

**Brit
Blaise**

**CAVE
CREEK
COWBOY** **IN
VEGAS**



CAVE CREEK COWBOY IN VEGAS

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Bobbi Jo smiled and snuggled closer until the length of her side was tight against him. "I loved your grandma. I wanted her to be mine, too."

Tam sighed. "I know. She was so nice."

"Nice-shh."

"That's the saddest thing I've ever heard," one of the women said with an exaggerated sigh.

"What's sad?" Bobbi Jo asked her.

"He's in love with you," Mike said a little too loudly. People nearby turned to stare.

"With me? Why?"

Everyone seemed to be waiting expectantly on his answer, except the one who mattered most—Bobbi Jo.

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Cave Creek Cowboy

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CAVE CREEK COWBOY IN VEGAS

BY

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CAVE CREEK COWBOY IN VEGAS
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To my mother, who always enjoys Vegas

CHAPTER 1

Watching her ex-husband, Ridge, get married again sucked. Bobbi Jo Gerow followed the crowd out of the chapel, glad it was finally over. It was time to start living again. What better place to start than Vegas?

“Looks like you could use a drink,” a male voice said from over her shoulder as the wedding guests walked into a nearby casino and headed toward the spacious lounge.

“Make mine a triple,” Bobbi Jo said, and glanced back to see Tam, a close friend of her ex. He was devastatingly handsome in his western-cut tux. He wasn’t as tall as Ridge or as muscular, but still looked scrumptious. He had red hair and tanned skin with a hint of freckles that made a woman naturally gravitate toward him. Dark mahogany lashes framed the twinkling blue eyes he used to his advantage. A girl could drown in those eyes.

Tam cocked a brow and looked thoughtful. “I’ll buy you a triple as long as you save the last dance for me.”

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Bobbi Jo nearly tripped in her four-inch heels. Could Tam be interested in starting something with her? No way in hell would she ever get involved with another cowboy, especially a close friend of her ex. "I don't think I can dance in these heels."

"You look good in them." Tam stroked his chin as if he were thinking hard. "Damn good. You look good, *period*."

"Compared to a horse?"

Tam huffed and his eyes narrowed. "Bobbi Jo, from the moment I laid eyes on you, I thought Ridge had hit the jackpot."

"Since he just married another woman, I guess he hit the jackpot *twice*."

"I know this can't be easy on you. Ridge should never have married you, considering his feelings for Holly."

Bobbi Jo felt a sting at the back of her eyelids. *No!* She wouldn't cry. She'd already cried enough tears to last a lifetime over Ridge. "We got married here in Vegas. It was the first and the last time I overindulged in anything. I think it's fitting to tie one on tonight."

"Then you definitely need me to look out for you." Tam took hold of her elbow and steered her toward a large table with a reserved sign. "Over here," he said to someone.

Bobbie Jo turned to see Mike Kale in a tux matching Tam's.

He nodded politely. "Bobbi Jo."

"Mike," she said in return, figuring that would be the extent of her conversation with him. He was so quiet, most of the time she never knew he was around.

"You look great," he said and gave her a wide grin.

Okay. That did it. "Did Ridge tell the two of you to look out for me?"

Mike nervously looked away and Tam cleared his throat. "Not exactly."

For a second Bobbi Jo was about to protest, but then she

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remembered the vow she'd made. The new Bobbi Jo would keep her mouth shut if it killed her and enjoy sitting with two of the most handsome men there.

Tam extended his hand, indicating she sit down first. She shimmied around the booth until she was dead center in the large half-circle. Tam sat on one side of her and Mike the other. Not too close, but close enough.

"What're you drinking?" Tam asked.

"I'll have the same as you."

Mike laughed a little too loudly.

"We're drinking tequila shots and beer," Tam explained.

"I figured that. Haven't I known you two long enough to know what you drink when you're celebrating?" She sat back and her girdle pinched her side, making her curse her need to appear svelte. *As if!*

When the waitress came, Mike ordered while Tam continued to stare at her. "You look different tonight. I'm surprised you came to see Ridge married. Although I shouldn't be...you've always been a good sport."

"Holly and Ridge asked me. I didn't give it too much thought. Other than buying a dress costing a week's salary, investing in a shaper that promised to take two dress sizes off my hips, getting my nails and hair done and buying new shoes, I had to special order to get the four-inch heels. Then I had to spring for a wedding gift and a plane ticket. I figure I spent a couple of grand to see my ex get married again. No, I didn't give it too much thought at all, except to the cost of my fragile ego."

"Damn." Mike groaned and looked as uncomfortable as she felt in her tight under garment.

Tam smiled. "I'd say it was worth every penny. You're the most beautiful woman here. But I also think you should take the shaper thing off. Your curves look like calendar girl material."

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Tam had managed to both shock and exhilarate her with his compliment. Only the arrival of their drinks distracted her.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Tam asked. "I've never seen you drink." He moved closer until they almost touched.

"I drink," Bobbi Jo said. "I've had champagne several times...besides my first fiasco in Vegas, seven years ago. And once I had some elderberry wine my great-grandmother made."

"This ought to be interesting," Mike quipped. He then chuckled.

"Happy to entertain you," she fired back.

Tam shot him a frown before turning his blue eyes back to her. "I've never seen this side of you." He licked the back of his hand between his thumb and index finger. His long, thick fingers distracted her—a *man's* hands. Hands that could hold a woman tight. After Tam shook salt onto the wet spot, he handed the shaker to her. She followed his example.

"Don't drink it slowly." Tam licked the salt off his hand and then tossed the tequila back before sticking a lime in his mouth for just a second. Then he stuffed the lime into his beer bottle and took a strong pull.

It looked easy enough. *No problem.*

Nothing could have prepared Bobbi Jo for the burning taste when she tipped her head back and poured the tequila into her mouth. She didn't have a choice—swallow or spit it out. She swallowed. Tam held the lime to her lips and she couldn't get it into her mouth fast enough. Remarkably, the oily taste began to ease away. The burn in her throat, however, raged on. She grabbed the beer and literally poured it down her throat.

