



MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S STEAM
HOT SUMMER NIGHTS

SPONTANEOUS
KAREN ERICKSON

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Spontaneous

Karen Erickson

Dedication

To my family for their never-ending support.

Chapter One

Sophie stopped short when she saw *him* sitting at the bar.

Ian Grey never, ever sat at the bar. Rumor had it he flat out didn't drink. *Ever*. She'd worked at the bar in the Royal Plaza Hotel in San Francisco for the last six months and she couldn't remember him staying in the room for more than ten minutes, tops. Rather unfortunate considering what delicious eye candy he made.

With her new resolve though, she didn't pay attention to eye candy. Or at least she tried not to. Delicious men were dangerous, and Sophie Kincaid had had enough of dangerous delicious men to last her a lifetime.

So what was the general manager of the Royal Plaza doing there, she wondered as she slowly walked towards the bar counter. And with a sweating drink in front of him?

"...so she broke up with me. After five years of my life in a relationship with a woman I thought I was going to marry, she dumps me. Just like that."

Sophie's ears perked up at that statement. Perfect Ian Grey got dumped by his equally perfect girlfriend? She hadn't heard that particular rumor yet.

Chuck, the bar manager, nodded in commiseration and Ian knocked back the rest of his drink. "Tough breaks, man."

"I was gonna marry that woman. I'd planned on buying her a ring for Christmas." Ian shook his head and stared into his glass.

Sophie shuffled her feet and gnawed on her lip. It was almost six o'clock, time for her to start her shift with Chuck for the busy Friday

summer night. She needed to get behind the counter, needed to get to work, but she didn't want to butt in on what sounded like a rather personal conversation.

"Hey, Sophie."

She glanced up and found Chuck smiling at her, a look on his face that read *rescue me*. She started towards the bar, sauntered really, deciding to work it for the efficient, sexy man who ran the entire hotel with a straightforward intensity she'd never witnessed before.

After all, he just broke up with his girlfriend. A little wiggle in her ass and a thrust of her chest might be what he needed to make him feel better.

"Chuck." She bent to put her purse in a cabinet beneath the bar and turned to find Ian Grey's dark blue gaze settled in the exact spot where her ass had just been. "Mr. Grey. What brings you here tonight?"

His gaze lifted, met hers and he smiled. A sensual smile that revealed straight white teeth and curved his firm lips invitingly. Those lips tempted her to lean forward and touch his mouth with her fingers.

And then maybe follow up with her tongue.

"Hello, Sophie. And please, call me Ian."

Hearing her name on his lips did something to her. Made her shiver from the inside out, made her want to know what his voice sounded like when he breathed her name in her ear. Right before he buried himself deep inside her.

Sophie shook her head and started moving down the bar, wiping the already clean counter with a damp cloth. She needed to stop thinking like that. Doing so had gotten her in way too much trouble in the past. Too many men, too many who used her, treated her like shit, even forgot her name. One who even smacked her around, though she'd wised up and left him relatively fast.

The last one had not only stolen her heart, but he'd also stolen all of her money and her credit. It devastated her so much she lost her previous job and her apartment. She'd had to move back in with her mom for a few months to get herself back on her feet both mentally and physically.

When the job listing for a bartender at the Royal Plaza Hotel appeared in the *Chronicle*, she immediately applied. Okay, yeah, she knew it was kind of trashy that her past bartending experience had been at the Wily Fox, a popular strip joint in the heart of the San Francisco Tenderloin district. She had made a lot of money at that place in tips, just for flashing a little bit of cleavage. She also learned a lot and became a skilled bartender. She'd even been in line to be lead bartender until Marty screwed it all up. Marty, the boyfriend bouncer who helped her lose her job as well as his own.

God, what a jerk he'd been. And he hadn't even been that good in bed, despite his boasting around the club. No, he'd turned out to be a muscle-bound jerk with bulging biceps and a pencil dick.

Not that skilled with it, either.

The phone rang and Chuck gestured towards it. "You'll take care of the boss while I go answer it?"

Sophie gave him a firm nod, feeling the warm and intense gaze of Ian on her backside. "Of course, don't worry about it."

Chuck left them alone, and she was suddenly afraid to turn around, afraid to face the far-too-handsome man who sat before her. But she did so, their gazes locking, and the air immediately filled with an unseen crackling energy. Fingers of heat seemed to radiate off him and towards her, beckoning her to him. Luring her in.

She'd always been a sucker for a handsome man with dark hair and a sexy smile.

“Can I get you another?” She tilted her head towards his empty glass, fascinated at the sight of his fingers twirling it around, his blunt fingertips tracing the rim. She could imagine those fingers touching her, tracing along her body. Delicate yet firm, his touch would arouse her to climax with ease.

He stopped twirling the glass and pushed it towards her. “Why not?”

“What are you having?” She placed the glass in the sink and pulled out a clean one.

“Jack and Coke.”

“Coming right up.”

Ian watched her fix his drink, his gaze steady on her. “You like working at the hotel?”

“Oh, yes.” She set the fresh drink in front of him. “I love it here. Everyone seems to love working here.”

“I’m glad to hear it.” He sipped from his glass. “Do you work here full time? Forgive me for not remembering.”

She smiled. She’d forgive him for just about anything if he kept looking at her with those sexy blue eyes and intense expression. “Yes, I’m the only other full-time bartender besides Chuck.”

“So is this what you want to do with your life? Or is this a temporary thing while you’re working towards something else?”

Sophie shrugged, uncomfortable with his questions. No one ever asked her what she was doing with her life. She just—lived. “To be honest, I haven’t figured that out yet.”

“You haven’t?” He looked incredulous. “If you don’t mind my asking, how old are you?”

“Twenty-eight.” And feeling more uncomfortable by the second.

“Huh. I can’t imagine going through life not knowing what was going to happen next.”

Thank goodness, a couple sat down at the opposite end of the counter and she walked over to take their order, away from Ian's intense scrutiny. She supposed that was part of the attraction for her, his intensity, his single-minded focus. She could only imagine that intensity focused solely on her while he touched her. Stripped her of all her clothing. Pounded himself deep inside her, his eyes locked with hers as his cock filled her.

Crap, all of this intensity was getting to her, breaking her even. She didn't need this, didn't need to feel so serious, so worked up over a man. After her vow to herself a few months ago, she knew she couldn't allow herself to fall hard for someone who would only end up breaking her heart. Considering he recently broke up with his girlfriend and he just happened to be her boss, Ian would most definitely end up breaking her heart.

Sophie served the couple their drinks, then went back to check on him, deciding it was time to lighten things up.

Ian watched her approach, appreciating the shift of her hips in her tight black miniskirt, the swell of her breasts beneath the fitted sleeveless shirt. He could see her bra through the thin white fabric of the shirt. He could make out the white lace cups that hugged her rounded curves too. God help him but the idea of unbuttoning her shirt, revealing her lace-covered breasts to his gaze turned him on, made his dick hard.

Hell, everything about the sexy bartender made his dick hard. He hadn't been this hard since...

He didn't know when. Certainly not in the last few years with Nadia. Their sex life had gotten so stale he could count on a roll in the sheets once a week, usually on a Saturday, at approximately ten o'clock. His life

had turned boring in a blink of an eye. And he desperately wanted to do something about it.

“Can I ask you a personal question?”

He glanced up, found Sophie watching him with an amused gleam in her blue-green eyes, her full lips pursed.

He shrugged. “Depends on how personal you want to get.” Shit, did that come out sounding sexual? Because he didn’t mean for it to sound sexual.

Okay, maybe he did mean it to just a little bit.

“It’s not too personal, don’t worry. I just wanted to know something.” She leaned across the bar, resting her arms on it. A daring look shone in her eyes. “Have you ever done anything spontaneous?”

Ian sat up straighter. What kind of question was that? Of course he’d never done anything spontaneous. He planned his life down to the letter. He’d worked hard his entire life to get what he had, and barely had time to even think about being spontaneous, let alone actually *do* anything spontaneous.

Yet another thing to add to the list of what made him feel really, really boring.

“I can be spontaneous.” He knew he sounded defensive, but he didn’t care. “I just never have time.”

She shook her head, a tiny smile curving her sexy lips. “That last sentence says it all. No one makes time to be spontaneous—you just are.” She shifted, her forearms still resting on the counter. He swore she did it on purpose, to give him a better view of her delectable cleavage. He couldn’t help himself, he tipped his head and looked down her shirt and actually saw the white lacy cups of her bra. *Fuck*.

Her breasts looked plump and full, and he imagined them filling his hands. Pink nipples hard and begging to be touched and sucked. He

could almost hear her little gasps and sighs when he put his mouth on her...

“Haven’t you ever done something crazy? Without any thought? Like buy five-hundred-dollar sheets even though you’re broke, or go on an unplanned vacation without any luggage? Or maybe have a hot one-night stand with someone you’re attracted to but know you’ll never see again?” Sophie paused, her eyes meeting his. “Have you ever done anything like that, Ian?”

This was not the kind of conversation he should be having with an employee, even though she wasn’t under him directly. Still, it was completely inappropriate. And he was all about appropriate. “Have *you* done any of those things?”

