

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

SHELLEY
MUNRO

Fringe
BENEFITS

ELLORA'S CAVE
Quickies

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Fringe Benefits

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FRINGE BENEFITS

Shelley Munro

Chapter One

Heat shimmered in the air, making patterns swirl above the sealed driveway. A New Zealand summer at full blast—hot, humid and sweltering with dazzling blue skies and a capricious breeze. Marie Wright stretched out on a towel under the shade of an old oak tree, droplets of water glistening on her partially naked body. The house she shared with Kelvin Green and Shane Coulter lay on the outskirts of small-town Tuakau. They had no close neighbors, a fact she appreciated on this sticky January day since there was no one to witness her swimming topless in the river.

A sigh escaped as she thought of her two flatmates. Falling for both men at the same time was a disaster waiting to happen. Plain weird and kinky even, but oh, she wished she were brave enough to act on the desire. Two men and one woman. No matter how hard she tried, the thought refused to go away. It was making her crazy, but she didn't want to lose their friendship or upset her current housing situation so she remained silent.

"Hey, Marie. You gonna turn over and let me see those luscious breasts of yours?"

Marie let out a shriek and bolted upright, grasping her orange beach towel to her breasts and knocking her sunglasses askew. She only relaxed when she saw it was Kelvin and that he was alone. Her breath eased out but her heart continued to race. "Don't frighten me like that." She rearranged her towel and tried to relax again, or as much as she could in her semi-naked state. "Where's Saffron?"

Kelvin dropped a towel beside her and stripped off his faded T-shirt and black shorts. "We broke up."

His flat tone told Marie he didn't want to discuss it. She watched him stride to the riverbank naked, his lean and athletic form tanned to golden brown from their frequent swimming during the past month. Her mouth dried as she sneaked a look at his butt,

her eyes screened by the sunglasses. Beautiful. Muscles flexed with natural grace, reminding her of the statue David come to life. A jolt of desire shot straight to her pussy. Although she hadn't liked Saffron, she didn't like to see Kelvin hurting. But this did mean he was back on the market and until he found someone else to date, potential friends-with-benefits material again. Sexual hunger rolled through her like a rogue wave and her breathing hitched. Although she wanted both men at the same time, one would work. Of course, he probably wouldn't be interested in some lazy afternoon loving...

Marie considered the thought and slowly turned over onto her back, baring her breasts. She'd shared a house with Kelvin and Shane for two years, and for the first time in her life felt happy and secure. When it was just the three of them, it was better. Common interests in rugby and cooking had cemented their friendship. Time and close proximity turned them in to best friends.

She closed her eyes, wincing at the rapid tattoo of her heart. Kelvin splashed in the river and a thrush perched in the oak tree sang its little heart out. In a nearby paddock, a sheep let out a plaintive *baa* that sounded faintly complaining. Marie couldn't blame the creature. This heat wave was making everyone moody and miserable.

A whisper of sensation across one breast stirred her. Suspecting a fly, she swished a lazy hand. Then warm, wet suction closed around her nipple and her eyes flew open.

Kelvin pulled away to smile at her. "I couldn't resist." His dark brown eyes challenged her, dared her to tell him to stop.

As if. Marie wanted to grab him by the ears and direct his mouth back to her breast. She wanted to bossily order him to suck her nipple hard in easy, rhythmic pulls that would echo in her pussy and start the journey to pleasure. Instead, she cleared her throat. "You okay?"

A shadow crossed his face. "It's Friday and a long weekend. Why shouldn't I be okay?"

Neat avoidance of her question. If he didn't want to talk about Saffron, fine. "Have you seen my bikini top? I couldn't find it."

"I like you better without." Mischief lit his eyes as his fingers drifted across the lower curve of her breast. A prickle of heat shot from the spot he touched to settle in an ache between her legs. As they watched, her nipple pulled to a crest. "Much better," he murmured with masculine appreciation.

Heat collected in her cheeks but she couldn't look away from his fingers and the mesmerizing stroke of them across her breast, the contrast in color between her creamy skin and his tanned fingers. A sigh escaped as yearning and desire blossomed. She'd missed the closeness with Kelvin. Too much, if she was honest. The thought made her bite her lip in consternation. Friends with benefits was just that—sex with friends—but it meant no jealousy, no strings. No unruly emotions. It meant sticking to the rules they'd discussed before they'd decided on this course. No sex if they were in relationships with other people, no discussing the relationship with outsiders and most of all, respect.

A problem these days. Her feelings for Kelvin and Shane had grown from mere friendship to love after she'd become physically intimate with them. Jealousy. It nibbled at her mind, corroding her good intentions. She'd hated the perky Saffron as much as she disliked Shane's recent girlfriend. Marie had become a mite possessive about her men and it was becoming difficult to hide her feelings.

"You have the sexiest breasts. Voluptuous. Beautiful curves." Each word he punctuated with an open-mouthed kiss, moving closer to her taut nipple.

Begging words crammed her throat and her hands fisted in the nubby fabric of the towel. Finally—thank goodness—his mouth closed over her nipple. Suction plus a hint of teeth shoved past her misgivings and a groan escaped. The curl of heat throbbed between her legs and, with trembling hands, she cupped his head, running her fingers through his damp hair. Okay, so her misgivings were fragile and had fallen like a sandcastle to the tide. She couldn't help her feelings or the way her body responded to

Kelvin and Shane. Wanting two men didn't make her a slut. Or sick, she added defiantly, trying to argue with the voice of reason.

Kelvin lifted his head to blow across her glistening nipple. "Beautiful." He leaned over and took her other nipple into his mouth, dragging hard without gentleness.

Marie whimpered, arching up and clutching his shoulders when he would have pulled away. During the last three months she had missed Kelvin. With just his touch he had her hovering on the edge of control, moisture flooding her sex and tension rippling from head to toe.

Kelvin rolled onto his back and dragged her with him so she sprawled over his chest. To her relief, she wasn't the only one affected by their play. Kelvin sported an impressive erection, his face taut with desire.

"You're wet," she said, the droplets of water from his swim sending a raft of goose bumps across her heated skin.

"And if I'm lucky you will be too," he whispered. "God, you're so sexy, Marie. I love your curves and the way you enjoy your food."

Marie bit back a smirk. Obviously Saffron's veiled insults about her healthy appetite and love of cooking hadn't gone unnoticed. "If that's a hint for me to cook dinner tonight, no way. It's too hot to cook."

"How about a barbeque? Do we have steaks in the freezer?"

"We do, but aren't you going out tonight with the rest of the boys?" Kelvin and Shane and their friends normally went to the pub on a Friday night to play pool and shoot the breeze. Sometimes she went with them, but all she wanted to do tonight was laze around.

"Nah, thought I might hang out at home tonight. You?"

"I'm not going anywhere that requires putting on too many clothes," Marie said. "Are you sure you don't know where my bikini top is?"

"Shane and I might have mislaid it," Kelvin said with a grin.

"I knew it!"

"It's more fun when we skinny-dip."

"And when we have guests?"

"We'll give it back," he promised in a husky voice. His eyes darkened, the laughter fading until his lashes lowered to screen his expression. "Marie, I'm really horny. Can we have sex?"

Hell yes! Immediately, the tight ball of arousal in her lower body contracted, a tremor of pleasure and anticipation fluttering in her pussy. She grinned and wondered what had gone wrong between him and Saffron. "As long as you don't expect anything too energetic in this heat. Kiss me."

"I've missed you, Marie." He settled in to kiss her, nibbling gently on her bottom lip before licking and finally pushing his tongue into her mouth. Marie sighed, a purr of pleasure and acquiescence. She grasped his shoulders and rubbed against his hard chest with acute eagerness bubbling through her. God, she'd missed him so much.

"Is this a private party or can anyone join?"

Marie jerked away from Kelvin with a startled shriek. "You have to stop sneaking around. I'm gonna have to issue you with collars and bells." Fear and arousal galloped through her – a heady combination. "Are you alone?"

Shane laughed. "Relax, sweetheart. It's just me. I figured if either of you were home you'd be down here." He stripped off, tossing his white business shirt and black trousers in a heap and chucking a towel beside them.

Shane and Kelvin were both tall. Kelvin was leaner with chocolate brown eyes and curly deep-brown hair. Shane was broader and a few inches taller, but his eyes were blue and his hair verged on black. Both were self-assured and confident, and the three of them got along well together. It had been Shane who first suggested the friends-with-benefit deal after he'd walked in on her during a session with her vibrator. Marie's cheeks heated at the memory. She hadn't known where to look or what to do, and in the end had muttered that she'd had to do something because she was between boyfriends.

Shane had disappeared and come back with Kelvin. Right in her bedroom they'd discussed the proposition and come up with workable rules then Shane left her alone with Kelvin because he'd had a girlfriend at the time.

To Marie's surprise, the deal had worked well, bringing the three closer together and love on her part.

"What are you doing? What about our rules?" Shane demanded, glaring at Kelvin. "Where's Saffron?"

"They broke up," Marie said, feeling Kelvin tense beneath her. She rolled back onto her towel, figuring she'd cut off Kelvin's circulation if she didn't move.

"Aw, damn," Shane said. "I'll leave you alone. I knew I shouldn't have stopped at the pub."

"Don't go," Marie said. "It's been ages since the three of us have spent time together without others around. That's unless you have something better to do." Her heart knocked against her ribs. She wanted to blurt out that they could both make love to her at the same time, but she remained quiet, not adding to what she'd already said.

