cool and collected going in. Right now she was neither. Shortly after Matt dozed off, nerves plagued her. She'd never been one to freak out over air travel. After all, it was part of life, not to mention her job. And it wasn't exactly that the long plane ride bothered her, it was...

She tossed another magazine to the stack in the seat between them and rested her chin on the pedestal of her hand. Allie didn't know what was wrong. Something felt off. *She* felt off. It was all she could do to remain seated and not pace



## *LOOSE ENDS*

the length of the jet. Nervous energy? Being cooped up when she was anxious to get things moving? Fear?

One glance at the gorgeous man sleeping next to her answered all those questions in an instant. Odd how a look could take her breath away after all they'd been through. At some point she recognized the feeling for what it was—her heart tumbling head-over-heels for the man. It wasn't an emotion Allie took for granted. Finding love wasn't an everyday occurrence. Finding a compatible mate, especially in her line of work, even rarer. Although she'd longed for this to be a forever-feeling, Allie wasn't ready to be picking out china patterns yet. They'd barely had time to bask in the wonder and newness of their relationship before Matt had been called back to work.

There'd been no hesitation on her part when he'd asked her to join him. If he hadn't suggested it, she probably would have. Hell, she couldn't stand having one seat between them, much less miles.

That thought made her smile. She loved how soft his brown hair felt when she rippled the strands through her fingers, how his hard body meshed with hers. Locked in passion or walking side by side, he made her feel like a woman, like nothing and no one existed but her. And yet there was also no denying he treated her as his equal. He valued her opinion, her skill, her intelligence. On top of all that was an adventurous spirit to match hers, be that in play, in exploration, or in work.

All special agents knew they had to do anything and

## *LOOSE ENDS*

everything for the job, to stay alive. It was a given. But with Matt, Allie could trust he'd do exactly that. As a federal agent, she appreciated the worry that took off her shoulders. As a woman falling in love...

Allie pulled in a deep sigh. She, too, would do whatever it took. Her biggest obstacle now was setting aside this burgeoning feeling and putting the job first. She had to continue to trust the instincts that had thrown them together in the first place. That's what would keep them alive. Putting love ahead of job, especially undercover, had to be the number one mistake a special agent could make. She refused to let her feelings make her sloppy. Matt's professionalism was what drew her to him initially—that and the fact he'd crawled under her skirt minutes before he'd fucked her up against the wall in front of God and everyone. She had to let him do his job, just as he had to let her do hers.

It didn't matter that his smile had her tingling like a teenager. It didn't matter that one brush of his hand, one look, one kiss had her close to coming. It didn't matter that the thought of him made her smile. What mattered was staying alive so they could continue to enjoy it all.

Allie snapped her wandering thoughts to a halt as the flight attendants hauled the service cart up the aisle. The scent of fresh brewed coffee stirred people awake. She glanced at her watch. Matt still had some snooze time available...if he was still asleep. She'd bet he'd wakened with the first rattle of the cart and chosen to keep his eyes closed. It was a ploy she'd used in the past to surreptitiously gather information—

## *LOOSE ENDS*

amazing what a person found out when others thought you were asleep. It was also an excellent chance to hone one's other senses. Agents never knew when they'd literally be in the dark. Good use of touch, sound, and scent might be the difference between life and death.

Lowering the center tray, she peaked out the window. Approaching sunrise lightened the sky. By the time they reached New York City, it'd be dark again. They hadn't been on Hawaiian time long enough to reset their biological clocks, so at least the time change wouldn't be too much of a killer. By this time day after tomorrow, they'd be ready to step into the world of Brian Sumner and his dirty dealings. She'd had a small sample of what being in the man's company was like and wasn't looking forward to repeating it. But she'd also be damned if she let Matt go back there alone.

"Would you like something to drink?"

Allie smiled up at the flight attendant as Nikki placed napkins and two granola bars on the tray. "Two black coffees, two waters with ice, please."

She poured bottled water into the plastic cups and put them on the tray. "Feeling better?"

The question was innocent enough, but they all knew what she and Matt had been up to in the bathroom. By now, the whole flight crew would know, too.

"Yes...thank you...I got just what I needed."

The comment brought a smirk to Nikki's lips. As she placed the coffee beside the waters, she gave Allie a wink. Then she was on to the rows behind them.

## LOOSE ENDS

Allie fished ice from the cups and placed it in the hot coffees. Amazing the routine she and Matt had fallen into after so short an acquaintance. She wondered what it would be like... *Nope, don't go there.*

Leaving the coffee to cool, she eased back into her seat with her water. A news program had started after the movie. They were running a piece about Sumner. While the images that flashed across the screen told a story of their own, she found herself wishing she could hear the commentary that went along with it. Too bad she'd never learned to read lips. The extra insight into the man might be helpful. She focused instead on those in the background of the shots, noting faces for future reference.

Allie was in mid-sip when a shot from a surveillance camera popped up. Though altered for public broadcast, she had no trouble recognizing it—that fateful encounter between her and Matt...the one where he'd fucked her against the wall while Sumner and his men looked on. She choked on her water.

Matt snapped upright.

“You all right?”

The question came in unison from him and Nikki. Allie nodded, while she coughed and blotted tears from her eyes. Looking at Matt, she shot a side glance toward the monitor. A frown pulled his gaze that way, but the piece on Sumner had already ended. She was forced to wait until the attendants moved further down the aisle, and she recovered, before she could tell him. Even then, she darted a glance around to make

## *LOOSE ENDS*

sure they weren't overheard.

"Someone released that video of us in the hallway from the train," she whispered.

Matt's frown deepened. His lips thinned. His muttered, "Fuck" said it all. Wrapping his hand around his coffee cup, he sank back into his seat. There wasn't anything they could do about it until they landed, if they could do anything then.

She thought about the possibility of them slipping off to the lavatory to talk. Considering their earlier rendezvous, she doubted Nikki and her co-workers would be as tolerant this time around. They could be arrested the second their feet left the jetway. They didn't need attention turned their way.

The video wasn't the best quality. Maybe no one would recognize them. Allie closed her eyes. It was clear enough. As many times as it'd be shown on news broadcasts, someone would notice. It would help to know the commentary that went with it. Were their fake IDs used, or had someone made them? That had been close to happening at the time when Gordie Kidwell's ex-wife had exploded onto the scene. In her quest to get even with her ex-husband, Eva told Sumner that Gordie was FBI. Then the bitch had pointed her finger at Allie and outed her as FBI, too. If it weren't for Matt's quick thinking, they'd all be dead right now.

Matt reached over and squeezed her fingers. She blessed him for not spewing false hope. He knew as well as she did this could go either way. Those instincts so ingrained in each of them, that bond they'd instantly formed, was going to be getting a real workout.

*LOOSE ENDS*

She turned his way. “Bob and weave, bob and weave.”  
He laughed lightly and raised his cup. “I’ll toast to that  
one.”  
They clinked cups and slugged down a gulp.

## CHAPTER 3

There was some saving grace to being in a crowded airport—everyone was too busy rushing to the next destination to notice anyone else. No one paid much attention to Matt and Allie as they waited for their luggage at the baggage carousel. That might change the more circulation the video clip received. Matt sure wished he'd caught the earlier viewing so he could know just how bad it was. But if it was enough to make Allie go pale, they'd have to do some fancy maneuvering to keep from getting screwed or, worse yet, killed.