"Easy!" Tam pulled the bottle down.

"You've done this before, I see," Mike said and laughed again.

"Smart ass."

At the same time, a mob of beautiful women dressed in their rodeo

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finest walked by.

"This cowboy says he can drink you girls under the table," Bobbi Jo said to them, pointing at Mike.

One of them stopped and looked at Mike, so they all stopped and waited expectantly. Bobbi Jo recognized her as leader of the pack from the way they all took her cue.

"Is that so?" the striking woman asked Mike.

"I'd never call a lady a liar." He was still smiling.

"I accept your challenge. You buy the first round." The woman slipped into the booth next to him. Her friends hesitated at first and then scrambled for position. Suddenly, Bobbi Jo was squished between two handsome men.

The woman looked at her and smiled before reaching her hand across Mike in Bobbi Jo's direction. "It's nice of you to share. I'm Kresley."

Bobbi Jo shook her hand. "Pleased to meet you. I'm Bobbi Jo."

What did I just do? No wonder she had such a hard time with romance. This stupid stunt was a clear testimony to what a loser she'd become. As the last two women pulled up chairs at the end of the table, Bobbi Jo mentally kicked herself in her over-sized ass. Why in the world had she invited six beautiful women to sit with them?

Right then and there she made a silent vow. She was going to keep her mouth shut and do what they did. If only she didn't feel so dizzy.

* * *

"Take it off," one of the women encouraged.

Tam was in over his head. For more years than he could remember, he'd carried a torch for Bobbi Jo. She didn't have a clue then—or now—if she thought she could lift her skirt up to her waist in front of him. It was tantamount to waving a red flag in front of a raging bull.

His cock was hard enough to crack nuts, but Bobbi Jo had already done it just by revealing the black silk stockings anchored with black,

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lacy garters. He wanted to run his hand under the garter and give it a little snap. Instead, he reached up to her waist where she struggled with her shaper to give her a hand.

"Maybe I should do this in the ladies room?" She tossed her head, sending her shining brown curls flying across his face.

Tam agreed.

"Let me help," said the woman on his right as she leaned over his lap. When her arm brushed over his hard-on, she stopped to look up at him with expressive eyes.

Tam shrugged and held his hands in the air. In seconds, she both unzipped and unsnapped Bobbi Jo. What would happen next was anybody's guess. Tam prayed she wouldn't make it harder on him by taking it completely off.

"I can breathe again." Bobbi Jo began to work the offending garment downward. "I thought I was going to die."

"You're killing me," he muttered and finished his beer.

"Rigor mortis has already set in," quipped the woman who'd groped him.

Bobbi Jo stopped struggling and wiggling. *Thank God she's stopped wiggling.* She looked over with her sparkling brown-golden eyes, her sumptuous red lips pulled into a pout. All he had to do was lean forward to have those lips pressed against his. It took all his willpower to stop himself.

"Are you sick?" Bobbi Jo patted his hand. "You are s-so nice-shh."

Tam smiled, despite his painful predicament. "You're nice too. Very nice."

"Why don't you two get a room?" one of the women at the end of the table suggested.

Bobbi Jo hiccupped. "I have a room." With that she began to wiggle down her undergarment again.

Mike looked at Tam over her head. "Think we should cut her off?"

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“Cut her loose,” one of the women said and blew Tam a kiss.

“I don’t need to cut it,” Bobbi Jo said, holding both hands high in the air like she’d just performed a magic trick. “See, I’m free.”

Tam looked down. Sure enough the shaper was no longer in sight, however, he had a clear view of brown curls under a triangular patch of black lace against her white skin. “Let’s get this skirt back down before you start a riot.”

“You’re so nice-shh,” Bobbi Jo slurred and leaned into him, her generous breast snug against his arm.

“And you’re going to hate yourself in the morning if you remember this, sweetheart.”

“Are you two an item?” the woman next to him asked pointedly. “Or is your *hardware* public domain?”

Bobbi Jo smiled and waved her hand. “Tam is my friend. Are you a computer tech? It surprises me to hear a cowgirl talk computers.”

“A girl has to earn a living, but I wasn’t exactly talking computer components.”

Mike’s eyes narrowed as he stared at Tam over her head. “Tell Bobbi Jo how you feel about her. It might be the only chance you get.”

Tam took a deep breath. *Hell, why not?* As drunk as Bobbi Jo was becoming, she probably wouldn’t remember anyway. “I’ve been in love with her since she took care of my grandma when she was still in nursing school. Then she married Ridge, so I never had a chance with her.”

One of the women let loose a sob.

Bobbi Jo smiled and snuggled closer to him until the length of her side was tight against him. “I loved your grandma. I wanted her to be mine, too.”

Tam sighed. “I know. She was so nice.”

“Nice-shh.”

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with an exaggerated sigh.

“What’s sad?” Bobbi Jo asked her.

“He’s in love with you,” Mike said a little too loudly. People nearby turned to stare.

“With me? Why?”

Everyone seemed to be waiting expectantly on his answer, except the one who mattered most—Bobbi Jo. The waitress delivered another round of drinks and still they all stared at him.

“Here’s to love,” Bobbi Jo said before tossing back her tequila and missing her mouth with at least half. She tried to capture the remnants with her tongue.

Tam’s cock was ready to explode.

“Here’s to good sex,” someone else said.

“Damn,” Bobbi Jo huffed. “Does that mean I don’t get any sex because I drank to love instead? I haven’t had sex for three years.”

“I have the feeling your luck has changed,” the cowgirl on Tam’s right said. “You just might be getting the big one.”

Bobbi Jo’s eyes widened and her moist lips formed an “O.” “You are so nice-shh. Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me. I had *nothing* to do with it. If it was up to me, I’d be at the head of the line, but you’re already taking home the *trophy* in this competition.”

Tam shifted uncomfortably. “Let’s get some fresh air,” he told Bobbi Jo.

She smiled seductively, making his cock throb. To make matters worse, she didn’t have a clue what she did to him.

“I’m not sure if I can walk.” She sighed and then looked up at him with her big, brown eyes.

