



MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S STEAM
HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

ONE NIGHT ON A BALCONY
SAMANTHA LUCAS

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One Night on a Balcony

Samantha Lucas

Dedication

To Art and Terri, Karen and Wendy, Doug and Howard, Chariya and Nancy, Carlos and Pancho and to the summer of 1985. Thanks for the memories.

Chapter One

Naked. Sweaty. Sex.

Jill had been spending far too much time thinking about it since Cole Adams moved in across the hall, but right now she felt like the worst kind of voyeur—not that she supposed there was a good kind—as she sat in her darkened kitchen, watching through the screened back door as a nude, muscled Cole rammed his hard cock into the body of a very beautiful redhead on their shared balcony. Jill decided to call her Ginger, because it seemed wrong not to have a name for someone you’d seen without their clothes on. As Ginger ratcheted up the moans, Jill felt herself growing wet, achy and incredibly needy. These conditions were becoming a regular feature in her life.

“I wanna suck you, Cole.”

Rough laughter was followed by a grunted, “By all means, sweetheart.”

Jill’s eyes bulged as Cole leaned back against the banister, naked and hard and in all his very large glory. She could almost taste him. She surprised herself with how very much she wanted to. Pressing herself against the door, she was careful to keep her head in shadows. Not that she thought they had enough wits left between them to look around and see her, but in a situation like this, safe was definitely better than sorry. She blinked twice. Not that she’d ever been in a situation like this before, but come on, there was something to be said for common sense.

Now on her knees, Ginger clutched Cole's hips as her mouth slid over him. Cole moaned and gripped the rail with fervor. Even from her place hidden in the kitchen, Jill heard every slurp and moan as Ginger ate at him enthusiastically until Jill felt her toes curl. Every time Ginger slid her mouth off Cole, leaving his cock wet in the moonlight, Jill fought the urge to rise on tiptoes for a better look.

"Sweetheart, I'm gonna come if you don't stop."

Ginger moaned, pouted, then swallowed Cole once more.

Cole responded, voice somewhat strained, "Fine, honey, but don't blame me when this is over real quick."

"Mm-hm," Ginger murmured around Cole's shaft.

Ginger licked Cole's balls, grabbed his cock and gave it a squeeze before she stood back up. Jill felt as if she'd run ten blocks. Of course, the only reason she could think of for running ten blocks would be if she'd missed the ice-cream man and had a major craving for a fifty-fifty bar.

As she sank lower on the chipped linoleum and deeper in shadow, she kept her attention riveted on Act Two being executed right in front of her. Cole slipped his fingers deep inside Ginger, whose breath seemed to stop. Then he slowly slid the length of her body and nuzzled her mound with his mouth.

"Your goatee's scratchin' me, honey."

Cole stopped long enough to raise his gaze to hers. "That a problem for you, sweetheart?"

Ginger panted, her fingers working her clit in desperation where Cole's mouth had been. "Nu-uh."

"Didn't think so."

Jill didn't think it would be a problem either, in fact she rather liked the idea of Cole's goatee coated in her juices when he finished.

Who are you? Jill asked herself. She honestly wondered why on earth she wasn't feeling awfully ashamed of her little voyeuristic escapade. Of course, if the duo on the balcony didn't want their sex life to be a public affair, then maybe they should have thought for a half a second before putting on a public show. She shook her head. That was hardly the point.

Ginger wrapped her leg around Cole's neck. Jill had no idea sex required a background in gymnastics. Now she was wishing she'd stuck with it, despite the pommel horse incident. She found herself mildly worried for Ginger's safety, as neither of them seemed to care that they were hanging off a balcony two stories above the ground. She also worried about the well-being of her geraniums that filled the window boxes she had attached to the balcony railing. She supposed so long as none of them fell, they'd be all right.

"Ooooh, yeah, Cole. Right there, baby."

A second later, Ginger came. Jill knew this because she started chanting, "God, Cole, I'm coming," repeatedly, as if Cole needed a play-by-play. *Okay, so why did Ginger get to come and Cole didn't?* Somehow the division of labor didn't seem exactly fair.

"Fuck me, Cole."

Jill's eyebrows rose. *Ginger's bossy.*

Unkind though it was, she took some pleasure in this. She folded her arms, then quickly became engrossed as Cole grabbed his thick hard cock, sheathed in latex. He stroked it before once again sliding it into his current girlfriend. *Painfully slow*, Jill moaned internally, but she guessed no one was asking her. She did, however, start wondering why she'd never rented a porn flick before. *Probably because watching porn alone in the dark is pathetic.* Still, suddenly the thought wasn't nearly as

revolting. In fact, it bordered on fascinating. *What in God's name has come over you?*

She would have thought maybe sex deprivation, but could someone be deprived from something they'd never actually tried before? She wasn't sure—until this moment she hadn't even been sure she'd ever want to try it. The child who'd seen way too much had first turned into the adult who had no interest and now seemed to be turning into a middle-aged hoyden. Right now, with the way her body was reacting to the visual stimuli, she was thinking of sex in a whole new light.

Okay, so maybe thirty-three wasn't quite middle-aged, but it was incredibly old to still be a virgin. Unless of course you were thinking of becoming a nun. Which she wasn't.

Man, the guy's got a great ass.

She sucked in her top lip with a little too much enthusiasm and started choking on saliva she swallowed the wrong way in the process. Sinking all the way to the floor, she prayed to God they wouldn't hear her. It was early June and she often left the back door open at night to welcome the cool night air. Since it was around three in the morning—outside of an occasional cricket, grunts, groaning and sound of flesh slapping against flesh coming from her balcony—it was dead silent out there, making her choking all the more evident.

She waited, hunched in silence after the choking fit passed. Incredibly, the love duo didn't even seem to miss a beat. Ginger groaned, leaning back over the balcony rail and Jill's geraniums as Cole sucked her erect nipple into his mouth. Jill unconsciously pressed hers between thumb and forefinger and moaned without forethought. Slapping a hand over her mouth, she realized the two outside were way too wrapped up in one another to notice her and she released a sigh of relief. *Heart*

palpitations are the least you deserve for being a snoopy little insomniac in the first place.

Of course, in her defense, she had been heading to the balcony she shared with Cole—who, by the way, she never even knew used it—to enjoy the spring night and the heady scent of night-blooming jasmine when she'd come across her own personal human sexuality exhibition. Although any decent person would have turned around and gone back to bed, Jill had been instantly captivated.

“Oh God, Cole. Fuck me harder.”

Cole growled in response, slid his hands under Ginger's bare ass and pulled her harder against him. Jill slid her hand inside her plain cotton panties, white with a pink bow—*Yeah, yeah, like an eight-year-old. Let's not go there*—and shivered at how wet she was. Knowing it was wrong on so many levels, she still positioned herself in shadow along the kitchen wall where she could get a good view, but for the most part stay out of sight. She dipped her finger inside, spreading her juices over her labia, holding her breath, not making a sound, wondering how in the hell she could have forgotten how good this felt.

One palm flat against the white semi-gloss, the other circled, dipped and massaged until she was panting. Watching Cole's cock made her even wetter. She imagined what it might feel like if he was sliding in and out of her. This wasn't the first fantasy she'd had about her hunky neighbor since he'd moved in three months ago. Every time the man came home on his Harley Fatboy she wondered what it would feel like to have him ride *her*, to have those muscled thighs entwined with hers. Wondered how hot his mouth was, what it would feel like to have his tongue lave her nipples. *God.*

She was having positively wicked thoughts about the man. Not only had she never had these kind of thoughts about another man, she'd

never had thoughts like these at all. Not once while standing at the checkout line had an article entitled “Best Sex Ever!” attracted her attention. Not once while she enjoyed a corn dog on the pier had the surfers in their wet gear—or out of it—ever appealed to her. Not once had she ever had an erotic dream. Romance novels made no sense to her, romantic movies went completely over her head—primarily because she could never suspend her personal beliefs long enough to buy into the romantic garbage the writers and directors were shoveling.

Not once. Not ever. Not until Cole Adams moved in next door. In fact, Jill had grown so content with her brokenness, she hadn’t been overly worried about her lack of sexual interest in anything—until Cole.

She still didn’t worry about lack of interest, though now she worried about being a perv.

“Oh God!” For a second Jill wasn’t certain if that had been her or Ginger.

The moonlight spilled over Cole’s shoulders spotlighting the tattoo of a leopard spanning his shoulder and upper back. She liked to watch that leopard dance and play across Cole’s muscles while he worked on his bike in the street below her bedroom window, his skin beaded with sweat.

And ooh baby, the man has muscles on muscles.

Thankfully, however, he didn’t look like the body builders she’d grown up around down on Venice beach, grotesquely disfigured as they all fought for the biggest pecs. *Gross.*

It seemed to her that Cole had come by all that muscle naturally. She longed to touch it, touch him, but in the three months they lived side by side she had never found the courage to even speak to the man and she didn’t think it would make a very good first impression for her to say, “Hi. I’m Jill, your neighbor. Can I play with your leopard?”

Of course, getting caught watching him fuck probably wouldn't make a very good first impression, either. Somehow, though, over the past three months, she'd managed to build quite a fantasy world around Cole Adams—not that he had ever once encouraged her. He smiled politely at her when they passed one another on the stairs, but that was about it. He'd laugh himself silly if he knew she dreamt about him. If he knew she was watching him now, he'd probably be furious.

“Cole, you fuck like we're gonna die or something. It's never been like this before.”

Cole, you fuck like we're gonna die or something. Jill mocked the words silently, but quickly forgot the sharp burst of jealousy as Cole moved Ginger, smashing her ass against Jill's metal screen security door. Ginger's white flesh pressed against all those little metal holes while the door damn near rattled off its hinges. Jill was so close to coming, herself, that she couldn't even laugh at the thought of Ginger walking around with little round indents on her ass.

She couldn't see Cole's cock anymore, or his ass, just a slice of muscular thigh and a hip, but the breeze picked up his aftershave. Momentarily overpowering the scent of pure, unbridled sex, a burst of spruce and musk wafted across her senses while she breathed it in with shuddering gulps. Biting her lip and holding in her groans, she dipped her finger back inside, as Cole bit down into Ginger's shoulder. Ginger yelped, then moaned. For a flash, Jill thought Cole was looking right at her, his eyes so dark they almost glowed, but then his lids closed and he rammed harder against her door. Within seconds of that, Ginger screamed. Jill made one last pass at her clit and came as Cole growled out his own completion.

Dropping her head back carelessly, she rubbed a tender spot when it hit the wall. Outside, Ginger continued to whimper and Cole gathered

her up into his arms, ravaging her mouth one last time as if he'd die without her taste on his lips. Jill's heart squeezed tight. When she was a kid she'd wondered if a man could kiss like that, as if his entire world was encompassed in the mouth and body of the woman he kissed and nothing existed beyond the moment. She shuddered, remembering all the lousy kisses she'd fended off over the years. Drunk boyfriends of her sisters', mostly. She was eight the first time a guy tried to grab her and nine when she decided she'd never let a guy touch her anywhere. *Ever.*

She pulled her hand out of her panties. Lowering her big purple tee and reeling from a barrage of emotions, she decided to stay on the floor for a while. Recovering from a fairly intense orgasm while assimilating the fact that she'd spied on two people fucking on her balcony—sounds, sights, smells and all—she discovered maybe the touch of a man didn't always have to feel slimy. Maybe, if it was the right man, she'd even enjoy it.

Cole had different women in and out of his place all the time. She couldn't imagine him ever fantasizing about a woman. If he wanted one, he probably said, "Hey, baby, wanna fuck?" and she'd be all, "Oooh" and "Aaah" and "Me?" Then voila, balcony porn. More than worlds apart from where she lived. That was galaxies apart.