She smirked. The sight of it made him want to kiss it right off her face. “Guess which ones. I’ve done two out of the three.”

He needed to walk out of the bar right now. Really. Things were happening that he hadn’t planned. First of all, there was the drinking. He was so unused to consuming alcohol he could feel the buzz coming on. Hell, it was already on. Second, the flirtatious conversation with a woman he’d secretly lusted for since she walked onto the hotel premises and applied for a job. Third, the fact that he was now a single man and contemplating making a play for his lusty sex object. All of this equaled...spontaneous actions. Well, hell.

“Okay.” He sighed, dragging his index finger through the water ring his sweating glass left on the counter. “I’m pretty sure you’ve paid five hundred dollars for sheets when you were broke.”

“Yep.” Sophie nodded, a giant grin on her face. “They are the softest sheets I’ve ever slept on. Well worth the money.”

His head was suddenly filled with images of soft cotton sheets sliding against naked bodies, long legs tangling with his. Blonde hair spilled

across a plump pillow, blue-green eyes cloudy with passion staring into his...

Then he remembered the last time he had sex with Nadia, and how crappy it had been. How disconnected she had seemed. He didn't know what was worse, remembering how bad his last sexual encounter was or torturing himself with an overactive imagination about a sexual encounter he was never going to experience. At least, that's what he told himself.

Her expression was naughty, as if she knew what he was thinking and he swore she pressed her breasts together with her arms to make deeper cleavage. "So tell me, what's your other guess?"

"The one-night stand?" Just saying it made his forehead break out in a faint sweat. His imagination filled with thoughts of having a one-night stand with her. Doing whatever he wanted with her, to her. Letting her do whatever she wanted with him, to him.

Sophie laughed triumphantly and slapped her hands down on the counter directly in front of him. "Wrong! Wish I would've made a bet with you, I could've made some easy money."

"So you've gone on vacation without any luggage?" That surprised him. Who the hell went on vacation and didn't take anything with them?

She stood a little straighter, his cleavage view now gone. He didn't know whether to sigh in relief or cry with disappointment. He had a distinct feeling he was drunker than he realized.

"I was involved with this guy, a really rich guy. One Friday afternoon he called me and asked, 'You want to go to the Caribbean?' I laughed and said, 'Quit joking.' We talked about it a little more, then hung up. Next thing I know he's at my place, asking if I was ready to go, and he drove us to the airport where he had his private jet waiting."

Ian interrupted her. “He had a private jet?” Like he could ever compete with that. Wait a minute, he wasn’t competing with anyone over Sophie. They were just talking. That’s it.

Yeah, right.

She nodded. “I told him, ‘I don’t have any luggage. You need to take me back home so I can pack.’ But he said he would buy me whatever I needed and we got on the jet. We spent the whole weekend over there. Quite the adventure.”

“Wow.” Ian shook his head. He didn’t know what to say. What kind of life had she really led? He’d heard a lot of rumors about her, most of them unflattering. It made him curious, made him want to get to know her better, figure her out. “That all sounds crazy.”

“It was. Turns out *he* was crazy.” Her expression grew somber and she averted her gaze. “Totally nuts. But that was a long time ago, when I lived in Miami.” Those pretty eyes met his again, and he felt himself slowly start to drown in them.

“How long did you live there?” Damn it, he wanted to break the spell, needed to get out of whatever tangled web she seemed to weave around him with just her words. And her smile. Not to mention the sassy sparkle in her eyes. He wondered if this was what she did to all of the men she met.

And he realized that thought was pretty damn unfair. He had no idea how she conducted her private life. Rumors were just that—stories that could be true or could be all lies.

“Too long,” she said quickly, as if she didn’t want to talk about it, so he let the topic drop. She smiled at him again, resting her hands on her slim hips. “Want another drink, boss man?”

The last thing he needed was a drink and he definitely didn't want her to call him *boss man*. "No, I should get going. I have an early meeting tomorrow and I still need to go home and work out."

"What do you do to work out?"

Was her tone suggestive? Or was he just imagining things? "I usually run a couple of miles at least five nights a week."

"Cool. I like to run too." She grabbed his glass and dumped it into the sink behind the counter. "I overheard you talking earlier. Sorry about your breakup."

Okay, he didn't want to talk about *that*. With *her*. "No big deal."

"Weren't you two going to get married?"

"I never actually asked her but it was assumed." Part of his problem, he should've asked her. Should've given her a ring. Lord knew she hinted about it enough. But it never felt like the right time, and now he wondered if his doubts had something to do with realizing that maybe she wasn't the right woman. He'd certainly never know.

"That's tough, breaking up after being with someone for so long."

"Yeah, well, it happens." Ian shrugged, trying to act nonchalant, but it still stung. And not necessarily that he lost the girl, but *how* he lost the girl. How Nadia made him feel like an inadequate failure, when he'd never done anything else in his life but strive for perfection. Just when his life was coming together, Nadia had to kick him in the proverbial nuts and dump his ass. It sucked.

Chapter Two

Maybe Sophie shouldn't have mentioned his breakup. The minute she apologized his body language changed. His entire body tensed, his sensuous mouth drew tight. The playful light in his dark blue eyes dimmed. Like she had hit an invisible off switch, his entire mood went from cheerful to serious.

Too bad, considering she much preferred cheerful. And drunk and cute. She walked along the bar, collecting discarded glasses and dumping them into the sink. She'd never had a conversation with Ian before. Had only admired him from afar, knowing that nothing would ever come of it since he was her boss. And because he had a girlfriend he was practically married to. Now that the girlfriend was out of the picture and Sophie had him front and center at her bar, drunk and depressed, well, if she'd been the old Sophie, she'd probably figure out a way to take advantage of him. And then promptly do so.

But she wasn't that girl anymore. She wasn't going to sell herself out for another quick lay, only to be left wide open with a bleeding heart while whoever she'd just been with walked away from her and never looked back. No, she was on a different path now. She had plans to do something with her life and make something of herself. Once she finished working on herself, then she could attempt to find a man, establish a relationship that was real. True. To find someone who cared for her and wanted to do right by her, maybe even forever.

"You know, Sophie, I think I will take you up on your offer."

What, truly care for me and do right by me forever? Oh, yeah, that was her imaginary offer. Something *this* man wouldn't be interested in at all. For the life of her, she couldn't recall what he was talking about. "What do you mean?"

"Another drink. Same thing I had before, please." He smiled, dimples winking at her, and she wanted to melt into the floor. "I don't think I'm drunk enough."

"You wanna get drunk?" She cocked an eyebrow at him, grabbing a clean glass and filling it with ice. "How many drinks have you had?"

"This will be my fourth."

"Oh, I bet you still have a long way to go." She added a couple extra splashes of whiskey into the glass then poured cola into it before pushing it in front of him. "It's on the house, sir. Your money is no good here."

He chuckled, the sound of it sending a shiver down Sophie's spine, and took a long drink until the glass was less than half full when he set it on the counter. "You know, I never drink."

"Really?" She already knew this of course, since everyone loved to share any little tidbit about Ian Grey. She had a feeling most of his personal quirks were common knowledge amongst his employees.

Ian nodded. "Yep, I never drink. Ever. I don't like feeling out of control."

"So why are you drinking tonight?" She stood in front of him and his gaze met hers, his eyes burning with an intensity she'd never seen before. Something passed between them at that very moment, something dark and mysterious and sexual. Goose bumps broke out on her skin and she rubbed her arms, trying to ease the shivers that had come over her.

"Because my life already feels out of control so why not add to it?" He lifted the glass with his thumb and index finger and drained the rest of it

in one swallow. “You know what’s so funny? I could give a shit about not having Nadia in my life anymore.”

Sophie wondered if that was really true, but she thought it wise to keep her opinions to herself.

“It’s the fact that she screwed up my plans. I had plans, you know? My life was supposed to follow a particular order and now she kinked that all up by breaking it off with me.” He shook his head, swirling the ice around in the glass.

“My life never goes according to plan,” Sophie said, trying to make him feel better. Who had their entire life planned out? She’d been flying by the seat of her pants since she left home at seventeen. Sometimes she liked it that way, it made life more exciting. Most of the time though, it only seemed to cause her trouble.

“My life has always followed a plan. Now I don’t know what to do.” He looked completely and totally miserable. And also completely and totally like a lost and lonely little boy. For whatever silly reason, it touched her heart.

“Sometimes change is good. It makes you reevaluate your life and see what your priorities really are.” At least that’s what change did for her.

“I already know what my priorities are.”

He was blowing her away with every statement he made. Was it natural to have your life so ordered, so mapped out? God, she didn’t think so. The man definitely needed a change, he just didn’t know it yet.

“Have you ever thought that maybe it just wasn’t meant to be? That you can’t always be in control of your life? That maybe all of this is a good thing? You are, after all, the man who has no time to be spontaneous. Maybe it’ll do you some good to shake it up a little bit. Do something different for once in your life.”

Ian looked away from her and stared at the countertop for a moment before he spoke. "Maybe you're right. Maybe a little change will do me some good."