On the surface it looked like things were going according to plan. Both their bosses stood by the exit doors, waiting for

## *LOOSE ENDS*

them. Dressed in dark suits, hands clasping wrists before them, they looked like chauffeurs waiting for clients. They could have been mirror images, except for the fact Herb Walker was black and Bob James was so white everyone always teased that he had ice in his veins. Both were bald.

Once inside the waiting vehicle, they would hand over everything Matt and Allie needed to assume their false identities. In turn, he and she would give the trappings of their real lives to the men. From Los Angeles, they'd drive the couple to Las Vegas, where Matt and Allie would board the plane to JFK under their new names. The four-hour drive would also give them time for an updated briefing.

Matt couldn't tell if the stern looks on the men's faces were part of the role they now presented, or if they'd seen the video and knew all hell was about to break loose if they didn't nip this in the bud.

"Oh...shit."

Matt looked Allie's way at her barely perceptible comment. She was frowning at her open cell phone. She snapped the device closed and jerked her chin up.

"My mom. Ten guesses what her phone call was about. She has very sharp eyes, and she never misses the news."

Matt plucked his phone from his jeans pocket. Sure enough, his mother had called. He shoved it back in his pocket. Once they reached the vehicle, both phones would be in Bob's and Herb's possession. He and Allie could lie and eventually tell their mothers they were undercover when their calls came through. The families were used to things like that.



## *LOOSE ENDS*

Their personal cells were monitored in their absence in the event of family emergencies. This was no different, no voice mail, just a call. They would have been noted and deleted.

Allie nudged against him. “I wouldn’t recommend ignoring them. While you might be able to get away with it, mine knows I’m supposed to be on vacation. We need to suck it up and deal with it now, or it’ll be nibbling away at the corners of our minds when we should be focusing on the job.”

It continued to amaze him that she knew his mind so well. That’s what was going to get them through this. “They could be calling for no particular reason.”

The look she gave him suggested otherwise and that they both knew better.

Matt pulled in a sigh. “Let’s wait to get the full scoop from Bob and Herb before we call them back. There’s your last bag.” He hauled the green zippered bag off the conveyor as it neared.

Allie extended the handles on the remaining wheeled bags. Each taking two, they headed for the exit.

Bob and Herb did no more than nod before leading them out and onto the shuttle taking them to the parking area. Wedged in as they were on the bus, talking was out of the question. They made eye contact with no one save each other, but Matt couldn’t help wondering how many others on the bus were looking at him and Allie, trying to place them. He listened for whispered conversations, snickers, or gasps of shock and heard nothing.

Finally, they reached a dark green Durango. This time

## *LOOSE ENDS*

Herb and Bob took possession of the luggage, stowing it in the rear of the SUV, while Matt and Allie slipped into the back seats. The senior agents then took the front, shutting their doors, and turning toward them in perfect synchronicity.

Matt held up a hand before either of them could speak. “Who leaked the video of us?”

They exchanged a look before Bob answered. “It surfaced on the internet a few days ago on sex sites. Apparently, the bartender on Sumner’s train made duplicate copies of the tape before it was seized and has been offering it for download sales ever since. Somehow the news media got hold of it.”

Allie leaned forward. “I caught a glimpse of it on the plane, but couldn’t hear the commentary that went with it. Matt hasn’t seen it at all.”

Herb’s deep brown eyes focused exclusively on her. Judging from the sympathy Matt saw in them, he had the feeling they weren’t going to get good news.

“At first broadcasters were using it as an example of the lifestyle Sumner led and the lengths he’d go to monitor activities within his realm. There were hints of other tapes surfacing of higher profile people. Neither of you were identified. However...” His gaze never shifted, but his shoulders lifted and fell on a sigh. “News people soon recognized others on the tape as men arrested with Sumner, as well as the couple taken to the hospital—Gordon and Eva Kidwell. Friends and family of the Kidwells have verified Gordon as being Eva’s husband, confirmed their belief he is FBI, and that their name is Kidwell.”

## LOOSE ENDS

Allie closed her eyes and rubbed her fingers over her forehead. “And since Eva swore I was also a special agent...”

“It’s only a matter of time before it comes out. I’m afraid you’re off the case,” Herb answered.

A breath pulled her eyes open. “And where does that leave Matt?”

“Exactly where he’d be without you,” Bob answered. “His identity isn’t at risk, just yours. Having you along with him was just an added perk. It doesn’t matter to the overall mission. In fact, after seeing the video...and other things...”

“What other things?” Matt demanded to know. As far as he knew, Sumner’s private railcar in which “other things” took place wasn’t set up with video surveillance.

“I’m referring to your little Hawaiian sex-fest,” Bob snapped.

Matt narrowed his gaze. The son-of-a-bitch had had them watched, followed. He and Allie had been led to believe they were in a safe environment. They’d been too wrapped up in each other to consider their own people had lied to them.

“You’ve got years invested in the Sumner case, Matt.” Bob sounded like he was trying to placate an unruly child. “While we appreciated your need to get away for a bit until things died down and Sumner made his next move, we certainly didn’t want to risk anything happening to you. Of course we had you followed. Is there anyplace the two of you won’t have sex?”

“Pretty much...no.” It was a smart-assed response, but Matt couldn’t help it. “But then you suspected that before you

## LOOSE ENDS

agreed to me leaving, didn't you? Were you all just trying to see how good we really got along, or did you think a couple of days of hot fucking would clear my head enough to get locked onto the job?"

Both men had the decency to look away. Looked like Matt had hit the nail on the head—he and Allie had been played from the start, more or less.

"When did you decide to hook us up?" he asked.

Bob coughed into his fist. "After we saw the video of you two doing it up against the wall and Gordie told us about the subsequent incident in Sumner's private car. We realized what a unique distraction something like that created. You're both single. We wanted you real comfortable with each other—"

"Hoping to use us for future jobs," Allie finished for him. Neither confirmed or denied the allegation.

She snorted. "And here I was expecting a reprimand of some sort, not what amounts to your blessing. I trust you were all pleased with our exuberant and inventive exploration of one another? Will those encounters wind up for sale on the internet, too?"

Embarrassment flushed their faces.

"Well, we certainly can't let your valiant subterfuge go to waste. I'm going back in with Matt."

"Your identity—"

"We'll use it to our advantage," Matt interrupted. "Keep Sumner guessing what she's up to. Give me Matteo Lombardi's cell. I'm going to call him."

"Everything's in a pouch under the seat," Herb said.

## LOOSE ENDS

Matt reached beneath him. His hand went straight to it. One yank pulled the pouch free from the tape. He zipped it open, pulled out the cell, and handed the pouch to Allie to retrieve the rest of the phony documentation.

One press of a button had Sumner's phone ringing. He answered halfway through the second ring.

"Teo...how good to hear from you."

Matt didn't waste time. "What the hell's going on, boss? Nothing I hate more than waking up with my coffee and seeing myself on national TV. I pray to God my mother didn't see it and recognize me. I'm beginning to feel set up."

"Not by me, my friend. I believe your lady friend might not be who she says she is." Sumner's tone was smooth, calm, cultured, never once giving any hint of the alarm Matt knew he was feeling.

"What are you saying? That"—he racked his brain for the name Gordie had used while undercover—"that Little's wife was right?"

