



# WANTED

By

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## Chapter One

It had been a hell of a day, one of those days where everything began to go wrong the moment you woke up.

An internal, seriously delayed alarm, had woken her up with a start because she realized the moment it filtered into her foggy brain how bright the room was that she'd overslept. Since she had freaked out, she wound up falling out of her bed and knocking everything off of her bedside table and hurting herself in the process. It had only gotten progressively worse from there.

She had been late for class because no amount of rushing had made up for the time that had been lost. Consequently, she'd been scolded by her psychology professor, Mr. Stone, and he hadn't looked kindly on anything she'd done in class after that, not that he typically looked kindly on anything.

She'd had to stay after class to get notes on what she'd missed, which caused her to miss the bus she usually rode home. She'd had to take a later bus and, because of that, she'd missed meeting with her classmate and best friend, Beth, who'd planned on joining her at her place after classes. Beth had called her after she'd finally dragged in and told her that she would be over later, which was a relief. She was still formulating her notes for her thesis, *Women Who Love Men That Kill*, and she'd wanted to get some feedback from Beth on how it was progressing.

Figuring that it would take Beth a while to get around to coming over because it was time for supper and she would most likely eat before she came, Lillian decided to take a relaxing shower to calm her nerves and to hopefully soothe away the tension that had built in her muscles from the hectic day.

She was about to step into the shower when she recognized a faint pounding. She paused mid-step, listening. At first she thought, or at least hoped, it was just her imagination, but she quickly realized that the thumping wasn't from her headache at all.

Someone was knocking, and they seemed pretty damned determined for her to answer the summons to her door.

Her brow furrowed at the unwelcome intrusion, her lips pursing irritably. She'd been only seconds away from the first enjoyable moment of the day! It was a hell of a time for Beth to arrive! She hadn't expected her to until later, damn it all!

Of course, she couldn't very well gripe, she reminded herself. She'd begged Beth to come over to help, after all. Just because she felt bitchy because she'd had a hard day didn't make it alright to take it out on her friend.

It was still with great reluctance that she turned from the shower and grabbed a medium-sized pink towel out of the small open linen closet by the door. She'd just let Beth in and jump back in the bathroom for a quick shower, she decided, wrapping the towel tightly around herself like a sarong as she left the bathroom.

The knock on the front door sounded again before she was halfway there.

"Hold on, hold on. I'll be right there," Lillian called out as she made her way sluggishly from her bedroom to her kitchen to her living room, hoping that she didn't

sound as frustrated as she felt. She didn't want Beth to feel unwelcome.

She grabbed the door and snatched it wide. "Hey Beth, sorry it took me so long to get to the door . . . ." The words she had been about to say died on her lips.

The air suddenly gusted from her lungs as if she'd had the wind knocked out of her. Her mouth fell agape and her skin became flush and hot all over as her vision narrowed on the massive, *dangerous*-looking man who was standing in her doorway, all but obliterating the dying rays of the afternoon sun. Working on autopilot, she lifted a hand to shield her eyes from the few rays that managed to sneak past her unexpected guest. When she did, she got her second jolt.

The impression of dangerous increased dramatically as she gaped at his unshaven face, the long unruly black locks that fell around his broad shoulders, and met the feral deep blue eyes. Recognition hit her like a sledge hammer.

Despite the warmth of the outdoors, a shiver began to snake through Lillian's body. The man before her wasn't a stranger, she realized, feeling a wave of dizziness wash over her. She would've recognized him anywhere.

He looked just like his picture.

Correction, mug shot.

Jack Colton.

The first thought that ran through her mind directly after she recognized him was what was he doing on her doorstep instead of on death row where he was supposed to be?

How many cops were on his tail? And how close were they?

Would they hear her if she screamed?

Could she *produce* a scream?

She could—not that it was one of her better impulses.

Seconds after her mind had matched the man before her positively with Colton, her vocal chords caught up to the fact. She screamed hysterically.

Actually, it emerged as a sort of chicken squawk.

Tears of pure terror filled her eyes.

Some emotion flickered across his hard features, but she sure as hell wasn't in any condition to figure out what it was. Folding his massive arms over his equally massive chest, he leaned against her doorjamb, grinning at her wolfishly. "Do I look that bad?"

Lillian's chaotic mind registered a fresh alarm as it slowly sank in that he'd noticed she wasn't particularly thrilled to see him.

"Colton!" she managed to gasp in a strangled voice. "I . . . I'm . . . just so happy to see you . . . is all. How did you . . .? What I mean is *when* . . . when did you get out?" Inspiration struck her. She was standing at the door in nothing but a damned towel!

"This is just so unexpected! If you'll just wait right there," she added a little breathlessly, motioning at the doorstep and the yard in particular, "I'll just run wash my face, put something decent on, and straighten up the house."

Colton's eyes glittered with a spark of anger. That time she didn't have any trouble interpreting it. "Don't worry about it on my account," he murmured. Pushing past her, he entered the house, glanced around, and then sprawled on a loveseat in her small informal living room just a few steps from the front door with every appearance of someone who was perfectly relaxed and intended to stay.

She stared at him blankly, struggling to jog her mind into working.

She'd thought her idea for her thesis was a stroke of brilliance—and perfectly

safe. She could choose an inmate to write about that would never see the light of day again.

The decision of who to choose hadn't been hard. All of the other inmates she'd investigated had been just as scary, and murderously so, but none of them had even come close when it came to pure, raw animal magnetism. He'd been the only one of the lot that had actually been handsome—more than handsome, actually—deeply attractive—in a savage sort of way. She remembered how surprised she'd been when she'd first seen his picture in the newspaper—the same paper that had listed his heinous offenses. She'd known instantly that he was the one she wanted for her project—the perfect man. She'd been intimidated and captivated all in the same breath—he just had that way about him.