"First off, I'm gonna have a swim," Shane said, already striding to the riverbank.

"And we can continue," Kelvin murmured seconds before he pressed her into the ground and captured her mouth with his.

At first Marie's mind rebelled despite the insidious longings creeping through her mind lately. Although she'd made love with both men, it was always singly. They were always circumspect and kept things private. While she didn't mind fooling around in the relative privacy of their property, doing it in front of Shane seemed weird, even if it turned her on. There! She'd admitted it. It was official. She was turning downright kinky.

"Relax," Kelvin whispered against her lips. "It's only Shane. Neither of us would ever do anything to embarrass you." He nuzzled the tender skin of her neck before circling the shell of her ear with his tongue.

Slowly she relaxed again, acknowledging the truth. Her life was better with both of these men in it. As well as being her casual lovers, they were her best friends. Her childhood had been both terrifying and lonely, bouncing from one foster family after another, a young child with a shy personality rather than a more malleable baby. It was no wonder prospective parents had never adopted her. With Shane and Kelvin she had a home. A family. She trusted them.

Her eyes fluttered shut and she drifted, savoring the pleasure Kelvin gave with his mouth and allowing the sensation to build, layer upon layer. Prickles and stabs of heat twisted through her until she was a mass of sensual longing. Her thighs fell apart, exposing her moist sex, and she couldn't find it in herself to care. Greedily, she craved his talented fingers, his skillful, ravenous tongue and most of all she desired his thick shaft to fill the emptiness and give her vaginal walls something to clasp.

"Kelvin, please. You're killing me here. I thought you were horny," she said at a near wail. "All you've done is pass it on to me!"

His bark of amusement was a hot blast of air against her neck. His mouth drifted downward and fingers, callused from his carpentry work, fueled the conflagration inside, stroking across her collarbone. He nuzzled one breast, cupping it in his hand, squeezing and molding before lifting the elongated nipple to his mouth.

"That's better," she said in approval. "Feels really good especially when you suckle me." And it did. She could feel how wet she'd become from his petting. The flush of arousal crept across her skin and he hadn't even reached the good stuff yet.

Kelvin paused before taking her nipple deep into his mouth. A bungee of pleasure streaked down her body from the laving of his tongue and the bite of teeth. Then she felt suction at her other breast. Her eyes flicked open and she gasped.

"Twice the pleasure," Shane said in a husky voice. He waited for her protest, but words failed her. It was a dream come true. She managed a smile but couldn't have squeezed out a recognizable word if she'd tried. Her breathing turned ragged and she stared at the two dark-haired men. They both watched her closely, measuring her

reaction. When she said nothing, they glanced at each other, communicating silently. The pair lowered their mouths to her breasts, each closing their lips around a nipple. The twin sensation was like nothing she'd imagined, even in her red-hot dreams. Electric pleasure shot to her clit and another surge of liquid arousal moistened her cunt. At the back of her mind the voice of reason told her to object. This was taking the friend thing a little too far. Not that she worried about Kelvin and Shane gossiping. Her trust in them was absolute, but this felt as if she—they—were stepping into something unknown and different. Changing the rules. But something that felt so good couldn't be wrong. Surely? Not if this was what she craved. Marie kicked the whiny voice in the butt, ignoring it to enjoy a taste of the forbidden.

As one, the two men kissed their way down her body, taking delight in each gasp and quiver they forced from her. A nip of fingers here. The damp trail of a tongue, soothing yet full of potential. The scrape of teeth and the soft caress of masculine lips until she melted like the ice cream she'd eaten earlier in the day.

"Pinch her nipple," Kelvin said, suiting action to words. "She likes that."

"Marie's very responsive," Shane said.

"I love her curves. She always feels soft."

Shane lifted his head and grinned. "Nothing worse than banging a bony woman."

"Boys, I'm here." Marie lifted a languid hand.

"No shit," Kelvin said.

"I could wash my hair," she said, pretending snootiness.

Shane cocked his head, laughter twinkling in his blue eyes. "But you won't. You love sex."

"That doesn't make me bad," Marie snapped, stung by the silent implication. She was not a whore.

"Hell no. Marie, we don't think of you like that. You're our friend." Shane caressed her hip. His hand was smoother than Kelvin's since he worked in a sales office.

Kelvin reached up to kiss her, his lips gentle and holding apology. "You're our best friend. We respect you totally."

"You're the best lover I've ever had," Shane whispered into her ear.

Just like that, she felt better, felt hope. "Are we going to keep going?"

"As long as you're comfortable with both of us here," Shane said.

Kelvin nodded. "We'd never push you into doing something you didn't want."

And if she said she'd always wondered what a threesome would be like, but only if it was with Shane and Kelvin? The thought pulsed through her, trembled at her lips. She opened her mouth, but that damn knot in her throat banked up all her words. Marie swallowed and tried again. "I need release. It's no fun if I have to do it myself."

Chapter Two

Kelvin and Shane grinned. Marie's mouth curved into the requisite smile but inside she died a little and chastised herself for a coward. An opportunity to tell the truth, to tell them about her confusing feelings, her love, and she'd let it get away with an insipid smile and a feeble request for release instead. Jeesh!

They each kissed her, both starting out gently before taking the kiss deeper into wet, carnal. Passionate. Sensations rippled through her body faster than before. Marie squirmed and whimpers of pleasure escaped despite the pain of her teeth digging into her bottom lip.

"I think she likes that." Kelvin removed her bikini briefs and parted her legs farther.

"She's very wet." Shane peered over his friend's shoulder. "Shift aside and let me taste."

Kelvin shifted to the left. "There's room for both of us, if you don't mind getting closer."

Marie's eyes opened and she stared down her body. Kelvin and Shane were doing the spooky communication thing again. They glanced at each other before Shane grinned in a seductive manner that upped her pulse and sent a quiver arcing through her belly. *Oh my*. It was hot having both of them touching her, looking at her as if they wanted to eat her.

Shane squirmed beside Kelvin until they were both so close to her pussy their every breath was a heated stimulant on her swollen folds. Her heart pounded in such a loud tattoo she was sure they'd call her on it, sure they'd start teasing. But they didn't. As one, they kissed her inner thighs, moving closer and closer to her clit. The ache in her lower belly grew. Her hips arched up and she tried to spread her legs even farther apart.

A tongue lapped across her clit, a delicate touch, but clawing tension grabbed her. Her heels dug into the sunbaked ground and she felt the sleek thrust of two tongues. One tongue stroked downward and the other up to her clit. They grazed her swollen nub, giving her a shot of pleasure yet not enough to shove her into orgasm. Her cunt clenched and fluttered and she gasped.

"You taste sweet, Marie. Dammit, Shane. Shift over or I'm gonna kiss you instead of Marie."

"I wanna have a taste," Shane said. "Besides, I think what we've just done probably rates as a kiss. You taste like Marie."

"Oh my." Marie clutched at the large towel when his lips brushed her flesh and his tongue stroked across her clit. She ignored the byplay about the kiss even though it made her hotter and more hopeful than ever. "Damn, you know the way around a woman's body."

"It's you, Marie," Kelvin said. "You don't play games."

"If we do something you don't like, you tell us," Shane agreed.

Kelvin nodded. "Which is why we like foolin' around with you."

"How are we gonna work this?" Shane asked.

Exactly what she'd been wondering. Although she'd had anal sex with Shane before, they didn't have any lube with them. Marie didn't care what anyone said, as much as she enjoyed the full sensation and always came really hard, she needed lube.

"How about if one of us takes her doggy-style and Marie uses her mouth on the other? Suit you, Marie?" Kelvin asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Okay with me, but I want a bit more of a taste first," Shane said.

Kelvin stared at him before finally nodding.

Excitement pulsed inside Marie. She tried to relax but Shane pushed a finger inside her pussy.

"How wet is she?" Kelvin asked.

"Push a finger in alongside mine," Shane suggested. "Feel how hot and wet she is."

Marie groaned at the added thickness of another finger. Together they hooked them to massage her G-spot. Another groan escaped and she thrust her hips upward, searching for more, needing pressure on her clit so badly she was ready to plead for stimulation.

"Shane. Kelvin. Please, I need more." She slid a hand down her quivering belly, intent on touching herself and getting release.

"Just one quick taste," Shane promised, bracketing her wrist with his fingers and holding it prisoner while he licked and teased.

Kelvin watched her face the entire time, his eyes dark and intent, his face serious. Marie shivered, her clit pulsing under Shane's phantom strokes, so light she barely registered the touch. She groaned, shivering at the heat blazing across her skin.

"Don't let her come yet," Kelvin said.

"I won't." Shane dragged his tongue down her slit, making a slurping noise. When he lifted his head, his lips were shiny with her juices. "Want to make this last. The waiting will make it sweeter."

"But that's not fair," Marie protested.

Kelvin chuckled. "This will be worth the wait. I promise."

"Up on all fours, Marie," Shane said, slapping her butt when she rolled over.

Marie yelped, more startled by the slap than any pain. She squirmed, trying to move from range, but Shane put her over his knee. He cupped her ass with his palm. "Isn't she pretty? All round and luscious."

"Yeah," Kelvin agreed. "She has a sexy ass."

