



MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S STEAM
TEMPERATURE'S RISING

TABOO DESIRES

AMANDA YOUNG

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Amanda Young

Dedication

In dedication to all the people out there, who stand brave and choose to
be true to themselves.

Chapter One

Sunlight filtered in through the picture window in the dining room. Tendrils of gossamer light illuminated Karen's long, golden hair like a halo around her pixyish face. Her emerald eyes filled with fire, she stood in the partition between the dining room and kitchen, her hands on her slender hips. "What do you mean you aren't ready to get married?"

Cole Winchester swore under his breath and ran a hand over the stubbled, lower half of his face in exasperation. He really didn't feel like having this discussion again. After a long, unproductive day at the store, he was tired and cranky. The last damn thing he wanted to talk about was whether or not they should get married. It wasn't as if he'd changed his mind in the past twenty-four hours.

"Well?" she asked, her gaze pinning him down with a glacial frown that left him feeling two inches tall.

He sighed and decided then and there that something had to change. *Now*. He was sick to death of having to deal with being interrogated every time he came over. "I meant just what I said, Karen. We aren't ready to get married. Weddings aren't cheap and neither one of us has that kind of dough right now."

Karen glared and her lips parted, no doubt ready to lambaste him for saying something she didn't agree with. Luckily, she was interrupted by the shrill whine of the oven's buzzer. With a humph, she turned and stomped into the kitchen. Thank God looks couldn't kill, or he'd be a six-foot shish kabob.

The simple truth was he wasn't ready to settle down. He didn't think he ever would be, at least not with Karen. He cared about her—they never would have made it past the two year mark if he didn't—but he

wasn't *in* love with her. Then again, she didn't seem to be very keen on him either these days. Which made her being so gung-ho to get married all the more strange. Up until the previous month, no mention had been made of getting married, and then all of a sudden it was the only thing she wanted to talk about. Or scream about, as the case may be.

Karen marched across the dining room, a glass pan full of steaming broccoli casserole between her oven-mitt-covered hands. "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. People get married every day without all the fancy trimmings." She punctuated her statement by slamming the dish down in the middle of the table and trudged over to her seat.

Cole watched as she bit into the rosy flesh of her lower lip, noting the way her skin turned pale around the edges of small, pearly white teeth. The action reminded him more of something a petulant teenager would do than a mature woman nearing thirty.

Where had the sweet woman he'd started dating gone in the last month? Marriage had become some kind of worry stone that shoved them further and further apart instead of bringing them closer together like it was meant to. The woman was obsessed. He didn't see what the big deal was. After all, it was only a piece of paper.

Tugging at the hem of his work shirt, a red polo with the words Winchester's Game Emporium embossed on the breast pocket, Cole pretended to pull at loose threads, while Karen silently filled her plate. Dinner smelled good, all cheesy and buttery the way he liked it, but his appetite had disappeared the moment Karen uttered the dreaded M word.

All they ever seemed to do was argue anymore. Sex was nonexistent, and though he'd never really understood what all the rave was about, he did miss the intimacy. His hand was fine for getting him off, but it didn't exactly keep him warm at night. More than anything else, he missed the cuddling and the kissing. He missed his best friend, Karen.

"If you're so worried about money, we could just go to the courthouse. Surely that isn't too expensive."

Cole looked up and met Karen's eyes from across the table. He felt trapped, like a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming Mack truck. Tension mounted between them, almost palpable in the air. If he could just find the words to tell her the truth, he wouldn't have to worry about being browbeaten into a marriage he didn't want. Unfortunately, the prospect of explaining himself was scarier than wedding bells.

His mind drew a blank, no ready excuses waiting in the wings for him to placate her with. Lack of money was the best reason he could come up with and she'd just blown that defense all to hell. He swallowed over the lump steadily rising in his throat. "I just don't think it's a good idea right now, is all."

It wasn't as if he could tell her the truth. Not when admitting his lifelong fascination for men—hot, sweaty bodies and hard musculature instead of soft curves and feminine mystique—was growing stronger and becoming more of an obsession than a curiosity. He found himself picturing a man right before he stroked one off at night. As his inhibitions dissolved with his rising need, the same fuzzy, faceless image of a man flashed through his mind and propelled him over the edge into orgasm. He tried to think of women, of breasts and smooth, pliant bodies, but somewhere between when he started jerking and when he climaxed, the images always transformed into hard pecs and rippling washboard stomachs.

He didn't want to be gay or bisexual, or whatever the hell he was. He wanted to stay in his safe little world, with Karen by his side, and live out the American dream—a beautiful wife and a nice home, maybe a Golden Retriever or two. But walking the straight and narrow line everyone else followed was becoming more difficult with every passing day. Like a drunk taking a sobriety test, he teeter-tottered on the brink of falling off the path.

Karen snorted in disagreement and pushed her long, straight blonde hair back over her shoulder. She took a dainty bite of food and made a big production of swallowing before she balanced her fork on the edge of the plate and glanced up. Cole sat immobile, sweat dampening the

underarms of his shirt, while he anxiously waited to hear what she'd say next.

She huffed out a deep exhalation, the air swirling upward to ruffle her bangs. "So, you just don't want to get married, is that it?"

Shit. "What brought all this on, Karen? We've never even discussed getting married and now it seems like that's all you think about. I don't see what the big hurry is. Things are fine between us the way they are."

"No, things are not fine! I want to get married. I want to start a family. If you love me, I'd think you would want those things too. We aren't getting any younger, you know?"

Numb shock radiated through Cole's limbs. "Is that what this is about? Kids? We talked about that when we first starting dating. I told you I wasn't sure if I even wanted to have any of my own. You said you didn't either."

"That was two years ago, Cole. I changed my mind."

So that was it, she'd changed her mind, and now he was supposed to go along with it? "I'm sorry, Karen, but I haven't. I don't want kids. I thought you understood that."

Tears pooled in her eyes and broke his heart. He didn't want to hurt her, but he wouldn't lie to her about how he felt. If they got married and popped out a bunch of kids, they'd both be miserable. And that was no kind of situation to bring a child into.

"I'm sorry." He didn't know what else to say.

Karen pushed back her chair and stood. She walked past him, not meeting his eyes, and he rose to follow her. She stopped at the door, her hand on the knob, and finally met his eyes. "I'm sorry too. I love you, but I can't waste any more time on a man who doesn't want the same things I do." She yanked open the door and held it. "I think you should leave."

His chest burned, right along with the backs of his eyelids. He didn't want things to end this way, didn't want to lose her like this. "Karen—"

"No. Whatever it is you plan to say, I don't want to hear it. Just go."

Chapter Two

Cole ambled along the shoreline, his toes sinking into the cool, wet sand with each step. The hot midday sun scalded his face and shoulders. Sweat beaded and ran down his bare torso in wet little rivulets. High humidity made his skin sticky and his mind slow, the heat making him lethargic.

As far as the eye could see, families, couples and groups of teenagers frolicked in the sea or on the beach. A gentle wind carried the salty smell of the ocean and the giddy laughter of children at play. A bright red beach ball darted past him, quickly followed by a little boy in yellow swim trunks. A smile tugged at the corners of Cole's lips as he watched the kid scoop it up and sprint back to his family.

Cole buried his hands in the pockets of his jean shorts and continued down the beach. His gaze wandered out over the frothy blue-green water, where surfers sat perched upon their boards, waiting to catch the next big wave. It was a beautiful August day, the kind meant to be spent outdoors.

Other than escaping the monotonous cycle of waking up, going to work and then home to sleep, Cole hadn't had a destination in mind when he'd left his apartment. All he'd wanted to do was get away from his life for the afternoon and think things through. Meandering about on the beach, feeling small in comparison to the vast ocean, always had a way of putting things into perspective.

Two weeks had gone by since Karen broke things off with him. True to her word, she hadn't accepted any of his phone calls and had returned

each and every bouquet of flowers he'd sent. Things were well and truly over between them. He simply wasn't sure how he felt about it.

Karen had been a part of his life for so long that he didn't quite know what to do with himself without her. A part of him was relieved she was gone—the same part that whispered in his ear about how wrong it felt to pretend to be someone he wasn't. The other half of him screamed for him to go crawling back to her on his knees and beg for forgiveness before it was too late. He knew she would take him back, if only so she could have the “Mrs.” moniker before her first name.

While that would have been the easy, safe thing to do, he couldn't make himself give in to her demand. Simply put, he didn't want to marry Karen. Not now, not ever. And it wasn't fair to keep stringing her along so he wouldn't have to admit to things about himself he'd rather not face.

Loving someone wasn't the same as being in love with them, and that's what he wanted for Karen. He cared enough about her to want the best for her, and that wasn't him. She deserved someone better, a man who would love her the way he couldn't.

Cole shook his head, almost amused by how depressing his thoughts were. What he needed to do was go out and have some fun. Maybe call up one of his single buddies from poker night and see if they wanted to... *Oh, wait.* That wouldn't work. The last of his single buddies got married back in June, so getting anyone to go out with him on a Tuesday night was probably a no-go. Hell, it'd probably be out of the question on the weekend too. Did married people even go out with their single friends? He sincerely doubted it.

The tide hit the shore, washing seaweed in right along with water. A slimy green clump of vegetation landed atop his foot. He stepped back, jiggling his left foot to dislodge it, even as the back of his right knee ran into something cold and hard.

“Hey, watch it!”

Arms swinging out, he tried to right his equilibrium, to no avail. His ass hit the ground, not really hurting anything besides his ego. Face

flaming in embarrassment, he glanced up and around, trying to see who or what he'd run into.

The first thing he saw was the neon purple surfboard he'd tripped over. Right next to it sat the owner. Cole blinked and did a double take, seeing the flesh and blood version of his every fantasy sitting in the sand, smiling at him.

The man was the epitome of everything Cole had ever dreamt of. Sun-bleached blond hair, sheared close to the scalp on the sides and longer on top, fell into a face so classically beautiful it rivaled Michelangelo's David. Sharp cheekbones and a straight, tip-tilted nose led down to a full mouth the color of fresh strawberries. His neck was long and graceful, leading to leanly corded shoulders. His skin gleamed golden-bronze in the sunlight. His pecs and biceps were nicely defined, not too much muscle, just enough to broadcast health and fitness. Tiny copper nipples, pierced with silver barbells, sat above a chiseled, washboard stomach.

