

*Dreamspinner Press Presents*

# DAYDREAMS



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## Taking in Strays by Sonja Spencer

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### 2

WHISTLING tunelessly with the radio, Donavan kept brushing the old horse that stood so patiently at the rail. The music was the man's one concession to modern technology – his radio played at all hours, and one of his current favorite songs was playing now, a song he really identified with because it matched his own headlong, unplanned flight into the wilderness of Idaho four years before.

He'd hit a moose out on the lonely highway, close to the Grand Teton National Park, and the first person who happened by lived in Tetonia.

Somehow, he'd settled here and never looked back, with the help of old Bernie, who'd sold him the farm and several hundred acres for a pittance and taken off for Florida. Donavan still got a postcard now and then. And for incidentals, he made house calls around the area that didn't have a veterinarian of its own. Not that he needed the money.

Earl came out of the store to where Donavan worked, right on Main Street. "Thanks, Donavan, he just won't settle, and I sure don't want to put him down."

"No problem, Earl. He'll earn his keep at the farm," Donavan said quietly. He watched as the young man rambled on down the street, leaving the older horse with him.

Donavan sighed. One more pet to add to his growing menagerie. He hadn't planned to do this kind of thing when he settled here, but he'd seen the need in the small community. And he'd always been the type of person to help someone rather than turn them away. In the last four years, he'd amassed quite a collection of strays and castoffs. He walked the horse around behind his shop, putting her inside the temporary corral he had just for this purpose. "There you go, old girl. You'll like the farm. Nothing will bother you there, and you can live out the rest of your life in peace."

Just like me.

KRISTY slowed the car as she entered the city limits. "This is it, Richie, Tetonia. Isn't it gorgeous? God, I missed the mountains!"

Rich stared out the window, really uncomfortable and lost. He was a city boy through and through, and he had never felt it so keenly. Kristy waved out the window at people as she drove through the country town, and Rich felt like he was being marooned. But he'd only promised a month. He could live here a month. Right?

Donavan had just walked back around to the front of his small clinic when he heard one of the old men who was always sitting on the bench next door observe, "That the Bevers girl?"

The other old-timer, Frank, spit his wad of tobacco to the edge of the curb. "Reckon so. She s'posed to be back for th' summer. Leastways that's what 'er daddy said at church last Sunday."

Both men followed the car with their eyes until it turned the corner. "Whossat boy?"

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“Some fur’ner she picked up out east, I reckon,” Frank answered. “From New England, so’s her momma said. That’s still the U.S., ain’t it?”

Donavan followed the car with his gaze as well. He shrugged as the older men leaned back against the bench once more. “Oh well,” they sighed in unison, one of their favorite sayings. ‘Oh well,’ Donovan thought.

Rich fidgeted in his seat, watching the town pass until Kristy parked in front of an old, weathered building. The peeling painted sign out front read BEVERS GENERAL STORE. He suppressed a cringe and got out of the car.

Donavan pulled the door to his shop shut, passing Bobby and Frank. “Headin’ down to the store, boys. If anybody stops by, tell ’em I’ll be back in ten.” He stepped over the tobacco, walked on down the street and around the building. As he turned the corner, he saw a long, tall frame stretch out of the car, arms upraised as the boy worked the kinks out of an obviously stiff back.

Bouncing around the car, Kristy was a bundle of energy. “C’mon, Richie, Daddy’s here, I’m sure, and we can get some cold Coke outta the fridge,” she said as Rich slowly turned around in place, taking in what was swiftly becoming a prison. He sighed and followed her into the store, stopping on the steps to stretch again. He knew tonight he’d be hurting – too many hours in the car for this trip.

Donavan watched as the young man turned slowly, and he grinned. “City boy. Sure. He’ll last a week,” he murmured, conveniently forgetting he’d been in the same position four years ago.

Rich sighed and trailed after Kristy, stopping as another man wearing dusty clothes and a beat-up hat reached the door at the same time. He gestured for the man to go ahead in. Donavan tipped his hat at the young man, but motioned for him to go on in as he held the door wide. When the boy breezed past him, he caught a whiff of ... was that civilization?

