

Red Sage Presents

# TRIPLE THREAT

Las Vegas  
ONLY

Mia Varano

Three  
Kinds  
of  
Wicked



An eRedSage Publishing Publication

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# *Triple Threat*

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*by Mia Varano*

***To My Reader:***

Your mother always told you to beware of strangers, but Trey is not just any stranger. Welcome (once again) to Trey's world where love and seduction heal all and pave the path for Trey's redemption.

In this story, Trey brings together two people who have lost their way and he shows them how to love again. So the next time you encounter a tall, dark stranger on the side of the road... maybe you should listen to your mother.

Brandy Tate pumped on the accelerator as her car slowed down. She gritted her teeth and ground out, “Don’t do this to me.”

She rocked forward in her seat as if to urge the dying car onward. As the car sucked up the remnants of the gas and began coasting down the highway on fumes, Brandy cranked the steering wheel to the right. She rolled along the gravelly shoulder of the road for another several seconds before the car whispered to a stop.

Stumbling out of the car, she tipped her head back and wailed at the bright ball of fire in the sky. Then she dropped her chin to her chest and wailed again as she glared at her four-inch heels.

She dug those heels into the glistening asphalt and wedged her hands on her hips. She announced to an audience of cacti, “You’ve been taking care of yourself for a long time, Brandy Tate. You can handle this one little setback.”

*Yeah, in a series of never-ending setbacks.*

The last road sign she passed mentioned a town, Buzzard Flats, in another forty miles. She could hang out here and wait for a car to come by and catch a ride, even though Buzzard Flats didn’t sound too promising. Her gaze shifted back and forth along the empty highway, wavy tendrils of heat rising from the blacktop like seaweed from the bottom of the ocean.

If a car didn’t come along before sunset in another hour or so, she’d start walking to Buzzard Flats. How long could it take to walk forty miles? In four-inch heels? In sweltering heat? With a ruthless criminal after you?

Her eyes flicked in the direction of Vegas. If Vinnie “The Voice” Caprese discovered she was the secret witness, would he believe she had no intention of cooperating with the Feds? Or would he just take care of her anyway?

A hot gust of wind whipped over the desert floor, snatched at her skirt, and pelted her bare legs with sand. Licking her lips, she clutched her skirt against her thighs and made a decision.

She’d start walking toward Buzzard Flats right now and hope for a lift on the way. She could buy gas there, get a ride back to this godforsaken stretch of highway, and make tracks for L.A. Anyone

could hide out in L.A. People did it all the time, and they didn't need the Witness Protection Program as insurance.

She swung her keychain around her finger. She might even have another pair of shoes in the trunk, something a little more practical for walking forty miles in the desert.

She tried to slide the key in her trunk lock and frowned when it scraped and stuck. She wiggled the key back and forth, jamming it into the lock. Finally, it clicked into place.

The trunk burst open, yanking the keys from her grasp. She stumbled back and clamped a hand over her mouth.

A large man unfolded his limbs and staggered from the trunk. His piercing blue eyes pinned her as he snarled, "It's about god-damn time."

Agent Coltrane. Brandy sucked in a sharp breath as her gaze raked over his solid, unyielding, six-foot three-inch frame. No disguises or suits this time. A pair of faded jeans outlined his muscular thighs, and a wrinkled white T-shirt clung to his broad chest. After taking inventory of his perfect parts, Brandy zeroed in on Coltrane's mouth, now twisted into an uncompromising snarl.

*Don't go there.* Brandy clenched her jaw. Despite all his physical disguises, she'd experienced a visceral attraction to the stoic FBI agent the minute he'd arrived at the Sundance Resort and Casino a few months ago to question her. And it all started with his mouth. Even the fake beards and mustaches couldn't conceal that sensual part of his anatomy.

His full lips did not mesh with the square jaw, the steely eyes, or the rock-hard, disciplined body he hid with his undercover disguises. He was a warrior with the lips of a lover.

Despite the raging heat that blew like a furnace through the desert, Brandy shivered and pressed her thighs together. Maybe if Agent Coltrane had used honey instead of vinegar to convince her to testify against Vinnie "The Voice" Caprese, she'd have succumbed to his wishes.

Or maybe not.

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Brandy's—Ms. Tate's big, dark eyes rimmed with black eyeliner roamed across his body, and Ridge felt her scrutiny as a whisper-soft touch. When her gaze collided with his, her lips parted. The luscious lips that drove him crazy every time he questioned her or tried to coerce her into testifying against Vinnie the Voice and entering the Witness Protection Program.

The frightened woman had already morphed into the tough chick with attitude, the one he'd come to know and desire the past few months. Her eyes narrowed and she regained her balance, planting her ridiculous high-heeled sandals in the dirt, her stance wide.

“What the hell are you doing in my trunk, Coltrane?”

“Burning up.” He peeled off his white T-shirt and mopped the back of his neck with it.

The tip of Brandy's pink tongue lodged at the corner of her mouth, her gaze tracking over his chest and belly. The crotch of his jeans tightened as his cock pulsed to life, just as it always did in the presence of this woman. And this time he didn't have a pair of loose dress slacks or a Hawaiian tourist shirt to conceal his dangerous desire.

“You ran out of gas, didn't you?” He bunched his T-shirt in his fist, dropping his hands to his sides.

“You didn't answer my question. Why were you in my trunk?”

A warm breeze swirled her blue flowered skirt around her endless showgirl legs. She bent her knees and pressed the billowing skirt against her thighs in a Marilyn Monroe moment, but not before he caught a glimpse of a frothy white thong.

Closing his eyes, he rolled back his shoulders, easing the stiffness of the past one hundred miles cramped in the trunk of Brandy's car. If only he could alleviate the stiffness of another part of his anatomy as easily.

“I knew you were going to hit the road, and I figured you're too smart not to spot a tail.”

Her long, chestnut brown hair whipped across her face. She shoved it back and clenched it in a ponytail. “Does Agent Reynolds

know about this little plan of yours?”

Ridge clenched his jaw and folded his arms across his bare chest, damp with sweat and suppressed lust. If his supervisor, Derek Reynolds, found out he'd stuffed himself in the trunk of a witness's car, he would report him to the Bureau, and Ridge would be looking at another suspension. Maybe this time the Bureau would try to get rid of him for good.

The FBI didn't like loose cannons.

Grinding his teeth together, Ridge dug his fingers into his biceps. If someone had used those words to describe him twelve years ago as a green recruit fresh out of Quantico, he'd have snorted in disbelief.

Then he lost a witness. Then he lost his wife. Then he lost all faith in a justice system that seemed to focus on expediency instead of fairness.

Brandy laughed, the sound like a freshwater stream bubbling across the scarred lunar-like landscape. “He doesn't know, does he? Agent Coltrane, I believe you'll have some 'splainin' to do when you get back to Vegas.”

“You mean when *we* get back to Vegas.”

The jaw of Brandy's delicately boned face hardened, and Ridge knew he'd landed back at square one with this stubborn woman.

Didn't she understand the importance of her testimony against Vinnie Caprese? Once the Feds secured her in the Witness Protection Program, she'd be safe. He'd make sure of it this time.

“I told you, Coltrane. I'm not going to testify against The Voice, and I'm not spending the rest of my life under an assumed identity, afraid of my own shadow. Besides, I don't trust you guys.”

By *you guys*, Brandy not only meant the FBI, she meant the entire United States government. Just their luck the only witness to the murder of Black Jack Moretti, the pit boss at the Sundance Casino, turned out to be a woman with an innate distrust of all government agencies.

Ridge lifted his shoulders. “You can trust me.”

“You mean the guy who broke into my trunk?” She held her



hands in front of her, palms forward. “No thanks.”

He didn’t blame her for not trusting him. The last witness who’d put her life in his hands ended up with a bullet between the eyes. A bead of sweat trickled along his hairline and he smacked it away, silently cursing at the way his hand trembled.

He was no good for anything anymore, especially not for offering protection to this sexy long drink of water. Brandy deserved better.

Tilting her head, she released her hair, which fluttered around her shoulders criss-crossed with the thin spaghetti straps of her tummy-skimming top. “It’s nothing personal, Coltrane. I’ve been looking after myself for so long, I’ve decided it’s best not to entrust my care and feeding to anyone else.”

God, did she sense his weakness? He waved his arms around the emptiness, the sun now sinking into the desert floor. “We still need to find a way out of this mess.”

“The next town, Buzzard Flats, is forty miles up the road. How long do you think it would take to walk there?”

Ridge’s gaze razored back and forth along the highway, and he lifted a shoulder. “I’m sure someone will come along to save us.”

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And then he came.

He rose from the shimmering highway as if ejected from the asphalt, black on black. As the Harley drew closer and the whine of its engine pierced the dense silence of the desert, goose bumps rushed along Brandy’s arms.

Agent Coltrane tensed beside her, and when the biker slowed, Coltrane reached into the open trunk and pulled out his gun.

Brandy squinted at the stranger, his longish dark hair blowing behind him beneath the abbreviated motorcycle helmet, his black T-shirt molded to his body by the wind. He didn’t look like one of Vinnie’s boys, but she couldn’t be too careful.

The motorcycle pulled onto the shoulder of the road, churning up sand and grit. Man and machine seemed welded together into one powerful entity. Brandy covered her face with her hands to

protect it from the particles needling her flesh.

Agent Coltrane growled beside her. "Let me handle this."

What did Coltrane plan to do, shoot the biker and steal his motorcycle? For being one of the good guys, Agent Coltrane had a dangerous edge.

It turned her on.

He shoved his weapon in the back of his waistband and pulled his wrinkled T-shirt over his head, hiding all those rippling muscles from her greedy gaze.

She'd been happier to find him in her trunk than she had let on. Even though she'd been making her own way in the world longer than she could remember, she welcomed the support and protection of Agent Coltrane and his big gun in the middle of the desert. Of course, he was hardly the type to wrap her in his arms and soothe away all her fears.

She had yet to find the man capable of that.

The stranger cut the bike's engine and slid from the Harley. His black motorcycle boots crunched the gravel as he ambled toward them with the grace of a jungle cat, unusual for a big man.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Coltrane widen his stance and hook one thumb in the front pocket of his jeans. The pocket closest to his weapon.

The biker stopped in front of them and dragged the helmet from his head. He shook out his hair, blue-black as a raven's wing, which skimmed his broad shoulders.

"Do you have a problem?"

His voice, low and as smooth as aged cognac, insinuated itself into her core, stirring up those old feelings of longing, of wanting to belong to something, to someone. She leaned toward him to catch the last syllables from his lips.

Agent Coltrane snorted. "What was your first clue?"

Brandy drew her brows together and shot Coltrane a warning look. This man in black had the ability to help them, and Coltrane needed to tame his sarcastic tongue. Coltrane really had to work on his people skills.

“You look lost.” Their savior shrugged and shoved his dark sunglasses to the top of his head, sweeping his hair from his face.

Brandy sucked in a breath and stepped back. The man’s eyes looked almost black in the fading desert light. Their intensity dominated his beautiful face, all sharp angles and shadows.

She clutched her hands in front of her to quell her compulsion to run her palms across the deep lines bracketing his mouth. Pain. His eyes and the harshness of his mouth spoke volumes of pain.

Definitely not one of Vinnie’s guys. Couldn’t Coltrane, even with his limited understanding of the human heart, understand that?

“We’re not lost. She—we ran out of gas.”

The stranger nodded as if it were the most normal thing in the world for a couple to run out of gas two hours out of Vegas.

Coltrane took charge, as usual, but at least the rod up his back seemed to bend a little. He must’ve realized the biker posed no threat to them. Despite his height and muscular build, the stranger possessed a calm gentleness.

“Could you ride over to Buzzard Flats, get us some gas, and then bring it back here? I’d pay you for our gas, your gas, and your time.”

The man’s grim mouth quirked at the corner. “There is no Buzzard Flats.”

“What do you mean? I saw the sign back there.” Brandy’s arms flailed at her sides. They couldn’t be on this road much longer. There were only so many roads out of Vegas, and she didn’t want anyone else following her. Coltrane represented danger, but at least he didn’t want to kill her.