"It doesn't hurt, you know." Their gazes met and held and her heart beat painfully. He was listening, really listening to her. And she liked it. "Letting go of the control you seem to hold so tightly over your life. You're so busy *planning* your life you're probably missing out on *living* it."

"You think so?" His voice was low, skimming over her nerve endings like velvet against bare skin, his eyes hot and suddenly sparkling with interest. For her? She wasn't quite sure.

"From everything you've told me tonight, yes, I do."

"So you've got me all figured out?" His dark eyebrows raised in challenge, the expression on his handsome face sexy as hell.

"Oh, far from it. Just trying to get you to relax, is all." He made her uncomfortable, in that edgy, aroused way she got when she was turned on. Their conversation was moving, shifting, straight towards uncharted territory. Territory she should step far away from if she knew what was good for her.

"Hey, Sophie?"

She whirled around and found Chuck standing next to her. She'd been so wrapped up in Ian that she hadn't even heard him approach.

"Yeah, Chuck?"

"I hate to ask this of you but could you go back into the stockroom and clean out all the empty boxes? A delivery's coming in tomorrow and Randy unloaded a bunch of stuff back there. Forgot to clean it out when he left." Chuck shook his head. "Do you mind? It's not heavy work."

Disappointment filled her. She didn't want to leave Ian, afraid that if she left the bar he'd leave too. But she couldn't tell Chuck no. He was, after all, her manager. "No, I don't mind."

“Aw, Chuck, you’re ruining our conversation.”

Chuck laughed. “Sorry, Ian. Some of us around here have to *work* for a living.”

“Ouch.” Ian swirled the ice in his glass, his eyes meeting hers. His lips parted and she could feel his warm gaze travel over her lazily. “Nice talking to you, Sophie. Thanks for the advice.”

“You’re welcome, sir.” She felt stupid sounding so formal but she didn’t know what to say, how to act. Especially in front of Chuck.

Something flickered in his eyes and she wondered if he was disappointed by her formal tone. It was better, she told herself. She shouldn’t be flirting with him, giving him advice. She couldn’t help him when she could barely help herself. She didn’t need his attention, anyway.

Though she wanted it.



Sophie broke the empty boxes down one by one, throwing them into a growing pile. Her mind wandered, going over her conversation with Ian. Wishing circumstances were different, so she wouldn’t feel so guilty harboring wicked feelings for her boss. A man who had total control over her own destiny, a situation she didn’t want to put herself in.

That didn’t stop her from being attracted to him, though. To recall the glint in his eyes when he looked at her, the sexy curve of his mouth. All that restrained power and muscle so nicely defined in his expensive suits.

She sighed, throwing the last box in the pile, and then wiped the sweat away from her forehead. He was a man who looked like he knew

how to treat a woman right. A man who knew just how to touch her, knew just what to say to make her melt.

A man she had no business thinking about in such a manner. No matter how sexy he was, no matter how charming, he was off-limits.

There was a sudden shift in the air and Sophie knew the minute he walked into the storage room, smelled his unique masculine scent, heard the quiet click of the door closing. She stood a little straighter but didn't turn around. Wondered what he wanted exactly, though she already had an idea.

Telling herself he was off-limits seemed to have no meaning now that he was in the room with her, so close to her. If he made the first move, she knew she wouldn't stop him. Didn't want to stop him.

She didn't move, listened as he walked closer to her, could actually feel his body heat as he stood behind her, and she held her breath, ready for whatever he was going to do. It had been so long since she'd had sex, been with another man, and longing curled inside her, causing her entire body to tense with anticipation.

Big hands were suddenly at her waist and she expelled her held breath on a soft sigh, leaning her body against his. He was so solid and warm, his chest broad, his hands large and sure as they curled around her. Long fingers grazed her stomach, his face pressed into her neck and she closed her eyes, savoring the sensations of the man wrapped all around her.

"You smell delicious," he whispered in her ear, his lips so close they touched the tender skin. "I bet you taste even better."

Her heart fluttered wildly, a surge of moisture spreading between her thighs at his words. He pressed tiny kisses to her neck, his tongue darting out to lick, and she tilted her head to give him better access. She opened her eyes and watched as his hands moved up her stomach to cup

her breasts, fingers gliding over her sensitive flesh, her nipples tightening with pleasure from his touch.

His hands smoothed downward, fingers tracing little circles over her stomach and she shivered, despite the close warmth of the storage room.

“You like that?” His teeth nibbled at her lobe and she bit her lip to keep the moan building inside of her from escaping.

She nodded in response and his free hand skittered up her arm. “I could tell. I’m giving you goose bumps.”

Oh yes he was, and in more ways than one. Sophie tried to pull away from him, but he held her close, both arms settled on her waist, legs tucked around hers. “We shouldn’t be doing this.” She sounded weak, but who wouldn’t sound weak when the sexiest, most handsome man she’d ever laid eyes on had his hands all over her, his mouth on her, driving her wild?

“You’re the one who said I needed to be more spontaneous. More open to change.” He brushed the hair away from her neck with gentle fingers, pressed his mouth against the back of it and she shivered again, wondering if anyone had ever kissed her there before. She had no idea the back of her neck was such an erogenous zone.

“I—I didn’t think I was going to be a part of your spontaneous plan.” She rested her arm over his, trying to stop him from sliding his hand beneath her shirt, but he did so anyway, his fingers now skimming bare flesh.

Ian chuckled, the sound reverberating through her. “From what you told me, spontaneous and plan don’t go together.”

He was right. Damn it. “Just this once, then,” she said, giving in so easily, a little disgusted with herself for doing so. She closed her eyes as both of his hands cupped her breasts, thumbs rubbing against her lace-covered nipples. “It’ll be our spontaneous secret.”

“Right,” he panted, his breath hot in her ear. “Just this once.”

Sophie turned her head to the side and his mouth found hers, surprising her. The kiss was gentle, his lips soft and smooth as they moved against hers, his tongue sliding into her mouth with ease. She turned in his arms to face him, pressing her body against his as she threw herself into the kiss. She didn’t hold back, reveling in the delicious sensation of his mouth connecting with her mouth, his tongue dancing with her tongue.

She realized he’d somehow gotten rid of his suit jacket and tie. His erection brushed against her stomach, setting her body on fire while his hands snuck around to her back, looking for the clasp of her bra. She broke the kiss to gaze up at him.

“We can’t do this in here.”

“Why not?” He was so focused on trying to disentangle her from her bra, which he still hadn’t figured out clasped in the front, he didn’t even bother to look up at her. She stood her ground, though, arms stiff at her sides so he couldn’t undress her. His gaze finally met hers, smoldering and frustrated. “If we’re going to be spontaneous, we may as well go for it.”

Sophie looked around, her gaze lingering on the door. Anyone could walk into the room at any time, though she doubted it would happen. For one thing, it was late, only Chuck and LuAnn the cocktail waitress worked the bar, and it was fully stocked. The only reason anyone would need to come back there would be to get more alcohol. The likelihood of that was slim.

But still...

“I’ll lock the door.” Ian must have been watching her watch the door she realized when he released her. He strode towards it, turned the lock

into place and then faced her. Hands rested on his lean hips, contemplating her with an unreadable expression on his face.

She knew then there was no going back. And she didn't want to, either.

Chapter Three

Sophie stood frozen, her breath coming in short pants, her body still reacting from his kiss and touch. *I could back out right now and get out of here. Pretend like it never happened. It would be better that way. Easier.*

“Do you want to leave?” He must have read her mind.

Yes. “No,” she answered. Why did she say that?

Ian started walking towards her, his stride sure, his expression...*hmm*. It was the expression of a man intent on having his way with a woman. His lids heavy, eyes slumberous, his mouth full, almost vulnerable looking and damp from their shared kiss. He looked ready to devour her in one gulp. Her entire body trembled with anticipation, her nipples painfully hard beneath her bra, panties drenched. *It's because it's been so long. I can't remember the last time I had sex. My body craves it—anyone would do.*

Yeah right. More like she'd been craving *him* from the first moment she saw him. And now all her dirty little dreams would come true. For a price, such as her dignity.

“Come on,” Ian said, taking her hand.

He led her through the deep recesses of the storage room, past the many rows of shelves that stocked all of the liquor bottles, paper products and extras, until they reached the deepest, darkest corner of the room. Ian pressed her against the wall, his hard body rubbing against her, his gaze locking with hers.

“You’re drunk,” Sophie said. She wanted him to realize she knew exactly where this was going—absolutely nowhere. And wanted to remind herself that maybe this wasn’t such a good idea after all. Not that she was going to stop it from happening.

Yet again proof that she was too weak when it came to handsome, charming men.

He smiled a slow sexy grin that thrilled her right down to her toes. “I know.” He touched her nose with the tip of his index finger, trailed it down her cheek to trace her lips. “Does that bother you?”

“Makes me wonder what your real motive is for being here.” She glanced about the dark corner, felt his fingers move down to curve around her neck. His touch felt so good. Too good. “Why you’re in a dark corner with me when you’ve hardly spoken to me since I started working here.”

“I run this entire hotel. I hardly have time to speak to the employees who report directly to me, let alone every single one.” He brought her closer to him. “Not that I haven’t noticed you.”