Heat rushed from his face to his groin, filling Cole's shaft with blood. He was damned glad he wasn't standing up. The pup tent in his shorts would have been mortifying.

Cool azure blue eyes, the color of the freshest mountain stream, met his and he could've sworn he felt the earth move. So what if it was just the tide hitting the shore? It felt a hell of a lot more life altering than something that simple.

"Cole? Cole Winchester? That you, man?"

Cole's brow wrinkled in confusion. How did this kid know his name? He couldn't be more than twenty years old, if he was a day. Studying the man's face more closely, he saw a familiarity in his features, but was unable to place him as anyone other than the specter haunting his fantasies. "Uh, yeah, it's me."

"You all right?" the man asked, in a tenor voice that straddled the line between masculine and feminine. "You took quite a spill there."

"Yeah," Cole replied, still unable to figure out who the guy was, but not wanting to admit he didn't recognize him. He found it hard to believe

that he could've met this guy and not remembered his face. "I'm good. Sorry about that, I didn't see you there."

"No problem. I know how it is. You look out into the water and you're miles away, right? It's cool." His smile kicked up a notch. "You have no idea who I am, do you?"

Damn. Busted. "Uh, well, not really. Sorry."

"It's okay. I think the last time you saw me I was about twelve and skinny as a light post, all teeth and limbs. I'm Eric Radcliff, Beau Radcliff's little brother."

"Oh, yeah, I remember you. Senior year, you used to tag along behind Beau everywhere he went. You followed him to all of the football team's home games and stuff. He was always bitchin' about how you ruined his chances of scoring with the cheerleaders."

Eric laughed. "Yep, that was me. I was a regular little buzz kill, the way Beau tells it."

"Oh man, how is Beau? The last I heard, he'd settled down with that Sherry chick he started seeing in college and was selling insurance or something."

Eric nodded. "Yeah, that's about right, except him and Sherry divorced a couple of years ago."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that." But he wasn't real surprised. Beau had always been a bit of a ladies' man, so it wouldn't exactly shock Cole to hear that marriage hadn't stopped Beau from getting a little action on the side.

The conversation tapered off and Eric turned away from him, glancing out over the incoming waves. Cole took that as a dismissal. He sat for a moment, giving his erection a chance to subside, before he climbed to his feet and brushed the sand off the seat of his shorts.

"Well, it was nice seeing you again, Eric. You take care and tell your brother I said hello." He turned to leave, but he didn't get more than a few steps down the beach before Eric's lyrical voice stopped him.

"Hey, Cole?"

“Yeah?”

Eric ducked his head, his gaze not quite meeting Cole’s. “You want to maybe catch a drink tonight? There’s a pretty good band playing over at The Razor, the grunge bar over on Eighth Street, you know, and the buddy I was planning to take bailed on me this morning. Said he had to work tonight or something. Anyway, if you want, you could go. You don’t have to, mind you, if you have plans or something, but it might be fun. We could have a couple of drinks. Maybe catch up on old times or something?”

Though he wasn’t into grunge music—so much so that he’d never even heard of the bar Eric named—he found himself wanting to go. It would be fun. They could kick back a few Buds, catch up, and maybe scope out some chicks. Or, well, he could pretend to check out women.

Maybe this wasn’t such a good idea after all. The last thing he needed to do was keep pretending. He needed to figure out who he was and what he wanted. Not put on another production of “Cole Winchester, straight guy extraordinaire”.

Cole opened his mouth, intent on saying he had plans. “Sure, that would be fun,” popped out instead. Well, shit, so much for erring on the side of caution. He’d just have to make sure he wore loose pants and a long shirt. Then maybe the boner he was sure to sport all night wouldn’t be so obvious.

“Great!” Eric smiled, showcasing straight white teeth and a cute little dimple in his left cheek. “So, you wanna just meet me there, say around nine?”

“Yeah, that’ll work.”

Eric stood and bent over to pick up his board, giving Cole a full view of his firm ass covered by a thin layer of tight spandex. “Well, I, um, have some things to do, but I’ll see you tonight, yeah?”

“Oh yeah,” Cole replied, and then wanted to smack himself upside the head for sounding so eager. So what if the kid had an ass like two firm peaches, he was probably as straight as they came. For that matter,

Cole wasn't even sure if he himself was bent, or just more naturally curious than the next guy.

As he stood watching Eric walk off, his pert bottom swishing from side to side, Cole wondered just how much trouble he was letting himself in for. One thing was for sure; it was bound to be an interesting night.

* * *

Eric whistled as he strode across the scorching sand toward where his jeep was parked alongside of the highway. What started out as a relaxing day at the beach, meant to curb his escalating boredom, had turned out to be the start of something he'd wanted for years.

Cole Winchester. Talk about a blast from the past. Eric shook his head and threw his board into the open backseat. Who would've thought he'd run into him again after all this time? Sure, they lived in the same general vicinity, but Tidewater was a big area, covering several counties and small coastal towns, plenty big enough that you never had to worry about running into someone you were trying to avoid.

Not that he was trying to avoid anyone, least of all Cole. That man, with his broad shoulders and fine ass, had single-handedly spawned more jack-off sessions during his adolescence than Blue magazine and porno combined.

He slid behind the wheel, the hot vinyl seat against his back making him wince, and started up the engine. Flipping through the CD case lying open on the passenger seat, he chose an old Stone Temple Pilots album, popping it into the player before pulling out onto the road.

He hadn't lied to Cole when he'd said he had plans. He'd just come out of the water and flopped down on the sand, trying to catch his breath after riding in one particularly awesome wave, and was preparing to haul his ass home, when Cole had sauntered by and almost stepped on him. Now he was running late for a lunch date with his brother.

Truthfully, he'd just as soon cancel the lunch and spend the rest of the evening daydreaming about his outing with Cole. Or speculating

about whether or not the hunger he'd seen reflected back at him from Cole's chocolate gaze was real or imagined. He'd always had the notion Cole was straight, but a man's body wasn't designed to hide his needs and Cole's had been screaming, *do me*. Unfortunately, he didn't have time to ponder any of that. Ever since Sherry caught Beau banging their eighteen-year-old babysitter on the living room sofa, and moved herself and their four-year-old son, Bradley, into her mother's house across state, Beau had been a pitiful replica of his former self. The whoremonger Eric knew and loved was gone, replaced by an empty shell that moped and drank himself to sleep every night.

Eric turned into his parents' driveway and killed the engine. He stared at the home he'd grown up in, a two story Tudor with rosy bricks and hunter green shutters, and felt a nagging sense of suffocation. In two weeks, he would be back at school, and thank God for that. While his childhood had been a good one, it was filled with the typical teen angst, ramped up a few pegs because of his sexual orientation. With time, his parents had finally accepted him for who he was, but that hadn't stopped them from looking down their noses at him or referring to his homosexuality as a "rebellious phase". As if he sucked cock just to piss them off or something.

He jumped down from the jeep and marched up the cobblestone walk. The scent of the ocean and well-earned sweat clung to his skin. He needed a shower and a change of clothes before lunch. Sliding his key in the lock, he twisted the knob and shoved open the door. A rush of cool air hit his feverish skin and made him queasy as he climbed the stairs.

Stepping over the threshold into his bedroom was like taking a walk back in time. The same twin bed sat against the wall, plain white cotton sheets and puffy, navy quilt spread over the firm mattress. Pale blue wallpaper bordered plain white walls, littered with framed posters of his favorite metal bands. Mother had insisted on the frames when she'd caught him trying to tack the first one up when he was eleven.

That had been right around the same time he'd started lusting after Cole. A walking hormone on legs, he'd just begun to discover that while his pals were developing crushes on girls, he was more interested in

hanging with the guys and sneaking curious peeks at their hindquarters. Eric grinned as he selected a pair of jean shorts and navy jersey from the closet and laid them out on the bed. Even back then he'd been an ass man.

By the time he'd been old enough to put a name to the differences he felt, Cole was long gone, already away at college. That hadn't stopped the fantasies though. Everything from down and dirty daydreams, where Cole cornered him in the guys' locker room and forced him to suck him off, to more gentle scenarios, where they held hands, kissed and made slow, sweet love to each other.

Plush cream carpet squished under the soles of his sneakers as Eric walked into the adjoining bathroom. He toed off his shoes and quickly stripped down to his skin. He dropped his clothes into a muddled heap on the blue tiled floor and bent over the tub, adjusting the shower thermostat to just this side of *boil you alive*, the way he liked it, and stepped in.

Just thinking about those dreams had his balls pulling up tight and his cock twitching in hopeful anticipation of the night to come. He resisted the urge to take himself in hand and relieve the ache thinking about Cole caused. Instead, he would wait and savor the buildup until later. Getting there was half the fun.

He wasn't entirely sure Cole swung his way, but he wasn't about to turn down the opportunity to find out. If he'd misinterpreted the signals, the worst that could happen was a punch in the face, but if he was right, well, then tonight would be the stuff dreams were made of. Only time would tell.

Chapter Three

After running some errands and basically just puttering around town for the afternoon in a bid to blow some time, Cole stumbled into his apartment. His hip hit the rickety table located inside the living room doorway and set off his answering machine, which was a touchy piece of shit. An automated voice confirmed what he already knew—he had zero messages.

Cole flopped down on his sofa and picked up the remote lying next to him on the side table. He flipped through the channels, passing by them all over and again, only to realize he hadn't actually seen a single thing. His mind was too wrapped up in what had happened earlier, on the beach, and what would happen later that evening.

The upcoming outing with Eric had Cole's balls tied up in knots. He didn't know whether to think of it as a date or just two friends hanging out. The word *outing* seemed like the safest box to categorize it in for the time being, at least until he knew whether Eric's overt flirting was normal friendliness, or something more. The image of the younger man's sparkling blue eyes and teasing smile popped into the forefront of his mind and lodged there, taunting him. Naughty thoughts of exactly what he'd like that mouth to do to him played out like a high definition movie.