"She was right about him, Teo. I must conclude she's right about our lovely call girl."

"Not possible, boss." Matt let his mind run with a plan. "I've been with her every day since then. She sure doesn't act or talk like anyone other than who she claims."

He could hear Sumner's sharp intake of breath over the phone and could almost see his nostrils flaring as the man stared down the bridge of his nose. "She's a loose end that must be dealt with, Teo. I expect you to do so."

"And Little and his bitch wife?"

## LOOSE ENDS

“Beyond my reach...for the moment. Trust that it’s an issue we’ll handle at the earliest possible opportunity.”

Matt let silence stand between them for a few heartbeats. “I think you’re wrong about her, boss.”

“I never thought you’d be the type to be led by the cock, Mr. Lombardi,” Sumner said.

“I’m not, but I know a good piece of ass when I’ve got one. I’ve fucked her six ways to Sunday. Only a pro can fuck like that. Besides, everyone’s seen us together. Who do you think they’ll come looking for if something happens to her? Or have I become another loose end you’d like to be rid of?”

“And if you are, will that send you running to the feds?” Sumner shot back.

Matt laughed. “And be locked up with the rest of you? No, thanks. I’m sure there are others who would appreciate a loyal man. Your friends haven’t been subtle about that over the years either, if you recall. If they suspect you’ve turned against me, one of your most loyal men, how long before they worry you’ll turn against them? Do you really want to be a loose end yourself?”

“Are you threatening me, Mr. Lombardi?”

“Just stating fact, boss. Anything happens to me, your friends will know it was your doing. No matter what you say, they’ll still believe you had me silenced for what I know, not because of my taste in women. They’ll be anxious to make sure something similar doesn’t happen to them.”

“I can’t believe we’re allowing one woman to rend us apart, my friend.” So now Sumner was trying to smooth things

## LOOSE ENDS

over.

“Not any woman—my woman. I’ve become very fond of her. Hell, it’s close enough to call it love. I don’t care if she is a call girl. I’m thinking Vegas, wedding chapel...Simon Petrocelli lives in Vegas, doesn’t he?” The biggest thorn in Sumner’s side. That ought to dig deep.

Matt had never been able to determine exactly what Petrocelli’s business was with Sumner. In his mind, the two didn’t mesh as cohorts, yet he couldn’t see them being friends either. Both were rich, appeared cultured, but, while Sumner’s lifestyle screamed “mob cutthroat,” Petrocelli’s exuded “quietly dignified businessman.” Matt hated like hell to think someone of Petrocelli’s apparent character was tied up in Sumner’s dirty dealings. But there’d come a point where he couldn’t discount anyone as a suspect, even someone he liked and respected as much as Simon Petrocelli.

“You’ve made your point exceedingly well, Teo. Come back. She’ll be welcome as well. But one questionable move on her part and—”

“I’ll deal with her personally.”

“Good. I’ll see you soon?”

“I’ll call.” Matt ended the call and sagged against the seat.

“Think he’ll call your bluff?” Bob asked.

Matt stuffed the cell into his pocket. “No, he has too much to lose. If the threat of retaliation isn’t enough to keep him from killing me, the very idea I’d go to Petrocelli if he tries, will. I think Petrocelli has something big on Sumner, something that keeps the man in line.”

## LOOSE ENDS

Bob nodded. “He could be a big piece of the puzzle, possibly the final key. Getting into his inner circle has been impossible up to now. This could be the chance we’ve been looking for.”

“How’s that?” Herb’s dark forehead crinkled in a washboard of furrows.

“Petrocelli’s surveillance of those who concern him makes Sumner’s set-up look like tin cans and string,” Matt said.

Allie leaned forward, forearms on knees. “In other words, the FBI isn’t the only one monitoring Sumner’s phone.”

“Exactly.” Matt punctuated the sentence with a tap to her arm. “Petrocelli offered me a spot with him a couple of months back. He’s big on loyalty. The fact I refused and stayed with Sumner impressed him. Once he thinks Sumner could be severing all loose ends, I’d be willing to bet Petrocelli tries to contact me.”

“So now what happens?” Bob’s dark eyebrows looked like lazy question marks.

“How about you let Matt and I do what we do best?” Allie draped her arm around his shoulders.

Herb shook his head. “The danger—”

“The more I’m associated with Matt, the safer I’ll be. Any attempt on my life will be viewed as an attack on him. Without Matt, I don’t stand a chance. Sumner will see to that.”

Matt wrapped his hand over her knee. He prayed that was true, that he hadn’t signed their death warrants by taunting Sumner. Fear clutched at his heart at the thought of losing Allie. She’d said it perfectly before they’d left Hawaii—she



## LOOSE ENDS

couldn't breathe without Matt by her side. That's exactly how he felt. He wanted to clutch her to him, sink deep inside her heat, be so tightly bond together nothing could pull them apart. That's how his heart felt.

*Cut her loose and send her into hiding like the Kidwells? No way in hell.* The Kidwells were as good as dead. Sumner had said so himself. Allie wasn't leaving his side. He'd been told in the past that falling in love wasn't smart for an undercover agent. Gordie's relationship with Eva proved that. Falling in love with a fellow agent also ranked up there as one of the top ten forbidden on a special agent's list of no-nos. Two weeks ago Matt had lived by that creed. But then, two weeks ago he hadn't met Allie.

"Let us do our job." He slid a steady gaze between their bosses.

"All right," they finally replied together.

"How would you like to proceed from here?" Bob asked.

"With a few adjustments to the current plan," Matt replied. "After Allie and I make a couple of personal phone calls."

"Just keep the sex out of the public eye," Herb grumbled.

Allie gave a humorless laugh. "And yet days ago you all cultivated and encouraged that very thing."

"That's before we saw two undercover agents blasted all over the news," he snapped. "We don't care what you do behind closed doors. The rest is forbidden. The agency has a reputation."

"When it's convenient for them," Allie shot back.

Her boss jerked around to stare out the window. "Make

*LOOSE ENDS*

your calls. We're wasting time."

## CHAPTER 4

Allie's head still pounded and her stomach churned from the brief nearly one-way conversation she'd had with her mother. Furious was a mild way to put her mom's reaction to the video clip. The words still rang in her ears: "How low will you go," "Never been more embarrassed and ashamed," "A hoodlum," "Fucking in the hallway like a common street whore," "Nothing can justify this."

She was right—Allie couldn't utter one word in her defense. She ended the call with, "I have to go, Mom. I love you."

That garnered the super-guilt comment, "I love you, too, but I'm very disappointed."

## LOOSE ENDS

Matt hadn't fared any better. She'd heard a piece of his mother's tirade—"I thought I'd raised you better than that." That call ended the way hers had.

Their lectures put a bigger taboo on the whole sex in public thing than Herb or Bob ordering them to cease and desist. It was reckless behavior. And while it was true she and Matt had been cornered at that time, there was no excusing all the public fornicating they'd done on that brief Hawaiian interlude.

*But, damn, it'd sure been hot.*

Allie allowed herself a smile. They'd just have to find other ways to amuse themselves...and be more discreet at those times when lust overcame good judgment. They also still had a job to do. Fear of parental disillusionment or departmental edicts weren't going to stop them from doing it. As always, she and Matt would do anything and everything for the mission and to stay alive. They'd much rather have their families pissed off than grieving.

