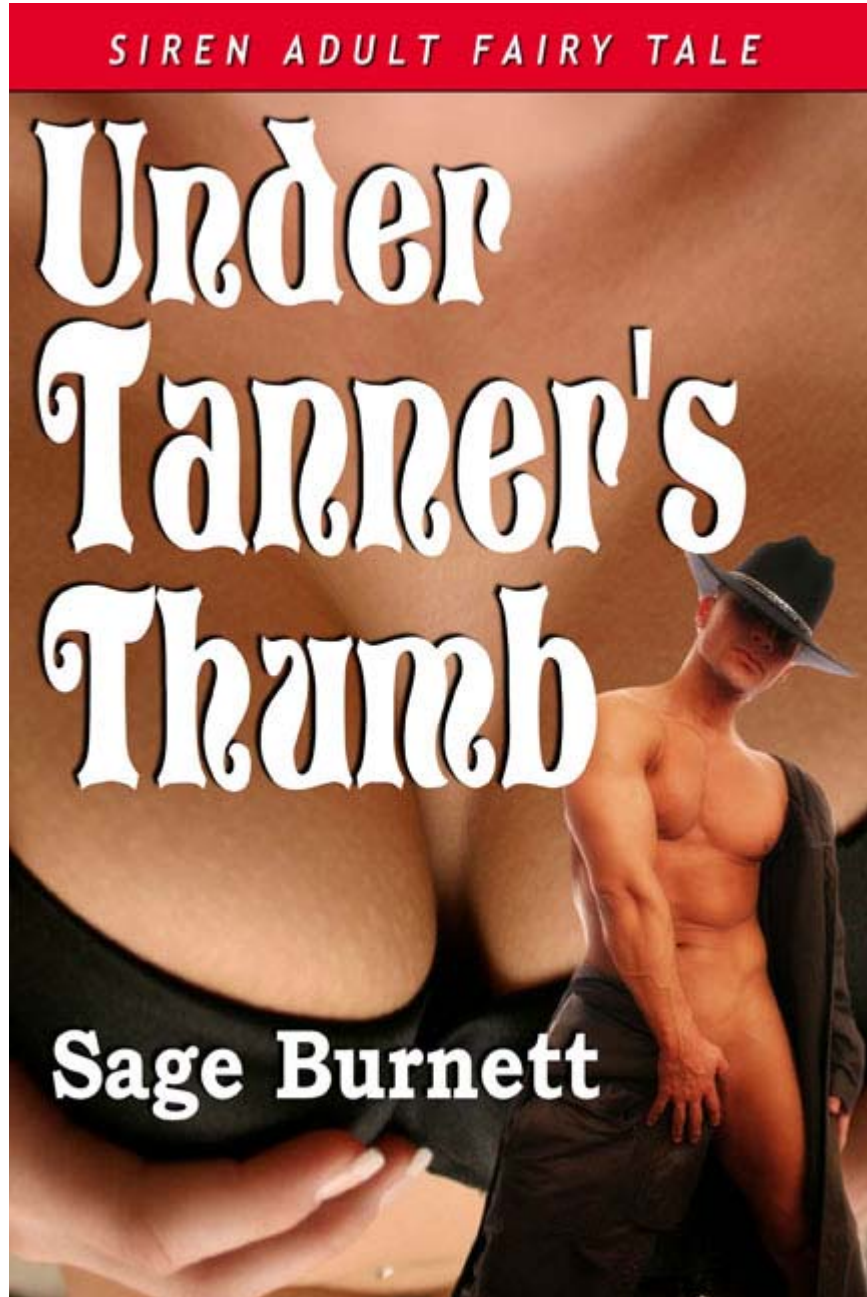


SIREN ADULT FAIRY TALE

Under Tanner's Thumb

Sage Burnett



A Siren Adult Fairy Tale

Under Tanner's Thumb

Tanner Clinton plays along with his nephew, Jeremy, when the little tyke casts a spell on him over the phone. Believing he turned his uncle into Tom Thumb, Jeremy tells Tanner he needs to kiss a fairy princess and nuzzle her neck before he'll be six foot tall again.

While sipping a glass of wine, Camille Barton knows she's losing it big time when a two-inch naked man suddenly appears on her porch one evening. The wine is supposed to tamp down the anger brewing inside her system that her no good boyfriend caused, not make her hallucinate. The voice that vibrates from the tiny man is rich and seductive. Camille wishes that deep irresistible voice accompanied a normal-sized man instead of one the size of Tom Thumb. When the man asks her if she can put him up for the night, Camille figures she's already a case for the psychiatric journals, so why not?

And when she wakes up in the morning with a six foot hunk of burning love...

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EROTIC ROMANCE



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Copyright © 2007 by Sage Burnett

ISBN: 1-933563-03-6-A4

First E-book Publication: April 2007

Cover design by Jinger Heaston

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PUBLISHER

Siren Publishing, Inc.

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SAGE BURNETT

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Chapter 1

"I bet I can turn you into Tom Thumb," Jeremy said.

Tanner Clinton chuckled before he took a swig of beer. "Sure you can." He lifted his long legs and plopped his bare feet on the coffee table. He got a real kick out of listening to his five-year-old nephew chatter on about his life.

"I really can, Uncle Tanner. I been reading *lots* of stories. Magic stories."

"Okay, cast a spell on me and we'll see what happens." He shifted the phone to his other ear.

"I'm gonna turn you into Tom Thumb. 'Cause that's a good story."

"Go for it." He drained the last swallow of beer from the bottle, sliding it on the end table next to his couch. Yawning, he waited for Jeremy to throw some hocus-pocus at him. Glancing at the wall clock across the room, he saw that it was past ten. His sister, Ann, let Jeremy stay up late on Friday nights.

When his nephew didn't rattle off any magic words at him, he wondered if the little guy has drifted off. True, it was only nine in Seattle. "Hey, buddy. You still with me?"

“Shhh...I need to be quiet.”

Another minute passed. So what if his only nephew was burning up the long distance air waves between Washington and Montana?

“Done,” Jeremy finally said. “I know you’re real short now.”

“Holy sh—” He caught himself in the nick of time. No cursing in front of his nephew. “I mean, holy cow. I’m about two inches tall now. Heck, I can’t even hold onto the phone.”

Jeremy responded with loud squeals of laughter.

“I’m so short I had to crawl up on the phone so I can talk to you.”

More laughter bubbled over the line. “Told you, Uncle Tanner.”

“How about shooting me back up to six feet again because I have lots of work to do on the ranch tomorrow.”

“Can’t do it, Uncle Tanner.”

“Why not?”

“A fairy princess has to kiss you before you’ll be tall again. And you have to, um....nuzzle her neck like Mama does to me.”

“Okay, then, Send me a fairy princess.”

“I’ll work on it. I gotta go to bed now. Night, Uncle Tanner.”

“Night, buddy.”

He sure as hell could use a fairy princess in his life since he had gone so damn long without a woman. The family jewels felt slightly tarnished. They needed a good and thorough polishing. Tanner stood up, scratched his bare chest before he walked around his house switching off the lights.

Maybe he’d get lucky tonight and at least dream about making love with a beautiful fairy princess. A man had to take what he could get in times of drought. Inside his bedroom, he stripped off his jeans and briefs, kicking them aside before he climbed into bed.

He definitely needed some good loving. Stacking his hands behind his head, he stared up at the ceiling. Since his ex-fiancé

Jenny, had called off their engagement a year ago, he hadn't seen much action in the female department. Jenny had been right about their relationship. They didn't have what it took for the long haul.

After turning off the night light, he rolled onto his side. It wasn't just the sex he missed, he also missed the companionship of a woman. Maybe Jeremy's magic spell would work and he'd meet his fairy princess.

Yeah, right. If only it was that easy...

* * * *

Camille Barton sat on her back porch, listening to the creak of the ancient wooden rocking chair as she sipped her wine. The cool, April night air soothed the anger still brewing inside of her. Of course, the red wine helped, too. Another one bites the dust.

Stood up again. How many times did that make for her now? Todd Wilson would never set foot inside her house again or in her bed for that matter. She was certain of that after the message she'd left on his answering machine an hour ago. No more dangling by her fingertips from a cliff waiting for him to show up for their dates. One of these years, she might learn.

Ready to take another sip of wine, she nearly leaped out of her skin at the sound of a deep, masculine voice.

"Do you think you could help me, lady?"