“Buzzard Flats is a ghost town.”

“Shit.” Coltrane slammed his fist against the car. “Can you make it to the next town then? We’ll wait for the gas. It should be cooling off here in a few hours.”

“It could be dangerous waiting out here,” the stranger said.

Brandy’s head snapped up in unison with Coltrane’s.

Agent Coltrane placed his hand behind his back again, his fin-

gers tracing the handle of his gun. “What do you mean by that?”

The man flipped his sunglasses back over his eyes and shrugged. “The desert looks empty during the day, but it’s filled with creatures, some more dangerous than others.”

Brandy pressed her fist to her mouth as her heart skittered in her chest. Yeah, and Vinnie’s thugs were probably the most dangerous creatures of all. A cold dread seeped into her skin, and she tottered forward.

The stranger’s tattooed arm shot out and curled around her waist. His warm breath tickled her ear. “You’ll be fine.”

Closing her eyes, she leaned against his strong arm, resisting the urge to fall against his chest. Damn Coltrane. As good as it felt leaning against this hot biker for support, she wished it had been Coltrane to break her swoon.

Her eyelashes fluttered, her eyes meeting Coltrane’s, burning with a blue fire as his gaze darted between her face and the stranger’s arm around her waist.

“You’re right.” Coltrane sliced a hand through the air. “We need to get off of this highway. Now.”

“I can help.”

The dark man’s arm tightened around Brandy’s waist, and she almost fell into another swoon, one of desire rather than fear. His scent enveloped her, a touch of cologne, a fresh, masculine soap, and a dollop of sex. She drank deeply.

“What do you suggest?” Coltrane crossed his arms over his solid chest, making himself look large and in charge.

The stranger pointed into the dusk draping the highway. “There’s a small desert community off the road and off the map. Mostly artists, wanderers, gypsies. They might even have some gas.”

“Is it within walking distance?” Coltrane jerked his thumb toward the Harley. “Because that bike isn’t big enough for the three of us.”

“If you don’t trust me, you can take Brandy on the motorcycle, and I’ll give you directions to the camp.” The man finally relin-

quished possession of Brandy's waist. "I'll start walking, and you can return for me."

Coltrane reached back and pulled out his gun. Pointing it at the stranger, he said, "Spread 'em."

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"What are you doing?" Brandy finally disentangled herself from her new best friend and smacked Ridge on the shoulder.

Ridge gestured with his gun. "Put your hands against the car and spread your legs. We don't know who this guy is, Brandy. Maybe Vinnie sent him."

"Are you nuts? Does he look like one of Vinnie's gofers?"

"I'm not entrusting you to a stranger." Ridge raked his hand through his hair. "I didn't tell you this before, but the reporter who's been on my back all month trying to unmask our secret witness must've gotten lucky. Right before I hopped in your trunk, I got a phone call from Agent Reynolds. He told me the station planned to go public with your identity. Your face is probably all over the TV by now."

Brandy cursed. "Or your buddies at the Bureau gave my name to the reporter to smoke me out and make me come running for your protection. I have to get away from this road."

Could he let Brandy ride off with the biker?

"First things first." Ridge turned back to the stranger. "Assume the position."

The man had obviously never been arrested before. Standing up straight, he put his hands on the side of the car. Ridge moved behind him, pushed him forward, and kicked his legs apart. He didn't protest.

Feeling beneath the man's black T-shirt, Ridge's hands skimmed over his flat, hard belly. He patted his hips and his pockets. His tight jeans molded to his body—no space to hide anything. The man had nothing in his pockets—no change, no wallet, no driver's license.

Ridge ran his hands along the stranger's muscular thighs. The guy was built, no question about that, but Ridge could take him if

necessary. He moved up the V of his legs and briefly clutched his crotch.

Ridge dropped his hand as if scorched, his face suffused with heat. The guy was semi-hard. Had the pat-down turned him on? At least Ridge had satisfied himself that the stranger wasn't packing anything more lethal than his cock.

Glancing at Brandy, studying the two of them intently, Ridge wondered just how lethal that cock might be.

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"Are you two finished?" Brandy raised her brows. Lust jolted her core as Coltrane ran a hand down the side of the man's muscled thigh encased in black denim. When Coltrane grabbed the man's crotch, she almost choked.

Coltrane straightened, his face flushed. "Just checking to make sure he's not packing heat."

Brandy smirked. The man in black was packing heat all right, but she wouldn't shy away from his weapon.

"Are you satisfied?" The man's dark eyes bore into Coltrane's as if the two of them shared a secret.

"Yeah. Take her. Brandy needs to get out of here now. I'll stay behind in case there's trouble."

Did Agent Coltrane just call her Brandy? Guess he didn't want to be one-upped by the biker.

"I'll start walking, and you can come back for me." Coltrane slid the gun from his waistband again and brandished it at the stranger. "If you hurt her—"

"I'll protect her." The man touched Brandy's hand, his long fingers skimming across her knuckles. "If she'll allow me."

Brandy glanced from the stranger to Coltrane. The tension between them stretched as tightly as a string on a violin. "Sounds like a plan to me. Will you be okay, Coltrane?"

His lips twisted into a smile as he tapped the barrel of his gun against his denim-clad thigh. "Yeah, me and Mr. Smith and Mr. Wesson."

The biker strode toward his Harley, and Brandy grabbed his

arm. As her hand skimmed up the tattoo on his forearm, he gasped, almost trembling beneath her light touch. Had she hurt him? She studied the tattoo, links of a chain, vibrant but not fresh.

She dragged her gaze from the intricate design to his face and staggered backward. Desire emanated from the stranger's dark eyes, not pain. That tattoo must be chained to his cock.

She dropped his arm and fanned herself with her open hand. "Wait. I need to get my purse out of the car. And I have a bottle of water in there for your walk, Coltrane."

Ducking into the car, she grabbed a bottle of warm water from the cup holder. She handed it to Coltrane, her gaze straying over his shoulder to the biker, now smoothing back his hair and replacing his dark glasses. "Since you already know I'm Brandy, and this is Agent Coltrane, what's your name?"

"Trey." He threw his leg over the big bike, straddling it as he started the engine.

Coltrane stuck out his hand. "I'm Ridge."

As the two men clasped hands, Trey said, "Help Brandy onto the motorcycle."

She settled one high-heeled sandal on the footrest of the bike and hoisted herself up while grasping Trey's shoulders. Coltrane—Ridge stood behind the bike, his hands spanning her waist as he steadied her. She swung her other leg around and landed with a smack on the leather seat.

Clawing at her skirt to pull it down around her thighs, she felt Ridge's hands resting on her hips, settling her on the seat. The thong panties she wore offered no buffer against the leather, and her delicate skin chafed against its warm surface.

Trey flipped up the bike's kickstand with his heavy motorcycle boot.

With her legs spread wide across the seat, her breasts crushed against Trey's broad back, and Ridge's hands shaping her hips to secure her on the bike, Brandy felt tingles awaken along the insides of her thighs. She rocked forward, clamping her knees against Trey's hips.

Trey revved the engine and handed his helmet to Ridge. Ridge secured the helmet on Brandy's head, the tips of his fingers lingering on her neck.

She scooted forward and her parted sex, slick with desire, trailed along the leather. She squirmed against the seat, her arousal leaping like a flame to consume her. As a pleasurable fog clouded her brain, she wrapped her arms around Trey's waist to keep from slipping off the Harley.

Trey shifted back until he sealed his body against hers, her mound pressing against his lower back. Ridge's rough palms trailed along the silk of her bare thighs, and the sensations overwhelmed her.

She came on the back of the Harley.

As she bucked forward, her skirt slipped from beneath her thighs and billowed up. The motorcycle lunged onto the highway, the roar of its engine drowning out her cry of passion and release.

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*Nice view.* Ridge ran the back of his hand across his dry lips as he watched the Harley eat up the road. God, he hoped his instincts were right on this one. What choice did he have? Brandy had to get out of here, find refuge.

After ten years on the job, he possessed an ability to read people. Trey didn't pose any danger to Brandy, did he? The guy had some odd mannerisms, but Brandy seemed to trust him. She'd felt comfortable with Trey immediately.

*Trusts him more than she trusts you, Coltrane.*

He smacked the plastic bottle against his thigh, and the water inside sloshed back and forth. Brandy let Trey put his hands all over her. Whenever Ridge had gotten physically close to her, she'd pulled away.

Except when he'd helped her onto the bike. He'd kept his hands on her hips longer than he needed to, allowed his fingers to trace the smoothness of her thighs. She didn't seem to mind, and seeing her straddling the Harley, her short skirt blowing freely, exposing her bare ass, had given him a raging hard on.



He checked the locks on Brandy's car, took a long swig of warm water, and started walking. Trey had given him directions to the artists' community, as he called it. Sounded like some kind of hippie enclave to him, but if they didn't mind his gun, he wouldn't mind their weed.

A car's engine rumbled in the distance behind him and a faint light illuminated the highway. *That figured.* He wouldn't accept a ride now. The folks at the commune wouldn't appreciate it much if he led a passel of outsiders to their little utopia.

Ridge glanced over his shoulder as the long car drew up behind Brandy's. Had the driver spotted him on the shoulder of the highway yet?

The car stopped and both the driver and passenger doors shot open. Two men exited the vehicle. With his heart hammering against his ribcage, Ridge plunged off the shoulder and into the gully running alongside it. He flattened himself into the sand, lifting his head above the edge of the trench to watch the men.

They tried the doors, and then the one on the passenger side hit the window. The sound of cracking glass carried across the desert floor. The man hadn't broken that window with his bare hand. It sounded more like the butt of a gun.

Ridge felt for his own weapon tucked in his waistband. The men finished a quick search of the car and climbed back into their vehicle. Ridge sucked in a breath and held it as the car, a white Caddy, rolled past him.

Damn. They had to be two of Vinnie's goons. Trey and Brandy had less than ten minutes on them.

He sure hoped that smooth-talking sonofabitch knew how to ride that Harley. Fast.

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Brandy hugged Trey around the waist, resting her cheek against the soft cotton of his T-shirt as the last ripples of her orgasm washed over her skin. She squeezed her eyes closed and inhaled Trey's masculine scent, milking the sensation to the last drop.

Damn, she couldn't believe she'd just climaxed on the back of a

motorcycle. With her legs spread across Trey's lean, black machine and with Ridge stroking her thighs, she'd lost all control.

She gave a little shudder of guilty pleasure. Ridge couldn't have noticed her loss of sanity since the bike shot off the minute she did. And Trey? She'd moaned softly as the orgasm claimed her over and over, but this growling hunk of metal vibrating between her legs would drown out any sound she could make. She'd rocked her hips to the pounding rhythm in her blood, but surely Trey didn't notice as he concentrated on the road ahead of them.

She sighed and snuggled against his warm back, secretly thrilled the Harley didn't sport a bitch seat. The air had cooled considerably with the sunset, and although the desert still held the heat of the scorching day, she felt the chill of riding on the back of a motorcycle with a short skirt, bare legs, and a thin top.

A car behind them flooded the highway with a yellow glow, and Brandy twisted around, squinting into its headlights. Her heart skipped. That car must've passed Ridge. Maybe the driver had picked him up. She tapped Trey on the shoulder and jerked her thumb toward the approaching car.

She caught his eye as he shifted his gaze to the rearview mirror. Then he accelerated.

"Slow down. That might be Ridge!" She yelled, but the wind snatched her words and scattered them like tumbleweeds.

The car gained on them, and Trey sent the motorcycle into full throttle. Brandy fisted his t-shirt and clamped her knees tighter against his hips. Had she been wrong about Trey? Had she just accepted a ride with a lunatic?

Something hot whizzed by her cheek and the rearview mirror of the bike shattered. Brandy ducked as bits of glass hurtled toward her.

Someone in the car had shot at them.

The big sedan screamed as it edged beside them, and an arm materialized from the passenger window. The man's head and torso followed. He clutched a gun in his hand.