"Tell me that smile is for me." Matt nuzzled that extra-sensitive spot along her neck, just under her ear.

Allie arched into the caress, eyes closed, sigh filled with contentment. "Always." She felt the heat of his hand as it hovered over her breast. Her nipple tightened in anticipation of the caress.

"Sir? Ma'am?"

They glanced at the flight attendant hovering next to them. Her black hair was perched precariously on top of her head with a clip. Her pale features were drawn too tight for her

## LOOSE ENDS

age—bad facelift. That had to be one of the many things that had soured her disposition. She'd been eyeballing Matt and Allie since they boarded the flight to Vegas. Maybe she'd even seen them on the news and was waiting to catch them in the act.

“Yes?” they asked together.

“Please restore your seats to their upright position in preparation for landing.”

When they dutifully obeyed, the woman moved to her next target.

“As if the plane can't land until we do so,” Matt muttered.

Allie giggled, earning a glare from the mop-topped attendant. Matt wrapped his hand over her thigh, moving his fingers up to a hair's breadth from her pussy. She longed to cross her legs and trap his hand in place while she rode him to orgasm. But not only was this flight attendant extra diligent, this plane was smaller.

“Later,” he whispered against her ear.

Her smile widened. “I look forward to it.”

They were now fully entrenched in their undercover personas—Matteo Lombardi and Samantha Shaw. Other than clothing, nothing connected them to Matt Oliver and Allie Quinn. They'd made the switch in the SUV, then returned to the LAX terminal and booked a flight to Vegas. By now Sumner would have notified a man there to be on the lookout for them and report back. Petrocelli had most probably done the same thing. Herb and Bob should be with their small team in Vegas...waiting, watching.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

A new plan was in place, hoping it would provide a catalyst for other events. Matt and Allie were essentially alone, left to their wits and instincts to carry this through. Allie didn't know whether that made her energized or scared. Whichever it was, her heart beat a mile a minute...or maybe that was because Matt was beside her. For the first time in her career as a special agent, Allie doubted her ability to put the job first.

Matt laced his fingers through hers as the plane made its final approach. "You okay?" he asked softly.

She forced herself to nod. He couldn't know how she really felt. They needed their heads straight, their thoughts focused. Allie was hoping him being locked into work mode would help her stay there, too.

As the aircraft taxied to the jetway, she shoved Samantha Shaw front and center and told her to stay there. She watched the shift in Matt, too. Two federal agents may have stepped onto the flight at LAX, but an opportunistic call girl and a hard-as-nails mob guy walked off in Las Vegas.

Tucked up tighter than decency allowed, they made their way to baggage claim. His hand stayed on her ass the whole way, tickling the crack every few yards. It might be for show, but it still turned her on something fierce. Her clit swelled between her sopping labia, singing with the strides that rubbed it between them. He swung her before him in the baggage area, anchoring her back to his front with one arm while the ridge of his hard cock pressed into the cleft of her butt. No faking there—he was as turned on as she.

## LOOSE ENDS

“I’m going to be the envy of every woman here when they see what you’re packing.”

“Think they’ll notice?” He brushed her hair from her neck and bit gently.

Allie sucked in a sharp breath. “They won’t be able to help noticing.”

“Don’t worry, hot stuff. That eye is only for you.” Matt chuckled, dared to tweak her breast, and stepped away to grab the first suitcase. Allie snagged the next one right behind it. In next to no time, they were headed for the exit...and looking at two different limo drivers, both of whom held up signs for “Matteo Lombardi.” Looked like the game was on.

“Ooooh...you went all out for me. I love a man with flash and style, Teo.”

Matt pulled her to a stop and glanced from man to man. “I hate to disappoint you, but it wasn’t me.”

The drivers stepped forward, neither sparing the other a look.

Driver One motioned them to the exit. “With Mr. Sumner’s regards.”

Matt lifted his eyebrow toward the other driver.

The man tilted a nod his way. “Mr. Petrocelli has extended the courtesy of a proper welcome to our fair city.”

“I’m not too fond of Mr. Sumner.” Allie grabbed Matt’s hand and started toward Driver Two.

He yanked her back in place. “You don’t made decisions, understood? Your job is to please me...period.”

She clamped her mouth closed on a pout.

## LOOSE ENDS

Matt returned his attention to the men. “Please extend my thanks and regrets to Mr. Sumner. I’m sure he will understand why I’m hesitant at this time to get into a vehicle he’s sent.” He sliced his gaze to the other man. “Please tell Mr. Petrocelli that, while I appreciate his consideration, I don’t wish to be placed in an awkward situation.” He ended with a sharp pat to Allie’s ass. “Go.”

Chin up, still feigning that pout, she darted between the men and to the exit, suitcases rolling behind her. A taxi swooped up to them the second they were at the curb. She left her bags there, jerked open the back door, and flopped onto the seat. Arms crossed like a petulant child, she stared out the windshield, heart thudding. Had she been believable enough? Been too over the top?

The vehicle bounced when the trunk lid closed. Matt slipped in beside her as the driver slid behind the steering wheel.

“Galaxy Casino, and make sure you take the freeway. I don’t want a five-hour tour of the Strip,” he said, then wrapped his hot hand over her knee. A subtle brush of his thumb told her all was well.

She parted her thighs and shoved his hand to her crotch. “If we’d taken the limo, this could be yours right now.”

“It still could be. You don’t mind an audience. I’m sure our driver won’t mind. Maybe he’ll want to join in.”

The man’s dark eyes widened, but he kept his mouth shut and body forward.

Allie tsked and shoved him away.



## *LOOSE ENDS*

Matt hauled her against him, one arm anchoring her shoulders into the cove of his body. “Looks like someone needs an attitude adjustment. I’m giving you fair warning...once we get to our hotel room, expect to be over my knee. It’s time my belt and your bare ass got reacquainted.”

She gave him a sexy smile and danced her fingers up his inner thigh right to his balls. “Ooooh...I can hardly wait.”

Their driver’s hand dropped to his lap. She fought a triumphant smirk and crossed her legs to quell the ache Matt’s promise created. Sex with him was the only part of this charade that wouldn’t be phony. Them having a predilection for exhibitionism was a definite plus. Anyone watching would get an eyeful...and there was no doubt someone would be watching.

## CHAPTER 5

Allie let her mind play out the different scenarios they could face, while she watched Las Vegas roll by. Casinos hugged the ribbon of freeway. She wasn't a big fan of the city in daylight. It was dry, stark...lonely despite the multitude of people. Mid-afternoon in August made it feel more so. Blistering heat shimmered between the towering casinos. Night was when the place came alive, dressed up in millions of bright lights that made resisting her lure impossible. Though bustling during the day, everyone crawled out from their burrows to play at night.

They were headed to the Galaxy Hotel Casino at the Fremont Street Experience, both favorites of hers. The

## LOOSE ENDS

canopied portion of Fremont Street with its nightly laser show felt like a party all its own—five blocks of casinos, restaurants, vendors, and shops. The Galaxy's lure was a décor that gave the illusion of gambling under the stars. For their purposes, it helped that Petrocelli was a co-owner.

Matt had predicted a comped room would be waiting for them at the hotel. Since he'd also predicted Sumner and Petrocelli would send someone to the airport to offer them transportation, Allie expected his insight to continue to be correct. His level of knowledge into his subjects took her breath away, exciting her in ways she'd never imagined. Matt was the complete package—hot, sexy, intelligent, fun... She could go on and on.