Her eyes quickly scanned her backyard. The porch light over her head only illuminated so far into the yard. Springing up from the rocker, she walked to the edge of the porch and searched for the source of that deep, husky voice.

"Careful. You damned near stepped on me."

"What?"

"Look down by your left foot."

Bullets of fear shot through her at the bizarre request and the fact she couldn't see the man. Since she hadn't even finished her

first glass of wine yet, there was no way she was falling down drunk. Besides, she didn't do falling down drunk. The bulb near the door afforded enough light for her to see the entire porch clearly. Goose bumps popped out on her flesh, but that could be because she didn't have on a jacket. Her instincts warned her to bolt inside the house and quick, but when she heard that seductive male voice again...

"Can you please just look down?"

The masculine voice held a richness to it, reminding her of a decadent two layer dark chocolate cake. Sucking in a deep breath, she slowly lowered her eyes.

"Ohmigod!" She jumped back, and the wine glass slipped from her fingers, shattering into a dozen pieces across the porch boards.

"Jesus, you could have killed me."

Staring down at the tiny creature standing on her porch, she couldn't believe what she was seeing. Camille blinked and shook her head simultaneously. She'd skipped dinner because Todd was supposed to have taken her out to dinner. Still, there was no way that one glass of wine could make her hallucinate.

She blinked several more times more to make sure her eyes weren't playing tricks on her. Sure enough, a tiny naked man about two inches tall, hands resting on his hips, stood near her left foot, staring up at her.

"You wouldn't happen to be a fairy princess would you?" he said.

"Come again?" Good lord, was she really talking to a two-inch naked man? It had been a long day at work, not to mention the disappointing and anger filled evening. But still...

"I need to be kissed by a fairy princess," he paused. "Oh yeah, and I have to nuzzle her neck, too, so I can grow back to my regular size."

Shaking her head again, Camille hoped to toss aside the effects of the red wine, if that was possible.

"It's pretty damn cold out here."

"Well...um...that's because you're naked."

"I don't remember Tom Thumb running around naked," he grumbled.

Tom Thumb, the fairy tale? It had been years since she'd read that book. And it *had* been a fairy tale. She was firmly rooted in reality with her job as an accountant at a local bank and a no good boyfriend. Correction. Ex-boyfriend.

"Do you have any clothes that would fit me?"

That manly voice...

Geez, even her old Barbie doll's clothes would be too big for this little guy. "No, not really."

Camille kept expecting him to disappear because stress had to be responsible for causing this episode. Episode of what, she wasn't sure. She had leaped off her rocker literally. "Are you for real?"

He held up his hands and circled around. "Do I look real?"

"You know, I have to be honest here. You're about two inches tall, so no, you don't look real."

"Jeremy cast a spell on me."

For a smidgen of a thing, he had a voice that could seduce and tempt a woman. "And who might Jeremy be?"

"My five-year-old nephew."

"Your five-year-old nephew cast a spell on you? Yeah, right. And I'm really Cindy Crawford."

"You kind of look like her, but no way as tall. Your hair's about the same color, but shorter," he paused. "And you're more curvy."

Oh, now she felt positively certifiable because it sounded like the little man was coming onto her. Had she conjured him up because of Todd's thoughtlessness and insensitivity over the past several months? If that was the case, why couldn't her imagination at least get the guy up to normal size?

"I'm going to bed." Practical was her middle name. Engaged in a conversation with a runt of a guy that had a deep, intoxicating voice didn't fit into the parameters of her practicality.

"Are you going to leave me out here to freeze to death?"

Chewing on her bottom lip, she stared down at him. Dark, midnight colored hair covered his teeny, tiny head. And it looked like the same black hair covered his chest and his...*uh, oh*. Bending forward from the waist, she saw that he had all of his man equipment, only in miniature.

Camille considered calling the local mental hospital and begging them to come and cart her off.

"Touch me," he said.

So the bogus Tom Thumb was a pervert to boot. "Sorry, no can do."

"If you touch me, you'll see I'm a real man. All flesh and blood."

True, the measure of man wasn't determined by his size, but this was pushing the envelope a tad too far.

"Come on," he coaxed in a husky voice. "Then you'll know I'm for real."

Why the hell not? Her evening had already turned out to be a wash out, she might as well play along. She crouched down and slowly reached out, letting her hand hover over his head. Working up the nerve to actually touch Mr. Tom Thumb, she gently poked him in the chest with her forefinger.

A mixture of fear and confusion raced through her because he actually felt like a man of flesh and blood. Camille leaped up. "I'm losing it. I mean, big time losing it."

Spinning around, she padded across the porch.

"You just can't find it in your heart to put a guy up for the night?"

Camille stopped and glanced over her shoulder. She wanted her practical life back. A practical man, and a practical picket fence to go along with it.

The voice that boomed out of him did things to her. If a naked man had to show up suddenly on her porch, why couldn't he be a tall, muscular hottie? If he really was a man. Because if he was a normal sized man, that voice of his could get her to do things. Impractical things. Sexy things.

In the morning, she'd wake up and realize this had all been some cock-eyed, twisted, insane dream. "Sure. Why not? Follow me."

"With pleasure."

Still looking over her shoulder, she could have sworn his gaze focused in on her butt in her snug, faded jeans. Why did an unexpected wave of heat roll through her? Gawd...now she was turning into a pervert like little Mr. Bogus Tom Thumb.

From now on out, she would never skip dinner before a glass of wine and she would never date losers again either. Dating losers for the majority of her adult life had apparently brought on some kind of strange breakdown. One that hadn't been documented in any psychiatric journals as of yet.

She'd be fine in the morning. Camille opened the door, feeling Tom Thumb following her inside. *Just fine.*

As she walked through the house to her bedroom, she kept peeking over her shoulder. Tom Thumb jogged to keep up with her. It really hadn't been some kind of mini mental lapse on her porch. In the morning, he'd be gone and everything would be back to normal. She walked into her bedroom, and unbuttoned her blouse but quickly remembered she had company. The little guy leaned one shoulder against the doorframe and looked up at her.

Camille pulled her blouse together to cover her black, lace bra. She had no intention of stripping in front of him. *If there really was a him.* As far as she knew this could be a dream. With her

thumb, she pointed over her shoulder. “There’s the bed.” Circling around, she headed for the bathroom.

* * * *

Tanner shoved away from the doorframe and strode over to the bed. A ladder sure as hell would be handy. The inside of his head felt swollen like he’d taken a hard punch to his face. He grabbed onto the drawer handles of the nightstand and climbed up to the top until he stood next to the digital clock. Feeling slightly dizzy after his climb, he rubbed his temples. Since his head wouldn’t clear, he decided a good night’s sleep would fix everything. With a lot of muscle, cursing, and determination, he managed to push back the comforter and slide under it.

The woman returned wearing a pair of pink flannel pajamas. Suspicion glinted in her eyes when she spotted him reclining on her bed. The hard peaks of her nipples under her pajama top made his cock swell. He might be two inches tall, but nevertheless, he felt a swift rush to his groin causing another wave of dizziness to wash through him.

Now he remembered. He had to kiss her and nuzzle her neck. Impatience grated on his nerves while waiting for her climb into bed.

She pulled back the blankets. “Just for the record. You’re not real. I’m having a break down. Tomorrow I’ll be back to normal.”

Tanner heard the doubt laced in her voice. Hell, maybe he’d had a break down, too. All he knew was he had to kiss her and nuzzle her neck, which in spite of his physical state and groggy brain he looked forward to with a combination of lust and anticipation.

When she lay down and pulled the blankets up to her neck, Tanner frowned. He studied her neck, which had a nice line to it, not to mention that it looked soft to the touch.

Turning her head, she narrowed her eyes at him. "Don't go getting any ideas. For some reason, I don't trust you."

"Hey, I'm stand up kind of guy." So much for making a move on her. He would have to wait until she fell asleep. He hoped like hell he could stay awake that long because his brain felt fuzzier with each passing minute.

"I'm just sure you are."

She rolled onto her side, putting her back to him before she turned off the lamp on the nightstand.

Teeth clenched together, he stared up at the ceiling, forcing himself to stay awake. Once he completed his mission, he could get the hell out of here and be on his way home. *Home?* Damn, he brain was all screwed up because he couldn't remember where home was. Shit. Jaw tightening, Tanner waited for the shapely woman next to him to drift off into dreamland.