Writing that first letter to him had been the hard part—at least she'd thought so at the time. What would she say? What did she have to offer verbally that would entice such a man to respond? Somehow, though, she had struggled through that first letter. Embarrassed and ashamed, she had mailed it off. It had seemed like eons before she'd gotten anything in return, so long she had begun to believe she would have to select a different 'pen pal'. She'd been so surprised that he'd written back. And, like a child at Christmas, she'd ripped open the first letter he had sent her, unwilling to examine to closely how anxious she was to read it.

After she'd corresponded with him for a while, as she had needed to so she could get in-depth information on relationships between women and killers, he had enclosed a photo of himself with one of his letters.

She'd told herself that her fascination with him, with his photograph, was just curiosity, was just the role-playing she had adopted to better write her thesis. It was just her mind trying to associate the individual in the picture with the letters he had written, letters of such depth, with such raw emotion, they were hard to put down.

Blinking rapidly a few times at his audacity, Lillian realized that either the man was not easily fooled by her translucent ploy to shut him out of her house or had absolutely no manners at all—which wasn't surprising considering where he'd just come from. If he'd had a decent upbringing at all prison certainly would have derailed it.

"Come in, come in," she said as if it was her idea, straining to sound cheerful, wiping away the remnants of her tears of 'joy' and struggling to keep the quake out of her voice. "I hope you don't mind the mess!"

The last thing she needed for him to think was that she was weak.

He was an animal. If she'd learned anything about psychology, it was that predators always went for the weak.

She shouldn't have closed the door, she realized in dismay. She should've made a run for it the moment he passed her.

No, actually, that might not have been the best idea. She was pretty sure she couldn't outrun him.

She had to get away.

She needed to use her wits.

Where *had* she put them?

The sound of the shower finally produced a possibility. If she could get to the bathroom, she could lock herself in and devise a plan ....

"I'm just going to go freshen up. Make yourself comfortable. Have a snack and something to drink. There's clean dishes in the dishwasher and fresh sweet tea in the

fridge. I'll only be a minute."

## Chapter Two

Lillian's knees felt rubbery as she headed toward the bath, trying to walk as casually as she could, fighting the urge to run. That wasn't as hard as it might've been if she'd had full use of her legs. As it was, she was just grateful they were still holding her upright.

Visions flickered through her mind as she neared the couch where he sat—of him ripping her towel off, throwing her down on the couch, and fucking her unconscious. Her belly tightened. A mixture of fear and completely inappropriate excitement rushed through her, making her skin prickle all over.

She couldn't resist glancing toward him.

She immediately wished she hadn't, but she couldn't help it. It was like his animal magnetism forced it, bent her will to his own.

He was staring straight at her, his gaze so eloquent of hunger that she felt heat surge through her, felt her heart leap upward another notch in its already frantic pace. Unconsciously, she clutched the towel more tightly to her breast, as if it were a shield that would protect her.

It took an effort to break eye contact. She poured on a little more speed as she passed her tiny kitchen and finally made it to her bedroom and shut the door. She'd already grabbed the lock before it occurred to her that he might hear the click.

The door wasn't going to keep him out if he decided to come after her, she realized in dismay. Locking it might inspire him to do just that.

Releasing the lock, she dashed to her bathroom on tiptoes and quietly shut the door and locked it behind her, feeling a fleeting sense of relief.

She'd left the shower running when she went to answer the door and now the bathroom was filled with steam, which added to the sweat that had begun to break out all over her. Frantically, she looked around the small bathroom to see if there was a weapon. There was nothing but tampons, toilet paper, and a plunger. She could probably whack him in the head with the handle of the plunger, but she had a bad feeling it wouldn't be enough to knock him out and would only piss him off.

Unbidden, her mind played back all of the things that she had written to him in her letters. At first, she'd been focused on nothing but writing her paper, trying to utilize what she'd learned in psyche class to get him to open up to her, to not only get into the mind of a killer, but the mind of a 'groupie'. The letters had been tame enough to begin with but, somehow, that had changed. He had written her evocative letters, indicating in great detail what he wanted to do to her, and she had responded. No, she had more than responded, she had gotten carried away. After all, she'd felt safe, which was exactly why

a lot of the women who dated and married inmates did it, for security. Which she had scoffed at until she had been in their place, and then . . . and then she had felt security in volumes, so much so that she had written all of her innermost fantasies, laid her soul bare to him . . . like an idiot.

Her mind reeled with the reality of her situation. She had a convicted killer sitting in her living room, waiting on her. Had he escaped from prison? There was no other way he could be here now if he hadn't. They didn't just *let* people off of death row.

The cops were probably scoping the area looking for him, but she couldn't wait for rescue.

She looked at the single small, foggy window that her bathroom boasted more than a little doubtfully, trying to gauge the size against her own. In the few years that she'd been renting the house, she had never even opened it. She didn't have a stitch of clothes on, but she couldn't be bothered with modesty under the circumstances.

She couldn't reach the window unless she stood on the toilet. Lowering the lid, she climbed up, unlatched the lock, and pushed up on the glass.

It didn't budge.

*Fuck!*

The idiots that had repainted the rental house before she had moved in had painted the damned thing shut! Glancing around a little frantically, she spied her metal nail file on the sink counter and dove for it. Her hand shook as she raked the point of the file up and down the crevices, finally splitting the paint. A sense of relief washed over her when she tried the window again and it gave.

She was going to make it! She was going to survive this. And she was going to go straight to the police as soon as she managed to get out the window.

Grunting with effort, she managed to pull herself up and into the window, head first. As soon as she had half her body out of the window, she realized she had another dilemma. There was nothing outside the window but a long drop. Because the window only had enough space for her to crawl through, she was going to have to fall head first onto the ground. She only hoped that she wouldn't break her neck trying to get away.

Bracing herself for impact, Lillian pulled herself all of the way out of the window, letting out a very unladylike squawk as she flew to meet the ground and landed in a thundering heap, scraping her bare ass on some rocks as she rolled and then bounced when she hit the ground and skidded about a foot down the slight slope that was under her window. Too stunned to move for several moments after she stopped, she lay staring at the sky, conducting an internal assessment for damage.

