



Her Best Man



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Houston

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Her Best Man

an erotic romance short by

MICHELLE HOUSTON

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Disheartened, Katherine slumped to the kitchen floor and stared at the filled boxes surrounding her. It was sad to see three and a half years of her life reduced to a couple dozen boxes. She could see the corner of a picture frame peeking out from one box, her clothing tossed haphazardly into another few. Most of the things that had been part of her home, she had to leave behind.

“Damn him,” she whispered to the empty room.

Not one to normally sit and cry over what couldn’t be changed, she blinked rapidly as her eyes started to burn, heralding tears to come. Wiping angrily at her eyes with the backs of her hands, she refused to let them fall. Grabbing another of the boxes, she folded the flaps down and taped them closed, before pushing it aside.

The quick rap of knuckles against her kitchen door was the only warning she had before Rick swung the door open and stepped into the room. The sunlight glinted off his sandy hair, catching on the blond highlights and creating a slight halo effect before the door swung closed behind him.

“Hey, gorgeous,” he said as he squatted next to her. “Ready to move into your new place and leave the shit-head a mess?”

Despite the urge to cry, Katherine couldn’t resist laughing. “He’s your best friend, Rick. Even though you’re my friend, even though my marriage ended, I don’t want to come between you two. You were the best man at our wedding, for crying out loud.”

“Babe, you’re not making me choose. *He did*, the moment he cheated on you. Especially since he actually had the nerve to expect me to cover for him.”

Katherine felt a tingle inside at the touch of his warm hand as he cupped her cheek and tipped her head up, forcing her gaze to meet his. “He’s also not worth crying over.”

She wanted to drown in the warmth of his blue eyes, to curl up inside of him and sleep until the pain disappeared.

“I know.” And she did. As much as Brian had hurt her, she knew he wasn’t worth it. She knew when she married him that he was immature despite how much she thought he loved her. She didn’t expect to change him, but she had expected him to settle down like he swore he would.

That promise, like so many others, had long since been broken. Rick knew about the cheating, but he had no idea about the other issues that had plagued their brief marriage—the gambling and the drinking were what worried her most. She left him before she found herself in debt, and before his drunken rages had escalated into full-on abuse. The other women just made the decision easier.

“I still think you should have kept the house in the divorce. You gave in much too easily, asking only to live here until everything was finalized.”

“Yeah, well, I didn’t want the constant reminders.” Needing to stop that train of thought before she pictured the image of her husband and his latest bimbo in their bed, she quickly changed the subject. “I think I’m about done, and since you’re so determined to help, you can go ahead and start tossing the boxes in my car.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Rick pressed a brief kiss against her forehead then stood. Katherine watched him stack two boxes, pick them up, and head out to the door. Shaking her head, she pushed how good the feel of his lips against her skin had felt aside and focused on getting the rest of her stuff into boxes. The last thing she needed at the moment was to remember her hopes of getting together with him before she was swept off her feet by his best friend. Where Rick was steady and calm, patient to a fault, and the best friend she could ever ask for, Brian had been a whirlwind of intensity, leaving her unbalanced, heart racing, and ready to go at a moment’s notice. She often wondered what would have been if she had tried with Rick instead, if she had been able to get him to see her as something other than his friend.

Would they have a kid by now? Would he be cheating? Would she? Or would they be looking forward to what the future held for them?

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Eyes burning with a fresh rush of tears, this time self-pitying and mocking, she blinked rapidly and turned her attention back to her task—packing all her things and starting over.

She was taping the last of her boxes about twenty minutes later when Rick squatted next to her again. “Okay, so far we have loaded your car and most of my truck cab with your stuff, but the bed’s still halfway empty. Anything else you want to take with you?”

Katherine looked through the doorway to the living room, painstakingly decorated, each piece debated over as she tried to mesh her and Brian’s style together. There were a few pieces she liked, but nothing she loved—not as she had the cherry coffee-table, or the sleigh bed, or the dozen other pieces she had resisted the urge to buy in favor of something Brian would also like.

Every item of furniture only reminded her of how much she had compromised, and how little of herself had shown through in their marriage. She planned to buy all of the things she had wanted in the first place, to furnish her new place.

“No, nothing. I’ll just grab my laptop bag, and if you’ll get this box, we’re ready to go.”