After a long time, he listened to her steady breathing, which signaled she'd fallen asleep. Tanner inched over to her pillow, careful not to wake her. He stood up, bent over her and kissed her cheek. Her skin tasted like some sweet flowery fragrance. She sighed. Fighting back the urge to kiss her again, he lowered his lips to her neck. He rubbed his cheek against her soft and satiny skin.

His eyelids suddenly felt heavy like weights were attached to them...

Chapter 2

A large, calloused hand massaged her breast. Sighing with pleasure, Camille arched her back. When a tongue raked across her nipple, tendrils of heat coasted through her. And when that same tongue drew her hardened nipple into his mouth to suckle it, languid heat slowly rippled throughout her body.

The supple lips moved away a moment. “Mmmm....you taste good.”

That deep seductive voice wiggled through her brain, still foggy with sleep, and sparked a vague memory. A hand wedged between her thighs spreading them open. Blunt fingertips caressed her clit.

“You feel good, too,” he whispered.

The voice that belonged to the hand seduced her senses. *Todd?* No...his voice had a nasal tone to it. The fingers trailed lower, slipping inside of her, causing her to not care who the voice belonged to. Unable to stop the moan that tumbled from her lips, she moved her hips as his finger slowly moved in and out of her pussy. Red hot sensations shot from her head to her toes.

Those yielding lips closed around her nipple again while a bare, muscled thigh slid across her knees. His fingers pumped faster into her. Camille, on the periphery of sleep, not wanting to wake up, felt her body coming alive with a burning need. When his lips found hers in the murky darkness, she wrapped her arms around a strong, broad back. She opened her lips for more of him as his tongue drove inside of her. His husky groan rumbled into her mouth, causing more erotic heat to wash through her.

His finger diving into her pushed her closer and closer until a sudden exquisite orgasm fragmented her mind from her body. She wasn't sure how much time passed before the tip of his cock nudged against her pussy.

And then he plunged inside of her. Her nails dug into the muscled flesh of his shoulders as he filled her. His body hovered over her as he thrust himself hard into her again.

"Damn, woman," he whispered harshly. "You feel better than good."

The scent of their sex and his male sweat drifted around her, mixing with that rich voice of his. She pulled his head down for another kiss, but first she rubbed her cheek against his stubbled jaw and neck. He came willingly, his tongue thrusting as hard into her mouth as he drove himself deeper into her sex.

His cock was big and bulging inside of her. When he pulled out for a moment, she heard herself whimper, but he quickly pushed himself into her again. Their movements combined into a perfect rhythm. Oh, she'd never had dream like this before, so passionate, so hot that every inch of this large man felt real. Camille tore her lips from him, needing air, needing to breathe. His groans increased in volume as he pounded his cock roughly into her pussy. Another orgasm rocketed through her leaving her boneless beneath him before one final groan rumbled from his lips.

Chapter 3

Tanner felt a shapely, warm female rump pressed against his dick. What a dream. He slipped his hand over a soft hip until his fingers tangled in crisp, curly pubic hair. A soft lock of hair tickled his nose, and he lowered his head and nipped at the nape of her neck. A sleepy, womanly sigh fell from her lips.

As his fingers trailed lowered, barely grazing her clit, the woman in his dream let go with a scream so loud and piercing he was damned near positive both of his eardrums had just been busted.

With the scream still echoing inside his head, an elbow jabbed him hard in the ribs. “Shit.”

The woman kicked and clawed at the blankets before she tumbled out of bed, landing on the floor with a thud. Tanner quickly scooted to the edge and looked down at her. He’d never had a woman kick and claw her way out of bed before. “Are you okay?”

“Okay?” Her eyes widened in fear and shock. “You’re asking if I’m okay?”

Her voice had only lowered a few decibels. Damn, she was a screamer. Her hazel eyes glowed with fear as she stared up at him. Her glossy, mahogany colored hair was tangled around her face, while her lips, which looked like they had a permanent pout to them, were pressed together in a tight line. “Yeah. Are you okay?” He held out a hand to her, but she shrank back from him. Frowning, Tanner let his hand drop.

She looked fine to him as his gaze took in her small, but firm breasts with rosy, hardened nipples. Sitting on her butt, her hips were slightly spread, showing her pubic hair where his fingers had lingered just a few minutes ago. He'd been hard, when she'd let go with that wild scream but he was even harder now.

"You were two inches tall last night." The tone of her voice bordered on hysteria.

His frown deepened, wondering what kind of woman he'd gotten involved with. His brain struggled to get a hold of the situation, but his head felt all scratchy like it was stuffed full of straw. "I don't think so."

"Don't you play with me." She scrambled into a kneeling position.

What a pose. Obviously unaware of her nakedness, she waved her hand in front of her, making her breasts jiggle. "Just go away."

"Why don't you come back to bed," Tanner coaxed, "and we'll talk about this?"

"In your dreams, Mister."

Leaning forward, she poked him in the chest with her forefinger. He tried to grab her hand but she snatched it away.

Covering her face with her hands, she slowly opened her fingers enough to peek at him. "Ohmigod...ohmigod....ohmigod..."

Was that some kind of ritualistic chant? Had he by chance, fallen into bed with one of those Goth women? Or whatever they were called?

"Ohmigod..." Lowering her hands, she stared at him.

She stared at him so long and hard, with fear and total confusion etched across her face, he wondered if he had transformed into some kind of hideous monster during the night.

Maybe he should get the hell out of here, but something held him back. The sexy woman kneeling by the side of the bed seemed to be in some kind of mental shock. Even if he didn't know who the hell she was, he just couldn't leave her. "What's your name?"

She came out of her trance long enough to glare at him.

Bad move on his part. He always made a point of remembering a woman's name the next morning. "I'm," he paused. Shit, he must have really tied one on last night because he couldn't remember his own frigging name. *Tanner*. "I'm Tanner." Was he suffering from some kind of amnesia? "Clinton."

"No you're not. You're Tom Thumb."

"What the hell?"

"You were two inches tall last when you just turned up out of nowhere on my porch last night. And you were naked."

For that matter, he was still naked. Like a light flickering to life in her head, he watched her expression change as she slowly looked down at herself.

"Stop staring at me." The woman scrambled to her feet, scrabbling to get a blanket off the bed. When she yanked at a blanket, the motion rolled him onto his back. He slid a glance in her direction as she wrapped the pink blanket around her like a toga. He might be in a mental state himself this morning, but unfortunately for him, she'd just covered up a body that could make any man want to do things to it. Sexy, erotic things.

"I'm calling the local mental hospital." Spinning around, she marched out of the room, the blanket trailing behind her like the train of a wedding gown.

Was she planning on calling for her, himself, or the both of them?

"Damn." Why couldn't he remember how he got here last night? And why didn't he know her name and why could he barely remember his own name? And why in the blazes did she think he was Tom Thumb? That was a kid's book.

Maybe this was some Looney Tunes dream he couldn't wake up from. He looked around the room, which was all decorated in soft blues and pinks from the curtains to the comforter. Not seeing

any vials of blood hanging from the walls, he figured it was safe to assume she wasn't a vampire or wanna-be vamp.

Some where along the way, she'd lost the blanket because when she walked back into the room. She had changed into a sunshine yellow robe, cinched tight around her narrow waist.

"You need to go," she said, pausing to comb her fingers through her hair. "Before I lose my freaking mind."

"Are you sure you're okay?" She now appeared slightly calmer, but the lady was out there. Where, he wasn't sure.

A crying shame. She was attractive with a sultry sounding voice that had his cock twitching again. "Did you have too much to drink last night?"

Stomping over to the bed, she planted her hands on her hips, causing her robe to open a slit. A hint of her bare breasts showed.

"For your information, Mr. Tom Thumb, I had one glass of wine. One lousy glass of wine."

Tanner held up his hands. "Okay, okay, I get the picture." No, he really didn't get the picture but he had to admit she didn't look hung over. Her eyes were sleepy, but not bloodshot.

Tossing the blankets back, he stood up.

She gasped.

He flicked her a quick glance before he looked down at his body. Everything looked as it should to him. Even his hard-on looked normal. His eyes scanned the room in search of his clothes. When he didn't spot them in a heap anywhere, he turned to face her. "Where are my clothes?"

"I told you, you were naked."

Tanner shook his head. "There is no way I turned up on your porch buck naked last night."

"I should have got my digital camera out, but I was too much in shock."

"I don't know what the hell is going on here. I'm more than willing to get out of your house, but I need my clothes first."