A face swam into her vision. "Need some help?"

Lillian stared up at him without comprehension for several thundering heartbeats. Letting out another squawk the moment recognition dawned, she scrambled to get to her feet. "The bathroom door was stuck and . . . and I didn't want you to think I was trying to keep you out . . .," she babbled. "This is just too embarrassing!" *He had gone around her house and waited outside of her window! The bastard! He had known she was going to try to escape the whole time!*

As she got up, she didn't realize that her towel's tentative hold on her breasts had given way during her small flight for freedom. It fell before she'd fully gained her feet. Screaming, she bent over to grab the towel before Colton could get more than an eyeful.

He grabbed one end just as she grabbed the other, giving it a yank that reeled her



in like a fish. She collided with his hard shoulder and fell over it. He'd stood up with her and started around the house before it dawned on her that she hadn't 'accidentally' fallen across his shoulder. He'd outmaneuvered her.

She giggled a little hysterically, trying to sound playful. "Colton! Someone will see!"

*Please let someone see!*

Although he hadn't done it roughly, the fact that he had picked her up and was heading back toward her house and that her naked ass was in his face was enough to make Lillian almost pass out. Only sheer survival instinct kept her from completely losing herself in the dark abyss that called. She thought about screaming for help, but if anyone heard her, they wouldn't be able to reach her before he made it into her house.

There was only one option left open, she was going to have to try to fling herself off of his shoulder and make a run for it. She wasn't close enough to anything to bite, the only thing she could do to surprise him would be to scratch or kick him. She decided very quickly that kicking would be the most effective.

With all of her might, she kicked downward at his body, hitting him in the thigh.

He grunted but didn't miss a step as he continued to make his way the last few steps into her house, holding her writhing body tightly to him with both hands.

Lillian beat his back and head with her balled up fists, really fighting for freedom now.

The hand that smacked down on her rump sounded like a thunderclap and stung like hell.

"Stop that before you fall and hurt yourself," Colton said sternly as he carried her into the house, paused, and turned to lock the door behind them, and then made a beeline for her bedroom.

Lillian stilled all over, the urge to cry suddenly paramount. *Hurt herself?*

Reaching her room, he tried the door of the bathroom. Not surprisingly, it didn't open since she'd locked it.

It was unnerving how undeterred he was by that.

He merely stepped back and placed a kick beside the door knob and the door flew open. Bending, he set her on her feet, her forgotten towel dropping to the floor.

The shower was still going, the steam thick in the room.

Lillian discovered her legs had turned jelly. Her feet touched the floor. Her knees wobbled, and she immediately began to sink toward the tile floor.

Colton grasped her beneath the arms—palms curling around her side, thumbs beneath her breasts—and jerked her upright again. "You ok? That make you dizzy, baby?"

Lillian blinked at him, trying to decide whether she should be relieved that he *appeared* to have accepted her lame explanation or more worried—appeared because, except for an unnerving glitter in his eyes he didn't seem to be particularly angry, and she was sure he would be if he'd figured out she was trying to escape. Unfortunately, she couldn't convince herself he'd been fooled by her panic inspired lies or acting abilities. "A little," she managed to stammer, adding another heaping of lies. She thought she would've felt *much* better, though, if he wasn't holding her up by her breasts—and better still if he was at the state pen.

He released her.

Relief swamped her.

“Get in. I think I’ll join you. It’ll be good to wash the stench of the prison off.”

## Chapter Three

Lillian wasn't certain if the dizziness that swept over her was from the nearly instantaneous sky rocket from relief to terror again or if the idea of climbing into the shower with him was enough all by itself to make her feel faint, but for several seconds she actually hoped it would overtake her. It needed only the vision that instantly flooded her mind of him fucking her limp, unconscious form to chase that thought of escape away.

She stepped into the shower, trying to keep her knees from knocking together or buckling and dumping her into the bottom of the shower.

The water wasn't hot anymore—no great surprise—but she doubted that would dissuade Colton. “Looks like the hot water's running low,” she said a little apologetically.

“I guess we better make it fast, then.”

The comment drew her gaze even though she'd been trying really hard not to look at him while he stripped. He'd just bent over to shove his pants down when she glanced at him. The impulse instantly hit her to whack him in the head with something. Unfortunately, the timing of the urge sucked big time. By the time she'd glanced around for something to use, he was already straightening.

The wall of bare flesh that moved toward her wiped her mind clean. He caught her upper arms to steady her and waltzed her in a tight circle, away from the water. A shiver skated through her when he released her and focused on rubbing his hands all over himself to thoroughly coat his skin with water.

The goose flesh rippling all over her was from cool air on damp skin she assured herself absently. She couldn't seem to look away. She just stood there, gaping like an idiot, and let the water splash off of him and onto her, blinking as a little bit of spray splashed into her eyes that were now open wide, waiting for his next move, afraid and titillated all in the same breath. She was afraid he would do something, and, perhaps, perversely, afraid he wouldn't. It was as if her eyeballs were glued to his hands by way of invisible strings. They followed every movement, registered the glistening skin, the way muscles rippled beneath it with each movement, the thin trickles of water that plastered the dark curling hair of his arms, chest, and belly to his skin. He grabbed the soap and bubbles trickled over his hard form, following the dark trail of hair down the center of his chest to the obscene thing that jutted from his lower belly.

It was thick and red, laced with veins that stood out from the shaft. The helmet-like head looked larger than the shank itself and that looked impossibly huge.

Almost as if he'd read her thoughts, he grasped her limp hand and brought it to his cock, curling her fingers around it and then guiding her hand along its length. Her heart stuttered to a halt. She lifted her head jerkily.

"Jesus, baby," he murmured in a gravelly voice, lifting his hands to cup and mold her breasts. "You're more beautiful than I imagined and that's saying something."

Warmth cascaded through her. Her belly tightened, although she wasn't certain why—if it was fear, or if her body had responded instinctively to the desire in his harsh features and voice, or his touch.