“Then it’s definitely time for you to call it a night. And you—” He pointed at Mike. “—have your work cut out for you. Not a single one of these women is under the table yet. It’s up to you show them not to

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take a Cave Creek cowboy lightly.”

“It’s just a matter of time,” Mike said. “It’s the safest bet in Vegas.”

Tam excused himself and the women started to move so he could get out of the booth. At the same time, some of them were giving him hell for leaving. He knew he could probably get lucky with one of them. But a chance with Bobbi Jo was worth giving up getting laid by all six of them at the same time.

Bobbi Jo stood after she wiggled to the end of the booth and then tumbled forward. Tam caught her. She responded by wrapping both arms around his neck and kissing him.

At first her lips just brushed his, but he’d waited so damned long to kiss her, he wasn’t about to let the opportunity slip away. He didn’t care if the entire population of Vegas watched them.

He flicked his tongue over the seam of her soft, full lips until she opened to him and then entered her mouth with all the passion he’d held in check for so long. She tasted of lime and beer and a taste he knew had to be uniquely her own. It was a wild mixture of sweetness and the promise of sex.

The cowgirls began to root him on.

Somebody at a nearby table shouted, “Get a room!”

“Yes,” Bobbi Jo whispered into his mouth.

He did the only thing he could do. Sweeping her up into his arms, he headed for the door while everyone cheered.

CHAPTER 2

Tam's hand shook as he inserted his key-card a third time. He was as nervous as a virgin.

Bobbi Jo snuggled into his neck and began to kiss his ear. "If it doesn't work, we could use my room."

"Do you have condoms in your room?"

"No, silly."

"I do and only *one* in my pocket. I'm not letting you go until I use at least half a box."

"Hurry," she whispered into his ear before she sucked his lobe into her mouth.

On the fourth try, the door opened. Scooping her into his arms, he carried her inside and then closed the door behind him with his heel. He couldn't wait any more than she could. "I want to see you naked on my bed."

When she began to pull at the shoulder straps on her dress, he

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lowered her feet to the floor, making sure she was secure on her wet-dreams heels from... “Wait. Not completely naked. I want to see you with the garter belt, stockings and heels, and nothing else.”

Bobbi Jo blinked her golden-brown eyes and then smiled. Her face went from simply gorgeous to humbling. Somehow, with that perfect smile, she managed to reach inside his chest and touch his heart, making his knees almost buckle.

Is this what it means to have a weakness for a woman? Tam felt like Jell-O. He was in big trouble.

“After my years with Ridge, I promised myself I’d never fall in love with another cowboy.”

“Did you promise not to make love with another cowboy?”

She didn’t answer right away. She started to move her hands and then hesitated, turning her back to him.

Tam wanted to reach out to her.

“I want you,” she said, still facing away from him.

Relief flooded through him. “No more than I want you.”

“Unzip me?”

Tam began to breathe again as the doubts disappeared. Taking a step nearer, he followed the line of the little black dress as it hugged her curves. Oh, how he wanted to see what was under that dress.

Brushing the brown curls of her long hair aside, he found the zipper. It felt like he was opening a present, making him take his time to savor the experience. As he lowered the zipper, he used one hand to unzip, and the other to caress her all the way to the small of her back before he peeled both sides of the garment apart and let it drop to her ankles.

Bobbi Jo stepped out of the dress and turned to face him. The contrast of black lace against the pale mounds overflowing the cups of her bra was a memory for a lifetime. His first impulse was to grab hold with both hands, and subtlety had never been his strong suit. He took a

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second to breathe before he did something to make her bolt.

Bobbi Jo started to squirm under his heated stare, but he couldn't force himself to stop looking. When she reached up and unfastened her bra in the front and freed her bodacious set of ta-tas, he had to touch them. Just to see if they were real. *Yeah, right.*

She gasped as he placed his open palms over both at the same time. Her small pink nipples hardened under his touch, inviting him to lean down and slip one into his mouth. She arched into him. It was serendipitous, a word his older college-educated brother tossed around. Now Tam understood it. He thanked his Irish stars for his good fortune to finally have her in his arms.

Bobbi Jo began to moan and he wanted more. He wanted to taste the mound under the black triangle of lace he'd seen when she removed her shaper at the table in the presence of a crowd. Still sucking her breast he reached down and cupped her there. She was hot to the touch. Moist and steamy.

With eager anticipation, he pulled away from her breast and fell to his knees to worship her with his mouth. He gave her an open mouth kiss over the top of her panties while he tested the elastic, trying to figure how to get her out of them as quickly as possible. As if she read his mind, Bobbi Jo reached down and, with her thumbs on both sides of the waistband, she pulled. The sound told him she ripped them before she widened her stance to give him better access.

Yes!

He brushed the cloth aside and buried his face in her downy curls. Then he brushed them aside to get to the bud he could feel waiting for him. At the same time he took her into his mouth, he entered her hot core with his finger. Bobbi Jo began to tremble as she grabbed for his shoulders. He was afraid she'd fall in those unbelievably high heels, but he'd be damned if he'd ask her to take them off. Not yet.

* * *

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Bobbi Jo could feel her release building and Tam had just started working his magic. Since when did she come this easily? The alcohol didn't appear to be slowing her down, and by all rights, she should be passed out cold. The tipsiness she'd experienced earlier was receding, leaving her warm and receptive.

She wanted to tell him to slow down, but no way would she invite him to take his lips away. She didn't have to concentrate. She was already on the edge. *So fast? Impossible!*

Nothing could compare to the other-worldly sensations buzzing along every nerve-ending. This experience was new and exciting. So close. She heard herself begin to hum with her breathing. Since when did she hum? It seemed appropriate, so she went with it. The sensations continued to build and she got louder.

"Yes!" she shouted as she came with a strong burst. This time, instead of coming in a heated rush, the bliss didn't subside. She continued to contract with each gentle pull from Tam's mouth and thrusts of his fingers.

When the sensations finally eased, her legs began to buckle, making Tam grab hold of her and sit her on the bed in front of him. "You haven't even taken your jacket off yet, yet you made me... That's just wrong."