Settling back against the cushions, Cole unbuttoned his jeans, shoved them and his boxer-briefs down over his hips, and let his wayward imagination have free rein over his psyche. Wound tight as he was, he needed to do something to relieve the tension. Fantasizing wouldn't hurt anyone and it wasn't as if someone would know what he thought about when he jerked off. Inside a world of his own making there

was no one to placate, not a single soul who would be offended by something he said or did. He could do who and what he pleased without fear of recrimination.

Closing his eyes, Cole took himself in hand, the hot flesh of his semi-erect cock like a shock against the cool surface of his palm. Starting at the base, he stroked up and over the head, pulling his flesh taut along the way. With his other hand, he reached down and cupped his sac, giving it a little squeeze and rub. Soft skin wrinkled, his balls drawing up as his cock expanded and throbbed under his grip.

Using his mind like an empty canvas, Cole painted the picture he wanted. The hand kneading his balls became Eric's. The thumb he used to spread slick precome over the blushing cap and sensitive ridge morphed into Eric's tongue, those pretty blue eyes staring up at him over the thick jut of his dick, just begging for a taste.

"Mmm. Suck me," Cole muttered and bucked his hips, sliding his cock through the tight ring of his fist. Moisture leaked from the tip, dampness he used to pretend it was Eric's mouth covering him, bathing every inch of his shaft in hot, slick pressure.

The pace of his strokes sped up, phantom Eric swallowing him to the root. Cole squeezed the head, an imaginary throat compressing around the tip. His ass clenched and his balls jerked, liquid lightning jetting up the shaft of his cock. Come sprang from the slit, molten ropes of it splashing over his abs and the hem of his T-shirt. He rocked up into his hand, milking the last bead of come from his body, and wished Eric was really there to lick the seed from his fingers.

Cole opened his eyes and wiped his damp palm off on his shirt. He stood and headed into the bathroom, wondering how reality would measure up with his fantasy. At the rate he was going, he would never know. Even if the opportunity presented itself, he wasn't sure he would have the balls to go through with anything.

By the time he rushed through a quick shower and agonized over what to wear, Cole was running behind schedule. He hopped in his car

and drove across town, breaking the speed limit half the time, while praying he didn't pass a cop.

Dusk began to darken the sky and change it into hues of lavender and pink as he made a left-hand turn onto Eighth Street. He slowed down, keeping an eye peeled for the club where he was supposed to meet Eric.

At the end of a strip mall, only three establishments wide, sat The Razor. He knew he'd found the right place before he saw the lighted black and silver sign bearing its name because clusters of young people loitered in groups outside the entrance, some waiting in line and some obviously just milling about, socializing.

Cole guided his pickup into the first parking space he saw. Nervous butterflies bit at the lining of his stomach as he got out and darted across the road to the opposite side. Making his way up the two blocks between where he was and where the club sat, he repeatedly second-guessed his motives for being there. It would have been so easy to stay home and stand Eric up. Not like he'd have to worry about getting an earful later on or something. The chances of running into Eric again, when they clearly ran in completely different circles, were slim to none.

And yet here he was, approaching a club he'd never heard of, to listen to music he didn't particularly care for, in the hopes of... In the hopes of what? That Eric was gay and would jump his bones? Drag him out of the closet and profess undying love? What a load of bullshit.

Agreeing to meet Eric, when he was so attracted to him, was a mistake. Which didn't explain why his feet walked him right up to the back of the entrance line, tapped impatiently while he waited, and then carried him through the club's door and into the dark and smoky interior.

Cole blinked a couple times, while his eyes tried to adjust to the change in light. A classic Metallica tune, "Enter Sandman", blasted through unseen speakers, setting the mood as he swerved around groups of college kids and walked deeper into the cavernous room.

A black veneered bar with a cylindrical chrome rail decorating its lip, hugged the length of one dark paneled wall. In need of a stiff drink, he moved toward the bar, pushing and shoving his way through the quickly multiplying number of people. Wedging himself between two occupied stools, he waved the bartender over.

“Bud, in the bottle, and a shot of Jack, please.”

The bartender, a skinny little man with enough piercings in his head to keep all the tattoo parlors in the county in business for a month, nodded and poured his liquor. While the man reached into the cooler beneath the bar for a beer, Cole threw back his shot, wincing as the stout liquor slid down his throat, and returned the empty glass. The bartender popped the cap off a longneck bottle and slid it across the counter in trade for the cash Cole held out. He accepted his change, dropped a five into the tip jar and wandered closer to the raised platform at the front of the room.

Along either side of the dance floor sat small tables, some with four stools and others with only two. He chose one of the smaller tables, butted up against the side wall, and sat down. From where he'd chosen to sit, Cole had a good view of the stage and the front entrance. He wanted to be able to spot Eric as soon as he came in.

Glancing down at his watch, he squinted in the low light, trying to make out the time. He silently chastised himself for not upgrading his watch to one of those with the luminescent numbers. Finally, he found a good angle and saw that it was five minutes till nine.

He looked up, having already decided he would only give Eric until half past nine to show up before he would leave, and saw Eric striding toward him. The anxious butterflies in his stomach began to do the rumba while his gaze wandered over Eric's svelte form, from the top of his sun-kissed hair to the tips of his white and blue sneakers. A snug white T-shirt stretched across his chest, the barbells piercing his nipples visible through the cotton. Faded denim, worn white and tissue thin around the pockets, hung low on his trim hips and hugged the long expanse of lean thighs.

Cole swallowed, the lump in his throat expanding right along with his dick, as Eric drew near. Sometime during the course of the day he'd managed to convince himself Eric's eyes weren't as blue as he remembered, that the attraction he felt hadn't been quite as electric as he'd thought. He was wrong. If anything, Eric's eyes looked more brilliant, his athletic shape more enticing, the attraction Cole felt more amplified.

"Hi," Eric said, sliding onto the stool across from him. He bounced a little and smiled, the single dimple in his cheek winking at Cole. "Thanks for grabbing us a good table. They fill up pretty quick some nights."

"Sure. No problem. This looked like as good a spot as any." Cole's gaze trailed from Eric's cute dimple to his full bottom lip, and then lower, to where Eric's nipples pressed against his shirt. He wondered how sensitive those piercings made Eric's nipples, if he preferred for his lovers to nibble or lick, and if he would get the chance to find out for himself.

"You didn't have any trouble finding it, did you?"

Cole's gaze shot back up to Eric's in confusion. "Huh?"

Eric laughed and patted Cole's hand where it lay upon the tabletop. "The club," he repeated. "You didn't have any trouble finding it, did you?"

Cole shivered at the feel of Eric's warm palm resting on his hand and resisted the urge to turn his hand over and intertwine their fingers. It was crazy, this inexplicable longing he felt for someone he barely knew.

Cole extracted his hand from beneath Eric's and used it to pick up his beer. He took a long, deep pull from the bottle before setting it back on the scuffed tabletop. "So," he said, "tell me about this band."

"Well," Eric drawled out, "Epoxy's Resolution is a great band. Their sound is sort of a mix between metal and grunge. It's kinda hard to describe to someone who hasn't heard them, you know, but they're really good. They do a lot of cover songs but the stuff they write themselves is the best."

Cole quirked a brow. "Sounds like a weird mix to me."

Eric laughed and scooted his chair closer, so they were both sitting on the same side of the table. His thigh brushed up against Cole's as he

leaned nearer. "That's what everyone says. You'll like 'em, just wait and see."

Cole wasn't too sure about that, but he wasn't about to say so. After all, he was supposed to be there for the music, not to salivate over the guy sitting next to him. Hell, as long as Eric stayed where he was, the band could sound like cats screeching and he wouldn't move. He couldn't, not with his dick as hard as a tenpenny nail. Who would've thought just sitting beside Eric in the dark would have him ready to pop the seam out of his jeans?

Rows of white lights lit up at the top and bottom of the stage. The crowd hushed as the band ran onto the stage and the lead singer took the mike and shouted a welcome.

Cole sat motionless, listening as the band started their first song, the ear-splitting noise loud enough to drown out the pounding echo of his own pulse. He faced forward, trying to appear as if he were paying attention to the show, while watching Eric out of the corner of his eye.

Beside him, Eric wiggled in his chair, his excitement almost contagious. Every few seconds he would brush up against Cole, rubbing their shoulders or thighs together in a way that did nothing to help Cole's hard-on subside. It was as if Eric was intentionally trying to drive him insane.

Cole stared up at the stage, seemingly riveted on the antics of the lead guitarist as he swung his guitar wildly about. All of Eric's attention was on Cole. With him busy watching the stage, Eric finally had a chance to study the man without being obvious about his interest. Though the room was dim, light from the stage illuminated Cole's chiseled profile, highlighting just enough of Cole's features to make Eric's pants tighter than they already were.

He'd been half hard all day, just thinking about tonight, but the reality was even better. Either Cole wanted him just as bad as he wanted Cole, or the man had some strange fetish for metal, because Cole had been sporting wood since the band took the stage. He probably wouldn't

have noticed, but he'd been rubbing up against Cole every chance he could without being too obvious and he'd been watching to see if he would have an effect on the man. Eric wanted to know if he was barking up the wrong tree before he actually put his ass on the line and hit on Cole. It wasn't that he was afraid of being rejected. Lord knew, he'd gotten used to that, being a single gay man. But he didn't want to freak Cole out, or come off as some slutty little twink who hit on every man he met. Whether they ultimately ended up as lovers or just friends, he still wanted Cole to like him.

The man in question glanced over at Eric and smiled. "You were right. They aren't half bad."

Eric's chest tightened. He nodded at Cole, too mesmerized to even pretend he wasn't gawking at him. Cole was a sexy man, but when he smiled, the expression lit up his whole face and made tiny, adorable crinkles pop up in the corners of his eyes. It transformed him from sexy to devastating.

He expected Cole to refocus on the band. He didn't. Cole stared right back, an odd look on his face, as if he couldn't decide whether to kiss Eric or kick his ass and run. He wanted to kiss Cole so bad he could taste it. All it would take was leaning forward the slightest bit and their lips would touch.