Slowly regaining her senses, she considered still sitting outside for a while, after they cleared out. She wasn't going to be able to sleep anyway; she knew that from experience. She was certain her geraniums would need some type of TLC after all that, and she did have a primo lounge out there. *Big enough for two, even though there's only one of me.*

She sighed. Sitting in the dark, recovering from a self-inflicted O, trying to come to grips with the fact that it was probably the only kind she'd ever have, she watched the shadow of moonlight flicker on the floor as the breeze moved the kitchen curtains, waiting for the nocturnal

bangers to head back inside. She melted with relief when she finally heard a breathy, “Come to bed, Cole,” only to have the knot reform in her chest when Ginger added on a purr, “Let’s do it again.” Cole kissed her. Jill sulked.

Once they were gone, she’d apologize to her geraniums and watch the stars for a while. What else was she going to do, go inside and masturbate again? The idea intrigued her but she shoved it aside. She was very good at shoving thoughts aside. In many ways, it was her forté.

Her gaze was focused on the hem of her tee, fingers playing along the edge, when a sound pulled her attention up to the back door. She realized belatedly it had been the sound of knuckles rapping twice on the doorframe. When she looked up she met Cole’s dark eyes head on.

“Next time join us, brown eyes.” His smile incinerated her. In the space of a second, he was gone. She heard his back door click shut.

“Oh, someone please fucking shoot me.” Jill’s head met the linoleum with a thud, her only hope, painless death before dawn.

Chapter Two

As predicted, Jill did not sleep one minute of the entire night. However, how much of that she could blame on her usual insomnia and how much was Cole Adams-induced she couldn't tell. Looking in the mirror, she added some extra blusher to her pale cheeks and extra concealer to the dark circles beneath her bloodshot eyes. Fixing the white apron over her navy skirt, she moved towards the back door with only one comforting thought—Cole Adams was as much of a night owl as she, so there was no way in hell he'd be up yet.

Even so, she didn't want to take any chances this morning, so she'd feed her birds later, water the plants at some point before they died and in general stay inside her own apartment until the memory of what she'd done faded. Ten or twenty years ought to do it.

After locking the security screen, she got down about three steps when she heard the deep, gravelly voice coming from behind her, seemingly out of thin air. As the earth started spinning too fast, she did the only intelligent thing—she gripped the banister for dear life.

“So, was it good for you, brown eyes?”

Jill figured she had a few choices here. She'd tried cowardice last night and gotten caught in the act. There was no need to be rude—she deserved that obnoxious little comment and then some. So, drawing a deep breath, she turned to face Cole like the adult she enjoyed pretending to be, only to find him stretched out on her lounge, facing

away from the apartment, which was what had kept him hidden from view.

“That’s mine.”

She sounded like a pouty four-year-old, and the fact that Cole only smiled at her somehow made it worse. “Sorry, hon. I thought that after last night we’d moved to the furniture-sharing portion of this relationship.”

“We don’t have a relationship,” she snapped, knowing it made her sound like a prudish schoolmarm. Rolling her eyes, she came back up the three stairs and bravely met Cole’s laughing eyes.

Blue eyes that reflected the sky and the sea and... Oh shut up.

“Okay, look, what I did last night was...” she scratched her head, then shook her hands out by her hips, “...inexcusable. I have no idea what got into me, and if you want to lie in my chaise, go ahead. Now, I’m late for work.” She took two steps down this time before stopping. She didn’t turn around because she couldn’t take another moment of looking at Cole Adams, his short blond hair bed-ruffled, his shirtless chest sunbathed and his damn hard-on tenting his work-out shorts. She squeezed her eyes tight, not believing she was actually having this conversation. “Don’t have sex on it, please.”

She swore to God she heard that stupid man snickering at her as she fled.

Well, what did you expect? Mere mortals can’t play with the gods and expect to come out untouched. Oooh, wrong choice of words.

She stuck the keys into the Celica parked on the tree-lined street in front of the small building that housed four two-bedroom apartments. She couldn’t see the side balcony from here, but somehow she still felt as if his eyes were on her. She hoped that sensation wouldn’t last all day, or more than a few people were going to end up with food in their laps.



Cole shook the last of the salt water from his hair, remnants of his late-morning swim. He'd lived his whole life on this beach, from the time he was a kid hanging out at his grandparents' restaurant on the cove. The restaurant he now proudly owned and operated the same way his grandfather and father had before him. Normally he was out in the water by dawn. Growing up on the beach, he loved everything about it, surfing, swimming, holding a woman's hand as he walked along it. But today he couldn't resist waiting around to hassle his sassy little neighbor.

Good God, she deserved it.

When he realized she was there last night, watching him, he couldn't remember ever being more turned on in his life. It had taken every ounce of strength he had not to dump Valerie on that pretty ass of hers, grab Jill and slam her up against her kitchen wall. His cock started stiffening again. *If that keeps happening all day, I'll never get anything done.*

Cole walked along the shore to the wooden pier steps, knowing he'd find his best friend somewhere along the old wooden and concrete structure. Leaning on a side rail, he pushed his feet back into his shoes. A pair of kids on skateboards zipped by him and every breath he took now included the aroma of corn dogs and pizza as it invaded the pure scent of sea air. The carousel was busy as always as it spun around, entertaining small children and lovesick teenagers. The music from the calliope nearly drowned out that of the sideshow games, but just as Cole passed the pitch-a-ball-in-the-milk-can game, someone won big and the small crowd gathered shrieked in delight.

He caught up with Ross, halfway down the pier, sitting on a bench with his twelve-year-old daughter, who had a line in the water. He spread

his hand over her thick blonde hair. Give it a couple of years and Ross was in for hell with that girl. Cole had already offered to go in halves with him on a chastity belt, and he'd been only half kidding.

“Shouldn't you be in school, squirt?”

It was their standard greeting as Ross was home-schooling his daughter and Cole liked to tease them about it.

“The world's my school, honey,” she said, her voice a passable imitation of Cole's.

“Smart-ass.”

“Better a smart-ass than a dumb-ass.”

This was when Ross always jumped in with, “Watch your mouth. You're teachin' Uncle Cole bad words.”

Cole sat beside Ross with an accompanying old-man grunt. Ross slapped him on the forearm. “Man, what are you now? Forty-five?”

“Ha-ha.”

“So, how'd it go with Valerie?” Ross raised both brows in query. With his long dark hair blowing around his face he looked a lot like a bearded collie.

“Fine.”

“Oh come on. *Details*. Do you have any idea the last time I got laid?”

“Dad!”

Ross cleared his throat, looking sheepish, “Sorry, sprite.” Lowering his tone, he leaned closer to Cole. “And *that* would be why.”

Cole laughed, tipping his face into the breeze, enjoying the warmth of the sun in contrast. “I'm not giving you details in front of the kid.”

Ross made a disgruntled sound, folded his arms over his chest and sank down farther on the bench.

“You know, if you wanted to date, I'd take Hailey for the night.”

Ross laughed so hard he nearly fell off the bench. Cole wasn't sure why, but he didn't find near as much humor in the situation, or his friend's reaction. Folding his own arms over his chest in a mirror position of Ross' sulking, he said, "What the hell's so funny?"

Ross took a minute to sober, then turned, facing Cole with a look of incredulity in his eyes. "You *are* kidding, right?"

"About what? Taking her, or wondering why you're laughing your ass off at the idea?"

"Uh...both? Come on, Cole." He slapped Cole's biceps again with the back of his hand. "This has to be a joke. First of all, you wouldn't know what to do with a kid for a whole night. Probably not even fifteen minutes, for that matter. And then there's the fact that you don't have a free night—*ever*."

Cole continued his sulk. All of that might be true, but Ross didn't have to laugh at him. After all, he'd been being magnanimous by offering. The least Ross could have done was pretend to appreciate the gesture. The thing of it, though, was that he wasn't kidding—a night with Hailey could be fun. They could set up his telescope on the balcony and watch for constellations, make brownies or some female-type thing they sold in all-in-one sets at the store and watch PG-13 action flicks. *Oh well*. It would have been fun. Besides, how much trouble could a twelve-year-old be, anyway?

The more he thought about it, the more offended he became. He turned to face Ross on the bench. "I'm not joking." Then he yelled over his shoulder to Hailey, who was wiggling her line with not much luck. "Hey, kid, you wanna come stay with me some night?" Hailey shrugged. Cole took that positively and focused on Ross. "See?"

Ross shook his head as if confused. "See what?"

"Hailey's all hyped. So who are you gonna ask out?"

Ross choked on a laugh, got up, rubbed his palms on his denim shorts and moved to the metal railing separating the pedestrians from a long fall to the ocean below. Cole joined him and for a while the two stood there silently, watching the waves crest and roll to the shore.

“I’m not like you, Cole. I can’t pick up any old woman and screw her. Even if I could, I also don’t have half your charm. And where *you* are the sun-bronzed Heath Ledger type, *I* am the nerdy sidekick type. By the time I even found a woman willing to do the nasty with me, Hailey would be filling out college apps.”

Cole ran a hand through his hair, drawing a breath, wondering how honest to be with his friend.

“I’d trade what you had with Hailey’s mom for every one of the women I’ve fu...” He glanced over his shoulder. Hailey had lost interest in the fishing line and was running a radio-controlled car along the side rails. “...had sex with.”

Ross snorted. Cole scowled. They hung arms over the rails, and Cole stepped up on the bottom rail as Hailey’s car buzzed him. She laughed hysterically as Cole shot her a “quit it” look both of them knew he didn’t mean.

“I’m serious, Ross. You had it with Shelly. What my grandparents had, what I...”

Ross’s furrowed brow said that maybe he was finally taking Cole seriously. Cole squinted into the sunlight, then pulled his shades from his pocket, sliding them on more for the chickenshit factor than for the sunlight. Though he’d confessed, he didn’t want to stand here and analyze it or his past mistakes in the relationship department. Three times he thought he’d found it; three times he’d gone down in flames. One of his marriages had only lasted three-and-a-half months. The last

one had lasted four years, exactly three years and eleven months too long.

Even a thickheaded beach bum like him knew it was time to pack it in. Meaningless sex—like he'd been drowning himself in since the divorce was final—was all that was left for him until he got too old for even that. Because, no matter how lonely or desperate he got, he wasn't going to a cosmetic surgeon to keep himself looking twenty and plastic forever.

“Your taste in women sucks, Cole. You pick one-night-stand types and try and make it last a lifetime. It ain't gonna. Plain and simple. Shit, at your last wedding, you were both hitting on other people by the reception.”

That wasn't entirely true, but close enough. His marriage to Wendy had been so bad, they'd both spent more time in other people's beds than in their own. Ross scratched his jaw and squinted, his gaze seemingly traversing the waves. A pair of sailboats raced on the horizon. The sun was sitting pretty high now and it glistened on the water, stunning in its intensity, both visually and emotionally.

“Honestly, man, I think you set yourself up. I think you pick women you know it ain't gonna last with, so when it fails, you didn't have that much at stake. If you ever did meet the right woman, I wonder if you'd take the risk and go after her.”

Cole ached. That hit *way* too close to home and sounded too much like one of those women's bonding sessions. It had the hair on the back of his neck all prickly. He wished there was some way to brush off what he said with a smartass comment, but there wasn't one fitting for the occasion, so rubbing at those prickly hairs, he hedged. “Yeah. I oughta get back.” He sighed, pulled the glasses from his face and met Ross' distant stare. “You're probably right, but I'm not sure what to do about it, pal.” Shrugging, he slid the glasses back up and captured Hailey with

the other arm, picking her off the ground and dropping a kiss to her head. “You be smart.”