“You have?” Hope rose within her then fell just as quickly in disappointment. Of course he’d noticed her. The minute she walked into the hotel looking for a job her reputation followed right behind her. She couldn’t shake that thing if she tried, and Lord knew she tried. It didn’t help that one of the cocktail waitresses knew her from the Wily Fox, so she spread the rumors of her past extravagant lifestyle, all of her many boyfriends. So embarrassing.

Yet here she was living up to her reputation yet again. Allowing herself to be seduced—by the boss, no less—in the storage room of the bar where she worked. Like the gullible girl she’d always been.

When would she ever learn?

Ian nodded. "I couldn't help but notice you. You're beautiful." His lips brushed against hers, slowly, deliberately chaste, powerfully seductive. She melted against him, her arms wrapping around his waist, holding on to him for fear she'd fall to the ground if she didn't.

His hands were at the front of her shirt, undoing the buttons, pushing her shirt open to reveal white-lace-encased breasts. He broke the kiss, his gaze drinking her in, his fingers swirling around her already hard nipples. "It's been so long..."

Her head snapped up, eyes meeting his. "What do you mean?" Been so long since what? He'd been with his girlfriend for the last five years. Surely, he wasn't referring to sex.

Ian shook his head, a grim smile on his face. "Nothing. Let's get you out of this." With a nimble flick of his fingers the front snap of her bra came undone, her breasts falling into his hands. He smoothed his thumbs over her nipples and she threw her head back against the wall, closing her eyes. Every time he touched her, looked at her, it was as if electric sparks went shooting across her nerve endings. She didn't remember ever reacting to a man like this, her entire being yearning for him. Sophie had always been the type to treat sex lightly, used it for fun, and of course, to get off.

Tonight she wanted to have sex with Ian Grey to share a piece of her with him and to claim a part of him for her alone. It dawned on her she didn't care if he was using her to get over his girlfriend, didn't really care if they never saw each other again.

Okay, that last part was a lie. But she wasn't going to think about that right now. Couldn't...

And who wanted to, when the very man she wanted a piece of just bent over her to draw her nipple into his mouth, sucking gently, his hand caressing her other breast. She moaned, sank her fingers into his

soft dark hair and held him to her, never wanting him to stop. His other hand moved down her body to the edge of her short skirt, lifting it up to slide beneath, cupping her lace-covered bottom.

Ian lifted his head and gazed into her eyes as his hand slipped to her front, pressing against her sex. She gasped, wanting to close her eyes but couldn't, trapped by the intensity of his stare. The intent of his fingers as they tucked beneath her panties, dipping into her soaking wet pussy. His blue eyes flared as he touched her, testing her wetness, and she spread her legs, giving him better access.

"You're wet." He said it as if he couldn't believe it. Was he crazy? All he had to do was look at her and her panties were drenched.

"For you," she said, unable to stop herself. Why not let him know how much he turned her on? When was the last time his now ex-girlfriend told him that? From the way he was talking and acting, Sophie had a feeling it had been a long time.

He leaned in and kissed her hard, pressing her against the wall even harder. His finger went to work inside her folds, searching, finding her clit, touching it lightly. She moaned against his mouth, her hands moving to the front of his shirt to unbutton it.

It parted with each undone button and her fingers connected with warm male flesh. She tested it, smoothing her hands over his hair-roughened skin. His chest was broad, muscles firm. She stripped him of his shirt, running her hands over his muscular arms, up to his broad shoulders. He felt good, so big and strong. His clean and spicy scent filled her nostrils. The lingering flavor of whiskey on his tongue as it stroked hers teased her taste buds. And what his fingers were doing down south, oh my. She had a feeling she was going to come any minute.

“Touch me,” he said against her lips, his voice harsh, ragged, thrusting his hips against hers. As if she had as much affect on him as he did on her.

Sophie stroked his erect cock through his trousers with firm fingers. His heat seared her and her fingers curled around him, tearing a groan from deep inside his chest.

He dropped in front of her, on his knees, his hands pushing her skirt up so it bunched around her waist. He stared at her for a moment, his breathing fast and loud. His hands rested at her hips, fingers pulling on the waistband of her lace panties, and he tugged them down, revealing her to him.

“Oh God,” he whispered, eyeing her naked pussy eagerly. His gaze lifted, meeting hers. “You’re completely bare.”

She nodded, sinking her fingers into his thick dark hair.

His warm hands curved over her hips, ran down her thighs and then moved up inside them, spreading her legs wider. He breathed against her, so hot, making her tingle, and she closed her eyes, leaning heavily against the wall.

“I can see everything.” He moaned, ran a single finger over her slit, and she moaned as well.

“Like what you see?” she couldn’t help but ask. Didn’t that dopey girlfriend of his ever do anything as simple as wax down there? The man acted like he’d never seen a pussy before in his life.

“Oh yeah.” He leaned in close, breathing deeply, and closed his eyes. “Do you want me to go down on you?”

He actually had to ask? If he didn’t thrust his tongue or fingers inside her quickly, she was going to *die*. “Yes. *Please*.”

His thumbs spread her swollen pussy lips, opening her wide to his gaze. She wasn’t embarrassed to have herself examined so closely, didn’t

even care, so eager to have him lick her, drive his tongue inside her. Never before had she wanted a man so much, so fast.

And then his tongue was there, tentative against her throbbing center, licking her slowly. She closed her eyes, allowing the sensations to take over, carry her away. He licked and stroked, his tongue like velvet against her hot sensitive skin, and she clutched tighter at his head.

His hands came around to squeeze her bottom, his lips closing around her clit, and he sucked it into his mouth. She bucked against him, nearly fainting with pleasure when his teeth lightly nibbled on the sensitive nub. Long fingers stroked down the crack of her ass, stopping at her pussy, and then they thrust deep inside her, making her cry out.

“Did that hurt?” His mouth tickled her pussy when he spoke.

She shook her head, knees weak as his fingers thrust in and out of her slowly. “It feels good.”

“I want to make you come.” He sucked on her clit again as his fingers still pumped inside her.

“Keep doing what you’re doing and it’s guaranteed.”

He smiled against her, then his mouth opened, sucking on her. His fingers moved faster and she clutched at his head, cramming his face into her.

“Oh, yes, yes,” she murmured, not even trying to keep herself quiet. Not able to care if anyone found them at this moment. All she could focus on was Ian’s mouth on her, his fingers inside her, his lips sucking on her clit so hard he was going to make her come...

And she did, crying out when it hit her, her fingers tight in his hair. His fingers stayed deep inside her and his tongue continued to play with her clit. All of it so much, so fast, so intense, she couldn’t take it anymore.

Sophie tugged on his hair, pulling his face away from her, and he looked up at her, his chin glistening with her juices. He removed his fingers from her and dragged them back up the crack of her ass, tickling at her anus. She jumped at the delicious sensation it brought forth.

“Jesus, you’re like my every fantasy come to life.” His dark gaze drank her in, his eyes appreciative as he stood to his full height. His hands kneaded her buttocks, the tent in the front of his pants indication that he needed some satisfaction and fast. And she was just the one to give it to him.

Ian held her close, his own wildly beating heart drowning out the sound of her harsh breathing. Her body still trembled in his arms and he marveled at her response. Nadia had certainly never reacted like *that*. He’d felt Sophie’s orgasm deep inside, her inner walls milking his fingers, the gush of wetness that surged at his lips when she came. He’d almost shot off himself at the sensation of it all.

She rubbed against him, her pebbled nipples making contact with his chest, and his cock surged, reminding him that he had unfinished business to tend to. That is, if Sophie was still willing...

Her slim fingers trailing back down to press over his crotch indicated she was still willing. Those nimble fingers undoing the button of his pants and tugging down his zipper more than indicated she was willing. And oh shit when her fingers curled around his hard flesh, he jerked in her hand.

“I want you to take me,” she murmured into his chest, then licked him long and slow. Like a satisfied cat. He shivered again.

“Take you?”

Sophie’s head lifted, her blue eyes meeting his, silent. Her hand still curled around his cock, stroking up and down, making him pulse with

need. Her lips parted and she stood on tiptoe, bringing her mouth close to his ear.

“I want you to fuck me, Ian.”

He didn’t even hesitate, reaching for his wallet from his back pocket with a jerk and opening it. One token packet was tucked inside the leather and he pulled it out. She helped him, pushed first his pants then his underwear down his hips. His clothing landed at his ankles and he realized it didn’t faze him, what they were about to do. In a storage room at his hotel. He wasn’t even worried about being caught in the throes of sexual passion with Sophie Kincaid. He was too focused on her and what they were about to do.

He heard her sharp intake of breath and caught her staring at him, watching his impossibly hard cock twitch with impatience.

“Wow.” Her lips parted and he could imagine thrusting his cock in between them, the warm cavern of her mouth milking him. Nadia had *never* given him a blow job, proclaiming them as “disgusting” and “vulgar”.

He had a feeling Sophie would suck his dick and like it. A lot.

“Come here,” he said with a growl, rolling the condom on.

She did so and he grabbed her by the waist, hauling her to him, her legs wrapping around his middle. Her warm wet pussy pressed so close to his sheathed cock and with one thrust, he was inside.