He acted on the thought before he even realized his intent. Cole's eyes widened and he jerked back, covering the hasty retreat by picking up his beer and taking a long gulp. Eric felt his face flame and dropped his gaze to his lap, embarrassed that he'd acted on the impulse to taste Cole and been rebuffed so amiably. God, hadn't he just decided he wasn't going to try and jump the man? And what did he do right after, but try to kiss the man. *Jesus*.

Eric swallowed his pride and looked up. "Listen, Cole, I'm sorry about that. It's just that you were looking at me, and I just..." God, he sounded mental, just blurting everything out loud like that. Eric tried to shrug it off with a laugh that came out a trifle too shrill for the carefree attitude he was trying to pull off. "Well, I acted before I thought, and I'm sorry."

“No sweat. Don’t worry about it.”

Cole’s gaze lowered and Eric would have sworn the other man was staring at his mouth. He could actually feel his lips tingling from the attention and couldn’t resist tempting fate by swiping his tongue over his bottom lip, just to see how Cole would react. Though he wasn’t sure what to expect, the soft groan that spilled from Cole’s parted lips wasn’t it. That one tiny sound echoed through his bloodstream and shocked his balls like a cattle prod. His already snug jeans tightened further. The metal fly bit into his swelling shaft, making him squirm. As subtly as possible, Eric turned to face the wall and readjusted himself, trying to give his cock room to expand. He swallowed a whimper and idly wondered if he had masochistic tendencies he wasn’t aware of.

Eric surreptitiously glanced back at Cole from around the rim of his drink. The pads of his fingers itched to rub over the surface of Cole’s short brown hair and test its bristly texture. His gaze traced the expanse of Cole’s forehead, the shallow dip where brow met nose, the straight bridge of his nose and bow of his thin upper lip. A full bottom lip and slight cleft in his chin softened the sharp cut of high cheekbones and his square jaw. The man was too damn hot for his own good.

The final strains of the song came to an end as he turned around. The lead singer shouted good night just as the lights around the stage dimmed and the overhead ones came back on. Finally, the concert was over. He loved the group, but being near Cole and smelling the intoxicating scent of his cologne and underlying musk—the tension of not knowing whether or not he had a snowball’s chance in hell of being with him—killed his enjoyment. His little slip up didn’t help matters any. Now he just felt awkward and dumb. He should’ve known better than to try to kiss Cole, even if the man *did* have a set of lips that appeared as if they were made to suck cock. He looked up from the lips in question and found Cole staring at him, another one of those curious expressions on his face. Eric felt his own cheeks go up in flames. He was busted. This could get ugly. “I, um.” Damn, he needed to say *something*. “You have a nice smile.” Eric winced. God, was that the best he could come up with? The man wasn’t even smiling.

Cole quirked a brow. “Uh, thanks. Listen, I’m going to go get another beer. You want one?”

Relief, thick as syrup, slowed Eric’s thundering pulse. “No thanks.” He held up his coke. “I’m not much of a drinker.” Eric paused, wondering if he should say something about the number of beers he’d seen Cole consume during the show. His conscience wouldn’t let him stay quiet. He gave a pointed look at the near-empty brown bottle in Cole’s hand. “Um, you aren’t driving yourself home after the show, are you?”

“Aww, isn’t that sweet. You’re all worried about me.” Cole smiled and winked at him. “Don’t worry, I’ll call a cab. I may have a nice little buzz going, but I’m not stupid enough to drink and drive.”

“That’s good to know. I’d hate to think someone as hot as you would be all brawn and no brains.” *Open mouth, insert foot.* What was it about this man that turned him into a hormonal teenager again? And more importantly, what was going to pop out of his mouth next, *smell ya later?*

Cole chuckled, his laugh deep and husky, sexy as hell, just like the rest of him. “Well, I don’t know about all that, but I’m glad you don’t think I’m the dumb jock I was in high school.”

“No fear of that happening.” A hot empty shell was not the kind of man he would be attracted to. The ability to hold an intelligent conversation was just as important, more so, than being hung like a moose. And damn if that didn’t derail his thoughts and bring them right back to what kind of package Cole could possibly be sporting beneath his pants.

Cole weaved his way through the crowd to the bar, where people packed in tight as canned sardines waited to give their orders. Eric trailed after him, his attention locked on Cole’s ass as it flexed beneath worn denim. Now that was an ass worthy of writing home about.

Cole abruptly stopped and swung back around to face him. Unable to stop his forward momentum, Eric couldn’t prevent his nose from smacking into the middle of Cole’s sternum. His cheek pressed into the nubby cotton fabric of Cole’s polo shirt, instantly surrounding him with his date’s heat and scent. He could hear the fast thump of Cole’s strong

heart. The intoxicating smell of spicy cologne, soap and an underlying musky scent that was Cole's alone wafted up to his nose. Eric swallowed a whimper and fought the urge to bury his face in Cole's wide chest, wallow in his fragrance.

More than his next breath of air, Eric wanted to press closer, to rub his burgeoning erection against Cole's hip and let the man feel the powerful effect he had on him. Instead, he ducked his head and backed away, murmuring a hasty, "Sorry."

Calloused fingers, rough as fine sandpaper, slid under his jaw and pushed up, tilting his chin until he looked Cole square in the eye. For an instant, while he stared into those fathomless deep brown eyes, the crowd, the noise, all of it dissolved. Cole, the intense expression on his handsome face, the gentle press of warm fingers beneath his jaw, was all that existed. Electricity crackled in the air between them. His gaze dropped to Cole's mouth. Cole licked his lips, making them glisten, and Eric whimpered. He took a step closer, needing to kiss, to taste Cole so bad it was like an addiction.

A woman with purple hair and enough eyeliner to make her resemble a raccoon turned from the bar, two frosty mugs of beer in her hands, and lurched into Eric. Cold, foamy beer sloshed over his arm and down the front of his shirt.

Cole dropped his hand and stepped away from him. Eric shot the woman a dirty look, more for ruining the moment between him and Cole than the accident. Beer would wash out. Other than the stench, it wasn't a big deal.

She handed the now-half-empty beers off to a friend—some guy whose shirt had more safety pins than material—and turned back to him. "Oh my God! I'm so sorry. I totally didn't see you there."

Eric waved off her concern. "It's no big deal. It'll wash off."

She apologized again and then wandered off after her friend. Eric returned his attention to Cole and found the man smiling down at him. "That was nice of you. To let her off the hook like that."

Eric shrugged. “Well, what was I gonna do, yell at her? She didn’t mean to slosh beer all over me. The drinks here cost too much to waste them.”

Cole snorted. “Isn’t that the truth.” He fidgeted a bit before continuing. “I was just thinking, I’ve had enough to drink, and... Well, I just thought maybe we could go somewhere quieter and get a cup of coffee or something.”

Damn that sounded like a good idea. They could go somewhere and talk, or something better. Except now he was wet and smelled like a brewery. “Uh, that’s probably not such a good idea.”

A frown marred Cole’s forehead before a neutral mask dropped down over his features. “Oh, well, that’s okay. Maybe some other time, right?”

Disappointment flashed through Cole’s eyes and disappeared so fast Eric wasn’t sure if he’d really seen it or imagined it. Either way, he wanted to make sure Cole didn’t get the wrong idea. “No, coffee sounds good, but I don’t think I’m fit for going out anywhere smelling to high heaven and with a big yellow stain spreading out over my shirt. It looks like someone peed on me.” He tucked his chin into his shoulder and sniffed, wrinkling his nose at the pungent smell. “Smells about like it too.”

Cole snickered. “Well, you know what they say, it’s better to be pissed off than pissed on,” and then he was laughing again, harder this time. Eric joined in, both of them being loud in their mirth. People all around them shot weird looks their way, which for some reason only made it funnier.

By the time they were through laughing their asses off, the awkward moment from before was long forgotten. Eric was glad of that because he wasn’t ready for this night to end yet. There was so much more he wanted to learn about Cole—everything really.

The most intriguing was the vibe he got from Cole. Usually, he would say that tingly gut feeling was his gaydar going off, but who knew what it was with Cole. Sure, the man had shot him some mixed signals—prolonged eye contact, lingering stares, and though he’d pulled back

before Eric could kiss him, Cole hadn't exactly complained about being rubbed up against half the night. Then again, there was every possibility he was interpreting Cole's body language in the way he wanted instead of as it was really intended. Or maybe his brain was fried from being around an old crush and not being able to act out all the feverish fantasies he'd had about Cole over the years. That was as likely an excuse as anything else he could imagine. The urge he possessed to pounce on Cole and lick him from head to toe was his own problem to solve.

Eric glanced at Cole from beneath his lashes and tried not to sigh like a love-struck teenager. He hadn't been so torn up over a guy since he'd blown Tommy Morgan under the bleachers in the twelfth grade and ended up having to endure a month of ridicule before graduation because the little bastard told everyone he was gay and easy.

Cole glanced at his watch and Eric knew their time together was drawing to a close. If Cole had been anyone else, and Eric had still been at college, instead of home for the summer, he would've invited Cole back to the apartment he and two other guys shared and made a move on him just to find out which way he swung, but he couldn't exactly do that here. Just imagining the horrified look on Mother's face if she caught him sneaking a man into his room was enough to make his cock curl up and shudder. He wasn't a kid anymore, but he had enough respect for his parents not to bring anyone home with him. In the end, he didn't have to say anything.

Cole tapped his watch. "It isn't very late, only about eleven. I know you don't want to go out anywhere covered in beer, but if you're interested in a cup of coffee, we could go back to my place." He bit into his bottom lip and released it, looking cute and bashful all at once. "I make a mean pot of French Vanilla."

As if he was going to say no to that. "Sure, that sounds great. I'll drive."

Chapter Four

Cole pointed to the green exit sign. “Turn off up there, on the next exit.”

“So,” Eric asked, guiding his jeep off the interstate, “where to from here?”

“Take a right here and stay straight for about two miles, then turn left onto Magnolia Street. My place is about halfway down the street, on the left. Just look for a big sign that says Winchester’s Game Emporium and pull around back. My apartment’s above the shop.”

“Cool.” Eric hit the gas and swerved around the corner.