"Don't talk to my butt," Marie said, attempting to ignore the sick excitement inside. Playing with both of them exceeded her expectations. They'd ruin her for any other man. "Eek, don't spank me."

"Marie, I've spanked you before. You know you like it."

"No!" she said quickly, but telltale heat crowded her cheeks. Kelvin could see her face. He knew she lied. It was another of her sick fascinations, but dammit, how could it be wrong when it felt so good?

Shane slapped one butt cheek. The sharp crack of hand against flesh, followed by the sting made her gasp. Another slap followed on the heels of the first, the burn traveling across her ass to sink into her pussy. She moaned, her embarrassment at her reaction almost as hot as the cheeks of her ass.

"Damn," Kelvin said. "She likes that. Let me have a turn."

"Not too much, just enough to get her hot and desperate for us." Shane stroked her ass before the two men delivered a series of smacks, changing both angle and pace so she couldn't tell when or where they'd land. The burn increased, darting down to her sex until she throbbed for penetration and lifted into the strokes, needy whimpers spilling from her throat.

Marie swallowed after Shane and Kelvin delivered each stroke. Damn, but the two men were good with their hands. But luckily, the spanking had a dual edge, turning them on as much as it did her. She couldn't see Kelvin from her upended position on Shane's lap, but Shane's cock thrust up, the wet tip brushing her stomach. Hiding her smirk she squirmed enough to make him aware of his need. He cursed and stood, spinning her through the air.

"Warm-up is over," he said, his voice full of husky promise.

"Shane," she shrieked, surprised by his sudden move but trusting him totally. Neither man would hurt her. They'd proven it before and today would be no different.

Shane ignored her laughing protests. "Here or inside?"

"Here," Kelvin said. "It's a bloody sauna inside." He scooped up their beach towels and moved them to a grassy area, laying them one on top of the other.

"I'll go first." Shane's blue eyes shone with anticipation. He lay on the towels and glanced over at Marie. "On your hands and knees. No, not there. I need room to go underneath."

Marie's mouth quirked when she noticed his waggling eyebrows. She crawled over his body so they were face-to-face. "Like this?"

"Nah, other way. I wanna lick your clit and Kelvin's gonna take you from behind."

Licking. Sounded like a fun idea to her. Marie wet her lips and turned, straddling Shane's body to face his cock. It strained upward, thick and long, the head a deep red. A prominent vein ran along the underside. She huffed out a breath, directing the stream of air onto the head, and watched a liquid bead form at his slit.

"Oh yeah," Shane said.

Carefully balancing on one hand, she guided his cock to her mouth.

"Yes," he hissed when she closed her lips around him and delicately licked the crown and sensitive underside.

"Don't come yet, Shane," Kelvin mocked. "It will feel better if you wait."

"Fuck you." From Shane's tone she could tell his lips curved in a smart-ass smirk.

"Oh yeah. You'd like that." Kelvin moved behind her to stroke the heated flesh of her ass with his calloused hands. A quiver worked through her and a gush of arousal dampened her folds. Kelvin petted her ass, grazing his fingers closer and closer to her pussy.

"Touch me," she pleaded, releasing Shane's cock in order to talk.

Kelvin continued stroking, driving her crazy with his touch. "In good time, sweetheart."

"Soon, babe," Shane promised. "Don't you have things to do?"

"I'd better get my just rewards," she muttered darkly. Payback could be a bitch. She concentrated on Shane's cock, swirling her tongue across the head and taking him deeper into her mouth. She'd show him things to do. Sweet punishment.

"Marie," Shane said, her name a hoarse whisper of pleasure.

"That feel good, mate?" Kelvin asked.

"Bloody good," Shane muttered. "If she does it any better, I'm in trouble."

Marie hummed around Shane's cock and tongued along the underside, intent on driving him crazy. Kelvin, she'd leave until later.

Kelvin ran a delicate finger down her slit. "Soon, sweetheart. Is it still okay not to use a condom?"

"Have you been a good boy suiting up?" Shane asked on her behalf since she had a mouthful.

"I'm safe. Had a medical last week for the new insurance policy I'm taking out," Kelvin said.

"I'm good too," Shane said.

Marie released Shane's cock. "I trust you both. I haven't been with anyone else since the last time with Shane." *Oh hell. Why did she have to blurt that out?* They didn't need to know about her sex life or lack of it, how much she loved them both. She caught her bottom lip between her teeth, waiting for the inevitable questions. Thankfully they couldn't see her face because then the show would really be up.

"I thought you were going out with Sam," Kelvin said. "Saffron and I saw you together at the club."

"And what about Tony?" Sam asked. "He said the two of you went away for the weekend."

"You gossiped about me?" Marie asked at a half shriek. While she trusted Shane and Kelvin not to blather about their personal lives, she wouldn't take a bet on Sam or Tony.

"Hell no," Shane said. "Tony did all the talking. I said nothing."

Marie made a huffy sound. "I don't want to talk about my sex life."

"The way I'm hearing it, there isn't a sex life," Shane said.

“Yeah, we know you like sex. Why haven’t you done it with either of them?” Kelvin asked.

Definitely not a question Marie wanted to answer. How could she tell them she enjoyed their friendly love sessions better than anything in her past? No way was she going there. Time to change the subject. Marie took Shane’s cock into her mouth again and licked the broad head, dipping her tongue into the slit, going all out to distract. Shane moaned and, to her relief, Kelvin dropped the conversation too. Calloused fingers stroked down the valley between her buttocks, pressing firmly across her puckered entrance. Marie swallowed and Shane groaned again. Shane wriggled, shifting position a fraction, then she felt his tongue slip across her folds and circle her nub with delicate precision while Kelvin continued to tease her rosette.

It felt good, really good and better than the last time she’d slept with a man who wasn’t Kelvin or Shane. Why would she even look at another man when she could have Kelvin and Shane?

“I’m going fuck you now, Marie.”

God, yes. Anticipation rolled through Marie. He thrust two fingers inside her wet channel almost at the same time as Shane fluttered his tongue across her clit. She swallowed, immersing herself in the magical experience of having both men love her with their fingers and mouths. Her pulse pounded faster, a tight, achy sensation clutching her breasts and sex.

Kelvin removed his fingers, replacing them with his cock. He pushed inside, stretching her insistently. Her sensitive tissues parted when he drove inexorably deeper, filling the empty spaces she felt when she wasn’t with her flatmates. Kelvin invaded and retreated, the rhythm slow and designed to drive her crazy. Or perhaps it was a twin-edged sword because every time she licked Shane’s cock or clenched her vagina around Kelvin’s shaft they doubled their efforts to tease her. Why couldn’t she find someone else who made her feel so complete? So happy.

The thrusts of Kelvin's cock and swipes of Shane's tongue crowded in on her, the spikes of sensation coming closer, faster, sending her hurling into intense pleasure. She sobbed, taking Shane's cock deeper and working harder to make him come.

Ferocious heat flared in her pussy, a white-hot conflagration coming from her pulsing clit. Seductive pleasure filled her mind as much as her body and heart, and automatically she worked to return the sinful heat to her lovers, wanting to tease and draw them into her snare. Desire drowned her until a gentle sweep of Shane's tongue dealt the final blow. The tension snapped in an explosive starburst, sensations arcing down to the tips of her toes and rushing to her head. Her vagina clenched Kelvin's cock, wringing a soft curse from him. Seconds later she felt the spurt of his semen splashing the mouth of her womb, the hard grasp of his hands at her hips.

Shane licked at her nub and a second explosion detonated, ripping through her with less intensity. It was sweet. Decadent. Marie took Shane deeper, working him until his shaft pulsed and wept. She sucked hard, taking his thrusts. He groaned, large body tensing, then his climax thundered through him, his seed shooting down her throat. Marie swallowed, gentling her licks until he softened. With a final lick, she let him fall from her mouth. Kelvin pulled out of her pussy and they fell into a tangle of limbs.

"Ow, that was my face," Shane muttered.

"Come up this end and you won't get hurt," Kelvin said.

Shane wriggled free and moved up to Marie's other side. It was still hot, but a breeze had sprung up, washing across their sweat-slicked skin.

Marie wasn't going to move despite the heat. She was right where she wanted to be, sandwiched between the two men. She noticed they weren't moving either, despite their limbs brushing with an intimacy that would make most brows rise in speculation. Oh no, she wouldn't move a muscle until absolutely necessary.

Chapter Three

Marie lounged on their deck, supremely comfortable after great sex and a barbeque dinner. She loved the way they worked together doing household chores. It had never been a problem, right from the start. Both Kelvin and Shane liked to eat well and that had meant cooking. Now with the sun low and about to set, the air felt cooler and refreshing. After their sexual playtime and another swim, Marie had dressed in a sundress, forgoing underwear in deference to the heat. Kelvin and Shane had pulled on shorts. Now their bare chests gleamed in the setting sun and made sinfully good scenery.

"Like the view?" Kelvin asked, catching her mid-gawk.

Marie grinned, hugging happiness to her like a blanket. "What's not to like?"

Shane wandered out from the kitchen carrying three glasses and an expensive bottle of champagne.

"Are we celebrating?" Marie glanced at Kelvin and he shrugged.

Shane handed the glasses to Marie and popped the cork before giving a wide grin. He poured the champagne and put the bottle down. "I've been promoted. Thought I might celebrate with my best friends."

"That's great!" Kelvin said. "Why didn't you say so earlier?"