*Faults?* She glanced his way, studying his profile. Though he had them, any she assigned to him were also ones she'd have to give herself.

A flash of black caught the corner of her eye. Without moving her head, she shifted her gaze to the window. Sumner's limo had followed them. Matt's gaze cut her way, then drifted over her shoulder. Facing forward, she again used her peripheral vision to see Petrocelli's limo on the other side. The game was most definitely on.

Heaving what she hoped looked like a sigh of contentment, Allie snuggled closer to Matt. One hand cupped her crotch, while his lips found their way to her ear lobe. She locked her sights onto the Petrocelli limo, not the easiest thing to do when a hot man was thumbing her clit through her pants. The limo driver never so much as glanced their way. That didn't mean

## *LOOSE ENDS*

that someone wasn't watching from the rear. With the dark glass covering the limo's passenger area, it was impossible to tell. It could even be Petrocelli himself. Within seconds of their display, the driver sped up and moved ahead.

Allie loosed a deep moan and swung herself astride Matt's lap. She now had a good view of the Sumner limo. Hot fingers swooped under her shirt, straight to her breasts. Matt toyed with her hard nipples through her bra while he licked his way up her throat. This limo driver wasn't so oblivious. He gaped at them, barely keeping his eye on traffic. Given Sumner's fear of flying, not to mention the bail order that kept him in New York, she and Matt could be reasonably certain any passenger onboard wasn't him.

Their taxi driver hit the gas in order to zip ahead and catch the upcoming exit. The Sumner limo hugged their ass the whole way. Obviously, the driver wasn't shy about letting them know they were being followed, or was too stupid to know any better. Allie grabbed Matt's head between her hands and pulled his face out of her bosom.

"Wish we'd taken one of those limos now?" she asked.

"Nope." He swooped his hands to her butt, pulling her crotch against his erection. "You know I don't like my lovin' rushed."

Allie's breath hitched when he thrust his cock against her. Their cab driver would be talking about this to anyone and everyone the second he dropped them off. That should help the plausibility of their cover.

Matt gave her ass a final squeeze, then hauled her off his

## LOOSE ENDS

lap. They were pulling up to the entrance of the Galaxy Hotel Casino, and Sumner's idiot of a driver was right behind him. He idled there as Matt paid the fare, finally edging away when they grabbed their suitcases and started inside.

"Shit like that makes me nervous as hell." Matt's voice was low near her ear.

She glanced at his reflection as they passed a decorative mirror in the faux white-gold marble lobby. Until that second, she never considered the implication of Sumner's limo dogging them—murder. Her lapse shocked her, but then she'd never expected a hit man to be bold enough to take them out in broad daylight from a high-profile limo among hundreds of witnesses. Where were those instincts she prided herself on? Lost in the throes of the love growing? Muddled in the fire of lust? Or was all of this completely out of her league? Whichever, the stumble had Allie second-guessing herself in ways that could be fatal.

\* \* \*

Staying in character and maintaining a cocksure attitude wasn't so easy when every muscle in Matt's body was locked in fight-or-flight mode. Something had gone wrong. Somehow he'd misjudged Sumner's response. He'd expected a postured threat, but he hadn't expected it to be so open. It wasn't something Sumner would do, not when he had so much to lose. He'd consider Matteo's words first, weighing options that wouldn't point a finger back his way. The limo sent would have been from a company—a gesture of presumed

## LOOSE ENDS

trust from Sumner to Teo—not an assassin.

That left Matt to conclude one thing—Sumner hadn't sent the limo. It had come from Petrocelli, too. He was trying to widen the rift between Teo and Sumner, to bring Matteo into his fold. How far would he go to do so? Or was this another last-minute change in plans by Matt's people to help stir the pot? He hated not knowing, hated second-guessing his knowledge of his target and what move to make next.

Smile plastered in place, Matt led Allie to registration. He'd felt the shift in her, too, at the overt threat. Tension tightened her muscles, stealing that Samantha Shaw sway. Questions poured from her wide brown eyes. He was losing her. Hell, he was losing himself trying to evaluate this latest twist.

“Checking in?” The clerk's smile was extra-bright against her leathery tan. It wasn't a nice look.

Matt fished his wallet from his back pocket. “Matteo Lombardi and Samantha Shaw, we have reservations.”

Inch-long blue nails clicked against the keyboard. Her smile didn't falter. Matt wondered if it'd been botoxed in place.

“Yes...here it is...a comped one-bedroom spa suite, courtesy of Galaxy Casino.”

At least he'd predicted that right. “There must be a mistake,” he said. “Ours was a single room with king bed.”

“No mistake, sir.” She tapped her monitor. “It was specifically requested by one of the owners...Mr. Petrocelli...a suite normally reserved for his family and

## LOOSE ENDS

friends. Everything including meals, room service, and mini-bar has been comped.”

Allie looped her arm through his. “Please, Teo. This is way better than the limo. Where’s the harm? You said you were thinking this could be a honeymoon. This would be a great way to start.”

He reached down and cupped her butt cheek. “Why not?” he said with a smile, then followed up with a squeeze to Allie’s ass.

Within minutes the bellman was escorting them up to a floor that required its own keycard to access. He and Allie might have played their parts well with the clerk, but wariness and tension still shimmered around them. Anyone watching for inconsistencies would pick up on it, and he didn’t doubt for a second Petrocelli had the suite wired for video surveillance.

When the elevator dinged, the bellman held the door for them, then pushed the luggage cart through and led them down the hallway. Dark green walls and carpet absorbed all sound, reflecting nothing back. Slender threads of red and gold swirled beneath their feet in no discernible pattern. Gold plaques beside cream-colored doors designated the room names. On this floor apparently room numbers weren’t allowed.

They stopped before a corner suite called “Midnight Gold.” When the bellman swung the door open, Matt and Allie stepped into the open room. Everything was smoky gray or black, edged in gold—furniture, fixtures, carpet. From the

## LOOSE ENDS

entrance there was a step down into a sunken living area. A black suede sectional surrounded a circular glass-topped table. To the left a small kitchenette and bar waited, apparently fully stocked from what Matt could see. There was one bathroom by the front door, another most probably off the bedroom to the right.

A blinking red light caught the corner of his eye—one of many smoke detectors. Sprinkler heads dotted the sparkling ceiling. It'd be easy to hide surveillance cameras among the safety paraphernalia.

“No draperies?” Allie asked as she pointed to the bank of curved windows making up the far wall.

The bellman pointed to a control panel by the door. “They darken as you wish. The designer wanted nothing to obscure the view.”

It was a magnificent one, Matt would admit. Even from this distance, he could see the town spread out, the mountains surrounding them. From oversized chairs of black suede or the bubbling hot tub nearby, you would watch the sun rise or set, glory in the display of lights over the valley, monitor an approaching thunderstorm.

“Shall I take these to the bedroom?” the young man asked.

Matt turned from the view. “No, thank you. We’ll take care of the luggage.” He slipped the man a twenty and escorted him to the door, double-locking it afterward.

Allie snagged the handle on her suitcases. “I think I’m going to take a shower and wash the travel off me.”

“Not so fast, hot stuff.” He loosened the buckle on his belt.



## LOOSE ENDS

“There’s that little matter of a spanking.”

