



MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S STEAM
TEMPERATURE'S RISING

CUSTOM RIDE

KA MITCHELL

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Samhain Publishing, Ltd.
512 Forest Lake Drive
Warner Robins, Georgia 31093

Custom Ride
Copyright © 2007 by K. A. Mitchell
Cover by Anne Cain
ISBN: 1-59998-590-X
www.samhainpublishing.com

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First Samhain Publishing, Ltd. electronic publication: August 2007

Custom Ride

K.A. Mitchell

Dedication

For all of you who didn't let me give up, especially B.F.S.

Chapter One

Ryan didn't do random hookups.

But try telling that to the hand around his dick.

Okay, so maybe sometimes he did do random hookups. But not on a single beer and five club sodas, and certainly not in public—or as public as the space between the cigarette machine and the wall under the strobing lights of the Playhouse. It was dark, and the guy behind him was pretty big so he wasn't exactly providing everyone on the dance floor behind them with free porn, but still this wasn't exactly Ryan's style.

Which led him straight back to that hand on his dick, the hand belonging to the guy behind him. Ryan was six-foot-one and this guy was still tall enough to rest his chin on his shoulder as he licked and mouthed the spot under Ryan's ear. Even if he didn't do random hookups, it was Gay Pride weekend, and Ryan had come down to Minneapolis for the party, so he wouldn't have objected if the guy wanted to move this somewhere private. That had been what Ryan had been hoping when the guy had started dancing with him, grinding into his ass from behind while keeping him pinned with an arm around his waist.

After steering them to this little space, the hand had undone both their jeans before pulling Ryan's dick out through his fly. Ryan couldn't deny some curiosity about the rest of the guy. The stranger jacked Ryan's cock like it was his own, knew the perfect strokes, timing and twists, dragging him to the edge and making him bite his lip to keep in the moans before backing off when Ryan was a breath away from coming.

Ryan looked down as the flashes of light revealed the wet, red slide of his cock through those fingers, the bunch and shift of muscles in the forearm beneath the swirling inks of his tattoo. The design roped around, ending in an open-mouthed dragon's head at the base of his thumb, the tongue curling to the first knuckle, a knuckle that was rubbing right under the head of his dick, while the other fingers kept up their long hot pulls.

Ryan's hips bucked, and the guy's dick caught the top of his ass. Ryan pressed in closer, giving that thick wet head more friction as the guy rocked them, plastered them together with sweat and need.

The stranger's voice rasped in his ear, a deep rumble that vibrated against the skin made wet by his mouth. "Bet your ass feels even better inside, huh? And this hair"—his free hand tugged—"bet it'd be perfect for pulling when you suck me off."

If Ryan knew his name, he'd have told him to stop fucking with him and get him the hell off, then he'd show him just how good his mouth and ass were. A sense of self-preservation that had helped him survive four years in the Air Force told him this was crazy—if not dangerous—letting some guy whose face he'd never seen jerk him off in a crowded bar, but his dick told that part of his brain to kindly fuck off. Ryan reached behind him, his hand curling around the back of the guy's neck, fingers brushing the fuzzy edge of a military buzz cut.

The stranger's mouth landed on his neck again. A groan vibrated against his skin. Ryan ground his ass back into the guy as he finally finished him off, his hand blurring on Ryan's cock. Ryan's muscles locked as the jolt pushed that first burst out of him, the hand on his dick moving faster, better with the slide of come. That knowing hand pulled every last shot out of his dick, as Ryan's head dropped back, unable to strangle the sound that came out of him with that last rope of come. Seconds later, wet heat splashed against the small of his back in time with a hard suck at the base of his neck.

A tongue soothed the bite, a hoarse voice murmured, "Sorry. So fucking hot," and something rough swiped at the stickiness on his back. Then the hand keeping their hips together was gone. By the time Ryan had tucked himself back into his jeans and turned around, the guy had disappeared into the crowd.



As soon as the drive-in marquee got close enough for him to read the title, Ryan turned to glare at his brother. "Another penguin movie?"

David shrugged. “Hey, you’ll like it. There’s a subplot with two male penguins raising an orphaned chick. A very gay-positive message.”

“Penguins!” was the happy cry from his niece.

“Yes, honey,” Ryan said with another glare at his brother. “Penguins.”

David ignored his daughter’s pleas and parked his Land Rover toward the back.

“We’ll be able to see just fine, honey. Daddy’s car is very tall.” Ryan coughed into his hand, muttering, “Overcompensation.”

“You could walk home, you know.”

“You’re the one who dragged me here.” Not that Ryan would have turned him down. Ryan loved spending time with his niece.

David fished a juice out of the built-in cooler and handed it back to his daughter. “You didn’t have other plans, did you?”

“No.” He’d been plan-free since last weekend and the hookup he hadn’t been able to get out of his head. Yeah, it had been hot—okay really hot—but hardly something he should have spent a week thinking about. The guy had probably gone on to do three more strangers that night.

“It’s been awhile since Paul, though, hasn’t it?”

“What are you, my therapist?”

“You in therapy?”

“Daddy, I’m hot.”

“I’m sorry, honey.” David turned the car back on and powered down the windows. There still wasn’t a breath of air. The sticky night wrapped the car in a wool blanket.

“Here, Holly, you don’t have to be belted in.” Ryan crawled back and unfastened the belt holding her in her car seat. “I’m going for soda and popcorn.”

David reached for his wallet, but Ryan popped open his door.

“I think I can spring for it, big brother. I do have a job, even if it doesn’t pay like yours.”

The air outside the Rover was a bit thinner than the air in, and Ryan decided to take his time. The previews were running before he’d crossed a few rows.

Three rows from the concession stand, he saw it. A forearm dangling from the window of a pickup, that dragon tattoo twining around it, and he knew the tongue would curl right to the first knuckle of the thumb.

He stopped, his sneakers digging into the gravel. It was ridiculous. The odds were damned slim that he'd run into the same guy who'd jerked him off in Minneapolis last weekend up here in St. Cloud. But the hair was the same as he'd pictured, a grown-out buzz, and with the light of the opening Antarctic scenes glowing white on the screen, he could see that it was a light brown. He deliberately cut in front of the pickup, trying to get a glimpse inside the cab, and saw a blonde girl a couple years older than Holly in the passenger seat.

Fuck. Ryan's stand on random hookups could get a little fuzzy, but he was really clear on not messing with people who were married, or considering his basket-case of a brother, recently divorced. And he sure as hell didn't want to be anyone's maybe-I'm-gay test case.

The concession stand was lit with those god-awful yellow bulbs that supposedly didn't attract mosquitoes, but as Ryan swatted one of the bloodsuckers on his arm he couldn't see that it made much difference. The line was still full of impatient parents and whiny kids. By the time he'd paid the cashier, the guy was standing at the entrance, and Ryan could see everything he'd only been able to feel.

Nobody should look that good in piss-yellow light. His T-shirt clung to a broad chest and tight abs. His eyes were a piercing blue, so clear Ryan thought they must be contacts. Light stubble covered a jaw he could almost taste, the line sharp, chin broad. Those blue eyes raked over Ryan's body, and the smile that pulled on the corners of the guy's mouth made blood pulse in Ryan's cock.

That impulse got checked the second the blonde girl from the truck came up and grabbed the guy's hand. "Dad, I want some ice cream."

Ryan stepped around them on his way back to the Rover, but he took the time to walk past the pickup again and read the "Connor's Custom Rides" lettering on the door—which was useless information in spite of what his dick thought. Even another hookup

was out of the question if the guy was married or playing straight. He wasn't stepping on that land mine.

He felt a breeze lift his hair and heard it start to snap in the trees around the screen. He smiled. It was going to storm, and he'd be spared an evening brooding over the wasted potential of Custom Ride guy with no distraction but anthropomorphized penguins.



Ryan's phone rang at seven-forty-five Tuesday morning. David. Of course.

"What?"

"I need you to pick me up at work at noon."

"Why?"

"Because the car had work done, and I'm picking it up then."

"Why is it that your car always needs to be picked up on Tuesdays?"

"Because it's your day off, and you can drive me."

"I hate you. Noon? And it's at the dealers?"

"No, this is the Mustang. It's at Connor's. You've been there before."

Ryan almost dropped the phone. "You know, now that I'm awake I just remembered the other tech is on vacation and they need me to cover in the Sauk Rapids office."

"This is because Dad left the Mustang to me and not to you, right?"

"No, David, it's not. I told you before, I didn't care and I certainly don't need something shiny and red to prove I've got a dick."

"Rye, I really need the ride."

It was a garage. There were probably a half-dozen mechanics, and he wouldn't be there long. "Fine."



Yeah, he probably wouldn't be seeing tattoo guy, and if he did there were reasons why Ryan couldn't get acquainted with more than the guy's talented left hand, but he still changed his T-shirt five times before settling on the green one that even Paul had grudgingly admitted looked good on him.

David insisted Ryan drive around the back so he could transfer his briefcase to the Mustang more easily. When Ryan rolled his eyes, his brother punched his arm.

"What? It's hot out."

"It's July. It gets that way every year." So much for just slowing down long enough to drop David off.

"Well, some of us have to wear ties to our job."

Ryan wondered if it had been a mistake to come back to St. Cloud. Every time he and David were together, they acted out the same sibling drama, and it was even worse with Mom in the mix.

"Some of us were smart enough to go into a field where we can wear comfortable clothes all day." He stopped as close as he could to where the Mustang was parked.

David left his briefcase and suit coat in the car as he got out. "Wait for me. I want to make sure everything's all set." He slammed the door shut before Ryan could answer.

He felt like an idiot sitting out here with the a/c running, would feel even dumber wandering around the lot. It wasn't as if he didn't like cars, especially classic cars, but if he got out, it would be like he was looking for an excuse to run into tattoo guy; if he sat in the car, it was like he was avoiding him.

He shut off the car. Heat hit him instantly. After two minutes, the air was impossible to breathe. He opened the door. A bike was between his car and the back entrance to the garage, and he examined it as he passed, chrome blinding in the sunlight.

With the shimmering heat, the dark opening was too tempting to resist, and Ryan ducked inside the garage. It was cavernous, cluttered without being messy. David was off in the far corner at some kind of counter and even at this distance, Ryan could see the light brown brush cut on the mechanic settling his brother's bill. He went back out into the heat and glare.

Ryan checked out the bike again, tried to picture himself on it, laughed and walked down past a line of cars in the back lot. He stopped between a gleaming late 60's Camaro and a disintegrating car from a 1930's gangster movie. The car looked like it had given birth *Alien*-style, with a gaping hole exploding out from the roof. He tried to figure out what caused it.

"Thanks, Rye!"

He glanced up in time to see his brother peeling out of the lot in the Mustang. He ought to head back to his car, but the sun baked in a lassitude that kept him looking at the rusted-out car. Maybe it was a relic from a real gangster, taken out when police had launched some kind of explosive into the backseat. He was reaching a hand toward the fragmented metal when a voice said, "Tree."

"Huh?" He turned. Tattoo guy had come up behind him.

"A tree did it. Grew right through the floor and tore right through the roof. It's going to be gorgeous when we get her fixed up though. A '37 Buick." The guy's voice curled over Ryan's ears like smoke, a deep graveled edge hugging the words.

The guy was definitely not taking gay for a test spin. He was subtly teasing the edge of Ryan's space, his eyes holding his a little too long to be misinterpreted as anything but interest. Ryan wondered if he even remembered him from that night.

He returned the look, watching the way the unbuttoned grey work shirt stretched across his shoulders, framing a grease-smeared white undershirt, sweat-stuck to hard pecs. Ryan wished mechanics still had names stitched above the pocket.