Looking around inside, Rich had to admit he was surprised. The store was well-stocked, with a wide variety of items including CDs, DVDs and some electronics, clothes, household items, and more. He fingered a thick flannel shirt as he waited for Kristy to reappear.

Donavan watched as the young man seemed surprised at the variety of items stocked in the store. Tetonia was small, but it wasn’t stuck in the Stone Age. He continued to watch as long, tanned fingers touched a thick shirt. “You might need one of those for the evenings. Gets kinda cool in the shadow of the mountain.” He chuckled as the young man jumped.

Rich looked up at the man who’d followed him in. His voice was low and raspy; it sounded to the young man like it wasn’t used much. To a musician, that was almost sacrilege. He nodded and smiled cautiously. “Ah, yes, Kristy told me to bring layers,” he replied.

The soft cultured tones of the young man’s voice were like music to Donavan’s ears. “You’re a long way from home, aren’t ya?”

“Yes, I’m from Amherst, Massachusetts,” Rich said. “You sound like you don’t talk a lot.”

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A surprised chuckle burst from Donovan's lips as he shook his head. "You're blunt. I like that. Too many folks around here like to 'beat around the bush' as ... well ... as they like to say..."

Rich nodded. "I've discovered that people really are not very up front sometimes in their way of talking. It's simpler to get right to the point, I think. You must have an amazing singing voice." He snapped his jaw shut, then mumbled, "Excuse me, my mouth just runs itself sometimes..."

Donovan's mouth dropped open. "Me? Sing?" He had to laugh again. "I've never thought of it. I'm just a simple man. I take in animals. That's it."

"Sorry. My fault. I'm crazy about voices and music. Never mind me..." Rich was saying as he was interrupted by Kristy.

"Richie! Come say hi to Daddy!"

Rich sighed. "Nice to meet you. Maybe I'll see you ... around."

Donovan nodded toward the front of the store. "True love calls."

The younger man blinked a few times, opened his mouth to say something, but then Kristy appeared to pull him away by the elbow. He raised his other hand slightly in a wave goodbye as she pulled him around the corner.

Donovan lowered his hand, realizing he'd been wriggling his fingers back at the charming young man. He rolled his eyes. "I'm such a hermit," he muttered as he bought a soda and a packet of cookies. "I should get out more."

"HELLO? Hello? I'm looking for Mr. Moreland?" Rich called out as he stood outside the barn.

Donovan straightened from forking straw into the stall. He walked to the barn door, pulling out a bandana to wipe his face before leaning on his pitchfork. "I'm Moreland. Can I help you?" He hid the surprise he felt at seeing the other man out here in the wilderness.

Rich's eyes widened in surprise, and he laughed. "Well, hello again."

Donovan pulled his rawhide gloves off and wiped his hand on his jeans. He extended it to the dark-haired boy. "I'm Donovan. And you're?"

The young man shook his hand firmly. "Rich. Richard Willis, if I'm being formal. I'm here visiting with Kristy and her family," he said, clearly used to everyone knowing who he was talking about.

Nodding his head, Donovan pulled his hand back, shocked by the warmth of the other man's hand. "What brings you out to the spread this lovely day, Mr. Willis?"

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Rich shoved his hands into his jeans. “I’d like to get a dog. Kristy’s dad said you’d ‘likely have one around’.” The young man shrugged.

“I have lots of dogs,” Donovan agreed, sizing Rich up. “But I don’t let them go to just anyone. How can I be sure you won’t just abandon it here when you leave?”

“Well, I had a dog in Amherst I took really good care of. Her name was Maggie. I could give you my mother’s number for a reference,” Rich said mischievously.

“I don’t know if a small town vet could afford a phone bill like that,” Donovan mused. “Promise me this. If you leave ... you bring the dog back?”

Rich frowned. “If we don’t get along, sure, but I was really planning on keeping her. Or him. To live with me in L.A. I really miss having a dog around, and there’s plenty of room at my house. I even have a yard, which I know is unusual in California.”