“I will, cause you an’ Dad are gonna need me to look out for ya at the home.”

Cole laughed. Hailey was one of a kind. She looked so much like her mother who was the epitome of femininity, but since Hailey’d only been three when Shelly died, she was the product of a single father who was doing his best. Cole loved her all the way to his core.

Walking away, he turned and waved back at them, a familiar punch of jealousy hitting him in the solar plexus until he had to catch his breath. The one thought foremost in his mind as his heart clenched with regret was Jill Reed, his next-door neighbor.



It was nearly three in the morning before Jill pulled her little car up in front of her building. Parking was a bitch, but an extra three hundred a month to have a garage wasn’t in the budget. Any residence in the beach areas of southern California had exorbitant rent, but having grown up landlocked in the Midwest, she couldn’t imagine living anywhere else. After the last roommate attempt had blown sky high, Jill picked up a third job as a cocktail waitress in a club downtown. The tips from her Friday and Saturday night shifts almost doubled the rent a roommate would pay and it was worth it to have her sanity and her peace.

The only drawback was Saturday when she worked all three jobs and came home dead tired and senseless. She’d discovered the senseless part after one particular late night and a half-dozen purchases on QVC of things like waterproof slippers. Tonight, because of last night’s little escapade and her lack of sleep, she was practically seeing double, yet she

still wasn't sure she'd get any sleep once she actually fell into bed. Even the thought of those little miracle pills the clinic doctor had prescribed her for sleeping gave her the heebie-jeebies. She couldn't help it. Her family tree was riddled with branches addicted to one thing or another; she wasn't about to add a sleeping pill addict into the mix.

As she started up the rear stairs, she had a moment of hesitation and stood still to listen for any moaning or panting. When all she heard was crickets and the distant rolling surf, she figured the coast was clear and headed on up. There were front stairs, but they ran between the two units and left her feeling claustrophobic whenever she used them, so her usual routine was to come and go from the back. After last night, however, she decided to seriously give that some consideration.

One eye out of commission while she rubbed it, the other one not overly clear, she thought maybe she was hallucinating. Blinking a couple of times didn't make the vision go away so she had to take it seriously that her blindingly handsome neighbor was indeed still lounging on her patio furniture.

She was too freakin' tired for a conversation that would make any sense and was more than a little concerned. It would be like her to lose control of her tongue and blurt out something like, "Wanna be my first?" That was a humiliation she would *never* recover from.

Slipping quietly by, hoping he'd fallen asleep, she froze solid at the sound of his low tenor.

"Hey, brown eyes. Wanna have a drink with me?"

Chapter Three

It took Jill a minute to realize that he meant that literally. As she strained her eyes in the darkness, he appeared to only have the one longneck that he was holding out to her. Admittedly, though, she did see several empties on the floor...and one in her ficus.

“Cole, it’s late and I’m beat. I’m going to bed. G’night.”

She only managed a step in the direction of her door before the man’s hand snaked around her wrist and he toppled her into his lap. She took a long deep breath and tried to keep her brain functioning enough to handle this properly, but before she had a chance to utter a single word in protest, his arm was around her waist and he had her settled back against his very evident erection.

“Oh my God, Cole. Are you drunk?”

He laughed derisively, his warm breath fanning her cheek when he whispered, “Not by a long shot, brown eyes.”

Jill tried to wriggle out of his hold, but gasped when her movements either enlarged the thing further, or brought her in closer contact. She wasn’t sure which and she didn’t care. She felt like a complete dolt. If he hadn’t caught her last night, he never would have wanted her, and last night she had given him a very wrong impression. It wouldn’t take long to give him the right one, though. She bet when he figured her out, he’d run screaming from the room so fast, he might even leave any clothing he wasn’t currently wearing behind.

“Damn it to hell, Jill. You make me hard. You make me fucking crazy with want.” His tongue made a slow pass along the shell of her ear. “Do you think I don’t notice you watching me? Shit, honey, I mis-wired my damn alternator last week because I was so fucking hard. Knowing you were behind me, in your bedroom. I imagined you touching yourself, but I wasn’t sure—until last night.”

His mouth slid over her neck, onto her shoulder, while the arm braced around her middle made a slow, hesitant move towards her breast. Jill wriggled, trying to free herself.

“Cole, I’m not who you think I am. Let me go.”

“Is that what you want, brown eyes?” He brushed over her nipple, which peaked instantly. Jill found herself actually having to bite back a moan of mixed desire and need. “I’ve fought it for months, Jill, but all I ever do is think of you.”

“What?”

“Christ, honey, what are you wearing?”

“It’s my uniform,” she answered blindly, still stuck on his last statement and the fact that his fingers had moved under the electric-blue spandex leotard she wore beneath a very small dancer’s skirt. His thumb rubbed her flesh, his forefinger joining to gently pinch and tease her nipple, while his mouth nuzzled her neck. No matter how many times she’d had this fantasy—or a variation of it—she’d never come close to getting it right. Maybe it was the sleep deprivation, but her skin felt tingly from head to foot, her nipple ached for his mouth, her inner muscles clenched, and she found herself having to fight hard for any kind of resistance.

She had no idea what had suddenly come over Cole, other than last night. And that had been so far from her real personality that it would have been laughable if she wasn’t in the man’s arms at the moment. He

wanted a hoyden, a woman who was brazen enough to watch a couple fucking and pleasure herself at the same time. While she had to admit that was exactly what she'd done, it hadn't been her. She'd obviously been taken over by some remnant sex spirit. Probably one left behind from one of his many...*many* girlfriends.

His entire hand flattened on her breast. *God, how I've wanted this.* It scared her how much she wanted this, wanted Cole, all of him touching her, taking off her clothes, kissing her, being the first one, the only one, to ever enter her. She wanted to feel him stretch her until he fit deep within, then she wanted to know how it felt to hold a man intimately when he came inside her.

He dipped to the side to set the beer bottle on the ground. When his hand came back, it rested on her thigh, but only for a mere second before skimming under her skirt.

“Cole, I think you have the wrong idea.”

Despite her own traitorous thoughts and aghast at how thready and broken her voice was, she swallowed back the lust threatening to engulf her. She knew all about men and their desires. Even if Cole didn't freak when he found out she was a virgin, once he'd had her, he'd lose interest and she'd be forced to watch his late-night balcony exhibits, knowing what it felt like to have him in her—knowing his touch and his kiss. If she knew anything about herself, she'd also be longing for those things and knowing there would be no hope of ever having him again.

“I do *not* do one-night stands.” She was beginning to sound panicked, her voice rising on each word. Although, in fairness, he had brushed against her crotch right about the time the word *stands* came out.

How in hell did he get my legs open?

She tried to close them tightly, but since Cole's hand was already between them, it did her no good. In fact, the damn man moaned.

“You’re soaked, baby. Let me touch you.”

“No.” She shook her head furiously, but since it was resting back against his chest at the time, she wasn’t sure it had the effect she meant for it to have.

“Please, baby.” He wriggled against her, prodding her cleft with an erection that felt like steel. She didn’t know much about a man’s make-up, but she couldn’t imagine that not being painful.

“I have to go inside. I have to sleep. By tomorrow you’ll have moved on to someone else; you won’t even care that I said no.”

He cupped her mound. Her muscles clenched and she had the wildest urge to know what it would feel like to do that around him, with him embedded deep inside, their bodies entwined, sweat-sheened as they fucked each other hard.

“Cole, you make me feel things I shouldn’t. You have no idea how dangerous you are to me.”

With one hand enfolding her, the other squeezed and massaged her breast. His mouth constantly hovered over her neck and shoulder—his moist breath with a hint of beer on it—the rough hairs of his goatee abrading her sensitive skin in a delicious wash of sensory overload. She became lost in the rising emotions. She knew she’d never get away from him unless he let her. Unless he stopped everything and shoved her from him, she wouldn’t leave—and that scared her to death. Thirty-three years she’d never let a man touch her like this, why now was this one so hard to say no to?

“I know exactly, honey. You think I haven’t been fighting this from the day I moved in and saw your sweet ass out here watering your flowers? Every night in my bed, I think of you, and that’s whether I’ve got company or not. One hint of your scent, the sound of your laughter and

I'm rock hard before I can breathe. You can't have any idea how you affect me."

She laughed now, nervously. The man had one hell of a line going for him.

No wonder he scores so much.

"Cohhhle." His name became a moan, a benediction as he eased his fingers under the spandex and grazed the hot, swollen flesh of her labia.

"You're so wet, I know you want me." His fingers slipped between the folds.

Jill gasped at how good it felt, how different from her own fingers. When he circled her clit, she writhed in ecstasy, against her will. He bit her shoulder like she'd seen him do last night, and like Ginger, she yelped, but then quickly moaned as the pain became heated pleasure.

"Let me make you come. I watched you last night. I was ramming inside Valerie and all I could think about was you. How goddamn much I wanted inside *you*."

He growled and bit her again, and Jill's breath stuttered and stalled. Never in her life had she felt anything this good, but if she said yes, then what? Not that she was expecting some kind of commitment from Mr. One Nighter, but what if she couldn't handle seeing him with other women after this? And worse—what if, after a taste of sex, she decided she wanted more? What then? Did she become like her mother and sisters, whoring themselves out, pretending to be in love with every guy they brought home so it didn't seem so sleazy?

She'd sworn to herself she'd never be like them, never let men touch her, use her the way they did. She'd moved halfway across the country to be free from them—from that lifestyle—and she couldn't let it all be for nothing.

The memories gave her the strength she needed and she pulled away, but Cole's moan was too much for her and she stopped before she'd made it anywhere near freedom and sanity.

"Please, God, don't leave me like this, Jill. I realize I must seem like the leech of the free world to you, but I swear to God it's not like that. I won't take you tonight out here and forget you in the morning, I wanna make you come. I want to hear those little pants I heard last night, knowing I'm making you so hot and wet." His finger made another pass over her and Jill knew it wouldn't take much more before she came. Even now she was purposefully holding her breath against it.

He must have taken her silence as acquiescence, because suddenly she realized his finger was moving inside, sliding deep into never-before-breached territory. She nearly choked from inhaling too fast, but then the sensations took over and her brain functions all but shut down completely. She flopped back against his chest and spread her legs wider, rising up against him, silently begging for more.

"You're so freakin' tight, honey." His fingers wiggled within her. She arched against his hand and moaned at the overwhelming feelings he was stirring within. "Fuck, it makes me want inside you even more." He spread her juices from her vagina over her sensitive folds, his finger practically slipping along her skin now. His rhythm became faster and as he tipped her back in his arms, Jill was almost utterly lost to her imminent orgasm. She didn't even notice his intent until she felt the wet heat of his mouth surrounding her nipple, felt the gentle scrape of his teeth.

That was all it took. She came with an explosive quality that almost made her understand why people craved sex the way they did. She bucked hard, nearly knocking them both off the chaise, she was sure of it. White light blinded her behind her closed lids, and the tingly feeling

she'd been having since he first touched her broke out into an electric frisson that left her toes numb. If her mind wasn't totally blown at this point, she most likely would have been horrified to know she might have been joining the ranks of the sexually depraved and needy.

She continued to writhe and moan as Cole moved his mouth from her breast to her lips, swallowing her cries while his tongue touched and danced with hers. Her first *real* kiss, and she was missing it. Because how could anyone think when their body was imploding on itself?

"Oh God," she whimpered against his mouth when the last of the spasms waned. Limp in his arms, she couldn't have moved if he'd shouted *fire*, and she was fairly certain her legs no longer worked, anyway. He kissed her lips, her throat, her shoulders, all the while his hand still cupped her mound protectively—as if he'd found treasure and didn't want to release it. Jill felt tears welling in her eyes and prayed they wouldn't slip free, but didn't have the emotional bandwidth left to fight them. When Cole's fingers reached up to touch her cheek, she imagined she'd lost the fight she hadn't the strength to start in the first place.