As if he were reading his mind, the guy stuck out a hand. "Jeff."

He reached for Jeff's hand, but before he could offer his own name, Jeff was saying it in that husky voice. "Ryan, right?"

"Yeah, how—"

"Your brother."

"Oh." He couldn't wait to get *that* phone call.

Jeff shook his hand firmly, but not in some kind of out-to-prove-who's-butcher way, and then didn't let go, leaving them fused at the palms.

“I remember you.” Jeff broke the ice, but Ryan felt hot all over. “From the club.”

“Oh...”

“Or should I say, I remember your ass a hell of a lot better.” Jeff’s grin was all sharp white teeth, and he took another step closer. The dense summer air squeezed between them, every breath syrupy and thick. Ryan felt the heat in his cheeks and was relieved he was too tan to show much of a blush.

“I’d still like to,” Jeff said suddenly.

“What?”

“Find out if my dick’ll feel better in you.” Jeff leaned in and dropped Ryan’s hand, fingers skimming the ends of Ryan’s hair. “I can get out of here by six, if you want to meet me,” Jeff offered, his breath licking hot against Ryan’s cheeks.

“Okay.”

As Jeff filled the last bit of space between them, Ryan balanced himself with a hand on the searing hood of the Camaro. Ryan had never had a guy come on this strong before; his dick felt like a pike shoved down his pants. Jeff was close enough to feel it too, he had to. Ryan wondered what Jeff would do if Ryan turned and bent over the burning hood behind him, let Jeff fuck him as the heat took them over, turned them boneless and liquid until they slid onto the ground in satisfaction.

Jeff’s words jarred him out of his fantasy. “If you bring beer, I’ll bring pizza.”

“Sure.” He met Jeff’s eyes, holding his gaze, hoping he sounded as self-assured as he felt. Jeff peeled away from him, eyes hot, his hands subtly adjusting himself in his jeans.

Ryan headed toward his car.

“Ryan?”

He turned back, surprised at the way his gut tightened.

Jeff winked. “What do you like on your pizza?”

Chapter Two

Ryan had barely been home long enough to shower when the phone rang. He was still toweling his hair dry as he picked it up.

“So, dude. Garage guy.”

He’d known David would call. Sometime Ryan wished David had actually had an issue with his sexuality. It was embarrassing to have his big brother tease him about hot guys. Then he thought of the way his mother was constantly making the sign of the cross over him and remembered how nice it was that someone in his family didn’t believe he was touched by Satan.

“Something wrong with your car?”

David laughed. “Yeah, good one. Man, I never would have pegged that guy and I’ve been bringing the car there for at least two years. My gaydar must be on the fritz.”

“You don’t have gaydar. You’re straight. And what makes you think that guy”—he managed to avoid saying Jeff’s name at the last second—“is gay?”

“Dude. The way he asked about you—Rye, the guy was practically drooling.”

Ryan caught himself before he could blurt out an excited, *Really?* “Was there a point to this call, or are we just revisiting high school? And you still can’t come to my tenth reunion as my date because you want to score Katie Thatcher.”

“Katie *Stacker*, man, I wonder if she’s still hot.”

“David.”

“Okay. So do you think there’s any chance you could get me a discount the next time the Mustang needs an oil change or something?”

“Okay, I’m hanging up now.”

“Wait—Mom wants you to come to dinner Sunday.”

“And there’s something wrong with her phone?”

“Rye—”

“I’ll think about it.”

But he didn’t. Because pretty much all he could think about was tonight. He thought about it during a second shower, thought about the thick length of cock against his ass and grabbed an extra three pillow packs of lube from the drawer next to his bed. He thought about Jeff’s blue-eyed wink and splurged the extra bucks for a six pack of Sam Adams, thought about how that gravelly voice could make even pizza toppings sound sexy and bought a twelve-pack of prelubed condoms.

When he got to the garage, the Camaro was parked in front, and Ryan couldn’t resist getting out to check the edge of the hood for his handprint.

“Might need a touch up.” There was amusement in the smoky voice that spoke behind him.

Ryan turned and leaned back against the hood. “Think the owner will mind?”

“Don’t know. Doesn’t have one yet.”

Ryan looked back over his shoulder at the glow of wax, the shine on the windows.

“It’s a junker I fixed up to sell. I saw you looking at it before, thought you might want to try it out.”

The activity Ryan had had in mind involving the Camaro wasn’t anything that could be done in the front of the lot, but before he could explain, Jeff tossed him a key.

“Want to drive it? I’ll be right back.”

Ryan transferred the cooler to the backseat of the Camaro, and Jeff came back out with a pizza box and a wide smile. Jeff had changed into a plain blue T-shirt, one Ryan was sure he knew set off his eyes and hugged the definition of his biceps and pecs and—Ryan bit his tongue back into his mouth—lickable abs.

Ryan wanted to tell him he really didn’t have to try this hard considering Ryan could already taste that thick head sliding over his lips, but it was kind of sweet that Jeff was making the effort.

“You can drive, really. We’ve got insurance that covers cars taken off the lot.”

Ryan eased into the leather seat, the trapped heat warming his ass and thighs through his worn-thin jeans like skin-to-skin contact. “If you’re that worried about my driving...”

Jeff swung in and leaned over to murmur in his ear. “I thought you might like the chance to drive—at least for now.”

Ryan’s dick seemed to catch Jeff’s double meaning before his brain did, a quick kick of warmth spreading out from his balls. He turned the ignition and was startled by the deep rumble of the engine. “Where are we heading?”

Jeff’s directions took them out to the state park, the car responding so smoothly and powerfully beneath him that Ryan could finally understand why people viewed cars as something besides a way to get from one point to another. Power vibrated up his spine, tingled in his fingers.

They didn’t talk on the way, just let the force of wind through the open windows and the purr of the engine fill the car. Ryan was almost disappointed when he pulled off in an out-of-the way picnic area after more than an hour.

Three slices of pizza and two beers later the sun had faded leaving behind a comfortable heat to match the growing one in his stomach. Jeff was good company even without their dicks involved. Ryan was kind of surprised to find Jeff cared little about any of the popular sports—even racing—but that they shared a passion for martial arts movies, the good, the bad and the idiotic.

“If I ever have time to get back into a dojo, I’m going to see if I can finally finish my brown levels.” Jeff set his empty down on the picnic table and tapped his foot where it rested on the bench.

“I still say Pai Mei in *Kill Bill* could handle Tony Jaa.” Ryan reached back into the cooler for a third beer.

“Because you’re an old man yourself.”

“Do not insult the master. I’d hate to think of you losing one of those beautiful eyes.”

“Beautiful?” Jeff’s lips twitched.

“Uh—” He shouldn’t have been so stupid on just two beers in a little less than two hours.

“You think I’m pretty, is that it?” Jeff leaned in, brows raised over the eyes in question. In the dark those eyes shone like a lake in starlight.

“Can I change my answer?”

“To?”

“Hot.”

“Depends.”

“On what?” Ryan forgot about the beer in his hands until the cold wet shock hit his stomach, and he shoved the bottle to the other side of the table.

“Which one gets me laid?”

Ryan licked his lips. “Pretty.” He caught Jeff’s head in his hands. “Beautiful.” He leaned in until his lips were resting against Jeff’s. “And hot.”

Jeff laughed against his mouth. “Guy’s gotta have all three, huh? And here I was hoping you were easy.”

“Try me.”

The kiss warmed slow and deep, buzzing along his nerves like the summer night around them. Jeff’s tongue flicked the corners of his mouth before stroking his, sharing and blending the rich malty taste of the beer.

Ryan slid his hands into Jeff’s hair, the short spikes softer than they looked. Jeff’s thumb traced his jaw, rubbed behind his ear while his other hand pushed his T-shirt out of the way to get his warm hand on the skin of his back. He followed Jeff’s push to deepen the kiss, bringing their chests together, pressing forward until Jeff was stretched out along the picnic table beneath him.

When his hands slid under Jeff’s shirt, finally brushing the hard muscles he’d been dying to touch, Jeff broke off the kiss. “Maybe we should move this to the car.”

They ditched their shirts on the way. Ryan hadn’t made out in a car’s backseat in...well, ever. Cramming two six-foot-plus frames into the backseat of a car was an adventure. He got an elbow to the ribs and bruised his shin on the seat edge before he managed to get Jeff back under him, all those long muscles pressing hot and hard into his skin. Jeff’s hands cupped his ass.

“I’ve been wanting to get my hands on this ass for more than a year.”

“Huh?” Ryan arched up.

“I’ve been watching you since you started bringing the car in.”

Realization hit him like a bucket of cold water. David, of course. “I think you’re with the wrong brother.”

“Nope.” Jeff’s hand slipped past the loose waistband of his jeans. “I’d never make a mistake about an ass like this. Your brother’s been bringing the car in for two years. You started picking him up the May before last.”

That was when he’d moved back to St. Cloud. And Jeff had been checking him out since then?

“Why didn’t you say something before?”

“I’m shy.”

“You gave me a hand job in the middle of a club because you’re shy?”

Jeff laughed, belly shaking against him. Ryan was really starting to like that sound. He liked the kiss that followed even more. He couldn’t remember laughing through kisses before.

They were both still laughing as Ryan tongued his way across Jeff’s jaw, down his neck, over his Adam’s apple.

Jeff pulled his mouth up and kissed him hard, hand on his ass, fingers working toward the crease. Ryan’s dick ached, trapped in his jeans. Ryan shifted until he could pull one of the pillow packs out of his pocket, and Jeff’s hand reached for his fly.

The opening chords of “Sunshine of Your Love” rang through the car.

“Son of a bitch.” Jeff pushed up; Ryan hit his head on the ceiling as he sat up.

“Are you on call, like with a tow truck?”

“No.” Jeff flipped open his phone and looked at the display. “This better be fucking good. Yeah?” he said into the phone.

The one-sided conversation was easy to follow.

“Jesus Christ, what the hell for?... How the hell did she fall out of bed?... Damn it, Val, were you even home?... Yeah. I’ll be there as soon as I can... About an hour... Because I am the fuck an hour away.” He snapped the phone closed. “I’m sorry.”

“Is your daughter all right?”

“Yeah. She might have broken her collarbone. I’m really sorry about this.”

“No. It’s fine. Do you want me to come with you?”

“No. I’ll drop you at the garage for your car.”

As they got out, Ryan tossed him the key before dumping their trash and collecting his cooler from the picnic table. Jeff had already turned the car around when Ryan slid in next to him.

“Ex-wife?”

“Wife?” Jeff’s tight laugh was nothing like the ones he kissed him with. “No. We made Anna. And that was the extent of it.”

The light from the dash was enough to see that Jeff’s expression had closed off. Ryan didn’t press. They were back at the garage in forty minutes. Ryan hopped out.

“I’ll call you.”

Well, Ryan hadn’t expected to hear that until after they’d fucked. “Let me know how she is. Oh, wait let me give you—”

“Got it from your brother.” Jeff flashed a crooked smile and sped off.



Ryan’s phone rang at quarter of two. Fuck. He grabbed it and took a deep breath. “Yeah.”

“Sorry to wake you. Maybe this was a bad idea.”

Ryan shook off the sleep and dread. “Jeff?”

“Yeah.”

“How is she?”

“Fine. It was her collarbone. Doc says it’s not a bad break. She’s a little pissed she didn’t get a cast, just a sling. I stayed with her until she fell asleep.”

“I’m glad she’s all right. And I’m glad you called.”