Irritation flashing in her eyes, she said, “You do not have any clothes.”

He plopped his ass back down on the bed, and plowed his hands through his hair. “Talk about a crazy dream.”

“Tell me.”

“Okay. I came naked, but I sure as hell can’t leave naked. Do you have some clothes I could borrow?”

She spread her hands in front of her. “Do my clothes look like they would fit you?”

She was maybe five- foot six, not slender, just padded in all the right places. No way in hell would her clothes fit him. “How about I borrow a towel or something?”

“Hmmp.” She spun around and disappeared.

Walking back into the room, she tossed a large folded pink towel at him.

“You wouldn’t happen to have another color, would you?” Damn, he at least needed a manly color to make a dash for his truck and get the hell out of here. Since the curtains were closed, he didn’t know if he was in town or the country.

“Oh, for God’s sakes.” She snatched the towel from him, and stormed out of the room.

A minute or so later, she returned with a navy blue towel. Navy blue he could handle. He caught it when she tossed it at him again. Standing, he wrapped it around his waist, making sure it was knotted tight. “Is there a white Ford truck parked out front?”

“Not that I noticed.”

“Wait one cotton picking minute.” If he didn’t have any clothes, where were his wallet and keys? He advanced toward her, wondering if he’d just been fleeced. She backed up a few steps. “Where are my wallet and keys?”

Lifting her chin, she stopped. “I’m telling you for the last time, you were naked when you got here. And,” she stabbed a finger in

the air. "You were two inches tall. There was no way you could have toted a man's wallet and set of keys around."

Jesus, why did she keep insisting he'd been two inches tall last night?

"Supposedly your nephew cast a spell on you." She rolled her eyes. "Yeah, right."

He moved towards her again, but she stood her ground. "How do you know I have a nephew?"

"Because you told me. Jason? Jeffrey? Now I remember. Jeremy."

Not liking that she knew his one and only nephew's name, Tanner scowled at her. "Why won't you tell me your name?"

"Oh hell, call me Cindy."

"Cindy, huh?" The look in her eye dared him to challenge her name. "Here's the deal, Cindy. I need to get out of here. Can I use your phone?"

Without a word, she pointed at the nightstand next to her bed. He angled around it and reached for the phone. He hoped like hell his right hand man, Luke, picked up and fast. "Luke, it's me Tanner."

"Where the hell are you? A bunch of heifers broke through the fence and I need your help rounding them up."

"Forget about the cows. Let them wander for now. I need you to come pick me up." Pausing, he glanced over at Cindy. She stood in the exact spot he'd left her, tapping her bare foot on the carpet. By the look on her face, she either wanted to strangle him or suck his blood right out of him. "Is my truck there?"

"Course, it's here. It's parked in front of your house. What's going on?"

"Grab some clothes for me and get into town."

"Did you tie one on last night?"

"No. Just get into town."

"It would help if I knew where you are."

“Hold on.” Tucking the phone under his chin, he turned back to Cindy. Judging by the expression on her face and the fire blazing in her eyes, oh, she definitely wanted to suck the blood right out of him. “What’s your address?”

“Two forty-six Fulton Street.”

Tanner nodded. “What color is your house?”

“Light brown.”

“Ah...thanks.” He recited the address to Luke. Lowering his voice to a whisper, he said, “Just get here fast.”

“What kind of woman did you tangle with now?”

“Never mind. Just get here.” He dropped the phone back into its cradle. Rubbing the back of his neck, he glanced over his shoulder at Cindy. She stared down at her bare feet, her nails painted with hot pink polish. He’d never noticed her toes until now. She might be wacky as hell, but she had sex appeal in spades.

Raising her eyes, she caught him watching her. Their gazes locked for one hot, sizzling moment. Bits and pieces of being in her bed started floating through his mind. Oh yeah, they’d done the nasty together. A blush crept up her cheeks, which meant she remembered, too. He circled around to face her. “My friend, Luke, is on his way to pick me up. He should be here soon.”

“Good.”

According to Luke, his truck was parked back at his ranch, which offered him some relief about this whole convoluted mess. He vaguely remembered talking to Jeremy last night, but what they covered in the conversation escaped him at the moment.

A strange, uncomfortable silence filled the room. The morning after a one-night stand had a tendency to be uncomfortable at times, but that depended on the woman. He caught her eye again, but she quickly looked down at her feet.

Rubbing the back of his neck for the second time, he considered apologizing to her. For what, he wasn’t sure. “You

wouldn't happen to have any coffee brewing, would you?" Right now, he'd kill for a hot, scalding cup of fresh coffee.

"I suppose I could make a pot."

"Thanks. I'd sure appreciate it."

Cindy leveled a long, distrustful look on him before she spun around and sashayed out of the room. After she left, he knelt down, searching under the bed on the off chance his clothes might have gotten kicked under it. A pink pair of ladies pajamas was scrunched up under the bed. One or both of them had stripped of her pajamas last night. Normally, he loved taking off a woman's clothes, but this particular time he didn't have the pleasure of reflecting back on that sexy pleasure.

Brows knitting together, he frowned, then he stood up and slowly circled around. He still didn't see his clothes. Damn, he didn't even remember what he might have been wearing. A sense of uneasiness raked at his nerves. Baffled by the entire situation, he wandered out of the bedroom in search of the kitchen, and hoped some caffeine might clear his foggy and scratchy feeling brain.

Cindy stood at the counter, her back to him. The bright yellow robe clung to her ass.

Wheeling around, she caught him staring at her. "You did the same thing last night."

He leaned a shoulder against the doorframe. "And what was that?" He'd obviously done a lot of things last night...

"You ogled my...my butt."

Crossing his arms over his chest, he said, "My apologies, but you have a noteworthy butt." When a pink flush stained her cheeks, the blood in his veins heated.

She mimicked his gesture by crossing her arms over her chest, and leaned back against the counter. "You don't believe me, do you?"

"That I appeared here in inches instead of feet or that we got down and dirty?"

The flush deepened before she circled around, and grabbed two mugs out of a cupboard. What he did remember was the feel of her lips pressed against his and the feel of his cock inside of her.

She carried a mug with steam rising from it over to him.

His fingers brushed against hers as he took the mug from her hand. She jumped back like she'd been stung by a bee. "I don't bite."

Cindy narrowed her eyes a fraction before circled around, her robe billowing around her. He caught a flash of bare thigh before she walked back to the counter and picked up a mug. Since she didn't offer him a chair, he drank his coffee from where he stood.

He'd only taken a couple of drinks sips when the doorbell rang. "Must be Luke."

Pushing away from the doorframe, he walked to the front door. When he opened it, Luke stood there with his folded clothes under an arm and his boots dangling from one hand.

Luke eyed him from under the brim of his straw cowboy hat. A devilish gleam twinkled in his green eyes.

"Good. Clothes." Tanner snatched a pair of jeans and light flannel shirt from his friend. "Where's my underwear?"

"If you think I'm going to paw through another man's drawers, you're one shy of six pack, pardner."

Luke took a step forward, but Tanner flattened his hand against his chest, and stopped him. "Wait for me in the truck."

"I was hoping to meet this woman. If you lost your clothes somewhere, and can't remember where you left your truck, she's gotta be worth seeing."

"Forget it. I'll be ready in a minute." Before he closed the door, he heard Luke muttering to himself.

He took another quick drink sip of coffee before he set it on a small table near the door. Since he couldn't see Cindy from where he stood, he dressed right there. Stuffing one foot into a boot, he swore under his breath. Luke must have tossed his boots in the bed

of truck. The inside leather felt frozen. It might be spring in Montana, but the mornings were still chilly. Buttoning his shirt, he worked his jaw while he stared over at the kitchen.

He couldn't just leave without saying something to her. He walked into the kitchen and found Cindy still leaning against the counter, with a mug cradled in her hands.

"I'll be on my way now." When he looked into her eyes, he saw traces of vulnerability, which got to him, which in turn surprised the hell out of him. "Thanks for the coffee and..."

"No problem."

"Okay, then." One last lingering look at her before he wheeled around and strode out of Cindy's house.

Once he was off the porch, he jogged across the lawn to Luke's truck where he climbed inside, and slammed the door behind him.

Luke gassed it and pulled away from the curb. "You got some explaining to do. Why wouldn't you let me meet Camille?"

He jerked his head so fast to the left, it almost felt like he'd thrown it out of alignment. "Camille? Her name's Cindy."