“I’ve been there ... lived there for about 10 years,” Donovan spoke without realizing. He’d unintentionally shared a piece of himself that he’d told no one in the past four years. Not since he’d left California.

“It’s not too bad, out away from the cities. Really different from home, of course. I still do double takes at the palm trees. What did you do in California?” Rich said in a near babble. He didn’t know why, but he was just really comfortable with this near-stranger.

“I was a veterinarian. I specialized in equine health. The racetracks kept me busy. I even owned a couple of thoroughbreds.” He didn’t mention the tragedy that drove him from his practice. “Now I just manage this shelter.”

It didn’t even occur to Rich to pry, so he didn’t. “That’s cool, horses. This is a gorgeous place, I can see that now. I had a hard time adjusting the first few days, but the scenery is breathtaking.”

Looking around as if noticing everything for the first time, Donovan grinned. “It is breathtaking. Took me about a month to adjust. You’re doing well if you’ve adjusted in less than a week.”

“Well, I’m only here a month, so I guess I have to adapt faster, then.” Rich shrugged, sort of wincing. “I don’t know that I fit in here that well. Kristy could tell I was chafing, so she sent me out to find something to occupy my time. I can’t sit around and compose all day, I guess.”

“You mentioned something about music in the store the other day. What exactly do you do, Mr. Willis?” Donovan led the other man toward the back of his farmhouse, where the dogs usually gathered for feeding. He stopped along the way to reach into a storage shed and grab a bag of food.

“I’m studying music. Primarily voice, although I also play guitar and piano, and I’ve been trying my hand at songwriting,” Rich said.

As they stepped around behind the house, a huge pack of dogs surrounded them, and Donovan laughed as he dropped to one knee, set the bag aside, and began to pet the various animals. A

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musician. Figured. “Your voice is very lyrical,” Donovan complimented Rich sincerely. “Your accent is gorgeous.”

“Thank you,” Rich answered, not at all self-conscious. “Although the accent rarely comes through while you’re singing,” he added as he tried to pet several dogs at once. “There are so many!” he exclaimed. After looking at several, he pointed out a sleek, black dog.

Donovan moved to bring the dog closer. “He’s beautiful ... and so good-natured. He’s only been here a week, but I think you’ll be really happy with him.”

Rich knelt down to rub the dog affectionately, and grinned as he got a doggie kiss. “Does he have a name?” he asked, looking up at Donovan.

“He seems noble,” Donovan murmured as he watched the slim frame of the boy petting the sleek dog. “How about that?”

“I like it,” Rich asked, scratching the dog’s ears. “Are you a Noble?” he asked the dark dog, who promptly barked once.

Rich grinned up at Donovan as Noble tried to lick his face. “Noble it is, then.” Noble barked once again. “Apparently he likes the name.”

“Apparently he likes his new master,” Donovan twisted Rich’s words a little to suit his purpose. “He’s had his shots. Should be a healthy dog, but as I said, I’ve only had him a week, so if you have any trouble at all with him, be sure to bring him back. I can treat most illnesses.”

“Thank you, what do I owe you?” Rich stood, reaching for his wallet.

“Nothing. I’m just glad to see him go to a good home. That’s all I ask in turn.” Donovan reached a hand out and grasped Rich’s arm, stopping the motion to grab for a wallet. “That – and a photo every now and again ... just to let me see how well he’s taking to his new life ... and you...”

Smiling widely, Rich nodded. “I can do that. Just give me your mailing address, yeah? I’m going to have Kristy take a picture tonight so I can send it to my mom.” The younger man swallowed as he felt a sudden heat flash through him. He dismissed it as a rush of blood from standing too quickly.

Donovan still held Rich’s arm, his thumb brushing over smooth, tanned skin. He stood for several moments, just staring into chocolate brown eyes. Finally, he shook himself from his silent admiration of the boy. “I’m sure she’ll like that ... your mother, I mean. And Kristy. And I’d like photos of you ... I mean – of Noble...”