A hint of a blush covered her face. Lust dilated her eyes as she dropped her gaze to his growing erection. They might be playing for their audience, but there was nothing fake about what they were going to do. And it might help them get their heads back in order. Hell, maybe she should spank him. The thought made him even harder.

“What do I have to do to make you change your mind?” Her voice purred as she stalked toward him. When she was within arm’s reach, Allie dropped to her knees and burrowed her face against his crotch.

Matt’s legs buckled with his groan. With one hand he cradled her head, the other fumbled to get his zipper down. Her tongue filled the gap as each link parted, hot fingers peeling his jeans and boxers away as she feathered up and down the opening. His cock brushed against her cheek, its weeping eye searching for her mouth. Allie tugged the clothing down his legs, nailing it to the floor so he could pull his feet free. He yanked his T-shirt over his head. Her fingernails raked over his washboard stomach in homage, around his aching dick, teasing but not touching, down his inner thighs until he quivered from want.

Allie nudged his feet further apart. “You are the most beautiful man I’ve ever met,” she whispered against his calf, then drew rapid circles upward with her tongue.

His breath caught when she reached his hard sac, then rushed out in a pained moan when she darted to the other leg and avoided his balls completely.

## LOOSE ENDS

“Poor baby,” she said softly. “Does this feel better?”

His body jerked when she cupped his sac. That tongue of hers lashed at the base of his cock, while she kneaded his balls. He widened his stance when he felt a wet finger probing his asshole. Eyes closed, head tossed back, he thrust into air. She squeezed his balls, pushing against the puckered entrance at the same time. Hot breath scored the head of his cock. It felt like every ounce of cum he'd ever produced was dammed in his testicles, waiting for release. She licked a circle around the crown, dug her tongue in the slit at the top.

“Oh...please,” he begged on a gasp.

Hands flexed against her head, he mindlessly tried to get her mouth where he needed. One thrust of her finger beyond the tight anal ring nearly brought Matt to his knees. She pressed against his prostate. A groan tore from his throat. Then she sucked him deep into her mouth. White sparks exploded behind his eyelids, traveling outward to score his body in fire as she pumped his ass, massaged his balls, and sucked him hard. He fucked her mouth like a madman, wanting to come, wanting it to last forever.

A tickle coiled in his lower back, then burst through his cock like a bolt of lightning. Jets of cum spurted from him in hot waves until finally the last drop drained. His body sagged against his gasps for breath. Gazing through half-closed eyelids, he watched Allie dot kisses around his crotch. Emotion overwhelmed him. He wanted to haul her against him and kiss her until they were both senseless.

As he reached to do so, Allie eased back and away. His

## *LOOSE ENDS*

belt buckle tinkled as she grabbed it. Leather hissed when she pulled it through the loops. He watched her double it over. Was she going to use it on him? His cock lifted its head to watch, too. Matt couldn't believe he was hard again. He'd swear she'd taken it all out of him.

She rolled back to her heels before him. Belt draped across her palms, she offered it up to him. "I'll take that spanking now...sir."

Matt wrapped his hand around it. "I'm not sure if it will be my pleasure...or yours."

A naughty smile lifted one side of her mouth. "Mutual, I'll bet."

"Clothes off...now. But leave the panties on for me."

## CHAPTER 6

Allie watched Matt walk to the sectional sofa as she stripped her clothes off. Her clit thrummed with anticipation. Her ass warmed at that remembered feeling of him spanking her. Just him saying the word was enough to make her come. That and the fact she knew they were being watched made for a powerful aphrodisiac. Crazy as it sounded, this was exactly what she'd needed to reset her mind and chase away the strangling fear.

Matt sat down and tapped his belt against his knee. "I'm waiting."

She tried not to run to him. It wasn't easy, not when she wanted this—him—as much as she did. Slow steps brought

## LOOSE ENDS

her to his side. She slithered into place over his lap.

“Oh, please, don’t take down my panties.” Her voice was low and sultry, belying her words.

He shoved his hand inside and cupped her sopping pussy. “Now why don’t I believe you?” He traced a finger down her slit and circled her clit.

Allie’s lips parted on a moan.

“That’s what I thought,” he said, circling once more. “I’m going to fuck you here.” He thrust two fingers into her cunt. “And here.” His thumb pierced her anal ring, sending her libido into overload. “I’ll push those knees of yours into your tits and give you a fucking like you’ve never had.” His little finger toyed with her clit. “You want that, baby, don’t you?”

“Yes, Teo,” she gasped out. “I want it bad.”

“After...”

“Please don’t make me say it.”

He yanked his hand free and gave her a hard spank. “Say it!” He added another.

Allie arched her back and lifted her ass for more. “Pull down my panties and spank me.”

“Good girl.” He rained hand swats from one cheek to the other, warming her bottom, sending blood pulsing to her aching clit, and still her panties remained in place.

She wiggled against his thigh, groaning with every smack he delivered. Then he tugged her panties up tight in the crack, creating the perfect sling for her clit. Allie couldn’t help it. Shoving her hand beneath her, she pressed her fingers right where she needed. Orgasm rippled through her.

## LOOSE ENDS

Matt added a hard spank and left his palm on her ass. “Tell me you didn’t just make yourself come.”

“I...I did. I couldn’t help it.”

“Obviously we need to do something with those hands of yours.” Grabbing her waist, he pulled her upright. “Go into the bedroom right now. By the time I get in there, I want you facedown with a pile of pillows lifting that pretty little rear of yours.”

Like the dutiful call girl she was supposed to be—and the horny woman she truly was—Allie hurried to do as he ordered. By the time he walked in a few minutes later, she was positioned bottom up on a mound of pillows in the center of the king-sized bed.

“That’s what I like to see”—the mattress dipped with his weight—“a beautiful woman at my mercy. I’m going to enjoy every minute of this.”

So would she.

Using clothing he’d taken from the suitcases—T-shirts, bras, pants—he tied her spread-eagle. Her ass was at his disposal, her pussy wide open for him to see. He knelt between her legs and flashed his tongue over her clit. Allie jerked against her bindings. A chuckle rumbled in his throat seconds before he sucked the swollen bud between his lips, yanking the orgasm out of her. She trembled with the climax that rattled her bones, then collapsed into place.

Matt’s fingers dug into her hips. She felt his cock brush against her thigh a heartbeat before it plunged deep into her.

“Oh...God!”

## LOOSE ENDS

He grunted a response, pushing slow thrusts into her G-spot. Her body tightened as the sensation pulled her to the top again. He felt like stone inside, pounding and pounding, stretching her further than she'd thought possible. Matt reached around, capturing her clitoris between his fingers. He pinched and pulled while he fucked her harder, faster, deeper. Again she came, a slave to passion and definitely not willing to be freed. As the moment waned, he eased from her without coming.

The bed bounced as he left it. She heard the tinkle of the buckle as he retrieved his belt. Then the leather caressed her flesh.

She lifted her head on a moan as he danced the belt up the inside of one leg and down the other. Over her back, her arms, her ass. Heat remained in its wake. Her clit felt like it'd never come—wet, pulsing.

“Please,” she begged.

Matt didn't hesitate. A stroke licked fire to her extremities. A second followed. Then another. Slow. Methodical. Leaving no part of her bottom untouched.