"The name on her mailbox is Camille Barton."

"Maybe she has a roommate." He hadn't seen any signs of a roommate.

"She might be a fugitive from justice," Luke said.

"No way." She might be slightly confused, but no more than he was. Tanner couldn't get the look in her eyes out of his head as Luke cruised down the residential streets. First, she'd been terrified of him, followed by angry. She'd acted like she'd wanted him out of her hair and fast. The vulnerability he'd noticed in her eyes before he left her house nagged at him.

"So how did you end up in town with a woman you don't know, naked as the day you were born?"

After he scrubbed a hand down his face, he glanced over at his friend. "Your guess is as good as mine."

Maybe she'd wanted him out of her house, but she had given him coffee and a manly colored towel. He wondered what Camille or Cindy as she called herself was really like. He couldn't shake the image of how willing and passionate she'd been while they'd made love. All warm and soft while molded against him.

She'd made it abundantly clear that it was a one night that she wanted to forget.

He'd had some memorable one-night stands in his time. There was something about the woman he'd woken up with this morning, which made it damned hard for him to just walk away.

Images and sexy fragments floated back to him about their lovemaking. He remembered enough of last night to know it had been good, damned good.

Chapter 4

With a trembling hand trembling, Camille set her mug on the counter. Her house yawned with a big emptiness after Tom Thumb, aka Tanner Clinton, walked out. Raking her fingers through her hair, she shook her head in disbelief.

What happened just couldn't have happened. She pinched the back of her left hand. "Ouch." She really was wide awake and not snared in some wild, crazy dream. The two-inch man she'd found on her back porch last time night had morphed into a six-foot hunk of burning love sometime while they slept.

Hot Technicolor images surfaced of the things they had done. His finger giving her delicious pleasure. The feel of him filling her. And lordy, the man could kiss. The doorbell rang, jolting her from her reverie. Heart pounding, she wondered if he had returned. Not possible. There was nothing he could have forgotten, since he'd arrived with nothing. She had to admit, he'd been polite and concerned about her when she'd tumbled out of bed.

Struggling to compose herself, she walked to the door and opened it.

"You're not ready?"

Amanda, her best friend, stood across the threshold dressed in tight jeans, knee high black boots, and a red pullover sweater.

Amanda hiked her purse higher on her shoulder. "I can't believe you're not ready."

Camille blinked. "Ready for what?"

“You’re not going to tell me you and Todd had all night marathon sex and you forgot about going shopping.” Amanda shook her head. “No way. That’s not possible.”

“Todd and I broke up.”

Amanda raised her arms in the air and did a little jig. Neatly jelled into place, her short, spiked blond hair jelled into place never moved. “Hallelujah.” Brushing past Camille, she walked inside and kicked the door closed with her boot. “This calls for a celebration. I’ll buy you lunch.”

“I don’t want lunch, and I don’t feel like going shopping. Sorry, I forgot.”

Her friend tilted her head. “Are you really that heartbroken? You’ve been threatening to break up with him for the past month.

Funny, but Todd had been the farthest thing from her mind since she’d woken up this morning in bed with the six-foot man. Besides, the no good s.o.b. hadn’t even bothered to call. “Really, I’m fine with it.”

“Then what gives?”

If she told Amanda about her adventure or episode or hallucination, she knew her friend would die of laughter. “Let’s have some coffee.”

Amanda followed her into the kitchen and poured her own coffee before dropping her purse on the counter. Camille took her mug and sat down at the table.

Amanda joined her. “You’ve got me worried? Did you pick up a bug or something?”

Fever could make a person delusional, but she didn’t have a cold or the flu. Drawing in a deep breath, she worked to get her thoughts in order. “Okay, here goes. You have to promise not to laugh your butt off. And to at least consider what I’m going to tell you.”

Amanda leaned forward. "You didn't off Todd, did you? Do you need me to help you stuff his body in your trunk so we can drive to the river and dump it?"

Murdering an insensitive jerk of a boyfriend was at least real. Trying to cover it up, would be real, too. Camille shook her head. "I'm sure he's alive and breathing, probably in some other woman's bed." She had no proof that he'd ever cheated on her, but the countless times he'd stood her up, made her question his faithfulness.

Amanda snorted. "I'd say that's doubtful."

Todd hadn't been that bad, but then again he hadn't been that good, either. "A naked, two-inch man, the size of Tom Thumb, turned up on my porch last night."

Camille had no idea how Amanda's perfectly plucked blonde brows could raise so high so fast.

"Did you drink an entire bottle of wine by yourself last night when Todd went missing in action?"

"I had one glass." She watched as her friend struggled not to laugh. "No laughing."

Amanda made a stab at a straight face. "Go on."

Her hands tightened around her mug. "Some time during the night he morphed into a six-foot hunk of man."

"Oh...gawd, what a dream."

"It wasn't a dream."

"Did you and the hunk partake in the pleasures of the flesh?"

Camille nodded, watching Amanda still fighting back laughter. "Just go ahead and laugh. Get it out of your system."

Impatience threading through her, she waited while Amanda had a gut busting laugh at her expense.

Amanda wiped her eyes. "Now you've gone and ruined my eye makeup."

"His friend brought him some clothes and picked him up this morning. In fact, he just left a few minutes before you got here."

“Uh...huh. Tell me more.”

“I knew you wouldn’t believe me.”

“Come on, girl. It’s a really off the wall story.”

Off the wall didn’t even begin to explain it.

“What’s his name and what did he look like?”

“He said his name is Tanner Clinton and–

“Clinton, that name sounds familiar.”

“Ex-president.”

“No. Clintons have been around Missoula for years in the ranching business.”

Amanda had grown up in the Missoula area, while she had only moved to town a few years ago from Billings. Because of that, she didn’t know the history of the residents. “You’re serious?”

“They’re like third or fourth generation ranchers. There’s still some hold outs these days.” Amanda paused and took another drink of her coffee. “So what did he look like?”

“Shiny black short hair, deep blue eyes, all hard muscles and wide shoulders.” Describing him got her all hot and bothered, which in turn, made her frown. “Do you know him?”

Amanda shook her head. “We went to different schools, but I think he’s older than us, probably mid-thirties. He dated a coworker of mine a few years ago. I met him once.” She tapped a long, black-polished fingernail against her lips. “As I recall, he was quite yummy.”

Yummy. That one word definitely described Tanner Clinton.

Amanda jumped up and grabbed Camille’s hand, dragging her to her feet. “Hurry, take a shower so we can shop.”

She glared at her friend. “I can’t just forget about last night or what...what happened between us.” Tanner Clinton seemed like a genuinely nice guy, not to mention nice on the eyes.

Amanda tilted her head, studying Camille. “Are you sure you didn’t hit a bar last night, hon?”

"No. I did not hit a bar. I spent the entire evening stewing and simmering and cursing Todd. I poured one." She held up a finger. "One glass of wine and went and sat on the back porch. Damn, I didn't even get a chance to finish it before Tom Thumb, I mean Tanner Clinton, showed up on my porch. Poof." She snapped her fingers. "Magic."

Amanda was thoughtful for a moment. "Is it possible you met him at the bank?"

If she had met that man at the bank, she would have remembered. Men like Tanner Clinton didn't happen along every day. Camille shook her head.

"Maybe he came by and asked to use your phone because his truck or car broke down." Amanda grinned. "I know what happened. You two looked at each other, instant attraction and well...the rest is history."

"Ha-ha. At that height, he couldn't have driven."

Amanda laid her hand on Camille's forehead. "You don't seem to have a fever."

She batted Amanda's hand away. "I don't have a fever. I'm not sick."

"Okay then, why don't we talk about it on the way to the mall? We'll see if we can figure this out. We do know you had sex with a red-blooded American male. As far as the size of Tom Thumb..."

"It really happened."

Amanda gave her a shove. "Like I said, we'll sort it out while shopping. There has to be a logical explanation for this."

Logical? Logic had disappeared as quickly as Tom Thumb had appeared. Reluctantly Camille headed for the bathroom. According to Amanda, Tanner Clinton really did exist, but that didn't explain his two-inch height last night or anything else for that matter.

Remembering the skill of his big, rough hands and the taste of his lips made her face warm with heat. Oh...he was better than good. And there was something about his dark blue eyes. They

weren't just sexy, but trustworthy and honorable, too. Picking up her pace, she hurried into the bathroom, desperate to wash away the burning memories.