Sophie cried out and he grasped her buttocks, propping her up against the wall. He moved within her, her inner walls tightening around him, gripping his cock like a velvet fist. God, he was going to lose it. He was this close to spurting off in her tight wet heat already.

“You feel so good.”

Ian opened his eyes at her words to find her watching him, her lower lip caught in her teeth, her eyes glazed. Her cheeks were flushed and

blonde wisps of hair clung to her face. She was beautiful, so beautiful and he couldn't resist. His lips met hers in a searing kiss, their tongues eager, teeth clashing. He pressed her even harder against the wall, regretfully tearing his mouth away from hers.

"Don't move," he murmured.

She listened to him, plastering herself against the wall, and he slowly pushed himself deep within her, staying there for a moment before pulling out. Then he thrust inside her again. Her head tilted back, eyes closing as a low moan of ecstasy escaped her.

"Oh, yes," she said, her hands flat along the wall, legs locked tight around him. He increased his pace, the friction between them sending off enough sparks he was surprised they didn't burst into flames. His balls drew up tight to his body, his dick surged and he knew he was gonna come. Gonna explode inside of her like he never had before.

With a groan he climaxed, his semen gushing from him like a geyser, filling the annoying condom as he thrust again and again and again. She slumped against him, her inner walls contracting around him as a low moan tore from her throat.

"Oh, my God," she whispered, her lips brushing his throat after it was all said and done, the both of them satisfied.

He lifted his head, smiled down at her, fingers lingering on her warm cheek. "You can say that again."

"Oh, my God." Sophie smiled and he withdrew from her, pulling the used condom off him. He clutched it in his hand, not sure of what to do with it. "I'll take that."

He handed her the condom carefully, and she walked over to a small garbage can and threw it inside. He watched her, noticed how sexy she looked in her high-heeled sandals, her skirt up around her waist, her pretty ass pink from being pressed against the wall.

As if she knew he was staring right at her ass, she yanked her skirt down, smoothing the fabric with her palms. He could see it on her face, could see it in her eyes. She was feeling regret, he could tell. Probably wasn't sure how to react. Hell, he wasn't sure how he should react either.

"That was very...spontaneous," she finally said, tugging on the hem of her skirt.

Ian pulled his underwear and pants up. "I'll say."

"We probably shouldn't have done that." Her gaze met his, reluctant.

"Why not?"

Sophie shrugged. "That entire boss, employee thing. The fact that I'm a bartender, and I know I'm not really deserving of your attention."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

She smiled, a winsome smile. A little lonely, a little sad, that smile said it all. "You know exactly what I'm talking about. You know what you get when you get with me. Easy sex, no strings. I'm sure you've heard the rumors about my past."

"You're saying they're true?" He buttoned up his shirt, surprised by her admissions, wondering why she was bringing all of this up now.

"I'm not denying them." She clasped her bra and buttoned her shirt too. "I've done things in my past I'm not proud of. This probably wasn't too smart of a move either. I'm sorry, Ian."

"There's nothing to apologize for. Maybe we should get together again, go to dinner..."

She stopped him from talking any further, pressing her index finger against his mouth, and he shut up. "No, let's not ruin it. Let's leave it at this. A lovely memory and no more."

Ian watched her go, perplexed. Wondering why she thought so low of herself. Wishing he knew her better, wishing he could figure her out. Knowing it wasn't smart to think any of this. But he couldn't help it.

He still wanted her. Even after everything they'd done, even though she'd walked out of the room, he wanted her. More than he wanted her before they had sex. He thought fucking her would get her out of his system, but he'd been wrong.

Now she was so deep inside him he didn't think he'd ever get her out.

Chapter Four

Ian had no business doing what he was about to do.

No, he shouldn't be doing it at all. He should turn his car around and head back home, to another lonely night. By himself, no one to keep him company except his television or his laptop.

Shit, that was way too freaking depressing. No way did he want to go back to his empty house and face *that*. Face the loneliness in his life, the monotony of it all. After the breakup with Nadia, he'd realized just how boring he'd become. Hell, he didn't half blame her for leaving. He probably would've left himself.

And then the night with Sophie two weeks ago, that unbelievable moment in the storage room that had turned his life completely upside down. He'd never had a woman so responsive, so sensual, so explosive in his arms before. He told himself he didn't want a relationship, didn't want anything special with Sophie Kincaid.

He just wanted to experience her again. To hold her in his arms, kiss her, taste her, fuck her...

Ian never thought in terms of *fucking* a woman. He was too damn polite, and after so many years with Nadia, being in a "proper" relationship, he definitely didn't think about *fucking* a woman. He was supposed to make love, have sex, whatever.

Funny how all he could think about was fucking Sophie's brains out since he'd had her. How much she'd probably like it if he said that in her ear. *I want to fuck you.*

So that's why he drove towards her apartment at ten o'clock at night. He'd looked up her address earlier at work, accessed the Human Resources files. No one ever questioned him when he did so, for he did it all the time. When he'd done so earlier, though, it felt sordid. Wrong and more than a little sleazy. But he did it anyway, because he wanted to know where she lived. So he could go see her later.

Hell, he was a dirty bastard.

She didn't live in the best part of Oakland, but he wasn't surprised. He'd heard the stories about her starting over, running away from whatever trouble she'd gotten into in Miami. Then there had been the trouble she'd had before she started at the hotel, when she'd worked at a strip club. Rumor had it she'd been a stripper a time or two to earn extra cash. He had no idea if that was true. Financial trouble and a crappy boyfriend had also been the rumor as to why she lost her job. From the looks of where she lived, he didn't doubt the financial part.

Ian pulled up in front of the apartment building and stared up at it in mock horror. Shit, it was worse than he thought. She lived in a total dump. The place looked dirty, the parking lot full of old cars, a bunch of tough-looking young men standing around, watching him as he got out of his car. He was almost afraid to leave his Lexus so close to a bunch of thugs, even though he could lock it and put the security alarm on, no problem.

Like that would stop them if they wanted to steal it.

Deciding that even a stolen car wouldn't stop him from seeing Sophie Kincaid again, Ian hit the keyless remote and stalked towards her building, relieved to see that at least she lived upstairs. Safer, he assumed. The stairwell rattled as he walked up the steps and he pulled at his too-tight collar. The heat wave that had swept the Bay Area left the

night air a sweltering eighty-five degrees. Not even the breezes off the San Francisco Bay helped ease the temperatures.

He hoped Sophie had a decent air conditioner. From the looks of the place, he doubted it.

Sophie glanced up from the sink at the sound of the doorbell. She turned off the water and patted her face dry, cocking her ear towards the front of the apartment. Did her doorbell really ring?

She strode into her bedroom, glancing at the clock on the nightstand. Who would be ringing her doorbell at ten o'clock on a Thursday night? Maybe it hadn't been her doorbell. The walls were thin in these old apartments, and occasionally she would hear knocks on the door of her neighbor's. Maybe it was someone coming to visit them.

She also heard lots of screaming sex coming from her neighbors below her. In fact, one bout had been particularly loud a few nights ago and she'd ended up masturbating to their shouts. Her mind filled with images of Ian Grey pumping his thick cock inside of her. Being fucked by his marvelous fingers, eaten by his generous mouth.

Just thinking about it right now made her wet.

A soft knock sounded on her door and she stiffened, nervous. There was nobody who would visit her at this time of night. Her only friends were a small group of fellow employees, and she was too embarrassed to invite them over. Her mother never left the house after sundown. Who could it be?

Sophie crept to the front door and peeked into the peephole, curious to know who stood on her doorstep. She immediately slumped against the door in disbelief at seeing who was on the other side.

Ian Grey? The man of her fantasies? The man who made her mouth water and her panties damp at the mere thought of him?

She looked through the peephole again, watching as he tugged at the collar of his crisp shirt, loosening the knot of his tie. He must've come straight over from work, still wearing a suit in the stifling heat. He looked good enough to eat.

Even though she was clad in only a revealing silky pink nightgown, she opened the door cautiously, her heart beating hard. "What are you doing here?"

"Is that any way to greet your boss?" His expression appeared about as jumpy as she felt, though she did notice the appreciative gleam in his eyes as he drank her in.

Hah. "What is my boss doing on my doorstep in the middle of the night?"

He ignored her question and gestured at the door. "May I come in?"

"Sure." She watched as he walked into her place, and she shut the door slowly, trying to gather her thoughts. She filled with shame at the shabbiness of the old apartment, at her lack of furniture or knickknacks. The place more than anything was just a spot to crash, a place to get ready before she left for work. She tried to avoid hanging out there as much as possible. She *never* invited anyone over.

"Nice apartment," Ian said as he looked around.

Sophie wanted to laugh out loud. What a liar. The place was a shit hole. "Yeah, right."

He walked over to the giant box turned upside down that acted as a temporary table. "Interesting furniture choice."

She shrugged, willing herself not to flush with embarrassment. "I just moved in, I haven't had a chance to furniture shop yet." That and the fact she had absolutely no money for furniture.

"The place has a lot of potential."

Enough with the small talk. "Why are you here, Ian?"

His expression grew serious. "I needed to see you."