"Don't cry, sweetheart."

Never, in all her life, had she heard words spoken more tenderly than those. It made her weep all the more. She felt her lonely life with bitter acuity in that moment. She hated that she was so alone. Hated that she'd walled off all her emotions so absolutely, yet this man had gotten to them, and now she hated the fact that probably meant she'd have to start the long and painful process of shoving her needs and desires aside again. But mostly, she hated that right now she felt like she might actually fall asleep in Cole's arms. Deep sleep, something that had been so elusive for so many years she couldn't count. She didn't want to need anyone, but as she felt consciousness slipping away, all she could think was, *Please don't leave me.*

Cole held her close while she slept, his own need still raging. He adjusted her limp body and slid his hand inside his sweatpants, fisting it around his engorged cock.

Damn, but she makes me harder than any other woman alive.

He couldn't even begin to imagine how good the sex between them would be, especially if tonight was any indication. Jill Reed was a wildfire of passion and desire, waiting to be ignited. He couldn't figure how or why she had remained single, unless of course it was some form of punishment for him from the gods. To hold out the perfect woman in front of him at a time in his life when he'd finally realized he was too defective to make the real thing work, even if it ever did come along.

He wondered about the other men in her life. Had they understood who she was, what she needed? He couldn't imagine anyone having such a responsive and sexy woman in their bed and letting her go. That, of course, was the crux of the problem for him—the “letting her go” part. He'd fought his attraction to Jill from the hour he'd moved in, knowing she was a woman not to be messed with and that all he ever seemed capable of was exactly that—messaging with women.

He'd waited and watched, anticipating the boyfriend's appearance. When none had appeared, he'd—yes, he was big enough to admit it, to himself, at least—done a victory dance in his head, knowing no other man was currently touching her when he couldn't. Petty and very fourth grade, all right, but he *was* a guy, after all, and those damned primal urges always seemed to spring up when they were least useful.

He drew a deep breath, sliding his hand over his cock, remembering how wet she was, how hot. He'd nearly had his fingers scorched off when he slid under her indecent uniform, and his cock had just about exploded.

Oh God in heaven, she was damn tight.

So tight that he hadn't even tried getting two fingers inside her. He wanted to pick her up then and there and carry her to his bed, get her naked and play with her all night, but thank God he'd held on to some semblance of maturity. He had nothing to offer Jill, except maybe a couple of good nights in the sack and a divorce certificate if she was lucky. Nothing he thought she'd be too interested in.

As he breathed out his groan of completion silently so as not to wake her, his cum jettisoning over his fist, he dropped his head back against the cushioned lounge, pressed a kiss into her beautiful dark hair and let himself relax. He grabbed the lightweight blanket he'd brought out with him and covered them with it, fighting the entire time the urge to growl in her ear, *Mine*.

Chapter Four

It was the strangest thing. Jill squeezed her eyes shut tight against the sun's rays, thinking that she couldn't remember another time when her bedroom got direct sunlight. She moaned, did a little stretch and froze entirely.

Oh. My. God. She opened one eye enough to see the sun-burnished form stretched out beside her. *What have I done?* Panic seared into her. *And what time is it?*

Sitting up slower than her racing heart liked, she moved stealthily so as not to wake Cole. The sun was too high for it to still be morning. *Shit!* She'd missed work. She *never* missed work. Adjusting her leotard as she stood off the chaise, she was appalled at her behavior the previous night. Late-night QVC shopping binges involving waterproof slippers had nothing on letting Cole Adams touch her so intimately.

She snuck into her apartment to call work, memories from last night washing over her with a mixture of pleasure and pain. How could she have ever allowed herself to be so stupid? All she knew for sure was that nothing would ever be the same again.

God help me.

It was probably the loss of her heat that woke him, but Cole couldn't remember ever experiencing such disappointment as he did to waking without Jill in his arms. He sat up and groaned. He was a big guy and sleeping on the little chaise lounge had wreaked havoc on his back. Not

nearly as much damage as little Jill Reed was wreaking on his body and soul, however.

Or as much havoc as you could wreak on her.

Gathering his blanket and empty beer bottles, he slithered inside like the coward he was coming to know himself to be.



For the next week, Jill avoided Cole like the plague. It wasn't all that difficult. She picked up a couple extra shifts at work, and on the rare occurrence when she thought she'd have free time when he might be home, she went to the bookstore. It was easy to lose several hours there. She hoped, given the sudden absence from his life, he would get the message that she wasn't interested and move on.

Problem was, she was more than just interested—she was rapidly becoming obsessed. She thought about him constantly, mixed up more orders in the last week than she'd done in a lifetime of waiting tables, dreamt about him whenever she slept and found herself either thinking about masturbating or doing it in every free moment.

Good Lord, she'd done it in the bathroom at work the other day.

Something was going on with her mind. It was like being on an out-of-control roller coaster and not being able to find the Emergency-stop.

All thoughts of Cole ceased suddenly as Jill pulled open her back door to find a very pretty little girl poking her finger into the pots hanging from the balcony roof.

“Hi.”

Jill smiled, she couldn't help it, the young girl's own smile was infectious.

“Hello.” She stepped cautiously onto the balcony. The television blasting from next door told her Cole was home and she did not want him to see her.

“So, you live here? What are these? I always forget.”

Jill hadn’t been around a child in more years than she could remember, well, outside the ones at the restaurant. “Uh, they’re fuchsias.”

The younger girl snapped her small fingers. “Right.” A big smile bloomed on her face and reflected in sky-blue eyes. Jill had the petty thought that her mother must be drop-dead gorgeous and had to fight the urge to look inside Cole’s open back door. She hadn’t known Cole to date the motherly type before, but then, she had to remind herself she knew nothing about the man.

Your body knows him.

She groaned at the thought.

“What’s wrong?”

“You want to help me feed the birds?” Jill smiled and knew not for one second had this precocious young girl missed the fact she hadn’t answered. “I’ve got two feeders up here and there’s one downstairs in the back.”

“Yeah.” The girl eyed her a bit hesitantly. “I’m Hailey. My dad and Cole are best buds.” She tilted her blonde head a little closer and Jill leaned in as if she were about to be let in on a great secret. “They’d both be lost without me, though.”

Jill held back her smile, but found herself touching the precious child’s face. An overwhelming array of emotions swelled to life within her that she couldn’t quite control.

“I bet they are, Hailey. Even the best men need a good woman around to keep them in line.”

“So does that mean you think I’m one of the best men, Jill?”

This time she groaned internally. No way on this earth would she let that man know how he affected her, or let him know that the sound of his voice had set off butterflies, or that she felt herself growing wet already.

Damn man.

She smiled, though it pained her, and would have turned around to face him if he hadn’t stepped right behind her, so close she could feel the now familiar heat of his skin burning through the back of her sundress and had to fight back a shiver.

“Cause if that’s the case, honey, why have you been avoiding me for the last week?”

He’d lowered his voice, whispering directly in her ear, but she watched Hailey’s eyes go wide as if she were drawing all types of conclusions about Cole’s relationship with her. For some reason, Jill felt the need to straighten her out.

Pushing away, she turned and faced him. For the first time she noticed the other man standing on the balcony with them. Somewhat shorter than Cole, the man had shaggy brown hair and big brown eyes and kind of looked like a puppy of some sort.

“That’s my dad.”

Hailey’s voice resonated with pride and Jill felt a quick stab of jealousy. She’d always wondered how her life would have been different if she’d had a father in it. She shoved the thoughts away, realizing she was rapidly heading for an emotional meltdown and didn’t need melancholy thoughts of her lost childhood in the mix.

“Are you guys *finally* ready?”

“Yeah, squirt, we’re ready,” Cole answered.

Jill heard keys jingling. The sound pulled her attention back to Cole, which was a big mistake because when her eyes met his, they were burning hot with desire. She felt an answering ache between her thighs.

Then he looked directly at her. "Come with us."

She shook her head slightly, not entirely sure she'd heard him. "What?"

"Come with us." This time she got the smile. And Jill was quite certain that no woman in viewing range of that smile could keep her panties dry.

"Yes! Oh *please!*" Hailey grabbed her by the hand, tugging on it in a very childlike fashion that belied the grownup façade the girl wrapped herself in. "I never get to hang out with girls and besides it would give us even numbers and then Dad and Uncle Cole can do guy stuff and we could look at dolls and oh, would you please, please, *please* go with us?"

The childlike enthusiasm was cut short by two male groans. Hailey shot them each a look that made Jill laugh softly, before Hailey's blue gaze was piercing hers again.

"You would be doing us both a favor, and the squirt's right." Cole put his hand atop Hailey's head in a way that spoke deep affection. The walls around Jill's heart cracked a little bit. "It would even out our numbers and she does rarely get to hang around with other women."

"Why is that?" Jill couldn't believe the words had popped out of her mouth. It was absolutely none of her business and she was about to retract her question when she caught the pain flashing in the eyes of the man beside her as he answered.

"Because her mom died a while ago, and I don't date much."

Hailey made a sound somewhere between a snort and a laugh. "Or *ever*. I've long since given up my hope for a little sister, but *please* come with us today."

Jill saw the same longing in Hailey's eyes that always lived in her own. Years of disappointment had buried it some, but she knew it was still there. Cole's hand brushed along the bare skin of her arm, and she broke out in goose bumps as he spoke. "Please come, we'd all enjoy your company."

"I..." She got lost for a moment in the deep blue of Cole's hungry eyes. She blinked away sensations of rampant lust. "I have to work."

"Christ, honey, don't you ever take a day off?"

"Um, no. Not really."

"Then you need one. I could let the restaurant bury me with work, but you've got to set some time aside for yourself. Besides, work is not the best way to kill oneself you know." Cole winked. "I can think of a half dozen ways to go that would be far more pleasurable. Please come with us, Jill."

Hailey began tugging on Jill's arm while Cole's thumb ran annoying little circles over the surface of her other, sending sparks of electricity dancing up her skin. Their combined pleas were becoming more than she could resist.

"Where are you guys going anyway?"

"Harbor Gardens!" Hailey added a jump of enthusiasm, a rare moment that revealed she was in fact just a child. "We usually go every week." Hailey's eyes rolled and it became quickly apparent when she spoke again that she was mocking her father. "But during summer it's too damn busy with freakin' tourists. So I only get to go once a month." She ended on a beautiful pout and Jill wondered if these two men had any idea what they were in for in a few years.

"I've never been there, but, I do have to work."

"You've never been to Harbor Gardens?" Three voices rang out in shocked disbelief as if she'd told them she'd been abducted by aliens last

night instead of that she'd never been to a kids' amusement park. She pushed down a hysterical giggle and wondered how'd they'd take it if she shared she'd never had sex before either.

"Oh, that's it, honey." Hailey's dad pushed between them and wrapped his arm around Jill's waist as he began leading her towards her apartment door. "There's no way on earth I'm letting you go another day with this sort of thing hanging over your head. It's a wonder you've made it this far. Now go call your job, get your things and hurry back." He glanced at his watch. "If we aren't on the road in the next fifteen minutes, we'll miss the afternoon parade."

Hailey jumped up and down again, lower lip sucked between her teeth. "Does this mean she's going?"

It was on the tip of Jill's tongue to say no. She had work and other responsibilities, which meant she had to stay away from Cole Adams. She glanced at him from the corner of her eye. He was leaning against the railing, arms crossed over his thin T-shirt, legs sheathed in tight, worn jeans. Jill knew she didn't have to go to a kids' theme park to have her fantasies met.