Humid night air, pungent with the scent of freshly cut grass, whipped at Cole’s face and stung his eyes. He latched onto the sides of his seat and held on tight. The ride so far had been interesting. Make that terrifying. Eric was sober as a saint, but drove like he’d thrown back a few too many drinks. Only his own hatred of side seat drivers kept Cole from commenting on Eric’s haphazard driving. Especially since he was pretty sure the passenger side wheels lifted right up off the ground on one of those sharp turns a little ways back.

He had to wonder whether or not Eric always drove like a maniac, or if he was just in a hurry to get them back to his place. The thought made him smile, until Eric swerved sharply, barely missing a dog that ambled out into the street, and his death grip on the seat regained all his attention.

His old, two story brick building came into view. The neon yellow sign shined like a beacon out of the large plate-glass window. Cole had never

been more grateful to be home in his entire life. He pointed the building out to Eric. "Right there."

"I see it. It's so cool how you live right above your store. Did I tell you that I'm majoring in business management at UVA?" The tires squealed as he maneuvered the jeep around the side of the building and slid into the small gravel lot behind.

Cole held his breath as the vehicle jerked to a stop, the bumper inches away from an old oak tree. Eric rambled on, unfazed. "That's what I want to do someday, own my own business. Maybe run a record shop or a bookstore, something like that. I'm even minoring in accounting so I'll be able to do my own books."

Cole glanced over at Eric and released his pent-up breath. "Yeah. That's what I wanted to do too, run my own bookstore, but there wasn't much call for one around here. There are already so many independent ones. Between those and the bigger chains, there was no way I could compete." He took a deep breath. "Man, do you always drive like that? Your license should come with a warning label."

Eric smiled, popped open his door and slid out. "Oh yeah, sorry 'bout that. I guess I can be a little heavy-footed on the gas sometimes." He shrugged. "I don't even realize I'm doing it. You should have said something. I can't really afford to get another ticket anyway. My insurance is high enough as it is."

Cole rolled his eyes and hopped down from the jeep. "Come on, let's go inside."

He strode across the lot, shooting a glance over his shoulder every couple of seconds to make sure Eric was following behind him. The rubber soles of his sneakers ate up the ground until he stood just outside the back door. The security lights, controlled by motion sensors, flashed on overhead and lit up the area around him. He dug through his pockets and pulled out his key ring, riffling through the dozen or so keys before he found the right one.

Eric stepped up beside him, yellow light spilling over his messy blond hair. “So, you like owning your own place? I bet it’s great not having to answer to anybody, right? You know, being your own boss and all.”

Cole unlocked the door and ushered Eric in ahead of him. “Oh, I still have to answer to people. IRS, the bank and customers; somebody always wants an explanation about something.” He closed the door, plunging them into darkness, and relocked it. “It’s good though. I always wanted to have my own place. Can’t really imagine doing anything else.”

He turned to find Eric right behind him, close enough to touch. Tension ratcheted up a notch, growing thick and palpable in the dark. His arms felt empty and longed to reach out, pull Eric to him.

“Sorry about the dark,” he rambled nervously, while stepping around Eric. “I would turn on the lights, but by the time I get to the breaker box, we could be upstairs anyway.”

Upstairs. Alone together. With a big comfy bed just waiting for us to make use of it. Cole gave himself a mental smack and, through determination alone, managed to keep his hands firmly at his sides.

Inviting Eric home with him was the equivalent of playing with fire. Oh, he’d noticed the sly glances the younger man had been shooting his way all night, seen him sporting wood more than once. And then that kiss—he didn’t even want to think about what might have happened if he hadn’t pulled away at the last second. He’d been so tempted to let Eric kiss him, to see what Eric’s lips would feel like against his own.

Eric was interested, of that Cole didn’t have any doubt. The real question was, was *he* interested? His cock shouted, “hell yeah”, but the rest of him was torn. Eric was a cute guy, and they seemed to have a bit in common, but he didn’t know if he was ready to take that next step, to go from fantasizing about being with a man to actually doing it. He could see him and Eric being friends, yes, but lovers? Oh, he wanted to fuck Eric, no doubt about that, but he wasn’t sure if he could go through with it. Twenty-seven years of being conditioned to believe homosexuality was wrong stood a silent vigil between him and what he desired.

“This way,” he said and headed for the private door leading up to his apartment. “Just follow behind me and I’ll try not to steer you into a wall.”

Eric’s footsteps echoed on the stairs as he tagged along. “Yeah, that would be good. I’d hate to run my head into a wall and end up spending the night on your sofa.”

Yep, Cole thought, that would be a tragedy. If Eric spent the night, he could think of a lot better places for him to spend time. Like sprawled out naked in bed, underneath him, or on top of him, or hell, even upside down would be okay.

Cole stopped on the last step and unlocked the door. Eric waited behind him, one step down. Any closer and Cole imagined he would feel the heat radiating off Eric’s body, feel his hot breath on the small of his back. That instantly brought to mind a picture of Eric’s pink tongue—the same one he’d coveted earlier in the night while it ran across Eric’s pouty lower lip—peeking out to lick at the delicate skin of his lower back, drifting lower to explore territory no woman had ever touched. What would that bubble gum tongue feel like moving over his ass, licking, prodding his entrance?

The cheeks of his backside clenched in response to the taboo image. His pulse quickened and in the dark, silent corridor, he could hear the resonance of his own labored breathing. As he shoved open his door and reached a hand inside to feel for the light switch, he wondered if Eric had noticed it too.

His hand never made it to the light. Eric rushed him from behind and pushed him up against the wall opposite the open door. A hand wrapped around the back of his neck and pulled his head down.

“Fuck it. I may be way off base here, but I think you want this as much as I do,” Eric whispered, hot puffs of breath caressing Cole’s skin with every word.

Before he could utter a response, soft lips pressed against his, and a tongue slid over the seam of his mouth, coaxing him to open wide. His eyelids fell shut and his lips parted, allowing Eric in. The first touch of

Eric's tongue gliding along his sent an electric current ricocheting through his body. He groaned and tilted his head, losing himself in the taste and texture of Eric's mouth.

His arms rose of their own will and wrapped around Eric's slim body, zeroing in on his firm little ass and pulling him closer. Their bodies flush, tongues dueling, Cole could feel everything. A hundred sensations hit him at once and short-circuited his senses. The whoosh of breath leaving Eric's body, the fast thump of blood rushing through his own ears, the ache of his balls drawing tight, the hard ridge of Eric's cock rubbing against his own through too many layers of clothes.

He wanted them naked. Now. Wanted to touch and taste with an intensity that should've frightened him, and probably would have if he'd been in the frame of mind to care right then. Luckily, he wasn't. He was too tired of all the bullshit, of hiding and pretending to be someone he wasn't. Though he wasn't sure why, Cole felt safe enough to let go and be himself around Eric. The only thing holding him back was himself, and for the first time ever, Cole was ready to ignore the persistent little whisper of his overactive conscience and throw caution to the wind for what he wanted. Nothing mattered but the man in his arms and the flame burning hotter between them.

Cole spun them around and pressed Eric's back to the wall. He sucked Eric's bottom lip into his mouth and nipped it, savoring the sweet whimper he got in response. His hands slid between their bodies and fumbled with the button of Eric's pants. The damn things were skin tight—he couldn't get them unfastened.

Eric shoved Cole's hands out of the way and undid them himself, yanking the front of his jeans open before going to work on Cole's. In a matter of seconds, Eric had both their cocks out, in his slender hand, and was rubbing them together. He leaned up on tiptoe, pressed his lips against Cole's and whispered, "Touch me."

He didn't need to be asked twice. Cole wrapped his fingers around Eric's dick and slid his palm from root to tip, stroking and caressing Eric with the firm grip he used on himself. The feel of Eric's dick, all hot flesh and throbbing need, was unlike anything Cole had ever dreamed of. So

similar to taking himself in hand, but vastly different because it was Eric. Panting, Cole buried his face against the curve of Eric's neck, giving himself a brief second to calm down before he lost control and embarrassed himself. He listened to the rapid heartbeat under his ear, one that rivaled his own beat for beat, and inhaled the musky scent of Eric's skin.

He held another man's dick, the firm flesh hot as a brand and hard as iron in his fist, and he could scarcely believe how good it felt, how right. He couldn't remember another time in his life when he'd been turned on so easily, so fast. It was like every nerve ending in his body had been lit on fire and was tingling. Sensations bombarded him—the cool air against feverish skin, Eric's hot body against his own. It felt like he'd been waiting for this moment all his life.

Now that he'd had a small sample of what he'd been missing out on, he wanted to do it all, to experience everything. "Eric, I want..." God, he couldn't say it.

"What do you want, Cole?" Eric's voice was thick and hoarse, full of need. "Anything. Just please, God, don't stop now."

The desperation in Eric's voice boosted Cole's courage and gave him the balls to go through with what he wanted to do. He dropped to his knees and wrapped his hand around the base of Eric's cock, holding it down and in position for his mouth. He leaned in, took a deep breath full of the heady scent of warm skin and male musk, and swiped the flat of his tongue over the moist tip of Eric's cock, testing the taste to see if he'd like it.

The bittersweet flavor of Eric's flesh burst over his palate and made him groan. He ran his tongue around the spongy cap, exploring the shape and texture. When he flicked over the shallow groove beneath the helmet, Eric grunted and bucked his hips, forcing the blunt crown deeper into Cole's mouth. Cole accepted him, groaning at the alien sensation of Eric's dick sliding over his tongue.

Slender fingers wove through his hair, urging him to continue. "Oh yeah, Cole...suck me. Suck my cock."

Hearing Eric sputter those dirty words, feeling the smooth skin quiver under his tongue's manipulation, pushed Cole to take more, to hollow his cheeks and suck hard, while bobbing up and down over Eric's prick. He pushed down, trying to force the entire length into his mouth, and took more than he could manage. The bulbous head of Eric's prick butted up against the back of his throat and made him gag.

Sputtering and embarrassed at his lack of experience, he backed off and let Eric slip from between his lips. He glanced up at Eric, glad the darkness camouflaged the heat suffusing his face, but wishing he could see Eric's expression and know if he was doing a good job or not. Though he didn't want to mess this up, he had no idea what he was doing. It was harder than it looked. He was operating on pure instinct and the memory of what he liked done to him.