He skimmed his hands down from her breasts to her waist and dragged her close. Sensations bombarded her. Her mind registered the contact of water slick skin to wet skin, warmth, the faint abrasiveness of his hair roughened skin as it brushed along hers. She felt abruptly enveloped by him as he shifted his hold on her, curling his arms around her and tightening them until she was pressed against him from breast to belly. Then he covered her mouth with his and she lost all touch with the world beyond.

Of all the dark things that had been fluttering at the back of her mind that he might do to her, kissing her wasn't on the list at all. Taken completely off-guard, Lilly didn't even consider struggling either openly or internally. An avalanche of sensations crashed down over her the moment his hard mouth connected with her own and she was lost within his essence. Heat tingled through her, spreading warmth throughout every corner of her being. The faintly rough texture of his tongue as it scraped along her own sent more pleasurable jolts to join the first barrage. His taste blossomed inside of her, awakening desires long laid dormant.

Drunk with the overload to her senses, Lilly readily yielded to the urge to merely luxuriate in the infinitely appealing sensations for a time and ignore the dim clamoring at the back of her mind for reason. As Colton divided the focus of his attention between the kiss and his need to explore her body, however, it fractured her own focus. Alarm filtered through the chinks, but it was so dulled by the glorious sensations that it was virtually useless as a warning.

The cold wall of the shower as he pressed her against it lifted her to more awareness briefly, but far too late. He broke the kiss. She had time to suck in one gulp of air to feed her starved lungs, and then he covered the tip of one breast with his mouth. The jolt of heat that shot through her as he tugged on the turgid tip knocked the breath out of her again. He squeezed and lifted her breasts with his hands as he teased first one nipple and then the other, almost more as if his intent was to eat her alive than sexual torment her.

The very urgency of his touch seemed to set her on fire, though. Her mind reeling with euphoria, she dug her fingers into his hair to anchor herself, feeling as if she would melt or float away. She panted for breath, unable to drag in more than a tiny sip of air with each attempt to expand her lungs. It took her deeper into a swirling whirlwind of wonderful sensations.

She managed a shaky breath when he finally ceased to pull at her nipples, succeeded in prying her eyelids open a fraction as she felt the crawl on his mouth down the center of her ribcage to her belly. She was too dizzy and disoriented to fix her mind on his intent, however, unable to brace herself for the onslaught of sensations that hit her as he fastened his mouth over her mound and dragged his tongue along her slit. A hard jolt went through her that nearly made her knees buckle as he stroked his tongue over her

clit. Her womb convulsed so hard, she thought for a moment she'd come—or that lightning had struck.

He settled on his knees, urging her to spread her thighs with his hand as he parted the lips of her sex away from her woman's nub. The moment he sucked it into his mouth, her heart slammed against her chest wall so hard she thought she would pass out.

She couldn't decide for several moments whether she wanted more or if the sensations were just too intense to bear, but she discovered she couldn't evade his touch even if that had been an objective. His hold on her and the wall behind her was all that held her upright. She'd lost her center of balance.

In any case, her most burning desire was to lift her legs and wrap them around his shoulders.

Unfortunately, she couldn't defy gravity to do it. She had nothing to hold on to to brace herself for such an attempt but his shoulders. She couldn't even widen her stance to give him better access.

Frustration warred with escalating excitement for a handful of moments and then, far too soon, she hit her peak. She was gasping so hard for breath by the time her climax hit her, her moans of pleasure emerged as little high pitched cries.

She hadn't even fallen from the peak when he abruptly surged upright, grasped her hips and shoved her up the wall, spearing her on the head of his cock. A bolt of pain flickered through her as the hard knob butted the tender skin between her clit and the mouth of her sex briefly, and then he wedged it in the still quaking opening.

She heard him grinding his teeth as he met the resistance of spasming muscles. As soaked as her channel was with the dew of her arousal, the muscles along her passage were still clenching so tightly he fought a battle to claim the territory that had her gasping and digging her fingers into his shoulders frantically.

Grim determination won out. He fully sheathed himself and began to pump into her at a wild pace that caught her halfway down the slope and hoisted her to the peak again.

Her second climax hit her as his cock began to jerk with his own release. The spasms of her second culmination were harder and her cries of pleasure much louder.

It would've been hard to say who was more tired out from the experience. Lilly was so weak in the aftermath that the wall, his hands steadying her, and her planting her feet firmly on the bottom of the shower together were barely enough to keep her upright. Colton leaned into her, panting for breath, shaking faintly with the aftershocks from his own climax.

Or maybe it was the water?

As awareness beyond the heated, tingling of her post coital body slowly filtered into her mind, she felt the splatter of icy mist from the showerhead. Colton reached out and shut the water off just about the time she became aware of the fact that the hot water was long gone, however. When he had, he gathered her against his length briefly, kissed her gustily, and then stepped from the shower, carrying her with him.

She caught her balance with an effort when he released her and looked up to see him scan the bathroom. Before she could figure out what he was looking for, he grabbed a towel from the towel bar and shoved it into her hands, then looked around for another.

Shivering, she clutched the towel to her. "In the cabinet at the end of the shower."

He'd spotted it before she'd even voiced the directions, however, and stepped over to the cabinet, dragging a towel out for himself and rubbing it briskly over his chest and belly.

Her mind was still too sluggish to function properly. The thought had just popped into her head that he was preoccupied when he turned to pin her with a smoldering look. A slow, almost bashful grin curled his lips. He chuckled huskily.

"It's been a while, baby. I've got a bad feeling I didn't do you justice."

Lilly gaped at him, trying her best to ignore the funny little flip-flop her heart performed and the way her belly clenched uncomfortably. Before she could think of anything to say, he swooped down on her, swept her off her feet, and headed out of the bathroom.

"That's alright. We've got all night."

## Chapter Four

Colton's 'threat' prompted a whirlwind of chaotic thoughts and emotions. He'd carried her to her bed and climbed into it with her before Lilly could gather her wits for any kind of objection. She was in luck, however. His comment had stimulated one potential avenue of rescue.

