

**Brit
Blaise**

*Trailer
Trash*

**CAVE
CREEK
COWBOY**



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...Connie stared, her brows drawn into a frown. "He's dedicating his ride to you. J.R.'s just made a very public demonstration of affection...cowboy style. I hope you feel the same for him."

Not only did Caren feel affection, but she knew this could be love. Caren couldn't remember the last time she'd felt this alive...joyous. "I never want him out of my sight, but I thought it was one-sided. Do you really think he likes me?"

"Sometimes it happens fast. Sometimes we women have to drag them to the altar kicking and screaming. Only time will tell."

As he performed, Caren couldn't look away if her life had depended upon it. The horse turned so fast, she wondered how he not only stayed on, but made it appear easy. Earlier, Bud had leaped much the same way. That gave her a good idea how hard this sport was. Both the rider and horse had to be in top condition. People were cheering for him.

"That's his best horse," Connie said. "You can see why. The two of them are a sight to behold."

When J.R. finished, the crowd went wild. Caren didn't have a clue what had made this ride better than his previous, but she made a promise to learn. He rode out of the arena and headed straight in her direction. While people congratulated him, he would nod and acknowledge them, but he didn't stop until he reached her side. Her heart leapt for joy. Every cell in her body celebrated.

This was all happening too fast...too perfect...too good for Caren. It couldn't last...

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CAVE CREEK COWBOY TRAILER TRASH

BY

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CAVE CREEK COWBOY TRAILER TRASH
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Thanks to Ray and Connie Kale from Cave Creek Cowboys Christmas for making an appearance in this story. Since the last time Connie and Ray appeared in a story, they've bought a bar/restaurant in Cave Creek. This is going to be fun! I'm sure many more characters will visit Connie's Cowboy Corral!

Poor Bev Wells who was in Cave Creek Cowboys: Too Many Brides is also in this story. However, she's caused a bit of trouble. It might be time to explore what's happened to Bev, and see how she came to be the leader at a grief management group.

Cave Creek Cowboy: Trailer Trash is my tenth Cave Creek Cowboy story. While it stands alone, the cowboy community is very close and friends in these stories are connected by the cowboy way of life.

So, thanks for all the cowboys...those who were once in my life, Don, Jim, James Michael, Shorty, and Jeff. To those who have passed on and those who I hope to meet in the future.

CHAPTER 1

It's got to get better. It's got get better. It's got to get better.

She knew she could chant her shitty little mantra all day long, but positive thoughts wouldn't give trailer-trash-Caren a happily-ever-after. Hopelessness, grief and loneliness ate at Caren until raw nerves caused physical chaos to torment her, too. As if out-of-control emotions weren't bad enough, her ailments ranged from killer headaches to full-blown panic attacks. Each day grew worse than the previous, not better like she'd been led to believe.

All the idiotic mistakes and misdeeds of her past had come back to torture her. So she'd come here... And *this* had to be one the most ill-advised ideas Caren had had since she'd lost her daughter. What had she been thinking? But she'd lost Cindi. Didn't that qualify? What the heck would she say when it came her turn to

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Speak?

Bev Wells, the dazzling blonde woman leading the support group, stared right at Caren, as if she'd guessed her secret. A shot of guilt hit her with a blast of icy prickles along her spine and blood pounded at her temples. Caren shook her head to indicate she didn't want to talk and stared down to where she unconsciously was wringing her hands in her lap. Even though these people were all strangers she'd never see again, Caren huddled in her chair, held her breath, and prayed not to be humiliated in front of everyone.

"We haven't heard from you in a while," Ms. Wells said. "Would you please share your experience with the group since some are new to us?"

Immediate relief washed over her. Caren expelled a breath hard enough to be heard across the room. The group leader hadn't been looking at Caren after all. This was the first time she'd come, so Ms. Wells must be speaking to the man with the dark, curly hair directly in front of Caren.

The man bowed his head. Her heart hurt for him, even as she rejoiced she wasn't in the hot seat. She'd survived. Next time she might not be so lucky. She needed to get out of the room. She swiped her sweaty palms along the top of her threadbare slacks and eyed the closed door.

The man cleared his throat, a barely audible resonance, and raked his long fingers through his shining hair. "I'll give it a shot for you, Bev. My name is Justin Roberts and I'm here because I lost my only child, two years, nine months and eleven days ago. And it hasn't gotten easier with time like the experts say it will."

His words cut deep and not just because he'd echoed what she'd been thinking only moments before. Caren's selfish stupidity

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made her spine slink back against the hard chair. A gurgling sob escaped her lips before she could muffle it. A pain in her heart reminded Caren of its existence. Maybe losing her precious daughter, her only reason for living, hadn't destroyed it after all.

The dozen or so people in the room seemed to freeze with the weird sound she'd made. The uncomfortable silence continued for far too long without the group leader saying anything. Why had she come here? Caren needed her head examined. If she could afford it, she would. Even in her break from reality, she recognized she'd finally hit rock bottom.

The man, Justin, sat a little straighter in his hard metal folding-chair, and his shoulders appeared wider in the starched white shirt. "Tina was just short of six years old when she died after a short illness. Leukemia. My marriage ended the same day we buried her. So I guess I lost both my daughter and my wife at the same time. While we were at the cemetery, my wife's brother moved her stuff out of our home. I've only seen her once since that day, at the divorce proceedings where she refused to speak to me. Now she's living two thousand miles from Arizona."

"Would you like to tell us about your daughter Tina?" the leader asked. "Maybe some happy memories?"

Caren considered the leader's suggestion pushy and insensitive, but then she'd never been to a grief management group before. And she had no business being there after hearing Justin Robert's tragic story.

The room went icky-silent again, and a lump formed in her throat as she waited to see if the man would share more. He had a low, silky voice, making her wonder what he'd look like. Sitting directly behind him, all she could see was the pristine white shirt with a western yoke. His jeans were faded and very snug, making

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the view of his butt something she had no business thinking about under the circumstances.

Lately, she'd become preoccupied with looking at men, with wondering what it would be like to move on with her life, to become a sexual being again. She couldn't go on living in the past and wishing for what would never be once more. Besides, except for her daughter, her life had pretty much sucked. She'd screwed up the first time around and the scars had cut deeply into her soul leaving her terrified...petrified to try again.

Once a slut, always a slut, her husband had always said.

"My Tina..." His voice cracked, and shattered what was left of Caren's nerves. "It would take a year of talking nonstop to tell all the wonderful things about her. Every second I shared with her was a precious gift, one I didn't realize I'd lose so damned soon. Her precociousness, her sweet nature and her outgoing personality astounded everyone who ever met her. It used to scare me that she'd talk to anyone...everywhere I took her."

He could be talking about Caren's daughter. How often had Caren worried when Cindi was little that a bad person would use Cindi's trusting personality against her?

"Turns out it wasn't a child molester who took her from me, but cancer." Justin Robert's dark head shifted toward the left side of the room. "Sorry, Jan."

An attractive brunette who'd been gazing at him with tears in eyes gave a small nod. "That's fine. I didn't take offense," the woman said and swiped at her face with the back of her sleeve.

"That's why I don't open my mouth much here." His voice dropped lower, as if he was talking to himself. "I always say the wrong thing, even when I know how important words can be. Tina's last words to me were the same she'd often spoken to me as

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a toddler, ‘Dada, I love you all much.’ I play those words and sound of her tiny voice over and over until I can’t breathe—don’t want to breathe another second on this earth.”

Fat tears began to stream down Caren’s face. Why had she come? How stupid could she be? This wasn’t the place for her. Thankfully, she’d sat in the last row at the end closest to the door. Grabbing for her purse on the floor next to her, she snapped it up and made a dash for the door. With each feverish stride, she expected someone would say something to stop her. No one did.

She got to her car, still listening for the sound of footsteps behind her. Her hand shook as she inserted the keys into the ignition. As she pulled out of the parking lot, she went the wrong way. “Damn it!”

How many times had she driven north on Cave Creek Road to go to Connie’s Cowboy’s Corral. Every Friday night for a couple of years, she’d come this way with Cindi. Going out to eat one day a week had been indulgent, but living in an ugly old trailer with a single bedroom had always embarrassed Cindi and going out made her happy. The place had a different name then, but still it looked the same. They’d split a single meal, while Caren ogled cowboys and hid it from her very prim and proper daughter. How she missed those carefree evenings. How she missed Cindi.

Could she go there alone? Later in the evenings, the personality of the small town bar and eatery changed. It transformed from families to a rowdier cowboy crowd. She looked at the clock on the dashboard. *Eight*. If she remembered correctly, the house band didn’t start playing until ten. Would it hurt or make her feel closer to her daughter to go there alone?

Could she trust her inner slut in public? Or was it time to stop denying who and what she was?

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* * *

J.R. walked into Connie's place with rage and frustration oozing from every pore. He hated when he shared at the group. It opened his festering wound and the pain was almost more than he could bear. On nights like this, he had no business being around people.

He spotted a seat at the bar next to a redhead concentrating on the drink in her hand—his kind of woman hopefully. Her clothes were almost nondescript—light tan slacks, belted at the waist, with a matching button-down shirt. It had the appearance of a uniform, with nothing feminine about it. Her red hair hung in a thick braid to her waist. She turned to show him her profile, as if she sensed him staring at her. With hair pulled back from her pale freckled face, and little or no makeup, she interested him. From where he stood, it wasn't a beautiful face, but cute enough. He could see himself with her. Buried inside her.