Shane smirked. "My flatmates distracted me."

Marie set the glasses on the step and leapt to her feet, throwing her arms around Shane. "I'm so pleased for you."

She lifted her head and their lips met. Marie held tight, throwing herself into the kiss. Pleasure darted through her as she inhaled his familiar musky scent with the hint of sandalwood. Shane didn't muck around. His kiss went from touching to carnal heat

in seconds flat, their tongues tangling, thrusting and withdrawing in a facsimile of the sexual act. Marie moaned, excitement zapping through her when she felt his erection brushing her stomach.

"Hey, mate. Do I get a celebratory kiss too?" Kelvin's voice drew them apart. Marie caught his sharp look, despite the humor in his tone, and flushed, her heart thudding. With shaking limbs she stepped away from Shane. Her hand still trembled when she reached for her glass of champagne.

Kelvin drew Shane into a hug of congratulation. "Give us details, man," he said after clapping Shane over the back. He observed them both with watchful eyes.

Marie's blush intensified. Damn, she hadn't meant to do that, but if she'd erred so had Shane. She snuck a glance in Shane's direction and caught him watching her. An expression of satisfaction glowed on his face.

"I've been promoted to regional manager of the sales team," he said, still watching her.

Marie broke their gaze and took a hurried sip of her champagne. The bubbles tickled her nose and she sneezed.

"Bless you, sweetheart," Kelvin said. "Regional manager, huh? Sounds good. Pay rise?"

"Yeah." Shane grinned. "I have to relocate to Wellington but it will be worth it."

"Wellington?" Marie felt as if someone had upended a bucket of icy water over her head. A chill swept down her spine. "You're leaving?" she whispered. Her old fears rose up to swallow her whole. A tremble racked her body and she had to set the glass aside or risk spilling it.

"Yeah, babe," Shane said. "And I want you to come with me."

"What?" Anger replaced Kelvin's normal easy tones.

"Go with you?" Marie asked, shock still kicking her in the gut. That would change everything. She, Kelvin and Shane were a team. Friends. Lovers. And today they'd

made love as a threesome. It had given her hope. Shane leaving would change everything.

"Yeah," Shane said, seemingly oblivious to the swirling undercurrents.

"But I like things the way they are." Marie couldn't imagine a life without both Shane and Kelvin. "I'd miss Kelvin."

"You want Marie to move to Wellington with you?" Kelvin's face was impassive but his voice sounded dangerous. He straightened from his lazy sprawl against the wall. Visible tension bracketed his mouth.

"It's a good idea. I love her. She's not like other women."

"You didn't think to discuss this with me first?" Kelvin drawled. Marie noticed his eyes held none of their usual humor.

"None of your business," Shane said. "It's between me and Marie."

Marie sat trembling in her chair. All she could think about was change. She loved Shane and she loved Kelvin as well. No way could she choose one man over the other, which meant she couldn't have either. Tears stung the back of her eyes. She scrambled to her feet but wasn't fast enough to prevent the fall of tears. They ran down her face as she fled to the safety of her bedroom. The door slammed behind her and she locked it before throwing herself onto her bed. Alone, she allowed the tears to fall, sobs vibrating the length of her body.

She was vaguely aware of shouting outside, thumps and curses. Marie lifted her head, a fresh spate of tears falling when she identified the sounds as fighting. Kelvin and Shane were brawling, fighting each other when they never fought. Over her. Marie pulled the pillow over her head to block out the crashes and shouting. It was like her childhood over again. Her fault. She should have known it was wrong to feel happy, that it would blow up in her face. One of her foster mothers had told her she was bad luck, right before she'd returned her to foster care as an impossible case. It seemed the woman was right and she was destined to live alone.

* * * * *

Marie must have fallen asleep but woke exhausted. Gritty eyes struggled to focus on the face of her watch. Six in the morning. Marie drew her curtains back, wincing at the song of a cheerful thrush in the hedge. Her head thudded but she forced herself to move. She couldn't stay here. Marie had no idea what she'd do, apart from knowing she couldn't go with Shane and she couldn't stay with Kelvin. Either option would hurt too much. Sweat beaded her forehead, the early morning heat foretelling another scorching day. Marie tore her wrinkled sundress over her head and donned a pair of cotton panties and bra. She pulled a sleeveless top from her drawer and a pair of denim shorts, dressing rapidly.

Damn. What was she going to do now? She needed to think. Alone.

Her girlfriend Christie, who was away at present, had left her the keys to her holiday home at Sunset beach. It would be crowded at this time of the year, but she'd always liked to walk. She could walk to the far end of the beach where few people ventured. Almost before the thought formed, she grabbed a bag and started to pack—a sarong, two bikini briefs plus one top the boys had missed, shorts and T-shirts. She wouldn't need more. She'd stop at the supermarket on the way to pick up fresh supplies.

Packed and ready to go, Marie paused at her bedroom door, traces of anxiety unfurling inside. One or both of the men were already up. She could hear the clatter of dishes in the kitchen. Marie took a deep breath and unlocked her door. The scent of coffee wafted through the air. Marie hesitated before heading to the kitchen. She couldn't hide. No longer a child, she was responsible for her actions. If she slinked away like a coward she'd come to regret it later. Besides, Kelvin and Shane both cared for her. They'd worry if she went off without telling them her destination.

Kelvin was seated at the breakfast bar and nursing a mug of coffee.

Marie cleared her throat. "Good morning."

"Morning, sweetheart. You okay?" When he turned his head the first thing she noticed was his black eye. Slightly puffy, it looked tender. Her breath caught and she bit down on the cushion of her bottom lip to stem her distress.

Shane entered the kitchen from the deck. His bottom lip had a split and distinct swelling. A bruise slashed across his cheekbone.

Marie sniffed, forcing back her pain and attempting to replace it with anger. They had no right brawling over her. "I'm fine. I'm going to spend a few days at Christie's beach house."

Kelvin frowned. "Alone?"

"Yes, alone," Marie snapped.

"What about work?" Shane grabbed two mugs and poured coffee into each of them. He topped up Kelvin's mug before returning the carafe to sit on the heated element.

"It's a long weekend. If I decide to spend longer I'll ring in sick at work."

"But you're never sick," Shane said.

"I might be on Tuesday," Marie muttered, reaching for the coffee. Strong and black, it was what she needed.

"Have you thought about Shane's proposal?" Kelvin asked in a tight voice.

"Yes." But thinking about it made her want to cry.

Shane winced when he tried to smile. "We could even get married, babe, if you want."

"You and Kelvin both had sex with me yesterday," Marie said. "How can you want to marry me when you're happy to share with Kelvin?" She caught Kelvin's nod while they waited for Shane to answer.

"Kelvin is my best friend," Shane said.

"Do you envisage sharing me in the future?" Marie's stomach churned and black fear swirled through her mind. It was Kelvin and Shane together. She couldn't imagine being with other men. How the heck could they ask her to choose? It wasn't fair.

"Hell no. You'd be my wife," Shane said.

"And what if I don't want to choose?" Marie said, relaxing a little.

Kelvin set his coffee mug down with a thump. "It's too late for that, sweetheart. You have to choose. Me or Shane."

Chapter Four

You have to choose. Me or Shane. The words pounded through her head. The end of an era. That's what it spelled because Marie couldn't choose, not when she loved them both. Yeah, a dilemma. She loved both men equally. She wasn't blind. Both men had their good and bad points, just as she had hers. But couldn't they see? Together they were stronger. A tight unit.

Except not solid enough. Tears misted her eyes, muddying her vision. She swiped the moisture from her eyes and blinked rapidly to concentrate on the road. Negotiating a series of bends, she steered her car into a straight. Usually she loved the drive to the beach, a route alongside the river, passing hills and green pastures dotted with dairy herds, horses and an alpaca farm. Today held none of the magic or the companionship. A sob emerged. The idea of starting over, finding a new place to live...not seeing Shane each day. Or Kelvin. Marie bit down on her abused lip, the jolt of pain helping to steady her.

Half an hour later she pulled up outside the holiday house, chest aching and throat tight. Thankfully the tears had dried. She grabbed the bags of groceries and hauled them inside, pausing to open windows as she went.

The small rustic house wasn't on the beach but she could smell the sea air.

"Friends with benefits. Huh!" Marie muttered while she put the perishables into the fridge and freezer.

The smooth rumble of a car outside brought a frown. A door slammed and footsteps echoed on the deck when someone prowled to the door. A knock.

"Marie, are you there?"

Before she could come to a decision, the door opened and Kelvin stood framed in the bright sunlight.

"Why didn't you answer?"

"You didn't give me a chance," she said dryly, surveying his puffy eye. Marie continued to unpack the groceries she'd brought with her—enough for a week even though she needed to return to work in three days. Change. She hated it. Continuing to live with Kelvin just wouldn't seem right. It would be unbalanced. She'd made a big mistake when she'd let herself care for both Shane and Kelvin. Emotional attachment. The kiss of death for a friends-with-benefits scheme. No, there was only one way to deal with Shane's proposal. She had to say no and move on without either of the men.

"What are you doing here?"

"I was worried about you. We heard you crying last night."

Marie placed a packet of breakfast cereal into the cupboard and closed it with a slam. "I have a cell phone."

Kelvin stepped inside, closing the door after him. "I wanted to see for myself. You were upset."

"Give the man a badge."

"Do you want to go for a walk? I won't talk if you want to think."