Dry sobs wracking her lungs, Brandy buried her face between

Trey's shoulder blades. The bike dipped to the side as the man in the car squeezed off another bullet.

Trey zigzagged the Harley, which must've been doing close to a hundred. The Caddy to their left shuddered as the driver cranked the wheel to clip the bike. Trey's back wheel fishtailed into a skid.

Brandy dug her nails into Trey's belly, curling herself into a tight ball. Oh God, she didn't want to die.

The big motorcycle leaped forward, gaining purchase on the asphalt. Tires squealed from behind them, and Brandy glanced back. The Caddy lurched, balancing on its two right wheels. It slowed, wobbled, and then flipped into the sand, spinning on its roof as it landed.

Trey eased off the throttle and made a U-turn on the highway. A small explosion sent particles of sand and dust flying through the air, and flames licked up around the vehicle. Brandy covered her eyes.

Trey parked his bike by the side of the road and slid off. "Stay here."

He crept toward the burning car and crouched next to it. Then he walked around the other side. When he came back to the bike, he said, "They're both dead."

He revved the engine and shot down the highway. After a few miles, he turned onto a dirt road. He pulled up to a small grove of Joshua trees and cut the engine.

Brandy's sobs resounded in the stillness. Trey swung off the bike and lifted her from the seat, his strong hands wrapping around her waist.

She burrowed her wet face into his shoulder. "Ridge."

Trey stroked her hair, brushing the strands from her sticky cheeks. "Shh. He's fine. He wasn't in the vehicle."

"What if they killed him when they passed him?" Her heart hurt at the thought. Had she lost the one man who'd been able to spark her interest in creating a bond with someone, however tentative?

"Ridge can handle himself."

Running his hands down her back, Trey kissed the top of

her head. She tilted her chin up to look into his face, and then smoothed her fingertips along the deep lines on either side of his mouth.

She drank in the savage beauty of this man. His dark eyes held mystery, secrets, and pain. Did he possess a pain greater than hers?

His harsh mouth softened, and she sagged against him, grateful for their safety, grateful to be in his arms. His large hands edged down the small of her back, and he bunched her skirt in his fists. She lifted her pelvis and made contact with the erection straining against his tight black jeans.

Trey reached beneath her skirt, splaying his hands across her bare derrière. Gasping, she parted her lips. He froze and then raised his dark brows in a question.

“I need you,” she whispered against his mouth. She threaded her fingers through his long, thick hair, tangled by the wind.

Trey sealed his mouth over hers, and she sucked on his probing tongue. He shoved a knee between her thighs, parting her legs. With one hand pressed against her back and the other still cupping her bottom, he slid his fingers along the crease of her buttocks. The pads of his fingertips dabbled at her wet, swollen folds, each feather-light touch fueling the fire between her legs.

He slipped two fingers inside, her creaminess easing his passage. She clenched her muscles around him while opening her legs wider. His thumb flicked her throbbing clit, once, twice, and then he pulled away.

Breaking away from their kiss, Brandy moaned and nipped his earlobe. Trey bent his head and kissed the hollow of her throat where her pulse beat a thundering response. He curled his fingers around the hem of her shirt and pulled it over her head.

Her nipples peeked through her lacey white demi-bra, and Trey trailed his tongue along the swell of her breasts where they bunched out of the bra. His tongue continued its torturous path along her mid-section until he licked the point low on her belly where the lace of her thong coyly concealed her bare mound.

Hooking his thumbs beneath the elastic of her panties, he peeled

them from her hips. They dropped to her ankles at the same time Trey dropped to his knees in front of her.

His warm breath dampened her skin as he traced her slit with his fingertip. Her head fell back, and she gripped his shoulders to steady herself, the ends of his long hair tickling the backs of her hands. Slowly, the tip of his tongue followed the path of his finger, and he nudged her lips apart.

Molding her ass with his hands, he took her clit between his lips, suckling gently, but the sensations raging through her body were anything but gentle. Yanking his T-shirt over the curve of his back, Brandy raked her fingernails across his smooth skin. Trey didn't even flinch, but dug his fingers into the soft flesh of her bottom.

She thrust against his mouth, panting and groaning like some nocturnal desert creature frantically mating to save itself from extinction.

He spread her cheeks and with a quick flick, dipped his finger into her cream and smeared it back to her bottom hole, easing two fingers inside at once. As he filled and invaded her most private area, Brandy threw her head back and cried out, startling a covey of birds in a nearby tree. Her shrieks mimicked theirs as she rocked back and forth between the hot mouth devouring her pussy and the insistent fingers opening her up to new, decadent desires.

Her climax ripped through her body. She soaked Trey's mouth and chin, and drove against his fingers lodged in her bottom hole until they filled her completely.

He pushed up and held her trembling frame while he kissed every inch of her face. She captured his lips again and feasted on their dark sweetness. The bulge in his jeans begged for release. She pulled the T-shirt from his muscled chest and smoothed her palms against the hard ridges of his belly.

In the darkness, she studied the tattoo on his chest, which appeared to be connected to the chain trailing down his arm. A padlock around a heart... his heart? She traced the heart with her fingertip, and Trey moaned and pumped his hips.

She struggled with the button on his fly and eased down the zipper. Dark, springy hair teased her fingertips. Trey wasn't wearing any underwear. As she peeled open his fly, his cock, slick and hard, emerged from his jeans.

She swallowed hard and caught her bottom lip between her teeth. No wonder the man didn't wear underwear. Probably couldn't find a size large enough to accommodate his erection.

Yanking his pants down his muscular thighs, she trailed her fingernails along his flaring quads. He was a work of art, a sculptured Adonis. A bead of moisture formed at the head of his cock, and she grasped his shaft, swirling her thumb over his cream and wetting his tip.

"I need to make you whole." He gripped her forearms and dragged her close, spearing her belly with his hard desire.

She'd never felt more complete in her life.

He turned her toward the bike, leaning on its kickstand, and she toed her panties from her ankles. Scooping up her skirt around her waist, Trey bent her over the Harley until her arms rested on the seat. She inhaled the scent of leather and her own sex.

Placing his hands on the insides of her thighs, he spread her legs open and nudged them closer to the bike, which hitched her bottom up in the air. A cool breeze caressed her bare flesh, and she felt exposed and vulnerable, but Trey's murmurs soothed her.

Heat radiated from his body as he settled behind her, his motorcycle boots crushing the dirt beneath them. He grabbed her hips and rubbed the tip of his cock along her cleft. Shivering, she wiggled her ass to signal her readiness.

But Trey was in no hurry. He poked and prodded at her sex, wetting down his cock. Reaching around her, he raked her smooth mound with the rough pad of his thumb, pinching her clit between thumb and forefinger. A jolt of desire claimed her again, and she thrust back against his tantalizing erection.

He eased inside her as if he feared he'd rip her asunder, but her moisture facilitated his entry, accommodating his girth, welcoming it. Pushing deeper and deeper, he sealed his body to hers. He filled

her with his entire length until she felt his tip nudge her very core.

He settled inside, and then sought her clit again, now hard and aching. He tweaked her tiny nub, and her arms and legs shook and weakened. Only his long shaft spearing her kept her steady.

When he rolled her clit between his fingers, she crashed, her body trembling and convulsing. He pulled out almost completely, and then plowed back into her. The gentle stranger in black disappeared as Trey pounded her with frenzied thrusts, lifting her off her feet and nearly toppling the Harley.

He slammed into her to the hilt, and then he stiffened. As he pumped his seed deep into her womb, a guttural cry emanated from deep inside him. His orgasm lasted for minutes, and he howled his release every time he plumbed her depths.

His cries of passion seemed to echo in the heavens above.

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The sonofabitch had fucked her.

Ridge narrowed his eyes as he surveyed Trey's rumpled shirt and his mop of tangled hair. It wasn't just Trey's disheveled appearance that gave him away. Ridge could smell it. The scent of sex permeated the air around him.

Fuck it.

Dragging in a deep breath, Ridge massaged the back of his right thigh. This little desert jaunt would've been a lot easier in running shoes than cowboy boots. "Did you run into the guys in the white Caddy?"

Trey nodded, and Ridge's head shot up. When he saw Trey coming down the highway, he figured they'd turned off before Vinnie's thugs caught up to them. Now his gut churned.

"Brandy?"

"She's fine. I delivered her to the campground safely."

The relief surging through Ridge's body made his head pound, and then he caught a whiff of sex again and clenched his jaw. *Yeah, the bastard delivered her all right, delivered her a high, hard slab of meat.*

Christ. Ridge ran a hand over his face. That was the first time

he'd ever thought about another man's cock. In fact, despite his jealousy, the image of Trey thoroughly fucking Brandy turned him on, and his own cock twitched in response.

He cleared his throat. "What happened?"

"They tried to chase us down and crashed. They're both dead. I checked."

Ridge's jaw dropped. God, Brandy must've been terrified. How long would it take Vinnie to find his guys?

Trey handed him the helmet. "Put it on. I'll take you to Brandy."

"I don't need it. You're the one driving." He shoved the helmet back at Trey, suddenly angry that he'd been the one to save Brandy instead of Ridge.

Trey clapped the helmet on his head and straddled the bike. Ridge hoisted himself onto the back, readjusting his gun beneath his shirt and checking the safety.

Twisting around, Trey said, "Hold on."

"That's okay." Ridge rested his hands on his thighs.

Trey lifted his shoulders. "There's no backrest on this bike."

Ridge curled his hands into fists and dug them into his legs. Then Trey shot forward, and Ridge slid toward the back of the Harley.

*Goddammit.*

He reached for Trey's waist, loosely touching his sides. A dip in the road thrust him forward, and his forehead knocked against Trey's helmet. The smell of sex invaded his nostrils, and his cock hardened again.

Ridge bit the inside of his cheek. It had to be the potent smell of pussy fueling his hard-on and not the thought of Trey's tool, which Ridge had skimmed when he'd frisked him.

He shifted backward, away from the other man's muscled shoulders, and his erection strained against his jeans.

This was going to be a long goddamn ride.

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The Harley rolled into a cool oasis, the noise from its engine rumbling through an almost pastoral scene. Colored lanterns hung



from cottonwood trees, casting a rainbow glow on knots of people engaged in various activities—sculpting, painting, strumming guitars, and playing cards. Tents and small campers dotted the shore of a small lake, and a campfire crackled in a clearing.

Only a few people looked up at the intrusion into their paradise. Ridge swept a gaze through the campsite in search of Brandy.

Trey parked the bike next to a clump of desert willows, and before Ridge slid from the back of the motorcycle he heard his name. He spun around. Brandy was running toward him with bare feet and wet hair.

She halted before him awkwardly, gripping her upper arms. “Are you okay? Did you see Vinnie’s guys?”

Ridge shoved his hands in his pockets. He wanted to grab her and crush her to his chest and never let go, but her eyes darted between him and Trey. The worry in her voice must be for Trey. *She doesn’t trust you, Coltrane.*

“They pulled up behind your car. I hid in a ditch, so they didn’t see me. Trey told me they chased you and then crashed. We saw the wreck on our way here.”

“Trey did an incredible job handling that bike. We were even dodging bullets.”

Trey hung his helmet on the handlebars of the Harley and swept around to catch Brandy in his arms. “You’re safe now.”

Ridge balled his fists. Why didn’t *he* do that first? It’s what he’d wanted to do the minute he spotted her.

Brandy entwined her arms around Trey’s neck and peered over his shoulder at Ridge. “And Ridge is safe, too.”

Trey grabbed Ridge’s wrist, pulling him toward Brandy. Hanging an arm around his shoulders, Trey said, “Yes. Ridge is safe too.”

Ridge shrugged off Trey’s arm and stepped back. This was a little too kumbaya for him. “I hope Vinnie doesn’t send a search party after his goons.”

Brandy’s eyes widened and she clutched at Trey’s shirt. Trey hooked an arm around her waist and tucked her against his hip.

Ridge clenched his jaw. Damn. Why did he keep pushing Brandy closer and closer to this guy?