"You needed to see me? For what? And why now? Couldn't this have waited until tomorrow?"

Ian shook his head, taking a couple of steps towards her, and she grew weak as he drew closer. "No."

"Then what's so urgent that you needed to see me now?" She was no fool—she knew why he was there. She just wanted to hear him say it.

"This," he said, stopping just before her, his arms sliding around her waist to pull her to him. His erection throbbed against her lower body, his eyes blazed into hers and she closed her eyes, reveling in the sensation of his body pressed next to hers again.

Sophie forced her eyes open and cleared her throat. "I thought we were only going to do this once. Remember?"

Ian buried his face in her hair. "I guess I'm not very good at keeping my promises."

His hands smoothed up and down her back, fingers lingering on her bare skin, and she shivered in his arms.

"Ian, you should go." Her voice sounded weak and she didn't really mean it. Being in his arms again, feeling his solid muscular warmth pressed up against her, was too delicious to turn away.

"You're all I think about," he murmured, his lips at her temple, kissing her there. The gesture was so tender she closed her eyes against the emotions that surged at his touch. "You're distracting me from my work and that *never* happens."

Sophie smiled faintly, resting her hands on his chest. "I don't mean to distract you."

His hands cupped her bottom. "Show me your bedroom, Sophie. I want to see your five-hundred-dollar sheets."

Pleasure bloomed in her chest, thrilled that he remembered. Silly as it was, it did make her feel good. She disentangled herself from his arms. “Ian...”

He smiled, looking beyond her at the short hall that led to her bedroom, before meeting her gaze once more. “I like to hear you say my name, even when you’re irritated with me. Say it again.”

She rolled her eyes. “Please. Now you’re just being ridiculous.”

“No, I’m a man with a supreme hard-on and the only person who can help relieve it is you.” He started towards the hallway. “Come on, sweetheart, let’s go check out your sheets.”

“Ian! Do you think you can just walk in here and tell me what to do? Just because you’re my boss at work doesn’t mean you’re my boss at home.”

He stopped in his tracks and crossed his arms in front of his impressive chest. “You’re telling me if I touched you right now I wouldn’t find you wet and ready for me?”

She was dripping just at his words but she couldn’t admit that. Certainly didn’t *want* to admit it.

“Sophie,” he said, a tantalizing light in his eyes as he took one step closer to her. “Come here.”

Her anger evaporating, she walked towards him, her feet light as air. Thrilling pleasure rose up inside her at the animalistic expression on his face, the commanding tone of his deep voice.

“That’s more like it,” he said, his arms drawing her closer, his erection settling against her belly. She couldn’t stop herself from touching him there, fingers lingering on his hard shaft. Desperate to undress him, see him naked, have her way with him.

"If you really want me to go, I'll leave," he whispered in her ear, his tongue licking at the sensitive spot behind it. "I'm not going to force myself on you if you don't want me."

If you don't want me. The craziest words she'd ever heard. "Ian..."

"God, Sophie, I've been going crazy thinking about you. Imagining touching you again, fucking you on your expensive sheets." He nuzzled her temple with his face, the gesture tender, endearing. "No distractions, no worries about anyone walking in, interrupting us. Just the two of us together, all night long."

Thank goodness he held her or else she'd be a puddle on the floor. Her entire body throbbed at his words, her breasts tight with wanting, her pussy wet and ready for him.

His hands stroked up and down her back, nudging her so close to him it was as if they were fused together. "I've been thinking about you too," she admitted.

He breathed deep, his chest swelling beneath her cheek, and she turned her head, pressing her mouth against the fabric of his shirt. She wanted to gobble him up, consume him. If only for one more night, then so be it.

"Let's go," Ian said, taking her hand.

She followed him back to her tiny bedroom, ashamed yet again at the lack of furnishings in her place. She only had the bed, not even a dresser or bedside tables. She stashed all of her clothes in the blessedly large walk-in closet her bedroom had, and the door was shut against the exploding disaster of it all.

"Purple?" He cocked an eyebrow at her, referring to her color choice for the sheets.

Sophie bent at the knee and ran her hand over the smooth cool sheets. "Not too feminine, not too masculine."

“Just right,” he ended with a smile. He glanced about the small room, his eyes settling on the large fan sitting on the floor. “Does that thing work?”

“Yes. Turn it on, if you want to.”

He did so, and she admired the flex of his legs and buttocks when he bent down. He was gorgeous, rich, sexy and amazing sexually. What the hell did he really see in her?

“No air conditioning in this place?”

“It’s old, doesn’t work very well. And normally we don’t need it that much here with the mild summers.”

“Nothing mild about this summer. Or at least the last few days.” Ian shrugged out of his jacket and undid his tie, throwing it on the floor. He began unbuttoning his shirt, each undone button revealing his muscular chest, and Sophie’s mouth watered at the sight of him. Watching him undress so casually while she stood there drooling over him like a giant treat she couldn’t wait to dive into. Anticipation thrummed in her veins and, barely able to contain herself, she tore off her nightgown.

His fingers went to the fly of his trousers and she rushed towards him, swatting his hands away. Her fingers tucked beneath his waistband, grazing against the hot flesh of his belly, and she led him towards the bed, sitting down on it.

Ian still stood, gazing down at her, his eyes hot, his chest lifting and falling rapidly. She watched him as she undid the button and tugged the zipper down, the sound of it seeming to fill the quiet room. She pushed at his trousers and they fell in a heap to the floor, revealing his black boxer briefs. His cock strained against the thin fabric, the smell of his arousal tickling her nostrils, musky male and intoxicating. Licking her lips, she shoved his underwear off his hips, down his legs, and he stepped out of the pile of clothes at his ankles, also ridding himself of his socks.

Wonderfully naked, she thought as she let her gaze wander over him from head to toe. His penis, thick and long, growing from a patch of black curling pubic hair. A glistening drop of moisture wept from the tip of it and she dipped forward, licking it away.

He gasped then growled, his hips jerking towards her. “Jesus, Sophie.”

“I’ve been dying to taste you,” she admitted, her lips wrapping around the head of his cock.

Ian thrust his hands into her hair, holding her head steady as she swirled her tongue around him and pushed his cock inside her mouth as far as he could go. She released him, licked his length, tickled his balls with the tip of her tongue and he groaned.

“More?” she asked, playing innocent.

He nodded, guiding her head and mouth back to the plum-shaped head of his penis. “Definitely more.”

She sucked and licked, nibbled and played with his cock, loving his taste, loving even more his reactions to her. His hands tightened in her hair and he thrust his hips rhythmically, fucking her mouth, really. She wanted to give him pleasure, she wanted to hear him scream with it, wanted him to be weak with it. All because of her and the power she held over him.

The same sexual power he held over *her*.

“I’m gonna come,” he said, forcing her to look up at him.

She continued to pump him in and out of her mouth, smiling when she heard the low groan come from deep within him. His balls were tight against his groin, his entire body tense and she knew he was close. She wanted him to explode in her mouth, was desperate for it.

“I don’t want to come like this, Sophie,” he mumbled, his voice weak. “Please, I want to be inside you.”

Ignoring him, she sucked hard, her hand gripping the base of him, pumping his shaft. He climaxed without warning, his semen spurting into her mouth. She drank from him and gentled her hold on his cock, licking at his length as the shudders that overtook his body slowly subsided.

“Damn...”

Sophie released him and he attacked her, pushing her back against the mattress, his big body covering hers. He was damp and sweaty and already semi-erect again, and she shivered with want.

“You are amazing,” he said, kissing her, his mouth so wet, so hot on hers.

She opened her mouth to him, and his tongue darted in with ease, tangling with her own. The kiss was carnal, sizzling with electricity. Made her whimper for more, her legs restless as they shifted against his. Her body grew sticky with sweat just like his and she slicked her hands over his shoulders, down his damp arms. It was so hot in her bedroom, the fan not enough to cool their heated bodies. She pushed at him, forcing him to roll over so she was on top.

“Hmmm, perfect,” he murmured, his hands cupping her breasts, thumbs playing with her erect nipples.

She arched her chest towards his mouth, feeling his cock brush against her wet folds, and she was overcome with the urge to impale herself on him.

“Do you have condoms?” he asked, his eyes blazing into hers.

She gazed down at him, her hair falling around her face as she shook her head no. “I’m on the pill, though.”

He looked towards the pile of clothing on the floor. “I have a couple in my pocket.”

“Ian.” She placed her hand on his cheek, turning his head so he looked at her. “I’m safe, I have a feeling you’re safe. I want to *feel* you when you’re inside me. Please.”

He groaned his answer, closed his eyes and thrust his hips towards her as she guided him inside. He stretched her, filled her so completely and she leaned forward, over him. His hand grabbed hers, fingers entwined and just like that, she felt connected to him. Something she’d never experienced before with a man during sex.

“Open your eyes, Sophie.”

She did, amazed at all of the emotion she saw shining in his, the tender expression on his face. She bent towards him even more, her hair enclosing them, and he kissed her, his lips gentle and searching, his free hand coming up to cup her cheek.