“Well, I did feel kind of bad. I don’t want to get a reputation as a cocktease.”

“Huh?” Sleep and sudden arousal at the shift in conversation deteriorated Ryan’s vocabulary.

“I hate to leave a guy hanging.”

Ryan was getting pretty familiar with that teasing smoke and sex tone in Jeff’s voice, and the tingle it sent to his balls. “And exactly what were you going to do about it?”

“Get you off.”

The tingle turned into a rush of blood. “Oh, really? I don’t hear anyone at my door.”

“Well, I think I could do it from here, if you’re up for it.”

“Could be.” Ryan slipped his hand through the slit in his briefs.

“Good, because I really like that sound you make when you come.”

Ryan’s breath hitched.

“That’s a nice sound too.”

Ryan slapped blindly at the nightstand, digging for one of the pillow packs he’d tossed there after tonight’s disappointing ending.

“What’s that?”

Ryan figured Jeff was perfectly familiar with the sound of a top snapping off a pack of lube, but he answered him. “Lube.”

“Mmm. You hard?”

He had been since the word *come* had rasped over the phone line, but he wasn’t sure he was ready to admit it. “Getting there.”

“Get there faster.”

“Hey, if you started without me...” He heard Jeff’s breaths speed up, imagined the slide of his hand on his cock, pictured the dragon tattoo snaking around his forearm as the head of his dick popped past that tongue-wrapped thumb. God, he wanted it to be his tongue.

“Ryan.” His name in Jeff’s voice, the sound so deep he might have been choking.

“Yeah?”

“Make that sound again.”

“Make me.”

“Want you in my bed. Wanted you so long.”

Ryan tucked the phone under his chin so he could get both slick hands on his dick. “Jesus.” His own voice was getting harsher.

“Want to fuck you until you can’t stand it, finish you in my mouth and then come all over your sweet ass.”

Ryan couldn’t stop the jerk of his hips, the moans rolling from the back of his throat as he thought about Jeff inside him. “Don’t stop.”

“How close are you?” Jeff’s voice had gone impossibly deeper. The sound rumbled through him like the purr of the Camaro’s engine.

He felt the warning tingle in his balls. “Close. Really. Close.” He panted between breaths.

“Finish it. Get a finger in your ass.”

Ryan rubbed the skin below his balls, his other hand still fast and hard on his dick. He barely had the tip of his finger in him before the explosion that had been building all day burst through him.

“Yeah, you gonna make that sound when it’s me in there?”

The words pressed the last shudders from him, slowing his hand to soothing strokes as he listened to Jeff go.

“Oh fu-uck.” The deep voice got tight, squeezing from his throat until it dissolved into moans hard and fast as Tony Jaa’s punches.

Post-come lassitude hit him hard, and he was fighting the weight of his eyelids as he listened to Jeff’s breathing slow.

“Night, Jeff.”

“Good night. I’ll call you.”

This time Ryan believed him.



Ryan skipped his morning run in the park on Wednesday, muscles heavy and eyes bleary when his alarm sounded. Jesus, Jeff could make a fortune if he hired himself out for phone sex. As Ryan headed out of the park gates at seven-forty-five the next morning,

he heard a motorized growl and turned to see the bike he'd admired at the garage pacing him. The rider didn't need to tip the visor for Ryan to recognize Jeff.

Jeff followed him the quarter mile back to his apartment, parking the bike and kicking down the stand. He tugged off his helmet.

"So you and my brother had a lot to talk about, huh?" Ryan pulled the sweat-soaked shirt away from his torso as he stretched his legs and paced a little.

"He might have mentioned you liked to run and where." Jeff stepped off the bike. "You know, you're a little distracting on the phone."

"And in person I'm easily ignored?"

"Well, I was hoping I might be able to demonstrate better control in the middle of Bradford Street. Doing anything after work tonight?"

"I get out at four."

Jeff straightened from his lean against his bike. He glanced up and down the street and then leveled an intense blue stare at Ryan. "I thought if you weren't busy, I'd come over and we'd fuck."

The desert-dry condition of Ryan's mouth had to do with more than just panting through his five-mile run, but at last he managed enough spit to say, "What time?"

"I'll be here by eight."

Jeff put his helmet back on and swung a leg over the bike. Ryan watched him ride off. Jeans, boots and a grey T-shirt, not a leather chap or silver stud in sight, but the lingering heat from that gaze made Ryan feel like Jeff had just slapped a dog collar on him. He had to jerk off in the shower before he could think about making it in to work.

Chapter Three

“Hey.”

Jeff slid his helmet onto the table Ryan used to hold his mail. “Hey.”

“You rode over? I thought it was supposed to rain tonight.”

“It’s going to clear up by morning, and I didn’t plan on being done before then.”

Ryan had never had a guy want him, look at him with that kind of intensity, as if he wanted to inhale him, could never get enough of him. He felt that invisible collar tighten around his neck.

Jeff’s hand came up and his tattooed thumb rubbed across Ryan’s lips. “Is that a problem?”

“No.” Ryan crushed him back against the door.

Jeff tasted like wintergreen, the cool flavor fading under the heat of Ryan’s tongue. He could smell the promise of a warm rainy night on Jeff’s skin, lying just over the soap from his shower. He pushed up Jeff’s shirt, desperate to get at those hard warm muscles. His teeth caught on the curls sprinkling his breastbone.

Jeff’s hand slipped through his hair and held him as he tried to drop lower. “I like the hall, but I kind of hoped for bed.”

Ryan couldn’t resist another lick under the ridge of his left pec.

“If you want to be fucked standing up here, keep right on going.” Jeff’s voice was a growl, and Ryan raised his head.

“Maybe later.” He stepped back far enough to peel off his shirt. “This way.”

Jeff dropped his clothes as he followed; both of them shucking their jeans and shorts as they hit the bedroom. As Jeff turned, Ryan caught his arm to study the newly revealed tattoo on Jeff’s back. Another Asian-style dragon sat upright on his shoulder, one vibrant jade eye open over a reptilian grin. The rest of his scales were in red, green and yellow. Ryan ran a finger over the marks, feeling the raised bumps the colored inks left in the

skin. He repeated the action with a wet, open mouth. Jeff drew Ryan's arms around his waist, and they pressed together, Ryan's cock snugged up against the small of his back.

"I like your bed."

"I like your car."

"We'll get back to it sometime." Jeff lifted Ryan's arms and turned to face him. "I've got to be at work in eleven hours." He pulled them forward onto the bed. "And you don't know how many ways I've thought of having your ass."

Ryan's cock twitched and leaked against Jeff's thigh. He rolled onto his hip and licked his way down that flat furred belly, tugging a little with his teeth.

God, Jeff had a gorgeous cock, thick and cut and curving against his stomach. Ryan dragged a nail lightly down the vein on the underside all the way to the root. The muscles of his ass tensed. Jeff was a lot bigger than his last lover. He stretched his lips over the head, letting spit ease the way until he could slide him over his tongue.

Jeff rolled onto his back, cradling Ryan's head in his hand. Ryan took him deeper, swirling his tongue around the head, tightening his lips as he went. Jeff's fingers threaded through his hair, a sharp sound breaking from his lips. Ryan eased back, let him slide free and mouthed and licked the length all the way down to the balls. He worked his thumbs into the deep grooves inside his hips, stroking up the cut to the narrow sharp bones. Jeff tugged at his hair. Ryan lapped the salty drop on the slit and took him back in his mouth. The fingers in his hair pulled painfully.

He looked up. Jeff crooked a finger on his free hand.

"You're too good at that. I don't want this to be over before it starts."

Ryan let Jeff pull him back up his body until they were kissing again. Jeff rubbed his back, long strokes sweeping down toward his ass. Jeff licked beneath Ryan's ear, and as his finger slid along the crease, Ryan's hips jerked.

"You do bottom, right?" Jeff's rough voice purred in his ear.

"Yeah." But saying *I'm a little nervous because you're huge and it's been six months* sounded at best lame and at worst desperate so he kept his mouth shut after that.

"How do you like it?"

Ryan thought for a minute. He wasn't ready to let Jeff watch his face. "On my knees." He rolled on his belly, dragging a pillow underneath him. "There's stuff on the nightstand." He'd left the box of condoms out. "I—uh—don't go bareback."

"Neither do I."

Ryan stretched out as he felt the press of Jeff's body over his, the prickle of chest hair against his back, the weight of his dick and balls rocking between his legs, strength and power and heat wrapped around him. Jeff kissed his way down his back, hands making deep caresses of the tense muscles around his spine.

Jeff rumbled against his skin as he wet the base of his spine with his mouth, tongue dipping lower. Ryan barely had time to process his intention before Jeff's hands pressed him wide and Jeff's mouth zeroed in on the opening of his body. His tongue teased the rim, slicking the muscle, thumbs holding him open as he flicked inside.

"Jesus." Ryan couldn't catch his breath. Jeff was making deep groans of satisfaction as he licked him, then his tongue was inside, hot and flexible in a way even fingers could never be. Ryan fisted the sheets, twisting his head until he could find a way to breathe against the sudden stabbing pleasure.

Jeff's thumbs drove a little deeper, playing with the ring of muscle until they slid in next to his tongue. Ryan's head rolled back on his shoulders, the groans tearing, burning his throat.

"Fuck me."

Jeff stroked faster with his tongue, worked his thumbs in to the knuckle.

"God, now, please."

Jeff's hands and mouth traveled back up to his waist. "Just getting started," he breathed against his skin.

Ryan's heart was hammering high up in his throat. "Shit."

He thought his whisper was inaudible, but Jeff laughed against his skin again, that deep vibration shared between them.

Jeff's hands lifted him higher on his knees, reached between his legs and slicked his cock, deep comforting pulls that took that *now-now-now* edge off. Ryan's hips rocked back toward him.

"Yeah." Jeff dropped kisses on his back again, and just as Ryan thought he might get his heart rate under two hundred, Jeff slid two fingers into him.

"Christ, you're tight." Jeff twisted his fingers, and Ryan panted into his forearm. "Gonna feel so good. Can't wait to get my dick inside you."

Ryan felt the cold slick of lube, and then Jeff drove him forward on three twisting fingers. Ryan could feel Jeff's groans as much as he could hear them, Jeff's body stretched over his as Jeff fucked him open and ready.

It took Ryan a couple of tries before he could scrape together enough brain cells to pant, "Now."

He heard the tear of foil. His pulse pounded everywhere now, sharp at the tip of his dick, a deep tingle in his balls, thick and hard in his ass. He braced himself up on his arms and waited.

He knew what to expect, knew it took a minute for that fiery protest of muscles being forced open to turn sweet and good, but when Jeff started to press inside him, it might as well have been his first time. He jerked away, body tensing, locking down. Jesus, it felt like Jeff was trying to shove a baseball bat in him.

Jeff's hand stroked his dick again before wrapping around his waist and holding him steady. He pressed in again, slowly. A bead of sweat rolled into Ryan's eye from his temple and he blinked it away. Jeff's hands stroked his back, his ass, waiting, and Ryan could feel the tremble in Jeff's thighs as he held himself still.

"Need me to back off?" Jeff's voice was hoarse with thick breaths, but he spoke softly.

"No." He wanted it, God, he just—

"Push back on me when you're ready."

Ryan knew how hard it was to hold yourself in check like that, when everything inside you wanted to fuck into that tight clinging hole, and he didn't think anyone had ever kept him waiting as long as he was making Jeff.

He arched his back and eased down a little. It wasn't good yet, not by a long shot. His body protested, and his muscles fought every inch, but he managed to work himself back until he could feel the prickle of hair against his ass.