He may not have much luck in life, but with one major exception, he was golden with women. J.R. didn't have to worry about getting laid. He had the knack.

As he stepped next to the stool, the woman he hoped to be fucking by the night's end glanced at him and did a double take. They said it was his eyes. Women claimed they were unusual. Fuck if he knew, but whatever, he wasn't above using them to get what he wanted... And it didn't take much to get it.

Right now, he needed booze to take the edge off. Sex later would numb the pain.

"Ma'am," he said in his best cowboy twang and touched his hand to his hat, "is this seat taken?"

She seemed hesitant, but shook her head, and he eased into the

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seat moving it closer under the guise of getting comfortable. All the better if she didn't jump to welcome his company. He enjoyed a modest challenge. "I've had a miserable day and I don't like to drink alone, but all you have to do is tell me to get lost and I'll disappear without a word."

When he said he'd disappear, she really looked at him, meeting his gaze for the first time. Her eyes were green, bright with flecks of amber, intelligent, and...sad inside. Not a hint of a smile tugged the corners of her lips. Maybe this wasn't the one for him.

"I don't like doing anything alone, but we don't always get what we want." Her voice, as sad as her eyes, made him wary. She turned back to drink in her hand.

"What are you drinking?" he asked.

Her fingers clutched the stem of a martini glass, but it wasn't the color of anything he'd ever had. Then again, he didn't go for silly, froufrou concoctions. Give him a shot of premium tequila and a cold beer, and he was on his way to finding a little peace.

"This is...was"—she drained it and caught a stray drop at the corner of her mouth with unmanicured finger—"a chocolate martini."

J.R. resisted shuddering and did a quick scan for the bartender. Instead, at the end of the bar, he spotted Connie, the owner of Cowboy Corral and a close personal friend. Her husband, a well-known, retired rodeo star, sat on the stool in front of her. People surrounded him while he spoke—his audience.

Must be nice to have the world at your feet. J.R. looked away. It hurt to see people happy and in love. He'd had that once upon a time...or thought he had.

Never again.

The pleasure wasn't worth the pain. The more a man loved, the

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harder he hurt when he lost it. He didn't want to feel that kind of pain ever again.

As if she sensed J.R.'s gaze on her, Connie looked away from her husband holding court and gave a wave. She started toward him, grabbing the Platinum Patron from the high shelf on the way, stopping long enough to grab a cold longneck. She popped the cap in a fluid motion. "I had no idea you'd be back this soon. My spies told me you were cruisin' here just last night."

J.R. glanced away from Connie to see the redhead's reaction. Had Connie just blown it for him?

"Sorry, J.R.," Connie said. "The first one's on me to apologize for my über mouth. My excuse is that I was thinking of the cutting competition tomorrow. You're going to be there, aren't you?" She reached down to capture a shot glass and poured his tequila. She offered a sheepish grin to the redhead. "Another chocolate martini for you?"

"Sure," his mark said as she frowned in the bottle in Connie's hand.

Maybe because of Connie's lame attempt to keep him from looking like a man-slut?

"Nice save," J.R. taunted Connie. "I'll be there. And the price of the mare your husband wants just went up. You can tell him the good news."

Unflappable as always, Connie smiled and winked. "Tall, dark and brooding as always."

"I'm not brooding," he told Connie before he turned his full attention to the woman next to him to see if she'd been spooked by the idea he could be a player.

Connie poured his tequila and cast a sidelong look at the redhead. "How am I doing on with the chocolate martinis? Be

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honest with me. I don't do this often and I'd like to know if I'm making them right. My regular bartender called in sick tonight and the back-up guy is on his honeymoon. I didn't have time to find anyone. Friday night is a tough night to fill in for the first string."

"The martini was fine. I'm not picky."

"Glad to hear it." Connie headed back to the center of the bar.

"I'm J.R." He held his hand toward her with his introduction.

"Caren. Pleased to meet you." She locked onto his hand with a firm grip, but she wouldn't look into eyes again, other than a quick glance.

"Don't let Connie scare you. I'm not brooding, but I want to be up front with you now, just in case. If I should appear to be in a dark mood, I don't want to talk about it." As he spoke, he'd leaned closer and stared at her mouth. Her lips were full, the top a fraction more than the bottom. *Unusual*. What would feel like to kiss her? Would it be a little different? A little upside down?

Did it matter?

Not really. As long as he lost himself for a while inside her pussy, he'd make it through the night. He'd worry about tomorrow when he couldn't avoid it. He usually waited until he knew he had a sure thing before he gave his mission statement. "I'm not looking for love. Just trying to get through the night."

She weighed his words, her intelligent green eyes assessing him without looking farther than his nose. "Am I putting out vibes? There are any number of women here tonight who you could've chosen."

"I believe in being up-front. I tried *forever-after* once and I'm not going to do it again. I can't get beyond thinking minute to minute enough to worry about *forever* anymore."

"I think it's happily-ever-after, not forever-after. And it's a

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myth. Trust me, I know.”

If she wasn’t on the prowl for Prince Charming, so much the better. “Smart woman.”

He could promise her was a night of pleasure if she’d let him.

CHAPTER 2

At thirty-three, Caren had no clue her hormones could take her hostage and turn her into sixty-eight inches of pure rampant lust. This was beyond anything she'd known from her past. The moment she'd looked into the handsome cowboy's sparkling amethyst gaze, she'd lost it. She wanted him, so bad it hurt. And this time, damn it, she wouldn't be denied. It was as if he pulled invisible strings inside her, awakening parts of her she didn't know existed.

He held his shot glass up. "To getting through a lonely night a little easier."

"I promise I get it." Caren clinked the edge of her martini glass against his. "Whatever this is...it's for one night only, no strings attached. You won't get any arguments from me. This is just what

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I need.” Surprisingly, she didn’t mind in the least, even liked the idea of no strings. She sipped her drink and it surprised her to see J.R. do the same with his tequila. She wanted to ask if expensive tequila made it better for sipping, but no way could she afford anything off the top shelf. She’d felt self-indulgent ordering what she did at eight dollars a pop. Two more and she’d blow her budget for the rest of the month.

As if he’d been reading her mind, he held the shot glass toward her. “Want a taste?”

Boy, did she! In the worst way. Instead, she gave a negative shake of her head. When he took another sip and set the glass down, it was all she could take. With a crook of her finger, she motioned him nearer, while leaning to meet him. Once he drew close enough, she cocked her head to avoid his hat and touched her tongue to the seam of his mouth. “Tastes wonderful,” she whispered.

He opened his mouth and captured her tongue as his lips met hers full-on. The taste of tequila, potent, buttery and rich, at first overpowered her as he sucked on her tongue. Not exactly how she imagined a first kiss, but she’d started this. And she wasn’t about to complain. By the time he released her, they were both breathing hard.

“Good grief.” She picked it up her drink again and gulped it. “I was in high school the last time I did that. I don’t do spontaneous oral. Especially in public.” She gave a furtive sweep of their area to see who might be watching, who might be ready to point a finger at her. No one seemed to care. She gave a shrug and turned back to her cowboy.

He touched her cheek, and she tingled all over.

“I feel privileged you’ve made an exception for me,” J.R. said.

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“Feel free to do it again and often.”

She surrendered to the moment and her body vibrated with unpredictable need. She wanted to feel free to kiss him again and often, but could she? Caren searched his handsome face framed by dark hair and a beige cowboy hat, a little bent and misshapen as if well-used. “Why do all you cowboys wear your hats inside?”

“I don’t always. But it’s not like there’s any place to put it here. It looks bad enough without a drunken cowboy trampling it. I have an aversion to breaking in a new one.”

She finished her martini and held the empty up until Connie noticed and gave a nod. “When I kissed you, it worried me I’d accidentally knock it off.”

“Let’s see how you do when not distracted by my damned hat.” He removed it with his right hand and held it at her back.

She reached up to caress his strong square chin peppered with a five o’clock shadow. That passionate moment clearly defined the differences between a man and a woman. With the exception of his pale amethyst eyes, he was all dark angles, muscles and sinew. His full, firm lips, perfect for kissing, were irresistible. She leaned into him with her left hand over his heart, and her right catching the shaggy hair at the nape of his neck. She threaded her fingers into the silk.

Inhaling, she breathed his essence...tequila, leather, faint aftershave, a hint of mint and clove and wonderful—drugging man-scent. *Delicious*. How had she lived without the smell of a man? If only she could bottle it. She pressed her lips against his with the slightest pressure, feeling him respond. Underneath her unsteady hand, his heartbeat quickened.

As she deepened the kiss, her own pulse raced. This was the perfect kiss—elevated heart rate, coursing blood, increased

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breathing—and any nagging worry about what she was doing with a strange man disappeared.

Reminiscent of her first kiss, emotions began to surface, only this time they were far stronger and still a mystery. Tears stung her closed lids. To hide both the unwelcome tears and emotions, she kissed him harder. Every cell in her body came alive, exploding with pent up desire.

She didn't want to stop kissing him—ever...until someone nearby made a rude noise. Her brain took over and she pulled away. *P.D.A.* Hadn't she always disapproved of public displays of affection?

"I think I should get to make a rule," she told him once she could breathe again without rasping. "Like your no strings attached."