Anger slashed through Marie, hot and vicious. "Here's a novel concept. You could leave me to walk on my own."

"Sweetheart, you don't mean that." Kelvin pulled her stiff body into a loose hug and an ache sprang to life at the back of her eyes, a harbinger of tears. More bloody tears. Heck, she'd cried enough during the night and knew her bronzing powder and the dash of lipstick wouldn't do much to hide the evidence.

"I don't like change," she muttered.

"Change doesn't have to be bad, sweetheart."

Showed what Kelvin knew. From her experience, change meant bad things happened. For example her parents' deaths and being put into foster care, being moved from family to family. Look how well that had gone. After the last creepy foster father

she'd been so screwed up she'd run away, lying to get a job. No, in her experience, change meant loss of security.

"Walk," Kelvin said firmly.

Knowing by his tone he wouldn't give up, she grabbed a straw basket and chucked in a bottle of water and two towels. She also grabbed a pair of sunglasses and a straw hat with a broad brim. Disguise in place to hide her red eyes, she turned to Kelvin and forced a smile. "I'm ready."

Kelvin took the basket from her and, without speaking, they walked down the road to the beach.

As usual, the area near the lifesaving club bustled, full of people, partially naked bodies in all shapes and sizes sprawled on the shimmering black sand. Breakers crashed to shore and several people waded between the patrolled area of the beach, indicated by the yellow and red flags.

Kelvin took her hand and they walked past the crowds, their sandals keeping the heat of the black sand from burning their feet. One end of the beach was rocky, waves crashing over the outlying cliffs with a wash of white spray. The other end of the beach went as far as the eye could see, a long expanse of black sand, edged by sand dunes with clumps of grasses. They chose to walk in this direction, away from the crowds. With the sea breeze in her face and the scent of salt in her nostrils, Marie's tense shoulders relaxed. Kelvin's presence brought a sense of peace. At least she was with one of her men. She halted abruptly, aghast at the thought. One of her men.

"Marie?"

"I love you," she blurted.

Stark relief crossed Kelvin's face before a smile bloomed, lighting his brown eyes.

"I love you too, sweetheart. Come on. Let's find a spot to sit." He squeezed her hand gently and started to walk again.

Marie frowned while she wondered what he wanted to discuss. She was acutely conscious of her hand in his and the faint whiff of his decadent aftershave.

Kelvin stopped when they came to a break in the dunes. "How about here?"

"Sure." Marie waited while he spread the beach towels on the sand. She sat, drawing her knees up and wrapping her arms around them to stare out to sea. Far out on the horizon a container ship sailed, and to their right, a lone surfer rode the waves.

"You love Shane," Kelvin said dropping onto the sand beside her. "That's why you're upset."

Damn, when had she become so transparent? "Of course I love Shane. I love both of you. You're my best friends. I'll miss Shane when he goes to Wellington."

Kelvin shot her a sharp look. "Are you going to marry him?"

Not a question she wanted to answer. "What do you think I should do?" Not one she should discuss with Kelvin either. Oh boy, talk about confused. No matter which way she looked at the problem, Marie couldn't see a solution.

"Shane didn't ask me to marry him. He asked you."

"I don't want him to leave."

"It's a big promotion for Shane. He's worked hard to get to this point."

"And now you're making me feel selfish," Marie said. "You're right. Shane has worked hard and deserves this chance."

Kelvin reached out to squeeze her upper arm. "We'll still live together. And it isn't as if Wellington is at the other end of the world. It's only an hour flight from Auckland. If you decide to go with Shane we'll still see each other."

"But it won't be every day." And that was the problem. It was getting to the point where she didn't like waking alone in her bed. She liked waking in Kelvin's arms. Or Shane's. And having sex with them both at the same time, being the sole focus of their attentions felt even better. Heck, she wasn't just turning into a whore. She was one!

"Marie, stop worrying. You have a few weeks to think about things. Shane doesn't need to start his new job until next month."

Marie snorted. Give her two years and she still wouldn't be able to choose between them. Fighting tears again, she leaned into him, seeking comfort. His arm came around her shoulders, drawing her against his side. Marie burrowed closer, savoring both his closeness and his masculine scent.

Kelvin kneaded her shoulders, brushing the tension away with each flex of his fingers. Marie let her head loll back against his chest, the stress in her muscles melting away while she enjoyed his strength and comfort. Lucky. That's what she was. Instead of sulking about losing what she had, maybe she should celebrate her luck in finding two such great men and good friends, how lucky she'd been to enjoy spending time with them.

"I love the heat and the sunshine," Kelvin whispered, his breath hot against her ear.

"Me too," Marie breathed. Each touch and stroke of his fingers had turned languid and unhurried, edged with sensual energy. Heat flowed from his touch and settled between her legs. He paused, removing his hands and a cry of protest escaped. Mortified, she froze.

"Just taking my shirt off, sweetheart. Why don't you take off yours as well?"

"I'm not wearing my bikini top."

"So? Hardly anyone comes along this end of the beach. We'll have plenty of warning if they do."

Temptation roared through her. Skin on skin. "I'll burn."

Kelvin chuckled. "You have suntan lotion. Besides, we can both last an hour before we head back to the house."

Marie nodded and let Kelvin help her off with her top.

"Take the bra off too." Kelvin leaned closer to whisper in her ear. "I dare you."

The clear challenge in his voice pulled her nipples to achy points. "All right," she said. Before she could change her mind, Kelvin unhooked her bra and peeled the straps down her arms.

"I love touching you. You're soft and always smell nice." His fingers drifted across the underside of one breast and traced around an areola. As she watched, it puckered, drawing tight. "So responsive." Kelvin tugged on her shoulders so she draped across his lap. They stared at each other for a long moment. Marie swallowed, desperately wanting him to touch her, to love her. Needing to burn away the pain and replace it with good memories.

"You're beautiful, Marie." Heat and passion simmered in his brown eyes. Slowly, he dipped his head to kiss her. The instant their lips touched, sparks flared in her body, heat building layer upon layer. This was what she'd miss when Shane left because his kiss fired her body in exactly the same way. Double trouble. Marie pushed the thought away, determined to go with the moment. She needed to enjoy every second, every encounter now before their lives changed.

She gasped when Kelvin licked a path across the rounded upper curve of one breast and dipped his tongue down into her cleavage.

The sun blazed, heating her skin and making her wish she could strip her clothes off and rub against Kelvin's naked body. At home they sunbaked in the nude during the summer, but here in a public place they needed to be circumspect.

"Do you know what I'd like to do?" Kelvin asked in a growl.

Her heart hammered in anticipation, warned by the heated rumble in his voice.

"What?" Her tongue darted out to moisten her bottom lip. Kelvin watched avidly.

"Damn, it's so sexy when you do that." A wolfish grin curled across his lips. "I'd like to fuck your breasts," he murmured, holding her with his gaze the entire time. "And have your mouth as a backstop, so each time I thrust, your lips and tongue would kiss and lick me."

"Yes." Heck that sounded like a fine idea. Thinking about it made her wet and willing, eager for him to fill her with long, slow strokes. "Tell me," she said. "We can't do it now but later. Describe what you're going to do to me and how it will make you feel."

His eyes glittered and she fed off his hunger, letting it fuel the sweet ache in her pussy.

"First, I'd kiss you. Rub our lips together and taste you. I'd lick and nibble until your sweet honey taste filled me. Then I'd kiss a trail down your neck."

"Would you detour?"

"Hell yes," he murmured, pinching her nipple between finger and thumb. He rolled it and tugged, sending a jagged streamer of pain to her cunt. She gasped, heart jumping while she waited for him to continue with both words and actions.

"I'd stop to tongue the shell of your ear and kiss the delicate spot behind where you put your vanilla scent.

"The perfume you and Shane gave me."

"We have great taste."

"Big head."

Kelvin smirked. "Next I'd move slowly down your neck, kissing you the entire time. I think I'd probably be tempted to leave a calling card."

"You know my boss hates employees who turn up to work with love bites."

"He's jealous because he didn't put it there. I like seeing my mark on your neck."

"But what if Shane does it to me? Doesn't that worry you?"

Kelvin's brow furrowed. "Strangely enough, no, but I wasn't happy when James Elliot left that hickey above your breast. I wanted to smash my fist into his arrogant face."

"I remember." Marie wrinkled her nose. "It pissed off Shane too." Her eyes narrowed. "It doesn't seem to bother either of you if you're the ones to leave marks on my body."

"After I'd taken a few love bites," Kelvin said, ignoring her statement, "I'd kiss your collarbone and search out the spots where you're ticklish."

"This seduction is taking an awful long time."

"If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well," Kelvin said, pinching her nipple twice before studying the rosy color. "Beautiful," he said. "I'd play with your breasts, kiss them and touch them, like I am now with my fingers, lips and teeth."

"And would all this playing and teasing have an effect on you?"

"It would make my heart beat faster and blood would start crowding into my cock until it hardened and my balls ached. A bit like now," he added ruefully.

"I had noticed."

"Very observant of you. Now where was I?"

"Playing with my breasts and driving me crazy," Marie said, a trifle breathless.

Kelvin grinned and bent to suck one nipple deep into his mouth. He plied it with his tongue and gave her a hint of teeth until she felt the honey flow between her legs. Slowly, he let the nipple pop from his mouth and they both watched the way the sun glistened on the wet peak.