“Tell you what, hon, I’ll grab both and you walk through again, just in case. We can pad the big-screen if you want it, or I can find someone to help get the fridge or even the washer and dryer into the truck bed if you’d like. Just think about it.” Katherine smiled just as she knew Rick had planned it out. She hadn’t planned on him helping, but should have. He had been considerate throughout the last few months, stopping by often to check on her, always leaving her with a vaguely frustrated feeling as he left. She yearned for him, in a way she shouldn’t have. Deep inside, she couldn’t help but wonder if that was what had driven Brian to cheat, to drink and gamble, because although she was faithful to him in body, her soul craved the man she had walked away from years ago.

As Rick headed out with his last load, Katherine stood and walked through the house for the last time, the ghosts of the past trailing behind her. Some of her friends had told her she should take Brian to the cleaners, get the house and everything in it, but

she had settled for a quick divorce. He had moved into a hotel during the three months required to be considered separated to push the proceedings forward. This morning they had signed the last of the paperwork. In the eyes of the courts, and everyone else, their relationship was officially over. But standing there in the house, she could feel the memories pressing in on her.

Brushing at a tear that had escaped, she wondered just how trapped he had felt the last few months. Certainly she had felt it for a while, and given they hadn't slept together in the same room in more than two months, she wondered why she hadn't filed sooner. She had thought about it frequently, but always put it down that he needed her. Maybe it was her fault.

Signing softly, she trailed a finger over the faint coating of dust that had accumulated on the banister in the last few days. The house did hold some good memories. Brian carrying her up the stairs on their anniversary, their first night in their own home. One afternoon when he had been out of town for a few days, and he came home early, they had made love in the entryway. The long dinners, where they had sat and talked for hours. The bubble-baths together.

Each step easier to take than the last, she climbed the stair case and walked down the hall, until she stood in the bedroom doorway. Leaning against the doorframe, she stood there in silence and let the tears win. As the heat of them trailed down her cheeks, rolling along the line of her jaw until they landed with a wet splash against her shirt, she remembered the good and the bad times.

Being chased around the room until he tumbled them both onto the bed, where they had screwed each other senseless.

The sight of him on top of some nameless blonde, his lean hips pumping as he groaned out his ecstasy. His drinking himself senseless and stumbling to bed.

A throat clearing behind her had her jerking away from the doorway and turning. Rick stood near the top of the stairs, a hesitant look on his face. "I didn't want to bother you, but you've been standing there almost a half hour, and I started to get worried."

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As his gaze flowed over her face, his eyes darkened and he climbed the last few steps. His hands cupped her cheeks, and calloused thumbs brushed the tear stains from them.

“Are you sure?” Rick asked. “Are you ready to move out and move on?”

Katherine nodded, her throat too tight to speak. It wasn’t that she didn’t want to leave Brian behind. She just didn’t know what the future held anymore, and the urge to stay where she felt comfortable, even if she wasn’t happy, was strong. A small part of her screamed for her to call Brian up and work things out, damn the divorce. Yet looking into Rick’s eyes, she reclaimed the core of strength within her that had been holding her steady. She deserved better than Brian, and even if his unhappiness was partially her fault, it was also his for not asking to be let go. In that, she wouldn’t suffer the blame.

“I’m ready. It’s time to go.”

Stepping back, she pulled away from Rick’s touch before she did something stupid, and shifted past him and headed down to the first floor. She could hear the quiet tread of his boots on the steps behind her.

Without pausing, she tossed her keys on the hallway table, headed into the kitchen and out the door. Rick followed, stopping long enough to turn the lock on the door and pull it closed. She headed to her car and was sinking into the seat before she started shaking.

Rick’s gaze met hers as he headed to his truck, and he winked at her. Despite the pain, the fear bombarding her, she smiled back. It hurt, but having Rick steady beside her, knowing he would be with her through this, helped. During the months of separation, she had steadily lost most of her friends as they were “couple” friends—and they didn’t know how to relate to her now that she wasn’t part of the couple. Only Rick seemed to be able to adjust to her being single, to her being without Brian. She wasn’t certain if it was because he knew her before, or if it was due to his anger at Brian. Whatever it was, though, she was grateful to have him to lean on.