J.R. gave her a cheeky grin. "Go ahead, but I've never been good at doing what someone else wants, unless I think it's my idea."

His smile delivered an arc of passion into her nether regions to make her wetter than his kiss had moments before. This cowboy was dangerous. "Is this agreeable nature of yours some new kind of foreplay?"

"I'm blaming it on you. I usually hold my tongue better than this. You seem to bring out the truth in me."

What a line! Okay. Whatever, as Cindi would say. Her lips, still close enough to initiate contact if she leaned forward, tingled, both from their previous kiss and anticipation of more. As cheeky as he might be, she wanted him...craved him to the point of distraction. Maybe because of his cock-sure attitude, she believed he could deliver the pleasure she desired.

"So tell me, why haven't I ever seen you here before?"

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A shadow of alarm swept over her. If he knew her, he wouldn't want her. "I've come here for several years, in fact, every Friday night for dinner. I've never been here this late when the cowboys come out in full force."

"Divorced?"

"What?" Caren pulled back a little too fast. The fragile shell of her composure could be destroyed by ex-speak. Her head spun. She didn't want to talk about her life—her ex-husband, especially not now.

Reservation came into his eyes, or was it her imagination. "I was wondering what changed your routine. What brought you here tonight, so I could meet you?"

"It's not divorce. That happened a very long time ago. And like you said earlier, I'd rather not talk."

"I said I didn't want to talk about what's bothering me. I don't mind talking about you."

Her life bothered her—her failures. "My rule is that I don't want to talk about myself at all. Can you deal with that?" Everything bad in her life centered around her ex-husband. He'd changed her forever...and not for the good.

Her cowboy replaced his hat, lifted his glass and tapped it against hers sitting close to where she white-knuckled the edge of the bar. Caren hadn't even noticed Connie had delivered their drinks.

"To getting through a lonely night with no regrets," Caren said. "Did I get it right?"

"Yeah, maybe too much so."

CHAPTER 3

Caren's head spun out of control, and it wasn't just from the martinis. This cowboy had the right idea. Unwelcome and painful thoughts about her daughter or her ex became few and far between when he stared at her with those arresting eyes. They were pale, purplish-blue and rimmed with long, thick, dark lashes, equally as dark as his hair. The five o'clock shadow made them appear even lighter.

The generic white T-shirt clung to his well-defined muscles. He wore a silver belt buckle bigger than both of her fists put together of a man riding a horse in front of a small cow. "What's with the cow on your buckle?"

He raised a dark brow and frowned. "Cow? Those are fighting words here in Cave Creek." He leaned into her space while he

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stared at her lips again.

She stared back. And if she believed him, he had a lot of practice using his mouth. Both heat and moisture flooded the juncture of legs as she anticipated what she'd be doing with this man soon enough.

How long had it been? Long enough Caren had begun to wonder if something was wrong with her sex drive. She'd blamed her lack of social life on her parental responsibilities and because she'd screwed up royally when she was young—far too young to be having sex. After she'd wised up and gotten a divorce, she'd needed to set a good example for her daughter with her ex ever ready to label her a slut if she made the smallest slip. Now here she was at thirty-three without a clue about relationships. And finally, her libido switch was not only in the ON position, it had a flashing green light and a shrieking siren.

This cowboy was a player. Did it matter? She only questioned *why* he wanted to play with her. Old Caren, the one hot guys used to call Puss-in-Boots, never had wondered why a man wanted her. Puss could get any man she chose.

Maybe she needed Puss's help to seal the deal. "I need to visit the little cowgirl's room." All of a sudden, she had a case of nerves. There were so many things she hadn't done in front of a man for years...like eating or sleeping...or fucking. Especially fucking. Puss could fuck two guys at the same time. Caren couldn't even fuck her own husband without feeling self-conscious and gross. She couldn't even piss if someone might hear her. She hurried in case someone came in.

While she washed her hands, she critiqued her appearance. Why had the handsome cowboy picked her when she looked this plain and shabby? Her too-thick hair, pulled into a braid at the

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back, was tight against her head. There wasn't anything particularly attractive about it. She wore it like this for convenience and to hide it. After drying her hands, she worked at letting her hair down. It was a fitting metaphor.

She carried everything she needed to refresh her makeup in her purse, if she'd been wearing any. She had foundation to minimize her freckles and it took a little time to watch them disappear. The dark circles under her eyes from lack of sleep were far harder to hide. After brushing out her hair, she looked like a lion. Her daughter always said she envied Caren's thick auburn hair. She swiped her lashes with black mascara and applied a thin coat of apricot gloss. A couple layers of blush and she stood back to see if the make-over had helped.

Caren thought it was good enough, but Puss wasn't satisfied. She unbuttoned her old well-worn shirt and took it off. The beige camisole would've been fine, except for the white straps from her bra showing. She took the bra off, not really believing she could pull something like that off at thirty-three. However, when she stood straighter, her C-cups looked perky...sexy even. Before she could make a decision about going without, a woman came through the door and interrupted. Caren shoved the bra into her purse and gathered her makeup. She looped her shirt low on her hips and went to find her handsome cowboy.

He was where she'd left him, turned and gazing toward the woman's restroom. Even as she approached, he acted like he didn't see her when she knew he had.

"How about some alone time?" When she spoke, he gave her an unreadable stare. Maybe Puss wasn't his type.

But when he cast an approving glance over the length of her, Caren relaxed.

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J.R. grinned. "You were gone so long I thought maybe you'd changed your mind."

"No chance, cowboy. I'm yours for the night."

* * *

J.R. found he didn't have much say on the cab ride to the hotel or once they arrived. When he should have been keeping her warm and ready with foreplay, he'd spent the time worrying. The kiss they'd shared had him worried, but the change in her appearance troubled him even more. He'd seen the knockout come out of the restroom, the woman whose shining strawberry hair surrounded her like a cloud, and hadn't recognized her. She'd removed the stuffy, too-masculine shirt she'd worn and looped it low on her curvaceous hips. The clinging camisole showed the tops of her breasts and more. Even from across the crowded dark room her pouting nipples caught his attention. And he hadn't been the only one to notice.

The touch of make-up she'd applied took her face from interesting to arresting. Until she'd stood, he hadn't realized how tall and leggy she was. This woman turned heads. The woman he'd sat and shared drinks with had almost been invisible with her hair pinned tight to her head and her androgynous attire. When he sat down, he'd half-expected her to tell him she preferred women. Talk about a diamond in the rough.

As she walked out of hotel bathroom in her camisole and generic white panties, she took his breath away...again. This woman hadn't worn the kind of undies a woman on the prowl did. She had a story he wanted to hear. But when she linked her thumbs into her waistband, his cock sprang to attention and the thought of

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talking to her evaporated.

She hesitated. "I'm not on the pill or anything. I guess I should've said something sooner."

"Not a problem." He reached to finger the two foil packages he'd laid on the table next to the bed. "I'll have it covered."

"Before that happens, can I look? I know this sounds stupid, but I feel cheated. My husband didn't like me to..." She gave a shrug and stared down to where she dug her bare toes into the pile of the carpet.

All of a sudden, J.R. was nervous as hell. Nothing about this woman made sense. The differences were unsettling...exciting.

He flipped back the sheet with a snap to reveal his nakedness. The fresh fragrance of clean sheets and his own male muskiness made him hunger for other smells...feminine ones. Caren stared at his cock...and stared...and stared. For a moment he wondered if she was about to bolt. "Come closer...it won't bite."

Blinking her beautiful green eyes, she gave a solemn nod, so serious. An emotional tug at his heart made the tension amp up and caused him to raise his fist to his chest. J.R. didn't care for where this could be heading, but like coming upon the scene of an accident, he couldn't back away. No retreat.

Without releasing her waistband, she moved nearer and leaned over him. This was all the foreplay J.R. needed, more than enough. A drop of pre-cum beaded on the head of his cock as it preened under her close inspection.

"Okay. I'm ready." She bent and stepped out of her panties.

Her auburn snatch stood out against the stark whiteness of her very pale skin. Now he was one staring. Her porcelain, translucent skin made her seem even more fragile. The cloud of rich red hair, surrounding her shoulders and down her back, made his fingers

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itch to touch. It was long enough to tickle his legs and chest while she rode him.

He reached for the rubber and ripped open the foil. It took no time at all to sheath himself. "I'm all yours." He stretched back upon the bed and motioned for her to join him. The confusion that flashed over her face almost made him sorry he'd taken this tactic. Until she removed her top in a single swoop, very nimble, despite all the hair which could have impeded her.

The immediate sight of her breasts distracted him, captivated him. Inviting, perfect, pale white globes with small pink nipples made his mouth water. It occurred to J.R. that she hadn't requested he turn off the lights. Then again, with a body like that, she had nothing to hide. The impression she made would keep him thinking of her for a long time to come.

After dropping her top, she crawled onto the bed and straddled him. The heat between her legs burned the length of his cock as she did a grind on him. J.R. prayed she'd have mercy, but he'd invited her to have her way with him. When she cupped both breasts, he considered it an invitation.

His hands replaced hers.

So soft...unbelievably perfect. He thumbed both nipples and she rewarded him with a long moan. She threw her head back, making her thick long hair tickle and caress the tops of his legs. When next she lifted up, he anticipated her mouth on his, but instead, she reached for his cock and surprised him once again.