"Once I'd played enough to make us both crazy I'd make you come. I'd pump my fingers inside you and hook my fingers so I hit your sweet spot. And when the pleasure started to cut through your body I'd lean in and lick your hard clit until you explode."

"Wow, you talk a good game."

"I'm not finished." Kelvin brushed a kiss over her lips. "Then I'd push your breasts together and make a tunnel for my cock."

"And then what?"

Kelvin traced her mouth with his forefinger. Giving in to the temptation she opened her mouth and took his finger inside. She sucked the digit and felt it in the clench of her cunt, the deepening heat in his eyes and his smile. She was lost in him and the moment, but at the back of her mind was the notion of how much better it would be if Shane was present, sharing in the togetherness.

"I'd push my cock through your cleavage far enough so you could lick the head of my cock."

Marie opened her mouth and let Kelvin's finger drop free. "I want you."

Kelvin's throat worked. "Sounds like a plan, but not here. Hell, woman, I have no control where you're concerned. I didn't even get to rub on suntan lotion yet."

Marie laughed. "You'll have to work on your technique."

"You want to go back to the house for privacy? We could go swimming instead."

"Bite your tongue."

"Hey, if I bite my tongue I won't be able to fuck you with it."

Marie laughed again. "Now there's an incentive."

"Here, you'd better put on your shirt before you shock the family heading this way."

"Kelvin!" Marie grabbed the shirt and shoved her arms into it with barely a moment to spare.

"Does that mean you want to stay here?"

"Not on your life. You got me all hot and horny and you're going to have to fix it."

Chapter Five

Hand in hand, they hurried back to the house, not speaking much, the tension building as they neared their destination. Privacy. A soft, flat surface and relief from the sensual ache that had sprung to life in her lower belly. Panting, Marie's hand trembled when she unlocked the front door. They stumbled inside, leaving a trail of clothing across the polished wooden floor all the way to the nearest bedroom. In a tangle of limbs they fell to the mattress. Marie parted her legs and Kelvin shoved inside with little finesse. They both groaned, equally wild for each other, bodies straining while Kelvin used rapid-fire thrusts, dominating and fueling the fire within them both. A blaze of sensual energy scorched her when he lunged deep in an erotic assault on her fevered flesh. Her vaginal walls clamped on his cock and needy sounds fell from her lips. Kelvin plundered her mouth, hot stabs of his tongue echoing the thrusts of his cock. She felt the uneven thumping of his heart, tasted his hunger. The slap of flesh on flesh filled the room along with harsh breathing.

"Kelvin," she gasped when he sucked a sensitive spot on her neck.

"Come for me." The raspy command tipped her over into searing pleasure, her clit spasming on Kelvin's next thrust. She sobbed out his name, their loving rough and hot and raw. He dug his fingers into the taut globes of her ass and drove deep until, with a groan, he joined her in climax.

In the aftermath, their clammy bodies stuck together but Marie wouldn't have traded places for anything. The only thing that would have made it better was if Shane was present, making her the filling between the two men. Her throat ached with the need to tell Kelvin. She tried. She even opened her mouth, but in the end she remained a coward.

Kelvin stayed the night. They made love again and again, falling asleep in the small hours of the morning, exhausted but well loved.

Marie came awake with a jolt, a stream of sunshine creeping across the bed. Already the room was stuffy with another humid day on the way. Kelvin was still asleep when she crawled out of bed. After a quick shower she dressed in shorts and a sleeveless shirt and wandered to the kitchen to make coffee.

A car pulled up outside and the familiar face made her heart beat faster. What was he doing here?

Marie flung open the front door. "Shane, what are you doing here?"

"Aren't I allowed to see my best girl?" Shane stalked inside and swept her into his arms, his mouth claiming hers an instant later. Marie's pulse went crazy as she breathed in his scent. Her heart did a distinct flip-flop before her hands crept around his neck to hold tight. How could she want two men at the same time? There was something fundamentally wrong with her, unnatural and wicked. But that didn't stop her yearning, and with the yearning came the knowledge that the two men—her best friends—had told her to decide. She'd rather hack off her hands before picking Shane over Kelvin or the reverse.

"Babe, I missed you." His face didn't look as bad as Kelvin's.

"You saw me yesterday."

"He means he wanted to fuck you," Kelvin said coming from the bedroom. With his naked state and his ruffled hair it was very obvious what they'd been doing all night. The mottled bruise on his upper chest was another great clue.

Shane's brows rose. "Babe, are those teeth marks?"

Heat filled her cheeks as she vaguely recalled biting Kelvin while in the throes of orgasm.

"Um, coffee?"

"Sure." Shane glanced at Kelvin's cock and smirked. "Didn't you tire each other out? Would you like me to take care of that swelling for you?"

Marie gasped and shot a quick glance at Kelvin.

"Fuck off," he said. "I can take care of things myself."

"But what if I'm offering?" Shane winked before he released Marie.

To Marie's surprise, Kelvin's face flushed. He cursed, hot and nasty words, judging by the tone. She didn't catch the exact words but Shane did.

"Right back at ya, mate," Shane said. "Should I bring in coffee?"

Marie frowned and grabbed Shane's arm, dragging him over to the kitchen area. "Sit, and stop causing trouble."

"It's my middle name," Shane said, taking a seat and leaning back in a lazy sprawl. With his dark ruffled hair and sexy blue eyes he looked mischievous, a bad boy set on trouble.

"When it suits you," Kelvin muttered before disappearing into the bedroom.

While the pipes rattled, indicating Kelvin was taking a shower, Marie made coffee and poured two mugs, handing one to Shane.

"Why are you needling him? You're best friends. You never fight."

"Things change," Shane said. "What are you doing today? Spending time at the beach?"

"Yeah, I thought I'd have a swim. I didn't get around to it yesterday."

"Sounds good. Maybe we can slip a snooze in your program somewhere."

"Damn, you never give up," Kelvin sneered, stalking up to the table where the pair sat.

"No," Shane said. "How the hell do you think I won my promotion in the first place?"

Marie stared at the two in shock. Shane had stood and watched Kelvin warily. Kelvin's hands had curled to fists and anger simmered through him in palpable waves. "What is wrong with the pair of you? Why are you behaving like rabid dogs?"

Neither man took their eyes off the other. Marie noticed that neither of them answered her questions either. The air throbbed with clear hostility.

Shane glanced at his watch before his gaze returned to Kelvin. "I believe it's my turn. Take a hike."

Shock hit Marie like a sledgehammer. She stared at the two men, distress curling like fog through her mind and body. They were playing a game with her as the prize. Her eyes stung but she swallowed and bit her inner lip to the point of pain, refusing to let them see how much they'd hurt her.

When she'd managed to still the impulse to cry, she spoke. "Explain." The terse word echoed between them. She saw the two men glance at each other, the accusation in Kelvin's face, and knew her supposition had been spot-on. They were treating her like a trophy. Marie sucked in a deep breath. It did nothing to calm her agitation. She glared at Kelvin before slowly turning her head to glare at Shane with equal contempt.

"Tell me," she said in a fierce tone.

Kelvin shrugged. "I know it looks bad, Marie, but—"

"Bad! You're treating me like an object. I thought I was your friend. You're treating me with total disrespect." Her words edged closer to a shriek.

"No, Marie," Shane said. "We love you."

Marie closed her eyes briefly, knowing she couldn't talk to them now. She didn't want to know them at the moment. Blindly she turned away, her gaze landing on her car keys. She picked them up and took two steps toward the door.

"Where are you going?" Kelvin asked.

"Away. I can't talk to either of you now." Marie scooped up her handbag and hurried through the door, slamming it in Shane's face. Sobbing she ran to her car.

Tossing her handbag onto the passenger seat, she jammed the keys in the ignition and started the engine as the door opened and Kelvin and Shane rushed outside.

Marie backed from the driveway, ignoring the two men. They were idiots. Total bloody idiots. And it had become painfully obvious that they didn't care for her in the same way she cared for them. They couldn't, otherwise they'd have shown her more respect.

Marie sped down the road, not sure of her destination but knowing one thing for sure. A broken heart hurt like hell.

* * * * *

The night spent at the motel hadn't helped her come to a decision. Dispirited, she decided she might as well return to the house in Tuakau. Kelvin and Shane might or might not be there. Her stomach crimped at the thought, but Marie knew she couldn't hide any longer. Time to put on her big girl panties and make some decisions – the first one being a resolution on where she would live. She wouldn't go with Shane and she knew she couldn't live with Kelvin either. It was all or nothing. Being with one of the men wouldn't ease the hole left by the departure of the other. No, it was best if she started over. She'd pulled herself from the depths of misery before. It would be difficult but she could do it again if she had to.

When she pulled up outside the house, Shane's vehicle was parked outside. There was no sign of Kelvin.

Big girl panties, she reminded herself when the urge to turn her vehicle and head back to town hit her. Marie pulled up beside Shane's SUV and climbed out.

The humid heat sucked the oxygen from the air and Marie swiped the back of her hand across her brow. Maybe she'd go for a swim and set up camp under an umbrella by the swimming hole.

The house was silent when she entered, only slightly cooler than outside. She went straight to her room and pulled out a bikini. An unwilling smile tugged at her lips

when she realized the top of this one was missing as well. She pulled on a sleeveless T-shirt, grabbed a towel from the cupboard and headed for the river. Her steps faltered when she saw Shane was already there. He'd put up the sun umbrella and brought down the padded mat they used on days they decided to spend several hours lazing by the river.