Eric's fingers tightened on Cole's scalp. His other hand reached down and petted Cole's cheek. "Don't stop, babe. I'm so close. Make me come." He grabbed his dick by its base and brushed the weeping tip over Cole's mouth. "Please, finish me off."

Cole's lips parted and he licked the salty ambrosia off the tip of Eric's cock. Surprisingly, it wasn't bad. A little bitter, maybe, but nothing gross, like he'd been half afraid of. His tongue dipped into the slit, searching out every drop. His hands rose and bracketed Eric's slim hips, pulling him forward, wanting Eric to take what he needed.

He slid his mouth off Eric's prick and looked up at him. "Do it. Fuck my mouth. Come for me."

Eric groaned and his hips bucked forward. With his hand still around the base of his cock, he set a fast rhythm, shuffling his length in and out of Cole's mouth.

His jaw began to ache, but he persevered, taking everything Eric had to give. He concentrated on keeping his teeth out of the way, his tongue moving along the firm shaft, keeping his jaw loose on the intake and his lips tight on the withdrawal. Saliva pooled in his mouth, making the slick glide of Eric's cock over his tongue more smooth. Just when he thought lockjaw was going to set in, Eric stiffened and cried out. His dick pulsed,

growing impossibly larger, as spurt after spurt of creamy seed spilled into Cole's mouth.

The force behind Eric's release made Cole gag, but he quickly recovered and swallowed what he could, gently suckling Eric as he shook and shivered through the last of his climax. When Eric began to soften, Cole lifted his head and let Eric slip from his mouth. He sat back on his heels, feeling inordinately pleased with himself and horny as hell, all at the same time. His dick hung out of the front of his pants, hard enough to jackhammer concrete, and his balls ached like heavy stones hugging the base of a tree. While he sucked Eric, his own need to come was superseded by the desire to satisfy Eric and not fuck it up. Now that he'd accomplished what he set out to do—and judging by the strength of Eric's climax, he'd done a pretty damn good job even if he did say so himself—his own body was screaming for relief.

Wonder if it would be bad taste to ask Eric to return the favor. It didn't take much imagination to picture Eric's pretty mouth wrapped around his dick, swallowing his load and moaning to beat the band, like his come was the next best thing compared to Tom and Jerry's ice cream.

The downstairs lights blinked on, illuminating the stairwell and the foyer where he was still kneeling in front of Eric. Cole blinked, his eyes trying to adjust to the sudden change. "What the fuck?"

Eric gasped and hastily stuffed himself back into his jeans. "Who is—?"

A loud gasp sounded from below, right before he heard a shrill female voice scream, "*Oh my God!*"

He knew that voice. Cole turned, his movements slow as molasses, and saw Karen standing at the bottom of the landing, her eyes wide and a splayed hand covering the lower half of her face.

"Shit!" Cole scrambled to his feet.

Karen dropped her hand, her expression twisting from hurt to pissed off in the blink of an eye. "You *bastard*. How long have you been fucking him behind my back? No wonder you didn't want to get married."

"Karen, wait."

She shook her head, her long blonde hair whipping from side to side, and hurried away in the opposite direction. Cole started after her, only to be pulled up short by Eric's voice.

"Cole, what the hell is going on? Who is that woman?"

He looked back over his shoulder, his gaze connecting with Eric's guileless blue eyes, while his head filled with white noise. There was no fast and easy answer for that, so he said the only thing that came to mind, "That's Karen," before dashing down the stairs after her.

* * *

Long after Cole disappeared downstairs and the loud crack of the back door slamming echoed up to him, Eric remained immobile. Cole's parting words replayed again and again inside his head. *That's Karen*. As if that was supposed to explain everything?

Anger, hot and heavy, pulled him from his catatonic state. Who the hell did Cole think he was, bringing Eric home with him, sucking his brains out through his cock, despite the fact that he had a girlfriend? Or was it fiancée? Hadn't she said something about a wedding?

Jesus. He sure knew how to pick men, didn't he? Unfortunately, this time around, he had no one to blame but himself. Cole had all the classic signs of someone locked in the closet, Eric just hadn't wanted to recognize them for what they were. He was a fucking idiot.

Eric leaned forward and flipped up the light switch. A bulb winked on overhead, illuminating the area around him, and cast dim fingers of light into the two adjoining rooms to either side.

To his left sat a small kitchen. He could only just make out part of the fridge and the corner of a waist-high counter from where he stood. He didn't care to see more of the kitchen, so he turned toward the room to his right. There he found an equally tiny living room, barely large enough to hold the matching black leather love seat and recliner, and a small black lacquered entertainment center.

Well, he had two choices. He could go into the living room and have a seat, or he could leave. Eric glanced at the door, still standing open, and considered leaving before Cole returned. He didn't know of any way out of the building except the one he'd been shown on the way in, where the happy couple were undoubtedly fighting right that very minute, so he chose to sit and wait. Facing Cole seemed like the lesser of two evils. Besides, running away also smacked of cowardice and he wasn't a damn coward. He faced his problems head on and this time would be no different. He would stay, listen to whatever lame excuse Cole came up with, and then calmly tell him exactly what he could do with his wandering cock, specifically that he could shove it up his own ass and rotate on it until Hell froze over.

As much as he would've liked to give Cole the benefit of the doubt, the evidence was not leaning in his favor. Even if Cole hadn't been using him for some kind of bi-curious experiment, he was still a cheater and, as far as Eric was concerned, a slimeball.

Without his knowledge or consent, Cole had made him into the other woman...man, whatever. That pissed him off. He was not going to be someone's dirty little secret.

Eric stepped into the living room and bumped his hip on a shoddy-looking telephone stand just inside the door. An automated voice filled the air. "You have one message." The machine recited a time earlier in the evening, and then the message played. "Hey, Cole. It's me." The woman's voice paused. "I just wanted to let you know that I've been away for the last week at my parents' house, thinking things over. I've decided that maybe I overreacted by ending things between us so quickly." A man's voice sounded in the background, calling the woman in to dinner. "Listen, I won't be home until later tonight, but I was hoping we could talk. I'll swing by your place on my way home. Talk to you soon. Bye."

Eric stared down at the red light on the answering machine as if it had teeth and was going to jump off the stand and bite him. Chewing on his lip, he tried to shove down the overwhelming sense of hurt welling up inside him.

The message confirmed one of his questions, but it opened the door for so many others. Cole wasn't cheating on the woman, but it was obvious they'd just ended things. And she'd been the one to dump him, not the other way around.

Did Cole want her back? Was that why he'd run out of the apartment as if his ass was on fire?

Eric stumbled to the love seat and perched on the end of it. He slumped forward and rested his elbows on his knees. Rubbing his hands over his face, he settled in to wait for Cole and the opportunity to give the man a piece of his mind.

Chapter Five

You're going to regret this, Cole. I swear it.

Karen's parting words rang in Cole's ears as he wearily trudged up the stairs, his head hung low. Any buzz he'd had earlier was long gone. A pounding headache had moved in to take its place.

Karen was furious. He'd tried to explain, but she refused to hear him out. Instead, she'd jumped to conclusions, choosing to believe he'd been seeing Eric on the side, even while they were together. That she could believe that of him, after two years of being together and his being nothing but faithful to her, hurt him more than he cared to admit. He cared for Karen, didn't want to see her hurt, but having her catch him with Eric, seeing her reaction, brought his latent feelings to the surface. It made him realize that although he didn't want to deal with the repercussions resulting from coming out, he couldn't put it off any longer. He wanted to step out of the closet and into the sunshine. Finally, he felt ready to embrace himself for who he was, without worrying about how it would affect anyone else.

No. That wasn't entirely true. He did care how his realization would affect one person.

Eric.

Standing next to Karen, seeing the woman he could have easily ended up spending the rest of his miserable life with, made him that much more aware of how lacking his attraction was to her. With Eric, right from the moment he'd laid eyes on him, he'd felt an inexplicable pull in

his direction. The chemistry between them was real and good, so strong it was unsettling.

Cole paused in the doorway of his apartment. He pinched the bridge of his nose, stalling for time while he tried to steel his courage. He knew what he wanted. All he had to do was go for it. Lay it all out in the open and hope Eric wanted the same thing.

In time, he knew that he could fall for the younger man. It wasn't a question of if he could love him, more a question of when. If Eric could be persuaded—and Cole was going to try his damndest to make sure he was—then Cole planned for them to share a lot more than a single night of passion. He wanted it all.

He stepped through the door and looked around for Eric. He found him in the living room, sitting in the dark, with his face buried in his hands. Cole cleared his throat, not wanting to startle him.

Eric's head jerked up. His gaze landed on Cole and narrowed. Damn, that didn't look good. He knew he had some explaining to do, but...

"Well, that was certainly quick. I guess your *girlfriend* decided not to stick around for an encore, huh?"

Cole winced at the sharp tone of Eric's voice, straightened his spine and crossed the room. He reached over and flipped on the lamp beside the love seat and plopped down on it next to Eric. Eric scooted over, practically falling off the other side in order to put as much space between them as he could.

Cole sighed. He didn't know why he'd expected Eric to be a little more understanding. Things never seemed to go as easy for him as they did for everyone else. "Could you maybe wait to hear me out before you start jumping to conclusions? I've had about enough of that for one night."

Eric arched one blond brow, his forehead wrinkled. "Why should I care what you want? Am I supposed to feel sorry for you now? Poor Cole, who has to deal with two pissed-off lovers in one night. Tsk, tsk, you really should have known better than to bring home a new playmate before you got the key back from your ex. You must have been absent the day they taught that lesson in 'How to be a Dog 101'."

Frowning, Cole wiped his damp palms on his pants. "It's not like that, Eric."

Eric rolled his eyes. "What's it like then, huh? Explain it to me. Make me understand because after what I've seen and heard, I'm having a hell of a time understanding."

"Karen is not my girlfriend. We broke up weeks ago."

Eric scowled. "Mm-hmm. I know that. She called and left a message. Said she was willing to talk about taking you back. That maybe she'd been a little hasty in dumping you."

"Shit." That explained why she'd shown up out of the blue. He'd been wondering about that.

"So...? You want to explain things, or what?"