* * * *

Luke rolled his truck to a stop next to Tanner's truck. "Give me forty-five minutes," he said. "I need a quick shower and some food in me."

"Those damn cows are probably halfway to Wyoming by now all because you had some kind of wild night with a woman."

Wild didn't even come close to explaining it. "I'll catch up with you." He stretched himself out of the truck, then bent down. "Thanks for rescuing me."

"Are you sure you needed rescuing?"

Luke's question made him pause. "Why would you say that?"

"Because a woman who can make a man look like he just got struck by a bolt of lightning has to be special."

His brows knitting together, he shut the door. Well, yeah, he needed rescuing. What in the blazes was Luke talking about? He walked up to his house, let himself in the back door, and headed straight for his bedroom. Food and a shower would have to wait.

Striding into his room, he went straight to his tall, oak chest of drawers. "I'll be damned." His wallet, keys, and loose change were scattered across the top, just like always. He picked up his wallet and thumbed through the cash. One hundred and thirty eight dollars. He never carried more than a couple of hundred on him, so that was about right.

Circling around, he spotted his jeans and briefs piled in a heap near his bed. His temples throbbed slightly as he struggled to remember last night before he ended up at Cindy or Camille's house. He'd peeled off his clothes and crawled into bed. He always slept in the buff no matter what the season.

Tanner walked across the hall to the bathroom, digging around in the clothes hamper until he found the red plaid shirt he'd worn yesterday. He'd tossed it in the hamper right before Jeremy called. Everything inside his house was normal. Then why in the hell didn't he feel normal?

After he turned on the shower, he stripped off his clothes and stepped under the hot spray of water. *Her scent still lingered on him. Their scent.* Scowling at the bar of soap he'd just picked up, he quickly scrubbed away any reminders of her.

Ten minutes later, dressed and ready to track down renegade cattle, he picked up his cell phone off the counter in the kitchen and hit speed dial.

"Hello."

"Hey, sis, it's me. Is Jeremy around?"

"Bob took him to the hardware store with him," Ann said. "The kitchen faucet is leaking."

He wedged the phone between his ear and shoulder so he could start a pot of coffee. "Did you happen to overhear our conversation last night?"

"Yeah, I was sitting on the couch next to him. Jeremy laughed all the way to bed because he turned his great big uncle into Tom Thumb. By the way, did you kiss a fairy princess last night?"

As it turned out, he had more than kissed a fairy princess, but his sister didn't need that info. He almost said, the little tyke's hocus-pocus worked.

"Yoo hoo, Tanner, are you still there?"

"A...yeah." He turned on the coffee maker. "So Jeremy is really into casting spells?" Shit, he couldn't believe he was trying to ferret information out of his sister about her kid.

"The other day he turned me into the Wicked Witch of the West. Only because I had to rush to pick him up from kindergarten and take him to the dentist. Then we had to grocery shop. By the time we got home, I felt like the Wicked Witch of the West."

“Hmmm.”

“And last week he turned Bob into Superman because his dad helped him fit the last four pieces into a jigsaw puzzle.” His sister laughed. “Bob as Superman?”

Bob was a great guy, but no way did he fit the Superman profile. “Okay, then...”

“Are you okay?”

“I’m a little tired. Luke and I have to go chase down some wandering cows that broke through the fence. Say hi to my little buddy for me.”

“Sure, bye.”

He slid the phone on the counter and felt his jaw tighten. His nephew was into casting spells on his family, but he was just a kid and spells only happened in fairy tales. Then why did Camille, or Cindy as she called herself, know Jeremy’s name? She’d kept insisting he was only two inches tall, just like Tom Thumb, when she’d seen him. And how had he ended up in her bed making love with her?

Tanner filled a glass with water and grabbed the aspirin bottle off the cupboard shelf. The slight pounding at his temples had turned into full-fledged headache.

After he wolfed down a quick breakfast, he settled his black cowboy hat on his head and left the house. Walking toward the barn, he saw that Luke had saddled his horse, Bourbon, and left him tethered to the hitching post.

When he mounted his horse, saddle leather creaking underneath him, he struggled to forget about the events of the last twelve hours, but Camille’s or Cindy’s face kept scrolling through his mind. The feel of her body pressed under his, the sound of her throaty moans as she’d come beneath him.

His headache still throbbing, he tightened the reins, and steered his horse to the left. He still battled to clear his head and get that woman out of his mind. Yeah, the sex had been damned good. He

should be satisfied with that. Instead, he had a crazy urge to get to know her better, to find out what she was about. As it stood, he didn't even know her real name. After spending the night with a woman, he never made empty promises. Saying he would call with no intention of ever doing that, had never sat well with him.

By the time he caught up with Luke in the south pasture, his head pounded harder. And his thoughts wouldn't let go of Cindy or Camille or whatever the hell her name was.

Chapter 5

Camille pointed the remote at the television, flipping through the channels and wished she had picked up a movie to watch. Instead, she had an ex-boyfriend that hadn't even bothered to call and beg her forgiveness. Not that she planned to forgive him for his sins. And she had the memory of a fairy tale of a man that had walked out of her house this morning. Sighing, she finally settled on a cop show.

For once in her life, she'd actually been with an attractive, desirable man, rugged in the Wild West kind of way, and it had turned out to be some kind of nonsensical dream.

While shopping and over lunch, she and Amanda hadn't come up with a logical explanation. Because there wasn't a logical explanation for what happened.

She had crawled into bed with a two-inch man and had woken up with the real deal this morning. The man knew how to use his hands. His large, rough palms had been sure, confident, and provocative as they had explored her body.

For the most part, he conducted himself like a gentleman, except for those few tense moments when he'd believed she'd ripped him off or rolled him. She'd seen it in his eyes. He'd been just as confused as she was about the whole convoluted situation.

Tanner could have walked out on her this morning after his friend came to pick him up. He'd been enough of a gentleman to walk back into the kitchen and thank her. True, it had been awkward when he'd said good-by, but the entire morning had turned out to be awkward and unsettling. Not paying any attention

to the television, she let herself wonder what Tanner Clinton, the man, was really like. She found it hard to believe he wasn't married unless he liked to play the field. She'd had a taste of what he was like in bed. Oh...he definitely knew how to please a woman. Picking up a magazine off the coffee table, she fanned herself.

An unexpected longing grew inside of her to know the real man. Yeah, right. Like she would ever see him again. No doubt he'd been overcome with relief when his friend had arrived.

Camille frowned when the doorbell rang several minutes later. Since she wasn't expecting any company, she wondered who it could be. Amanda had tried to sweet talk her into a party at one of her friend's, but she wasn't in the mood for socializing. If she didn't answer, maybe whoever was out there would go away. The way her luck was running lately, she didn't believe that for a second.

With the second ring, annoyance pecked at her nerves. She stood up, and hit the mute button on the remote before dropping it on the coffee table. Camille walked to the door and flipped on the porch light. When she opened the door, she immediately tried to slam it closed, but a man's hand stopped her.

The long lost boyfriend finally returned. Good old-fashioned irritation shot through her. "Go away."

"Come on, Camille," Todd pleaded.

"I left you a message last night. We have nothing to talk about."

"The last half of your message got cut off."

She figured she might have been talking into dead air, since she'd carried on for so long. "If you didn't get my drift in the first part, then that's your problem."

Todd's sandy colored hair looked freshly cut, and he was dressed for a night on the town. Not with her. Not by a long shot.

He shifted on the balls of his feet and grinned at her. "Save it," she said.

"How about a late dinner?"

Crossing her arms over her chest, she glared at him. "We're finished. End of story."

"Don't you even want to know why I didn't show?"

"No, I really don't. Just leave me alone."

"Is there a problem here?"

The deep seductive voice shot projectiles of heat through her bloodstream. Camille poked her head around Todd who had wheeled around at the sound of the man's voice. Tanner walked up the porch steps wearing sinfully faded jeans, a black tee shirt, and a chocolate-brown, waist-length leather jacket. The brim of his coal-black cowboy hat was pulled low over his brow, giving him both a dangerous and sexy look. She merely stared at him while her heart sounded like a jackhammer doing its work at a construction sight.

"Who the hell are you?" Todd asked.

"Are you okay, Camille?" Tanner regarded her with a steady, even gaze.

How did he know her name? She'd thrown out Cindy this morning because he'd said she reminded him of Cindy Crawford. Caught off guard by his sudden and unexpected appearance at her house again, she found her brain refusing to cooperate.