Jeff made a rough groan as Ryan stretched himself back that last inch and brought them together. "Christ, you're tight. Jesus, Ryan. Feel so good." His hand wrapped around Ryan's hips and pulled on his flagging dick until it was full and hard.

"Go," Ryan whispered, his head hanging between his shoulders, his whole body trembling.

The first stroke was a tearing scrape. The second burned. The third ripped through him like summer lightning. His body shuddered, surrendered to the force of that deep possession. He rocked back, and every screaming nerve lit up with pleasure. Jeff increased his pace, grabbing Ryan's hips and slamming forward, quick and deep.

"Yeah." Jeff's approving groan had Ryan arching for more.

Jeff shifted his angle, swiveling his hips and rubbing against that sweet spot inside him until Ryan couldn't support his weight on his arms. As Ryan collapsed onto his face, Jeff fucked him forward until his head was jammed into the headboard. Jeff grabbed his shoulder and held him steady against his thrusts, kept him tipped at that devastating angle so that every stroke of Jeff's cock forced an explosion of pleasure out of that swelling knot of nerves.

Ryan's knees slid wider until his hips came down on the pillow. He reached for his dick, and Jeff stretched out over him to whisper in his ear.

"Can you go longer?"

"Oh, yeah." Every fucking atom in him was singing the hallelujah chorus now, and it was fine with him if that went on all night.

Jeff hooked his arm under Ryan's knee and dragged it up toward his shoulder. He licked behind his ear and murmured, "This good?"

With his leg up, he was more open, and Jeff went deeper. He alternated gut-deep thrusts with that roll, blending sizzling friction with a touch that milked every inch of his ass for pleasure so bright it hurt.

Jeff's breath was wet and hot on his neck, and Ryan tipped his head back for a sloppy, musky kiss full of moans. Jeff fucked his tongue into his mouth in rhythm with his dick in his ass until Ryan ran out of breath and turned his face back into the sheets. Jeff's hand pressed his shoulder down again as he rode him into the mattress, driving thrusts that slapped against his ass.

Their bodies slipped against each other, slick from sweat and lube. Ryan could feel Jeff everywhere inside him as his blood pumped thick through his muscles with every stroke.

"How hard's your ass gonna squeeze me when you come?" Jeff hooked his leg higher, pulled on his shoulder and rolled him onto his side.

Ryan locked his foot behind Jeff's knee as Jeff rocked forward in sharp tight thrusts that hit him dead on.

Ryan was pinned under the weight of too much pleasure, crushing the breath from him, burning through his blood until he had to come or die. Jeff's hand landed on his cock before Ryan could find the muscle control to move his own.

The rush hit him. "Don't stop, don't stop, Jesus, don't—"

Jeff's wrist twisted just right around his cock and he couldn't keep it back another second. The first burst ripped through him, ten thousand volts through his pipes, shooting from his dick. Jeff fucked him right through every shuddering blast until he had to cover Jeff's hand with his to slow his strokes.

Jeff kissed him back down, soft and wet on his mouth, holding himself still inside him.

"Christ, Ryan, you are so fucking hot."

Ryan knew he should be able to come up with some kind of quip, but his brain had just been poured out his dick and the return of verbal skills seemed pretty far off in the

distance. His arm ached and he realized he'd had the headboard in a death grip. He shook his hand free.

Jeff rolled him back onto his stomach and started to ease out.

"S'okay," Ryan managed. "You can—"

Jeff buried a groan in the skin of his shoulder as he started thrusting again, his hips snapping so fast Ryan thought he'd break the sound barrier until he stiffened and took one long deep stroke, almost sliding out before slamming back in and jerking against him.

Ryan had been so lost in the sounds of their sharp gasps and the thick clash of flesh slamming together that he hadn't noticed that the rain had started until a wet breath blew through the screen, cutting through the smell of sex. Thunder rolled, adding ozone to the scent of freshly washed streets. He really ought to get up and close that window, but he couldn't remember how to move.

"Rug's getting wet," Jeff mumbled in his ear.

"Uh-huh."

Ryan felt a little ridiculous. His muscles were still shaking, his pulse throbbing behind his closed eyes like he'd run a marathon. It was as if Jeff had fucked him inside out, and he couldn't get everything back together the right way. He pried his eyes open.

Jeff rolled off the bed, ducked into the bathroom and came out to close the window.

"Uhm, there's beer in the fridge."

"Great."

He watched the play of muscles in Jeff's ass and hips as he stalked out of the bedroom. The guy was gorgeous, fucked like a jackhammer and seemed genuinely nice. There had to be a catch.

Ryan managed to get a towel spread over the wet spot on the bed before Jeff came back with two cold bottles. He twisted the cap off one and handed it to Ryan. Yeah, there *had* to be a catch.

Jeff sat on the edge of the bed and took a long pull on his bottle. Ryan matched him, pouring half the bottle down his burning throat.

Jeff looked at him for a long minute then licked his lips. “Tony Jaa.”

Ryan felt the knot in his stomach dissolve as a grin spread across his face. “Pai Mei.” He leaned over and grabbed the *Kill Bill Volume 2* DVD off the bookshelf and tossed it to him.

“Wait until you see *The Game*,” Jeff countered and slipped off the bed to examine the bookcase. “You don’t have *The Protector*?”

Ryan got up and pulled out the case. As soon as the DVD slid in, they sprawled on the bed to watch.

Tony Jaa had just taken out seven guys, feet and hands slamming into skin with a rapid rhythm when Jeff turned his head on Ryan’s lap. Warm breath teased his dick.

“That makes it a little difficult to concentrate,” Ryan said.

“On?” Jeff breathed on him again.

“The movie.”

“I’ll tell you how it ends.” Jeff leaned forward and pressed a kiss on the head of his cock.

He licked him until Ryan was lightheaded from the loss of blood as it flooded his dick like cement. Jeff kissed his belly, circled his navel, thumbs flicking hard against his nipples as he made his way up to his throat. Jeff lifted his head and looked at him, only a thin rim of blue showing around pupils blown wide with arousal.

“Look. Don’t think I—I mean—I do—” He swallowed. “Christ. Ryan, I want to fuck you again.”

The muscles in his ass tightened in protest but his mouth said, “Yeah.”



When he woke up, it was just light and he was alone, but he could hear the shower running. He rolled out of bed, muscles protesting the movement. He winced as he made his way to the kitchen to start the coffee. No matter how this ended, he’d be feeling Jeff all day.

Jeff had left the bathroom door open so Ryan took it as an invitation, stepping inside and digging out a clean towel.

Jeff slid the shower door open. “Do I smell coffee?”

“Yup.”

“Thank God.” He waved at the shower. “I didn’t think you’d mind.”

“Not at all.”

“I’m willing to share.”

Ryan edged in next to him, and Jeff turned to share the spray. Ryan leaned forward to rinse his mouth and reached around Jeff for the soap. Jeff took it from him and lathered his hands, trailing soap across Ryan’s chest.

“I’ve got the DVD of *The Game* at my house. You could come over tonight if you want to watch it.”

Ryan watched the soapy hand dip lower. “Come over and watch a movie, huh?”

“I make really good popcorn.”

“I’ll need directions, since you don’t seem to have an over-sharing brother.”

Chapter Four

Ryan spent the weekend at Jeff's. They fucked until their dicks were too raw to enjoy it and talked about nothing and made inroads in Jeff's martial arts DVD collection. Sunday night, Ryan was sprawled in a contented heap on Jeff's couch, Jeff on the floor at his feet, mouth still wet from Ryan's come.

"Man, I really do not want to go to work tomorrow." As soon as Ryan said the words he knew he was in trouble, because what he really meant was that he wanted to spend a long stretch of days in this house, doing nothing but hanging out with Jeff.

"Long day?" Jeff asked.

Ryan seized the out he'd been given. "Mondays always are."

Jeff got up and came back with two cans of soda. He dropped down on the couch after handing one to Ryan. "Look. I know how this is going to sound."

Ryan felt the soda burn all the way down his throat. Here was the brush off he'd been waiting for. Well, it's not like he'd had much of an expectation going into this.

Jeff turned on the couch and looked at him. "I want to see you again."

That was unexpected.

"I do," Jeff added. "But I can't until next Monday."

Ryan wondered if a why would make this conversation even more awkward than it felt, but Jeff went on without the question.

"I'll have my daughter next week."

"I like kids."

Jeff looked away, focusing his attention on the soda he still hadn't opened. "I just need it to be this way. If you don't want to get together again, that's fine too."

"I want to," Ryan said, maybe too quickly. Jeff's reasons made sense. He could see Jeff not wanting to introduce him to his daughter. They'd just started whatever it was they'd started, meeting family ought to wait, but he couldn't help feeling shut out. They'd

spent so much time together that Jeff's closed expression jarred, like he'd become a stranger again.

Jeff nodded and opened his soda. "So, I'll call you."

Another burst of resentment burned his chest. He couldn't be the one to call? He'd think the interest was all one-sided, but Jeff was the one sitting on the couch with his dick tenting his shorts while he washed Ryan's come down with soda. Not all one-sided, no, but definitely on Jeff's terms. Ryan wondered exactly how much of that he was willing to put up with. He didn't like his answer.



When the phone rang at ten-thirty Thursday night, Ryan didn't need caller ID to know it was Jeff. The second his "Hey" came over the phone, Ryan felt blood pump south.

"Hey."

Jeff asked him about work, which took all of a minute. Then Ryan heard him shift the phone around, and Jeff said, "You want to know about Anna?"

"If you want to tell me."

Jeff took a deep breath. "I was eighteen and despite the fact that I'd been jerking off to pictures of guys for years, I really didn't want to admit it, you know?"

Ryan had admitted to himself that girls weren't really his thing by the age of fourteen, but coming out was never easy so he murmured an acknowledgement.

"Val—Val was—we dated for a month, and damn, when I found out she was pregnant I didn't even want to believe it was mine, but when Anna was born, when I saw her—I just—well, I got the job at Connor's and as soon as I'd saved up some money I petitioned for joint custody.

"I've got four sisters and two brothers, but Anna, she's my whole family."

Ryan heard him swallow hard.

So Jeff loved his daughter, how was that a bad thing? Ryan liked kids. He'd just never really thought about them for himself. Cold realization washed over him. He was

thinking about the long term with this—with them, on the basis of what? An extended weekend?

“I saw her at the drive-in,” he said. “She’s adorable. How’s her collarbone?”

“She’s upset because she hasn’t been able to swim at day camp. She can still do crafts, though. It’s a good thing she’s a lefty like me.”

The love and warmth coloring Jeff’s voice reminded him of every other proud parent. Ryan realized he was wishing he knew what it would sound like if Jeff turned that warmth on him. He was so screwed.

Jeff’s voice turned husky enough to make the blood throb in Ryan’s dick. “So, we still on for Monday?”

“Sure.”

“If you want to meet me at the garage after work we could take the Camaro.”

“Sounds good.”

Before he fell asleep, Ryan jerked off to thoughts of Jeff fucking him over the hood of the Camaro.



As soon as the doors shut on the Camaro, there was no question of driving back out to the state park or anywhere they could get private with the car. They needed the safety of walls around them before the heat of *need, want, now* shattered into frantic touches and kisses. Time was frozen on the drive out to Jeff’s house, but the second they were inside it sped up again.

Once inside the kitchen Ryan managed one deep breath of the charged air before the tension snapped in a crash of hard bodies. He couldn’t remember the steps but it seemed like seconds later he was naked and holding on to the column framing the breakfast bar, riding three of Jeff’s fingers, while Jeff kissed and licked at his neck.