“Yeah ... I mean, great...” Rich swallowed hard as he nodded, feeling a little off balance. He leaned over and hefted Noble into his arms to carry him out of the paddock and over to his car, settling the dog in the back seat. He shut the door and turned back to Donovan, studying the other man’s face. “Ah, thanks again.”

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Donavan had regained his equilibrium by now. “No – thank you, Rich – for giving him a home. I hate to see an animal go homeless ... ’s why I have so many here.”

“So you’re running a shelter, then? Mr. Bevers didn’t really say...” Rich looked back to the barn.

“Not an official one, no.” Donovan stared toward the barn as well. “People just tend to know that I have a soft spot for animals. As a result, I get a lot that people can no longer take care of.”

Rich smiled, eyes softening. “That’s really great, you know. Really.” Feeling awkward, he shifted his feet and pulled out his keys. “I won’t keep you longer. Thanks ... again,” he said.

Donavan swung his gaze back to the young man. “Rich?” His voice was full of questions that he should never ask. “Come back and see me again before you leave ... just so I can say goodbye to Noble.” ‘And you,’ the voice in his head added.

Heart pounding, Rich felt like Donovan wanted to say something else. But he nodded and waved as he got into the car and drove away, mind stuck on thinking about an older man with dusty blond hair and piercing blue eyes.

TWO weeks later, Rich pulled back up to the farm, his heart pounding just like it had been when he had left. He darted out of the car, yelling. “Mr. Moreland! Moreland! Noble’s sick! I need your help!”

Donavan rushed onto the porch after hearing a car slide on the gravel in his driveway and the frantic yell of the young man. He wiped his hands on his napkin before shoving it into his pocket. “Rich? What’s wrong?”

Rich skidded to a stop in front of the steps. “It’s Noble. He’s ill and having trouble breathing.”

Donavan hurried to Rich’s car, lifting the dog carefully and taking him to the makeshift clinic he’d set up in the barn. He laid him on the examining table, running knowing hands along the dog’s body. “How long has he been like this?”

“I noticed that he didn’t eat last night, and he seemed tired, and then he was like this when I woke up this morning,” Rich said, obviously upset.

Donavan pried the dog’s mouth open and looked inside. “Has he been around any other dogs?”

“Kristy’s mum has a little dog, but she keeps it downstairs,” Rich said. “I’ve been keeping Noble in my room at night, although he was out in the fenced yard most of the days.”

“You said he hasn’t eaten ... has he had any water?” Donovan set up an IV drip to flush the dog’s system. “If not, it’s likely he’s developing parvo. We can stop it with antibiotics and a body flush.”



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“Parvo? It is bad? He’ll be okay?” Rich fretted, petting Noble’s head gently. The dog watched his master with loving eyes.

“I’m going to be honest, Rich ... it kills most dogs ... but if we caught it early enough ... if he makes it through ’til morning, he should be all right,” Donavan’s voice was hoarse and low, stressed at seeing one of his dogs sick like this.

Tears filled Rich’s eyes as he leaned over to kiss Noble’s head. “Be strong, Noble,” he begged softly. “I can’t imagine being without you now.”

Donavan taped the IV in place, hating to strap Noble to the table, but knowing if he didn’t, the dog might pull free and hurt himself. He was touched to see that he’d given Noble to a worthy master. He stepped back as Rich kissed his dog, giving them a moment. Finally, he placed a hand on Rich’s shoulder. “Let’s get some tea. We’ll come back out and sit with him.”

Wiping his face, Rich nodded and followed Donavan out of the room silently, turning to look back as if he felt he shouldn’t leave.

Donavan noticed the forlorn look. “On second thought – you stay here. I’ll bring us a thermos of tea. There are chairs in the next room if you’d like to pull one into the exam room.

Looking pathetically grateful, Rich nodded and turned right back, rushing to sit with Noble.

Donavan hurried to the house, gathering some blankets, a thermos of tea and some sandwiches. When he returned to the barn, Rich sat next to Noble, whispering words to the sick dog. Donavan set the food up on a side table, grateful that he kept the room spotless, despite its purpose.

Rich continued stroking Noble gently, and then he looked up at Donavan with watery eyes. “I think he’s asleep,” he murmured.