Tam grinned and removed his jacket, taking a couple of steps to a chair in the corner to fold it over the back. Then he turned to face her and began to remove his tie. Bobbi Joe wanted to see him naked so badly she started to squirm.

The western shirt had snaps so he slipped out of it quickly. With it removed, his taut muscles surprised her. The outline of washboard abs on his flat stomach invited her touch. His skin was golden and he had no hair on his well-defined chest.

He dropped the shirt and sat on the edge of the chair to remove his boots and socks. When he stood again, she wanted to cheer. Then as he

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touched his hand to his waist, she stopped breathing. He lowered his zipper and dropped his pants. His tighy-whities kept her from seeing skin, but the bulge ran almost to his waist. He smiled again, hooked his thumbs into his waistband and wagged his eyebrows.

Bobbi Jo surrendered to his enthusiasm, smiled back and laughed freely. She was smiling in places she didn't know she could. "I want to thank you in advance for giving me one of the best nights of my life."

"My pleasure."

His cowboy twang sent a frisson of desire through her. Instead of feeling sated, she yearned for the feel of him thrusting inside her.

As if he sensed her need, his face darkened, his eyes narrowed and he bent, lowering his briefs. When he straightened, his cock bobbed in front of him. "Don't be scared. It won't hurt you."

Had she looked scared? Maybe surprised and wondering how he would fit. "I trust you." But did she? Maybe she trusted him to show her a good time, but could she trust him with her heart. That *did* scare her. She didn't even want to think about it.

Tam walked to the table between the two queen-sized beds and opened the drawer. When he pulled out a large box of condoms, she had to wonder. Evidently, he'd come to Vegas prepared to have a good time and she was the squeeze of the moment. The thought made her hesitate. He removed a condom and ripped the foil. Instead of sheathing himself, he moved back toward her until he stood in front of her, his prodigious hard-on very close to her face.

When he handed her the condom, she realized he wanted her to put it on for him. Not hesitating any longer, she took the condom, raising it above the darker pink head of his cock with one hand and wrapping her other hand around him. The hissing sound of Tam sucking air between his teeth as she touched him made her reconsider. Instead of sheathing him, she leaned over to place an open-mouthed kiss on him.

Tam moaned and threaded his hands into her hair. "I know you'll

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think I'm crazy, but if you keep that up, I won't be able to last. And as good as it feels, I want to come inside you the first time."

Bobbi Jo caressed the length of him and gave him a final kiss before she began to roll the condom over him, wondering if it would fit. It was soon obvious it wasn't as easy as she thought. Tam chuckled and pushed her hands aside to finish the job.

"I want you to ride me," he said. "I want to watch while you sit astride me in your high-heels, hose and garters. I want to see those breasts bobbing up and down as you take your pleasure from me."

Bobbi Jo's womb clenched in anticipation. "That suits me fine." And it did. If she hadn't had so much to drink she would show him another way too. But since she was having trouble enough on solid ground, her idea could wait.

Tam stretched out on the bed, moving to the middle before he patted a spot next to his hip.

It wasn't his hips that interested her. Bobbi Jo couldn't wait to feel his cock buried deep inside her. It had been so long, too long and never *that* long.

She inched up the bed toward him, not stopping until she had thrown her leg over him. Rising on her knees, she waited. Tam smiled again before he positioned himself at the entrance to her core. She only had to lower herself to have him inside her, but she began to tremble and nearly lost him.

"Are you sure about this?" Tam asked.

Bobbi Jo leaned up to hold onto the headboard for support. "Positive. I'm just..." She began to take him inside her, slowly stretching and filling her. It was like nothing she'd ever felt and she didn't know exactly why. Ridge certainly hadn't been small, but this was so different.

It took a while before she reached the base of his cock and, once there, the trembling began again. An intense pressure to move urged

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her up again. The second time down was much easier, however, by only the third stroke, she felt the pressure of her release.

Impossible.

“Is something wrong? Am I hurting you?”

She shook her head and began to move and satisfy her building desire. The first wave hit her so fast and furious, she stopped moving, but the feeling wouldn't be denied. The friction of his magnificent cock sliding into her was mandatory to keep the orgasm alive. The sensations became so timeless and complete, the two of them became one. Then, just as she believed she'd discovered a bit of blissful peace in the storm of perfect pleasure, one final contraction hit her so hard she collapsed on him in a puddle of spent flesh.

It took some time to come to the realization he was still full and hard inside her. Somehow he turned her, pinning her underneath him as he began to thrust into her with urgency. At the same time, even though she'd have never believed it possible, his demand awakened her again.

She began to climb with him until they reached the pinnacle together in a heated rush.

CHAPTER 3

“Tam and Mike are next,” said one of the girls Bobbi Jo had met the previous evening. “My money is on them losing. Mike hasn’t recovered from waking up to find out he’d married one of us, and Tam is probably worried Ridge will find out you and he are an item.”

“Ridge is a new groom. Why would he care about anything his ex-wife is doing?” At the end of the arena, Mike and Tam were getting ready for their event. “Why would Ridge care if Tam and I see each other?” Bobbi Jo didn’t think Ridge gave her any thought at all.

“First, Tam carried a torch for Holly and now you. It’s like he has a *thing* for Ridge’s exes. Look there they are...they’re up next.”

“How do you know anything about Tam or Ridge, let alone something so personal?”

“My best friend is Mike’s brother, Ray. He always has the lowdown on what’s going on, who’s seeing who. I think since he rides the circuit and is home so little, he hungers for any gossip he can sink his teeth

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into. Cave Creek is a small town, and word gets around.”

“And I was a foregone conclusion?” Bobbi Jo snapped, turning toward the upcoming competition before she cried in front of this stranger who’d casually burst her bubble of happiness.

Bobbi Jo watched Mike and his horse come out of the shoot after the calf, with Tam right on his tail. It seemed instantaneous that Mike’s rope caught the calf’s neck and Tam had the heels and they threw their hands into the air. The crowd went wild.