“There’s a condom in my shirt pocket,” Jeff breathed against his ear.

Ryan let go with one hand to fish out the package and tore it with his teeth. Jeff pulled his fingers free to lift him with both hands under his ass.

Ryan rolled the condom down on Jeff with shaking fingers and grabbed back onto the column behind him as Jeff lifted him right off his feet.

“Get your legs around me.”

Jesus, Jeff was strong, but Ryan doubted they could—holy shit, Jeff was in him. Ryan wrapped his legs around his hips and hung onto the pillar behind him as Jeff pushed him up and back.

“God, I missed...this,” Jeff panted in his ear, lowering his head to nip at Ryan’s shoulders, never hard enough to bruise.

He rocked them slowly at first, and then started to pull Ryan down on him as he pushed up.

It wasn’t enough. Not after a whole week of not having him.

“Harder.”

“Can’t get deep enough like this.”

Jeff eased him to the floor and spun him so that he was bent over one of the barstools. He filled him again in one long thrust, and Ryan gripped the counter before he went flying off.

“Shit...wanted...watch you.”

Ryan reached back and grabbed Jeff’s thigh, pulling him tighter. “Don’t stop.”

Never stop. It was only the endorphin rush. He’d taken enough biology in college to know that the chemicals released in your blood during sex made you want to get attached. But knowing didn’t stop feeling, and Ryan’d never felt like this with anyone. He’d never felt this quick connection, known that it felt so good, so damned good because it was *him*. Jeff’s arm wrapped around his chest, and his mouth kissed his shoulders over and over, broken only by sandpaper moans in his ears.

“Sorry, I can’t—oh fuck.”

Ryan recognized Jeff’s about-to-die noises and the increased speed of his hips. He tightened himself around him, and Jeff went off, deep spasms that shook his whole body.

“Man, I am so sorry,” Jeff murmured against his neck when he got his breath back.

Ryan shifted his hips, and Jeff groaned.

“It’s actually kind of flattering.”

“Well, I’m just embarrassed.” Jeff slipped from him, and Ryan turned to face him. Jeff was looking down. “I haven’t lost it like that since...”

“Your first blow job?” Ryan suggested.

“Something like that. If we can make it to the bed, I’ll try to make it up to you.”

Jeff had a king-sized bed with a metal frame that Ryan had discovered was strong enough to anchor him against Jeff’s thrusts. The frame, the firm mattress and the size made it perfect for fucking, and Ryan wondered exactly how many other guys had had fun finding that out then shoved that insane jealousy down deep inside him. The room was stifling after being closed up all day, so Ryan pushed open a window before stretching out on sheets that smelled like Jeff. Only Jeff.

Jeff was naked when he joined him, rolling up on his side and cocking an elbow behind his head.

“So, on a scale of one to ten, how pissed would you be if I just fell asleep?” Jeff’s hand slipped down his chest and paused just above Ryan’s swollen, leaking cock.

“Forty-two,” Ryan snapped, the ache spreading from his cock to his thighs as he tried to tip his hips toward that teasing hand.

“You could do it yourself,” Jeff suggested.

“This is your idea of making it up to me?”

“Not quite.” Jeff rolled away and came back with a condom and lube. He made his fingers into a tight ring around the base of Ryan’s dick. “I want you in me.”

Despite the grip Jeff had on him, Ryan’s dick went harder at his words. Jeff leaned down and teased the skin behind his ear with his tongue. “I want to ride you until we both come.”

It took every bit of control Ryan had not to shoot from just that dirty whisper in his ear. He grabbed for the condom and Jeff pulled it out of reach.

“Let me.” Jeff tore it open and stretched it around the head of Ryan’s cock before leaning over.

“Shit.” Ryan hissed as Jeff’s mouth took over the operation. That took a lot of practice, and again Ryan felt that irrational stab of jealousy before the heat and the pressure of soft lips sliding down his shaft shorted out his brain.

Jeff lifted his head and crawled over him, and Ryan reached for the lube, pouring the gel over his fingers. Jeff kept up a distracting amount of kissing and licking and nipping, right up until the moment Ryan pressed his finger inside him. Jeff gasped and his head snapped back against his neck.

Ryan licked the exposed tendons as he worked his finger deeper. The smooth tight heat crushed his finger, making his cock just about vibrate with eagerness. He squeezed in a second finger, making Jeff arch away and then back as he adjusted to the stretch.

He was starting to wonder if this was a good idea, maybe Jeff didn’t like to bottom, was only doing it because he felt bad about shortchanging him, and then Jeff’s eyes snapped open and there was no mistaking the pleasure burning in them. Ryan curled his fingers up to find the swell of Jeff’s prostate. Jeff’s hips bucked as his cock started to fill again. Despite the choking need in Ryan’s balls and the sharp agony in his long-denied erection, he wanted to keep finger-fucking Jeff for hours, just to watch Jeff’s face tighten and relax in that sweet blend of pleasure and pain. Ryan stroked and rubbed him into desperate, tight jerks of his hips.

When his fingers were sliding easily, he slipped free and urged Jeff higher on his body. He gripped the base of his cock, half for leverage, half to prevent the orgasm boiling in him from spilling over as that first bit of perfect pressure swallowed the head. He let Jeff set the pace, releasing his grip as Jeff sank down to his thighs with a gravelly moan. Jeff held his shoulders as he shifted, squeezed Ryan’s dick until light burst behind his eyes, and he had to clamp down with every muscle to keep from fucking up, driving into Jeff until he lost himself in mindless pleasure.

Jeff’s breaths were coming in quick pants, his tongue wetting his lips as he rocked a little. Then his eyes opened again, and he levered himself up and down. So good, such perfect slick-hot friction, but so slow. Ryan kept his hips pinned against the mattress until Jeff released his shoulders, his fists dropping to the sheets next to Ryan’s ribs. Ryan

grabbed Jeff's hips and gave into his body's demands. He arched up into that burning channel of muscle, dragged Jeff down to meet each thrust.

The stream of sexy filth from Jeff's mouth each time Jeff had fucked him had driven Ryan insane, but he almost lost control when he realized that the best Jeff could manage with Ryan's dick up his ass were strangled *fucks* and frequent *yeahs*. Jeff was slamming down on him now, his features so dazed Ryan couldn't help leaning up to taste his slack lips. Jeff responded with a hungry, forceful kiss that had Ryan rolling them over, slamming back inside and pounding him into the mattress. He moved so long and deep that Jeff's rim squeezed his crown at the top of each stroke. He braced himself on his arms, watching everything play out across Jeff's face, the way his eyes turned to slits shut when Ryan went deep, the sound he made when the thick ridge tugged on that ring of muscle on the upstroke.

Jeff grabbed his cock and started pulling, the sounds getting deeper. Ryan's breath tore at his lungs and he was certain an aneurysm was one heartbeat away when he watched Jeff break, pumping thick streams across their bellies. Ryan lowered his head and let the contractions around his dick finish him, send him off like fireworks inside Jeff's body.

His pulse was still loud in his ears as he looked down at Jeff, whose face had gone intent, his gaze focused on his. He didn't care if it was the oxytocin or whatever post-orgasm high that pumped in his blood. He wanted this, wanted this man, wanted it as long as he could make it last. He hoped to God that's what that look on Jeff's face meant too. He lowered his forehead to Jeff's and breathed.

"Damn." Ryan's voice sounded strange to him, not the fucked-out hoarseness, but the amazement coloring that one word.

"Yeah."

And then he knew what it sounded like when Jeff turned that affection on him.



Ryan woke up alone.

He could hear a TV on in another room, but it was faint, it couldn't have woken him up. Then he heard the voices outside the open window.

Jeff's bedroom faced the front of the house and the long front lawn. The house was small, but had lots of yard space. Ryan didn't have to ask; he knew he'd bought it with Anna in mind. The voices must be right at the front door.

Jeff, and based on what he heard, a woman who must be Anna's mother Val.

He climbed off the bed and realized his pants were still in the kitchen. He found a pair of Jeff's jeans and slid them on. They were loose but should stay up. He pulled a T-shirt over his head as he crept toward the window.

"Because I need a day or two," Val said.

Jeff was silent for a minute. And then, "For Christsake, are you blown? Tell me you didn't drive her like that."

"Craig drove."

Ryan peeked through the screen and saw a red two-door out on the street.

"And I'm supposed to believe he's sober?"

"I don't give a fuck what you believe. I'll pick her up in a couple of days."

"If I find out you're putting Anna at risk like that—"

"If you thought you'd win, you'd have done it years ago." She laughed.

"So what is it this time? Craig doesn't like kids, is that it?"

"Not everybody wants to live like a monk." She paused. "Or a fag like you."

Jeff laughed, so bitter that Ryan felt his stomach churn.

"Try a new one, Val. Every guy who doesn't want to screw you isn't a fag."

"Yeah, well you'd better hope I never find out you're one. You'll never get near another kid, especially not your own."

The morning was already warm, but Ryan felt a chill on his skin. Jesus. Jeff was living with that kind of threat over his head?

He waited until he heard the car start up and then slipped into the hall.

When he got to the kitchen, he could see Anna parked in front of the TV. The clothes from last night were gone. He waited but Jeff didn't come back inside.

He decided to make breakfast. In his limited experience, kids were usually hungry, and he doubted her mother had fed her.

He checked the fridge, found it stocked and started to make French toast.

As soon as the bowl hit the counter, the blonde head in front of the TV spun around.

“Dad?” She had her father’s eyes, sharp, bright blue. “Who are you?”

“I’m Ryan.”

She got up and came a little closer. Her right arm was still in the sling and harnessed to her body. “There are two Ryans at my school.”

“I’m a friend of your dad’s.”

She looked at him for a minute. “Did you have a sleepover?”

Given the conversation he’d just overheard, he wondered what she thought a sleepover was. But since he was standing in Jeff’s kitchen at seven a.m., it didn’t seem like a good idea to lie to the kid. “Yes.”

“I like to sleep over at my friend Jessica’s house.”

“Oh?”

“Her mom makes *pancakes*.” Using her one good arm, Anna clambered up onto one of the stools and looked at the bowl with pointed emphasis.

“I can make pancakes.” Ryan hoped Jeff had a mix somewhere around here.

Taking it upon herself to assist, Anna pointed at one of the cabinets. He was still scanning the shelves when he heard Jeff come in. With his face as blank as he could make it, Ryan turned around, not sure how Jeff wanted to play this.

“Dad.” Anna jumped down and ran to hug her father.

Jeff met his eyes over his daughter’s head, and Ryan shrugged. Jeff lifted Anna onto the stool again and came over to the cabinet. “She talked you into pancakes, didn’t she?” He grabbed a box from the top shelf and set it next to the bowl.

Anna giggled.

“Anna would eat pancakes for breakfast, lunch and supper.” Jeff put a hand on her head and went to fill the coffee machine.

“But they taste better at supper,” she said. “Did you and Ryan have fun?”

The coffee carafe hit the counter hard. Glancing over, Ryan saw how dark Jeff's cheeks had gotten. He raised his eyebrows in apology.

"Yes," Jeff finally said.

"Because you never have sleepovers. Is Ryan your best friend now?"

"Boys don't usually have best friends, honey. But Ryan is a good friend."

The mention of friends launched Anna on a monologue about her friends at camp and school. Ryan decided that the best thing he could do was concentrate on the pancakes. Jeff stepped around him to get to the sink, making him conscious of every inch of space between them. The measuring cups were hanging next to the stove, which meant he had to go around Jeff again. He felt Jeff's jeans start to slide on his hips and he tugged them back up. This was going to be one hell of a dance.