She wiggled against the bindings, desperate for more, aching to rub her clit against something, anything. And still he spanked her. Was his cock harder? Did it drip from his own need to come? How could he keep from fucking her?

He sat astride her waist now, facing backward as the strokes came faster, harder. Her ass was on fire...so was the rest of her. Then he alternated five lashes against one butt cheek, then the other. Over and over. Just when she thought

## LOOSE ENDS

she'd die if she couldn't come, Matt stopped.

"I'm going to release you now. But you aren't allowed to move. Keep your hips on those pillows...and your hands out of your pussy. Understand?"

Allie managed a nod, each breath a short pant as she wondered what he'd do next.

"Good girl," he praised when she stayed in place.

He straddled her again and ran his hand down to her pussy. "God, baby, you're wet. Ever had your clit spanked?"

"No." It almost came out as a whimper. "Does it...hurt?"

"You tell me." He tapped the belt lightly against her.

Her clit sighed with the contact. "Oh, God, Matt..eo." She swallowed the near-error. "More!"

Each gentle lick of the leather raised her higher, physically, orgasmically. She wadded the bedspread in her fists and rode the pillows into climax.

Matt rolled her to her back. Sated as she was, she could barely move.

"Don't fade on me now, hot stuff."

The tear of a condom package punctuated his sentence. Cold lube touched her anus. He gently pushed her knees into her chest. She clutched his shoulders, gasping as his cock head breached the tight ring. He was in deep. Each pulse of his dick echoed through her.

Matt captured her lips in a slow kiss, sealing them further. He wedged his thumb between them, urging her clitoris back to life. It had no trouble obeying. Allie draped her legs over his shoulders, groaning with him over the deeper penetration.



## *LOOSE ENDS*

She rocked into his thrusts, reveling in the feel of his body linked with hers. And when they came together, it was all she could do to keep from telling him how she really felt.

He butted his forehead to hers. “Ready for that shower now?”

Allie hugged him and buried her face in his neck to hide a sudden rush of tears. “Only if there’s room for two.”

“We’ll make room, sweetheart,” he whispered into her ear.

## CHAPTER 7

The invitation to join Simon Petrocelli for dinner didn't take long in coming. Matt and Allie had just finished their shower and were debating between the hot tub or a quick nap when the phone call came on Matteo's cell. It was the opening Matt had been hoping for, but he still couldn't seem too anxious. Petrocelli had to believe he was torn in his decision to leave Sumner.

Any attack of nerves had been swallowed up by the afternoon of sex. Petrocelli most definitely had gotten a good show. He couldn't doubt they were a couple, hopefully erasing any conjecture otherwise.

It was nearly eight o'clock when they met him for dinner.

## *LOOSE ENDS*

Even in Vegas in the smothering August heat there were restaurants that had a dress code. A quick trip to the outlet stores had given Matt and Allie what they needed. The suit choked Matt. He prayed the air conditioning in this upscale joint was set to arctic. Allie, on the other hand, looked like an oasis spring. The blue silk kissed her curves and floated with her every step. No plunging neckline displayed her cleavage. No skimpy hemline to play peek-a-boo with her nether regions. She was simple, understated class.

Petrocelli arrived at Cachet on their heels, almost as if he waited to see them there before exiting his limo. Matt had seen the man many times over the course of his association with Sumner. The man never failed to impress him. Matt hoped he looked half as good in twenty years. Like fine wine, Petrocelli had aged very well, looking better now than he had in his younger years, judging from the few old photos Matt had seen on the internet. Gray peppered his black hair, but his eyebrows had remained dark. Women always took a second look...or more. He quietly owned a room the minute he stepped into it. His demeanor garnered respect without him having to ask for it, or perhaps it was the unspoken knowledge of information he possessed that earned him that right. Matt had wanted Petrocelli to be one of the good guys. Believing he wasn't had been more than disappointing.

He passed a slow, appreciative eye over Allie's figure as he shook Matt's hand. "Teo, it's good to see you again."

"You as well, sir."

Then he took Allie fingers and lifted them to his lips. "And

## LOOSE ENDS

you must be the infamous Samantha Shaw. I didn't anticipate you having such classic beauty. That scathing video didn't do you justice."

She let him have his moment with her hand before slowly extricating it. "No doubt any rumors you may have heard were crass and unflattering. If any were about my profession, I can assure you they were true. However"—she gave him a dazzling smile—"having met Matteo, those days and that job are behind me."

That lifted Petrocelli's eyebrow. "Really? Hard to believe you've managed to corral this elusive man."

Allie bathed that smile over him. "Perhaps he's the one who corralled me."

"Then I would say he's captured a prize to envy." He inclined a regal nod toward her before looking back at Matt. "Our table will be ready. It's a corner booth in the back that will give us an excellent view of the room. No one need sit with one's back to any door."

Even as he said the words, the maitre d' appeared at his side to escort them. Petrocelli took the lead, leaving Matt in the vulnerable rear—a position that raised the hairs on his neck. The dining room was awash with candlelight. Despite the crowd, conversations were hushed, intimate. This was a place for lovers and business. Even the waiters zipped in and out with little sound. The décor was burgundy and black. *It would hide bloodstains well.* The errant thought rattled Matt's nerves.

They slid into the burgundy leather booth, Allie between

## LOOSE ENDS

them. The maitre d' snapped the black linen napkins over their laps, then popped the cork on the bottle of merlot already there and awaited Petrocelli's approval. Once given, the man filled their wineglasses, did an about-face, and walked away.

Petrocelli steepled his hands on the table. "Obviously you see the importance of making other alliances, Teo."

Matt kept his hands in plain view as well. "If you're referring to the earlier incident with Mr. Sumner's limo driver—"

"I'm referring to the recent deaths of Gordon and Eva Kidwell."

Allie drew in a sharp breath through her nose. Matt let the moment hover. Obviously, his people had been successful in faking the deaths and subsequently reporting it to the media.

"I wasn't aware of that," Matt said.

"I take it you haven't seen the news today."

"No," Allie replied for them. "We were occupied."

Petrocelli glanced her way. "I see." His gaze shifted back to Matt. "You know you'll be next on Sumner's list of targets. Had you been foolish enough to take his limo earlier, the police would be plucking your remains from the desert...some day."

"I refuse to believe he'd do that," Matt insisted. "I've worked for him for years."

"Which is exactly why he would." Petrocelli tapped his index finger on the table and eased back. "Don't be stupid, Matteo."

"I suppose you want to offer me full protection."

## *LOOSE ENDS*

He gave a single nod.

“Why? What’s in it for you?”

“I prize loyalty.”

“So does Sumner,” he replied. “How do I know that you won’t turn on me, too?”

Petrocelli smiled. “Then you do admit he’s turned on you.”

Matt scrubbed his hand down his face. “I don’t know what to think.”

“Obviously you do, or you wouldn’t have accepted the suite from me. Please don’t insult me by playing games, Teo.”

It was time to make their move, take the door opening. Still, Matt wanted it to seem like he was conflicted. He tossed his napkin onto the table. “Excuse me. I need to use the facilities.”

Quick strides took him to a hallway near the kitchen. He darted inside the men’s room, waited what he considered the appropriate amount of time, washed his hands, and swung open the door to leave. He saw the movement, the glint of light on metal too late.

\* \* \*

“What about you, Ms. Shaw?”