Why had she been foolish enough to get mixed up with another cowboy? Bobbi Jo didn’t wait to see if Tam won. No way would she spend another day playing second fiddle to a cowboy in love with Holly Turner. Holly Turner White.

“Hey, wait!”

Bobbi Jo heard the shout as she walked into the hallway leading outside. *No*. She’d waited long enough. Out on the street she hailed a cab before she lost it. Tears threatened and she’d played the fool too long to ever do it again.

“Where to?” the cabdriver asked.

Bobbi Jo didn’t have a clue. If she went back to her hotel room, Tam might find her. No way could she resist him, even if it didn’t mean anything to him but a casual way to get off. “Can you recommend entertainment for a single woman on her own in Vegas?”

The cabdriver huffed. “Does a baby slobber?”

“What?”

“Depends on what you’re looking for...a little action maybe?”

Bobbi Jo had had so much action the night before with Tam, she could hardly walk. No, she definitely did not need action. However, maybe it wouldn’t hurt to look the part. “I wouldn’t mind an escort. Someone who’ll keep his hands to himself and make it *look* like he’s my lover.”

“You’d be surprised how many times I hear that. You gotta love

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Vegas.” He picked up a cell phone and dialed. “Hey, Marty, you got some free time?” The driver looked at her in the rearview mirror. “How long will you need him?”

Bobbi Jo glanced at her watch and thought about the second wedding invitation she’d gotten from Brett and Alicia. “I need someone to go to a wedding with me at the O’Dell Ranch. I was told it’s well known.”

“Did you hear that Marty? O’Dell Ranch. You’re in the big league today. Hey, lady, is it formal?”

“I don’t think it matters. It’s a spur of the moment wedding and it’s cowboys. Anything goes.”

“Did you hear that, Marty? We’ll be over to get you. About ten minutes. Jump in the shower.”

“This Marty will be a gentleman, won’t he?”

“Lady, if you are hanging out with the likes of Mr. O’Dell, you don’t have anything to worry about. He’s as rich and powerful as they come. Marty wouldn’t do anything to make him mad. He’ll be at your beck and call. Anything you say, he’ll do it without complaining.”

What had she gotten herself into?

True to his word, about ten minutes later they pulled into an older subdivision with small ranch houses. Marty didn’t keep them waiting. At the beep of the cab’s horn, he came out the door at a dead run. Marty was a mirror image of a young Hugh Jackman. Maybe it wouldn’t be so hard after all.

“This is great!” Marty said as he opened the door. “We’re going to a wedding at O’Dell’s? Should I rent a tux? Who’s getting married?”

Bobbi Jo sighed and extended her hand to her enthusiastic escort. “I’m Bobbi Jo Gerow. I need your services because I’m trying to show a certain cowboy I don’t care about him.”

“Marty Blane,” he said, while vigorously pumping her hand. “Who’s the cowboy? Someone famous? Will he try to deck me?”

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“*Deck* you? I doubt it. He probably won’t even care. Let’s head back to the rodeo and get this show on the road.”

Bobbi Jo sat back and listened to the cabbie and Marty talk. It turned out Marty was the cabbie’s brother-in-law and this was something they did on a regular basis. Then she remembered they hadn’t talked money. “How much is this going to cost me?”

“Are you rich?” Marty questioned.

“Not even close. I’m a nurse.”

“And you only want me for arm-candy?”

Bobbi Jo resisted rolling her eyes. “Exactly.”

“Can you pay fifty dollars an hour?”

“For about three hours, max.”

Marty looked at his watch. “Then I wouldn’t get to go to O’Dell’s. I’d hate to miss out. How about I cut my rate in half?”

“How about two hundred until midnight, at which point your brother-in-law picks us up at O’Dell’s?”

Marty thought for a minute and extended his hand. “Deal. And you’ll feed me, right?”

“How old are you?”

“Twenty-two.” Marty grinned.

“I don’t know how believable this is going to be.”

“Trust me. I can get the job done.”

Bobbie Jo wasn’t convinced. “I wonder how I can explain you.”

“Let’s say we had this day planned for a long time and I just got back in town this morning. We can say we met in Vegas in the past and kept in touch.”

“Don’t make me regret this,” she warned him. “I have enough regrets from this visit to your fair city.”

“Don’t worry. I can make it look real. It’s not like it’ll be hard. You do know you’re a knockout, don’t you?”

“Thank you, Marty. Right now I don’t feel like a knock-out...more

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like I've been knocked out and down for the count."

"Tell me all about these cowboys you have a problem with."

Bobbi Jo filled him in on the whole story, starting from her fatefully short marriage to Ridge White. To give him credit, Marty listened respectfully and gave the appropriate responses. It was cathartic, and surprised Bobbi Jo by making her feel better.

Before she realized it, they were back at the rodeo. "I don't know about this."

"Nothing is set in stone," Marty offered. "If it works out you don't need me, you can send me packing."

Bobbi Jo walked back into the area with handsome and far-too-young Marty draped over her shoulder. He drew attention from women as they walked. In the crowd, Bobbie Jo saw the cowgirl who had told her about Tam's fixation with Ridge's exes and decided to start with her.

"There you...are..." The woman stopped speaking to look at Marty.

"Sorry I rushed off. I had to pick up my boyfriend at the airport. I was almost late."

Marty beamed at her.

"But I thought...I mean...what about Tam? Aren't you two seeing each other?"

"Do you mean last night? I think I may have had too much to drink. What happened?"

"You don't remember last night?"

"I remember you guys sitting down with us and little else. I'm not a drinker."

"Tam and Mike won this go-round. Ridge and Brent took second. The cowboys from Cave Creek cleaned up."

"That's nice," Bobbie Jo said, trying to sound nonchalant.

"We're all meeting for lunch across the street. Are you coming?"

Tam had left an invitation for lunch on her pillow. It wouldn't make

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him too happy if she showed up with another man.

"I'm starving," Marty said.

"Probably because you still a growing boy," the cowgirl quipped. "I wouldn't miss lunch for anything. Mike's brother Ray Kale is going to be there. He's livid Mike is married."

"Ray Kale, the champion bull-rider?" Marty questioned.