Anna packed away an astonishing amount of pancakes into her small frame, politely declaring that his pancakes were good, but not as good as Dad's. "My birthday is in two weeks. Can you come to my party?"

Ryan looked at Jeff. "I'd like to but..."

"But my friends will be there and I want Dad to have a friend there. He never has friends."

At eight, Jeff sent Anna out to his car.

"I've got to take her to day camp. If you want to go, the key to the Camaro is on the hook and your clothes are under the sink." Jeff tugged on the jeans sagging over Ryan's hips and then yanked his hand back as if he'd been burned. "But you don't have to go." He looked out the door and then back at Ryan. "Will you be here?"

"Yeah."



He drank a second cup of coffee while he cleaned the kitchen, digesting a whole lot more than pancakes. Anna was sweet, her mom was a bitch and Jeff—Jeff was caught in the middle. There had to be some lawyer who could take on this case. He couldn't believe anyone would give Val a goldfish to raise after spending five seconds in her company. He

thought of all the news stories he'd read of parents losing their children because they were gay. But this was Minnesota, not Georgia, and that was years ago.

He knew now why Jeff had been the one to call, why he'd said he couldn't see him while he had Anna. The realization sat like a cold hard lump in his stomach.

When Jeff got back, Ryan was sitting at the breakfast bar and the lump hadn't gone away.

Jeff poured himself coffee and sat next to him. "Sorry about that."

"Why? She's great. I told you I liked kids."

"Yeah."

Ryan turned to face him. "I heard."

Jeff put down his mug. "I kind of figured you did."

"Exactly how many people know?"

Jeff didn't have to ask what he meant. He looked at his coffee. "I assume anyone who's had his dick in my mouth figured it out. Other than that, it doesn't come up."

Ryan got up and went to lean on the counter. "I did four years in the Air Force. You don't have to explain 'don't ask, don't tell' to me."

"So?"

"And it sucked. I was miserable. Have you even discussed it with a lawyer?"

Jeff shook his head. "I can't risk it. I can't lose Anna."

"What about your family?"

"I don't know that my mother or sisters wouldn't try to take her from me if they knew. It's why I've never tried for full custody."

Ryan ran his hands through his hair. "There are lawyers who—"

"You don't understand. I can't risk it."

"I understand. Believe me. My mom's been telling me for years that having a gay son is what drove my father to an early grave. But I couldn't stand lying anymore."

"Your brother?"

"David's great. But don't think it's been easy for me."

Jeff looked at him then and his voice was soft, the way it had been last night. “I never said it was.”

The look was the same, too, blue eyes so intent on his, so open, like Ryan could reach inside, and everything he’d felt last night was still there, no post-orgasm chemicals, nothing but a bone-deep knowledge that he should shut his mouth and walk over there and kiss him.

Ryan pushed away from the counter and the lump in his stomach did a queasy roll. “I just don’t think I can live like that again.”

“Did somebody ask you?”

“No. I guess not.” He went to the spot where he’d stashed his phone.

“What?”

“I’m calling a cab.”

Jeff got up and walked over to the door. He stepped back and slapped a key on the counter next to him. “Take the fucking Camaro.”

If Jeff had stood there in front of him a second longer, Ryan would have given into the instinct that was telling him to grab him, make them figure out how this had gone so bad so fast. But Jeff stepped away and went in to sit on the couch. Ryan looked at the key. If there was anything he wanted less than to drive that goddamned car he couldn’t think of it, but he doubted he had enough for cab fare in his wallet.

Ryan picked up the key.



On Friday Ryan’s car wouldn’t start. No grinding, no whine of a dead battery, nothing.

He called David.

“You’re dating a mechanic and you call me when your car won’t start?”

“I’m not dating a mechanic.”

“You broke up already?”

“I never said—we were never dating.”

“You had *plans* and couldn’t come to Mom’s for dinner that Sunday.”

Tony Jaa on TV and Jeff’s homemade popcorn and Jeff taking the bowl from his hands as he slid from the couch, hands on his fly.

“So can you help me?”

“I can give you the name of a good mechanic.”

“Thanks a lot.”



The warranty had expired a year ago. Between a dealer’s prices and a tow, Ryan could see his bank account emptying. He opened his phone again and realized he didn’t have Jeff’s number. Not his cell, not his work, not his home. That connection had clearly been all in his head, but at least maybe a couple nights of great sex would be enough to get his car running without leaving him bankrupt. He found Connor’s in the phone book.

“Connor’s.”

It wasn’t Jeff, and he wasn’t sure if that made things better or worse. He gave the guy his information, and the guy told him they’d tow it and Ryan could call to check on it at four.

“Do you want me to wait with you?” David asked as they pulled up to the garage at five-thirty.

Ryan squinted into the dark opening. There was no mistaking Jeff’s tall frame moving around.

“I’m just picking up my car. I think I can handle it.”

He stepped down from the Rover. The sun was bouncing off the glass in the garage windows, making it hard to see anything beyond the dark opening. The voice that came out of the shadows was easy to recognize.

“We closed at five.”

Ryan hesitated in confusion. He didn’t hear anyone else moving around. Was Jeff going to pretend he didn’t even know him? He looked back. David was still waiting.

“The guy on the phone said—”

“But as a favor...” Now Jeff was close enough for him to see the white of his teeth as he smiled. “C’mon.”

Now that his eyes adjusted he could see his little silver Altima in the corner. He followed Jeff farther into the cool darkness and heard David drive away.

“What was wrong with it?”

“I hit that switch.” Jeff led the way to the counter in the back.

“What?”

“The switch in your engine that makes you need a mechanic.”

Ryan looked at him.

“The alternator,” Jeff said.

“Sounds expensive.”

“It can be. Especially if it’s a rush job.”

“I never—”

“Ryan, I’m kidding. I’d have done it for free but I had to buy the part.”

“Oh.” Where the fuck was his sense of humor? Gone the way of his self-control. His pulse was jumping and his lungs felt as tight as if he were making the last sprint on a 10K. He reached for his wallet.

Jeff was holding a pink receipt in his hands. “You know, I couldn’t believe it when Tony gave me the address for the tow. I kind of thought this would be the last place you’d call.”

“Yeah.”

He tried to focus on the receipt Jeff had handed him, tried to look anywhere but at Jeff’s eyes, his throat where his Adam’s apple bobbed as he swallowed. Tried to think about anything but how that skin tasted, how powerful that body felt against his own.

“Your wipers are kind of shot. I could see if I’ve got some that would fit.”

Ryan didn’t care if that was an invitation or not, he followed him into the back room. In contrast to the order in the main garage, this room was chaos. Boxes everywhere, shelves littered with parts, but Ryan’s gaze just focused on Jeff. He breathed in metal,

grease and exhaust and wanted to bury his nose in Jeff's neck, fill himself with the smell of his sweat. Jeff pulled a package off a hook on the wall and turned back to him.

"Ryan, hey—" Jeff grabbed his elbow.

Startled, Ryan jerked free.

Jeff's jaw got hard. "You were going to trip."

That touch had snapped something loose inside Ryan, and he stepped around the box as he pushed Jeff back against a shelf. Jeff's hand came up to tear into his hair, tugging so hard Ryan thought he'd rip it out as he crushed their mouths together with a groan.

Jeff kissed him like he was starving, a hunger Ryan felt in his own gut, a craving to feel his skin under his hands. He shoved his shirt out of the way, struggled with the fly of Jeff's jeans, but Jeff's hands on his head and ass had them smashed together so tightly he couldn't work the button.

Jeff's tongue tangled around his own, the sounds vibrating between them so that he couldn't tell who was moaning. The slam of blood into his cock had Ryan desperate for friction. A groan of frustration burned his throat, and Jeff worked his hand around to Ryan's fly. The kiss hauled the breath from him as Jeff's hand finally got his cock free, pulling it from his briefs with a long stroke that made him want to swallow Jeff's tongue. Ryan braced his hands on the shelf behind Jeff's head, bucking into the touch he'd been dying for.

Jeff's thumb spread drops of precome over his head, down the shaft, his hand tightening as Ryan panted into his mouth. Ryan finally managed to get Jeff's fly open, and Jeff's dick pressed against his belly, leaving a wet trail.

But he shoved his hand away as Ryan reached for him. He used his grip on Ryan's hair to lift his head. "Just come for me, can you do that?" Jeff whispered into his mouth.

Oh, he definitely could.

Jeff's cock slid against his stomach, his hand slid over his dick, twisting, calluses catching just under the rim as he sped up his strokes. Jeff dragged him back into a kiss, tongue hot and demanding. Ryan stretched his jaw open for him. They rode together on that shared breath, shared sweat, the shared want slicking their cocks.

Ryan hit the point of no return, fucking into that tight grip, heat bursting from him to pool between them. Jeff pulled his head into his shoulder as he shuddered through the aftershocks of pleasure, legs shaking, mouth hunting for skin under Jeff's work shirt. Jeff dragged him in closer as he rocked against his stomach, breaking into those sounds that made him wish he could go again because just the sound of Jeff coming could send him right over the edge.

Jeff kissed his neck, lifted the wet strands of his hair out of the way and sifted through them, soothing the burn on his scalp.

"Why do you wear it so long?"

"I had to keep it so short in the service."

"Rebel." Jeff laughed and combed it through his fingers again. "I like it." He kissed him again, a soft caress against his swollen lips.

The hand on his ass shifted to his hip, and Ryan realized how much of his weight he'd had on Jeff. He straightened, and Jeff let him go with one last kiss of his lower lip. With a grin that lit up his eyes, Jeff scrubbed at their stomachs with a rag from one of the shelves.

The aggression that had had Ryan pushing Jeff into that shelving had faded, leaving Ryan wondering exactly what happened now. He couldn't imagine being with Jeff and not being with him, pretending to be buddies instead of lovers, worrying that a casual touch could cost Jeff his daughter.

He backed away, just remembering to avoid the box on the floor before he ended up on his ass. Every time they got together it got that much harder to think of not having this again. Even now he wanted to step back into Jeff's body, despite the thick heat in the airless room. He looked away, tucked himself back into his clothes and zipped up.

"What?"

He had the feeling Jeff's eyes could see right through to the back of his head, see through all the reasons why he was practically backing into the far wall.

"I should probably go."

“A guy could feel a little used.” Jeff hitched his jeans back up on his hips. “Just came by to get off and your car fixed for free?”

Anger stirred his pulse as hot and quick as desire had moments before. What the hell did Jeff want from him? He wasn't the one making things so goddamned complicated. “What do I owe you?”

“What a fucking pussy.”

It was a mutter, but Ryan knew he was meant to hear every word. His hands tightened into fists. “What?”

“You heard me.” Jeff made that bitter laugh that hurt just as much as his other laughs felt good against his skin, his mouth. “You know, when your brother said you liked to run I didn't realize how much.”

Ryan had been on his way out to the counter and Jeff's accusation brought him up short. “And you're not running?”

“I'm right here. You're the one who keeps leaving, who won't even stick around to see where it goes.”

“But you're running from who you are.”

“Oh Christ, don't try that psychobabble shit with me. I know who I am.” Jeff pushed past him.

“And no one else does.”

“So you want me to take out an ad or something?”

“No, but I can't go back to hiding who I am.”

“And you think I'm asking you to? I just have to be careful.”

“Careful? You never even gave me your number.”

“Did you ever fucking ask me for it?”

Ryan heard the hurt in his voice and stared at him.

Jeff shook his head. “Ah, forget it. It's obvious you've got your mind made up. It's all black and white. If I'm not wearing a T-shirt declaring my sexuality, I'm in denial.” He stepped behind the counter and grabbed the receipt. “The part was \$97.38 with tax. You can have your brother drop it off when you've got it.”