Then he caught her looking at him and the desire in his eyes flared. He gave her a slow seductive smile that told her without a doubt they would be lovers. In that moment, she wondered what the point was to fight fate, so she smiled at Hailey.

"Yeah, honey, I'll go."



Jill was giddy on a mix of emotions. How could such a place have existed all along and she hadn't known about it? She'd always thought of

Harbor Gardens as a place you took your kids, but it was heaven—plain and simple. She never wanted to leave.

Every sight, sound and smell seemed heightened. Every experience special. From the moment they'd walked in the main gate and seen the enormous fountain and the gardens and the...she'd been lost to the magic of the place.

“Okay.” Ross dusted his fingers with a napkin, then brushed chicken breadding from his beard. “It’s that time again for our lovely father-daughter tradition.”

Hailey jumped up and wiggled on her toes, all smiles. Ross turned his attention towards Jill.

“This is the part of the day I allow Hailey to drag me through the Beggar’s Emporium and show me all the things I’m never going to buy her.”

He winked and Jill saw the love for his daughter on display for the world to see. She fought back a pang of jealousy. All in all, she was having the best day of her life and had nothing to complain about. As she watched Ross and Hailey walk hand in hand away from their table on the patio, however, she allowed the words to slip her guard.

“I always wanted a dad.”

“You didn’t have one, sweetheart?”

She blinked, drawn from her memories and her wishes. It was so easy to get lost in fantasy in a place like this. All around them people were happy. The sounds of laughter and conversations mixed with that of faint music that came from speakers hidden in rocks and flowerbeds. The smell of fresh popcorn wafted over on a much-needed breeze which broke the stranglehold of the day’s heat.

The day had been surreal, a break from reality that she’d had no idea how much she needed. And she’d let her guard down big time. Allowing

Cole to take her hand casually as they walked, not tensing if he placed a hand at the base of her spine to lead her. Loving every casual brush of their bodies as they navigated the crowds.

His scent of musk and spices was forever lodged in her memories by now. His touch, the breathless dreaminess she felt whenever she caught him looking at her with guarded lust in his eyes. They all were leading to a place she refused to think overmuch on. What was the point? When Cole found out she was a virgin, he'd either bolt or he wouldn't. That was that.

Cole turned his chair and pulled it closer, tugging on hers as well until they sat so close his knees had to rest on the outside of hers. It had been a completely enjoyable day of closeness such as Jill had never before experienced. Sharing stories, memories and laughter, she'd gotten lost in the friendship of Cole and Ross and for a while had forgotten that she was the outsider here.

The brush of Cole's fingers against her hair brought her back. The lust was burning bright and unmistakable in his expression now. She swallowed.

"Where were you?"

"Lost in a memory." She shrugged. "I'm having the best day of my life. Thank you for including me."

She already felt lost in his gaze. Now, with Cole's legs pressed against her own as he stared deep into her eyes while his hand moved to cup her cheek, she felt lost in her soul, as well. How could she ever hope to hold him back after today?

"I've wanted to do this all day, brown eyes."

She melted into his kiss. She was in a place where dreams came true, and for a little while, she just wanted to lose herself to the fantasy. Why

deny herself what she wanted? And the only thing she wanted was Cole Adams—all of him for as long as he'd give her.

The coarse hair of his goatee scratched against her skin, and his tongue slowly ran the seam of her lips. She opened her mouth, allowing him entrance, and shivered when his tongue finally brushed against hers.

“I want you like I've never wanted another woman, Jill. And it scares the shit out of me.”

He rested his forehead against her, his fingers still holding her head in place. She felt the loss of his lips deeply as she made her own confession.

“Well, I've *never* wanted a man before, *period*. So I think I've got you beat in the terrified department.”

He smiled and she *felt* his smile, an intense, unexpected sensation, to say the least.

“Sweetheart...”

“No, I'm serious.” She pulled away, licking her lips in a nervous fashion. She couldn't quite bring herself to look him in the eyes, so instead she looked at the hedges, the topiary, the people, the huge freakin' castle behind his head. “You may as well know, Cole, I'm not the woman you think I am.”

Her heart tore when he took her hand in his.

“And what type of woman is that, brown eyes?” He put his fingers beneath her chin, dragging her gaze back to his. “You're beautiful, sweet, sexy as sin, and watching you all day with Hailey has made me realize whoever the bastard was that broke your heart was a fucking idiot.”

As she stood there, too overwhelmed with emotions to respond, he kissed her again on the lips, his hand curving around the back of her neck, encouraging her forward.

“I’m not what you think,” she whispered against his mouth, and felt his lips curve up in response.

“Then let me discover the real you for myself.”

She lost whatever argument she was about to make as he deepened the kiss, his tongue no longer reserved but taking everything from her. It was the type of kiss that Jill knew kissing was made for. His hands pressed her body closer, and she was sorely tempted to just climb in his lap. Cole Adams was sex defined, and once again Jill knew she was in over her head.

“Hey!”

She felt the whack Ross gave Cole as it reverberated through his body and into hers. “This is a family park. Not a park for making families.”

“Wow, Uncle Cole that was hot. Will you guys let me watch later? I’ve gotta learn somewhere.”

Jill was mortified and knew she was blushing furiously. Cole simply stood. Since he grabbed her hand as he did, Jill felt the need to follow. “No, you can’t watch, and you won’t need to learn until you’re at least forty. Ask me then.” He turned his attention to Ross. Jill exchanged a guilty smile with Hailey, who was sporting a new hat and holding several bags. “And as for you, we’ll meet up with you at the shack for fireworks.”

Cole started to walk; Jill followed along behind. He didn’t say a word to her while they were within earshot of Ross and Hailey. When they walked near the entrance of The Wild, Crazy, Mysterious, Adventure ride, Jill wondered if it was some kind of sign. Cartoon voices were singing from behind the rock wall, the wall Cole pushed her against right before recapturing her mouth with his own.

The torrent of passion he’d been holding back all day had apparently been unleashed. Jill’s knees buckled from the assault. Real and manufactured cartoon voices and laughter and trickling water from

somewhere all dissolved as her mind shut down and she became the wanton creature she'd always feared.

Her hands ran the planes of Cole's chest. She marveled at the muscles and the heat beneath his T-shirt, felt his heart beating so hard she wondered how it managed to stay inside. He wrapped his arms tight around her, pulling her body seamlessly against his. Jill felt his erection prodding her, and she wanted nothing more than to free it. She wanted to let him take her right here and now and didn't give a damn about the crowds, the kids, or getting arrested for public indecency. All she wanted was Cole Adams and in that moment, she decided she'd have him any way she could get him.

Chapter Five

“We have to get out of here.” He was breathless, she felt the same. Cole took her hand, pulling her through the crowd like an expert avoiding strollers and outdoor vendors.

“Where are we going?”

“Someplace private.” His voice was tense and he held her hand like it was precious treasure. She followed along without a word. She was burning up and wanted him with such ferocity it scared her. They circled around alongside a fast-food restaurant until he dragged her into the side opening of the castle. He stopped for a second, long enough to kiss her breathless again, then yanked her through the entrance and up a narrow staircase as regal-sounding music sang from secret speakers that seemed to be all around them.

It was dark and cold and he kept tugging her past windows that held dioramas depicting castles and dragons and princesses. The dolls in the windows appeared to be the only other people in there. “Why isn’t anyone else here?”

He pushed her into an alcove where they would be all but invisible should anyone actually come by. “Because this exhibit is duller than bird shit and the parade’s on. We’ll have privacy for at least a half hour.”

He kissed her again, pressing her back against the cold stone wall of the castle. It occurred to her that he sure was knowledgeable about the exact place to get privacy, but with his tongue passionately exploring her

mouth and his hands wandering along the bare skin of her leg up under the skirt of her dress, she didn't care about anything else.

"I want to feel you, baby." His words were lost into her lips. "Are you wet?"

She whimpered and nodded at him the second before she felt his fingers slip beneath the elastic of her panties. She gulped in air when he pushed inside her.

"Fuck, you're tight, honey."

Jill knew she'd lost her mind. She was in a public place...*children* were around, and all she thought was how bad she wanted more than his fingers inside her.

"Cole, can't we go somewhere else? I mean, what if someone—"

He swallowed her words, sucked on her tongue and found her clit all in one smooth movement. She was soooo in over her head.

"No one's coming. If they are, we'll hear them and even then, the only way they'd see us is if they turned around and went through the exhibit backwards. This is the entrance to a storage area. No one comes through this way. I swear I wouldn't risk your safety, Jill."

Cole's hand slid down her throat to the front of her dress, his eyes latched on hers as he cupped her breast, his other hand still brushing over the heated slick folds of her labia. He wasn't sure what the hell had come over him. He hadn't been this horny since he'd been a teen, but he wanted Jill. He wanted her now. His cock bulged as he caught the scent of her arousal. He eased two fingers inside her tight passage. He nearly came when she squeezed him.

"You make me crazy, baby. I haven't felt like this in forever."

"Ah. Uh-huh."

He smiled, she was close. She tried to look at him, but her eyes closed again instantly.

“God, Cole. I’m not a slut...”

He cupped her head in his palm, pulled her against him and whispered in her ear. “Wrap your leg around me. And, honey, I never thought you were.”

He kissed her. It was a deep, wet kiss, the kind you gave someone you loved, and that thought didn’t even make him blink. He just kissed her. Tried to show her with his mouth how much he felt for her. This crazy passion he’d been holding back for months had swept over the top of the dam holding back his heart and there was no turning back now.

He worked the zipper on the back of her dress enough to get the material to move aside, and he sucked her hard pink nipple into his mouth even as his finger slid deeper inside her.

When she came he swallowed her screams, held her body close and let her tremble out the last of her release. She fell limp against him and he reached for his wallet to get a condom. As her head rested against his shoulder he sheathed himself, lifted her into his arms and adjusted her panties. “Wrap the other leg around me now, honey.”

She did so without question. He smiled, knowing she was still lost to the afterglow, but if he didn’t get inside her quick, he was going to lose himself in his jeans and that would be a little difficult to explain. He nudged her opening, reminding himself that he’d have to go slow to get inside her without hurting her.

“Cole! I can’t... I mean, I haven’t... I mean...”

He kissed her into silence, pushing away his own conscience as well as any hesitation she might have. “Let me love you, brown eyes.” He pushed in further, but by the time he realized what he was doing it was

too late; his cock had pressed past the thin barrier and Cole knew he'd fucked up big time.

Tears burning the backs of her eyelids, Jill shoved hard against his shoulders, but she was no match for the man. She wasn't going anywhere until he decided that she could. "Let me go." The teary sound of her own voice only served to undo her further, and she pushed again while Cole stood motionless with his dick inside her. This was truly the worst moment of her life.

"Precious woman. *Stop* fretting." He pressed a fierce kiss to her forehead before he let her go enough to separate their bodies. What he did with the condom she had no idea, but if he didn't let her go soon she was sure she'd never recover from this.

"We need to talk, sweetheart."

"No." She shook her head furiously. "No talking. Let me go. I'll move out and never think of this again."

He *laughed*. Had the nerve to *laugh*. He adjusted his clothing, gave her an achingly soft kiss and looked around the corner for a moment, then back. "No one's moving. We're talking. Then I'm making *that* debacle right." Jill felt another layer of humiliation descend.

She followed along like a lost puppy as he led her down a series of stairs. The magic had drained from the afternoon and by the time they reached the final staircase she thought if she ever heard any music even remotely similar to the trumpets and woodwinds sounding now, she'd throw up.

"Good God, I'm blind."

She actually snickered as he blinked and brought his free arm up to cover his eyes. They had been inside long enough to make the southern California sunshine seem all the more blinding.