“Even if Vinnie does look for his men,” she said, “it doesn’t mean he’s going to find this place. Does it, Trey?”

“He’s not going to find us.” Trey rubbed her back in a slow circular motion, and she almost purred under his attentions.

In the two months since Ridge had known Brandy, she’d always given him the hands-off signals. Of course, she was a witness in a murder investigation. What right did he have to touch her?

The fact that he worked for the FBI, the same agency that killed her mother and arrested her father, didn’t help his case. When her name first came up in the murder investigation, the Bureau had done a background check on her. The results rocked their case.

“Are you hungry?” Trey pointed to a blue-and-white camper. “They share food here, and the leftovers from dinner are over there.”

Ridge’s stomach rumbled. He hadn’t eaten all day. “Did you get something to eat, Brandy?”

“Yeah, I did. Even rinsed off in the lake. I’m in that tent under the palms. When you get your food, bring it over.”

Ridge piled a plate with fruits, legumes, and vegetables. Guess he couldn’t expect a steak dinner. Trey and Brandy were sharing a log outside a good-sized tent, and when Ridge approached, Trey pushed up and offered him his place.

When this drama ended, he’d have to get Trey’s last name and look him up. He was the oddest biker Ridge had ever run across. He looked like a tough guy but wore a cloak of gentleness. Whatever Trey had, Brandy was buying plenty of it.

“Goody bag?”

Ridge glanced behind him, taking in the sixty-something woman with the long gray braid and Birkenstocks holding out a brown paper bag.

“Excuse me?”

She shook the bag. “I have some extra toys.”

Brandy plucked the bag from her hand and peeked inside. Her

cheeks bloomed as pink as a desert sunset.

Ridge raised his brows. "What is it?"

Waving the open bag beneath his nose, Brandy giggled. "Sex toys."

The woman smiled and nodded. "I use them in my art." She waved her hand toward a tent that had several sculptures standing guard.

As Ridge peered into the dimly lit space, he noticed a stone sculpture of a man with a dildo in his mouth. "Interesting."

"Thanks, but I'm moving onto a new theme, and I'm giving away my surplus."

"Thank you." Brandy shook the bag.

As the woman moved on to the next tent, Trey's brows collided over his nose. "Sex toys?"

Brandy handed the bag to him. "A dildo, a vibrator, edible lube."

"Guess we're not in Kansas anymore." Balancing his plate of food on his palm, Ridge sank onto the log next to Brandy. "I'm sorry the press revealed your identity, but Vinnie was going to figure it out sooner or later."

"Which is even more reason not to testify against him."

"But if you do testify, we can get you situated. We can protect you."

"I've seen how the FBI operates, Agent Coltrane."

He speared a chunk of cantaloupe. "What happened to Ridge?"

"I just can't get over my distrust of you... Ridge."

Her words punched him in the gut. He set down his plate.

"Look, Brandy. I know what happened to you as a kid."

"Do you? That's just like the FBI. Sneaky."

Trey looked up from his inspection of the articles in the bag.

"Do you want me to leave?"

Ridge and Brandy ignored him.

"It didn't take much to find out you were Filmore Tate's daughter."

"My father was a survivalist. So far as I know, that's not against

the law.”

Ridge dug his boot heels into the dirt. “Your father was stockpiling weapons. That is against the law. And your mother—”

Brandy jumped from the log. “They murdered her.”

Ridge shoved up beside her. “She pointed a gun at an FBI agent.”

“She was trying to protect me.”

“The FBI wouldn’t have hurt a child.”

“Oh really? Well, for not trying, you guys did a great job. After you killed my mother and arrested my father, the Government sent me to a foster home, the first of many. I didn’t leave the foster care system until I was eighteen.”

“I wasn’t even in the FBI then. You can’t blame me.”

“But you want to capture me again and force me back into the system. I won’t go.”

She brushed past him and stormed into the tent.

As Brandy’s muffled sobs wafted to them, Ridge kicked at his plate of food.

“You should go inside.” Trey peeled back the flap of the tent, motioning Ridge forward.

“I don’t think she wants me.”

Clutching the paper bag in his hand, Trey shrugged and dipped into the tent.

Shit. Ridge scooped up the plate and fork and returned to the camper with the food. He helped the woman in the camper wash up the rest of the plates and took another bowl of fruit.

“Is there someplace I can bunk tonight?”

She smiled. “You’re with Trey and Brandy, right?”

“Yeah.” *For better or for worse.*

“We gave you all a tent under the palms over there.”

Trey swallowed. “All of us.”

“It’s big enough for the three of you to share for a few nights. Sometimes the nights get chilly, and the tents take the edge off.”

Ridge thanked her and stomped back to the tent, gripping his bowl of fruit. Just goddamn great.

He dropped onto the log in front of the tent and stabbed a piece of melon. He'd screwed up again with Brandy. Now she blamed him for that mess with her parents. No wonder she couldn't trust anyone. Foster care could be hell.

Low murmuring seeped from the tent, and Ridge leaned closer. Trey's low voice soothed, while Brandy's sniffles subsided. Apparently she could trust some people.

Ridge closed his eyes, concentrating on the sounds from the tent. Hushed whispers dissipated into silence. *Good, they're sleeping.* He popped a strawberry in his mouth.

Then he heard it. A soft moan.

Ridge stopped chewing and tilted his head. The sleeping bags rustled, and he heard a zipper. *That better be the sleeping bag.*

A light breeze lifted the flap of the tent, revealing bare skin. Ridge couldn't stop. A vision of Trey and Brandy together had been dogging his thoughts all day. Maybe his secret wish was about to come true. He reclined on the log and hooked a finger along the tent opening, pulling it wider. His breath hitched in his throat.

Trey was pulling off Brandy's blouse, and her full breasts bulged over the top of her skimpy bra. Trey dropped his dark head and planted a row of kisses along her honeyed curves. Damn, what Ridge wouldn't give to be side-by-side with the man right now, one of Brandy's breasts for each of them.

Trey scooped one breast out of the bra cup, cradling it in his palm. Ridge could almost feel the warmth and heft in his own hand. Trey's thumb rubbed a circle around Brandy's nipple, which peaked in arousal. His tongue followed until he sucked the nipple into his mouth.

Ridge's lips parted as he admired Trey's technique. A flick of his tongue, and he had Brandy writhing with need. Ridge grabbed another strawberry and placed it between his lips. As Trey suckled Brandy, Ridge suckled the strawberry, having no doubt which was the sweeter fruit.

Brandy reached up and pulled Trey's T-shirt from his body. His

tattoo, a chain with links leading to another tattoo on his chest, gleamed in the soft light. She smoothed her hands across the man's ripped chest, and Ridge shivered, feeling her fingertips on his own skin. Ridge inched his hands beneath his T-shirt and across his hard abs, remembering the feel of Trey's flat belly beneath his fingers. He rubbed his palm across his nipples, mimicking Brandy's exploration of Trey's chest.

When Brandy dropped her hands to the waistband of Trey's jeans, Ridge's erection strained against his crotch. She unbuttoned Trey's fly and ran her hands beneath his pants, loosening them from his hips.

She lifted her pelvis and Trey pulled her skirt down and off her legs. Ridge's throat closed, and he stifled a cough. When had Brandy lost her panties? Must have been when Trey fucked her earlier. And here they were again. Did Trey have the stamina of a stallion as well as the equipment?

Completely naked, Brandy sprawled on the sleeping bag in front of Trey. In front of Ridge. Her legs fell open in invitation and trust. For Trey. But Ridge drank in the feast before him anyway, like a homeless man pressing his face against the glass of an exclusive restaurant.

Bending over her body, Trey kissed her shoulders, her breasts, her belly. With frantic hands, Brandy yanked at Trey's jeans, pulling them down around his thighs. Must've been good the first time. She couldn't wait to have him again.

Ridge closed his eyes. He wanted to look away from the sight in the tent, but he couldn't. Trey's cock rose, thick and hard, from a patch of dark hair. It glistened in the low light, pre-cum beading on the tip.

Ridge took a macho pride in the size of his own package, but Trey matched him even in that area. If Brandy preferred men with big cocks, he had a definite edge.

Brandy sat up and took Trey's cock in her mouth. That sassy mouth that gave Ridge so much grief was now giving another man so much pleasure. Ridge swallowed a grunt and unbuttoned his fly.

He rubbed his hand against the erection filling his briefs, a wet spot already staining the material.

Trey hitched Brandy's legs over his arms and drove into her. Ridge's mouth went dry as he watched Trey's big cock sliding in and out of Brandy. He yanked his cock from his underwear and his hand mimicked the action in the tent as he worked the shaft.

Brandy cried out, hooking her legs around Trey's muscled thighs. He rode out her orgasm with her, and she thrashed her head side-to-side. Trey took her face in his hands and kissed her on the mouth. Ridge's lips ached to feel her mouth on his.

Still inside her, Trey reached for the paper bag the sculptor had dropped off earlier. He pulled out a rubbery black dildo and a small bottle of lube and held them up to Brandy.

She smiled and shook her head, and then Trey pointed to his own backside. She whispered in Trey's ear, and he nodded.

As she squirted lube on the dildo, Ridge froze. What did Trey want? Was the guy gay?

Trey slid forward, his knees straddling Brandy's hips, her legs wrapping around his waist. She gripped the slick dildo in her hand and ran it along Trey's cleft. Ridge clenched his own buttocks and continued to pump his shaft, shocked to discover he'd make himself available to Brandy in that way, too.

Brandy eased the dildo into Trey's ass. He closed his eyes and stopped moving, and then he pushed against Brandy's hand. As more and more of the dildo disappeared into Trey's buttocks, Ridge plunged into his hand furiously, imagining the dildo sliding into his own ass, and then confusing the rubber dildo with Trey's hard cock.

Soon Trey was lunging forward, filling Brandy with his huge cock and driving backward against the dildo in his ass. When Trey climaxed, his howls shook the tent, drowning out Ridge's own grunts of release as he came hard in his hand.

Trey settled back on top of Brandy, nuzzling her neck and stroking her hair, not even bothering to pull the sex toy out of his ass. As Trey's head rolled to the side, cushioned by Brandy's soft breast,

his eyelids flew open.

Ridge let the tent flap fall back into place, but not before Trey's dark, sated, knowing gaze met his.

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Brandy stretched and shifted onto her side. Trey sprawled beside her on his stomach, and she traced a line down his smooth, olive-toned back. They'd made love half the night. The man had an endless reserve of energy, and his willingness to open himself up to her made her feel safe.

Her finger trailed along the cleft of his buttocks. She'd never done that to a man before, had never met a man secure enough to put himself in that position.

Trey opened one eye and threw an arm across her chest. He licked her shoulder, and then tweaked her nipple. "Do you want to do it again?"

Her brows shot up, and she shook her head. He would dabble all day if she let him. As much as she relished his offer, she wanted to see what was going on outside this tent. She wanted to find Ridge.

She'd been foolish to blame him for the catastrophe of her parents' lives. The raid on her father's compound had occurred almost twenty years ago. Ridge was probably playing Little League baseball at the time.

Where had he slept last night? If she hadn't attacked him, maybe he would've spent the night in the tent with her and Trey. The thought of the three of them in the tent together caused a shiver of excitement to run down her spine.

Never. Agent Ridge Coltrane would never release his inhibitions like that. He had to be in control at all times, and men like that scared the hell out of her.

She pulled on her top and skirt, not even bothering with her bra. Not many of the women here at the campsite wore bras, and Brandy had left her panties beneath that Joshua tree where she and Trey first made love.

Leaving a nude Trey reclining on the sleeping bag, she ducked out of the tent. The same scene greeted her as the day before.



People worked on their art or read or played chess, and others went about the business of running the campsite. She spotted Ridge helping a couple load up a small car.

Her heart flip-flopped. He wasn't going with them, was he?

She sauntered to his side. "What are you doing?"

He didn't look up as he loaded another box in the trunk. "I'm helping Jennifer and Lee. They're hitting the road this morning."

"Are you going with them?"