* * * *

Several days later, Katherine had just settled down on her newly bought couch in her now decorated apartment, when a

knock sounded at the door. Kicking off her shoes as she stood, she moved to the door and looked out the peephole. Rick stood on the other side, his sandy hair slightly curly and unruly.

Running a hand through her auburn locks, trying to bring them to some semblance of order, she waited for him to knock again before opening the door. With a grin, Rick held up a pizza box perfectly balanced on one hand and used his other to pull her close for a hug. Katherine allowed herself the brief touch of her body against his, the moment to inhale the scent of his cologne and slightly sweaty skin, and then pulled back.

“Welcome to my abode.” Stepping back, she grabbed the pizza and headed into the kitchen. She caught a glimpse of Rick grabbing something off the floor at his feet before following her into the apartment.

Katherine set the pizza down on the counter, then turned around, watching Rick take in her new place. His knowing gaze trailed over the furniture as he surveyed the room, a smile curving his lips. When he reached her, she could feel the liquid heat of his gaze trailing over her, before meeting her eyes. “Now this is more you,” he said as he crossed the room and slipped past her. After setting the bag down on the counter, he started searching through the cabinets.

“Make yourself at home.” Katherine drawled, amused rather than upset at his highhandedness. He was just Rick. Given all the years she had known him, she wouldn’t have expected anything else but that he make himself comfortable in her home.

As he pulled down two of her long-stemmed wine glasses, she couldn’t help herself. Peering into the bag, she saw a nice Merlot, her favorite wine. Knowing Rick was more of a beer drinker when he was in the mood for alcohol, she had to give him credit. Pizza and a nice glass, or two, of wine was her perfect relaxing evening.

“How did you know I hadn’t eaten?”

Rick turned toward her, set the glasses on the counter, and stepped close, pressing her back against the edge between him and the bottle of wine. He braced one hand on the counter at her hip and reached for the wine with his other, and for a brief moment Katherine felt the glide of his body against hers. Her nipples hardened in response to the feel of his chest separated

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only by a few layers of clothing. "I know you like to eat around seven."

Katherine tried to remember what they were talking about, but couldn't. She felt like she had licked her finger and touched it to a live wire.

She watched Rick's eyes darken, and his Adam's apple lift up then drop as he swallowed. The tension in the room thickened, and she couldn't help leaning towards him, brushing her body against his again, subconsciously teasing them both. When they were hanging out it was something she had always wanted to do, but she always figured he would make the first move if he wanted to take things from friendship to something more. When he never did, she cut her loses and looked elsewhere, managing to keep him in her life as her friend.

Nostrils flaring with each deep breath he took, Rick set the bottle back down, stepped back and freed her. Rather than move away, Katherine moved closer and tentatively clasped his shoulders. Rick's head tipped towards hers, his lids opening softly. Looking into his smoky eyes, she couldn't help wondering what the hell she ever saw in her ex. This man was the one who fired her blood, and now at least he seemed to know it.

As his lips brushed against hers, she slid her arms around his neck and pressed closer. Opening her mouth, she invited his tongue to sweep past her lips and engage her own in a duel for control. His hands grasped her hips and pulled her tight against his body, the counter pressed hard against her back, but she didn't care. All that mattered was his fingers slowly working her skirt up higher and higher, until the top of her thighs were exposed. The feel of his fingertips gently stroking her skin was unlike Brian's touch. Where Brain had been quick to passion, quick to feed her own need, and quick to seek their mutual completion, Rick was slowly stoking the fires within her, coaxing her a bit at a time.

Sliding a leg to the side, she managed to straddle one of his firm thighs, and gasped as he pressed it tight against her crotch, grinding in to the sensitive skin covered by a wisp of lace and cotton.

Fisting her hands in the material of his shirt, she squirmed against him, causing him to lift her higher against him, until her toes barely touched the floor. His hands slid to her ass, cupping the sensitive cheeks and raised her up onto the countertop, all without breaking their kiss.

Katherine gasped in his mouth as he shifted their position, pressing his denim clad crotch against hers, teasing her with the delicious friction as he rocked slowly back and forth, the flow of his body ebbing just when she craved it the most.

Breaking the kiss, she tipped her head to the side as his head dipped, his lips pressed against her rapidly beating pulse. "This is crazy," she whispered.