He didn't wait long before moving again. She heard music in the distance and realized it was the late-afternoon parade. Glancing at her watch she saw that it was well past dinnertime and she'd spent the entire day...having fun. Until the last few minutes, that is.

As she followed along behind Cole, who seemed to be taking every back path and secret alleyway there was, it dawned on her that this was the first day in years she hadn't worked and the world was still spinning on its axis—at least, as far as she knew.

As they came into the open courtyard, Jill froze. People—accompanied by furry characters, a penguin, a bear and some sort of dog, she thought—in a small circle danced and laughed and played with a group of children. A mariachi band performed nearby, and as Jill scanned the faces of the crowd, she noticed one thing was patently obvious. People were *happy*, delighted actually. Some laughed, smiles were on all and for this one moment in time, everything seemed perfect. Jill finally saw that she'd been wasting her life with worries.

How in the world seeing such an innocent exchange could transform the person she'd been up to that point, she wasn't sure, but she felt the shift inside her. It was deep, it was real and it was permanent.

Laughter bubbled up and she released it before tenderly capturing Cole's face in her hands and kissing him. When she broke the kiss, they both smiled as his forehead rested against hers. "Cole, can we save the conversation for later tonight? Maybe after you take me home but before you show me how wonderful it can be to make love with a man. Right now, I'd like to enjoy my first day off in years and my first trip to Harbor Gardens."

She laughed again as the internal joy had become too much to push back any longer. Cole kissed her, and she tasted his passion as his tongue danced with hers.

“I think I can handle that.” His mouth opened as if he were about to say more, then thought better of it. Then on a rush of air he said, “I’ve been divorced three times. Ross thinks it’s because I pick the wrong women.” He smiled and deep in his eyes she saw something spark to life, something a lot like hope. “Maybe he’s right. Maybe I used to be just like that. Hopefully that’s behind me now.”

He squeezed her hand and led her away. The rest of the day was the best of her life. A dam had burst or the walls had imploded or something, but there was a shift in both of them. Jill no longer felt that part of Cole wanted to keep her back, warning “keep your distance”. As for her, well, something had awakened in her and it left her feeling alive in a way she couldn’t remember ever feeling before.

They acted like horny teenagers for the rest of the day, unable to keep their hands off one another. She’d learned about every dark corner and make-out ride in the park on a personal level. Even now, as she rested back against Cole’s chest, his arms wrapped tight around her waist as they watched fireworks explode in a black velvet sky, he nuzzled her neck and she found herself reaching behind her and fondling his growing erection.

The ride home was quiet. Hailey slept in the front seat beside her dad, and Cole and Jill rode in the backseat. He had his hand up under the sweatshirt he’d bought her and—since her dress was unzipped and completely open—he had free access to her breasts. The way he kept brushing her nipple with his thumb and occasionally pinching it drove her mad with lust. Stunned by the depths of her desire, she found herself wanting Cole so desperately that she couldn’t see how on earth they’d ever have any kind of conversation first. She wondered if she could unzip his pants and fondle him now in the dark without Ross knowing. Cole’s repeated kisses, however, left her brain cells misfiring. She was

wet with arousal and was having a very difficult time keeping any train of thought at all.

“Take tomorrow off,” he whispered against her hair before he nuzzled her ear and throat. “I want to make love to you all day.”

The words alone sent tingles into places she never realized could tingle. “What work?”

“Oh God, would you two knock it off. I’m getting severely nauseous up here.”

Jill giggled as Cole whacked the back of Ross’ head. “Get your own woman. That should cure your nausea and then we could double date.” Jill’s heart tripped when he looked back into her eyes. “Because I think I’m gonna do the steady thing for a while, bro. May as well join me.”

He kissed her until they pulled up in front of their apartment. He kissed her up the walk to the stairs. He stopped her three separate times on the stairs to kiss her and when they got to the landing he swept her from her feet and carried her to his bed.

“I know I said we’d talk—”

This time she kissed him. “We have a long time to work out the details, just love me tonight.”

He gave her the heart-stopping smile as he came down on top of her. “Oh, brown eyes, I intend to.” He tugged the sweatshirt over her head. Seeing what a shambles had been made of her dress from all of his manhandling in the car made her giggle.

“Something funny, precious?”

She laughed again, but the sound quickly became a moan as his mouth covered her nipple, tugging on it gently with his teeth until she thought she’d lose her mind. She arched against his mouth, as his hand moved along her thigh up to her hip. He pulled away from her long enough to remove her panties.

“Sweetheart, I get that this is your first time and I should make it all candlelight and flowers, but fuck, honey, I want you like a crazy man. Let me make it up to you, all night, all day tomorrow, but right now...”

She pushed on his cheek until she met his eyes. “Right now, *fuck* me.” She laughed as he practically tore the clothes from his body. She removed her own clothes and tried to quickly dive under the covers only to have Cole stop her. Grabbing her by the waist, he flipped her onto her back, flat on the bed.

“Oh no you don’t.” His lips covered hers. Her heartbeat stilled as she accepted the safety she felt in his arms. “I’ve lusted after that body for months, you’re not going to jump under those covers and gyp me, honey.”

Keeping her hands pinned to the bed beside her head, his body straddling hers, he made her captive to his every desire. When he sat up and his gaze roamed over her entire body, searing her skin with his molten desire, she felt beautiful for the first time in her entire life.

“I’m going to taste every last inch of your skin.” He dropped his body back down over hers, and his tongue ran the length of her bottom lip. “I’m going to eat your pussy, honey, and I’m gonna make you scream my name.”

While Jill attempted to catch her breath, Cole moved the length of her body, nipping and tasting her as he promised. When he situated himself between her legs, he looked up and met her gaze with a wicked gleam.

“Spread your legs for me, brown eyes.”

A moment’s hesitation washed over her. “I...”

“Spread. Your. Legs.”

She swallowed hard and did as she was told.

“More.”

“But, Cole...”

“More,” he growled.

She complied. The first thing she felt was his fingers gliding over the slick surface of her labia, then the gentle press of his tongue. She nearly leapt off the bed. The wet, heated sensation was nothing like she ever could have imagined and when he sucked on her clit, shards of white heat shot up her thighs. Moaning, she writhed, pushing her pussy against his mouth.

Cole ate at her voraciously, never having enjoyed this particular intimacy more than he was at this very moment. Giving Jill Reed pleasure suddenly seemed like the only important job on earth. Warm summer air caressed their bodies as he brought Jill to her first climax. He knew he had only seconds before he joined her and he desperately needed to be inside her tight wet passage when he did.

Fumbling around on the floor, he found a condom and slid it on. He paused, pressing inside her nearly virgin body just a little. “This may hurt some. I’m not sure how complete of a job I did earlier. I’m sorry, brown eyes.”

She nodded, not entirely coherent. “I don’t care, just do it.”

He thought he might die before he got fully embedded in her heat. She was so damn tight and her pussy was still convulsing slightly from her orgasm. Every pulse teased his cock to the brink. There was no barrier this time, but even fully sheathed inside her, he waited. Attempted to count to ten, got to three, and started rocking his body against hers.

“You okay?”

“Mmmmmm.”

Her pussy squeezed him. She probably had no idea she’d done it, but damn it felt good. “I’m not gonna last, baby.” Picking up the tempo, he

tried to concentrate on remembering her body's needs. But when she started to move with him, naturally meeting his thrusts, he was done for.

Clutching her hips, he set a fierce rhythm, her pussy sliding the length of his cock. Now coated with her nectar it moved with ease in and out. Her little whimpers quickly turned to moans and then cries of passion. Each sound set Cole on the edge. Nothing or no woman had ever felt like this. He grabbed her ass, lifted it from the mattress and brought it hard against his thighs. She moaned, her head pushed back into the sheets—she was a classic erotic image. A goddess. And when he came he kept his eyes open to watch her as she experienced all this for the first time.

Depleted and exhausted, he crashed down on the bed beside her. His arm wrapped around her waist, he tugged her close and buried his nose in her hair. Never had fucking had such an emotional impact on him before. His eyes were tearing. He kissed her hard, wanting to remember it was a fuck. A rough jungle fuck.

But it wasn't.

It was very possible he'd just made love for the first time in his life and his heart would never be the same.

Jill caressed his cheek as tears rose in her eyes, feeling a bit mortified. She supposed it would be very cliché and juvenile to think she was in love because she'd had sex. After all, wasn't that what her mother and sisters did every time? Though she was no longer a virgin, she still had no intention of becoming a slut.

"I never want to leave your arms, brown eyes. I could live for eternity here." His gentle words did her in and the first tear rolled down her cheek. She nuzzled closer, as close as she could get. The windows were open and the hot muggy air sat heavy in the room. Her body was coated

in a thin sheen of sweat and just sort of ached. She noticed that the scent of sex—always detested when she was a kid—suddenly seemed sexy, erotic. As her unease rose, she blurted her fear before she could stop herself. “I have baggage, Cole. Sex stuff. You may not want—”

He brushed a kiss against her lips. “Three marriages. You really want to compare baggage?”

She smiled, though she wasn’t sure why. Cole left the bed for a minute. When he returned, he wrapped the sheet over their bodies and pulled her so close she knew air wouldn’t have been able to pass between them. All she kept thinking was she wanted to stay there forever.

Life will figure itself out. It always does.

For now, she just wanted to enjoy Cole.



The ocean waves rolled gently over the shore. All in all, it had been a perfect day. In truth, almost every day for the past eight months had been perfect. Jill startled when Cole ran up behind her and wrapped his arms around her waist, hugging her body tight against his.

“Married twenty minutes and already you’re trying to ditch me.” He turned her in his arms and gave her that smile that melted her insides. “I promised Dr. Hatcher I wouldn’t let *this* bride get away—and at three hundred dollars a session, I intend to keep that promise.”

She kissed him. It was all she ever wanted to do anymore. She could hear the music coming from the reception tent. Their wedding had been small, but Cole had made it perfect. Ross had been his best man and Hailey was thrilled at being maid of honor. Jill felt blessed; she’d not only found a man to love for all eternity but a small family all her own. She’d

become very close with Hailey and the relationship had filled a longing for something that had always lived deep inside her.

“I love you, Cole. More than I ever knew possible.”

The salt water rushed around their ankles as they kissed one another. Life would hold bumps, they both knew that, but somehow, what they’d found with each other, made them stronger. Jill no longer feared the future; in fact, she embraced it.

“Baby, you’re the gift of a lifetime. One I didn’t deserve, but goddamn if I’m not going to work the rest of my life to make sure you’re not sorry. Now come dance with me.”

He tugged her towards the tent, but she didn’t budge. Another wave rushed around her feet, removing sand from beneath her. She shifted her balance so she wouldn’t fall in and ruin a perfectly lovely dress.

“Dance with me here.”

He tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and kissed the tip of her nose.

“Anything for you, precious.”

As the southern California sun sank into the pacific, Mr. and Mrs. Adams shared the first moments of a life together. A life that, as it turned out, was abundantly joyful and profoundly satisfying...and it all started one night on a balcony.

About the Author

Passionate and creative to the point of insanity, Samantha lives in the mountains of southwest Virginia. A self-proclaimed hopeless romantic, she writes about what happens when that one person you can't live without walks into your life...ready or not. Her greatest joy is to finally be able to share her stories with readers and she hopes they find a place in your heart.

To learn more about Samantha, please visit www.samanthalucas.com or visit her on myspace www.myspace.com/samanthalucasromances.

Chastity Cuthbert is determined to bring love and romance to the Last Frontier.