"One and the same. It should be interesting. This has been the best Vegas rodeo ever."

"We'll be there," Marty said.

Bobbie Jo wanted to smack him, but he was only doing his job.

"Good, let's head that way and get a good seat. I can't wait to see what Mike has to say to his brother. Especially since it's one of my best friends he married. Of course, Mike doesn't know which friend he married, since we all decided to teach him a lesson. All six of us were in the bed with him when he came to, and we wouldn't tell him who he'd married. Now you don't remember what happened with Tam. Are you sure you didn't get married too?"

Bobbie Jo cringed.

"You guys live exciting lives," Marty said. "I can't believe I'm going to meet Ray Kale."

"Everyone feels that way about Ray Kale, and he has a big head to prove it," the cowgirl snapped. "I'm Connie Kettering by the way."

Marty shook her hand and she linked her arm around his elbow and started to pull them. "Let's go."

Bobbi Jo didn't complain. She thought she saw red hair in the crowd heading their way and wasn't ready to face Tam. She didn't know if she'd ever be ready.

They hadn't been in the restaurant long before the entire crowd began filing in. It could be her imagination, but Tam's face seemed eager as he looked for her. The note on his pillow hadn't been sentimental, but his face...he was nearly glowing, if a man could glow.

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She felt like a rat...almost.

Tam wove through the crowd, the bright smile on his face mesmerizing her. Bobbi Jo could feel herself trembling. His blue eyes crinkled as he saw her and just as suddenly they narrowed as Marty swung his arm over her shoulder. Connie made a smart crack and Marty told her to shut up.

Tam walked up to their table, glaring at Marty.

"Have you met Bobbi Jo's boy-toy, I mean boyfriend?" Connie said to Tam.

Tam turned to Bobbi Jo, his eyes burning into hers. "I didn't realize Bobbi Jo had a boyfriend. I guess she forgot to mention it. Tell Mike I had to leave." With that, he turned and walked away. Bobbi Jo stood, wanting to stop him, but she was trapped by Marty on one side and Connie on the other.

"What did you expect?" Connie asked. "Tam told everyone he's loved you for years. And they say I'm a ball breaker."

Bobbi Jo collapsed back onto the seat. "Tam said that?"

"He told us all. He said he's loved you since the time you nursed his grandmother. You don't remember?"

"No," Bobbi Jo whispered. "What have I done? Marty, let me up. I have to go to him."

Marty moved fast, but just then a confrontation began nearby, causing a crowd of cowboys to gather by their table. Bobbi Jo recognized the main participants—Ray and Mike Kale on the verge of a fight. She tried to push through, only to be pulled aside when a fist whizzed by her ear.

"Don't get in the middle of this," someone said to her.

As if! She had more cowboy-drama in her life than she could handle already.

By the time she made it out the front door of the restaurant, Tam was nowhere in sight. Marty followed on her heels.

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"I think I've made a big mistake, Marty. I don't think I'll need your services." Only the crestfallen look on his handsome face stopped her from saying more. "Never mind. You can help me find Tam. You can explain to him we're not involved."

"You don't have to pay me," Marty said. "This is going to be fun. Do you think Connie would like to come with us?"

Bobbi Jo stepped back inside the door. "Maybe we can get our order to go. Where is...?"

The crowd had gotten raucous. Bobbi Jo wound her way back to the table to give Connie money to cover their bill, only to find her in the middle of the fight. Connie pulled back her arm and blasted Ray Kale in the eye with a right hook. *This is how Connie treated her best friend? Lord only knows what she does to her enemies.*

"Damn, you run with an interesting crowd," Marty complimented.

* * *

Tam wished he'd entered the bull riding competition later that afternoon. At least then he'd have *pain* to look forward to. Maybe then he wouldn't feel the excruciating ache in his heart. He stopped to sit on a bench outside the Belagio where people gathered to watch water jetting high in the air to the rhythm of an Italian ballad.

Pulling the little black box from his pocket, he flipped it open. For a second, he considered tossing it into the water. Since he'd only purchased it shortly before he planned to meet Bobbi Jo for lunch, the jeweler would more than likely give him a refund. He certainly had no need for a pricey diamond ring now.

What a fool!

To think he'd actually believed he had a chance with Bobbi Jo. She'd warned him she wasn't interested in getting involved with another cowboy. He should have listened.

Tam snapped the black box shut and stuffed it back into his pocket. He had an old friend waiting. A bottle of tequila.

CHAPTER 4

Marty and a couple of Connie's girlfriends hit it off, giving Bobbie Jo a reason to excuse herself and go back to her hotel room—alone. Marty said he would pick her up in plenty of time to get her to the wedding. Bobbie Jo hoped she'd find Tam long before then, but no such luck.

It turned out she wasn't the only one worried about him. Every ten minutes someone called or came to her door searching for him. She may not have fit in as Ridge's wife, but she had to give credit where it was due. The cowboys from Cave Creek were a close-knit, caring family, looking out for one another.

By the time she walked into O'Dell's sprawling ranch house with Marty, Connie and two other cowgirls from Carefree, Arizona, Bobbi Jo was at the end of her patience. The conversation on the ride to the ranch had centered on Mike Kale's impromptu marriage and the big mystery behind it. The girls made bets about the chances of another

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altercation between the brothers at this wedding.

With her arm in a sling, Connie complained Ray had spoiled her chances to compete on the final day of the rodeo. Maybe Ray should have kept his face out of her fist?

“Have you heard from Tam?” Mike asked when they were shown to the backyard patio decorated with tons of fresh flowers and other ornate wedding paraphernalia.

Bobbi Jo shook her head, not trusting herself to speak.

“Champagne?” A waiter held a full tray of sparkling glasses toward her.

Mike took one and first offered it to her. She shook her head a second time.

Mike put the glass to his lips, then lowered it without drinking. “What happened between you two? Tam was on the top of the world this morning and then he mysteriously disappears. Connie Kettering said you showed up at the rodeo with a boyfriend.”