Tears threatened to shed and she shook her head, stunned by it all. This didn’t make any sense, none of it made any sense. How could she feel so strongly for a man she didn’t really know? She couldn’t blame it on the hot sex they shared.

She’d shared plenty of good sex with men in the past, though none of it had felt like *this*. Like it felt with Ian.

By the intensity in his gaze, the gentle way he touched her, she had a feeling he felt the same way too.

She sat back up and began to ride him, sliding herself up and down his rigid cock. Their hands still clasped together, his other hand played with first one breast, then the other. He pinched her nipples and she gasped at the pleasure/pain sensation. He finally released her hand and gripped her by the hips, guiding her on his cock, and they moved in tandem. Her climax threatened to erupt, take over her body. Make her lose control.

Ian stilled beneath her and she groaned, her body shivering with the onslaught of her orgasm, her inner walls clenching around him. She cried out his name and he thrust deep, spurting hot semen inside her, filling her.

Completing her.

Chapter Five

Yet again Ian was doing something he shouldn't.

Summoning a woman to his office for the sole purpose of seeing her again. Using his job, his position as a front so he could see Sophie, ask her what happened, explain to her how he felt.

After his surprise visit to her apartment two weeks ago had turned into an all-night sex fest, he'd asked her to stay with him at his house for the weekend. He had the time off, she had the time off, he thought it would be the perfect opportunity to spend more time with her, get to know each other.

The two solid days they had shared together had been amazing. He'd never felt closer to a woman, not even Nadia, whom he'd been with for so long. He and Sophie had never left the house and spent the majority of their time together naked, laughing, talking, eating, making love. He'd never been more sore and exhausted in his life.

Never been happier either.

His parents had shown up unexpectedly on Sunday afternoon and she fled without saying a word to him. One minute she'd been there, the next minute she was gone. He'd left her alone for a few days, didn't want to push, and then he'd gotten caught up with work. He even left for a week to a conference in Florida.

Next thing he knew two weeks had passed and he hadn't heard a peep from her.

Part of it was his own fault and he could take responsibility. Not like his fingers were broken, he knew how to make a phone call. His legs weren't broken either—he should've stopped by the bar to talk to her. But if he did that then he'd have to do something else to her. Like pull her into his arms and kiss her, run his hands all over her beautiful body before stripping her of her clothing. Stroke her into a frenzy then bury himself deep inside her. Make her cry out with pleasure right before she came.

Shit, he never once in his life felt like this over a woman before. She drove him nuts, made him crazy, made him horny, was always on his mind. He liked it too. Hell, he liked *her*. After spending so much time with her, two days of talking with her, making love to her, he realized just how much.

A forever kind of how much, that's what.

It didn't scare him, either. It had scared him with Nadia, had scared him with other women he'd been involved with in the past. Being close to his mid-thirties, he'd assumed he'd find the right woman soon. At one point, he'd thought Nadia had been the right woman but something always niggled at him in the back of his mind. A seed of doubt that grew and grew as time passed.

With Sophie, there was no doubt. She was the woman for him. She had to be.

Now Ian just needed to convince her.



"The boss man wants to see you."

Sophie glanced up at Chuck and set another clean glass in the row of already clean glasses behind the counter. "What are you talking about?"

“Mister Ian Grey himself has summoned you to his office. Better go see what he wants before the five o’clock rush shows up.”

Nerves clamored inside of her as she walked out of the bar, and she twisted her hands together. She hadn’t seen Ian in over two weeks, not after they spent an amazing two days together at his house. She hadn’t been able to turn him down the morning after his spontaneous visit to her apartment. She’d been sleepy and sated after a full night of lovemaking, and he’d looked so handsome, so appealing when he’d asked her to come over. Considering it was her one weekend a month she had off, she took him up on the offer.

It had been two days of luxurious living, decadent sex, delicious food and overall pleasant company. Surprisingly, she and Ian had a lot in common, similar tastes in movies, music, books and even politics. Yes, he was intense and focused, but he was also sweet and funny. And amazing in bed.

Beyond amazing. He did things to her, made her feel in ways she’d never done or felt before. The entire weekend had been like a dream, the best dream she’d ever had, until Sunday afternoon when his parents stopped by for a surprise visit.

Not even waiting around to meet the folks, Sophie got out of there fast, uncomfortable with the situation. She didn’t want to feel like she didn’t measure up, didn’t want to see the disappointment flicker in their eyes when they met the woman their son was boning. Because that’s all it was, there wasn’t a relationship. It was just based on sex. Incredible, earth-shaking, mind-blowing sex.

Besides, she *didn’t* measure up. She was a bartender with no direction in her life, too lazy to pursue anything that would better herself and her future. She certainly wasn’t worthy of such a man’s intentions, didn’t know why Ian seemed so interested in her.

He didn't treat her like she was just a fuck, but maybe that was his way. Charming and sweet and tender, he had treated her like a princess all weekend long. Feeding her breakfast in bed, giving her bone-melting massages, washing her in his giant whirlpool bathtub before he made love to her. He acted like nothing was too good for her. It had been wonderful.

Like a fool she'd run out on him and never looked back. She didn't contact him, acted as if she wasn't even interested in him anymore. All of it lies. She was dying to call him, touch him, kiss him. Wanted to feel his hands on her again, stripping her naked, leaving her open and vulnerable to him. For once in her life, she *wanted* to be vulnerable to a man, let him see all of her. Not afraid of how he'd treat her.

Yet he'd ignored her too. She'd barely seen him the past two weeks, which hurt. Didn't he care enough to try and contact her? Of course, she cared but didn't contact *him*. So turnabout seemed like fair play. Damn it.

And now he'd called her to his office. Who knew what he wanted? She was so nervous she could barely walk. She only hoped he wouldn't fire her. She really needed to keep this job. Needed to have some sort of stability in her life, even if she couldn't have him.

Sophie realized then, as she walked to his office, she *did* want him. She wanted to see if they could make something work. He probably wasn't interested, but if she got up enough nerve, she might mention it to him. See what his reaction would be.

The lobby for the executive offices was huge, like a cavern, and she smiled at the secretary who sat behind the polished desk set in the exact middle of the room.

"Ian Grey asked me to see him?"

The secretary nodded and picked up the ringing phone. "You can go ahead and see him. His office is right there," she said, pointing her finger towards a door.

Sophie went to the door and opened it, peeking her head inside. Ian sat at his desk, his dark head dipped down, reading something. She stepped inside the doorway and shut it behind her with a silent click, content to watch him before he noticed her.

The suit jacket was long gone, his normally pressed and crisp, white, button-down shirt rumpled, the blue silk tie loosened. Sleeves unbuttoned and rolled up to reveal strong forearms, thick wrists, his beautiful hands. Hands that had been all over her body, inside her body, bringing her such intense pleasure.

She moved, shifting against the door, and he glanced up, his eyes meeting hers. They looked sad, his entire expression somber, tight. But then his blue gaze cleared and he smiled, standing up.

"Hello, Sophie."

Oh God, just hearing his voice made her knees weak and made her want to run to him. "Hello, Ian."

He propped his hands on the edge of his desk. "How have you been?"

Always in check, always polite at work. She much preferred him wild and unrestrained, his gaze hot, moaning when she touched him. "I've been fine. Busy."

"I've been busy as well. I was out of town on business for the past week." He came around the desk, stopped and leaned his butt against it. He crossed his arms in front of him as if waiting for a response.

She cleared her throat, nervous by his closeness. Just a few steps and she'd be right next to him, would be able to touch him. "The bar has been crazy with the heat wave still going on. Everyone wants a drink to cool themselves off."

"I've noticed the numbers have been up. I guess that's one good thing about this heat." He smiled again, but it didn't quite light up his eyes. No, really he just looked miserable.

"Did you call me to your office for a reason?"

Ian looked like he was about to say something but then he closed his eyes briefly, shaking his head. "No. I just wanted to see you."

"Oh."

"Why haven't you called me, Sophie? Or tried to see me?"

"I could ask you the same thing."

"I didn't want to push. You seemed upset when my parents stopped by and then you left without a word..."

Sophie sighed. She still felt bad about that. "I'm sorry. I didn't think you wanted me around when your family was there." More like *she* didn't want to be around when his family was there.

"I didn't mind, I want you to meet them eventually but maybe I'm rushing things..."

"Whoa, wait a minute. Rushing things? Rushing what, may I ask?"

"Well, I guess I kind of assumed we were together."

Huh? She thought he assumed they were getting together to have fun, not to have a relationship. She couldn't contain the hope that rose within her at his words, though. "We've fooled around a couple of times. You just broke up with your girlfriend. I definitely didn't think we were 'together', as you say."

"You're telling me what we shared meant nothing to you."

It meant everything to her but she couldn't admit that. Didn't want him to know just how badly she wanted him, wanted something meaningful with him. All of the other men, all of the other disappointing relationships in her life, evaporated when she thought about Ian. What

he did for her, how he made her feel. Treasured, appreciated, cared for. Maybe even eventually loved.

“I’m telling you I didn’t think it meant anything to *you*. I thought I was your rebound relationship.”