"Oh gosh!" she exclaimed as he burrowed under the covers with her and planted his face between her breasts. "I almost forgot ...!"

He uttered a questioning grunt, plucking at one nipple with his lips until it began to stand erect.

"My friend ... uh ... Beth is coming by. She was going to help me with my ...." She broke off abruptly when it suddenly occurred to her that the last thing she wanted to do was to talk about the thesis she was writing.

"About five foot six? Curly red hair?"

Lilly blinked at him, trying to make sense of his questions. "Oh!" she exclaimed when it finally hit her, then added in dismay when it clicked, "Oh ... uh ... yes, that sounds like her."

"I ran into her as I was coming up the walk—asked her if this was your place. I told her we were going to be busy getting better acquainted. She said to tell you to call her tomorrow."

Lilly managed a weak smile. *Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!*

"Oh ... well ... one less thing to worry about!" she said, hoping she sounded *Fuck!*

He had pinned her to the bed with the weight of his upper torso, although he'd propped the majority of his weight on his elbows. He grunted, focused on examining her breasts as if he was completely fascinated, massaging them with his hands, plucking at her nipples until both were standing tightly erect and then stroking the puckered areolas.

Lilly's heart and belly were performing summersaults.

"Hungry?" she asked brightly.

He lifted his head to give her a smoldering look. "Starving," he murmured.

A flicker of hope went through her as he planted his palms on the bed beside her and lifted his upper weight off of her, but he merely shoved himself upward, tilted his head, and opened his mouth over hers. Warmth flowed through her in mindless appreciation of the feel of his mouth and tongue on hers as he kissed her in an almost leisurely manner. "I think I'll just eat you," he said huskily when he'd broken the kiss and charted a path along her cheek to her ear.

He sucked the shell of her ear and then traced the swirls with the tip of his tongue.

Lilly's skin pebbled all over, her already erect nipples throbbing as they tightened even more. "Food might fill you up a little better," she managed to gasp out a little desperately.

He chuckled huskily, transferring his attention from her ear to her throat and sucking a string of love bites down the column to her shoulder. "It wouldn't be nearly as satisfying, though. Now that I've taken the edge off, I'm going to focus on my homework. I need to satisfy my baby, after all."

Lilly was torn between the urge to persist in feeding him as a distraction and the anxiety that insisting might arouse his ire. As unnerving as his desire was, though, she certainly didn't want any part of his temper.

She managed a chuckle that emerged more as a throaty sound of seduction than the tempering giggle she'd hoped for. "But ... you already did ... twice."

She felt his lips curl against the upper slope of her breast. "Was that what all that screaming was about?" he murmured, satisfaction evident in his voice.

It sparked a brief flare of irritation. "I didn't scream," she lied, resisting the urge to box his ears with a strenuous effort.

He chuckled. "I'll take your word for it. If the lady says she isn't satisfied ...."

She might have protested if he hadn't chosen that moment to kiss her again. His lips met hers, teasing, nipping, brushing gently across them. The sensation of his lips against hers made her gasp. He took advantage of that momentary vulnerability, laying siege to her mouth, plundering its depths. Closing his mouth over the tip of her tongue, he sucked it with surprising gentleness, and then crushed his hard naked body against hers. Opening his mouth over hers, he leaned into the embrace so that their naked flesh ground together. By the time he was satisfied that he'd thoroughly explored her mouth and broke the kiss to shift his attention to one of her breasts, she'd had time to reconsider.

Not that she had the mind to, but she'd had *time* if she could've pulled her wits together. She was already floating on a pleasurable cloud of anticipation however. Excitement had begun to pump through her veins in a heated tide. His pointed, leisurely familiarization with her nipples pretty well wiped out what little good sense she had left although it floated hazily through her mind that he'd willfully misunderstood her.

Lilly's breath caught in her throat as he caressed the tops of her thighs and then her lower abdomen, one hand drifting down to cup her pussy. His expert fingers gently stroked the outer lips of her sex. With a will all their own, her legs moved apart to give him better access.

He began to breathe harder at her reaction, his hot breath fanning her ear as his fingers probed deeper.

Electricity rocked her to her core as he found her clit and began to tease it with his fingers. She wanted, no, *needed* fulfillment. She ached to feel the engorged flesh that was pressing so ardently against her thigh. She wanted it impaling her, claiming her.

His hand fisted almost painfully in her hair. His other hand stopped the wonderful torment on her pussy and found her chin. Tipping her face upward, he covered her mouth again in a toe-curling kiss, his tongue raking along the length of hers. His cock, heavy and throbbing with the blood engorging it, rubbed against the entrance to her damp pussy. His thick cock dug deep into the flesh of her wet sex, parting the folds.

She curled her hips to meet his initial thrust and uttered a pleasurable gasp as she felt his body connect with hers, felt the slow press of his thick shaft as he penetrated her.



He paused when he'd sunk as deeply inside of her as he could get, taking a moment to reposition himself so that he was supporting his upper body on his elbows. She lifted her eyelids a fraction with an effort, peering up at his hard face as he began with a slow cadence of thrust and retreat that stirred currents of warmth in her belly.

She'd fantasized about this, she realized hazily. She'd fallen into her own web, gotten so wrapped up in the letters they'd exchanged that she'd been pulled down into the sexual fantasy he'd helped her build. They'd begun to haunt her dreams, arousing her to the point that she'd experienced wet dreams for the first in her life.

This felt ten times better than it had in her dreams, she thought languorously.

Yielding to the fantasy 'feel' of the moment, she lifted her hands, skimmed them lightly over his shoulders and cupped the hard, bulging muscles of his upper arms. Her kegels clenched at the thrill that went through her.

He released a grunting breath. "You keep that up, this ain't going to be slow," he said in a harsh voice. Shifting onto his side, he slid a hand down her back at the same time, carrying her with him. He squeezed one cheek of her ass, and then skated his hand along the under side of her thigh, dragging her leg across his hips. He cupped his hips, seating his cock deeply inside her again, shifting his grip to her ass and pulling her into his thrust.