Allie lifted her wineglass and took a sip. Matt hadn’t gotten two steps away before Petrocelli had turned his attention to her. It was the intensity in his eyes that got to her, like he really believed what he was doing. Looking into them, it was hard to believe his motives weren’t good and pure. She did her best not to make eye contact. She focused instead on

## LOOSE ENDS

his nose, his forehead, his mouth, or chin, anything but those brown eyes.

“What do you mean?”

One arm draped on the booth behind her as he bracketed her body. “Aren’t you concerned for your safety?”

She shrugged and set her glass back. “Teo will keep me safe.”

He gave a soft laugh. “And who will keep him safe?” He dusted his fingers over her shoulder. Goose bumps flared of their own volition. “What’s in it for you, Samantha?”

“I...I don’t know what you mean.” She wished he’d stop playing with her shoulder. It unnerved her in ways it shouldn’t.

“A man like Matteo Lombardi isn’t for you, and you know it. You’re a sensible woman looking to get ahead. A beautiful woman who deserves beautiful, expensive things.” His free hand dropped to her thigh, slowly peeling her dress up. “I can offer you anything and everything you’d ever want.”

Allie focused on everything around her—the pop of a champagne cork in the far corner of the place, muffled conversations, the clink of dishes—not the inexplicable heat his hand generated. She clamped her fingers around his wrist before his fingers could travel any further up her thigh. “Don’t...please.”

“I’m sorry. I forgot myself.” He moved away.

“You call yourself Teo’s friend and do that?” She scowled. “I don’t think we’ll be—”

A woman’s scream cut her off. Heads snapped around. The

## LOOSE ENDS

maitre d' rushed their table.

“Sir...the other gentleman in your party—”

Allie jumped up before he could finish his sentence. A busboy snagged her arm and led her toward the restrooms. She saw the blood smeared on the wall first, then fell to her knees beside Matt. Fear clawed at her throat, squeezed her heart so hard she couldn't breathe. It was a gunshot she'd heard, not a champagne cork.

“Oh, my God,” she gasped out, feathering her fingers over his face.

He blinked up at her and then over her shoulder where Petrocelli hovered with the maitre d'.

“We've called 9-1-1,” the man said.

“What happened?” Petrocelli demanded to know.

Matt pulled in hard breaths. One bloodied hand cupped Allie's face. He wiped at the track of her tears, only to have a new stream replace that one.

“Stupid mistake,” he managed to say. “Got me as I was leaving the men's room. I ducked too late. Took a hit to the shoulder. I think it's just a graze, but it hurts like hell.”

She glanced at the suit jacket. The left shoulder padding was ripped and bloodied at the top. She could see gunshot residue in the lining. The shooter had gotten up close and personal. If Matt hadn't ducked, he'd be dead right now.

Petrocelli wrapped his hand around Allie's elbow and tried to tug her to her feet. “We need to get you somewhere safe. My house is secure.”

“No!” She jerked free. She couldn't leave Matt, couldn't



## LOOSE ENDS

just walk out while he lay there bleeding.

“Go,” Matt whispered.

“No...I go with you.” She loved him. There was no place other than by his side.

\* \* \*

“Have you lost your fucking mind?”

Allie resisted the urge to clamp her hands over her ears. When Herb wasn't yelling, Bob was.

“Do you know how long we've waited to get inside Petrocelli's organization?” Bob chimed in. “You had one chance to grab it. Why the hell didn't you?”

“I couldn't leave Matt.”

Herb's complexion darkened with rage. “Your job is to protect the mission by any and all means possible. Why? Why now of all times—”

“Leave her alone,” Matt said from the hospital bed. He was weak, but his voice still said “don't fuck with us.”

He reached for Allie's hand. When she grasped his, he pulled her against his good side. He was lucky. The bullet was across the shoulder, needing stitches and nothing more. He was still going to be hurting and vulnerable for a short while.

“I wouldn't have left her either,” he said, and followed the words with a kiss to her forehead.

“Fuck!” Bob smacked his fist into bedside table, knocking the water pitcher to the floor. “They're *in love*.” The words were hurled in a sickly-sweet sneer. “Great timing. After all we've got invested, you two go and screw it up. Now what?”

## LOOSE ENDS

What the fuck do we do now?"

Allie blinked back a rush of tears. It was her fault. She'd done the unpardonable—fallen in love and jeopardized a case Matt had devoted two years of his life to investigating. If not for her...

She pulled up and faced their superiors. "I can fix this. I can get us back on track."

Herb jammed his fists onto his hips. "Then you'd better do it fast. Everything we've set up is going to hell in a hand basket right now."

"I'll take care it." She bent down to Matt, dropping a kiss to his lips. The words didn't need to be said. The love was there, but there was also that nasty business of doing their jobs. All the love in the world wouldn't survive if that were left hanging between them.

Pulling in a deep breath to steel her resolve, Allie fished Matt's cell phone from her purse and pressed redial to Petrocelli's number. No one dared mention this unpardonable sin—using the cell phone in the hospital.

He answered on the first ring. "Yes?"

"This is Samantha Shaw. Teo and I...we've decided your protection is a wise idea."

"I see," he said. "And what will I get in return?"

Allie frowned. "What will you get?"

"Yes...from you. I will, of course, have Matteo's unquestioned loyalty. But, after tonight, I think I'm going to need something from you."

Allie understood all too well. She stared down at Matt, at

## LOOSE ENDS

the man she loved, the man who'd given up so much to put a criminal behind bars. What did one more taboo matter?

"Me," she told Petrocelli. "If you help us...you get me."

Matt squeezed his eyes shut. His jaw clenched. Doing their job had never been more gut-wrenching.

"An intriguing trade," Petrocelli replied. "Someone will be there shortly."

"It's done," she told them all as she ended the call. *My final descent into hell.*

Herb and Bob grumbled something and had the decency to finally shut up and leave. Matt patted the space beside him and lifted his arm in invitation. Allie did the only thing left to do—she curled into the cove of his body and prayed they and their new love could somehow survive.

## CAITLYN WILLOWS

Caitlyn Willows is the pseudonym for award-winning author Catherine Snodgrass, who wanted to flex her writing muscles in the erotica genre. Readers will find the same quality from “Caitlyn” that they have come to expect from “Catherine,” but the stories will be more over-the-top and more steamy. Always they will be action-filled...in more ways than one.

Caitlyn Willows’s email address is:  
caitlyn@caitlynwillows.com

\* \* \*

***Don’t miss A Real Man,  
(Book IV in the Teamwork Series)  
by Caitlyn Willows,  
available May, 2007 at AmberHeat.com!***

*FBI agents Allie Quinn and Matt Oliver have a reputation for doing whatever it takes to stay alive and get the job done. But doing whatever it takes to complete an undercover mission suddenly holds new meaning to a man in love with his partner—a partner he now has to share with another man!*

# AMBER QUILL PRESS, LLC

## HOME OF AMBER HEAT!

QUALITY EROTIC FICTION  
IN BOTH PRINT AND ELECTRONIC FORMATS

ACTION/ADVENTURE

SUSPENSE/THRILLER

SCIENCE FICTION

PARANORMAL

ALTERNATIVE

MYSTERY

ROMANCE

HORROR

DARK FANTASY

FANTASY

CONTEMPORARY

HISTORICAL

AND MORE...

**BUY DIRECT AND SAVE**  
<http://www.amberheat.com>