“I think maybe Connie likes to keep things stirred up. She told me about Tam’s relationship with Holly. What did you expect? I didn’t take it too well, considering I’ve lived in Holly’s shadow for years.”

Mike rubbed his wide hand across his jaw. “What relationship? You don’t mean the whopper Holly told Ridge when she left him years ago?”

“Holly lied?” A sick feeling rose in the pit of her stomach.

“Holly made Ridge think she’d fallen for Tam, even slept with him. It never happened, but Tam didn’t set anyone straight until recently.”

“Tam didn’t love Holly?”

“I thought he made that perfectly clear last night. One of my last lucid memories before I woke—before I realized I was married—is Tam telling you he loves you.”

“I didn’t know.”

“He said he’s loved you for years.”

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From two witnesses, Bobbi Jo had to believe it, but... “You think he meant it?”

Mike’s face darkened, showing his irritation with her question. “He must be going about this all wrong if he didn’t make himself clear. I thought I knew him better than that.”

Bobbi Jo might not remember Tam saying the words, but she had a vivid memory of the way he’d pleased her all night long. She wouldn’t forget it—ever.

“I promised myself I’d never fall in love with another cowboy. I didn’t see it coming. Is it possible to fall in love in a single night?”

Mike huffed. “You’re asking me? I seem to have skipped the love part and went straight for the marriage. Except I don’t even know who I married. Try explaining something like that.”

Music started and everyone began to find their seats. Connie came up to tug on Bobbi Jo’s arm. “Congratulations, sweetie,” Connie said to Mike and winked.

“Damn,” Mike responded and moved away.

“Was it something I said?” Connie called after him. “This thing is about to start. Marty is saving us seats where we can get a good look at the bride.”

“You know Alicia?”

“Do I know Alicia? She’s been kicking my butt all season. That girl and her horse are going to the top. She won again today.”

They walked toward Marty. “I didn’t even know she was engaged. How could she have planned this from Cave Creek?”

“This all happened here in Vegas,” Connie answered, keeping her voice low, as if she was telling a secret.” And this ranch is her father’s. As far as I know, she didn’t tell anyone O’Dell is her father. Looks like she’s an heiress.”

They hadn’t sat too long before the wedding party started to come down the center aisle. Still no sign of Tam.

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Tam's conspicuous absence left one of the bridesmaids to walk down the isle alone. The bridesmaids wore the same clothes they'd worn to show their horses. Dressier western show clothes, but not the standard wedding fare.

Only Brent, the groom, wore a tuxedo, but it was western cut, and similar to the one Tam had worn the previous evening. A cheer rose from the back as the bride started down the aisle. Bobbi Jo gasped. She'd never seen such a beautiful dress. It must have cost a small fortune, but Alicia's shining face was even more beautiful than her gown.

Tears were pouring down Alicia's face and the older man escorting her down the isle was patting her hand and tearing too.

When they walked past Bobbi Jo toward the minister, a movement to the side caught her eye. She'd recognize his red curly hair anywhere. Tam. He joined the men standing next to the groom. Her heart began to slam in her chest.

She didn't hear any of the ceremony because all she could do was think about Tam. How to talk to him...what to say to him...how much she wanted to commit to him.

She needed to get him alone. There was a pool house off to her right. She tapped Connie on the shoulder and leaned over to whisper into her ear. "Find a way to get Tam to that pool house for me."

Connie glanced over to the pool house, back to Bobbi Jo and smiled widely. "You got it."

As soon as the ceremony ended, Bobbi Jo took off. She thanked her lucky stars when she found the pool house door unlocked. However, once inside, it wasn't what she expected. The space had been converted for the wedding with a make-shift sound system. There wasn't a bed, like she'd been hoping, but she didn't need a bed to show Tam what she thought of him. She flipped the interior light off, discovered it was too dark and flipped it back on again. She investigated a door at the

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back and found a bathroom. After switching on the light, she closed the door, leaving it open only a slit to allow some light into the room, before she started to undress and for a second time flipped the main light off.

By the time a knock sounded on the door, she was down to her garter belt, hosiery and four-inch heels, just like Tam liked her. She stood behind the door and peeked out.

"In there, cowboy," she heard Connie say.

Bobbi Jo reached for his arm to pull him inside before anyone saw her.

"What?" Tam said. "It's dark..."

"Your eyes will adjust. Recognize this?" She placed his hand on her breast and he moaned. She nudged him back until he was against the heavy wooden table with the sound equipment. "Lean up against the table," she told him. "And don't move."

Bobbi Jo went to her knees in front of him and then carefully slid his zipper down over the hard evidence she excited him.

"What are you doing?"

"If you can't tell, I'm not doing it right." She extracted him from his briefs and kissed him.

"Believe me, I feel what you're doing, I just don't know why. What about your boyfriend?"

"If I had a boyfriend, would I be doing this?" She took him into her mouth, wishing she had more experience. Licking around the top of his cock, she stopped to look up at him.

"I'm sorry I tried to make you believe I was involved with someone else." This time, when she took him into her mouth, she decided to see how far she could go. She took a deep breath and began to work him back into her throat.

"I can't take too much of that before—"

If it was the last thing she did, she'd figure out how to do it right.

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She took a deeper breath and started again. This time he started to slide down her throat. The feeling shocked her. She could feel pressure build in her own body in response. Easing him back out, she did it again and again, until he was moaning.

It gave her a feeling of power.

“Bobbi Jo, you have to stop before I...”

He was trembling. Bobbi eased him out of her throat and sucked on his cock’s head. In no time, he rewarded her with proof he couldn’t resist her. The taste of cum was salty and not the least bit unpleasant.

“Bobbi Jo,” Tam moaned.

She sucked until he went almost limp in her hand.

“It’ll take me a while to recover from that,” he said pulling her up.

A knock on the door startled her.

“My clothes,” she whispered.

“I’ll see who it is. Stay behind the door.” Tam cracked open the door.

“Before you decide to reciprocate, you need to know that somehow you managed to turn on a speaker and you’re killing us out here,” she heard Mike say.

“Everyone heard what just happened?” Tam asked.

“Get a room,” someone else hollered.