"Camille?" he repeated.

The way he said her name had her wanting to elbow Todd out of her way.

"If you don't mind," Todd said. "Camille and I are having a private conversation."

Tanner leaned a shoulder against the porch pillar. "Is that right? I heard the lady ask you to leave."

She finally found her voice, and did elbow Todd in the ribs to get him to move out of her way. He cursed, but she ignored him

and spoke to Tanner instead. "He's my ex-boyfriend, but he's having a hard time comprehending that simple fact."

Tanner rubbed his jaw. "You could call the cops or I can escort him off your property."

"Oh, please, give me a break," Todd said.

Tanner cocked his head and his eyes locked on her. "How do you want to play this?"

Turning to face Todd, she said. "Please just leave. It's over. It should have been over a long time of ago."

"Give me another chance." A hint of irritation glowed in his eyes. "I can explain about last night."

"I don't want to hear about last night. I just want you to go."

"You heard the lady," Tanner said.

Before he directed his anger at Tanner, first, Todd leveled an angry look at her. Without another word, Todd brushed past Tanner and stomped down the steps. Why wasn't she surprised that Todd hadn't even made a stab at fighting for her? Several seconds later she heard him gas the engine of his car and peel away from the curb.

Her gaze moved to Tanner again. They simply looked into each other's eyes for what seemed like forever to her.

"Do you want me to leave, too, Camille?"

"How do you know my real name?"

He pointed a thumb over his shoulder. "It's on your mailbox."

Stuffing her hands in the back pocket of her jeans, she glanced away from him for a moment. "Oh yeah." So much for her alias.

"Why did you say it was Cindy?"

"Because last night on my porch you said I reminded you of Cindy Crawford. You probably don't even remember saying that."

His eyes narrowed a fraction. "Now that you mention it, I do remember. And you do remind me of her."

He did remember. And why did that make her feel so darned good? Especially since there was a strong possibility she still floated in la-la land somewhere.

The cowboy pushed away from the pillar and angled over to her. His blue eyes darkened, filling with unreadable emotions. "I think we need to talk. That's why I came over."

"I agree. Come in." She planned to keep her distance from him because the six-foot man package was just too tempting.

Tanner followed her inside, closing the door behind.

"Sit down." She circled around the coffee table and sat down at one end of her couch.

He shrugged off his leather jacket, then plucked off his hat, dropping them on a chair near the couch. She'd been hoping he'd sit on that chair instead of parking himself only a foot from her. His aftershave wafted toward her, some kind of spicy scent. This morning, black stubble had covered his face. Now he was clean shaven. Either way he looked too good.

Dropping both hands onto his thighs, he stared straight ahead for a few seconds. "This is how everything went down for me last night." He shifted on the couch, turning his attention on her. "I talked to Jeremy, my nephew, last night on the phone about ten. According to my sister, Ann, he's really into casting spells on everybody and turning them into some fictional character. Last night he believed he turned me into Tom Thumb and I played along."

"But he really did turn you into Tom Thumb. I swear to God."

His expression still said he didn't believe her. She huffed out a big sigh. "Okay, go on. Tell me what else you remember."

"Jeremy told me I had to kiss a fairy princess and nuzzle her neck before I'd be six feet tall again. After I finished talking to him." He drummed his fingers on his thigh. "I went straight to bed and fell asleep. And the next thing I know I'm standing on your porch." He shook his head. "Unbelievable."

Camille rolled her eyes. "No kidding."

"I waited for you to fall asleep so I could kiss you and nuzzle your neck." Tanner scratched his jaw. "Then I could barely keep my eyes open."

So by kissing her and nuzzling her neck, the spell his nephew cast over him vanished. "Okay, now that we've shed light on the whole crazy thing, we can go our separate ways." From the corner of her, she caught him watching her. Camille fought to ignore her beating pulse.

"Hey, not so fast."

She tilted her head in his direction. "What do you mean not so fast? We've explained it as best as we can. What else is there to say?"

"I could say this, that I really do believe I did kiss a fairy princess last night."

The tone of his seductive voice felt like a warm summer breeze whispering across her senses. Feeling a blush creep into her cheeks, she clasped her hands together in her lap. "Hardly."

"You're even sexier when you blush. And your lips..." He reached out and outlined them with the pad of his thumb.

A delicious ring of heat formed in her belly with his touch, making her feel like she *was* under some kind of spell. "Are you trying to seduce me?" Because if he was, Camille doubted he would have to put out much effort. Minutes earlier, she'd given Todd his walking papers and now she hovered on the edge of doing something totally insane. Like making love with Tanner.

He traced his thumb over her lips again. "I don't know. Maybe I am. You're a woman that should be seduced."

She wasn't sure what he meant by that, but it sounded good.

"How did I get in your bed last night?"

His thumb continued doing luscious things to her lips. "Um...let's see." Thinking was nearly impossible with him

touching her. "I haven't the foggiest. After I finished changing you were in my bed."

His voice lowered a notch. "That was thoughtful of you to offer to let me stay for the night."

Look where it had gotten her. Under some kind of unbelievable, crazy, provocative spell.

"What about your boyfriend?"

"He's history. He should have been history a long time ago."

"He doesn't think so."

Looking into his eyes, she whispered, "I guess that's his problem." At this moment, she felt mesmerized by Tanner's touch and the dark depths of his blue eyes.

He lowered his thumb and lifted up her chin. "I don't know what the hell happened last night. Looks like it might remain one of those mysteries of life that never gets solved. But," he paused. "Right now, I'm glad it happened."

A raw desire burned in his gaze. She couldn't nod because he held her chin and she couldn't speak because her throat had suddenly turned bone dry. Last night had felt like a dream when they'd made love, but now they were both wide awake. The electrically charged air surrounding them proved that.

Tanner slanted his head, brushing his lips across hers. Oh, his lips tasted just as delectable as last night. When she parted her lips, his tongue slithered inside, slow and easy in an exploring way. She let him probe to his heart's content, savoring the feel of his touch.

A moment later, his hand covered her breast. She cupped his face with her hands pulling him closer while his hand lowered, and slid under her top. His rough hand pushed up and gently squeezed her breast.

Tanner ended the kiss, nibbling at the corner of her lips. "I'd like to return the favor."

While his hand massaged her breast, she struggled to clear her sex filled brain. "Pardon me?"

"You let me sleep in your bed. Now I want to carry you to your bed." He nipped her bottom lip this time. "Lay you down and let your pretty hair spread out on your pillow."

Circling his tongue around the outline of her lips, his hand traveled to her other aching breast, where this time he fondled her nipple.

"Camille?"

Blinking a couple of times, she fought to break the spell he'd cast on her. Looking into his hooded eyes, she realized it was impossible to run from Tanner's magic charm. Eyes locked with his, she managed to nod.

He kissed her quick and hard, before he stood up and offered his hands to her. She placed her hands in his while he hoisted her to her feet.

In one quick swoop, she was in his strong arms, her breath momentarily stolen away.

Tanner carried her from the living room to her bedroom, while her house passed by her like in a blur. Expecting him to lay her on the bed, he stood her on her feet instead, next to the bed.

"First, we get naked." He peeled her black pull over top off in seconds, dropping it to the floor.

He stared at her black, lacy bra. "So sexy."

And then he unsnapped her jeans, pushing them down over her hips.

"I couldn't stop thinking about you today." Bending down, he kissed the tender skin above her bikini panty line. "No matter how hard I tried."

She'd suffered from the same problem. Tanner overload.

After he helped her step out of her jeans, he skimmed her black panties down her thighs, to the floor. She reached behind her to unhook her bra, but he slipped his hands behind her back, stopping her.

“I want the pleasure.” Skimming the tip of his tongue down the nape of her neck, he unclasped her bra.

* * * *

Camille held out her arms so he could skim off her bra. His eyes feasted on her small, plump breasts. Her hard nipples pointed straight at him. Rubbing his fingers over her nipples, she moaned low and deep in her throat. A woman who he only knew in the biblical sense, but a woman he wanted to know everything about. Tanner stepped back, so he could enjoy her body.

A tiny smile played at her lips.

“I want to look at you.” Although, he’d seen her naked this morning, she’d been terrified and so confused. Now, her body was flushed with sexual heat, her eyes dreamy.