Her skin pebbled in reaction, her heart stammering and then beating a little faster.

Pushing one arm beneath her, he gathered her closer, nuzzling her face in search of her lips. When she tilted her head to meet him, he kissed her, drove deeply inside of her, held himself still for a heartbeat and then retreated slowly.

"Jesus, baby!" he murmured when he broke the kiss. "You're so hot, so tight! I don't think I could've made it without you, without thinking about this. I think I would've lost my mind."

Lilly felt her heart contract almost painfully at the anguish she heard in his voice, but the warmth inside of her blossomed into fiery heat, too.

"Shit! So much for slow and easy," he growled, rolling her onto her back and driving into her hard. "Fuck!"

She wrapped her legs around him tightly then, thrusting upward to meet him, striving to have his hot pulsating cock fill her entirely. Her inner turmoil from before completely gone. She couldn't think anymore, all she could do was feel.

A shudder racked his body as he struggled to maintain control, leaning down and burying his face against her neck. Grinding his teeth, he drove deeper and deeper into her, as if he had no control over the urge to pump into her, as if he was an animal uncaged, grinding his pelvis against her as if he wanted to drive deeper still.

She felt the moment his body spiraled out of his control in the sudden tension that gripped him, making his muscles quiver with the strain. It shot her own libido through the roof. With a flicker of surprise she felt her body straining toward another climax as he began to pound into her frenziedly. For a few moments, she felt as if she was racing him to the finish line. Then, abruptly, it broke over her. Her entire body seized with the force of it. She sucked in a couple of choked gasps as she hovered on the brink and then groaned mindlessly as the waves of pleasure rocketed through her, so focused on her own release that she was scarcely aware of the buck of his cock within her channel beyond the added boost it gave her pounding heart.

Misplaced empathy, she thought vaguely, as they collapsed together in a sticky,

sweaty tangle in the aftermath.

He was a convicted killer! What the *hell* was the matter with her to feel a need to comfort and console?

It was the letters, she thought sluggishly when she could gather her wits for any kind of thought at all. She'd played right into his hands.

But had he seduced her? Or had she seduced herself?

Did it matter?

She was fucked!

Actually, *very* fucked and just about comatose, she thought, struggling to keep from sinking into oblivion.

The thought roused her enough for a plan to flicker through her mind.

Actually, she thought it was prompted more by the fact that he was snoring in her ear.

Brilliant! She'd fucked him unconscious, she thought, feeling a little more alert.

All she had to do was figure out a way to get out from under his dead weight before she passed out from lack of oxygen and she could escape!

## Chapter Five

Wiggling, Lilly quickly discovered, roused him. He lifted his head, stared at her dully for a moment and then struggled off of her—sort of. In actuality, he merely shifted the bulk of his weight to the mattress, leaving one arm and one leg across her that felt like two oak limbs.

She wasn't certain if it was nothing more than a lover's embrace or an intentional effort to anchor her to the bed, but she didn't suppose it mattered in the scheme of things. She was just as effectively pinned as she had been when he'd been lying on top of her. There was no way she could wiggle free without alerting him.

And there was something very possessive about the way he was holding her. Not that she should've been surprised.

She hadn't discouraged him from feeling as if he 'owned' her. In point of fact, she'd worked damned hard to put herself in the position she now found herself in—not that she'd ever in her wildest dreams expected *this*! She'd sensed his skepticism in the beginning, though, even a certain amount of contempt for a woman who would flirt with a convicted killer. She'd had to convince him that she'd followed his trial and didn't believe he was guilty.

That wasn't as hard as it would've been if she'd been absolutely convinced that he was, because it wasn't actually that far from the truth. The case had been almost entirely circumstantial—a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time added to the fact that it was well known that he had an ax to grind with his victim—his former employer.

The victim was one of those lovely people often referred to by southerners as someone who 'needed killing' because they made a habit of screwing people over and gloating about it, a completely ruthless individual who'd made more than his fair share of enemies as he walked over everybody in his path on the road to success.

So, she'd managed to convince Colton she believed in his claim of innocence.

Maybe in the process, she'd managed to convince herself, too?

Not that she *was* convinced—now. When he'd been safely locked away from her she'd felt comfortable entertaining doubts. Maybe she'd used that to justify her 'seduction' of inmate Jack Colton?

Maybe that was what the women she was writing about did?

She shook the thought off. She could analyze her temporary insanity when she was safe. She could figure out then if she'd gotten too deeply wrapped up in her role and fallen victim to her own sympathy. At the moment, she needed to focus on not becoming another victim of Jack Colton!

The sex seemed to be his only weakness, the only thing she could use to her advantage.

She could keep him occupied until the cops finally tracked him to her door and run the risk of being shot when they apprehended him, or she could try to 'entertain' him until he was so exhausted he fell asleep and then, maybe, slip away.

It seemed like a sound plan. He was already drowsing. If she simply lay

perfectly still, as if she was as worn out from their love play as he was, he'd let his guard down and go to sleep.

She fell asleep while she was waiting.

Annoyance flickered through Lillian when she was aroused from a deep sleep. For a time, it warred with a sense of enjoyment as she slowly drifted closer to complete awareness because the teasing stroke of his hands already had her body humming with desire. Briefly, irritation won out.

Holding her down with his hands, he began to move down the length of her body.

She very nearly jumped out of her skin when she felt his mouth settle over a nipple.

He sucked it long and hard, lathing her swollen nipple with his tongue, grazing it brazenly with his teeth, hard enough to feel worry but not enough to hurt. And then he stopped the sweet assault on her nipple.

Lilly had imagined many things about the man behind bars that she had never met. But she had been certain that no man could fulfill her wildest fantasies, could make her so excited that she forgot her fears. Men like that didn't exist, she told herself. But all Colton had to do was look at her, and she was shaken to the core.