He smiled and the sight of it warmed her heart, besides other places on her body. “Sophie, if you only knew how much you consume me. Everything I see, everything I think about, talk about, I always wonder, ‘How would Sophie feel?’ ‘What would Sophie say?’ Especially after our weekend together, I’ve known.”

“You’ve known what?” Her throat suddenly felt tight, overwhelmed by what he had said.

“How much I want you in my life. I wanted to give you time to know how you felt about me, but I couldn’t wait anymore. I had to see you.”

Ian came towards her and then she was in his arms, her face pressed against his chest. She breathed deep, his familiar spicy smell filling her nostrils, and she smiled. He buried his face in her hair.

“Do you think we could make this work?”

“What did you mean, how I felt about you?” She wished she could undress him right here, press her lips against his naked chest, run her hands all over his bare skin.

“You don’t like the fact that I’m your boss. I know you’re gun shy about relationships but I swear I’m not like those other men who took advantage of you.” He kissed her forehead, the touch of his lips whisper soft and she melted.

Sophie had filled him in briefly on her troubled relationship past during their shut-in weekend. She’d felt comfortable letting him know, wanted him to know about it. Maybe it had been a bit of a test, but it looked like he passed.

"I can get over that if you can. As long as you don't boss me around," she teased.

Ian pulled back, watching her, his gaze smoldering. "You don't seem to mind it when I boss you around in bed."

She stood on tiptoe, pressing her lips to his for a too brief kiss. "That's different."

His hands cupped the back of her head, his mouth so close to hers his breath fanned her face. "I wish I could make love to you right here. It's been far too long since I've been with you, touched you."

"Have you ever done it in your office?" Sophie cocked a brow.

He shook his head, a wicked grin on his face. "Never."

"Then maybe we should do something about that." She kissed him again, her mouth lingering, tongue sneaking out to trace the outline of his lips. "Spontaneity is what got us in trouble in the first place."

He moaned and his mouth opened, allowing her tongue to slip inside and meet his. "I'm all for spontaneous," he said when he broke away.

"Why don't you go lock the door?" She slipped her arms around his neck and plunged her fingers into the thick hair at the back of his head. She was never going to let go of this man again.

"I will," Ian said, trying to get out of her grasp, but she wouldn't let him.

So he kissed her instead.

About the Author

After leaving the working world to become a stay at home mom/slave, Karen Erickson realized she needed to get crackin' and pursue her lifelong dream of being a published writer. A busy mother of three, she fits her precious writing time in between chasing her children, taking care of her wonderful husband and pretending she has a maid. She lives in California.

You can visit Karen at her website www.karenwritesromance.com or her blog at www.karenwritesromance.com/blog.

Look for these titles by Karen Erickson

Now Available:

Spontaneous

Coming Soon:

Fortune's Deception

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

Skin to Skin

© 2007 Dionne Galace

Available now at Samhain Publishing

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.

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Skin to Skin*:

Leilani dropped her arms to her sides and Ollie almost fell out of his chair. The handcuffs slid out of his hands, landing on the grass. *So much for keeping my cool.*

Her breasts were just as he imagined them. Round, perky and tipped with dark brown nipples that looked like Hershey's Kisses. He couldn't wait to touch them, to suckle and nibble on those nipples. His mouth watered at the thought. His eyes followed the natural line of her body, her exposed belly, the tapered waist and the generous flare of her hips. Her bottom was covered by a white scrap of cloth that was barely holding on for dear life.

Reaching down, he felt around the grass for his handcuffs and was thankful when he found them quickly enough. He wrapped his fingers around the cool metal just as Leilani got to the edge of the pool and began to gracefully pull herself out on the rungs. He could have gotten up to help her, but at that moment, his thigh had begun to throb and frankly, the way his cock was threatening to poke a hole through his shorts told him standing up probably wouldn't be a good idea.

He surreptitiously snuck a hand down to his inner thigh to rub the area around his wound. It wasn't hurting yet, but the throbbing was definitely a warning. *Not now*, he prayed silently. *Please not now*.

Leilani stood before him, confident in her near-nudity, one arm hanging loosely by her side and the other propped on her hip. Her dark eyes belied her curiosity, but her lips were pursed in a sensual smile. Her curly mane was scraped back in a ponytail, serving to emphasize her long neck and the delicate bones in her face. Beads of water dotted her lips and neck as well as the valley between her breasts and he couldn't decide which part he wanted to lick first.

"Take down your hair," he ordered hoarsely.

Leilani raised one eyebrow, but reached up to pull off the scrunchie holding her ponytail, sending a cascade of black curls over her shoulders and back. One errant curl teased her nipple. With her hair loose, he decided she looked more like a Polynesian princess.

For a brief moment, he had a vision of himself lying in a hammock on a desert island somewhere sipping on a piña colada while Leilani danced in front of him in nothing but a grass skirt and her hair draped over her breasts.

"Will you give me back my top?" She nodded at the tiny piece of white fabric clenched in his fist. "Or are we going to do this naked?"

He looked down at the bikini top tangled with his fingers. "No, you're not going to get this back." Raising his head to look at her, he reared his

arm back and flung the bikini top into the pool. “You don’t need to be wearing anything for what I’m going to do to you.”

“Well, I guess that means I have to take this off too.” She hooked her thumbs into her bikini bottoms and did a little shimmy, but didn’t take them off. As she studied him from beneath the veil of her lashes, the tip of her pink tongue peeked out and touched the corner of her lips. “What *are* you going to do to me, Detective?”

Staring at the expanse of brown flesh before him, at the enticing dip in her navel, and those long, slender legs that could easily wrap around his hips, a hint of insecurity began to nibble at him. What if his leg cramped up in the middle of their lovemaking and they had to stop? He jiggled the handcuffs uncertainly in his hand. He felt kind of stupid for bringing them out now. What the hell did he think he was actually going to do with them?

He looked up at Leilani’s face and could see she was struggling to keep her flirtatious expression. She arranged her hair so it covered her breasts more adequately, and placed both hands on her hips for a moment before dropping them again so they hung at her sides. The teasing glint that was just in her chocolate eyes faded until she stood before him shifting uncomfortably from one foot to the other.

“Um...I should go.” She jerked a thumb over her shoulder. “I’m just going to grab my stuff and get out of here. I’m sorry for trespassing.”

Damn, he’d lost her. He resisted the urge to slam his palm into his forehead and call himself an idiot. He took a deep breath and slowly released it in an effort to regain his composure. “Your top is underwater in the middle of my pool. Are you seriously going to go home dressed only in those skimpy bottoms?”

A tiny knot appeared between her brows. “No, I brought my sarong with— Oh, fuck it, Oliver. You want nothing to do with me. I get it. I’ll stop bothering you, okay?” She ran a hand over her hair, inadvertently

flashing him her tits again, but realized what she was doing and blushed, crossing her arms securely over her chest. “I...I’m just gonna go while I still have some dignity left, thanks.”

“Sit down, Leilani.”

She raised her eyebrows in surprise, then shook her head. “No. I’m going home. You’re probably not going to see me for a while. For the next few years, I’ll be very busy trying to avoid you.”

“I wasn’t asking, Leilani.”

“I...” Looking adorably flustered, she sat on the lounge next to him, her bare thigh only inches from his.

He stopped thinking. Stopped worrying. And for once just went with the flow. He cupped her face between his hands and brushed his lips against hers. She stilled against him, then placed her hands around his wrists to tug them away from her head.

“This isn’t going to work, Oliver. I’m just gonna...”

“Shut up.” He buried his hands in her silky-soft hair and used his grip on her to pull her close. “You’re so fucking beautiful, you know that?” Without waiting for her response, he lowered his head and covered her mouth with his own.

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

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

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

A Scorching Seduction

© 2007 Marie Harte

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

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

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

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

Blackberry Pie

© 2007 Bonnie Dee

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

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

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

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

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

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

Catching a Buzz

© 2007 Ally Blue

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

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

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

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

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

Full Disclosure

© 2007 Mary Wine

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

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

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

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

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

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

Does a full moon really cause naughty behavior?

Bad Moon Rising

© 2007 Leeanne Kenedy

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

Wrong.

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

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

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

Beyond the Tears

© 2007 Michelle Cary

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

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

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

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

Is their passion real, or only a mirage?

La Mirage

© 2007 Jennifer Colgan

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

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

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

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

Take Me

© 2007 Mackenzie McKade

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

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

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

It's payback time.

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

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

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

Fijian Fling

© 2007 Sami Lee

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

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

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

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

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

Honeymoon Castaways

© 2007 Dawn Halliday

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

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

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

Two men and a bottle of nut cream...

Nut Cream

© 2007 Jade Buchanan

Nut [nuht] noun, verb.

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

2. Slang, Vulgar – a testis.

Cream [kreem] noun.

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

2. Slang, Vulgar – to have an orgasm.

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

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

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

Fantasmagorical

© 2007 Annmarie McKenna

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

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

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

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

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

Hunk of Burnin' Love

© 2007 Veronica Wilde

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

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

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

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

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

Ladies! Meet Red Hot Alaskan Men

© 2007 Nancy Lindquist

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Custom Ride
© 2007 K.A. Mitchell

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

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

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

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

Skin to Skin

© 2007 Dionne Galace

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

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

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

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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