Cole held Eric's gaze, imploring him to listen. Eric had no reason to accept his word for the truth, but that wasn't going to stop Cole from trying to explain. "Karen and I dated for about two years. There weren't any bells and whistles going off between us, but I was comfortable in the relationship, safe. As long as I was with her I could keep my head buried in the sand and ignore what my psyche, my fantasies, had been trying to tell me for years."

He paused, taking a deep breath before continuing. Now that he'd started, he wanted to get it all out. "Karen and I broke up two weeks ago. She wanted to get married and start a family. I just... I couldn't live a lie anymore. Karen isn't what I want. She isn't what I need. You are."

Eric's eyes widened. "Cole, I—"

Cole held up a hand, cutting Eric off. "No, hear me out before you say anything. I know we don't know each other all that well yet, but there's something here, something between us. I felt it on the beach and I feel it even stronger now. If you're willing, I'd like the chance to get to know you better and see where things could lead for us."

As soon as the last words poured out of his mouth, Cole's gaze fell to his lap. Though he was anxious to hear what Eric had to say, he was petrified of being rejected. His pride dangled out on a line and Eric had the power to cut it in half.

When no reply came, Cole lifted his head, scared of what he would see on Eric's face. His gaze connected with Eric's. Cole was afraid to breathe, afraid he would blink and the soft, accepting look on his lover's face would dematerialize into one of scorn.

Coming up onto his knees on the love seat, Eric reached for Cole. A warm palm cupped Cole's cheek, but it was nothing compared to the heat he saw growing behind Eric's beautiful azure eyes.

His voice was feather soft when he spoke, "Do you mean that? I want to believe you. I just..." Large, expressive blue eyes searched Cole's face. "I've wanted you since before I knew I was gay. There was just something about you that drew me." He blushed. "I kinda feel like I'm going to wake up any minute, with wet sheets, and realize this was all a dream."

Cole grinned and reached out to swipe an errant lock of blond hair out of Eric's face. His fingers lingered over Eric's satiny skin. "I meant every word. I want to be with you, Eric. Only you."

Eric's attention dropped to Cole's mouth. His thumb swept over Cole's bottom lip, making him shiver. Before the shiver had time to work its way down his spine, Eric leaned in and replaced his thumb with his mouth, softly brushing his lips over Cole's.

Though the kiss began gently, there was a wealth of emotion behind it. Cole's heart warmed and filled with a sense of peace. This was right. The burgeoning emotions he felt for Eric were the real thing, not the glamour of lust. He wasn't sure how he knew, but as Eric sought to deepen the kiss, running his tongue over the seam of Cole's mouth, he believed it with every fiber of his being.

Eric was the one for him.

Cole tilted his head and parted his lips, allowing Eric inside. The fingers of one hand rose to wind in the silky hair at Eric's nape, while the other reached around Eric's back and pulled him in tight, pressing their chests together.

Eric moaned and the sweet sound vibrated along his tongue and into Cole's mouth. He inched the last bit forward and straddled Cole's lap, wrapping his arms around his neck. Their tongues twined and danced,

mouths moving in concert with each other until both men panted, their chests rising and falling, pushing against one another in an effort to replenish their lungs with oxygen.

Though he didn't want to stop, Cole had to breathe. He pulled his head back a fraction and eased the kiss until their lips barely skimmed back and forth.

God, he was hard. Not having gotten off earlier with Eric, plus the additional torment of Eric's hard bottom pressing down into his dick, was working on his control. Too much more stimulation and he would be coming in his pants like a teenager.

That was not what he had in mind. No, tonight he wanted to come buried balls deep inside of Eric.

Cole's eyelids grew heavy and fell shut. It was so easy to picture pushing Eric backward and taking him over the arm of the love seat. All he'd have to do was yank those snug jeans down over Eric's tight little ass and shove inside, pump his way to heaven. He could almost feel the inviting grip of Eric's channel fisting around his cock.

"What?" Eric asked, his hot breath fanning over Cole's neck an instant before his lips pressed a moist kiss to the side of his throat.

Cole's eyelids slowly lifted. "Huh?"

"You whimpered."

"I did?"

Eric nipped at Cole's earlobe. "Uh-huh. What were you thinking about just now? Something good, I'll bet, by the way your hips jerked up."

Time to do or die. "Strip and I'll show you exactly what I'm thinking about."

"Thought you'd never ask." Eric pressed a quick, hard kiss to Cole's lips and scrambled off his lap.

Cole sat back and watched his lover quickly disrobe. Clothes flew in abandon as Eric yanked his shirt off over his head and shimmied out of

his jeans. With every inch of skin that appeared, more blood rushed to Cole's prick, engorging him to the point of pain.

His tanned skin gleamed in the low light. Hands propped on his slim hips, Eric turned to face Cole. "This what you had in mind?"

Cole swallowed and nodded, his gaze riveted on the naked expanse of Eric's skin. The long, ruddy prick he'd seen before, but the rest... *Damn.*

Earlier, when he'd taken Eric in his mouth, it had been dark and he hadn't been able to see much. Now though... Now he wanted to make up for that slight. He wanted to touch and taste every inch of Eric's lithe body. Learn all the things that made him whimper and cry out.

He held his hand out to Eric. "Come here." Eric stepped forward and twined their fingers together. Cole pulled him closer, until Eric stood in the V of his open thighs. With his free hand, Cole ran an errant fingertip down the shallow indentation between Eric's abs and watched as the muscles tightened and flexed in response to his touch.

He looked up, his gaze roaming over the expanse of Eric's leanly muscled chest, and met Eric's eyes. "You're beautiful."

Eric's eyes shifted away and he blushed. "No, I'm not. Men aren't beautiful."

Cole thought how adorable it was that Eric could be so unconcerned with his nudity but be embarrassed by a simple compliment. He made a mental note to bestow them often and reached up to tweak the barbell piercing one of his plump pink nipples. "You are."

Eric made a pitiful little noise, half whimper and gasp, in the back of his throat and his hips jettisoned forward, riding air.

A bedeviled smile on his face, Cole advanced.

Chapter Six

Cole's hands moved to either side of Eric's hips and tightened. He spread his fingers and squeezed, holding Eric still. With his tongue, he flicked at Eric's innie bellybutton and moaned as the taste of clean, salty skin burst over his palate. Working his way up, Cole took his time licking and kissing every inch of smooth, tanned skin between Eric's navel and his pecs. He sucked and nibbled on one tender nipple, tugging on the barbell with his teeth, before moving to the other and lavishing the same attention on it. He switched back and forth, loving the way the tiny buds puckered under his tongue, until Eric's desperate pleas for more became too much for him to resist.

Letting go of Eric, Cole grabbed the hem of his own shirt and tugged it over his head. Eric dropped to his knees and began to work at the button of Cole's jeans. He popped the round metal disc through the hole and tore down the zipper. Anxious to be naked and feel Eric's skin against his own, Cole leaned back on his elbows and elevated his hips, easing the way for Eric to pull his jeans the rest of the way off.

He stared down, inflamed by lust at the sight of Eric kneeling at his feet, so similar to the fantasy he'd had earlier in the day. Eric grinned up at him and licked his lips, almost as if he knew what Cole was thinking. Eyelids at half mast, Cole watched as Eric's tongue extended and swiped a warm, wet trail over his balls. He sucked and lapped at Cole's sac, never taking more than the loose skin into his mouth. Breath whooshed from Cole's lungs, the feel of Eric's tongue too good for words.

He gaped down at Eric, fixated on the full pink lips as they moved upward and stretched wide around the flared head of his cock. Hot, wet

heat engulfed him, swallowing half his shaft in one fell swoop, and his hips involuntarily bucked upward. Eric's cheeks hollowed and the suction intensified. Eric began to bob up and down, his mouth gliding over Cole's cock, taking him deeper with every pass. The nerve-rich tip of Cole's dick hit the soft wall at the back of Eric's throat. He held still, so damn still, not wanting to push and take the chance of hurting Eric, but goddamn it felt good. Their gazes connected, and at that moment, the muscles at the back of Eric's throat began to flutter and gave way, allowing the tip of his cock to pop through. Eric groaned around Cole's cock, making his mouth vibrate, and then his throat compressed around Cole's knob, sucking him into a vise of hot, almost impossibly tight pleasure.

Cole's balls drew up and hugged the base of his dick. His body screamed for him to thrust, to give in to the pleasure and spill himself down Eric's throat. His heart, *his damn contrary heart*, screamed no. The orgasm would be spectacular, no doubt about that, but when he came, he wanted Eric to be right there with him. A one-sided climax wasn't enough.

With a touch of reluctance, Cole fisted his hands in Eric's hair. "Eric..." Eric backed off of Cole's cock a couple of inches and used the tip of his tongue to fuck the slit of Cole's cock. A moan forced its way out of his mouth, undermining what he was trying to say. "Stop, baby, that's enough."

Eric gave Cole's cock one last, good, hard suck and released him. He leaned back on his heels, his pretty, pink dick bobbing up against his washboard stomach. "Party pooper. I was enjoying that."

Cole grinned at the fake pout Eric sported. "Yeah well, so was I. A bit too much, if we're going to do what I think we are." *Please, let Eric want the same thing I do.*

"Oh yeah?" Eric teased as he crawled up into Cole's lap and straddled his hips. "And what would that be?" He wiggled his ass over Cole's groin and shuffled around until Cole's cock slid back and glided between his ass cheeks.

Cole grunted and fought his body's natural inclination to thrust. "You keep doing that and this will be over before we even get started."

Eric chuckled and wrapped his arms around Cole's neck. He brushed his lips over Cole's and kissed him.

With Eric clinging to him, their bodies pressed close, Cole found himself unable to think. His body took over and demanded satisfaction. The insistent throb and ache in his balls swept away all his insecurities and allowed him to float on pure sensation. He was carried away by the power of Eric's kiss, the tender hands petting his chest and sides, the small whimpers spilling from Eric as he rocked to and fro. Over it all, the heady scent of lust and testosterone rose in steady increments, skyrocketing right along with the desire to take that last final step and make love.

Cole slid his hand between his and Eric's bodies and took hold of Eric's cock. He pumped up and down, thumbed the weeping tip. They were both ready and impatient for more.