Ryan reached into his pocket. “I—I’ve got it.” He pulled five twenties out of his wallet and laid them on the counter. “Thanks for—” The glare Jeff shot him made him stop. “Thanks.”

It had to be the heat of the sun slanting in through the garage that made it so damned hard to breathe.

“Goodbye, Ryan.”

And even then he knew he could fix it. *Say something*, he told himself. Or just pin him up against the counter and kiss him, but maybe they were past sex being able to fix things. *Tell him you understand. Tell him you don’t want to say it.*

“Bye, Jeff.”

Chapter Five

Ryan's car ran perfectly. Life, on the other hand, sucked.

David called him Saturday, ostensibly to ask about the car. Ryan ended up hanging up on him.

He skipped his run on Monday, which didn't improve his mood. People started to avoid him at work. He ran the rest of the week, and that didn't help either. He knew he'd fucked up, but that didn't make it any easier to fix. He lay in bed Thursday, trying to decide if he should drive down to the city tomorrow and see if a night in the bars could get his mind off Jeff, when his phone rang.

His heart rate kicked up at the familiar *hey*, and Jeff went on without giving him a chance to respond.

"Look. I'm sorry to bother you, but Anna's birthday party is Saturday and she's got this thing in her head about me having a friend there and she's decided it's you."

He couldn't stop the smile at knowing how tightly Anna had her dad wrapped around her finger.

"I realize this is kind of fucked up," Jeff said when he didn't answer.

"No. I'm—" *I'm glad you called? I'm kind of freaked out because I may be falling in love with you?* "I'll be there. What time?"



After a quick consultation with his ex-sister-in-law, Ryan ended up with a Polly Pocket play set and a multi-piece sticker and coloring package. He'd had to guess at Anna's age, and was relieved when he saw the big eight stuck in the cake on the picnic table in the back yard of Jeff's house. The yard seemed full of screeching girls, running around the swing set waving iridescent ribbons on sticks.

He'd attracted the gaze of the two women standing next to the picnic table and hoped that neither of them were Val. Anna jumped off the swing and ran up to him. "Hi, Ryan."

"Happy Birthday." He held out his gifts.

Anna's greeting turned the women's scrutiny into smiles and one of them came to take the gifts from him.

"Dad's in the kitchen," Anna said before running back to the swing set.

Jeff met him at the door, his hands full of a box overflowing with things in pink wrapping paper. "Glad you made it. You mind?"

"No." Ryan took the box and brought it to the picnic table. Jeff came back out with another two bags.

It was a little girl's birthday party, but just watching Jeff come down those stairs hit him like a shock rolling right down his spine. How was he going to get through the next two hours without staring at him, touching him, some kind of betraying action?

As it turned out, it wasn't that hard. Four adults and eight—God, were there only eight?—girls should have made things manageable, but Ryan had never realized what organization was necessary for an eight-year-old's birthday party. It was grueling enough to be a required part of basic training. There were games to be played, the adults trying to insure that each girl got at least one prize, a few crying fits to be placated, snacks, drinks and ice cream and cake to be disseminated, no easy task since every girl insisted on a piece with a pink and green flower on it. Ryan barely had time to catch his breath let alone think about Jeff.

Anna was just starting to tear into her presents when a car door slammed and heels clicked up the driveway. Ryan didn't need the murmurs from the two other women or the heavy sigh from Jeff to get the message. Val was here.

She was so thin she made x-ray technology redundant, hair that might have been blonde was pulled into a sloppy knot on her head, and her reddened nose showed the signs of her choice of recreation. But there was still a beauty to be reckoned with in that face. Despite the hardness in her light eyes, they held an exotic tilt and the lips were full, features in perfect symmetry.

“Wasn’t anyone going to invite me to my daughter’s birthday party?”

Ryan busied himself gathering the remnants of wrapping paper.

“Val.” Jeff’s voice held a warning note.

She ignored him. “Anna, sweetie, Mommy brought you a present.”

Anna slid off the picnic table and stood half-behind her father as she looked up at Val.

Val held out a small box.

Anna took it as if it might bite her and peeled back the paper. Ryan couldn’t see her face as she opened the box, but he could see Jeff put a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

“Anna doesn’t have pierced ears, Val. You know that.”

“Yes and it’s time she got over that fear. Mommy will take you to have them done on Monday.”

“I don’t want a shot in my ears.”

“It doesn’t hurt, honey. All pretty girls wear earrings. Don’t you want to be a pretty girl?”

He could see Jeff pull Anna in against his side. “She is a pretty girl.”

“Of course she is,” Jessica’s mother added. “Val, did you see this? Isn’t it adorable?” She picked up the game Anna had just unwrapped, but Val refused to be distracted.

“Mommy will take you today, if you want, honey. Look at how pretty these earrings are.”

“I don’t want needles in my ears.”

Ryan could hear the quaver of tears in her voice.

“Val, will you come in the kitchen with me for a minute?” Jeff’s voice was quiet but there was no mistaking his anger.

“Can I at least have a piece of my daughter’s birthday cake?”

As Val staggered closer to the picnic table, Ryan could smell the fumes on her breath. “Val.” Jeff’s hand was on her arm, pulling her back.

“Jesus fucking Christ.” She jerked free and stomped up the steps.

With the windows closed, the words were unintelligible, but the volume of the voices was perfectly clear.

“How about one more game of Statues?” Jessica’s mom suggested and turned on the portable CD player.

The kids went into wild gyrations that were supposed to be dances, until they froze when the music went off. Over the blare of pop music, the woman murmured, “She’s quite a piece of work. I feel so sorry for Anna.”

Ryan nodded.

“Have you known Jeff and Anna long?”

“Not long.”

“I wish—I try to have her stay as often as I can—I worry—” She stopped the music and the kids froze. “Oh, Marisol, you’re still moving.”

Marisol went to sit on the bench. There was a crash from the house, and the front door slammed.

“Don’t think you can scare me with that!” Val screamed as she stomped to her car.

Ryan found Jeff in the kitchen, picking up the shattered pieces of the popcorn bowl. He bent down to help. “Jeff, I—”

“Not now. Can you just make sure none of the kids come in until I get this cleaned up? Most of ’em have sandals on.” Jeff’s voice was hoarse.

“Sure.”

He went back outside. He stayed through the presents, stayed through the handing out of goodie bags, stayed through the clean up.

As part of the celebration, Jessica was spending the night. As soon as they bid Jessica’s mom goodbye, Jessica and Anna tore upstairs with the pile of brand-new toys Anna had received. The downstairs was relatively quiet when Ryan finally cornered Jeff as he was dumping a load of jeans into the washer.

“God, Jeff, I’m so sorry.”

Jeff turned around and leaned on the machine, face closed, arms folded across his chest. “For what?”

“I’ve been an asshole.”

Jeff’s eyebrows went up, but he didn’t contradict him.

“I understand. If Anna didn’t have you... I get it.”

“Just like that, huh?” The corners of his mouth lifted, but his eyes never changed.

Jeff wasn’t going to make it easy. But then there was no reason why he should. “And I still want to...” He swallowed. “I want to see where this goes.”

“Really? And now all of a sudden you can put up with those restrictions that you couldn’t deal with a week ago?”

“If that’s what it takes.”

Jeff pushed past him, and Ryan’s stomach sank as he realized it was all too late. But Jeff just pulled the folding doors shut on the alcove and pressed back into him.

“If that’s what it takes for what?” Jeff put his hands on the machine on either side of his hips.

Ryan couldn’t think with the heat of Jeff’s body crowding him against the machine, his mouth so close to his. He took a breath, dryer sheets and detergent and Jeff, then went for broke. “To have you.” He leaned forward and kissed him.

Jeff grabbed his hips and kissed him back, brought every inch of them together as his tongue curled hot and deep around his own. Ryan’s hands pressed in at his back, slid through the soft spikes in his hair. He swallowed back the moan building in his throat and arched closer. Just that long, hard kiss sent blood pumping through him slow and thick as honey.

Jeff broke off the kiss with a gasp. “I’m sorry. I want to, Christ, I want to, but...” His eyes flicked upward.

Ryan tugged on his suddenly too tight jeans.

Jeff stepped away. “If you want to run, now might be a good time. It’s just going to get worse.”

“What?”

“I may be getting full custody of Anna.”

“But that’s great.”

“One of the hospital workers reported that Val was under the influence when she brought Anna in. There’s a hearing on Wednesday. I may be walking out of there with Anna permanently.”

“Why is that a problem?”

“There’s going to be home studies and social workers and lawyers and not a lot of time for this.”

“I’m not fifteen. I can keep it in my pants.”

“I’m not just talking about that. I may not be able to see much of you for awhile.” Jeff turned away and braced his hands on the machine as if he expected him to leave again.

“You suck as a salesman, you know that?” Ryan covered his body with his, running his palms down the length of Jeff’s arms. He rested his head on his shoulder. “It’s a good thing you’re pretty.”

Jeff laughed and turned in his arms. “Back to that, are we?”

That laugh acted like a hand on Ryan’s dick. “I know you said it was going to be awhile but there can be phone sex, can’t there?”

“Sounds good to me.” Jeff hooked his fingers in Ryan’s belt loops.

There was a squeal and a thud overhead. Jeff listened for a moment, body tense. Pounding feet and giggles followed, and he relaxed again.

He brought up a hand to Ryan’s neck, his thumb stroking his jaw. “Last chance. It’s more than just my dick involved here, Ryan. If you pull that crap again, something’s going to break and it’s not going to be pretty.”

Something clamped hard and tight inside of him. For a second it hurt, but then he looked at Jeff, and it felt damned near perfect. “Yeah.” He smiled.

He could do this.

About the Author

K.A. Mitchell discovered the magic of writing at an early age when she learned that a carefully crayoned note of apology sent to the kitchen in a toy truck would earn her a reprieve from banishment to her room. Her career as a spin control artist was cut short when her family moved to a two-story house, and her trucks would not roll safely down the stairs. Around the same time, she decided that Chip and Ken made a much cuter couple than Ken and Barbie and was perplexed when invitations to play Barbie dropped off. An unnamed number of years later, she's happy to find other readers and writers who like to play in her world.

To learn more about K.A. Mitchell, please visit kamitchell.com. Send an email to K.A. Mitchell at authorKAMitchell@gmail.com.

Look for these titles by K. A. Mitchell

Coming Soon:

Hot Ticket

Two men and a bottle of nut cream...

Nut Cream

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Available now at Samhain Publishing

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.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Nut Cream*:

It was a good thing Toby was going to be his. Cliff had always been attracted to other men. It would have been horrible to have a female as a mate. What the fuck would he do with her? It wasn't unheard of for previously heterosexual couples to find same-sex mates. But, it definitely complicated matters. He didn't know if Toby was attracted to men since he'd never seen him with anyone, but the fact that Toby seemed to be responding sexually to Cliff's presence put things squarely in Cliff's favor.

To make matters more complicated, though, most werewolves weren't even interested in sex until they reached their mating phase. Unlike humans, when werewolves

hit puberty in their early teens, they normally went through the physical changes but not all the sexual ones. In other words, even though Toby might be ready for a relationship now, he was still innocent compared to other werewolves. He would be completely fresh, his sexual urges not strengthening until recently. How did you seduce a man who was entirely mature emotionally, physically and intellectually, but still a virgin sexually?