“Probably best.” Donavan nodded. Motioning to the food, he added, “Eat something yourself, Rich. If you want to stay up with him all night, you’ll need your strength.”

Sighing, the younger man nodded and picked up a sandwich, forcing himself to take a bite. “He’s become my best friend,” he said after swallowing.

Donavan nodded indulgently. “They don’t expect as much of you as another human would. Brigit is my rock. She’s there when nobody else is. She was the only thing I brought with me when ... well – when I came here.”

“The only thing I brought with me is my guitar,” Rich said weakly. “And I was so lonely, I couldn’t even pick it up.”

“Are you and Kristy – are you a couple? I’ve noticed that some of the old-timers in town think that you are. But you don’t say a lot about her.” Donavan sat back in a chair, waiting for an answer.



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Rich raised an eyebrow and shrugged. “Well, we were. At school, anyway. But I think we both knew even before this summer that we were better off as friends. I agreed to come home with her to see if we could ... I don’t know ... jump start things. Instead, she’s off, hanging out with old friends, and I’m in my room with Noble.”

“You’ve been lonely.” Donovan repeated Rich’s statement from earlier, eyes narrowing as he thought about how he could help relieve that loneliness. “I know the feeling. I’ve been alone since I came here, four years ago.”

“How do you manage it? It that why you run the shelter? I can’t imagine the last couple of weeks without Noble,” Rich murmured.

“You get used to it,” Donovan answered. “After David ... left ... well – I got used to being alone really quickly.” He dropped his gaze to the floor. “But you’re young and beautiful. You won’t be alone for long.”

Rich swallowed hard on his iced tea, comprehending both that Donovan apparently had been involved with a man and that Donovan thought he was beautiful. “Uh. Thanks,” he murmured, watching Donovan curiously.

Donovan busied himself with checking Noble. “He’ll sleep through the night. Are you sure you don’t want to go inside the house?”

“You’re sure he’ll be okay?” Rich suddenly looked exhausted.

Donovan covered the dog with a blanket he’d brought from the house. “He’ll be fine. I’ll even come check on him throughout the night. You could use some rest.”

Rich stood and lightly rubbed Noble’s ears. “Do you mind if ... if I stay here tonight? I’d like to be here if...” His eyes filled with tears again and he looked down at Noble to hide them.

Donovan couldn’t deny those eyes. He held a hand up, indicating Rich should wait. He then pulled the cot from the storage room, folding out a spare sleeping bag on it. “You can stay as long as you like, Rich.”

With a soft smile, Rich nodded, gathering the thermos and plate of food to follow Donovan up to the house.

Reaching the house, Donovan encouraged Rich to freshen up in the small bathroom. While the other man was busy, he worked on cleaning up the dishes from his aborted dinner.

Splashing his face with cool water, Rich looked up to see his sunken eyes and winced. He looked awful ... but Donovan, he had called him beautiful. He looked to the door, feeling the lonely ache in his chest, and he wondered...

Rich had been in the bathroom for several moments. Long enough that Donovan had started to worry. He walked over to the door and tapped lightly. “You okay?”

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### 10

He'd been staring at the door for a couple minutes, and when Rich heard Donovan's raspy voice, he flinched in surprise, looking down at himself. His body was reacting to Donovan's voice, Donovan's presence. He swallowed hard, knowing this was a huge chance he was taking. Before he could chicken out, he opened the door to face the older man.

Donovan gasped as the door flew open and Rich was less than three inches away from him. He could smell the musky scent of the younger man, and he closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. "Sorry, didn't mean to rush you. I was worried."

Rich thought his heart might pound out of his chest, but he moved anyway – sliding his hands to each side of Donovan's face and pulling him down for a needy kiss.

Donovan knew Rich had said he'd been lonely, but the action was still surprising. He closed his eyes as his lips crashed against Rich's, the pure force of the kiss making his head spin. It was the first time he'd been touched like this in years, but his body remembered how it was supposed to react, and the feelings he'd been suppressing since meeting the lovely young man pushed to the fore. He slid his hands around Rich's waist and pulled him closer.