He slammed the trunk shut. "Is that what you think? You think I'm going to leave you?"

"No." She grabbed his arm. "Ridge, I'm sorry about last night."

His blue eyes kindled with emotion. "Are you?"

"I wasn't really blaming you for my parents' tragedy. I know you're not the type of man who would put someone's life in danger."

His face tightened, the lines on his face deepening. "I wouldn't be too sure about that, Brandy."

"What are you talking about?" Was he admitting that he'd used her to get to Vinnie Caprese? She folded her arms across her stomach, her legs suddenly weak.

"Have a good trip and drive carefully." He slapped the trunk as the couple wheeled onto the dirt road. Then he took her hand. "Come on."

He led her to the water's edge and pulled up two battered lawn chairs. "Four years ago, the Bureau was investigating a mob murder. One of the wise guy's girlfriends decided she'd had enough and agreed to testify."

"Was she going into the Witness Protection Program, too?"

"She was." Ridge rasped his knuckles across his sexy blond stubble. "During the trial, I was one of the agents assigned to the hotel with her. My partner answered the door for room service, and the waiter opened fire. He wounded my partner and killed the witness. I didn't even get a shot off."

Brandy covered her mouth. "How awful. And you blame yourself."

“I should’ve been more alert. I liked the girl. Too much. I let my interest in her distract me.” Ridge scooped up a handful of rocks and chucked one into the water.

“Were you having an affair with her?”

“No. It wasn’t like that, and I was married at the time.”

“You were married? What happened?”

He dropped the rocks and brushed his hands on his jeans. “After Dee Dee’s murder, I was suspended from the Bureau. I guess I made my wife’s life hell. She left me.”

Brandy’s hand shot out and grabbed his. The man had human qualities after all. “Sounds like you had a tough time. Is that why you want me to testify?”

“What do you mean?”

“If you can see me through the trial and get me into the Witness Protection Program, you’ll have succeeded where you failed with Dee Dee.”

Ridge jumped up so quickly, the plastic lawn chair flipped backward. “You’re not a substitute for her. I don’t need to prove myself.”

“I didn’t mean it like that, Ridge. I just meant I understand your motives.” She rose slowly and reached for him again, but he took a step back.

“I don’t need your understanding.”

He charged off, nearly mowing Trey down.

Trey cocked his head and caught the tear rolling down her cheek on his fingertip. “Is Ridge mad at you?”

“He just can’t let go.” She rubbed the back of her hand across her nose. She’d been so close to getting through to him, but he couldn’t bear showing any weakness.

Brushing her hair from her forehead, Trey whispered, “He needs you.”

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Brandy spent the rest of the day helping the artists and washing dishes and clothes. Everyone had a generous spirit, and nobody asked questions. Ridge kept busy and out of her way putting up

tents for some new arrivals and working on someone's carburetor.

Many of the artists had discovered Trey's perfect form, and he obliged them by posing in the nude for their drawings, paintings, and sculptures. The women drooled over him, but he saved all his attentions for Brandy.

She didn't fool herself that their association would lead to any kind of relationship. Trey had an affectionate and loving nature, and while the sex between them had a deep emotional quality, Brandy felt it as a healing process for both of them.

He'd been quiet, almost mysterious, about his past, revealing nothing beyond the fact that he'd been on the road, traveling. He'd never mentioned a girlfriend or a wife, but she had no doubt he yearned for someone very special. His heart belonged to someone else.

After dinner and conversation, people began wandering back to their own tents and campers. The wind put a bite in the air, and as Ridge settled in a sleeping bag outside the tent, Brandy invited him inside.

"There's plenty of room, Ridge. It's going to be chilly tonight."

He zipped up his bag. "I can handle it."

She sighed and entered the tent, leaving the flap unzipped. Trey awaited her. He'd already shed his clothing, and his muscular frame stretched on top of the sleeping bag like a sumptuous feast.

Crouching beside him, Brandy ran her hands along his shoulders and kissed his pebbled nipple. His cock hardened instantly, and she wondered if she and Ridge had been rescued by some sort of cyborg, a sperminator wired to give and receive sexual pleasure.

Trey ran his hands under her skirt and cupped her bare bottom. "Is Ridge joining us tonight?"

"No." She unzipped her skirt and pulled it off her legs. Straddling him, she rested on his thick thighs.

"You want him to join us." He peeled off her top, and his dark eyes smoldered with a need that transcended lust.

He didn't pose the statement as a question, but she nodded anyway. "Do you want him to join us?"

“Yes.”

Brandy’s heart pounded. She wanted both men. As much as she desired Trey and relished their lovemaking, they needed Ridge to complete the circle. Somehow Trey understood this, too.

When would Ridge realize it?

She shook her head, the ends of her hair playing peekaboo with her sensitive nipples. “Ridge will never consent.”

She trailed a finger along Trey’s strong jaw, and he captured her hand and kissed her palm.

“We’ll show him what he needs.”

Yeah, sure. Seeing her getting it on with Trey, instead of just imagining it, wouldn’t light a fuse under Ridge’s need. Ridge struck her as a possessive man, not likely to share his woman, not interested in inhabiting a tent with another naked male.

Trey sat up and rolled her off his body. Pushing to his feet, he extended a hand and pulled her into his arms. He sealed his body to hers, connecting along every line, skin to skin. His erection plowed against her belly, and her head fell back as he laved her neck with his tongue.

Glancing to the side, she caught her breath as the outline of their bodies, backlit by the kerosene lamp, played against the front of the tent. Anyone walking by could see them.

Anyone outside.

She dropped to her knees in front of Trey, her fingernails zig-zagging along his flesh before settling on his backside, digging into his hard muscle. Trey thrust his hips forward and groaned.

A sharp intake of breath hissed outside the tent.

Cupping Trey’s balls, Brandy allowed her tongue to dabble along the insides of his thighs, inhaling his exotic scent. His fingers teased her hair, and then stroked her cheek, nudging her head to the side.

The dark shape of Ridge’s body now pressed against the tent flap, inches away from Brandy’s face. She didn’t think Trey’s ploy would work, but at least she’d give Ridge a taste of what he spurned.

She sank back on her heels, cradling her breasts in her hands. She captured Trey's throbbing cock between the fullness of her breasts, rubbing them along his length, teasing his head with the tip of her tongue.

Ridge gasped and his sleeping bag rustled.

Brandy drew back from Trey, and the silhouette of his cock, extending long and hard from his body, appeared on the side of the tent. She trailed her fingertips along the tight, smooth skin of his erection.

Glancing to the side, Brandy noticed that Ridge had shaken off his sleeping bag and was kneeling outside the tent. Would he try to stop her from pleasuring Trey?

She guided Trey into her mouth, her lips closing around his girth. Growling, he lunged forward, driving the head of his cock against the back of her throat. After that, he let her set the pace, and she swirled her tongue around his tip, lapping at the salty fluid that pearled at the top.

A soft groan floated into the tent. Trey peeled back the flap to expose Ridge kneeling at the entrance, shirtless, with his jeans and boxers tugged down around his thighs. He held his cock in his hand, and it gleamed with need in the waxy glow of the kerosene lamp.

Ridge jerked back, but before he could disappear, Brandy reached for him. She palmed his balls, rubbing the tip of her middle finger along the sensitive patch beneath them. Hissing, he froze in place, seemingly unable to pull away.

Just so Ridge understood she didn't plan to relinquish one man for another, Brandy sucked Trey's cock into her mouth. Nudging Ridge's hand away, her own hand took its place, sliding along his shaft to the rhythm she set with her mouth on Trey's cock.

The sensation of possessing two men at once sent a hot surge of passion coursing through her veins. She moaned and pressed her thighs together.

Trey slipped out of her mouth and dropped a kiss on top of her head. He cupped her face, turning her toward Ridge. "Take him."

She swung toward Ridge on her hands and knees and kissed away the drop of musky fluid on the tip of his cock. That seemed to vanquish any thoughts he had of fleeing the tent. His fingers nestled in her hair as he prodded her lips with his blunt head. She opened her mouth and drew him in inch by hot inch. Although Trey enjoyed a wealth of endowment, Ridge matched him in length and girth.

Plastic crackled behind her, and she felt Trey's body heat against her backside. He kneeled next to her and Ridge and extended a blue rubber dildo toward Ridge.

Trey grinned. "Sadie gave me another one."

That smile was the first she'd seen from Trey. He displayed a giddiness at Ridge's involvement that had Brandy wondering if he preferred him to her.

As Trey pressed the dildo to Ridge's lips, Ridge jerked his head to the side, pulling out of Brandy's mouth.

A crease formed between Trey's black brows. "Do it for Brandy. Do it for yourself."

Ridge's eyes widened at Trey's cryptic words, but he turned his head toward the dildo and opened his mouth. Slowly, Trey slipped the dildo between Ridge's lips, feeding it to him until it all but disappeared.

"Suck on it."

As if mesmerized, Ridge began sucking the dildo as Trey guided it in and out of his mouth. The erotic interplay between the two men caused a hot thread of lust to tighten in Brandy's belly. Once again she took Ridge between her lips, sucking him as he sucked the dildo Trey worked in and out of his mouth.

Ridge grunted as Trey slipped the dildo from his mouth. Trey moved behind Brandy, and she gasped when he prodded her tight hole with the head of the dildo, now slick with Ridge's saliva.

Ridge leaned forward and she felt his strong hands spread her cheeks for Trey. Less than a half an hour ago, she'd believed that Ridge might try to stop her from making love with Trey. Now he was making her available to Trey in the most personal way. Did she

really want this to continue?

When Trey began to ease the dildo into her backside at the same time he plowed into her with his cock, all her reservations evaporated like a drop of water on the hot desert asphalt. As he fucked her, his abdomen slapped against her ass, driving the dildo deeper inside.

Ridge's cock filled her mouth, muffling her torrid cries. The two men had invaded all her senses. Filled her up. Completed her. Her body acted like a bridge between her two lovers, connecting them to each other. Binding them all together.

Ridge came first, shooting his creamy fluid down her throat. He then pulled out of her mouth and gently urged her up so that she faced him. With Trey still plowing her from behind, Ridge took her face in his hands and kissed her mouth.

Trey reached across her and gripped Ridge's shoulders, his fingers pinching into his smooth, bare flesh. Trey stiffened, shoving Brandy further against Ridge's chest, and then he exploded.

Like the previous night, his plaintive howls held an echo of sadness. His arms encompassed her as he held onto Ridge, and the three of them rode out Trey's orgasm together.

With his arms still wrapped around her, Trey eased onto his back, taking her with him until she settled between his thighs. He hooked his hands around her knees and spread her legs open. His breath was hot on her cheek as he whispered to Ridge, "Pleasure her."

Ridge dropped to his hands and knees and crawled toward them. Desire coiled tightly in her belly as Ridge's golden hair brushed the inside of her thigh. He kissed a path up her leg, landing a final kiss on her mound. Moaning, Brandy pushed back against Trey, who cupped her breasts and rolled her nipples between his thumb and forefinger.

Ridge plucked her clit from her swollen folds, and she whimpered as the fire spread down her legs and curled her toes. His fingertip painted lazy strokes along her outer lips and when his tongue followed, she gasped and closed her eyes. On the edge of a

sweet abyss, Brandy weaved her fingers into Ridge's hair to guide him to her point of no return.

His lips pressed a delicious kiss against her throbbing clit and then once, twice he drew her into his mouth. As the tidal wave engulfed her, she screamed and didn't care if the entire campsite heard her. Ridge used his flickering tongue to extend each spasm of her orgasm until they all ran together into one hot, sticky flood of pleasure.

When Brandy's last cry died out, they all tumbled to the side, still clinging together as they fell onto the sleeping bags in a tangle of limbs. Brandy snuggled between the two men, relishing their warmth and feeling more at home than she ever had with any of her foster families.

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The next morning a shaft of sunlight beamed through a gap in the tent flap, and Brandy's eyelashes fluttered as she burrowed into a warm shoulder. Her tongue darted out and teased the smooth flesh. By the tangy, exotic taste, she could tell she faced Trey. Ridge's skin embodied a sweet muskiness.