He watched her face as he began to move lower, his hold on her body pressing her firmly into the bed. His mouth settled over her sex, seeking out her woman's bud.

Lilly cried out at the feel of his hot mouth on her clit. Embarrassed by her reaction, she tried to wiggle away from the sweet torment of his mouth, but he had her firmly pinned.

He began to trace her bud with his tongue, flicking it back and forth over the sensitive area, to suckle it relentlessly.

Mounting pleasure began to build deep inside of her, radiating out of her core, making her feel desperate with need. She moaned, every fiber of her being honing in on the pleasure he was inflicting on her against her will. His hot breath on her damp skin, his hot tongue on her exposed flesh built tension until she was near to exploding with ecstasy. Her stomach clenched and relaxed as the waves of pleasure radiated from his mouth and up through her core. She could feel her body clamoring for release, inching closer and closer to climax.

He stopped, climbing back up her body in a trail of hot kisses and nibbles. Her body basked in the pleasure he provided. Her body had taken over, and she craved him with every ounce of her being. She writhed wantonly beneath him when his mouth covered a neglected nipple, causing gooseflesh to ripple over her entire body, heightening each sensation. She didn't want him to stop.

He kissed and nibbled his way back down her body, caressing her hips with his strong hands. He took her hips in both hands and lifted her ass a little off of the bed, settling his mouth on her sex again, sucking on it hard, thrusting his hot tongue deep into her waiting pussy. He began to rub her clit with his thumb in little circles while his tongue thrust in and out of her core, lapping at her juices.

She moaned low in her throat, grabbing onto the sheets beneath her as she struggled to remain resistant to the pleasure he was giving her.

He pushed an index finger inside of her, licking the folds of her sex, suckling her clit.

She almost climaxed then, but he pulled it out again almost at once, leaving her

more frustrated than ever.

“Do you want me? Do you want to feel my cock deep inside of you?”

Lilly couldn't believe her ears. Of course she wanted it. She wanted to beg him for it, but she refused to.

Groaning, she rolled onto her belly.

It didn't deter him. He simply transferred his attention to her bare back, lifting goose bumps all over her with the light stroke of his hands. He followed the course his hands had charted with his lips, nibbling almost teasingly along her back and buttocks.

She sucked in a shaky breath as he nudged her thighs apart and slid over her.

Confusion filled her, but then he slipped one hand beneath her belly, lifting her hips. She felt the hard, rounded head of his cock slip between the cheeks of her ass. Before she could object, though, the head of his cock connected with the mouth of her sex. Relieved that she wasn't going to have to fight him about a back door entrance, she arched her back, tipping her hips upward as he slowly penetrated her.

He settled more fully against her, supporting his weight on his elbows, and nuzzled her ear and the side of her neck. A warming rush washed over her.

“If you're feeling like kicking my ass, I'll stop,” he murmured after thoroughly exploring her ear, sawing shallowly in and out of the mouth of her sex with his cock as he did so.

As if she could if she wanted to!

She realized she didn't want to, though. This felt ... interesting.

“I'll do it later.”

He chuckled huskily and then reared up, thrusting more deeply.

He couldn't quite reach the spot that itched for his touch, though, not in his current position. He seemed to realize that at the same time she did. He went up on his knees and dragged her higher, until she had knees beneath her. Before she could push her upper body off the bed and get fully on her hands and knees, he leaned over her again. He planted one hand on her belly, supporting himself with arm, and drove deeply.

“Mmm ... this feels like heaven, baby,” he said in a growling whisper. “Feels like home.”

Warmth flowed through her that was only partly sexual along with the realization that it felt like home to her, too, the fit of him inside of her, the feel of his strong body wrapped around hers. Before she could examine the thought too closely, he began to move slowly and rhythmically. It felt so good, her mind focused on the surges of warmth generated with each thrust and little else.

She was aware of the brush of his body along her sensitive back, though, aware of it in the tingles that fluttered through her. She was aware of the rise of his passion in his heavy breaths and the heat his body gave off. Before long, she felt more than warmth. She felt heat and a rise in tension. It made her as breathless as he was.

As he escalated toward pending explosion, he began to thrust faster, holding her more tightly until he was pounding into her jarringly. For many moments, she wondered if her body could possibly respond by climaxing yet again when she'd already had three of the most powerful climaxes she could ever recall. She discovered that it was finely attuned to his, however. Even as he began to shake almost uncontrollably with imminent release, her heart leapt with excitement, pushing her toward culmination and when she felt his cock buck inside of her, it pushed her over the edge into absolute bliss.

She fisted her hands in the sheets as it hit her, groaning mindlessly as wave upon wave of glory washed over her and through her. She was nearly comatose when the pounding waves of pleasure finally subsided and he settled bonelessly against her, fighting to catch his own breath.

He fell to the bed beside her after a few moments, dragging her across his chest.

“No more of that, woman,” he muttered, a teasing note to his voice.

It was the last thing she was aware of ... but she fell asleep with an answering smile on her lips.

She woke with her stomach growling and the smell of coffee and cooking bacon in her nostrils. Despite the hunger and the soreness in seemingly every muscle in her body that she discovered when she tried to move, stronger than anything else was a sense of profound satisfaction and well being.

## Chapter Six

Lillian was still trying to track down the source of that sense that all was right with the world when Colton came in balancing her mixing bowl, a saucer with what looked like a dozen pieces of toast, and two sloshing mugs in his hands. He flicked a glance at her and then returned his attention to his burdens until he reached her beside table.

“I thought the smell of coffee might bring you around,” he said once he’d set his burdens down and given her his full attention. The faint grin curling his lips broadened as she shoved her hair out of her eyes and stared at him through sleep blurred eyes. “Mornin’ beautiful.”

Lillian slanted a surprised glance at the windows at that, discovering the weak light of morning was filtering around the curtains. For a moment, she struggled with disorientation, trying to figure out what day of the week it was and if she should feel alarmed about it.

Colton waved a steaming cup of coffee under her nose, effectively distracting her. She took the cup, staring at it in confusion.