Rick's lips left her neck from one heartbeat to the next, and he moved back. Tensing, she lifted her head and opened her eyes to look at him. He was breathing heavily, looking for all the world like a man fighting a battle within himself.

"I didn't say I didn't want this, just that it's crazy."

"I'm taking advantage of you," he responded.

Katherine grabbed hold of his shirt and pulled him closer, succeeding only by catching him off guard. "No, you're not. You never did. I waited weeks for you to show you were ready to move beyond friends, lonely nights, wondering if I was reading your signals wrong, too scared to trust myself enough to make the first move."

Rick's eyes widened for a moment, before a small smile curved his lips. "And here I thought you didn't see me that way. Every time I worked up the nerve to make a move, you always seemed to withdraw."

"I was scared, Rick. I wanted you, but I was scared of what you made me feel." She could feel the beat of his heart under her knuckles, the steady thump-thump at sharp contrast to her own racing pulse. She had always admired that about him, his ability to be in such control of himself, yet so free.

He reminded her of a wild animal, managing to function within society, but always drawn elsewhere. Where Brian was outgoing and reckless, Rick had always been steady, with a leashed intensity she was only now coming to understand.

"So much lost time," he whispered as he leaned down, the brush of his lips over hers so light, she wondered if she had

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imagined it, until he brushed over them again. As he passed by a third time, she licked her lips as his were passing over.

Rick groaned softly and shifted closer, but still not close enough for her. Sliding her feet up the side of his legs, she wrapped them around his waist and locked her ankles, forcing him back in the cradle of her body. The thought of dinner brushed briefly against her mind, but the feel of his body against her was more important than any pizza ever could be. There was a microwave, and reheated pizza was almost as good as it was fresh.

“We have a lot of catching up to do,” she whispered against his lips before claiming them with her tongue, thrusting past and deepening their chaste kiss into one of carnal delight. Her fingers trembling with the intensity of her need for him, Katherine grasped the bottom of his shirt and pulled it free of his jeans. Rich groaned and broke the kiss, his hands unsteady as he helped her pull the shirt over his head. As she tossed it aside, his fingers tangled in her auburn hair, gently tugging until she tipped her head back, allowing him access to her neck.

Her motions jerky, she managed to get the first two buttons undone, but his lips quickly followed, placing soft open-mouth kisses against the bared skin. Anxious to feel more, she struggled with the last few buttons as he tormented her, his hands lightly running from her neck down her back and up again. As the last button slid free, she shrugged the shirt off, and let it pool at her hips. Her skirt rode up as she shifted, wiggling to be closer to the heat of his body, needing to feel her breasts against his chest, her groin solidly locked against his.

Rick’s muffled groan of masculine approval whispered over her skin, sending a fresh wave of heat to her pussy. She could feel her panties rapidly growing damp, the silky material pressing against her throbbing flesh. She wanted him inside of her, but he didn’t seem to be in any hurry as his lips continued to leisurely sample her warm flesh, his fingertips softly stroking over her bared back.

Cupping her breasts in her hands, she unhooked the front clasp of her bra, baring her skin to the warmth radiating from his body. Rocking her hips, she surged against him, grinding her needy flesh against his erection. She knew he wanted her, his

cock was straining against the denim of his jeans, but unlike her ex-husband, he wasn't making any move to unzip them and sink into her welcoming wetness.

Wanting to move things along, she reached between them, only to lose the feel of his touch against her skin as he grasped her wrists in his hands and pulled her hands away from his zipper. "Easy," he whispered against her neck, the warm of his lips sending a trail of fire along her nerve endings. She about screamed as he flicked his tongue against her pulse, then shifted back, unlocking her ankles from his waist with a roll of his hips. "Show me what you like."

Watching the way his gaze moved over her, she felt sexy. With Brian she wouldn't have been able to sit on the kitchen counter and touch herself. But there was something about the leashed intensity of Rick's eyes. The way he held himself still as she cupped a breast and rolled her nipple between the thumb and forefinger of one hand while her other hand slowly eased down her stomach to the top of her skirt, the way his breath caught as she shifted forward, braced the heels of her feet on the handles of her drawers and flipped her skirt up to bare her damp panties, emboldened her.