She wriggled her derriere to make contact with Ridge, but she met cool emptiness. She groped behind her, hoping to grasp her target, but grabbed a handful of sleeping bag instead. Rolling to her other side, she reached for Ridge but met only the indentation his body had left on the sleeping bag.

She sat up and her gaze darted around the tent, slowly filling up with sunlight. Trey's heavy arm circled her waist, urging her back down. Struggling against him, she said, "Ridge is gone."

"He'll be back." Trey murmured against her hip, his warm lips caressing her skin. "He can't resist us."

"Do you think he's outside getting breakfast?"

Trey's caress turned into a kiss, and he slid his hand between her legs. "Yes. Let's lure him back."

Brandy shimmied down next to Trey, succumbing to his magic fingertips, which parted her eager lips. She couldn't deny Trey's logic any more than she could deny his touch. Seeing her with Trey



last night had aroused Ridge so much that he couldn't resist joining them.

He'd be back.

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Ridge shook Jesse's hand in front of the Sundance Resort and Casino as the other man thanked him. "I appreciate that you got up at the crack of dawn to help me get my car running, Ridge. Especially since the three of you looked mighty cozy."

A slow warmth spread across Ridge's chest. Christ, he still couldn't believe he'd spent the night, naked, with another man, even if they did have a naked woman between them.

He squeezed Jesse's hand tighter, just so he would know Ridge hadn't lost one ounce of his machismo. "Thanks for the ride and good luck on your travels."

Jesse waved a paint-stained hand as he slid back into his car.

As the glass doors of the hotel whisked open, Ridge strode through them and marched to the front desk. He knew he looked like hell, but the platinum credit card he clutched in his hand should settle the clerk's fears. In Vegas, nothing mattered but money.

Three hours later, he stood in front of the mirrored closet doors in his suite, smoothing the collar of his Hugo Boss suit. *Not bad for off-the-rack*. His brand new Bruno Maglis sank into the dense carpet as he strolled to the bathroom to dab on a little cologne. Not his usual style, but definitely in line for a high roller wannabe.

He took the elevator to the casino and sauntered to the roped-off blackjack tables, where he slid several bills across the smooth felt and stacked his chips in front of him. He played for a few hours, losing badly, until he spotted his quarry at the next table. Then he tipped the dealer a hundred and slid off his stool to get a drink at the bar.

Swirling his martini, Ridge hovered near the blackjack table where Vinnie "The Voice" Caprese held court. The diamond on Vinnie's pinky finger glittered in the low light as he tapped his cards for a hit.

The sonofabitch kept up a cocky banter with his cronies, but the way he clutched his cigar and tapped the toe of his expensive loafer told a different story. He must know by now the goons he'd sent after Brandy had crashed and burned. Literally.

Ridge straddled the seat next to Vinnie's, nearly gagging on the man's heavy cologne. He tossed a couple of chips onto the table and scratched the felt with his fingernail. He felt Vinnie's gaze track over his face and was grateful that the Bureau had kept him in disguise during the investigation into Black Jack Moretti's murder. He'd handled all the secret meetings with Brandy, but never questioned the suspect.

Ridge began to play recklessly, taking hits on fifteens and sixteens, his stack of chips dwindling. He bought a few rounds of drinks for the table, and Vinnie offered him a cigar.

"Slow down, cowboy. The night's young."

Waving a dismissive hand over his short stack of chips, Ridge said, "I have more where that came from. I'm here to have a good time."

"You play poker?" Vinnie narrowed his already beady eyes.

"Sure do. Can you get me into one of the games at the casino? Seems they're off limits to outsiders."

"I can do you one better. I host a private game in my suite once in a while. I feel a sudden urge to be hospitable. What do you think, Mash?"

The man to Vinnie's left nodded his bald head, the thick gold ring in his ear swaying.

Ridge scooped his chips from the table and pocketed them. "Sounds good to me. I'm ready to recoup some of my losses."

They both pushed back from the table, and Ridge followed Vinnie's broad back toward the bank of elevators. Glancing over his shoulder, Ridge hoped like hell his co-workers weren't watching The Voice right now. They'd be wondering why one of their agents was chummy with a known criminal and murder suspect.

Doubt seeped into his mind, but only for a moment. When he recalled the taste of Brandy's sweet lips, he lengthened his stride to

keep up with his new best friend.

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Brandy dug her fists into her hips as she peered down the dirt access road, her stomach sinking faster than that fiery ball of fire. Ridge had no intention of coming back.

When he hadn't appeared at breakfast, she'd asked around and discovered he'd helped Jesse with his car and then the two of them had left. Nobody knew where they'd gone, and Jesse hadn't mentioned to anyone that he planned to take off. But that didn't mean anything. People at the campsite came and went. That was what most of them liked about the place—no deadlines, no responsibilities, no connections.

Why did Ridge leave her? Maybe the night they spent with Trey didn't mean anything to him. Or worse, he'd used sex to gain her confidence. Maybe the Fibbies were on their way right now to drag her back to Vegas and pound her into submission.

She curled her toes into the dirt. If that were the case, the Feds would already be here. Perhaps opening up to her and allowing Trey to sway him drove him away. His big ego couldn't handle the fact that he'd shared her with another man.

Oh hell, she'd better return to Plan A, hightail it out of here and get lost in the big city. She rubbed her palms against her skirt while she watched Trey strum a guitar someone had handed him.

She might be able to count on Trey to get her back to her car with some gas, but that was as far as he'd go. Instinctively, she knew Trey had someplace else to be. Despite his sensitive nature, she'd more than once caught a glimpse of steel behind the man's eyes. He had a purpose, and he wouldn't allow anyone or anything to stand in his way.

A feather-light touch on her arm made her jump. A woman from the campsite, Elise, smiled. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. Someone said you had been asking about Jesse."

"Yes. Do you know where he is?"

Elise lifted her shoulders. "He left camp. He's on his way to Florida." She tapped her finger against her cell phone. "He just

called me.”

Brandy curled her hands into fists, her nails biting into her flesh. “And Ridge?”

“Jesse dropped him off in Vegas.”

Brandy folded her arms across her stomach. Ridge had gone back to Vegas, back to the FBI. Did he tell his bosses about her? It didn’t make sense. If he had ratted her out, she would be back in Vegas herself by now. Obviously, Ridge had given up on her.

Brandy thanked Elise. Staring at Trey, she sucked in her lower lip. She could put this all behind her now and go on the run. Damn it, she wouldn’t let Ridge off so easily. She tossed back her hair and drew blood from her lip. All her life she’d given up on the people she cared about. She never fought for them. When her first few foster families hadn’t wanted to keep her around, she’d stopped trying. She allowed each family in succession to give her up, shrugging off their abandonment as if it had no effect on her.

But it did.

Every time she shuttled from one family to a new family, a little piece of her soul chipped away. Now she’d found a man, two men, to make her feel whole, and she didn’t intend on letting one of them slip out of her life.

She strode across the campsite and tapped Trey on the shoulder. “Ridge went back to Vegas, and we’re going after him.”

Trey’s dark brows shot up. “He can’t leave you.” He clasped a hand over the links of his tattoo. “He can’t.”

“That’s exactly what I’m thinking, so let’s go to Vegas.”

Given the transitory nature of the camp, it took them less than a half hour to grab their personal items, say goodbye, and speed down the dirt access road. They passed the site of the crash, but nothing remained except a black streak on the highway. Her own car had also disappeared. Must’ve been towed.

A few hours later, Trey pulled over and idled at the curb.

“Where to?”

Brandy tugged the helmet from her head and shook out her hair. “I’d take you to my apartment, but I’m afraid to go back there. Vin-

nie's guys might be watching and waiting for me."

"Where should we start looking for Ridge?"

"I have no clue." She dug into the bottom of her purse and pulled out a dog-eared business card, courtesy of the FBI. She tapped the back of the card where Ridge had scribbled his personal cell phone number with instructions to call him day or night. "But I have his cell phone number, and one way or another, I'm going to find out why he left us."

They traveled a long way down the Strip until they found a pay phone in front of a liquor store. With trembling fingers, Brandy punched in Ridge's number. He answered on the second ring in a hushed tone.

"Ridge, it's Brandy. Where the hell are you?"

"Why are you calling me?" His voice rose, and Brandy heard male laughter in the background.

"Because you ran out on us—me, and I'm not letting you off the hook so easily. I'm here in Vegas. Where are you?"

"I'll call you later. I'm busy."

The receiver almost slipped out of her clammy hand. Busy?

She heard Ridge shout, "Hey," and then another voice came on the line. "Get lost, sweetheart. Your man's playing a serious game of poker here."

The connection went dead, and Brandy swayed, leaning her forehead against the phone. She recognized that voice, and it caused a ripple of fear down her back.

Ridge was playing poker with Vinnie Caprese.

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Ridge gritted his teeth behind his smile. What the hell was Brandy doing in Vegas?

Vinnie chuckled, rubbing his hands. "That's how you handle a broad, Rick."

Nodding, Ridge pocketed his phone after switching it off. He didn't need any more interruptions from Brandy. He had this SOB licking his chops over the prospect of ensnaring some poor schmuck and getting him into his debt.

Ridge almost had him right where he wanted him.

Another member of the party had left twenty minutes ago, leaving him the sole gambler at the table with Vinnie. Ridge had lost more hands than he won, pacing himself, taking advantage of Vinnie's greed. When Vinnie first offered to loan him money, Ridge pretended to think it over. Then he hit a bad streak and kept gambling, leading Vinnie to believe he'd gotten reckless.

The next time Vinnie made his offer, Ridge accepted.

"Whaddya think, Rick? Do you hold a straight flush in your hands, or can you get rid of something?" Vinnie tapped the side of his glass and Mash lurched forward with an open bottle.

*That's right, Vinnie, keep drinking.*

Ridge pasted a frown on his face as he discarded a king of hearts to give himself a pair of kings instead of three of a kind. He then turned over the two worthless cards Vinnie dealt him. "How much am I into you for?"

Vinnie snapped his fingers, and Mash flipped open a leather-bound ledger book and held it in front of Vinnie.

Vinnie ran his manicured fingertip down the page. "Three hundred and seventy-eight grand." He lifted his shoulder. "We'll call it an even three hundred seventy-five."

Ridge swallowed. "That can't be right."

"I assure you, my friend, it is. You've had a few stretches of bad luck, but you can always try to recapture the magic."

"I-I can't afford to pay you back." Ridge wiped the back of his hand across his mouth.

Vinnie steepled his fingers as a smile twisted his lips. "I can offer a very reasonable payment plan."

Gripping the edge of the table so hard the ice tinkled in the glasses, Ridge said, "A payment plan for three hundred seventy-eight thousand dollars?"

Vinnie's smile hardened into a grimace. "It beats the alternative."

Ridge tensed his muscles, his gaze darting toward Mash, who stood with his arms crossed in front of the hotel door.

Ridge had left his weapon in his room. Didn't want Vinnie to frisk him and find a Smith and Wesson .357 on a gambling tourist. But he could shove the table against Vinnie to immobilize him and then go for Mash. He could handle Mash with one hand tied behind his back.

If he could take out both Vinnie and Mash while they were attacking him, he could claim self-defense, and Brandy would be out of this mess and free to live her life as she pleased.

A knot twisted in his gut. Would that life include him?

Ridge scratched his chin and added a quaver to his voice for good measure. "What's the alternative?"

Vinnie opened his mouth, and then froze at the sound of a tap on the door of the hotel suite.

*Damn. That knock better not mean reinforcements for Vinnie.*

"Get that." Vinnie jerked his thumb toward the door.

Mash inched open the door and peered through the crack. He swore and swung open the door.

Ridge sucked in a sharp breath, but luckily Vinnie's own choke drowned it out.

Vinnie passed a hand over his face and emerged with a slick smile. "Well, well, so the little canary has flown home."

The beefy bodyguard from the hallway shoved Brandy into the room and took up his station in the hallway again. Mash grabbed her arm and pinned it behind her.