“Just the way you like it,” he said with supreme satisfaction. “You didn’t think I’d notice little things like that, huh?”

Grabbing the mixing bowl and the saucer stacked with toast, he settled on the bed. “I know you don’t usually eat in the morning, but you’ve got to at least try the eggs. They turned out perfect. It’s been so long since I cooked anything, I figured it would turn out like shit.”

Blinking, still too disoriented to really take anything in, Lillian pushed herself upright and stared into the bowl at the fluffy eggs topped with crispy slices of bacon. It looked wonderful. Her stomach growled again, and she flicked a self-conscious look at Colton.

He grinned, but instead of commenting, he scooped out a spoonful of eggs and held it out.

She opened her mouth, closing her eyes in ecstasy as he slipped the spoonful of eggs into her mouth and her taste buds exploded with pleasure. “Mmmm!”

He chuckled. Handing her a piece of bacon, he scooped up a spoonful for himself.

“God damn! I’d forgotten how good real eggs tasted. Then again, I’m thinking it might be the sweet taste of freedom that’s the seasoning that makes everything fantastic.”

Lillian felt her belly twist at the comment. A wave of nausea swept over her that

was a curious mixture of empathy and fear. She focused on sipping her coffee, trying to think what to say, how she might ask the million dollar question without risking throwing him into a dangerously foul mood. “You didn’t tell me about that,” she mumbled finally.

He flicked a rather piercing glance at her, shrugged, and focused on his food. “You didn’t get my last letter?”

Lillian frowned. “I guess not,” she said finally. “I didn’t know you were getting out.”

He made a sound that wasn’t exactly a laugh of amusement, although it sounded sort of like a laugh. “Right. You did seem ... surprised to see me.”

Lillian managed a weak smile.

He looked her over assessingly. “You did get the letters where I was talking about the Innocence Project looking in to my case, though?”

She had, but then again she hadn’t really believed he *was* innocent, regardless of what she’d said, and she hadn’t expected anything to come of it. The comment sent her heart to surging into overtime. “You mean ...?” she asked a little breathlessly.

He grinned at her. “There wasn’t much in the way of forensics when I was convicted. The evidence against me was primarily circumstantial.”

Lillian nodded, deciding not to point out the fact that his fingerprint had been found on the gun—and it had been *his* gun that they proved was the murder weapon.

It was almost as if he read her mind. He narrowed his eyes at her. “Yeah, I know. It was my gun—which is why my fingerprint was on it, but they didn’t find any gun powder residue on me, because I hadn’t even seen the damned gun for weeks before the murder.”

He shrugged. “Like I said—I wasn’t entirely innocent. I was screwing his wife—but it didn’t go down like the cops decided it did. He didn’t catch us together, or find out I’d been screwing his wife. Turns out, she seduced me—not the other way around—and I was just too young and stupid to realize she was playing me. She stole the gun and killed the bastard herself and then set me up to take the fall. They found her fingerprints and hair stuck to the tape used to wrap the body up. What they didn’t find was a single speck of my DNA anywhere near the body or the crime scene—which was what I’d been telling them all along. I wasn’t there. Since they also located a witness to corroborate my alibi, they had to turn me loose.”

He set the remains of his breakfast aside and dusted the crumbs from his hands. “I’m cleared—no new trial, no probation—I’m a free man. I’ll be getting a check, in point of fact, for false imprisonment. I’ve got a job waiting for me with the Innocence Project.”

He studied her for several moments in silence, as if waiting to see how she would take his statements.

Lillian wasn’t sure of how to take what he’d told her. She was, in fact, having trouble taking it in at all, much less deciding how she felt about it. Tentative relief—hesitant because she was having trouble accepting that it was true. His behavior since he’d arrived, though, went a long way toward convincing her. He hadn’t behaved, at all, like anyone on the run and looking over his shoulder.

He settled beside her on the bed, pulling her into an embrace and stroking his fingers lightly along her back. “There’s something I’ve been wanting to ask you for a long time now. There didn’t seem to be much point in asking when I didn’t think I’d



ever see daylight again.”

Lillian tilted her face to look up at him questioningly when he didn’t continue.

“I didn’t actually think it would be fair to ask anyway if things hadn’t turned out the way they had, but I’ve been cleared. My *name* has been cleared—not that the cops or the DA are willing to admit that they were wrong. I expect there will always be people who think I got away with murder, whatever anybody says to the contrary, so if you don’t want to, I’ll understand.”

Lillian frowned. “What?”

He flicked a gaze over her face. “Will you marry me?”

Stunned, Lillian couldn’t do anything but stare at him for several moments. As the shock wore off, though, everything she’d felt when she’d been writing to him began to zip through her mind, all the things she’d learned about him. She realized abruptly that she’d fallen in love with him somewhere along the way. She’d done her best to convince herself that it was nothing more than a condition of the mind that she’d set herself up for when she’d decided to use him to write her thesis, but she realized that wasn’t true. If it had been, it would’ve felt wrong being with him so intimately and that hadn’t felt wrong at all. It had felt so very right that it was downright scary.

He frowned when she didn’t say anything, easing his hold on her although he hadn’t been holding her tightly to begin with. Neither did he push her away, but she could sense a withdrawal. “I know you’re a psychology student. I figured all the time that I was just a subject for a college thesis.”

Lillian felt her face redden. She should’ve realized that he would have checked her out if he got the chance, that her secret wouldn’t be a secret from him for long. She was relieved in a way. At least she didn’t have to confess!

She snuggled against his chest, toying with the dark hair that grew in a small patch in the center of his chest. “You were. That’s true. I was trying to get into the mind of a killer—to figure out why women become involved with men in prison, fall in love with them, marry them.”

“Did you figure it out?” he asked coolly.

She frowned. “I’m not sure. I think I know why I fell in love with you, though.”

He tensed. After a moment, he caught her chin and urged her to look up at him. “Say that again.”

She smiled. “I love you. I’d love to marry you, Jack Colton.”

The End