Her breath came in harsh pants as she positioned him. He penetrated, just a little, but enough to deliver a kick of passion to his gut, while his balls tightened. He wanted to close his eyes and concentrate. He didn't dare miss this. The rapture and elation on her face as she took him inside her very tight opening mesmerized

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him.

He didn't know what he'd expected, but this wasn't it. This was surreal. Humbling. "Are you sure you're ready?"

* * *

Caren's body was awash with incredible sensations coming at her from every direction and all pooling in her glittering hoo-ha. Even Puss, at her sluttiest, had never experienced this kind of sparkling pleasure from the get-go. Delicious tension coiled tight inside her, making it almost impossible for her to come down on his magnificent cock like she wanted. She'd taken him halfway inside when her body signaled her imminent release. It was far too soon. This couldn't be happening.

His hands trailed away from her breasts to the juncture of her legs where they spread in a vee, his thumbs meeting at her clit. He positioned them so the head of her clit slipped between them. The slightest movement was mind-blowing. As much as she didn't want to move, she needed it. She needed to know...feel...live.

Hot tears traced a path from the corners of her eyes to her hairline at her temples. With her head tilted back, the cowboy wouldn't see...misinterpret and take it as a sign of weakness. The emotions boiling at the surface were only about these unbelievable sensations.

She began to tremble from the exertion of holding herself aloft with her hands on the tops of his legs behind her. Shifting forward, she grabbed hold of the headboard. The friction against her clit from the movement made her burst into an orgasm so strong her back snapped back. She came down on him all the way. Stretching with hard spasms, Caren pushed downward until fully seated upon

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the length of his long, hard cock. The pleasure was so acute it made her lightheaded.

J.R.'s large hands moved up to her hips and he lifted her up and down. She'd been afraid to move for fear the pleasure would disappear after the initial epic flash and bang. Instead, just the opposite happened when the tension came back a little harder with each thrust he made. In no time at all, she teetered on the brink of another orgasm. This one rolled over her in waves as her pussy clutched his cock after each blissful pop.

"If I'm dreaming, don't wake me up." The sound of her own voice, deep and growling, startled her. She hadn't intended to vocalize the thought.

"Fuck me!"

Caren didn't know if it was a demand or an expletive, but the cowboy began bucking under her. His handsome face strained with the sweet agony of his orgasm. All of the muscles from his corded neck down over his defined pecs to his washboard abs were straining as he lifted and jerked into her.

This was like the cherry on her sundae, the shine on a diamond, a radiant smile on her daughter's face. Watching the cowboy come made this experience just perfect. So perfect she wanted to cry with joy.

CHAPTER 4

With round two about to begin, J.R. regretted he'd only brought two condoms. They'd used the first in less than five minutes, and only the fact he'd gotten hard again in record time saved him from embarrassment. He might even be bigheaded about the feat, if not for nagging idea this had nothing to do with him. And everything to do with this beautiful woman holding her arms out to welcome him as she laid spread eagle on the bed in front of him.

"And to think I almost missed this. I came to the bar on a fluke because I turned the wrong way." She gave a hint of a smile after her speech. He wished he could see what she looked like when she was happy.

"I'll be honest with you," he said as he settled between her long

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legs, like coming home. "I'm damned glad to have met you." *Glad?* No sexual experience had come close to this since he'd married Fran. He always compared his liaisons with Fran, but this time the comparison worried him. Not only did he ache for this woman like he had for his ex, Caren made him almost feel young and carefree again. Something he hadn't felt since long before Fran had left him.

"A penny for your thoughts."

He looked up from her delectable breasts to study her beautiful face. "Women have a sixth sense about the worst possible time to ask that. I was thinking of my ex."

"And how do I stack up?"

"I was thinking you're much too smart for me."

She touched his cheek. "You didn't have to tell me the truth. You could've said anything."

J.R. gave up. "I was thinking for the first time I'm with someone who could make me forget her...everything...make the pain less."

Her big green eyes widened at his juvenile declaration. "I don't know what to say. I'm touched."

He didn't know what he wanted her to say, but that wasn't it. What the hell *did* he want? Why now? Why her? He didn't know this woman. She shifted and his cock settled where he wanted to be. But he had unfinished business. Those upside-down lips. He kissed her.

As a tactical option to get his mind off the craziness inside his damned brain, this didn't work. Her sweet taste, sugary and potent, drove him crazy. The enthusiastic way she kissed him back made his cock pain him to the point J.R. couldn't hold back a second longer. With his mouth on hers, he penetrated her hot and

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welcoming cunt. He wanted to dive to the bottom, but being the gentleman he considered himself, he contained his fervor. Each slow inch was bliss. Addicting.

How many times had he buried himself in a woman and, while pleasurable, it was often work to get what he wanted, the satisfaction he needed. This was eroticism at its very purest. His blood pounded in his veins; his breath ragged in his throat. His balls tightened when they shouldn't have so soon. When he should be humbled by his adolescent performance, this time he didn't care. He reveled in the sensations taking him where he longed to be.

* * *

Caren had never been in the place this cowboy took her. As she climbed the invisible ladder, tension and diamonds of sparkling bursts originating in her glittering hoo-ha spread like wildfire throughout her body. She never imagined this possible.

All of this reaffirmed every vile word her ex had ever said about her. Only a slut would fall into a stranger's arms and become so entranced. This was a night she'd remember until she died.

"Fuck, I'm coming again," J.R. said and grunted loudly.

As he drove into her, she did a freefall over the edge of bliss. She came so hard she saw glitter at the backs of her closed eyelids. Somewhere in the moments that followed, she came back to reality and realized her time would soon end with J.R. She wanted more.

CHAPTER 5

When J.R. asked Caren if she'd like to watch him ride, she didn't have a clue. She'd never been to a cutting competition, or even had an idea about what was involved other than cowboys and horses. The directions he gave to where he parked his rig took her straight to it. She recognized the truck from the night before. She'd been impressed with how luxurious and large it was.

The long, sleek black trailer attached matched the truck. The deep blue insignia on the trailer stated J.R. Stables. *Now what?* She just stood there looking stupid in the outfit she'd borrowed from her daughter's closet. The snug, hip-hugger jeans made her waist look small and her boobs big. The form-fitting T-shirt in baby blue just skimmed the top of the jeans and if she moved too fast, or lifted her arms higher than her shoulders, her skin showed. The red

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leather western boots belonged to her daughter, too. Never once in the past had Caren considered wearing any of the expensive items just going to waste. Her daughter had left it all, claiming it was cheap and beneath her.

Caren had no doubt her daughter believed her mother was cheap and beneath her, too. The closeness they'd always experienced had been sabotaged by her ex, who hated Caren with a passion.

A flash of grief ripped through her. These damned ostrich-leather boots were far from cheap. Caren had sacrificed for several long months to buy them for Cindi, who'd claimed she'd die without them.

"If you're looking for J.R., he's about to go into the arena."

Caren shifted to see the owner of the Cowboy Corral ride up on the biggest horse Caren had ever seen.

"They called his class a few minutes ago." Connie took her foot out of the stirrup and extended a hand. "Hop on. I'll give you a lift over there, so you don't miss him. Nice boots by the way."

Caren would've thanked Connie for complimenting her boots, but the idea of getting on a horse took precedence above manners. "Up there? On the horse with you?"

Connie gave a snort. "I never guessed J.R. would fall for someone afraid of horses. You look sturdy enough to handle it, but I'll make it easier for you." Connie dismounted, accidentally dropping her reins in the process.

Caren didn't want to get closer to the beast, but she also didn't want Connie's horse to run away when she could stop it—maybe. She pushed past her fear and reached for the dangling reins.

Only the sound Connie made as she chuckled distracted Caren. "I'm not laughing at you...well, almost *not*. Leave the reins be.

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He's ground tied."

This woman was insane. Were all horse people like this? Tied to the ground? They were just hanging there. Caren gave a shrug.

"Did J.R. invite you or was this your idea?" Connie asked.

Caren couldn't help be irritated, and it probably showed, which only seemed to make Connie smile wider.

"He invited me."

"I figured that must be the case with the directions to his trailer in your hand, but horses are his life. Those boots look like they've never touched a stirrup."

The boots again! Caren looked down at the notepaper J.R. had given her crunched in her fist. The same logo on his horse trailer was on the paper where Connie could see it. "I don't see what's so funny. I bought the boots for my daughter, but when she moved away, she left them. And these clothes belonged to her, too. I look ridiculous, don't I?"

Connie's face fell dramatically. "I apologize if you believed I was poking fun at you. The clothes look fine on you. I admit when I saw you last night, I didn't figure you for wearing anything expensive, though."

"You were right. I'd never dress like this if my daughter hadn't left if all behind. I had to work a third job to buy her these boots." Tears began to well as Caren spoke and she tugged at the too-short top. "I live in the ugliest trailer in a small trailer park on the edge of Phoenix. I'm trailer trash. This world is so far beyond me it's pathetic."

"Holy cow!" Connie said. "I wasn't expecting this. I'm sorry if I made you feel like I'm judging you because I'm not. My curiosity is because J.R. is a close friend. And it's great fun to see someone I care about finding love. J.R. deserves to be happy. He's

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a really good man. One who wouldn't pass judgment on anyone because they're poor or live in a trailer. No matter how ugly. The trailer, I mean."