Blindly, with one hand stroking Eric's cock, he reached over the arm of the love seat and into the drawer of the end table. He divided his attention between kissing Eric and searching for the bottle of lube he knew was somewhere in the drawer. After he fumbled through pamphlets, magazines and more odds and ends than he remembered being in there, his hand finally landed on the dented plastic bottle he sought.

Eric chose that moment to back out of their kiss. He looked up with huge, slightly foggy blue eyes and noticed the bottle in Cole's hand. "Thank God. We'll need that. It's been a while for me."

"Yeah, about that. Um, I haven't exactly done this before. So you might need to guide me through things. I don't want to screw up and do something that might hurt you by accident."

Eric smiled softly and cupped his cheek. "You won't. I'll walk you through all the steps later on. For now, hand me that lube and I'll get myself ready for you. I'm too revved up to wait. I'll lube up while you squeeze that huge cock of yours into a rubber."

Cole butted his head back into the cushion. "Shit, I don't have any. I'm sorry, I didn't plan this far ahead."

"Good thing one of us was more optimistic for tonight's outcome. I have one in the pocket of my jeans. Hold onto my hips and I'll get it. I don't want to get up."

Cole was about to ask what he meant when Eric's thighs tightened around the outside of his and he twisted backward. Cole's hands flew down to Eric's hips, holding on, while Eric reached over his head and grabbed his jeans up off the floor. The image of Eric splayed back, his body displayed like a wanton banquet, burned into Cole's retinas.

All too soon, Eric propelled himself upright and began to rifle through his pants pockets. He came up with a small, square foil packet and held it out to Cole with a triumphant smile. "Got it."

Cole accepted the condom and tore it open. He positioned it over the wide flare of his cock and only then noticed how bad his hands were trembling. Heat suffused his cheeks.

Eric covered Cole's hand with his own. "Here, let me." Nimble fingers took up where Cole left off and quickly finished unrolling the condom down Cole's hard shaft.

Eric picked up the bottle of lube lying next to Cole's thigh and squeezed out a giant dollop of slick liquid. He rested his head on Cole's shoulder and reached around behind himself.

Whatever he was doing caused Eric to stiffen up and moan. Cole could well imagine those slender fingers working lube into his hole but he had to see it for himself. He craned his neck and glanced down over Eric's back. What he saw caused his cock to jerk, the already hard length stretching impossibly longer. He goggled at the sight of Eric preparing his own ass. Slim, graceful fingers, first one and then a second, plunged in and out of Eric's ass. The tiny opening was flushed a dark, angry shade of pink as it was forced to stretch beyond its natural size to accommodate Eric's manipulations.

Eric eased his fingers out and grabbed for the lube. He spread more slick liquid over his crease and added a third finger. He shoved them deep and hissed, "Almost ready."

Cole had had enough of being a spectator. Watching was fun, but he wanted to touch and play too. He kept one hand on Eric's back and with the other palmed Eric's balls, rolling the heavy sac in his hand. The tips of his fingers reached back to rub over the sensitive skin behind, and he could feel Eric's hand at work. A strong flame of lust incited him to grip Eric's wrist. Together, they set the speed of Eric's fingers until Cole was well past the point of turned on and couldn't wait another minute to be inside Eric.

His hold tightened around Eric's wrist. "Enough. I can't wait any more, Eric. I need you. Please." Cole didn't like the way his voice sounded, all pleading and desperate, but it was too late to call it back now.

Eric sat up and braced one hand on Cole's shoulders. He leaned in for a kiss, while his other hand traveled down to grip the base of Cole's cock. Angling Cole's penis into position, Eric began to lower himself down.

Tight, hot heat kissed the tip of Cole's dick. He felt snug pressure shoving down on him. He was just about to tell Eric to stop, that he feared Eric was too small to take him, when he felt the restricting ring of muscle give way. Eric's body flowered open and the crown of Cole's dick popped through. Cole gasped and Eric cried out as the snug ring of muscle snapped closed around the blunt head. Eric began to push down, taking more of Cole's shaft inside him, one excruciating inch at a time.

Cole gritted his teeth and held his body rigid, afraid that if he moved, he would force too much of himself inside Eric and hurt him. It took all his willpower to stay still. The muscles of Eric's channel rippled and caressed every inch of cock fed into it. It felt like he was being devoured by the hottest mouth on earth.

Finally, after what seemed like hours, but couldn't have been more than a few minutes, Eric's buttocks rested firmly on Cole's thighs. He was in, buried all the way inside Eric's body. Cole could hardly believe it.

"Oh God, Cole. So good... You're so deep inside me... You feel so *damn* good."

Beyond the point of being able to speak, Cole grunted and enfolded Eric into his arms. His hands immediately sought out the firm mounds of Eric's ass and squeezed. He smashed his lips down over Eric's and thrust his tongue into Eric's mouth, swallowing down the smaller man's moans as their tongues slip-slided against one another.

Eric's hips began to swivel, rocking slow, but moving all the same. Cole took that to mean he was free to move and pushed up with his hips. He thrust into Eric with small and concise movements. The wet drag and pressure of Eric's channel pushing against him on the outstroke and then blossoming open to allow him right back inside on the upstroke was almost too much for him to take.

Eric's neck arched, pulling his mouth away from Cole's. His head fell back and his eyes closed, a string of whimpers and obscenities falling from his mouth. "Fuck me, Cole. Harder. Please."

Hearing his lover's strangled cries, Cole plunged upward. He put everything he had into each hard-driving thrust and hoped like hell it was enough to send Eric over the edge. The sound of ragged breathing and the soft thump of damp flesh thudding together filled the air. Cole was seconds away from coming. The telltale tingle of impending orgasm started in his balls and plumped his cock beyond endurance.

Whimpering, Eric sped up the pace, riding Cole fast and hard. "Fuck, Cole, I'm gonna..." His ass clamped down on Cole's dick, released, and clamped down again. Come spewed from his dick and splashed against Cole's abdomen.

It was too much for Cole. The tension building deep down in his balls reached a crescendo and exploded. The skin of his shaft tightened, almost to the point of pain, before his balls clenched and released, the first spurts of his climax jetting into the condom.

“Eric...” He threw his head back and howled, no longer able to control himself as his climax ripped through his body and drained him.

Eric fell forward, his weight a blessing against Cole’s damp chest. He pressed his lips to Cole’s cheek and snuggled closer. “I’m so glad I was on the beach this morning.”

The wealth of meaning behind his words rang out loud and clear. It was too soon to make declarations of love, for either of them, but Eric’s words told him he was cared for all the same. “Me too. I didn’t even know what it was I wanted until I tripped right over it.”

Eric laughed. “Well, thank God you’re a klutz.”

Cole grinned and rubbed his cheek into the curve of Eric’s neck. “Yeah, thank Heaven for that.”

Happenstance may have led him to Eric, but perseverance and time would cement the bonds between them. In Eric, Cole found all he’d been missing and more. He wasn’t sure where the road of life would lead, but he was confident that no matter what tribulations awaited them, they would face them together.

About the Author

Amanda Young spends her days basking in the sun by the seashore and her nights surrounded by dozens of serenading male strippers whose only desire is to make her happy.

Yeah, right.

In real life, my husband would chase away all the hot men, right before asking me what I'm going to fix him for dinner and reminding me to do the dishes for the umpteenth time.

Always an avid reader of romance, I was thrilled when I discovered erotic romance. For a long while I toyed with the idea of writing my own but could never find the time.

When I found myself unemployed, I decided that it was high time I gave it a shot. I sat down at my trusty computer and, according to my very patient husband, haven't moved since.

To learn more about Amanda Young, please visit www.amandayoung.org. Send an email to Amanda Young at AmandasRomance@aol.com.

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

Custom Ride

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Available now at Samhain Publishing

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.

Enjoy the following excerpt for Custom Ride:

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

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

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

"Don't know. Doesn't have one yet."

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

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

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

"Want to drive it? I'll be right back."

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

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

"You can drive, really. We've got insurance that covers cars taken off the lot."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Because you’re an old man yourself.”

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

“Beautiful?” Jeff’s lips twitched.

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

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

“Can I change my answer?”

“To?”

“Hot.”

“Depends.”

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

“Which one gets me laid?”

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

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

“Try me.”

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

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

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

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

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

“Huh?” Ryan arched up.

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

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

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

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

“Why didn’t you say something before?”

“I’m shy.”

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

Two men and a bottle of nut cream...

Nut Cream

© 2007 Jade Buchanan

Available now at Samhain Publishing

Nut [nuht] noun, verb.

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

2. Slang, Vulgar – a testis.

Cream [kreem] noun.

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

2. Slang, Vulgar – to have an orgasm.

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

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

Enjoy the following excerpt for *Nut Cream*:

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

To make matters more complicated, though, most werewolves weren't even interested in sex until they reached their mating phase. Unlike humans, when werewolves hit puberty in their early teens, they normally went through the physical changes but not all the sexual ones. In other words, even though Toby might be ready for a relationship now, he was still innocent compared to other werewolves. He would be completely fresh, his sexual urges not strengthening until recently. How did you seduce a man who was entirely mature emotionally, physically and intellectually, but still a virgin sexually?

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

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

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

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

* * *

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

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

The porch door creaked open, shutting with a bang.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They hit the tree line seconds apart. Toby twisted, veering off the marked path. Barking, Cliff was pleased that Toby was heading deeper into the park. Lush greenery sprang up around them, peppering the ground, providing obstacles for Toby as he ran through the trees.

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

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

"Damn it." Toby wriggled to get free.

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

Toby bucked up into him once, before stilling completely.

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

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.

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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.

Hot summer nights make people do crazy things.

Spontaneous

© 2007 Karen Erickson

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

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

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

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

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

Knotty Girl

© 2007 Maggie Casper

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

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

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

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

Marielle's Marshal

© 2007 Beth Williamson

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

Marshal Ramsey Whitfield doesn't know what to make of the outspoken teacher, but he does know she feels perfect in his arms. As they trek together across the barren landscape, searching for civilization,

they discover that their desire for each other is hotter than the desert sand.

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

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

Sealed With a Kiss

© 2007 Lila Dubois

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

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

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

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

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

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