A dark rage burned in his gut as Mash manhandled Brandy, but Ridge schooled his face into a blank mask devoid of all emotion. If he blew his cover, he would be dead within the minute and no use to Brandy at all.

Scowling, Brandy twisted out of Mash's grasp. "Get off me."

"I know most showgirls are bimbos, but you're really stupid to come waltzing back into this town, Brandy."

"Most showgirls are a lot brighter than you think, and you're about to find out just how smart one of them is." She planted her high-heeled sandals in the plush carpet, legs astride.

Ridge's jaw tightened. She must've recognized Vinnie's voice

on the phone and tracked him down. He didn't have a clue what she had planned, but she just put herself in a hell of a lot of danger. And where had she stashed Trey?

"I could kill you right now." Vinnie pushed back from the table and patted the piece in the pocket of his jacket.

"In front of a witness?" She pointed to Ridge with a steady finger.

"Him?" Vinnie flicked a hand in Ridge's direction. "I own him."

Brandy's nostrils flared as she studied Ridge's face. Did she really believe he might be in Vinnie's employ?

"I don't think you want to kill me until you hear what I have to say."

Vinnie poured himself another drink. "Maybe I'll listen to what you have to say and *then* kill you."

Brandy shrugged, the strap of her shirt slipping off her shoulder. "Whatever."

Ridge raised his brows. The woman had more balls than a lot of agents in the Bureau.

"Look, Vinnie, I did see you whack Black Jack, but I'm not interested in testifying against you, and I don't trust the Feds. I want cash."

Vinnie laughed and swirled his drink. "Why should I give you any dough? I can kill you now and take care of the problem."

"I don't think you want to do that. Remember a few nights after the murder, you slept with one of the dancers from the show?"

"Sweetheart, I sleep with a lot of dancers from the show. I even had my eye on you at one point." He lifted a broad shoulder and took another swig of booze while eyeing Brandy's unfettered breasts beneath her tiny t-shirt.

Brandy gave an exaggerated shiver. "Ooh, color me flattered."

Ridge rubbed his hand across his mouth, hiding his smile. She was pushing Vinnie right to the edge.

"The point is, Vinnie, I knew you were planning to bed Meg. You're so predictable. I also figured it was just a matter of time before you discovered I'd witnessed the murder, so I hid a record-



ing device in Meg's room. You just couldn't help yourself. You had to brag to Meg about taking care of Black Jack Moretti, and I have it all on tape."

Was she telling the truth? She'd never mentioned any tape to him. Tensing his muscles, Ridge eased back from the card table. Brandy was playing a treacherous game.

Vinnie's mouth gaped open, and then he shook his head. "You're lying, sweetheart. I never confessed nothing to no broad."

"I heard you on the tape. You had a little too much to drink. Meg had you all pumped up, full of yourself. You implicated yourself in the murder of Black Jack Moretti, and I have the proof locked away in a safe deposit box. If anything happens to me, the FBI will receive a posthumous letter notifying them of the evidence."

Eyes wide, Vinnie choked. The man obviously couldn't recall his own pillow talk. Would he be willing to take the risk?

Ridge's heart swelled with something suspiciously like pride at the way Brandy was handling herself. She'd decided to take charge of the situation, control her own destiny. Of course, all this bravery gnawed at his gut.

He didn't plan on losing Brandy now.

"I don't believe you." Vinnie's eyes darted toward his henchman hulking by the hotel door. "If you have this tape, how come you didn't give it to the Feds right away?"

"I told you." Brandy sauntered to the wet bar and poured herself a half tumbler of scotch. "I'm not interested in turning you in. I want cash."

A commotion resounded outside the door, and as two bodies crashed into the room, Ridge jumped up from his chair. Brandy hurled her glass at Mash's head, and he fell to the floor.

Ridge liked this plan a whole lot better.

Vinnie grabbed his gun from his pocket. Ridge tackled him and knocked his arm to the side, pinning it to the carpet. Vinnie squeezed off the shot anyway.

One of the men grappling by the door grunted and slumped onto the floor.

“He’s dead.” Trey brushed his black hair out of his face as he leaned over the body.

Digging his knee into Vinnie’s mid-section, Ridge panted, “Better him than you.”

Brandy screamed, “Ridge, look out!”

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Mash rolled onto his stomach and yanked his gun out of his waistband. He pointed his weapon at Ridge’s head.

With her heart thundering in her chest, Brandy clapped a hand over her mouth. Her gaze darted toward Trey crouched over the dead man in the corner. Could he charge Mash or would Mash turn his weapon on Trey? She couldn’t allow Trey to risk his own life for Ridge’s life.

But she could.

She had to get between the gun and Ridge. She’d come up with this stupid plan, and she’d pay the ultimate price, not Ridge, not Trey.

“If anyone makes another move, I’ll shoot to kill.” Mash’s words slurred together, and he rubbed the back of his neck as his eyes glazed over.

Ridge lunged across Vinnie. He grabbed Vinnie around his thick neck and wedged the beefy man in front of him like a shield.

Vinnie yelled, “Don’t shoot, you idiot.”

Mash fired his weapon at the same time Vinnie fired his, and the bullets hit their targets simultaneously. Vinnie sagged against Ridge’s body, and Mash collapsed onto the carpet.

Brandy’s legs felt like rubber. She gripped the back of a chair to keep from sliding to the floor. Ridge shoved Vinnie’s body away and sprang to his feet. He wrapped his arms around her as she melted against his chest. The circular motions of his hands on her back soothed the trembles rolling through her body.

Resting her cheek against his pounding heart, Brandy turned her head to watch Trey check the pulses of the men on the floor. He jerked up his head, a deep crease between his brows. “They’re all dead.”

“Self defense.” Ridge stroked Brandy’s hair, and she burrowed deeper into his shoulder.

“And Brandy’s safe.” Trey pushed up from the floor and joined them, placing one hand on her shoulder and one on Ridge’s shoulder.

His touch spread like a warm glow across her skin. She had not one, but two saviors. She didn’t want to scare Ridge away with her attraction to Trey, so she grasped Ridge around the waist more firmly.

Ridge nudged his finger beneath her chin and tipped up her head. His deep blue eyes smoldered with a fire so passionate it almost singed her eyelashes. He bent his head and caressed her lips with his own. The gentle kiss grew more and more demanding. As she opened her mouth, her tongue meeting his in a sensuous dance, the kiss became possessive. She belonged to him. He belonged to her.

When Ridge ended the kiss, he peeled her arm from around his waist and turned her toward Trey. Placing a hand on her bottom, Ridge pressed her against Trey’s body. Her lips still throbbed with the heat of Ridge’s kiss, and then Trey sealed his mouth over hers. His tongue probed all the same places she’d shared with Ridge.

Ridge pulled her out of Trey’s embrace. “We can finish this later. Right now, I have to take care of this mess. Trey, you get out of here. I’m going to concoct a story about Brandy returning to Vegas, Vinnie’s boys snatching her, and yours truly coming to the rescue. Sorry I can’t give you your due as a hero, but I don’t want to complicate matters.”

The corner of Trey’s mouth lifted. “I’m not here to cause complications.”

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Brandy wriggled on the banquette between the two most gorgeous men in the restaurant. Ridge shone like a white knight, his bright blond hair gleaming against the snowy white of his shirt. Trey smoldered like a dark duke, his raven black hair blending with the black of his silk shirt, unbuttoned just enough to reveal the top

of the tattoo on his chest.

Both men dropped their hands to the small of her back at the same time, and she sighed with contentment.

Looked like Lady Luck was staging a strong comeback.

Sipping her martini, she smoothed her palm along Ridge's muscular thigh. "I still don't get why you were playing cards with Vinnie."

"Before you showed up, I was planning to provoke him, get him to take a shot at me so I could retaliate in self-defense."

"You were prepared to take on all three of them?" She wrinkled her nose.

He kissed the tip of her nose. "Turns out I didn't have to take on all three of them. I had backup. Three on three. Those boys didn't have a chance."

Brandy tossed back the rest of her drink and placed her other hand on Trey's thigh. He nuzzled her ear, and her hand slid toward his crotch, molding his slacks around his erection.

Ridge kissed her neck and said, "I'm just as hard as he is. And just as big."

Tilting her head back, Brandy ran her hand across Ridge's cock bulging against his pants. He got that right—just as hard and just as big.

As she stroked both men under the table, Ridge kissed her lips while Trey nibbled on her earlobe. Then Ridge laced his fingers through her hair and turned her head toward Trey. Trey's tongue dabbled at the moisture on her lips left by Ridge's kiss.

Ridge skimmed his fingers along her inner thigh, and she almost bounced off the leather. Trey glanced down, and with a grin, he trailed his fingertips along her other thigh. Then like two little boys racing for the last piece of candy, they both slid their fingers inside her panties.

Gasping, she opened her legs and they continued their exploration. Creamy and slick with her juices, their fingers toyed with her and toyed with each other. While Ridge slid one finger inside her, Trey stroked her clit. When her orgasm rocked her, she dug her

fingernails into their thighs, biting back her scream for the benefit of the other diners in the dark restaurant.

Trey whispered, “Did you enjoy that as much as climaxing on the back of the motorcycle?”

Someone coughed and Brandy’s eyelids flew open, her gaze focusing on the young waiter. Her hands were still under the table, furiously rubbing two extremely large, impatient cocks. Her legs were still spread, with two sets of fingers stroking her heated flesh.

Spots of color formed on the waiter’s face, and he cleared his throat again. “Can I get you anything else, sir—sirs?”

“Would you like anything else, sweet stuff?” Ridge deliberately removed his fingers from her panties and touched a fingertip to her lips before kissing her. “Trey?”

Trey had the audacity to tweak her clit once more before draping his arm across her shoulders and finishing the kiss Ridge started. He turned his dark eyes toward the waiter. “We’ll have our dessert in our room.”

The waiter stammered and stumbled but managed to drop the check on the table.

Brandy slapped their hands. “You two are bad.”

Ridge glanced at Trey and raised his brows. “How about the three of us be badder?”

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Brandy eased, naked, into the enormous sunken Jacuzzi tub in Ridge’s hotel suite. She held up her hands at the two nude Adonises beside the tub. “Hold it. I just want to make sure I’m not dreaming.”

Ridge and Trey glanced at each other, grinned, and shrugged. They stood like finely-molded statues, side by side, their huge cocks standing at attention, almost touching at the tips. Rising to her knees on the top step of the tub, Brandy trailed her fingertips up their legs and cupped their balls in her hands. Ridge sighed and Trey moaned.

“I could play you two like a couple of musical instruments.” She gripped their shafts and smoothed the pads of her thumbs across

the pre-cum that had formed on their tips, identical pearly beads that immediately formed again. She sampled one and then the other with the tip of her tongue, eliciting gasps of pleasure from both of them.

Ridge dropped to his knees and cupped her breasts, caressing her nipples into hard pebbles. His hot, slick cock speared her belly, and she arched her back to offer herself to him.

Trey cranked on the jets and slid into the water, his flaring thighs and strong buttocks disappearing into the bubbles. The top of the tattoo on his chest was just visible above the surface of the water.

Settling on the side of the tub with his legs dangling in the water, Ridge said, "I'm not afraid to open myself up to you, Brandy. I'm not afraid of anything."

He spun her around and pulled her against his body between his open thighs. She tilted her head back against his shoulder, and he ran his tongue down her neck as she reached behind to clutch his wavy hair.

Ridge scooped his hands beneath her thighs, hoisting her higher so that her back rested against his broad chest. He parted her legs and she rested her thighs on top of his, hooking her feet around his calves. His cock nestled between her legs, and she reached down to stroke the head. With their bodies entwined, Brandy felt as if she were touching herself, as if Ridge's cock belonged to her, a part of her.

Trey submerged himself in the bubbling water. Then he broke the surface, slicking back his long, black hair. Steam rose from his powerful, dangerous form.