Caren could feel her face color. "Love? We've known each other less than twenty-four hours."

"You must've made a dynamite impression. This isn't like him. He doesn't do this—ever." Connie patted the seat of the saddle. "Now hop on up here, and I'll ride behind. That's probably a better idea anyway. All that long hair would tickle the top of Bud's ass and make him buck."

"You say he bucks and then you tell me to get on top of him?"

"Get real. That cowboy you've managed to wrangle more than likely bucks harder than ol' Bud here does."

Caren's face heated twice as hot. She hated when she blushed.

"You need to grow a thicker skin if you're going to hang with cowboys. We're a rowdy bunch." Connie held the stirrup. "Left foot in here and swing your leg over his back. And don't kick him."

Don't kick him. Don't let her hair tickle him. "Sheesh." She stretched to get her foot in the stirrup and missed.

"Use the horn to pull yourself up."

"The what?"

"Stand back. I'll show you."

Caren did as Connie said. She had the feeling most people did exactly what Connie told them to do.

Connie put her foot in the leather. "One hand here, the other here, and lift." She gracefully mounted and smiled down. "See. Easy." Just as quickly, she got off. "Your turn."

No way would Caren keep up this humiliation by whining. She placed her hands like Connie showed her and lifted. Her foot

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missed the stirrup a second time. She couldn't get a break. Trying again, she connected, and Connie wiggled it further onto her foot. Caren gave a little bounce and heaved herself upward. When Connie's hand connected with her rear and lifted her higher, Caren yelped.

While she righted herself, Connie looped the reins over the horse's neck and handed them to Caren. "No matter what happens, never let go of the reins."

"Oh, Lord." Caren gripped them tight enough to dig her nails into her palms.

"That's rule number one."

"There's more?" What had started out as a daunting experience had turned to utter shit.

Connie pulled Caren's foot back out of the stirrup and replaced it with hers. A moment later, she swung up behind Caren. "Second rule—relax. Stick both feet back in the leather, but don't move your legs around and don't squeeze him. Keep them still, with your heels down, and toes straight ahead. Are you ready?"

"I guess." Did it matter if she wasn't?

Connie's hand closed over the hand in which Caren held the reins. She lifted and made a clicking sound with her tongue. "Walk on."

The horse responded right away. Connie eased the reins to the left and he turned that way until she brought them back to center above the horn before letting go. "Now keep him heading straight."

As they clopped along at a snail's pace, it didn't seem too hard, not nearly as bad as she'd been anticipating. Connie didn't stop talking other than to take a breath. As they passed by other trailers, Connie told her about the horses the people owned and a little about the owners. It seemed as though she knew everyone. But

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mostly horses.

When Connie tensed, Caren felt it and jumped inside. Connie put one hand on the reins and the other around Caren's waist. "Idiot."

Caren was about to ask what she'd done when she understood. A horse rearing and jumping sideways was about to crash into them. Caren grabbed the horn tighter and squeezed her legs tight to hold on. Ol' Bud rocketed sideways to avoid the collision. "Relax your legs. Now!"

Caren didn't want to, but the sound of Connie's voice made her obey. Connie turned them away from the horse moving faster than Caren would've liked.

"Good, girl," Connie said. "You kept your seat like you've been doing this forever."

She did? "Why did you yell about my legs then?"

Connie squeezed her, like a hug. "He's a cutting horse, trained to move with pressure from the rider's legs. The way you listened and kept your ass glued to the saddle tells me you're a natural."

Pride in her accomplishment would've been more if Connie hadn't kept her arm wrapped tight around Caren's waist. "Just in case," she said and gave Caren another hug. "You kept your seat, but I almost lost *mine*."

Had Caren heard correctly? She'd done something right for a change?

Connie weaved them into a crowd of other horses and riders, toward an opening by a fence. Before Caren had a chance to look around someone moved next to them.

"This is unexpected."

J.R.

The sight of him sent Caren's heart into arrest. It began beating

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so fast she swore Bud reacted with a snort. Her face flushed and the hand holding the reins began to shake. She put both hands together on top of the horn to hide it. In broad daylight, in full cowboy regalia, he was incredible, delectable.

Perfect.

Those insanely beautiful eyes, made even more stunning with the black felt hat, royal blue shirt, black vest and black fringed chaps, almost made her weep. This cowboy, this magnificent specimen had requested her presence. How did something so backward, but great, happen to her?

“Your girl has a good seat,” Connie said.

He raised a dark brow and grinned. “You have no idea how good.”

Caren felt glittery inside again with his bold declaration.

“I’ll leave you two alone before I lose my breakfast,” Connie said and slid off the horse.

The glitter turned to crap. Caren wanted to scream. How dare Connie leave her alone on top of this giant?

“I’m glad you could make it. After this class, I have almost two hours before I ride again. I thought maybe you’d like to have lunch with me back at the trailer.”

Caren knuckles went white on the horn. The urge to grip the horse with her legs was difficult to resist. “Sounds nice. I’d like that.” How had she managed to speak and not make it sound like she was about to panic?

“Do you ever smile?”

What a silly question. Of course she smiled. Didn’t she? However, right then she couldn’t force herself to if she tried. Having the sole control of this animal worried her too much. “If someone gives me a reason, I can.”

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“If that’s a challenge, I accept.” He flashed teeth white enough for a toothpaste commercial. And he had dimples! How had she missed them?

Moisture pool between her thighs. Tension coiled tight as her breath quickened. For the briefest moment, she forgot she was perched on the back of a horse.

“Ray is riding next. Aren’t you holding back for him?” Connie climbed up on the fence in front of them and grabbed hold of Bud’s bridle, making Caren feel infinitely safer.

Before Caren could wish him well, J.R. rode away and disappeared into the crowd. “What’s it mean to hold back?”

“Hold back, turn back, same thing. On either side of the herd, two riders hold the cattle together. And then two other riders keep the steer cut from the herd from bolting to the far end of the arena for the rider while he and his horse are working. Just watch. You’ll see. There they are now.

“This is the novice class, horses without a lot of experience. My husband wants to buy the mare J.R. is riding. The cowboy on the bay mare next to J.R. is Jake, our ranch manager and trainer. He and J.R. have competed against one another for years. Jake is married to one of my best friends. This is a small world. Everyone knows everyone.”

Caren shuddered inwardly. These people would probably recognized trailer-trash when they saw her.

CHAPTER 6

J.R. stared at the goddess, naked and spread eagle on his bed. Her fiery hair fanned like a coppery halo. Her alabaster skin seemed to glow with translucent perfection. He sheathed his aching dick before he took her in a mindless frenzy. “You’re magnificent. Beautiful. But you don’t act like you have a clue just how spectacular you are.”

Her sparkling green eyes widened and she gave a slight shake of her head. “Years ago I heard that now and then. It’s been a long time. A very long time.”

“I want to see you smile. I can’t remember when I wanted something—someone—this much.” He covered her with his throbbing body, both of them sinking into the mattress. His cock settled between her legs, and she spread them still farther to

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accommodate him. As much as he wanted to drive into her, he needed to celebrate this even more. He pulled back to take a perfect breast into his mouth. She bucked underneath him while he sucked.

She sank her fingers into his hair as her breath rasped. He lavished her soft flesh and hard nipples with his tongue until she thrashed, making it difficult to keep her in his mouth without hurting her. With reluctance, he moved away from her boobs and traveled down her stomach, licking and sucking. He gloried in the taste of skin, the sound of her moans, and the anticipation of claiming her cunt with his mouth.

J.R. didn't stop until he reached the juncture of her legs. He spread her pussy lips and delivered an open mouth kiss to her clit. The heady fragrance of her juices filled his head and wet his chin. So fresh and clean with a hint of leather from the saddle, he inhaled deeper.

She tasted sweet.

Good.

So good.

She screamed and released his hair. Throwing her arms wide, she clutched the bed and tossed her head from one side to the other. She couldn't be that close this soon. They'd just started. Or could she?

He pulled her clit between his teeth and flicked it with his tongue. Caren screamed louder and bucked into his mouth. Time to test if she was ready for him. He inserted a single finger and she began to pant...hard. A second finger.

"Oh, God! Oh, God!"

Her screams made his balls ache. He wanted her like no woman he'd had for longer than he could remember.

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So wet.

So hot.

“I want you inside me. Now!”

With this scream, J.R. couldn't move fast enough. He pulled up into sitting position between her thighs and penetrated her. She squealed and clawed at the bed. Her pussy grabbed him tight enough he couldn't move. She arched her back and bucked, grinding against him. If he'd been buried deeper, he might've come with her. As it was, he found it difficult not to unload his wad, but somehow he held it.

* * *

Caren's orgasm didn't stop with the initial burst. As J.R. pushed inside her, another stronger internal burst took her higher and harder. She opened her eyes to find J.R. staring, his amethyst eyes a dark sapphire. The idea of him watching her come only magnified the glittering pulses inside her. With each pulsating burst, she clutched his cock.

J.R.'s head rolled back and he shook it. When he gave a loud groan, the elation she'd experienced made her burst again.

“Just once I'd like to fuck you for more than a few minutes,” J.R. said.

He sounded so upset with his performance, her face stretched into a smile from one ear to the other. He stopped moving with a dumbfounded expression on his handsome face. What had she done to cause it? Did he think she was laughing at him? Nothing could be farther from the truth.