She wanted him to watch her, to see her as a sensual woman rather than his friend, needed him to desire her as she had him for so long. Sliding a hand inside her panties, she stroked it over her wet lips, barely daring to slip past.

"More." His voice was deeper than she had ever heard it, and it sent a flutter of awareness throughout her body. She was going to make love with this man, was going to soon feel the slide of his hard length inside of her pussy, feel his cock surging in and out of her body.

Carefully, she lifted her hips and pushed her skirt and panties down, then kicked free of them. For a brief moment, she wondered what the hell she was doing sitting bare assed naked on her kitchen counter with Rick, but the flaring of his nostrils, the way he clenched his fists at his sides, pushed any fear aside. She wanted this, needed to be this woman with him, the kind of woman who knew what she wanted and went after it.

Still shy, she returned her hands to their earlier positions, and dipped her finger into her core, stroking it along her slick

inner walls. A moan welled inside her and escaped at the feel of her fingernail lightly scraping her sensitive flesh. Rick groaned in echo and moved forward, his mouth slamming down over hers as his hands slid between them, his fingers joining hers in playing with her body.

Rick's lips burned down her neck, slowly moving lower, down her chest, her stomach, until he knelt down and pressed soft kisses against her inner thighs. Katherine's eyes almost crossed as he nipped at the tender skin.

Pulling her hands away, she moved them to her breasts, coating her nipples in her juices as she started pinching and pulling on them, sending sparks of pleasure-pain along her body to her clit.

Rick meandered his way to her pussy, his tongue lapping gently at her flesh and his fingers continued to play and torment her clit, holding her just on the edge of arousal, but not allowing her passions to build enough to drive her into orgasm.

Whimpering in need, she rocked her hips into his motions, trying to coax him into licking her where she needed it the most. Katherine could feel the moist heat of his breath brushing across her pussy, teasing her. When he showed no signs of cooperating, she decided to take control. Reaching down with one hand, she fisted it in his hair and tried to guide him where she wanted him. With Brian she never would have dared to do something so wanton. She had always let him set the pace, trusting him to take her with him, generally too swept up in the moment to give it much thought.

But with Rick she was aware of her body to a level she hadn't experienced before, and his leisurely pace allowed her to play, to explore to a deeper degree. He pulled his hands away from her pussy, spread her legs wider, and pressed his lips against her pussy-lips, a closed mouth kiss. Frustrated, she tried to push him away only to have him drive his tongue in fast and deep into her core while his fingers returned, pinching her clit and teasing along the seam of her lips. Squirming, she slid down on the counter until her hips hung over the edge and she could twist and recline, her body draped along the counter.

She could feel her orgasm quickly building. Returning her hands to her body, she caressed up and down her torso, stroking

her body with the backs of her fingers, gliding them over her nipples and down along her sides. Rick settled into a steady thrusting with his fingers, lapping at her pussy with his tongue as his fingers retreated, while rolling her clit in tiny little circles with his thumb.

Sweet euphoria rushed over her within minutes, her core tightening around his tongue and fingers. With a gasp, she arched her back, tightened her body, and rode the wave as her orgasm rushed over her, her nerve endings exploding in unison.

She could feel Rick's tongue leave her, and was vaguely aware of him standing, but his fingers continued their magic, driving her quickly into a second orgasm, this one stronger than the first. Whispering his name softly, she pinched her nipples hard, increasing the sensations coursing through her.

She wasn't sure if she could stand, but she knew she wanted more, she wanted to feel his body covering hers. When his hands left body, she moaned softly in complaint.

"Shhh, Kath," he whispered as he slid his arms under, picking her up, and holding her against his bare chest. Katherine wrapped her arms around his neck, pressing soft kisses against his neck as he carried her down the hall.

"Which door?"

"Mmmm, the right," she managed to say against his neck. She didn't want to think any more, she just wanted to feel. She was tired of thinking. Closing her eyes, she drifted, held safe in his arms as he crossed her bedroom.

The next thing she was aware of was the cool feel of her sheets against her skin as he laid her down, then came down over her, his body a welcome weight. Claspng at his shoulders, she pulled him tight against her, her limber legs wrapping around his waist. Rubbing her damp pussy against the denim covering his crotch, she whimpered at the rough feel even as she increased the friction, her body demanding more.