He drew closer, his dark eyes pinning hers. He lifted his gaze to Ridge's face, and a silent understanding passed between them. Ridge smoothed his hands down her belly until his fingers reached her mound. Gently, he spread her lips open to Trey's hungry gaze, offering, insisting.

Trey's wet hair tickled Brandy's thighs as he accepted Ridge's invitation. His tongue darted out of his mouth, teasing her clit, now

throbbing with need.

As Ridge held her open, Trey kissed and suckled and drove her to the edge of madness. She rubbed against Ridge's cock, which hardened beneath her.

The circle Trey drew with his tongue expanded, and he nibbled on her outer lips. Then his touch dipped lower, and he ran his tongue along Ridge's shaft. "He tastes like you."

Brandy twisted her head around to see how Ridge liked this latest development. Seemed he hadn't lied about opening himself up. He'd squeezed his eyes shut, but his heart thundered beneath her shoulder blade.

Encouraged, Trey sampled another taste of Ridge's cock. Ridge grunted and juttied his hips forward, thrusting both of them closer to Trey's warm, wet mouth and exposing his red tip, weeping precum.

Trey licked the head of Ridge's cock and then licked Brandy's clit. She drove her bottom against Ridge's belly, tipping up her pelvis. This revealed more of Ridge's pulsing erection to Trey.

Trey drew Ridge's tip between his lips, and the sight sent hot blood coursing through Brandy's veins. In truth, ever since Trey rode into their lives, Brandy had been imagining these two strong men pleasuring each other.

As Trey sucked Ridge, he moved his upper lip against Brandy's clit. She squirmed and bounced against Ridge, but his fingers dug into her hips, holding her in place for Trey's sweet assault.

The liquid fire rushed from her toes to her nipples, flooding her with molten ecstasy. She screamed her release at the same time Ridge bucked and then stiffened beneath her. They rocked forward as they both came in Trey's mouth.

Trey drank them in, drank them deeply until their climaxes robbed them of the strength to sit in an upright position. Claspings his arms around her, Ridge slid into the warm water and released her to Trey.

Brandy hooked her arms around Trey's neck and curled her legs around his slim hips, driving him back toward the steps on

the other side of the tub. He reclined and pulled her on top of his engorged shaft.

With Ridge cupping her breasts from behind, she rode Trey like that Harley, teasing the links of his tattoo chain with her fingertips until he thrashed his head from side to side, his long hair whipping up droplets of water.

When he came, he tipped his head back and stretched his arms along the edge of the tub, bucking his hips so violently she rose out of the water with each thrust, taking Ridge along for the ride.

Ridge pressed his slick body against her skin and kissed her neck. Resting his chin on her shoulder he grinned at Trey. "Let's continue this party on that round bed over there. It's big enough. Big enough for the three of us."

\*\*\*

The mattress dipped and Brandy, spooned against Ridge, reached out from her snug cocoon to pull Trey into the warmth. Instead of smooth flesh, her fingers brushed rough denim.

Her eyelids fluttered open, and her gaze focused on Trey perched on the edge of the bed dressed in his black jeans and T-shirt. She sat up and reached for him.

He grabbed her hands and brought them to his lips. His soft kiss on her palm kindled a spark in her belly, but she could already feel his distance.

"You're leaving, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

A sad smile touched his lips. "I don't know."

His vague answer didn't surprise her. She sensed he had a mission, some desperate journey to complete. And somehow she and Ridge had helped him as much as he had helped them.

Placing her hands on either side of his lean face, she whispered, "Be well. Be safe."

Trey kissed her one last time before settling her back in the arms of Ridge, still sleeping beside her. Then, without a backward glance, Trey slipped out the door and out of her life.



She snuggled against Ridge, running her hand along his thigh. His cock stirred to life against her belly, and she pressed kisses against his eyelids.

A smile curved his mouth as he hitched his leg over her hip, drawing her closer. "Where's Trey?"

"He's gone. It's just you and me, baby."

\*\*\*

Trey swung his leg over the Harley and shoved his sunglasses on top of his head. He revved the engine of the big machine, feeling the vibration throughout his body.

The incredible sex he had enjoyed with Brandy and Trey had done little to slake his thirst. In fact, his cock throbbed and ached for more. His punishment. His destiny.

But his desire for sexual release didn't weaken him. Strength and power surged through his veins, and he glanced at the cursed tattoo snaking down his forearm. The remaining vestiges of blue ink faded from the end link on the chain.

Success. Brandy and Ridge lay safe in each other's arms. Could he also earn his own salvation?

He tipped the sunglasses over his eyes and shot forward into the sparse traffic. The wind blew the hair back from his face, and he smiled.

*I'm coming, Heather.*

***About the author:***

*Mia Varano has hordes of virile men and strong but luscious women in her head, all clamoring to escape and realize their destinies. It makes for some interesting headaches until she sets them free to fulfill their fantasies and those of her readers. In addition to highly sensual, and somewhat kinky, erotic romance, Mia writes nail-biting romantic suspense as Carol Ericson. If you just can't get enough, please visit Mia's website at [www.miavarano.com](http://www.miavarano.com).*

## *Interview With Mia Varano*

### **1. Hi, Mia! When not writing, what do you like to read?**

I like to read the *Secrets* volumes, of course! I also enjoy reading Harlequin Intrigues, which I also write, and I love historicals, especially Eloisa James's series, and I enjoy Susan Elizabeth Phillips's romantic comedies.

### **2. Do you remember the first romance you read?**

Absolutely. It was Victoria Holt's *The Secret Woman*. I then went on to read every one of Holt's books, eagerly awaiting her new releases. Now I'm collecting all of her gothic romances in first edition hard copy. Reading Victoria Holt is what influenced me to become a romance writer. I've written a couple of gothic romances, homages to Ms. Holt, that will never see the light of day, but I had fun writing them.

### **3. How did becoming a writer change your life?**

It made me a lot busier! LOL I still work full time, and I'm married, and I have two boys who play lots of sports, so I rarely have any downtime. Becoming a writer also put me in touch with an amazing community of other very supportive writers.

### **4. Did you ever think you would be doing what you do?**

Actually, yes! Not erotic romance specifically, but from the time I was about 12 or 13, I knew I wanted to write romance. I always loved to write and I was a daydreamer, so writing romance just came naturally to me!

### **5. What got you interested in erotic romance?**

I used to enjoy writing sexy poems and letters to my boyfriends (current husband included!). I've always found the words on a page, creating a sensuous scene that I could expand upon in my mind, more erotic than a visual scene in a movie. Several years

ago, I stumbled on a website where writers posted their erotic stories, some good some pretty bad, and decided to join the fun. So I posted several erotic short stories that all had a romantic overlay. I received so many complimentary and positive emails, mostly from women, who loved the romanticism of the stories. When I picked up my first *Secrets* volume, I knew I had found a home for my erotic romance!

**6. Are there common themes that show up in all your stories? If so, what are they?**

Hmm, men in skimpy clothing? LOL One common theme that appears in a lot of my stories is the notion of redemption and change. Most of my characters are damaged people. They've become cynical or repressed by fear or they've had their self-worth trampled. They don't believe in themselves, and they don't trust the people around them. By the end of the story, they gain redemption through love. They learn to put their trust in another human being or they rediscover their inner strength by being called upon to rescue, either emotionally or physically, the one they love. Even in erotic romance, it's the love, stupid!

**7. Which comes to you first, the plot or the characters?**

For erotic romance, the idea for the plot comes first (no pun intended—LOL). For my erotic romances, I want a plot and setting that are going to enhance the eroticism of the story and give the characters lots of opportunities to interact sexually, perhaps outside their usual confines of propriety or situation. So in *Virgin of the Amazon (Secrets: Primal Heat Volume 21)*, I put the uptight heroine in the middle of the Amazon, matching her with a British adventurer with a fondness for loincloths.

*Hot on Her Heels*, my release in *Secrets Vol. 24* (July '08) also began with a setting and plot. I got the idea for the story when my friend told me she took her 80-year old mother to Vegas for her birthday and surprised her with a visit to the all-male revue the Thunder From Down Under! Her mother had a blast, by the way. In *Hot on Her Heels*, the hero, a former cop who's now a private

investigator, goes undercover (sort of!) at a male strip club in Vegas to investigate a male dancer who stole some jewels from an “older” lady and patron of the club. At first he believes the hard-as-nails, but super sexy, owner of the club is involved in the theft. The steamy setting allows for a lot of sexuality to come into play, as well as the opportunity for the hero to shake his stuff in a g-string.

## **8. Any advice for newbie writers?**

Keep writing! Don’t write one book and revise it over and over. Write one book, send it out, forget about it, and then start your next book, and so on, and so on. Chances are pretty good you’re not going to sell that first book, so don’t pin all your hopes and dreams on one manuscript.

## **9. Any plans to step out of your usual genre?**

I don’t have a usual genre! In addition to writing erotic romance, I write category romantic suspense for Harlequin Intrigue (*The Stranger and I* was a Dec. ‘07 release and *A Doctor-Nurse Encounter* will be an Aug. ‘08 Intrigue release), and I’ve written a very funny, sexy romantic comedy about a hot English soccer star who lands on American soil—trying to find a home for that one.

Be sure to visit Mia’s website at **miavarano.com** for all the news of Mia’s next sizzling hot erotic romance stories. She’s also one of the Fierce Romance bloggers at [fierceromance.blogspot.com/](http://fierceromance.blogspot.com/)—if you haven’t read the Fierce Romance blog yet, you’re in for a treat! Check it out!

## *Mia Varano's Yummy Yam Casserole*

To make this yummy yam casserole, you'll need:

3 large yams (2 ½ lbs.)

2 eggs, slightly beaten

3 Tbl. melted unsalted butter, a little more for preparing the pan

3 Tbl. dark brown sugar

1 tsp. kosher salt

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground ginger

Pinch of ground nutmeg (or freshly grated)

Dash of pepper

½ cup chopped pecans

Bake yams at 400° for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until soft.

Set aside to cool, scoop out the insides, and then mash them in a bowl. Add all other ingredients and mix thoroughly until smooth. Butter an 8x8 baking pan with unsalted butter and spread mixture in pan. Sprinkle the top with pecans and bake at 355° for 30–40 minutes or until slightly puffy on top.

Enjoy with your own special hero!

*Look for Mia Varano's  
other passion-filled stories!*

*Aphrodite's Fire* by Mia Varano

Available in e-books!

When Rafe Kincaid, the man who broke her heart, asks bounty hunter, Cassie Cartwright, to help him reel in a date rapist who jumped bail, she reluctantly agrees. Their assignment lands them in the middle of a decadent house party where a powerful drug strips Cassie of her inhibitions. Is her love for Rafe strong enough to break the drug's insidious control of her desires, or will she succumb to its dangerous call to passion?

*Sex And The Single Pearl* by Mia Varano

Available in e-books!

Urban legend promises the woman who finds the single pearl one week of pure sexual fulfillment, so L.A. attorney, Kyra Davis, is thrilled when she finds the fabled gem. There's only one problem. Kyra doesn't even know her own sexual fantasies. Can hot-shot sports attorney, Gavin St. Clair, help her realize those fantasies? Gavin doesn't know a thing about the single pearl, but he does know he wants to lead the reserved Kyra on an exploration of her deepest desires.

*Virgin Of The Amazon* by Mia Varano

Available in ***Secrets Volume 21*** in paperback!

Virgin librarian, Anna Winter, gets lost on her Amazon vacation and stumbles upon a tribe whose shaman just happens to be looking for a pale-skinned virgin to deflower. Coop Daventry, a British adventurer and the tribe's self-styled chief, has a plan to save Anna from the shaman's bed. But which man poses a greater threat to Anna's virginity—the shaman or Coop himself?

*Hot On Her Heels* by Mia Varano  
Available in ***Secrets Volume 24*** in paperback!

Private investigator Jack Slater dons a leopard-print g-string to investigate an exclusive male strip club, the Lollipop Lounge. He's not sure if the club's sexy, hard-driving owner, Vivica Steele, is involved in the scam, but Jack figures he's just the Lollipop to sweeten her life.





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