He changed his position without denying her his magic cock. She'd wanted to look at it again, but had been too embarrassed to

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ask without a few martinis to embolden her. He was long and thick, the perfect size for giving pleasure. As he moved into the missionary position, pinning her under his weight, he also penetrated her, going deeper, filling her. The length and hardness told her he hadn't come despite his claim of not being able to last. He continued to stare as though seeing her for the first time.

Oh, how she didn't want this to end. Not just the physical act at the moment, but she didn't want to stop seeing him. She had promised him she'd understood his rules, but she didn't count on coming alive like this. What would it hurt to see where this could lead? If it went nowhere, at least she'd tried. She couldn't get enough of him.

"I want more of you," she told him.

"I want to give you more." His lips touch hers as he strained into her, filling her completely. She could taste herself on him, the sweet tang of her own juices. His lips moved over hers like a man eager to give pleasure. And he did.

He thrust—long, slow, in and out—until she was mindless with ecstasy. When he stopped kissing her, she knew he was probably staring at her again, but when she tried to open her eyes, she couldn't focus. Suspended in an orgasm so intense it bordered between pleasure and pain, she reveled in it.

She deserved this. She did! Caren fought to keep negative thoughts at bay. *I deserve this. I deserve this. I deserve this.*

Perfect.

"Don't stop," she whispered as she chanted her mantra. *I deserve this.*

And he didn't.

* * *

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Pounding on the side of the trailer startled J.R. awake, when he hadn't realized he'd dozed.

"You planning on giving your horse a chance to warm up?" a deep male voice yelled. *Ray Kale*.

"Fuck." He raised his head to see Caren sound asleep next to him. The hint of a smile on her lips made his soft cock begin to come to life. He didn't have time for thirds, as much as he'd love to bury himself in her again. Getting out of the bed in the gooseneck without awakening her was interesting. She stirred, but he did it.

No time for a shower, so he'd smell her on him all afternoon. He only hoped his cock would behave in public. Damn, he felt good!

Vitality, fresh and potent, zinged throughout his body. Determination, as strong as he'd ever experienced, made him cock-sure he was on the right course. This could be his chance to build a new life and he wanted to take the time to find out.

He walked out of the trailer and threw his hat into the sparkling blue sky.

CHAPTER 7

Caren made it back to the arena on her own. She'd walked, after leaving Bud tethered to the trailer where J.R. had put him.

"What did you do with my horse?"

Caren grinned at Connie. Funny how an hour or so of making love to a gorgeous cowboy gave a woman confidence. "Sorry. I lost him."

Connie punched her upper arm, a playful tap. "Yeah, right. You just didn't want to go for a ride without me, did you?"

"Something like that." Caren leaned forward and grasped the fence rail leading into the cutting pen. "Did I miss anything?"

Connie gave her the once-over and shrugged. "You'd know that better than me. Or were you talking about the competition?"

Caren liked Connie's cheeky banter, but right then her interest

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centered on a very virile cowboy. One who could curl her toes with just his smile. "I didn't miss J.R. win again, did I?"

An unladylike snort flew from Connie. She tossed her short blond curls as she shook her head. "Let him win today. This is only the preliminaries, the eliminations. Tomorrow is the big money."

The announcer called the current rider's score and drew Caren's attention away from Connie and back to the arena. J.R. rode in through the gate. The sight of him sent her heart racing. "I think I have it bad."

Connie looped her arm around Caren's shoulder. "So does he. See there. He's looking for you."

Sure enough, his gaze swept over the crowd until it stopped at her. The effect of his public attention centered on her made her weak in the knees. A female catcall nearby made him grin. His handsome face was full of strength and determination. Caren smiled back, basking in his interest. He clutched his chest in an exaggerated gesture and then pointed to her. She never felt less like trailer-trash.

"Holy smokes." Connie whistled. "I didn't think I'd see the day. He's dedicating this round to you. A cowboy's way to show he cares."

Dedicating his ride, his performance. Caren wasn't sure she liked the sound of that. "That could be the kiss of death if he doesn't do well."

Connie stared, her brows drawn into a frown. "He's just made a very public demonstration of affection...cowboy style. I hope you feel the same for him."

Not only did Caren feel affection, but she knew this could be love. Caren couldn't remember the last time she'd felt this alive...joyous. "I never want him out of my sight, but I thought it

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was one-sided. Do you really think he likes me?"

"Sometimes it happens fast. Sometimes we women have to drag them to the altar kicking and screaming. Only time will tell."

As he performed, Caren couldn't look away if her life had depended upon it. The horse turned so fast, she wondered how he not only stayed on, but made it appear easy. Earlier, Bud had leaped much the same way. That gave her a good idea how hard this sport was. Both the rider and horse had to be in top condition. People were cheering for him.

"That's his best horse," Connie said. "You can see why. The two of them are a sight to behold."

When J.R. finished, the crowd went wild. Caren didn't have a clue what had made this ride better than his previous, but she made a promise to learn. He rode out of the arena and headed straight in her direction. While people congratulated him, he would nod and acknowledge them, but he didn't stop until he reached her side. Her heart leapt for joy. Every cell in her body celebrated.

This was all happening too fast...too perfect...too good for Caren. It couldn't last.

* * *

Caren feathered her fingers over J.R.'s well-defined abs. After he'd won his class, he wanted to come back to the trailer to celebrate...alone. None of his friends, who also wanted his attention, could dissuade him. It turned out that J.R.'s idea of celebration was making love. Caren liked the way his mind worked and especially liked the never-ending orgasm he gave her.

Now—how to make sure this wouldn't be her final day with him? She was beside herself with joy...and terror it would all

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come to a crashing end. He captured her hand and brought it to his lips to kiss it while she watched in fascination. There was so much to learn about this man, so much to explore. Would she get the chance?

“What are we doing here?” Why had she let that come out of her mouth? *What a fucking idiot.*

“It’s worrying you, too?”

Relief flooded through her. “It’s just, well, I could get used to this.”

“I’ve been thinking the same thing.”

“No. I mean, I don’t want to get used to this and then lose it.”

He stared at her for a while with his fabulous amethyst eyes. “I haven’t dated since my divorce almost three years ago. And I was married for eight years. I don’t have a clue how to court a woman—a proper courtship. I don’t think wanting to spend every waking moment buried inside you qualifies as courtship. Besides, I told myself I didn’t want to get close to anyone like that ever again.”

“I haven’t dated since my divorce either. Seven years ago. And I was married for ten years. That’s not having a clue.”

He looked puzzled. Of course he would. What single woman doesn’t date for seven years? “How old are you?”

“Thirty-three.”

“You must have married really young.”

“I screwed up...I was pregnant at fifteen. My ex wanted to marry me and have the baby. I didn’t think marriage was a good idea, but my mother made it happen. And I don’t regret having the baby, not for a second. But my ex...that’s another story. He was older and had a very controlling mother, even worse than mine, who hated me.”

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“So you left him?” By the sound of his voice, she could tell J.R. didn’t like the idea.

“I stuck it out for over ten years and made a lot of mistakes. That’s why I didn’t date afterward. I couldn’t risk setting a bad example for my daughter.” That was a partial truth. She didn’t want her ex using her bad behavior as ammunition to take Cindi away.

“How did that work out?”

“She’s in college now. Only seventeen and a freshman in an ivy-league school. And she lives clear across the country where I can’t see her. And I rarely hear from her.” That was another lie. Cindi had stopped taking her mother’s calls and returned her letters unopened.

“Maybe that’s enough talking for now.” J.R. nibbled on her shoulder and ran his fingers along her arm.

Why did she suddenly feel like crying? He didn’t like what she’d said. He’d frowned. He’d turned away. So what if he was kissing her, Caren knew disapproval when she saw it. He didn’t like that she’d gotten pregnant at fifteen. A slut is for a good time, not for a relationship.

J.R.’s cell phone rang and he stretched away to reach for it. The movement felt like the beginning of the end. Caren tried not let him see how much this hurt as he talked. He tapped her shoulder, and she turned to face him.

“A few of my friends are meeting for dinner. Do you mind?”

“I don’t mind at all.” Like hell she didn’t. Just like that—it was over. He had dinner plans without her. Her future involved a tacky little trailer, a TV dinner and a rerun on her dying nineteen-inch. This goose-necked horse trailer with living quarters at the front, ten times nicer than the place she called home, made her want

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more in her horizon. Was that so wrong? Why did she believe for a second that he might want her?

“About an hour then.” J.R. said.

She heard the click of him shutting his phone. Would he make love to her one last time? It would probably be easier just to leave.

He kissed her shoulder again and snuggled up, spooning her backside. “You surprised me. I didn’t think you’d agree to meet my friends so easily. Then again, you already know Connie. And I know you like eating at Connie’s place.”

Caren’s heart lurched. He wasn’t sending her away. He wanted her to go with him, meet his friends? “I need to take a shower. Is there enough water?”

“I filled the tank, but it only holds thirty gallons. I think we need to share to make sure there’ll be enough for both of us.”

“We won’t fit.”

“Sure we will,” J.R. said like he knew what he was talking about. “Two misfits make a whole.” He unfurled from the bed while Caren watched. A body like his should be seen.

When he reached his hand toward her, Caren took it.