Bobbi Jo started to work back over the last few minutes to remember what they’d said. Tam closed the door and walked over to the table.

“Could you open the bathroom door and shed a little light on the subject?”

She wanted to argue she wasn’t dressed, but everyone would hear. She slipped inside the bathroom and grabbed her dress to slip into it first.

* * *

Tam looked at the complicated equipment in front of him after

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Bobbi Jo opened the bathroom door. He didn't have a clue which button or knob would turn off the sound.

Eventually Bobbi Jo moved to stand next to him. What could he do to make it up to her? He could see from her face she would have a hard time walking out the door to face a crowd of people who knew she'd just given him a blow job.

"I can't find it," he told her and stood back as she began to examine the system.

This was no time to be gagged by a pesky microphone. But that was the problem—nothing looked like a mic. Damn! He needed to talk to her and he wanted answers. He needed... He knew exactly what he needed. And maybe, just maybe, he could make it easier for her to face the people outside.

Tam reached into his pocket and brought the box out hidden in his fist. "Bobbi Jo, I have something I need to say to you."

"Not yet," she insisted. "I have to find how to turn this off."

Reaching out, he caught her arm and pulled her toward him. "This can't wait." Looking at her face, he realized there wasn't enough light to see what she was feeling or thinking with her back to the light. And no way would she tell him and risk everyone hearing. He released her to go toward the doorway and heard a hiss of air from her. Did she think he was going to leave her? When he turned on the light, she breathed an audible sign of relief and turned back to the equipment.

"Bobbi Jo, this can't wait."

When she turned back to face him, he got down on one knee in front of her.

"Are you crazy?" she asked. "You can't do that. You know I'm louder than you are."

Tam realized she was thinking he wanted to eat her pussy. He did. But that would have to wait.

"I love you," he started. "I have loved you since the days you were

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in nursing school and you came every evening to care for my grandma. I never got a chance to tell you because you fell for Ridge. But I'm telling you now. I love you."

Bobbi Jo's eyes were as big as saucers.

Tam brought the box up and flipped it open. Bobbi Jo gasped.

"I bought this before I saw you at lunch...and I thought about returning it. I didn't take it back because I wasn't ready to give up so easily. It's taken me too long to get you into my arms and I'm not about to let you go without a fight.

"I'm here," she whispered.

"I want to marry you."

"But..."

"I know you have reasons for concern, but the way I see it, if you'd noticed me way back when, we'd already be married and living the good life."

"Yes."

Tam's heart jumped in his chest. "Yes, you agree you should've noticed me?"

"Yes, I'll marry you."

Shouts and cheers filtered through the closed door. Tam's hand shook as he lifted the ring toward her, thinking all the while he'd misunderstood. Why did she agree so quickly?

"I didn't remember you telling me last night that you loved me, but my memory is crystal clear about what happened later and how you made me feel. I never realized it could even be that way between a man and a woman. You showed me what no one else ever has. Even though it makes me nervous because it's all happening so fast, I trust you know what's best. Evidently you've always known, and I was slow on the uptake."

"I promise you I'll make up for lost time." He took the box back and removed the ring before slipping it on her finger.

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She stared at it, tilting her hand one way and then another. “I believe you.”

“Are you ready to be introduced as my bride-to-be?” Tam stood, nudged her toward the door and opened it. Shouts encouraged them to come out.

“I’m ready, cowboy.”

* * *

Two weeks later

“This is incredible.”

Tam leaned over Bobbi Jo’s shoulder and kissed her neck. “Something about my grandma again?”

“Look at the date,” she said and held the journal up so he could get a closer look. “Your grandma was the one who encouraged me to start journaling in the first place. She said not to underestimate the power of words the heart expresses in secret. Especially words written in a stream of consciousness.”

“But that’s my name,” Tam said. “Why would you have written about me? When did you write it? Let me see the date again.”

Bobbi Jo touched her finger reverently to the date written at the top of the page. “In two weeks, it’ll be seven years to the day since I wrote this. Let me read it to you.

“I could stand on my head naked and I don’t think Tam would notice me. His grandma says he really likes me, but I wonder. Why did he introduce me to his best friend, Ridge, if he likes me? If he’s interested in me?

“When we talk, which isn’t often, we share so many of the same opinions of life in general. His grandma says I’m her angel and one day I’ll be Tam’s angel too. What does she see that I can’t? I trust her wisdom and instincts, so maybe I’ll take matters into my own hands and ask Tam out on a date.”

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Bobbi Jo looked up to meet his eyes. Tears poured out of hers. “I wrote this the day before your grandma died. I never got a chance to ask you to go out with me.”

“Damn,” Tam choked.

Bobbi Jo swiped at her wet face. “After she died, I didn’t see you except at the funeral.”

Tam glanced away. “I made such a fool of myself at Grandma’s funeral. I bawled on you like a baby and ruined your dress.”

“Then you made Ridge take me home. I took it to mean you didn’t like me that way.”

“Bobbi Jo, I was interested in you, just too young and inexperienced to let it show.”

“All the wedding plans we’ve talked about are nice, but I’d rather do something small. Something to commemorate the woman who believed we were meant for each other, even when we didn’t know it ourselves. Let’s get married on the same day I wrote this, only seven years later.”

Tam leaned down and gathered her into his arms. His chin trembled and his eyes glistened with unshed tears. “My angel.”

BRIT BLAISE

Brit Blaise lives and writes in hot and steamy Phoenix, Arizona, where she owns a mountainside home among the Saguaro cacti, rattlesnakes, smoldering temperatures and lots of real cowboys. She has a husband, three children and two Labradors. Brit loves the history and adventure of the sunny southwest even if she doesn't love the heat (that kind anyway).

Brit started seriously writing in 2002. Her first contemporary comedy was a finalist in the 2002 Realizing the Dream Contest by Phoenix Desert Rose and since then she's added to her list of achievements.

She enjoys writing and reading above all else, but her hobbies include needlework, quilting, gardening and arena football. Go Phoenix Rattlers! She likes to hear from readers; you can visit her website at www.Britblaise.com.

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