Moaning against Donovan's lips, Rich wound his arms around the other man's neck. He wanted to be held, kissed, comforted – he wanted to be wanted. As long as Donovan wanted him, he could handle this, no matter that he'd never so much as kissed a man. He gasped softly and opened his mouth, licking Donovan's lips.

Donovan chased the elusive tongue that teased him, backing into the living room as his hands slid down Rich's thighs, hitching the New Englander's legs to wrap around his waist. He turned and pushed the slighter man against the wall, his body grinding as old needs made themselves known.

Gasping aloud, Rich tilted his head back as Donovan's lips moved to his throat, and he unconsciously wrapped his legs around the other man and gasped again as his back hit the wall. "Oh God," he whispered as he felt himself harden in his pants, especially when he figured out that he was feeling Donovan's erection.

Donovan's head moved lower, his lips gliding over slightly salty skin as he explored. He cupped Rich's backside, kneading the firm cheek in his hand as he sucked at the hollow of the slim throat beneath those tempting, swollen lips. His hips bucked, pushing insistently against the vee of Rich's legs, where he could feel an answering hardness. "Rich," he sighed, his breath heating already sweaty skin.

Groaning, Rich tried to push his cock harder against Donovan, more aroused than he could ever remember being. "Please ... Donovan, please," he murmured, one hand moving to slide through the other man's hair.

Donovan managed to regain enough sense and composure to pull away slightly. "Are you sure about this?" He waited for an answer, observing pouty lips spread in harsh breathing, mocha eyes darkened to midnight, a slim chest rising and falling so quickly it seemed as if the smaller man

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## 11

would hyperventilate. “Are you sure?” he repeated, thumb tracing against the swollen lower cusp of Rich’s lips.

Rich made himself meet Donovan’s eyes and he nodded. “You want me,” he said, as if that explained it all.

Donovan closed his eyes and nodded. “I do,” he replied simply. Opening his eyes once more, he tightened his grasp on Rich, carrying him through the short hallway to his bedroom. Laying Rich on the bed, he whispered, “God, how I want you...”

Sprawling out on the bed, the younger man pulled his t-shirt over his head and threw it to the floor, his hand moving to press against his own hard cock through his jeans. “I want this ... and you. Now come here,” he demanded.

Donovan pulled his own shirt off and crawled over Rich. He lowered his body, allowing his chest to press against the young man’s hard cock before their skin met and he slid up Rich’s chest. Kissing Rich’s chin, Donovan reached between them to palm the ridge concealed behind the denim of Rich’s jeans. He squeezed and stroked gently, lips moving to capture Rich’s once more.

Groaning again, Rich wrapped his arms around Donovan. “I had no idea...” he said breathlessly after the long kiss. “No idea it could be like this.” His cheeks were flushed with color, eyes sparkling.

Donovan froze. “You’ve never? God, Rich ... are you sure you want to do this? With me?” His hand continued its ministrations even as a small frown crossed his forehead. He felt infinitely humbled by Rich’s desire and willingness.

Rich blinked. “Yes! Yes, I want this. Please, don’t stop,” he begged. “I noticed it the first time we met ... around you I felt flushed, out of breath, but I didn’t understand why. Then you said I was beautiful...” He reached to pull Donovan’s hips against his, their hard cocks mashing together. “Please don’t stop.”

Donovan couldn’t deny Rich. He took the willing mouth, tongue sweeping inside to fight with Rich’s even as he unfastened the young man’s jeans. He pushed at them, finally able to reach inside and grasp hot flesh. He moaned against Rich as he fisted the hard length.

Rich’s shocked cry echoed off the walls as he jerked up against Donovan’s hand. “Oh, hell!” His own hands slid down to cup Donovan’s rear, trying to keep the other man as close as possible. “You’re gonna make me come!”

Donovan dropped his head against Rich’s shoulder, biting at the fleshy knob as he continued to stroke. Maybe coming would make it easier for the young man. It would relax his body and would provide ... lubrication ... for other things.