* * *

J.R. loved washing Caren, feeling her curves under his soapy hands. And she writhed beneath his touch, but he didn’t dare soap her up again with so little water in the tank. He settled for spooning against her backside and kissing her neck.

“I need a towel.”

“Why don’t you let me lick you dry?”

She gave a smoky chuckle. “Sounds wonderful, but why don’t we save the tongue-toweling for when I’m not meeting your

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friends.”

“It’s a date.”

Caren pulled away from and stepped out of the shower. Before he could formulate a plan, she grabbed his hand and pulled him along. Once out of the tiny bathroom, she stopped and turned. When she went down on her knees in front of him, his cock, already semi-hard, sprang to full attention.

She took his cock-head into her mouth. She laved him with her tongue and began to suck. At this rate, they weren’t going to make to dinner. “Baby, we need to go. We can finish this after dinner.”

She released him, tilted her head back and looked up. When she grinned, his heart beat even harder than it had with his cock in her mouth. When she smiled, it made his knees weak again. How could such a simple gesture make him this crazy?

“We could also finish this after dinner,” she said and stood. She looped both arms around his neck and lifted up on her toes until their gaze was level.

J.R. had no idea what she was up to, but he liked it.

“Here’s a little taste.” She raised her leg and wrapped it around him. Thankfully, his cock was trapped between them or he’d be inside her without protection. “Lift me?” she asked.

He put his hands under her shapely cheeks and lifted. He could feel the heat of her pussy on his cock. She wiggled like she wanted to get him inside. “Just a little,” she pleaded.

He couldn’t remember the last time he’d been inside a woman without a condom. It had been years. Hell, even his ex had made him use them. Did he dare? He decided it probably wasn’t a good idea, since he might go wild on her. He was about to tell her no, when her wiggling caused him to penetrate. It felt good enough to bring tears to his eyes.

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He still had control.

He still held her.

He didn't have to lower her onto his length.

But he did.

The combination of her mouth earlier and then this had him ready to come. Holding her tight, he pumped slowly. So slowly. She was hot and wet. Perfect. And he knew he couldn't stop.

He walked them to the bed. On the bottom step leading to the gooseneck, he had ideal leverage. He laid her on the edge with her legs dangling over the side. While hunched over her prone figure, he fucked her.

And fucked her.

He could feel her coming and didn't hold back. He shot a long ribbon of cum deep inside her again, again and again. Never in his life could he remember coming this hard and long.

CHAPTER 8

They had a long table in a back room at the Cowboy Corral Caren had never seen. The double doors at the east end of the building had remained closed every time she'd come to Connie's. Connie's husband sat the head of the table, and there were twenty seats, about half of which were filled. Despite introductions, Caren couldn't keep track of everyone. The twin blondes, Zoe and Zandra, were easy, but she couldn't remember their husbands' names.

J.R. had just brought Caren a chocolate martini when another group of people arrived. He inched his chair closer and looped his arm over her shoulder. She snuggled against his warm strength and gave a contented sigh.

"Maybe we could make excuses and get out of here early," he

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whispered into her ear. "Go back to my trailer and take up where we left off earlier. I can't think of anything else. It was mind-blowing."

Joy bubbled inside her like sparkling champagne, making her giddy. "I'd love that."

"I didn't know you two knew each other."

The words over her shoulder took her attention away from J.R. Caren turned to see the group leader...what was her name? Bev Wells.

"We just met," J.R. said to the woman.

"At our grief management meeting. You know that's unadvisable. Two people dealing with grief can feed off of each other in unhealthy ways."

J.R. gave a dismissive wave with his free hand. His other hugged her closer. "I met Caren at Connie's, just last night."

Fear knotted inside Caren. She recalled the man sitting in front of her who'd lost his daughter. *No, it couldn't be. What did he say his name was...not J.R.*

"She was sitting straight behind you when you spoke about your daughter." Bev shot a glare at Caren.

No, it couldn't be. Caren began to tremble as fear of losing J.R. built rapidly in her mind. It had to happen, of course, but not this soon. She couldn't let him believe she'd somehow maneuvered their meeting.

"If it was you, I didn't see your face," she told J.R. who looked stunned at Bev's words. "I had no idea." The pain and confusion in his eyes were more than she could bear. His arm fell from her shoulder and the tension where their bodies still touched made Caren unsure and frightened.

She turned away to glare at the disapproving Ms. Wells. "I

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don't know what you're inferring, but the man who spoke wasn't named J.R."

"J.R. is his nickname. Justin Roberts."

J.R. pulled back until they no longer touched at all. Skepticism showed in his handsome face and stabbed her in the heart. Caren couldn't believe it. This couldn't be happening. Reality brought her crashing back to earth. Just like always, she was the loser...the person who stepped in shit. She'd thought he'd eventually reject her for a million reasons, but not for this. He raised his arm, and she reacted in panic. She jumped to avoid the blow she knew was coming.

"What the hell?" J.R. said.

Caren didn't know if he was speaking to her. She only knew she needed to get out of there before she shattered in a million pieces in front of everyone. She was trailer-trash. She'd never be good enough to fit in with these people. Why had she even tried?

Getting out of the room and through the restaurant was easy, but in the parking lot, she didn't know what to do. She just started weaving through the cars until she came upon a man opening the door of his truck. "Can I get a lift?" she asked.

He gave her the once over and shrugged. "Where are you headed?"

"I don't have a clue. Just away from here."

* * *

J.R. couldn't find Caren. He'd lost her at Connie's because he hadn't reacted fast enough. Once he finally got his ass moving, she was nowhere in sight. Connie and Ray helped him, but he'd lost her.

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She'd thought he was going to strike her. That moment when Bev spoke had shocked him, and he hadn't known how to react. And so he hadn't, until it was too late. The fucking rhetoric he'd spouted about one-night stands had come back to bite him in the ass. He'd found a woman who he wanted and he'd let her get away. In his stupidity, he'd failed to get her last name, or phone number, or address. He knew nothing about her.

Connie told him she lived in trailer park on the edge of Phoenix. She'd claimed to have the ugliest trailer in a small park, which made him feel even worse about what had happened with Bev Well's untimely interference. Connie said she'd been worried about fitting in... Why hadn't he picked up on her insecurity?

When he went looking, he found some damned ugly trailers in a couple of the smaller parks. It broke his heart to think of Caren's life being hard enough she might live in one of them. Especially when he had so much. Not even his friends, none of them, knew the extent of his finances. It was a good thing or some might have wondered about her. Living like this, the word gold-digger might come to minds of his well-to-do cronies.

He'd driven through all the trailer parks, even ones that didn't qualify as small. He'd asked the people he'd seen there if they knew a redhead named Caren. And he came off looking like a stalker, a pervert, without coming close to finding her.

Frustration had him ready to spit nails.

* * *

The following week, he didn't want to go back to his grief support group to face Bev Wells after he'd told her to fuck off. But he feared Caren might show up again and he'd miss her. Although

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the chances were slim, he had to be there just in case. He took a seat at the back of the room where he could watch the door.

His relationship with Bev had deteriorated to curt, perfunctory answers to her attempts at cordiality. He knew it wasn't her fault in theory, but his heart said otherwise. When the hour came and went without Caren, he went to Connie's in hopes she'd show there. She didn't.

And J.R. had lost again.

His only hope was that she'd show the following Friday...or the next one after that.

* * *

Caren had driven by both the building where the grief management group met, then by Connie's, only to see J.R.'s truck at both places. Had he hoped to see her? Wouldn't he have avoided both places to steer clear of her? She didn't have the nerve to find out and she hated what a coward she was.

By the following Friday, her nerves were shattered by sleepless nights and maniacal hormones. Her job as bookkeeper at a small construction company in Cave Creek was in jeopardy when she made one error after another. Her boss put her on notice. She had to do something before she lost what little she had. She was fed-up with being a victim of her own stupid, pathetic life.

When she drove by the grief management group, his truck was parked close to the road where it was easily seen. No way would she go there, but with any luck he'd come to the bar again. Caren passed by and headed toward Connie's. It took a several minutes before she could work up the nerve to walk inside. When Connie was nowhere in sight, relief washed over her. She didn't want to

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explain herself to anyone while waiting to see if J.R. came. She sat her purse on the chair next to her so no one would take the seat.

Sipping a chocolate martini, she waited on pins and needles until she knew it was time to expect him. The closer it drew to when he'd arrived before, the more nervous she became. And he arrived five minutes sooner than she thought. The sight of him both thrilled and cut her heart to the core. How could she have become so emotionally invested in this cowboy in only two days? It couldn't be real, could it?

His eyes swept the bar starting with where she'd sat when they first met and stopping at her present space. She tried to read his expression and couldn't. However, he headed straight toward her with long, purposeful strides, eating up the distance between them at a rapid pace.

Her breath hitched. Her heart raced. Memories of making love to him were as clear as though they'd only just happened. She shivered with the vivid recollection. Her heart swelled as he drew closer, and his beautiful eyes heated. When she picked up her purse, he wedged into the seat next to her.

"You thought I was going to hit you?"

Her reaction to his raised arm at Connie's dinner table embarrassed her. "Not really. Not once I thought about it, but by then it was too late. I didn't have any idea you were the same man who'd sat in front of me at group meeting. Your story shamed me and I left when you stopped speaking. I went there thinking I might fit in, only to discover I'd made a terrible error in judgment."

"You went there because your daughter went away to college?"