Ladies! Meet Red Hot Alaskan Men

© 2007 Nancy Lindquist

Available now at Samhain Publishing

Chastity Cuthbert is in love with love. Its too bad that she's so busy working on everyone else's happily ever after that there's no time left to work on hers. Her company, The Alaskan Connection, matches single women with sexy Alaskan hunks. Business is booming. Until Dave Wellington drags his personal vendetta against outsiders right to her doorstep.

Dave Wellington, Mayor of Smithfield, Alaska won't allow Chastity's cadre of red-lipped floozies to take over his town. A she-bitch from the lower forty-eight broke his brother's heart and no one else is gonna go through that. Not if he can help it. Besides, Smithfield is welcoming tourists for the first time. The male residents need to keep their minds on business. Not sex.

Determined to change Chastity's mind, he travels to Chicago to talk her out of her plan. Chas is so pissed off at the sexy mayor that she forgets her "no one-night stands" motto. Right into Dave's bed.

Now she has to travel to Smithfield and face him. She's strong. She can face Dave again. Just because she snuck out of his hotel room in the middle of the night doesn't mean she's a big ole chicken. Right?

Warning: This book contains hot naked Alaskan guys, all looking for love. Read it at your own risk. I am not responsible for any sudden urges to go to the Last Frontier, nor travel costs incurred. Oh, and there's explicit sex too.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Ladies! Meet Red Hot Alaskan Men*:

“The devil? Am I really so bad?” It came out almost a whisper.

The indecision was clear on her face. “If I do this, and I’m not saying I’m going to, that does not mean I’m giving in. The Alaskan Connection has a signed contract and we’re coming, like it or not. This is just animal attraction, plain and simple. Nothing more. Agreed?”

“Agreed.” Something in Dave released and he felt like howling into the moonless night.

Dave grasped her hand, afraid she would pull away, and helped her from the cab and into the lobby. He barely noticed the warm wood tones and masculine feel of the lobby he’d been so impressed with earlier in the day. He was bringing a woman to his room, Chastity Cuthbert no less. Pressing the up button at the elevator, Dave leaned in and kissed her once more.

His fingers wrapped in her hair, and he pulled her close with a groan. The elevator doors whooshed open and somehow they moved inside. It felt like all the passion of their ongoing fight was in her mouth and tongue. The touch of her mouth against his felt unbelievable.

“Oh God.” Her needy moan ripped straight through his body in a way he’d not expected. The elevator came to a halt, the doors whispering open. She looked up with a dazed expression and laughed.

He smiled in return. “I think we’re supposed to get off the elevator now.”

She nodded. “Yep, I think that’s what we’re supposed to do.”

Hand in hand, they headed to his door. Impatiently, he hunted for the keycard, jammed it in the lock and twisted the door handle.

Her arms wrapped around his waist and they fell into the room, onto the floor, Dave’s body cushioning their fall. Twisting around, he captured the shell of her ear with his lips. Nipping at her ear, he held her wriggling body against him.

She felt soft and sexy and full of desire in his arms. She left no questions about what she wanted. Good. Dave hated games.

“Let’s get out of these wet clothes.” Her throaty voice made him harder, if that was possible. Passion filled her gaze. There was no hesitation at all. She wanted this as much as he did. No teasing, just yearning. Standing, she unbuttoned her coat and dropped it in the entryway behind her. Her suit jacket and skirt followed. Her fingers toyed with, then fumbled over the buttons on her shirt.

Nerves. She’s as nervous as I am. Something about the tension in the line of her body surprised and touched him. A look of frustration crossed her beautiful face. He rose and placed his hands on her shoulders, massaging gently. Slowly they moved down, brushing the tops of her breasts through the cloth of her shirt, until they reached the small pearl-colored buttons.

Tenderly, he undid each one, bottom to top. When her hands covered his, he paused at the button over her bra. Did she want him to stop?

Pulling his hands, she popped the button off the fabric.

Lips curving in a playful, kittenish way, she grabbed his jacket and yanked it down his arms. Buttons flying, his shirt followed hers.

Now this is more like it.

This summer, it's going to be Steamy...

Samhain Publishing Presents
Midsummer Night's Steam
24 Sizzling ebooks
\$2.50 each

Duty wars with affection when Racor's greatest spy must decide who to trust, the evidence against her sexy suspects, or her heart?

A Scorching Seduction

© 2007 Marie Harte

Lt. Col. Trace N'Tre and Assassin Vaan C'Vail are hiding out in the only place the military can't touch them—on a pleasure planet in an island resort owned by Vaan's cousin. Gathering evidence on the outside, they know it's only a matter of time before they'll have to face their accuser, a high official in the Racor government.

Unbeknownst to them, Myst, Racor's greatest spy, has had her eyes on them for some time. The puzzle of these two alleged traitors doesn't fit, and Myst has made it her mission to find out why. But when the tables are turned and she's caught spying under the planet's hot summer suns, pleasure and affection confuse the issue, making her wonder who to trust—her heart, or the evidence against her lovers.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, frank language, ménage, m/m action, and hot sweaty adventure.

A young minister's celibacy is challenged by an earthy, Appalachian woman.

Blackberry Pie

© 2007 Bonnie Dee

On a blistering summer afternoon, Reverend Nathan Andrews climbs a mountain to meet backwoods members of his congregation. Fresh from

seminary, the young man isn't prepared for the onslaught of lust that hits him when he encounters a sensuous girl picking blackberries.

Determined to implement his outreach plan, he helps her harvest the fruit. But their potent sexual chemistry is too intense to deny and they engage in passionate sex surrounded by the beauty of nature.

Grace is earthy and primal, the opposite of the proper young lady he expects to take as a wife some day. Can there possibly be a future for a college-educated minister and a primitive mountain girl?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

Can a straight-laced business student and an indie boy with a thing for extremely personal electronics turn one night's wild ride into a trip to last forever?

Catching a Buzz

© 2007 Ally Blue

Adam Holderman isn't your typical twenty-something college boy. He prefers jazz to Goth, shuns body piercings and street-waif clothing, and despises the lack of vocabulary among his peers. Some call him uptight, but Adam doesn't see it that way. Just because he prefers his men articulate and well-groomed doesn't make him a stick-in-the-mud. He simply has standards, unlike most guys his age.

The new employee at Wild Waters Park, where Adam works, single-handedly throws a monkey wrench into Adam's orderly world view. Buzz Stiles wears eyeliner and black clothes, listens to emo bands, and talks like a teenage skate punk. He's the polar opposite of Adam's avowed "type". So why can't Adam get him out of his head?

When Adam finally agrees to go out with Buzz, he finds there's much more to Buzz than a hot body, a sharp wit, and a Goth fashion sense. Buzz is someone Adam can see himself being with for the long haul. But you need more than mind-melting sex to make a relationship last. Can they keep their hands off each other long enough to find out if they have what it takes?

Warning, this title contains the following: graphic language, explicit male/male sex, inappropriate use of personal electronic devices, and gratuitous disco dancing.

Her boyfriend is back...and that's a major problem. Antonia isn't ready to face the one man who shakes up her world...

Full Disclosure

© 2007 Mary Wine

Antonia doesn't need to look at forbidden fruit. The taste still clings to her lips, haunting her with just how good she and Danton had been together...

...Right up until he informed her that he had to get married because he was going to be a father. That just made it worse. Inside him was a man worth dreaming about, even if she knew it was in vain.

Danton always double-checked his facts. It was a habit that kept him alive during missions that should have killed him. His impromptu wedding was no exception. There wasn't going to be any consummation of the vows until he had a paternity test. But doing the right thing had cost him the one woman he loved.

Until the test came back negative. Now there is nothing that will stop him from coming back with the prize he'd been forced to abandon three

months ago. Toni was going to be his, right after she got the full disclosure on his hasty wedding and the blunt fact that he loved her.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language and bondage bedroom games with toys.

Does a full moon really cause naughty behavior?

Bad Moon Rising

© 2007 Leeanne Kenedy

Hailey Burke has heard that full moons cause people to behave in strange ways, but she never thought it would apply to her until the night she winds up in bed with a man she doesn't even like. So she'd had a temporary loss of sanity when she slept with Zack Creighton, the womanizing photographer. Big deal. Doesn't mean she's going to do it again, right?

Wrong.

Unfortunately, Zack has something else in store for Hailey. He's liked the sassy redhead from the moment he met her, but he can't get the stubborn woman to let go of the misconceptions she's formed about him. Sure, he's played the field, but Zack is no womanizer, and he has no intention of leaving things at one night. Once he's had a taste of Hailey, he wants another. And he's determined to convince her that he's not the bad boy she's always thought.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

How can masturbating in a hotel Jacuzzi lead to love? Cassidy Yates is about to find out.

Beyond the Tears

© 2007 Michelle Cary

A year after her husband died while serving in Iraq, Cassidy Yates still nurses a broken heart. Thinking a vacation will help, she agrees to a week in Key West with her best friend, April. Upon arrival, April suggests a way for Cassidy to ease her pain—sleep with the sexiest stud she can find.

Not the type to bed hop, Cassidy refuses April's idea and ends up alone. Abandoned by her friend, Cassidy decides to take a nighttime swim. In the Jacuzzi, she masturbates to the memories of making love to her husband. Mortified by her own behavior, Cassidy retreats to her hotel room, hoping no one witnessed her exhibition.

Chase Dempsey is a man with rugged good looks and a killer smile. He isn't looking to fall in love and only wants few days of relaxation before returning to his Texas ranch. Still, he's curious after watching Cassidy's erotic display and wonders what makes the gorgeous redhead tick. When he finds her dropped sarong, he realizes she's just given him the opportunity to find out...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Is their passion real, or only a mirage?

La Mirage

© 2007 Jennifer Colgan

On a lonely stretch of I-95 in the middle of the Nevada desert, journalist Savanna Blaine and photographer Ben Lantano find themselves stranded by engine trouble on their way back from an assignment. Their quest for a gas station leads them to La Mirage, a beautiful resort nestled in a secluded canyon where they are the only guests.

Invited to spend the night in lush accommodations, passion flares between Savanna and Ben who have suppressed their hidden desires long enough. A single touch ignites an unforgettable night in each other's arms, but the next day, when La Mirage mysteriously disappears, they're left to wonder, is their newfound intimacy real or nothing more than a trick of the summer heat?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, oral sex.

One tempting heiress. Two sexy cowboys. Three means fun beyond her wildest dreams—until her Cord starts to unravel.

Take Me

© 2007 Mackenzie McKade

Thoroughbred rancher's daughter Caitlyn Culver has always wanted playboy Cord Daily, even after her daddy threatened to bankrupt him. But winning a racehorse in a poker game means Cord is no longer just a cattle rancher. He's come back wealthier and more wicked than ever.

Snaring this cowboy won't be easy for Cait, and keeping him will be even harder. Still, his sexual antics and taste for ménages won't scare her off. She knows the best way to snag a man like Cord is to pretend

indifference. So when he comes onto her in the barn, she plays along—only to leave him tied to a ladder, aroused and unfulfilled.

It's payback time.

Cord seeks out Cait and brings along his playboy cousin, Dolan Crane. The two cowboys are enough to set her body afire. She's bound and determined to resist their sexual allure, but ends up experiencing a night beyond her wildest fantasies. Now Dolan wants Cait for himself. Cait's father wants Cord's racehorse. And Cord wants Caitlyn to choose—her father's money or her cowboy's love.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, and BDSM.

Can a jaded lawyer and a reformed criminal really find true love in the tropics?

Fijian Fling

© 2007 Sami Lee

Dumped by her boyfriend and on thin ice in her law career, Sophie Edison badly needs to re-evaluate her life. She escapes to her favorite hideaway on the tropical island of Fiji, where the attentions of the resort owner – the enigmatic and lethally sexy Dominick 'Nick' Dufour – prove a temptation too great to resist. Nick's obvious desire to take her to bed is just the salve her battered confidence needs, and she embarks on an affair that leads her to uncharted waters. Before long she starts to wonder if she can ever go back to her old life.