"Marie, I'm glad you're here. I was worried." Shane leapt to his feet and wrapped his arms around her before she could protest. The citrus aftershave he wore along with his musky scent combined in a seductive cocktail. "Sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you."

Marie relaxed against his muscular chest, feeling the warmth of his sun-heated skin through her T-shirt. She closed her eyes and soaked up the comfort he offered. They stood that way for long minutes. Marie felt his solid heartbeat beneath her cheek and heard the river water rippling past plus the click of a cicada in the trees.

"Can we have a truce? I don't want to fight with you."

Because he was leaving soon, with or without her. Marie winced but pulled away and forced a smile. "Truce. I don't suppose you know where my bikini top is?"

Shane grinned lazily. "Go without. I'm going topless."

Marie snorted. "Oh yeah. It's fine for you."

"Come for a swim. It's too hot to fight." Shane stood. Marie watched as he prowled to the riverbank. Despite her anger at both him and Kelvin her body tingled, her sex moistening when she studied him. Gorgeous. So damned sexy. He'd figured out her weakness without even trying. She was a sad, sad woman. Sighing, Marie removed her shirt and went for a swim.

Fifteen minutes later and refreshed, they walked from the water.

"Your nipples are hard," Shane said.

"Clever boy. That's a very acute observation."

"Marie, I know you're still angry. Kelvin and I haven't behaved well, but please can I love you? I'm leaving soon."

"So you think you'll make up for lost time?" Marie asked tartly.

"Hell no. It's not like that. I love you."

"You keep saying that." Marie knew she should tell him to go to hell. *Weak, feeble-minded woman*. But the fact was she already hurt. She didn't want to argue with either of them. "We're doing this because the heat is making me horny," she said. "That's all." *Liar, liar, pants on fire*.

"Marie, I am sorry. I've loved you for a while. It's why I broke off with my last girlfriend."

"Enough. Kiss me."

"Your wish is my command."

"Huh!"

Shane's blue eyes twinkled. "I think I fell for you when I saw you with that damn vibrator. Couldn't stop thinking about you. Besides, you're fun to spend time with." He cocked his head as if he expected her to add something else. She refrained. It would only get her in trouble. Marie raised her head for a kiss and pressed close, enjoying the way her bare breasts flattened against his chest. He expelled his breath in a groan and took what she offered, swinging her up into his arms and placing her on the ground beneath the umbrella.

Marie melted into his kiss, enjoying the sensual tangle of their tongues and lips. Her body tingled, softened, desire creeping upon her like the stealthy incoming tide. Shane slipped his hand beneath the blue bikini briefs and ran his fingers over her pubic hair and across her clit before thrusting two fingers into her damp pussy.

A moan squeezed past her lips even as she wondered how he could make her feel this way when she was still angry with him, with Kelvin, their disrespect for her as a person.

"Marie." Shane whisked off the briefs and spread her legs so he could see her glistening folds. "Pretty."

The scrape of his stubble against her inner thighs aroused rather than pained her. He brushed a kiss over the delicate skin, and when she thought he'd get straight to her pussy, he surprised her. He moved up to her breasts, tonguing them, teasing her nipples, nipping at the plump curves until she twisted and squirmed. She stared into his brilliant blue eyes and fell a bit more in love. At times he was a rascal, a devil-may-care bad boy but she loved him so much. His hot breath caressed her neck when he pressed kisses along the smooth column of her throat. Marie rubbed against him, running her hands across his powerful shoulders, down his spine to grab the muscular globes of his ass.

His mouth curved into a captivating smile that held the strength of a sucker punch. It jabbed her right in the gut, reminding her of what she had to lose.

Marie couldn't bear to wait any longer. "Shane, take me. Make love to me now."

"Yes." Shane shoved his swimming trunks down enough to release his cock. It sprang free, the head a swollen red. He fed it into her with a hot, easy glide, groaning when her cunt flexed around him. Their lovemaking was slow and dreamy, the pleasure building slowly with each thrust, each touch. Closing her eyes, she clutched his shoulders and held on to him like an anchor in a storm. Up and up she soared, each powerful stroke feeding the growing hunger inside. The liquid roll of desire broke like a wave, crashing down on her, on him. She shattered, his cry of completion coming seconds after hers. They clutched each other tight while they came back down, warm and replete. Together.

The sharp crack of a breaking twig made her eyes fly open.

"Don't let me interrupt," Kelvin said.

"Dammit." Shane pulled out of Marie and rolled over, pulling his shorts over his cock before standing.

"I'll go and leave the two of you in privacy." Pain etched into Kelvin's face, the same torment that sliced through her heart.

This had to stop. It was tearing them apart when the three of them had been such good friends. *Were good friends.*

Shane didn't say anything but glared at Kelvin.

Kelvin slouched with dejection. "You've won, mate. Congratulations. Marie is awesome. I know you'll be happy."

"Won? Happy? What the fuck are you talking about? Kelvin, don't you dare walk away," Marie snarled, leaping to her feet. "Come back here or you'll be sorry." She planted her hands on her hips.

Shane snorted a laugh. "Better come back, Kelvin. Marie doesn't look like she's mucking around."

Kelvin retraced his steps until he stood in front of her. His gaze flitted briefly to her bare breasts.

"Sit," she ordered, pointing at a space next to Shane. "You sit as well, Shane."

"Better move fast. Her breasts are heaving," Shane said.

"Don't comment," Marie snapped before Kelvin could answer. She glared at her battle-scarred lovers.

"See that pink color? It's almost crept down to her nipples," Kelvin said. "Marie, it's all right if you've decided to go with Shane. I understand."

"I don't understand, and I'm not going with Shane," she said.

A slow grin spread across Kelvin's tanned face.

"And I'm not staying with you either."

"You're not?" Shane asked.

The two men glanced at each other in clear confusion. For two intelligent males they were incredibly dense. Marie took two steps toward the house before stopping abruptly. Damn. She was acting just as stupidly as they were. They weren't mind readers, any more than she was. She turned back to face them. "I love both of you. You know that, right?"

As one they nodded.

She closed her eyes briefly, torment flaring through her. It was time. She had to tell them what she thought, what she really wanted no matter how out there it seemed. They loved her. At worst they could laugh. They'd laughed at her before. She was still here to tell the tale. "Shane, I can't go to Wellington with you because I'd miss Kelvin. And Kelvin, I love you as much as I do Shane, but I can't imagine living here with you alone. I love you both equally."

Kelvin scowled. "What are you trying to say?"

Marie took a deep breath. "My ideal situation is living with both of you."

"But you do that now. Change is good, babe." Shane didn't get it.

Kelvin rapped his knuckles against Shane's head. "Shut up, numskull. I don't think that's what she means. Is it, sweetheart?"

Marie shook her head, hope surging inside. The glint in Kelvin's eyes told her he might just understand. He hadn't shown disapproval yet. Of course he hadn't shown approval either. "Um...I want the same but different."

"Say it," Kelvin said, a smile twitching at his mouth. "Tell us what you want."

"I want to live with you both in an exclusive relationship."

Shane straightened abruptly. "Exclusive? You mean —"

"Numskull, she means —"

"A ménage a trois," Marie said firmly.

"A threesome?" Shane looked shocked, which pissed her off. He scrambled to his feet and stared at her as if she'd grown an extra head.

"We already have sex together," Marie said, trying not to sound defensive. "What's wrong with taking things a step further?"

Kelvin stood and walked over, placing an arm around her shoulders. "Nothing wrong, sweetheart. Damn, Saffron was right. She said I loved you more than her. I don't want to lose you."

"Don't look at me that way, Shane Coulter. You didn't mind sharing me with Kelvin on Friday."

Kelvin squeezed her gently before smirking at Shane. "We've already touched each other while we're making love with Marie. It doesn't make us queer."

"It will in some people's eyes," Shane said.

"It doesn't matter what other people think." Kelvin closed the distance between them and Shane, pulling her with him. "It's what we think that matters. What we do in our home is no one's business."

Shane shifted his weight, uncomfortable with the conversation. "What are you saying?" he asked finally.

"I'm saying that I'd miss you as much as Marie. I liked being with both of you the other day. I'd like to do it again. Marie's right. It felt good with the three of us together."

Marie let out a sigh, hope surging higher. Kelvin felt the same way. Now all they needed to do was persuade Shane.

Shane shook his head as if he'd misheard. "You like it when we're together? When we touched by mistake?"

"Yeah, I liked it when we were together. I'm not sure if it would be the same if Marie wasn't there, if it were the two of us. I don't know because I haven't thought about it. But the truth of it is Marie and I don't want you to go to Wellington."

Marie nodded and smiled at Kelvin. Exactly.

"Well, hell," Shane said after staring at them both for what seemed like a long time.

Marie touched Shane's shoulder. "Is there anyone else you'd like to be with? Another woman?"

"Another man?" Kelvin added with a smirk.

"There's no one else. I haven't slept with anyone but you two for the last month."

"Me either," Kelvin said. "Saffron and I...never mind."

"Which proves my point," Marie said. "We're already committed to each other. You should stay here with us and make things official."

"What about my job?"

Kelvin grinned. "You're good. There are other jobs in the Auckland area."

A strange expression crossed Shane's face. "Is this my cue to kiss you?"