"She doesn't want to have anything to do with me. After my husband's mother died, he inherited a fortune. He lavished Cindi with gifts and an education I could never afford. He told Cindi

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about my behavior when we were married. And even though I spent years trying to make up for what I'd done, it wasn't enough. I'd cheated on him. I couldn't deny it.

"No matter how unhappy I was, or how many times he beat me, I shouldn't have cheated. I was weak, looking for any scrap of kindness I could find. And now, the most important person in my life hates me because of my despicable behavior. She was my reason for living." By the time Caren got it all out, she couldn't breathe. She searched J.R.'s face for a sign he understood.

"Maybe she'll wake up one day and realize what she's lost."

"I'd like to believe that, but the longer I go without a single word, while she refuses my calls and returns my letters unopened, the less hope I have. For years, it was just the two of us against the world. Her father, Ken, only gave me a pittance of support for her. I had to work two and three jobs to give her what she needed...wanted."

His eyes narrowed. "I'm sure you believed you were doing your best for her."

"But instead, I spoiled her. When I married Ken, I didn't know about his mother's money. My mother made him marry me under the threat of having him arrested for statutory rape. I was fifteen and he was twenty-five. At the time, I didn't have a clue how despicable what he did to me was. His mother hated me and our daughter when she was born. My bad conduct after our marriage only made it worse. When we divorced, he threatened to tell Cindi about my adultery if I tried to get more money from him. He needn't have worried. I would've starved before I used a penny he sent for myself. I hated his money."

J.R. rose in one fluid motion from his stool and surrounded her with his arms, pulling her tight against his hard chest. The firm set

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of his strong jaw and the intense emotion in his amethyst gaze gave her pause. When he lowered his mouth to hers, she didn't expect it. She gave herself to the passion she found there.

CHAPTER 9

Seven months later

J.R. traced his forefinger over the bump of Caren's belly. He'd sworn he'd never have children again, now here he was—about to be a father in less than two months to a baby girl. And today was his wedding day.

"I need to start getting ready," Caren said, capturing his hand as it dipped lower.

"You look just fine like this."

"Today will be the first day I've seen Cindi in over a year. I want to look my best."

It had taken all his considerable persuasiveness to get her to marry him. She'd insisted no way would she get hitched again

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because she had to, like the first time. He managed to convince her, but if her daughter disapproved, it could spoil their special day.

“You look your best with a smile on your face. And I know how to put one there.” He rolled and settled between her legs blowing on the fine auburn hairs of her alluring snatch. She’d had it waxed into the shape of a heart, leaving her sweet nether lips ready for an open-mouthed kiss. With the flat of his tongue, he laved her from clit to core and then back again. She sank her fingers into his hair, moaning loudly.

“I want you inside me,” she said in a breathless whisper.

“My pleasure.” He moved back up the bed to spoon her from behind. She lifted her leg back over the top of his thigh and titled her pelvis back, making penetration easier. He slid into her wet heat, while his fingers sought her clit. He couldn’t go deep, but she was so tight it made up for it. This position made for optimal G-spot stimulation. Her soft pants signaled she’d entered her climb. The place where she said was like a continual orgasm...climbing and leveling, floating a little higher in perfect, timeless pleasure. If he relaxed into this, he could make it last at least thirty minutes for her, sometimes longer.

She called it her heaven on earth, and he was the only man ever to take her there. Every few minutes contractions shimmered over his cock, each time causing his balls to tighten. Her deep pelvic muscles would then lull him back into an easy rhythm. However, he was only human. The slightest encouragement from Caren, thrashing her head, clutching the sheets, or moans would send him into overdrive.

She arched her back and rubbed his thigh, signaling it was time for the big one. J.R. was more than ready to oblige. He extended

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his stroke and applied more pressure to her clit.

“Yes. Yes. Yes!”

Her voice as she came pushed him over the edge. He shot a ribbon of cum into her, long enough to make him see stars. Twice more he unloaded impossibly long streams, followed by a flood of emotion. He hugged her against him. “I never believed I’d be this happy. Never.”

Caren twisted around and Mr. Happy, all wet and willy, flopped out on the sheets. “You made me feel special and more wanted than I ever dreamed possible. All my life I’ve chased after love in all the wrong places,” she told him. “You make me believe I can be the woman you deserve. I have no doubt I can do it. I promise to love you forever.”

She kissed him. The warmth of her soft lips against his, coupled with love flowing between them, nearly unmanned him. Tears stung the backs of his eyes. “I’m going to get out of here and let you get ready. I’ll see you on the patio in a little over an hour.”

* * *

Their wedding was perfect. J.R. had thought of everything and spared no expense to give Caren whatever she wanted before she even realized she wanted it. He’d built them a sprawling southwestern home, with every upgraded amenity. This was the kind of house she’d seen in magazines and never imagined.

The only worry was how Cindi would react to the marriage. She’d R.S.V.P.’ed but hadn’t taken any of Caren’s calls.

“You look beautiful.”

Caren’s emotions whirled as her daughter’s voice registered. She turned to face her daughter, the person who’d been the center

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of her life for many years. The person whose love had once made Caren whole. But not now. While she loved Cindi with her whole heart, she now had J.R. and another daughter on the way. "You look beautiful, too."

Cindi flew into her arms. "I'm so sorry for the way I treated you. J.R. is right. I should never have turned my back on you."

"J.R. is right? When did you talk to J.R.?"

"About a month ago, he came to see me. And let me have it...big time. Plus, he wanted me know he'd be there for me. Somehow, he found out Dad managed to blow most of the money his mother left him. My tuition is paid for the remainder of this year, but I need to make other plans for the future."

J.R. joined them and looped his arm around Caren's shoulder. "Looks like my interference has been discovered. But since Cindi is here, I'm hoping I'm not in too much hot water."

"You have a beautiful home," Cindi told him.

"Ahh. That's my cue to show you one of the wedding presents I have for my lovely wife."

Caren smiled. "The mysterious pool house you won't let me see?"

"Smart woman. The two of you want to follow me?"

Caren took Cindi's hand and they weaved through the crowd of J.R.'s friends toward the back of the patio. They circled the marble statue of an angel with Tina's name engraved above the words: My sweet angel. J.R. touched it as he passed by walking around the pool. He had made Caren promise not to go anywhere near the pool house he'd had built over the last month.

He stopped by the French doors and reached into his pocket to pull out two keys. "This one is for you." He handed a key to Caren. "And this one's for you." He handed the second key to Cindi.

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Cindi gave him a questioning look. Caren now had an idea what he was up to, but didn't dare to dream it was possible.

"Will one of you open the door?" J.R. made a sound of mock impatience.

Caren put her key in the lock and opened the door. The first room was a living area with a kitchenette to the left. It was spacious and decorated with a white leather sofa and lounge chair on a marble tiled floor. An entertainment center filled the back wall and a quick glance showed J.R. had thought of everything.

"What do you think?" he asked Cindi.

"It doesn't look like a pool house."

"It's yours," he said to her. "This apartment is yours to use whenever you need it. I figured you might decide to come back to Arizona to finish school. There are some great schools here to choose from, and I'm sure your mother would love to have you close again. No pressure. It's here if you need it."

Caren kissed her daughter. "We'll leave you to look around." She took her husband's hand and led him back through the door, leaving her daughter to think about J.R.'s generosity. They walked to the rose garden he'd planted when he discovered Caren loved roses. She stopped and wrapped her arms around him as best she could seven months along.

"How did I get so lucky? Justin Roberts, you're a dream come true. Most men would've had little patience with Cindi's selfish behavior. But not you. You see the good, even when others might not. You're going to spoil me."

"Mrs. Roberts, your daughter is entitled to make a few mistakes. Don't we all? People who are good, always doing the right thing, don't appreciate like those of us who learn the hard way. As far as spoiling you goes, I can't think of anyone who

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deserves it more than you. Be prepared because this is only the beginning.”

Caren looked over to the barn where her old trailer sat. She’d kept it as a reminder of all she’d gone through to reach this pinnacle in her life. “It can’t get any better than this.”

“I accept that challenge, my love,” said the cowboy from Cave Creek.

BRIT BLAISE

More than two years have passed since Brit wrote her first story for Amber Quill, and it's been an adventure. No longer in Arizona, she resides on the outskirts of a small Ohio town with her extended family, which includes her daughter's family, too. The dream of restoring a Victorian has passed and the home she's found is big enough to get lost inside...while writing her next story. She's taking the drastic changes one day at a time! Keep in touch with her latest project at:

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* * *

**Don't miss *Cave Creek Cowboy Ménage*
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When the heat turns from friendly to deadly...

A dynamite duo, Zandra and Spence are best friends with a history of sexual exploits. When a handsome cowboy joins them, three isn't a crowd, just pure raucous fun for all.

But something goes wrong. What starts as amusing entertainment with a splash of kink, becomes complicated for Zandra. She can't control her emotions. What's worse, Jake brings more to the ménage than anyone suspects—a desperate stalker.

Jake's already questioning whether the experimentation is messing with his mind, not because of Zandra's bisexual friend, Spence, but because Zandra awakens feelings he'd wanted to bury forever. Even worse, she's missing and everyone thinks he's to blame. Jake's life is what he wants, freedom to fulfill his every desire and some he didn't know he had. He doesn't need a six-foot-tall blond complication...

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