He skimmed his fingers down her body, starting at the undersides of her breasts. His hard cock strained against his snug jeans. He slid one hand between her legs, rubbing his palm down her slick pussy. Camille moaned again for him. Clenching his teeth, he removed his hand and with breakneck speed peeled off his clothes and boots.

As he she reached for him, he swung her up into his arms again and laid her down on the bed.

She smiled at him, those pouty lips curving into this sexiest smile he’d ever seen. “Jesus.” He came down hard on her lips, forcing them open, feeling her arms twine around his neck.

With one knee, he spread her legs, pressing his thigh against her warm, wet pussy. Tightening her arms around him, she clamped her legs around his thigh. He ended the kiss as abruptly as he started it. Listening to her little moan of displeasure, made him all even hotter. He scooted down until he was eye level with her breasts and drew one hardened peak into his mouth. He groaned at the salty taste of her between his teeth.

Tanner felt Camille's fingers tangle in his hair, pushing his head against her. When he had his fill, he moved onto the next while his hand slid back between her legs, searching out her clit.

She gasped when he pressed his fingers against her. Rolling her over, with her now on top of him, Tanner looked up at her, holding her gaze. "I want you to sit on my face, babe."

Her eyes widened, while the sexual flush deepened on her cheeks. "Please." His voice came out as a harsh whisper.

She stared at him for several moments before she scooted up his chest, while he lowered his body. When her thighs framed his head and her musky scent surrounded him, he grabbed her hips and started to lave her clit. Above him, her hips moved in perfect rhythm with the movements of his tongue. With broad strokes, he licked her clit, her opening. Above his own muffled groans, he listened to her sharp gasps of breath and throaty moans, which turned him on as much as his head buried between her legs.

Letting go of her hips, he reached up to fondle her breasts, pinching her nipples between his fingers. Way too soon, her thighs tightened around his head while her body convulsed and jerked as she came.

Camille leaned back with her eyes closed and her body limp. Gently, he pushed her back until her pussy touched the head of his cock. And then he rammed himself up high into her. She gasped, her eyes flying open.

"Ride me, Camille honey." He ground the words out through tight jaws.

"Oh....oh...."

His hands latched onto her hips, working her pussy up and down over his cock. Through half closed eyes, he watched her plump, small breasts bounce and jiggle, loving the sight of her. Not sure how much longer he could hold out, he increased his hard thrusts, wanting her to come first, so he could feel and see her pleasure.

“Camille, baby, come on. You gotta come for me.”

Opening her eyes, she stared at him, her hair tangled and tossed around her face, her lips pressed tight together. Tanner knew the moment she came, by the look of pure surprise spreading across her face. With one last thrust of his cock into her, his own body shuddered in release.

She collapsed on top of him, while his arms slid around her back.

After his breathing had evened out, he whispered in her ear, “Tell me about yourself.”

She raised her head. Tanner brushed the hair back from her cheeks. “What do you do? How old are you?”

A small smile curled up her lips. “Now you ask.”

He grinned back at her. “Better late than never.”

“I’m thirty two and I’m the senior accountant at First Federal Savings and Loan.”

“Senior accountant, huh? That sounds impressive.”

She kissed him softly on the lips first before answering. “I’m not doing too bad in my career, if I do say so myself.” She kissed him again. “You’re a rancher.”

“My cowboy hat gave me away?”

“No. I heard it through the grapevine today. That’s how I learned you were a real live person.”

One of his brows lifted. “My family has been around these parts for generations.”

“What do you ranch?”

“Mostly cattle, and grow a lot of alfalfa hay.”

Their eyes locked and Tanner slipped his hand behind her neck, dragging her down for another kiss. This one, slow and easy. “How about we start over?”

“Start over?”

“Yeah. I want to get to know you. I’d like to take you out to dinner tomorrow night.”

Another one of her sexy smiles was his answer.

"I'd like that, but..."

An uneasy feeling moved through him. "But what?"

"I'd like to meet your nephew and thank him for casting a spell on you."

Surprised at how good he felt with at the relief filtering through him, the corners of his lips kicked up into a grin. While he'd made love with her, he'd completely forgotten about Jeremy's spell and how he'd met her in the first place. "He lives in Seattle."

"Oh, darn."

"I could call him, I wouldn't mind thanking him myself."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I'll introduce him to you."

Camille giggled and climbed off of him. He grabbed her for a quick kiss before he reached for the phone on her nightstand. Tangled together, he dialed his sister's cell phone number.

"Hey, sis." Too much static on the phone made it hard for him to hear her. "Ann, are you there?"

"Tanner, yeah, I'm here."

He had to raise his voice because of the high amount of interference over the lines. "Where's Jeremy? I want to talk to him." He caught Camille staring at him so he mouthed the word. *Static.*

Ann raised her voice, too. "He's at a sleep over."

Disappointed that he couldn't talk to his nephew, he said, "Why is there so much interference? Did you forget to charge yeah battery?"

"No, it's because Bob and I are flying?"

A frown furrowed his brows together. Bob and Ann weren't exactly rolling in dough. And they would never leave Jeremy while they flew off somewhere. "Where are you going?"

"We're just out for a cruise."

"What the hell? What's going on, Ann?"

“Jeremy turned Bob into superman. He’s holding me in his arms.”

He could have sworn his heart stopped beat for one full second. “Pull my leg, if you want.”

“Really, we are. Bob, honey, watch out for the Space Needle.”

“Sorry, my pretty, I’m taking a sharp right,” He heard Bob holler.

“Tanner, I’ll call you tomorrow. Bye.” The line went dead.

Camille shook his shoulder. “What’s going on? You look like you just saw a ghost. Is Jeremy okay? Your sister?”

Struggling to digest the conversation between himself and Ann, he didn’t answer her as he replaced the phone. He rolled onto his back and looked at Camille. “You’re not going to believe this.”

“I’ll believe anything after last night.”

He wondered since Ann and Bob had a free night if they weren’t having some kind of fun together with Jeremy out of the house.

“Tanner, talk to me.”

“Okay, here goes. Supposedly Jeremy turned his dad, Bob, into Superman, last week.” He paused. Damn, was his entire family nuts? “Ann said they were flying and Bob was carrying her in his arms. Then she told him to watch out for the Space Needle.”

Camille’s hand flew to her mouth. “Ohmigod.”

Tanner shook his head. “It can’t be. Ann was playing some kind of practical joke on me.”

She lowered her hand, a serious expression on her face. “You don’t know that for sure.”

He supposed she did have a point. There was no way to know that for sure. “I guess I don’t.”

“I mean, look what happened to you. To us.”

“Are you going to tell me you believe in fairy tales?”

Pursing her lips together, she was quiet for a time. “Up until last night, I would have said no. But now...” She lifted a shoulder.

Wrapping his arms around her, he pulled her closer. “So Ms. Fairy Princess, maybe it was fate that brought us together.”

Her eyes twinkled with mischief. “Or magic.”

“I have to admit I’m a practical guy, but it could definitely be magic.” Tanner kissed her, feeling the magic of Camille’s sweet lips.

UNDER TANNER’S THUMB

A Siren Adult Fairy Tale

THE END

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AUTHOR'S BIO

Sage Burnett has been composing stories since childhood. Short stories, school plays, and poetry. She now writes contemporary romance set in Montana. Romantic suspense and comedy. And she loves a happy ending.

Sage once had a face-to-face encounter with a grizzly sow and her two cubs. It's clear she lived to tell about it. She survived a one-hundred-year storm on the eastern side of the state, another nail-biting incident she lived to tell about. She loves hiking in the Montana wilderness, wondering what wild animal might be around the next bend.

Sage eats a bowl of Cream of Wheat every morning and is a chocolate addict. She also drinks tons of green tea.

Her roomies are a rowdy girl black lab, Madison, and two spoiled, lazy, temperamental girl kitties, Runt and Cody.

Some of her favorite authors are Dana Stabenow, John Sanford, Tami Hoag and Dr. Seuss.

Visit Sage at **www.sageburnett.com**.

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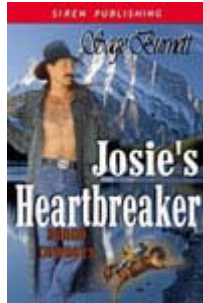
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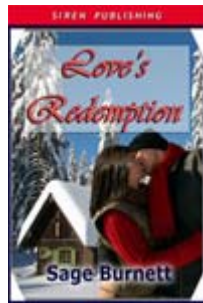
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