"So much lost time," he whispered against her neck as his lips trailed a path of liquid heat, stinging her nerve endings. Her fluttered at his words, her throat tight with emotion.

"We have all the time in the world," she finally managed to whisper back as she slid her hands down his body, sliding them between their bodies to the button of his jeans. Nimble working

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on the piece of metal, she managed to slide it free as he continued to kiss his way down her neck, along the curve of her collarbone and further downward until he was worshipping at her breasts. Working his zipper down, Katherine managed to open the fly enough so she could grasp Rick's cock, the smooth length hard and hot in her hands.

With a groan muffled against her breasts, Rick wiggled out of her grasp and knelt between her legs. Pushing his jeans down his hips he bared his cock fully to her gaze. Trailing her gaze over his body, she smiled lazily.

This was the man she had been waiting for forever.

As Rick slid off of the bed and stood, his hands quickly pushed his jeans and briefs from his body, she rolled over and fumbled in the nightstand drawer, pulling out a foil package. She ripped it open and had it ready when Rick knelt between her legs again.

Sitting up, she quickly rolled the latex sheath over his cock, then wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him back into the welcoming heat of her body. His cock nudged at the entrance of her pussy, and she arched against him, craving the firm heat of him plunging deep inside of her, filling her.

Tipping her head up, she pressed her lips against his, claiming his mouth with her tongue as he rocked forward, his cock infinitely slow in joining them together. Whimpering into his mouth, she wrapped her legs around his waist and pulled him in tighter. Her pussy fluttered as his cock slid deeper, then retreated. She could feel the slap of his pelvis against hers as he thrust, his hips gliding up and down the sensitive skin of her inner thighs.

Breaking the kiss, she gasped out her pleasure, moans filling the room as he picked up the pace. Holding tight to his shoulders, she dug tiny crescents with her nails as he settled into a steady rhythm. Her body hummed with desire, every nerve ending screaming for more, for the sensations to never end.

Rick's breathing grew harsh as he dropped his head to lie next to hers on the pillow, his face pressed against the curve of her neck. Sliding her arms further around him, she stroked them over his back and down to his ass. Gripping the soft skin, she

pressed him as tight into her body as she could with each down stroke.

Her body damp with their sweat, she was reaching for the stars, her slick inner muscles clutching at Rick's cock, growing tighter with each thrust. Until, with a soft scream, she climaxed, her moans echoing off the bedroom walls.

She was dimly aware of the tightness of his body, the faster, shorter strokes within her as he rushed toward his own orgasm, driving her back over the crest into yet another of her own. Holding him tight, she fought to recover her breath, needing to say so many things to him.

A while later, she opened her eyes and looked into Rick's twinkling blue ones, feeling satisfied emotionally as well as physically for the first time in a long while. Cupping his strong jaw in her hand Katherine rose up from where she rested against his chest and kissed him, needing to convey to him in some way what she was feeling, but unsure if either was ready for the words. As she pulled away, she curled back up against his chest, his hands stroking through her damp hair. "There's so much I feel like we should talk about. So much that needs to be said."

His hands stilled for a moment at her words, and her heart leaped, uncertain of what he would say. "I think there's a lot we should have said before now. But right now, in this moment, holding you in my arms, I am content to wait so long as you know that you mean more to me than just a friend. That I want more from you than that."

Katherine pressed a soft kiss against his breastbone, the sprinkle of hair on his chest tickling her nose. "So do I Rick. I always did."

About the Author

Born to ride on the back of dragons, to journey among the stars in a ship traveling faster than light, or to dance the night away in the arms of a mysterious vampire, Michelle Houston willingly shares the worlds in her mind in an effort to bring them to life.

Writing everything from short and sweet stories, to hot and spicy tales of kink, from contemporary tales of romance to erotic romances featuring Greek gods, vampires and were-creatures, she has crossed sexualities and has gone wherever her mental muse has guided her, a journey she has never regretted.

Beyond that, she has a love of the natural world around us (except for insects, spiders, snakes, scorpions, and she reserves the right to add more at any time) and hopes to share the enjoyment of the earth with her students once she finally earns her degree in secondary Biology/Earth Science Education.

In other words, she is an ordinary woman with an imagination that is only held in bounds by how fast she can type.