Mick wandered outside, stretching in place, undressing and shifting to his wolf form. Cliff followed him, glancing to the copse of trees behind the house. He lived about four houses down, but they always got together at Mick's parents' place. He was glad that Mick hadn't moved into his home yet. Things were working positively for Cliff, with Toby's return to the city. He could come and go from Butch and Charlene's place without it seeming too strange, since the sweetest ass this side of the Rockies lived inside.

He grinned, peeling off his shirt. Rubbing his hand absently on his furred chest, he thought about which direction he wanted to run in today. He popped the buttons on his jeans, sliding them down his legs to stand completely nude.

Mick whined at his side, his shaggy coat a mixture of brown and gray. He danced in place, all four feet moving, anxious to be going. Cliff inhaled, breathing in the warm air. He loved summer, everything was just fresher somehow. He concentrated, his body shifting effortlessly. Standing on all fours now, he craned his neck and licked one of his black front paws.

Mick took off, loping toward the tree line. Cliff gave a happy bark, tearing after him. He needed to find some way to release his tension. If he couldn't find release with Toby, at least he could run.



Cliff panted, flopping down at the base of the tree in Mick's yard. Mick limped up the back steps, shifting in mid-stride before walking into the house. Smirking, Cliff remembered the chase that had resulted in that limp. It wasn't his fault that Mick had run just a tad too slow. It *was* his fault that he bit down on Mick's back leg, but it was too tempting to pay him back for the scratches that ran up his backside. Mick had nudged

him right into a firepit and the damn metal grate raked across his ass before he realized what he had landed in.

He lowered his head, resting it on his front paws while he listened to the murmured words from inside. Charlene—who must have recently come home from work—was exclaiming over Mick’s calf. His teeth marks were pretty obvious.

The porch door creaked open, shutting with a bang.

“What did you do to Mick?” Toby sauntered outside, stepping in a wide path around Cliff, careful to stay out of reach. He turned his head to glance at the trees that Cliff had viewed earlier.

Cliff studied Toby, raising his nose. The pup was leaking pheromones like crazy, the air rife with the tasty scent. He tensed his body, lifting up his hind end to crawl forward.

Toby turned back, and Cliff froze, settling back down. If Toby noticed that Cliff was now closer to him, he didn’t say anything. Cliff waited, his neck stiff, until Toby glanced at the house where the muted conversation between Mick and Charlene was still audible. Cliff took advantage of Toby’s distraction and inched forward.

Toby twisted his head again, gazing at Cliff. He froze. This was gonna be fun. He smiled, allowing his tongue to drop and hang out of his mouth. *Harmless. Look at the cute, harmless wolfie. I’m not gonna hurt you. See how cute I am.* He wagged his tail, stirring the air.

Toby grunted. “You aren’t fooling me with that act, so stop it.” He couldn’t quite hide the smile on his face. Cliff wagged his tail harder.

Facing him, Toby put his hands on his hips. Cliff bunched his back legs, waiting. Sticking out his tongue, Toby baited him.

Cliff pounced, pushing hard with his back legs, missing his prey by inches. Toby twirled in place, running flat out. He was wearing shoes—a serious miscalculation on his part—and wouldn’t be able to shift. Lunging to the right, Cliff gloried in the happy laugh that Toby let out. Toby altered his path and started to run to the left. *Perfect.*

They hit the tree line seconds apart. Toby twisted, veering off the marked path. Barking, Cliff was pleased that Toby was heading deeper into the park. Lush greenery

sprang up around them, peppering the ground, providing obstacles for Toby as he ran through the trees.

Cliff growled and snapped at Toby's heels, herding him in the direction Cliff wanted. They both knew he could have caught him at any time. He barked, and Toby slowed. Toby's chest moved unevenly. Weres didn't have the same stamina in human form. Toby turned, walking backward.

Cliff pounced, taking Toby off guard. Shifting back to his human form in midair, he slammed into Toby, rolling with him so that he was on the bottom with Toby cradled to his chest. Rolling again, he straddled Toby, pressing his hands to Toby's shoulders to hold him in place. Fragrant grass bent under their bodies, releasing a pleasant smell that hinted at wild summer nights.

"Damn it." Toby wriggled to get free.

Cliff moaned. His cock was between them, sliding against the rough fabric of Toby's jeans.

Toby bucked up into him once, before stilling completely.

Cliff chuckled. "Well, well. Looks like I have you right where I want you."

A Sidhe warrior in exile. A young man with powers he's only beginning to understand. In their hands, the fate of two worlds.

Fireflies

© 2007 Ally Blue

Available now at Samhain Publishing

A childhood encounter with one of the Sidhe sets Joseph Vines' life on a fateful course. Unable to forget the beautiful creature who promised to one day return for him, Joey spends the next twenty years learning, dreaming and waiting.

Braeden Shay, a warrior of the Sidhe, has spent those same twenty years watching Joey from a distance, waiting for Joey's heritage to make itself known. When the time is ripe, Braeden steps in to protect Joey from those trying to kill him, and to help him deal with the changes turning his life inside out.

During the days that follow, as Braeden teaches Joey to harness and control his newfound power over the natural world, Joey finds himself falling for the gentle, patient Braeden. Braeden, who has watched over Joey for most of his life, is already deeply in love with him. When the forces targeting Joey for death catch up with them, it will take all their magic—and the power of their love for each other—to survive, and to save both their worlds.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit male/male sex, graphic language, violence, and inappropriate use of plants.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Fireflies*:

Braeden paced sideways, keeping a critical eye on Joseph's technique as the man searched for an opening in Braeden's defense. The grass felt cool and prickly under Braeden's bare feet. He glanced around, making sure the little field remained empty other than himself and Joseph. A stone's throw to his right, the meadow sloped steeply downward. Puffs of white cloud drifted across an azure sky, and the Smoky Mountains

rose in verdant waves all the way to the hazy horizon. To his left, the cabin lay between two outflung arms of birch and evergreen, hidden in a web of charms and glamours.

Nothing stirred but birds and insects, and the warm fragrant breeze. Nevertheless, Braeden couldn't seem to shake the feeling of something creeping up on him. It had niggled at his mind all morning and was becoming too insistent to ignore.

Joseph's knife hand fell to his side, and he cocked his head sideways with a frown. "Hey, Braeden?"

"Yes?" Dropping his defense posture, Braeden moved closer to Joseph. "You feel something, don't you?"

Joseph nodded. His gaze darted from side to side, eyes slightly too wide. "Something's not right. The plants' energy is disturbed." A frown creased Joseph's brow. "Whatever it is, it seems to be focused near the cabin."

Adrenaline shot through Braeden's veins. Trotting over to where the weapons case sat on the ground, he crouched beside it and flung it open. "Joseph, bring me your knife."

"What's wrong?" Joseph asked, jogging over and handing Braeden his silver knife.

"Perhaps nothing." Braeden placed Joseph's knife in the case alongside his own. "Perhaps everything."

"What the fuck's that supposed to mean?" Joseph demanded as Braeden took two heavy iron blades from the case. "Why are you getting out the iron weapons?"

"Because I'd rather be ready for no reason than to be caught unprepared." Braeden held out one of the knives, ignoring the faint burn of bare iron against his skin. "Take this."

Joseph closed his hand around the handle, staring at it like it might bite him. "What about you? Can you use an iron knife?"

"Touching it for a moment won't harm me, but I use one with a silver handle for combat." Lifting the ancient weapon from the foam padding, Braeden held it out for Joseph to see. "It was made for my grandsire by an artisan of Cleopatra's court."

Joseph's eyes saucered. He leveled a curious look at Braeden, but said nothing. Braeden was relieved. Now was not the time for Joseph to attempt to come to terms with the fact that centuries, not years, separated them.

“Let’s go back to the cabin,” Braeden said, rising to his feet. “If they attack us there, the spells I’ve set will warn us and give us enough time to escape.”

Joseph nodded. His face was grayish underneath the caramel skin tone, but his hand gripped the knife handle without shaking, and his eyes were clear.

Smiling, Braeden laid a hand on his lover’s cheek. “Only a fortnight, and already you face danger without panic. You have the soul of a warrior, *a chuisle*.”

A charming blush rose in Joseph’s cheeks. Eyes shining, he tilted his head up and kissed Braeden, a swift brush of lips that was over too quickly.

The small touch made Braeden’s tightly furled wings vibrate against the bonds of the glamour he wore while outside the cabin. *By Danu, he needs no magic but his kiss to hold me captive.* In the past two weeks, Braeden had memorized every inch of Joseph’s body. He’d learned Joseph’s taste and smell and the texture of his skin so well he was sure he could pick his lover out from a crowd of hundreds while blindfolded. But nothing intoxicated him like the man’s kiss. It was an addiction he never wanted to cure.

“Come,” Braeden said, taking Joseph’s free hand and silently charming the weapons case to float behind them. “Let’s get inside.”

Joseph kept close to Braeden’s side as they walked the short distance to the cabin. “They’re here, aren’t they?” He gripped Braeden’s hand tight. “Caratacus’s people. They’ve come for me.”

“Possibly.” He gave Joseph’s fingers a squeeze. “But they can’t imagine how strong you’ve already become. And I will die before I let them have you.”

Joseph’s gaze locked onto Braeden’s face. His deep brown eyes brimmed with naked apprehension. “I don’t want you to die for me, Braeden.”

“Believe me, I have no intention of letting either of us die if I can help it.” Under the shade of a gnarled old birch whose branches spread over the cabin roof, Braeden stopped and glanced toward the cabin. “If Caratacus has indeed found us, *a chuisle*, it will be the beginning of a dangerous time. You’re not yet ready to face him down, but he will perceive that your powers are being honed very rapidly indeed, and therefore his pursuit will be relentless. We must both keep our eyes and ears open at all times, and our magic at the ready.”

“I understand.” Joseph tilted his head back, staring into the greenery above them. “I wonder if...”

His voice trailed off, but his lips continued to move. With a creak and a rustle, one of the low-hanging birch branches bent and curved around Braeden’s chest. A sharp thrill coursed through him, and he smiled. Joseph’s control over his magic had become strong indeed if he could bend a tree as old as this one to his will.

“Caratacus would do well to fear you, Joseph.” Lifting their still-joined hands, Braeden kissed Joseph’s fingers. “Let us go inside now. We are too exposed out here.”

“Okay.”

Without so much as a word or a look from Joseph, the branch withdrew. Braeden eyed it as they stepped up to the cabin door. Even though he himself had no power over plant life, he had an affinity with all things in the natural world, and he could feel the tree’s watchfulness.

Joseph has instructed it to guard the door, and it is doing his bidding.

It was an impressive feat, especially for one whose powers had only just manifested, and who had barely begun to learn how to use them. The honeysuckle vine outside the bedroom window was one thing—young and curious, as eager and malleable as a puppy. This tree was another thing entirely. Ancient as the mountains themselves, wild and proud and untamable. A being such as this one did not bow to anyone, yet it had allowed Joseph to command it.

Caratacus should fear him indeed.

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 à 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.

One hot summer night and a scorching balcony interlude light the fuse of hidden attraction between neighbors Jill Reed and Cole Adams.

One Night on a Balcony

© 2007 Samantha Lucas

Jill Reed has spent her entire life denying her sexuality, but living next door to Cole Adams the past few months has made it near impossible.

Cole is fresh off his third divorce and considers himself a one-man relationship train wreck. He purposefully keeps his lust for Jill in check because, after all, she's the kind of woman a man keeps.

Jill and Cole have been denying their bone-deep attraction for months, but one night on a balcony, passions ignite, an adventure starts and everything is about to change—forever.

Warning, this title contains the following: explicit sex, sex in a public place, graphic language.

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.

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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