Nick has lusted after Sophie for years. When she turns up at his secluded resort alone for the first time he wastes no time in making her his lover. Sophie is his perfect match in bed, and in the ocean and the

shower...but although he might long for something more, Nick knows theirs is just a holiday fling. For he is keeping the secret of his checkered past from Sophie and it could prove the ultimate deal breaker...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language.

Newlywed Catalina Robinson thinks it's not possible to be more satisfied...but then she learns what it's like to love two men.

Honeymoon Castaways

© 2007 Dawn Halliday

Cat has just married Dave Robinson, the man of her dreams. Their Best Man, Andreas Bailey, is flying them to their honeymoon resort in Barbados. But over the middle of the ocean, something goes horribly wrong...

Cat, Dave and Andreas find themselves stranded on an uninhabited Caribbean island. Though she's never thought of him as more than a friend, Cat finds herself connecting to Andreas in a way she never expected and is shocked and aroused to learn that her husband feels the same way. Together, the three of them discover a heat and passion uninhibited by the conventions of society. But will they ever be rescued? And what will happen to their unusual relationship once they return home?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, voyeurism and skinny dipping.

Two men and a bottle of nut cream...

Nut Cream

© 2007 Jade Buchanan

Nut [nuht] noun, verb.

1. A dry fruit consisting of an edible kernel or meat enclosed in a woody or leathery shell.

2. Slang, Vulgar – a testis.

Cream [kreem] noun.

1. A soft solid or thick liquid containing medicaments or other specific ingredients, applied externally for a therapeutic, or cosmetic purpose.

2. Slang, Vulgar – to have an orgasm.

Toby Madison is coming into his mating phase, and is leaking pheromones all over the place. He is about to find out what happens to bad little wolves, in the best possible way. Cliff Bullen is more than ready to place his mark on the man he has always wanted as his mate – with a little help from a bottle of nut cream.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit male/male sex and graphic language.

Welcome to Fantasm Island! Leave your inhibitions at the door and let your fantasies soar.

Fantasmagorical

© 2007 Annmarie McKenna

That's what the brochure said anyway. A week long fling with a stranger. Where's the harm in that? Take a compatibility quiz and a slew of other health tests, sign a strict privacy agreement and give license to any sexual fantasy you've ever had. Evan Knight couldn't wait.

Gabe and Lance have been searching for their perfect third for what seems like forever. One look at the woman he and his best friend and lover Lance have chosen to claim during her time on the island, and Gabe thinks they may have finally found her.

But what if Evan isn't interested in more than the fling she signed up for? Or worse, what if she can't handle two men who are into each other too? Gabe and Lance have one week to convince Evan that the three of them belong together...and they'll use every bit of seduction in their arsenal to make sure when the fantasy ends, their reality together will only just be beginning.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit fantasmagorical sex, graphic language, ménage a trois, and hot nekkid man-love.

Falling in lust with a sexy Elvis impersonator gets complicated when Vanessa discovers the real Elvis Presley may have hoaxed his death.

Hunk of Burnin' Love

© 2007 Veronica Wilde

Summer should mean hot men and toe-curling sex—at least that's what Vanessa believes, but a bad break-up has left her spending her summer nights alone. Then her sex life erupts into flames when she meets two very different Elvis impersonators on the same night. One is a sexy young musician who gets her all shook up in a steamy midnight

swim. The other is a graying older man who looks just a little too much like Elvis Presley for comfort.

Vanessa can't help falling in love with her new summer hottie. But their burning love gets complicated when the mysterious older impersonator begins dropping disturbing hints about his true identity—hints that suggest Elvis Presley never died at all.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Chastity Cuthbert is determined to bring love and romance to the Last Frontier.

Ladies! Meet Red Hot Alaskan Men

© 2007 Nancy Lindquist

Chastity Cuthbert is in love with love. Its too bad that she's so busy working on everyone else's happily ever after that there's no time left to work on hers. Her company, The Alaskan Connection, matches single women with sexy Alaskan hunks. Business is booming. Until Dave Wellington drags his personal vendetta against outsiders right to her doorstep.

Dave Wellington, Mayor of Smithfield, Alaska won't allow Chastity's cadre of red-lipped floozies to take over his town. A she-bitch from the lower forty-eight broke his brother's heart and no one else is gonna go through that. Not if he can help it. Besides, Smithfield is welcoming tourists for the first time. The male residents need to keep their minds on business. Not sex.

Determined to change Chastity's mind, he travels to Chicago to talk her out of her plan. Chas is so pissed off at the sexy mayor that she forgets her "no one-night stands" motto. Right into Dave's bed.

Now she has to travel to Smithfield and face him. She's strong. She can face Dave again. Just because she snuck out of his hotel room in the middle of the night doesn't mean she's a big ole chicken. Right?

Warning: This book contains hot naked Alaskan guys, all looking for love. Read it at your own risk. I am not responsible for any sudden urges to go to the Last Frontier, nor travel costs incurred. Oh, and there's explicit sex too.

Sometimes the truth is the greatest aphrodisiac.

Liaisons in Jubilee

© 2007 Jamie Craig

Katie Mayes is the Executive Manager for a large, east coast beach resort. Unfortunately, her boss has discovered her one secret – her seasonal flings with Caleb Beckett, the Entertainment Director for the resort. Company policy dictates no internal fraternization, especially between managers and their subordinates, so her boss gives Katie a choice. Caleb or her job.

She avoids personal encounters with Caleb, until one fateful night a week before the resort's big summer launch. Then, she runs into him at a local nightclub. When Caleb approaches her, she tries to give him the cold shoulder, but he follows her onto the dance floor where the music, her desire, and his persistence break her will. She claims it's only one

more night before they break it off completely, but Caleb insists on more. Far from an ending, he views the summer as their true beginning.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, spanking, light bondage.

*A bad marriage is like a fierce thunderstorm on a fragile field of wheat.
Will a proud Texas cowboy and a stubborn Boston-bred lawyer find
shelter from a real summer storm long enough to rebuild their love?*

Second Wind

© 2007 Dee S. Knight

Cocky cowboy Rafe Walker doesn't plan to meet a beautiful woman in designer jeans and ostrich boots at the rodeo, but the beauty catches his gaze just before the gate opens for his bull ride. Talk about losing focus! With one glance, his thoughts are of sex-scented sheets, not hard, sawdust-covered dirt.

A city girl like her would never fit in on his ranch, but a weekend in Dallas? Yes, Ma'am, she'll do just fine. Little does he expect a ride wilder than with any bull. She grabs hold of his heart and his hottest fantasies and holds on tight.

Cathy Fitzgerald, raised in a wealthy eastern family, half falls in love with the rakish cowboy after one impulsive weekend of wild sex. She returns to Boston, breaks off her near engagement and waits to hear from Rafe. After months of silence, he surprises Cathy with a proposal. It's a shock to both of them when she accepts, and moves to his ranch in nowhere, Texas.

They soon find that passion alone can't sustain a marriage. Rafe's pride and Cathy's long hours at work breed distrust and broken hearts. Giving their marriage its second wind will take an act of nature.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex and graphic language.

Life's not always about the journey, but who takes you on the ride.

Custom Ride

© 2007 K.A. Mitchell

A stint in the Air Force left Ryan MacRae with a bitter memory of life in the closet. Jeff Allstein is a mechanic who has too much to lose if his private life becomes public. The heat of their attraction boils over on a stormy summer night, but satisfying that need only makes them both crave more.

Their searing connection makes it hard for Ryan to understand the road blocks Jeff continually puts down. Ryan will have to buckle up if he's going to find love at the end of his custom ride.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit male/male sex, graphic language.

What Leilani wants, Leilani gets...and she always gets her man.

Skin to Skin

© 2007 Dionne Galace

What Leilani wants, Leilani gets. That is, until she meets the enigmatic Oliver Clayton, her new neighbor. For some reason, Oliver seems to be intent on avoiding her even though he's obviously interested. Leilani has tried to everything to get his attention, from wearing skimpy little outfits to walking a neighbor's dog six times in front of his yard. Leilani wants Oliver...and she always gets her man.

In the heat of the summer, the temperature's not only thing rising. Luckily, Oliver has that pool in his backyard and Leilani knows just how to cool off...

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, light bondage.

Hot summer nights make people do crazy things.

Spontaneous

© 2007 Karen Erickson

Sophie Kincaid doesn't want to be attracted to her boss but she is. Sick and tired of being used by men, she's sworn them off. But her hot and now slightly drunk boss just became too hard to resist.

His girlfriend dumped him and now Ian Grey is drowning his sorrows in alcohol, something he never does. Flirting with Sophie the sexy bartender inspires him to do even more things he'd never consider. Like have hot sex with her in the storage room.

They can't deny their attraction for each other but Sophie's afraid she doesn't measure up. And what does Ian want from her anyway? She'll have a naked good time figuring it out...

Warning this title contains the following: Hot, steamy, explicit sex and graphic language.

Roping the naughty girl is all fun and games until someone falls in love.

Knotty Girl

© 2007 Maggie Casper

Shelby Langley was not sub, slave or Mistress, she was merely kinky. Point her to a BDSM club where she could watch and experience pretty much anything the mind could conjure, without the tangled web of an actual relationship, and she was in orgasmic bliss.

Long into the lifestyle, Craig Jensen was able to spot a submissive in denial from a mile away. Usually he left them be to find their own way, only keeping an eye out for their safety while on his turf, but there was something about the sweet, young blonde who had a love for rope bondage that called for him to claim her as his own.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, anal play and an overall spanking good time.

When a school teacher with a backbone of steel meets a hard-nosed lawman, more than the desert will heat up.

Marielle's Marshal

© 2007 Beth Williamson

Marielle Bloom never expected to be the victim of a stagecoach robbery stranded in the desert in the middle of summer with a sexy marshal who sets her body on fire with one look from his steely eyes.

Marshal Ramsey Whitfield doesn't know what to make of the outspoken teacher, but he does know she feels perfect in his arms. As they trek together across the barren landscape, searching for civilization, they discover that their desire for each other is hotter than the desert sand.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, violence.

When a man who isn't human is accidentally enslaved by a woman who has no idea what he is, the result is magical.

Sealed With a Kiss

© 2007 Lila Dubois

Signing up for a one-week adventure vacation, Helena expects to be kayaking in the Pacific, not having every sexual fantasy fulfilled in her guide's bed.

Ocean is more than he seems, his kayaking business a cover for his deepest secret.

When Helena accidentally enacts old magic, enslaving Ocean, he doesn't know if she is the luckiest girl on earth, or an enemy of his kind, bent on imprisoning him forever. Ocean's strange behavior worries Helena but she's distracted by the mind-blowing sex.

After the truth is revealed, will their budding love be Sealed with a Kiss?

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, voyeurism, and fantasy fulfillment.

When his girlfriend demands he settle down and start a family, Cole Winchester has some hard decisions to make. Marry his girlfriend, or finally own up to his taboo attraction to other men.

Taboo Desires

© 2007 Amanda Young

Cole Winchester feels like a rat, boxed into a corner. Faced with the prospect of being trapped in a passionless marriage, he makes the hard choice to end his relationship.

A run in with an old friend on the beach, propels Cole's fantasies out into the open and forces him to confront his taboo desires. Before him, lies the choice of a lifetime—embrace his desire for another man and all the pitfalls that come along with it, or return to his girlfriend and live out the safe half-life he carved for himself.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, graphic language, and hot nekkid man-love.

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