“Oh God ... oh God ... oh Donovan!” Rich yelled as he catapulted into orgasm, body seizing as his hips pressed up, sending the splatter of come all over Donovan’s hand and his own belly.

Donavan kissed Rich's gasping lips, smiling as he maneuvered the boneless young man from the rest of his clothing. The sight and sound and smell of Rich's release had pushed Donovan's arousal to record limits, making him hurry as he stripped himself. He moved to kneel between his lover's legs, bending one at the knee and placing Rich's foot against his shoulder. His arm wrapped around the bent leg, teasing at Rich's softened cock, hoping to bring it back to life. His wet hand slid into the crease of the young man's ass, teasing at the furled opening hidden there.

Hissing softly at the pressure spiraling in his gut, Rich blinked up at Donovan. "You want me," he whispered, almost a silent mantra.

"Yes," Donovan sighed, "I do want you. I want this ... so much ... I—" He cut himself off from admitting that he feared how he'd survive when Rich left Tetonia. Instead, he whispered encouragement as his thumb pressed inside Rich's body.

Rich's eyes rolled back in his head, his cock already hardening again under Donovan's ministrations. "Yes ... please..." he whispered, hips lifting toward the older man.

Donavan stretched the untried opening, adding another finger and searching for that hidden nub deep inside Rich's body. He found himself unconsciously swaying his hips back and forth with each thrust of his fingers, the leaking head of his cock rubbing against Rich's upraised thigh.

Wincing at the pressure, Rich was about to protest when pleasure exploded through his groin. "Christ! Do that again!" His hands scrabbled to take hold of Donovan's shoulders. "Please ... Donovan..."

Donavan added a third finger at the exclamation, pressing his longer, middle finger against the nub he'd found. He rubbed back and forth, twisting his fingers in the clutching hole. "Anything," Donovan promised, nudging the nub yet again, "Anything..."

Gasping aloud, Rich reached to pump his own cock, which he found hard and leaking. "You're driving me nuts! Please! Do it!" His eyes flared with heat.

Donavan removed his fingers and spread the evidence of his own throbbing arousal along his shaft. He grasped Rich's other leg and raised it to rest across his shoulder. "Will make it easier for you..." he rasped, pressing forward until he could feel the heat of Rich's body. The slick opening gave under the light pressure, making him cry out as he was engulfed in raging heat.

Rich grimaced but sighed, and amazingly, he felt Donovan slide in without too much pain. It wasn't at all what he had expected ... it was ... amazing. "Fuck..." he whispered. "You're inside me."

Sighing as he slid to a stop against Rich's hips, Donovan nodded, seemingly in pain from holding back. "Fuck yes ... so good ... you – oh god..." He fell forward, Rich's legs sliding down to hook over his elbows, but he could kiss the beautiful man beneath him this way.

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### 13

Pressing their lips together, Rich sank his hands into Donovan's hair, whimpering into his mouth as he had no friction on his own aching erection. He tore his mouth away. "Please, I need more," he panted.

Donavan began to move slowly, not wanting to hurt the seemingly fragile being beneath him. His hand found purchase on the slippery cock that jostled between them with each thrust, and he stroked it lovingly as he looked into Rich's eyes.

"Yes ... yes..." Rich cried as Donovan pushed into him. "Oh yes, please ... more!"

Donavan's strokes lengthened, grew rougher ... less practiced and more erratic. His head dropped to Rich's shoulder, his hips pistoning heedlessly as he stroked at Rich's reawakened length. He could feel his release gathering in his groin, preparing to explode at the slightest provocation.

Driven to a distraction, Rich gasped with each thrust, then lowered his mouth to Donovan's ear. "You ... want ... me..." he said with each push. "I'm ... yours..." Then his body seized up again and he howled as the orgasm crashed through him.

Donavan continued thrusting through Rich's orgasm, his face growing tortured as he neared his own release. "I do want you," Donavan cried, "forever!" He slammed into the limp body beneath him two – three more times and then he yelled as he came deep inside of his new lover.

Donavan's words were lost in the sounds of blood rushing in his ears, and Rich could only hear his lover's shouting as he collapsed back against the pillow, overcome and drained, nearly unconscious.