"Whatever turns you on." There was a distinct challenge in Kelvin's voice and Marie held her breath, waiting to see what Shane would do, how he'd react to Kelvin's needling.

Shane ignored Kelvin to kiss Marie, his lips gentle, the kiss full of promise. When he pulled away, her breath caught at the decision on his face.

He released her and took a step back, his blue eyes serious. "Part of the reason I went for the promotion was because I'd started to have feelings for Kelvin. And it confused the hell out of me because I like women." He shook his head, water flying from with his wet hair. "I still like women," he said, sounding a trifle confused and a touch belligerent.

Kelvin grinned. "I must be smarter than you because I managed to work out that it was the three of us together that made the difference. It didn't matter when our lips touched by mistake or when my cock brushed your leg because it was you and we were with Marie."

Marie beamed. It was going to be all right.

Shane shook his head again. "You didn't think to say anything?"

"It wasn't the right time," Kelvin said with a shrug. "Besides I think this blindsided me as much as it did you. It came to me when I was driving home. I was going to say something, but seeing you and Marie together made me wonder if I had it all wrong."

Shane's eyes glinted with a burst of amusement and he jumped at Kelvin, grabbing his upper arms to hold him still. Before Kelvin could jerk away Shane kissed him, grinding their lips together. Kelvin stomped on Shane's foot and Shane released him.

"Ow, what did you do that for?"

"If you're gonna kiss me, you'd better do it right," Kelvin muttered. "Don't maul me."

Marie held back a snigger and watched with interest when Shane approached Kelvin again. Self-assurance radiated from him when he grasped Kelvin's shoulders and kissed him, much like he'd kissed her earlier. A sweet and tender kiss designed to show feelings. Kelvin groaned deep in his chest and desire shot through Marie. Who knew watching Kelvin and Shane kiss would make her feel so hot?

When the two men pulled apart, all of them were breathing harder.

"Wow," Shane said, swiping his hand over his face.

"Yeah," Kelvin agreed, looking shell-shocked.

Marie noticed both men had erections. She obeyed the impulse to move closer until her arm brushed Shane's chest. Kelvin's arm slipped around her waist while Shane hugged her to his side.

"Are we okay?" she asked.

"I don't want to leave either of you," Shane confessed. "But we'll take things slowly, right?"

"As long as we can make love soon," Marie said. "This hot weather makes me...um..."

"Horny," the two men said together.

"Inside," Shane said. "I know it's hotter in there but I have some lube."

Marie winked at Shane, feeling so hopeful and happy she thought she might burst. "If we do things right we won't feel the heat."

"Just so we're clear," Kelvin said. "I'm hoping the lube isn't for me. I need to wrap my head around this a bit more."

"Aw, mate. That's a shame," Shane said. "I was looking forward —"

Marie punched Shane in the arm. "He's teasing you. The lube is for me and I can't wait for both of you to fill me at the same time." She couldn't restrain the shiver of anticipation that worked through her sensitized body. There was no hiding either since she was still naked.

Kelvin grunted, but the gleam in his dark eyes foretold payback in the future. "You're beautiful, Marie. I love your lush curves. So sexy."

"It'll feel even better when we're all touching." Marie's breathing was shallow, a little harsh and a tickle of heat trickled down to her sex. In her imagination Kelvin and Shane were already impaled in her body and they were all rocking together in a lazy manner. In. Out. In. Out. Heck! "We need to hurry."

"Is someone impatient?" Shane asked.

Marie tossed her head and attempted to move faster. "Hell yeah."

"Good sex takes place in the brain as well as the body," Shane said in a hot, sexy whisper. "And anticipation will make it even better."

"He's right," Kelvin said. "Think about how it will feel when we're so close, pumping in and out of your body, touching each other."

"Damn," Shane said. "We need to walk faster."

Laughing, they made it to the house, heading for Shane's bedroom since his bed was the biggest. Marie fell back on the mattress, bouncing before she rolled onto her back and grinned at the two men. "Strip, boys." And she parted her legs, letting her hand slide down her belly to delve in her wet folds. With her free hand she played with one breast, plucking and rolling the nipple with her fingers.

"Damn, that is so hot. Part your legs farther, sweetheart. Yeah, just like that. Shane, see all that honey and the way she's so swollen and puffy. She wants this. She wants both of us to fuck her."

Ferocious heat grabbed her, twisting through her body and consuming her. Energy coiled in her belly and her tiny nubbin spasmed beneath her stroking fingers. Whimpers she couldn't contain squeezed past her lips.

"No more, babe. You're too close." Shane opened a drawer and pulled out a bottle of lube. "Kelvin on the bed. Marie, go on top of him and take him inside you but don't move a muscle once he's inside. I want us to come when we're all touching."

"I knew you liked touching me," Kelvin said.

Shane pumped the top of the lube bottle and coated his cock until it glistened. "Fuck you," he muttered, a tinge of color creeping across his cheekbones.

"Promises, promises," Kelvin said, winking at her. He sprawled out on the bed and grinned. "I'm ready, sweetheart."

"Glad to hear it," Shane said.

Marie just shook her head and crawled over Kelvin until she straddled his body. She grasped Kelvin's cock and couldn't resist bending to bathe it with the heat of her mouth. Flames of heat flickered in his eyes, increasing when she gently scored his balls with her fingernails. Her vagina clenched with fresh hunger and she knew Shane was right. If either of them touched her or gave her too much stimulation she'd shatter.

She released Kelvin's cock after giving the head a last lazy lick. "Will you spank me if I disobey?"

"Yeah, you'd like that," Kelvin said. "I've seen how hot it makes you."

"Another day," Shane said. "Hurry up. I need to work your ass a bit before we get this show on the road."

Marie lifted up and guided Kelvin's cock to her entrance. Slowly she impaled herself, savoring the stretch as he filled her. When she was fully seated they were both breathing hard. Marie's head fell back and her eyes fluttered closed to concentrate on the thick wedge of pleasure suffusing her body.

"That's it, babe."

She felt Shane's hand caress her ass.

"Bend forward for me," Shane instructed.

"Come kiss me, sweetheart, while Shane does his magic."

Eyes still closed, she leaned forward, blindly seeking his mouth. She felt the throbbing of his cock and knew he was as turned-on as she. Their lips moved lazily together, each going slow, trying to keep the sensual heat at an even level rather than ramping it up.

She felt Shane's fingers drift across her puckered entrance. He kissed one butt cheek while he fingered her, letting her relax. The cool sensation of the lube did nothing to quell the heat. She quivered, trying not to move when he pushed a finger into her dark channel. Slowly he worked her, pushing past the ring of muscle and filling her. She sighed against Kelvin's mouth, positive it would feel better yet. One finger became two, pushing her to the edge of pain. Marie breathed through the discomfort, listening to both men as they praised her, touched and caressed her.

Finally, Shane removed his fingers and applied more lube before lining up his cock. Taking his time he pushed into her in small degrees until he was fully seated.

"Damn, I can feel you against my cock," Kelvin said. "Incredible."

And it was. Amazing. The erotic assault on her body made her quiver. There was a little pain but she'd never felt closer to her two lovers than in this moment. They set up a slow rhythm with one thrusting while the other retreated. Her pulse spiked sharply and she started unraveling, coming apart in their arms.

"How close are you, Shane?" Kelvin asked through gritted teeth.

"Real close. Marie, should I rub your clit?" Shane purred in her ear.

"Yes," she whispered.

Kelvin stroked, filling her deeply. Shane withdrew and surged inside again to finger her slippery clit. Marie gasped, heat and pressure rampaging through her.

“Oh hell.” Kelvin’s entire body shuddered and she felt the abrupt contractions as he came. Shane thrust into her and rubbed her nub. Seconds later she exploded, her pussy rippling around Kelvin’s cock as blistering waves took her. Shane rocked his pelvis forward and with a raw and guttural cry came, his cock jerking with explosive contractions.

Shane’s arms wrapped around them both, hugging her and Kelvin before he pulled away. He walked into the bathroom and she heard running water. She clambered off Kelvin, leaning forward to kiss him. Not long after Shane returned with a damp cloth. They cleaned up and fell onto the mattress with Shane on one side of her and Kelvin on the other.

“I love you both,” she said. Happiness soared when they both rolled into her, sandwiching her between them, masculine arms coming around to wrap them into one. Friends and lovers. If they could keep talking and communicate their needs, she knew they’d have a good future ahead, and quite frankly, she couldn’t wait. It wasn’t often a girl managed to find two great men who loved her and each other. This would be a summer to remember and one they could recall with pleasure in the future. Summer had never been so hot and that was just the way Marie liked it.

About the Author

Shelley lives in Auckland, New Zealand, with her husband and a small, bossy dog named Scotty.

Typical New Zealanders, Shelley and her husband left home for their big OE soon after they married (translation of New Zealand-speak: big overseas experience). A year-long adventure lengthened to six years of roaming the world. Enduring memories include being almost sat on by a mountain gorilla in Rwanda, lazing on white sandy beaches in India, whale watching in Alaska, searching for leprechauns in Ireland, and dealing with ghosts in an English pub.

While travel is still a big attraction, these days Shelley is most likely found in front of her computer following another love—that of writing stories of romance and adventure. Other interests include watching rugby and rugby league (strictly for research purposes *grin*), being walked by the dog, and curling up with a good book.

Shelley welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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