Donavan fell against Rich, letting the younger man's legs fall to his sides as he regained his breath. Poor Rich. He was wiped out. Donavan slid from the bed and cleaned the younger man before slipping into his clothes and checking Noble. He heard noises in the barn and ran to the exam room, finding Noble scuffling to lose his bonds and wagging his tail. Donavan ran back to the house, hating to wake Rich, but knowing he'd be in trouble if he didn't.

At feeling himself shaken, Rich pried open an eyelid. "Huh?" he murmured.

"Come with me, beautiful," Donavan whispered, holding Rich's jeans out to him. "There's something you need to see."

Confused and bleary, Rich climbed off the bed and pulled on the jeans, padding outside after Donavan.

Rich walked entirely too slowly for Donavan's tastes, so he hauled the slight man into his arms and carried him into the exam room. Noble was sitting on the floor, eating food as if he'd never been fed before. Donavan sat Rich down and whispered, "Look!"

"Noble!" Rich cried happily, falling to his knees to greet the dog who tramped over playfully to his master. The young man looked up to Donavan, more tears in his eyes. "Thank you," he said, hugging a wriggling Noble close. "Thank you," he added softly.

Donavan merely smiled, stepping back out of the way. “No problem.”

RICH climbed out of the car, whistling, smiling and laughing as Noble ran out to greet him. “Hey, Noble, how was your day? Where’s Donovan, huh?” Noble licked Rich’s face, barked, and ran back toward the barn, so he followed.

It was almost a replay of the day Rich found Donovan in the barn years earlier. Donovan shoved the pitchfork into the bale of straw as he heard Rich’s voice and pulled off his gloves. He wiped his hands on his jeans and as Rich rounded the corner, he leaned back against the stall gate, hooking the heel of his boot on a plank. “Howdy, stranger,” he drawled, face lighting up as Rich stopped in front of him.

“Hey, handsome,” Rich drawled back, sliding his hands around Donovan’s neck and pulling him down for a loving kiss. He sighed happily afterward. “How was your day?”

“Busy. Starlight birthed her foal in the back pasture. Noble brought me a pet rabbit, and then the mail carrier had a registered letter. For you.” He pulled it from his back pocket, passing it to Rich. He stole a kiss before he released his grip on the envelope.

Brows lifting in curiosity, Rich smiled into Donovan’s kiss while pulling on the envelope. He looked it over, flipping it. “It’s from Virgin Records,” he said, excited as he tore it open.

“Appropriate, no?” Donovan teased, tweaking Rich’s nose. “After all, you were my little virgin boy.”

Rich swatted at Donovan, having heard the teasing many times before. He pulled out the letter, skimming, smile growing. “They bought it! They bought my song! And they want more!” He jumped right into Donovan’s arms and laid a huge kiss on him.

Donovan pushed away from the wall, swinging Rich around as he laughed in relief. “I knew you’d do it eventually, baby,” he crooned, burying his face in Rich’s neck. “I knew it.”

“I couldn’t have done it without you, Donovan,” Rich said happily. “I love you.”

“I love you too, angel.” Donovan grinned, twirling Rich once more for good measure. “What say we go celebrate? Scandalize Frank and Bobby by kissing on the street as we tell the whole town?”

Rich laughed. “Sure. We can stop by and see Kristy, Jake and the kids. We were going to take them those two kittens, remember?”

Donovan picked his published songwriter, significant other, husband, love of his life up and threw him over his shoulder. “On second thought, maybe we should do our celebratin’ here.”

Curling his arms around Donovan's neck, Rich grinned. "As long as you want me, I'm yours," he said softly, pressing his lips to his lover's.

"Forever," Donovan whispered back, grinning against Rich's lips. "Forever."



Sonja Spencer

Sonja Spencer has always enjoyed writing as an escape from her professional life. She spends what spare time she has with her family and friends; and she loves long walks on the beach, jumping in puddles and cuddling puppies. She aspires to be an entertaining writer and a gourmet chef.

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers.