

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

BARBARA
HUFFERT

*Whisper
and Sigh*

ELLORA'S CAVE
Quickies®

Whisper and Sigh

Barbara Huffert

She's had enough of her stagnant life, can't take another day, so she walks out, destination unknown. She didn't know what to expect...but it wasn't the unrestrained reaction to the mysterious man who suddenly appears on the beach beside her.

He's been waiting for his one true love all his life. When she finally arrives, he can't resist their overwhelming chemistry. One touch leads to another and the expression on her face as she comes is more beautiful than he ever imagined.

Now they can get started on the rest of their lives together – if they can keep their hands to themselves long enough to exchange names.

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Whisper and Sigh

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WHISPER AND SIGH

Barbara Huffert

Dedication

For Cutter Murdoch.

Poet, prophet, photographer – the most wickedly creative individual ever.

I expect great things from you, my friend.

Chapter One

I was lost. Literally and figuratively. I hadn't been myself in so long I couldn't really remember who I was. That's how I ended up there in the first place. I got up the other morning and wandered away from my life. I grabbed the few things I couldn't live without and just walked out without looking back. I drove up the coast, stopping here and there, hoping to find someplace that felt right.

Now, four days later, I had no idea where I was. Seriously, I didn't even know what state I was in. Why should I? It didn't really matter. It's not like I had anyone to call and tell where I was in case they wanted to come after me. I'm sure no one even noticed I was gone.

So there I was, sitting on a log on the beach, staring out at the ocean, wondering what the hell I was doing. It was midafternoon. Not close to dark yet but rapidly approaching the point where I should consider finding someplace to stay. But I was bone tired. I couldn't bring myself to get my ass up off the log and go look around. Also, I hadn't eaten in who knew how long. I suppose I was hungry but I couldn't motivate myself for that either.

I remained where I was, unable to force myself into motion, unable to make any decisions, unable to do much of anything except watch the waves roll toward me. I don't really know how long he'd been standing there, observing me but I suspect it was some time. I noticed his shadow because he moved closer and it appeared at the end of my log. He seemed to be approaching slowly, in stages, as if not wanting to startle me.

Part of me briefly wondered if I should be afraid since the beach was essentially deserted but then he took another step and was parallel to me. I looked over and found him watching the waves instead of me. For some reason that made him feel nonthreatening.

He wasn't handsome in any classic sense but still, I was instantly drawn to him. That fact hit me hard. It had been ages since anyone interested me yet there I was, experiencing a tremendous pull toward a complete stranger I'd encountered only seconds before. He hadn't even looked at me so all I'd seen was his profile. We hadn't spoken a word. It made absolutely no sense.

I was stunned by my reaction. I didn't know what to do so I went back to studying the ocean. Out of the corner of my eye I saw him glide closer. For such a big, sturdy looking man, his movements were fluid and sure. Had I been out at a restaurant or a club I definitely would have noticed him. As it was, him standing there, towering above me, made him impossible to ignore. Something about him made me tingle and I shivered in anticipation.

"Cold?" he asked softly, catching it.

"No," I replied, looking up to meet his eyes. My breath caught in my throat.

"Ah," he said as if that explained everything.

I sighed. I couldn't help it. For a second I wondered if I was imagining him because I was so lonely. Real men didn't appear out of nowhere and soothe me merely with their presence.

"So sad," he whispered. "So unnecessarily sad."

That confused me. "What?" I asked stupidly as I felt my face heat.

He smiled kindly. For some reason I got the impression that it wasn't something he did often. "You have to get up. You know you can't just sit here forever."

"I know," I muttered a tad defensively. What an odd encounter this was becoming yet I still felt no fear.

He chuckled as if that pleased him for God knows what reason. "C'mon." He turned fully toward me and extended his hand.

I don't know what possessed me. Really I don't. I should have jumped and run but I didn't. No, I reached out and took his hand. It was warm as his fingers closed around

mine. In one simple motion he pulled me to my feet. My head only reached his shoulder. Slowly, watching me intently, he closed the small distance between us and folded me in his arms. It wasn't only his hand that was warm. His entire body was. Until the second I felt his heat, I hadn't realized that yes, I was chilly. His full length pressed against mine like he'd known that when I hadn't and it rapidly chased the cold away.

I burst into tears, something I definitely wasn't expecting but he took it in stride as if he was. He held me tighter, whispering quiet nothings and I felt safe for the first time in forever. Again, it confused the hell out of me. I didn't know this man one bit but being there, my head pressed to his shoulder, his arms banded around me, was so unbelievably comforting. I sobbed harder, not even trying to contain myself. I'm not sure how but I knew I didn't need to. I knew it wouldn't be acceptable if I'd tried, not that I wanted to.

He leaned back just enough to tip my chin and kiss the tears from my cheeks. I should have worried about looking like a puffy mess and embarrassing myself as I just had, only I didn't. I stood there, clinging to the stranger, letting him lick the wetness from my face. His expression was tender as his hand shifted to cup the back of my head. Ever so gradually, he lowered his head and brushed his lips over mine. He licked the salt from them too. Then he smiled the oddest little smile and guided our lips back together.

His mouth explored mine thoroughly, tongue invading, teasing, while his lips alternated between caressing and demanding. It was like no kiss I'd ever experienced and that was before he nipped my bottom lip. It surprised me so much I opened my eyes, only to find him watching me as if he expected that to be my reaction.

Who was this man? Why was he there with me, kissing me? Why was I letting him? And why the hell did my body go into overdrive, wanting more? Looking at him, there was no doubt in my mind that he knew exactly what I was thinking. But for some reason I was okay with that.

As if wanting me to know I wasn't alone in the direction my thoughts were taking, he slid a hand down to my ass. Damn, it was large! My butt wasn't exactly small and his one hand cupped my cheek easily. He urged me more firmly against his body and I could feel his hard cock pressing into my belly. My slight gasp drew a knowing grin just before he went back to kissing me.

I have no idea how long we remained there. I was so completely lost in the sensations he created within me, sensations I hadn't felt in years, that the concept of time ceased to exist. All I knew was this man who I really didn't know at all, even though at the moment my senses felt as if I always had.

I moaned, arching my back to push my breasts to his chest. My nipples were peaked. I could feel them rubbing against the lace of my bra. How I wished there were no clothes separating us. I wanted to feel his heat on my bare skin. He tilted my head and scraped my neck with his teeth. Lightly but enough to send sparks straight to my pussy. His hand held me in place as he moved his hips, shifting his bulging cock against me. More than anything I wanted to pull it from his jeans and beg him to bury it inside me.

What was happening to me? I didn't behave like that. I didn't want to have sex in public with total strangers. For that matter, I didn't have sex at all—or not for the past several years anyway. But there I was, silently pleading with my body for him to finish what we'd started in spite of where we were. And not only that, I was wanting things I'd never experienced. His biting me set off all sorts of desires I didn't even know I had.

My pulse was already rapid but meeting his eyes, seeing the raw desire in them, made it race out of control. No one had ever looked at me like that before in my life. The heat in his expression, the longing that was so obvious made my knees weak. Thank goodness he was so muscular. I knew instinctively he'd never let me melt to the ground as I was in danger of doing.

His mouth returned to devouring mine. His hands held my body pressed hard against his. I was thoroughly captivated and still I knew nothing about the man. And,

unbelievably, it didn't matter. When he shifted us so his foot was between mine, bringing my throbbing core in contact with his thigh, I whimpered in need. He groaned in response, flexing the muscle against me, making me shiver as it pulsed against my swollen clit. He guided me over him, creating friction with the smallest movement. Without him holding me, I would have been thrashing against him, out of control. Without him kissing me, I would have been begging for him to fuck me right then and there.

As it was, the pressure of his solid leg against my sensitive flesh, even with our clothes on was enough. I came. Just like that. Something I hadn't done with another person in forever and there I was, taking pleasure from a man whose name I still didn't know. He swallowed my gasps and moans as he held me steady, easing me down by caressing my back.

All too soon, his kisses lightened until they were soft brushes mixed with gentle nips. In the end he rested his forehead against mine, I suspect catching his breath as I was.

"Come. Let's get you some food and then we'll talk."

* * * * *

Without any hesitation, I took his hand and let him lead me from the beach. We walked a few streets into the town to a tavern. It was comparatively dark inside as he guided me to a high-backed booth in the corner, ushering me in to sit before he did. With the time of day it was nearly empty but still he said something to the bartender on our way by. Once two dishes of steaming shepherd's pie and glasses of tea were delivered we were left on our own.

I knew I was hungry but hadn't realized just how much until the first forkful. Oh my, was it good! Even though I was curious beyond belief as to what he thought we needed to talk over, I didn't stop eating until I'd finished the last bite.

"More?" he asked with a concerned expression on his face.

I suppose I did inhale the food like I was starving and perhaps I should have been embarrassed but I wasn't. I knew without a doubt that as long as my behavior was honest I never had to worry with him.

"No thank you. I've had more than enough already."

He chuckled knowingly. "Too good to leave any," he declared, finishing off his own meal.

I nodded in agreement, suddenly very aware of his nearness. It wasn't that I was intimidated. No, fascinated was more like it. Especially now that I'd gotten a good look at him, particularly his hands. I'd realized they were large when we were on the beach. Now, looking at them, I also saw how strong they were. I was willing to bet, just by how he wielded a fork, they were very adept as well. I had the sudden need to feel them all over me.

My gaze shifted to his forearms, then on to his chest. Mm, it wasn't just his hands that fascinated me. I didn't mean to let my eyes drop but I couldn't help myself. I looked down even further and was disappointed to find that the table shielded what I hoped to see. I covered the same ground on my way back up, ending with his mouth. Without thinking, I licked my bottom lip. When his curved into a smile, I knew I'd been caught.

"Thank you." He chuckled.

I felt my face heat. "I, uh..."

"It's perfectly all right. Look all you want." He shifted back on the bench to give me a better view. "I'm flattered."

I wanted to resist but in the end I let my eyes wander again. Outside, I'd noticed he was a large man. When he held me against him, I felt how sturdy he was. Now, looking at him closely I could see that he was solid muscle. Still, I got the impression that he would be quick on his feet and hard to track should he choose to be. Who was this man? What did he do? And why was he sitting there all but encouraging me to ogle the bulge

in his jeans. His well-worn jeans that were faded at just the right place to outline his cock. Ooh, did I want to see him without his clothes.

I didn't give it any thought, nor did I hesitate. I raised my gaze and reached out to cup his cheek. He let me be for a few seconds before turning his head to kiss my palm. That one little gesture sent shivers along my spine and made my pussy clench. My God, the man radiated pure sex and really, all he was doing was sitting there.

I traced his lips. He kissed my fingertip before catching it with his teeth for a sharp nip. I gasped. The thrill I'd felt on the beach hit me again. I was instantly wet. I wondered if I inhaled deeply if I'd be able to scent my arousal. I stopped myself from doing just that. I had to. He'd know exactly what I was doing and would surely comment on it. I wasn't anywhere near ready to end my exploration.

I ran my hand down his arm and spent some time caressing his hand before moving on to his chest. His breath caught when I rested my palm over his heart. It was racing. I was so pleased to discover I wasn't the only one affected. He wasn't nearly as calm as he appeared. Good, since I was blushing like a teenager on her first date.

I continued touching him, letting my hand find his abs. Oh wow, he was even more solid than I thought. It took all I had not to tug his shirt from his jeans to get to bare skin. It would be warm and more than anything I wanted to lick it in order to taste his flesh. But that would have to wait until we were somewhere a little more private. I knew, once I got started, that I wouldn't want to quit.

When I hesitated, he reached out and tapped my hand that was resting on the table. "Go on. Help yourself."

"Here?" I squeaked, stalling.

He chuckled, knowing exactly what I was doing. "Sure. Why not?"

"This is a public place. There are people here."

"So? No one will bother us now that we're done eating unless I signal for them."

"Oh so you do this all the time then."

He stared silently so long my cheeks grew hot. That was a ridiculous conclusion. I knew better. I didn't know how. I just did.

"I'm sorry," I mumbled, dropping my chin.

"Stop that." He tipped my head so I had to look at him. "You're a little unsure right now. I understand that. You didn't mean anything by it. You already know the answer anyway. Don't you?"

"Yes," I admitted.

He looked at me with a little smile on his face and flexed his abs. "Well?"

I realized I'd been sitting there with my hand on his stomach the whole time. "Oh." I returned his smile.

As he linked our fingers resting on the table, I slid my other hand lower. I couldn't believe I was about to grope a stranger and in public no less. For some reason it didn't feel nearly as wrong as part of me thought it should. I ran my palm down the outside of his thigh. Rock-hard as expected. Then I moved it to the inside and slid it toward his body. I repeated my caress several times getting closer and closer until I inched my way back up to his groin.

Finally, I couldn't continue to resist. I had to touch him. I began by circling the head with my thumb. He started at my touch. His cock was half-hard to begin with but it stiffened rapidly. I cupped him as much as I could but my hand was too small. Mm, he was a big man and, as I discovered, proportionate as well. I had to bite my lip to keep from drooling which of course he noticed.

He covered my hand and squeezed. "Like what you feel?"

"You know I do." No point in denying the obvious.

"Take it out," he urged harshly.

I know I shouldn't have but when I met his gaze and saw the intense desire there, I simply had to. It took some doing to lower his zipper with his shaft fully engorged but I eventually managed. What I found nearly took my breath away. His cock was thick and

full. I could feel it pulsing in my hands. I took a moment to admire it. Then, meeting his eyes, I began to stroke. Not the easiest thing to do since my fingers didn't reach completely around it.

"Harder. I won't break. Don't be afraid to squeeze."

"Show me."

He wrapped his hand over mine and together we pumped his shaft. A drop of pre-cum escaped. I used one thumb to spread it over the head. Slick and shiny and mm, did I want to suck the knob into my mouth. I was thoroughly surprised when he rearranged my hand so my nails caught the crown. I looked at him questioningly and received a nod of encouragement. His hips lifted off the seat when I dug into his shaft. What a rush it was to be given such trust! I scraped my nails along his length while I used my soft inner wrist on the head for contrast.

"Fuck, that's good," he groaned, clearly struggling to stay quiet.

The more his pre-cum flowed, the more I wished I could taste his essence. Though I was in-the-moment enough to sit there with my hands wrapped around his erection, I hadn't quite reached the point where I was comfortable enough to drop my head to his lap and suck his cock in public no matter how much I wanted to. But I could have, had I chosen to. I was sure he'd permit me. He might have been certain we wouldn't be interrupted but I wasn't so I settled for licking my wrist. The gesture caused him to swell even more.

With a smile, I returned my hands to his shaft, grasping him tightly with both once again. I used his pre-cum as lubricant, sliding them up and down from base to tip, nails one time, palms the next. His breathing was becoming shallow, his pupils dilated. I never felt such power before and I knew it was all him. Although I held him in my grip, he was the one who was truly controlling the moment. Never in my life had I even considered doing such a thing. With anyone else beside me, I knew I wouldn't have been doing it then either.

I don't know how long we sat there, me stroking his hard cock, him watching me intently but I suspect it was quite some time. Longer than I'd ever had my hands on anyone before. When I looked up at him, I could tell by his expression that it wasn't because he wasn't enjoying my touch. That, he most definitely was. When he bit his lip to contain a moan I realized that he was holding off as long as he could to prolong the moment. What a compliment! I could have told him not to worry, that I was more than willing to repeat my actions but I didn't want to speak just then. No, it would have lessened the moment somehow.

I noticed he was holding his breath and knew he was close. I wondered if he would permit me to make him come but decided he was more than capable of stopping me if he chose not to. When he reached for his napkin, I had my answer. That made me smile. I peeked up at him and he was smiling too.

I pumped harder, faster and felt his shaft twitch. When I raked my nails beneath the ridge, his hand covered the head. I wrapped my hands around his cock and felt the hot cum pulsing out of him. How I wished I could see it but I understood why I couldn't just then. Even better would have been feeling it in my mouth. Perhaps the next time. I didn't need to ask to be sure there would be a next time. Many more next times.

Slowly, I ran my palms over his still hard shaft, something more that fascinated me and needed further exploration. I continued until he sighed and balled up the napkin. I took my hands away but not before catching the last drop that appeared from his slit with my finger. He groaned when I sucked it into my mouth, obviously thinking the same things I was.

As soon as he had his cock tucked back into his jeans, again with difficulty, he lifted my hands to his mouth, running his tongue over the same finger before licking the spot on my wrist that I had used on him. That sent tingles racing throughout my body. I didn't need to inhale deeply. His doing that had my arousal level so spiked my scent hung in the air around us. Yes, he noticed it too. His nostrils flared and he looked at me with such longing I couldn't breathe.

He pulled me closer and kissed me so thoroughly I began to feel faint. I'd never had that happen before and knew the kiss was just another of the many new experiences I would have with this man. Again, I wondered who he was and why I was so willing to follow his lead when still I knew absolutely nothing about him. He gentled the kiss, ending it with little licks over my lips. I sighed. How could I feel so aroused and yet so completely satisfied all at once?

"Let me toss this and then we'll go," he said, indicating the napkin.

I laughed, filled with happiness I hadn't felt in ages. He laughed with me, smiling as if he knew exactly what I was feeling, as if he was feeling it as well. I hoped he was. Something that good was meant to be shared, not hoarded.

"Go on. I'm not going anywhere without you."

He kissed my cheek and said almost smugly but not in an annoying way, "I know."

Chapter Two

We left the tavern without my knowing where we were going. I suppose I should have asked. If anyone had suggested I'd wander off into the dusk with a complete stranger and one who I'd just made come in a public place at that, I'd have told them it would never happen. I was way more practical and safety conscious than that. But I felt no fear with this man. Exhilaration, fascination, overwhelming desire, a boldness I'd never experienced before but not one trace of fear. I decided I needed to analyze that at some point. For the moment though, I was going along wherever he took me. I'd figure out the rest later.

I thought we might head back to the beach and my car and it did seem we were going that way at first. But then he veered down a side street and took me in the opposite direction. I considered asking but didn't. I trusted him and not knowing where he was leading me added to the adventure.

"This way," he said, tugging me along behind him as he picked up the pace.

I heard the impatience in his voice and had to giggle. He sounded like I felt. He didn't need to spell it out. I knew that he wanted me as much as I wanted him. Talking be damned. That could wait. I needed him desperately. Right that very second if not sooner. I'd never wanted nor been wanted like that before and it thrilled me beyond belief. I had no idea where we were going but it didn't matter as long as we got there quickly.

"In here." He pulled me through a gateway into a walled courtyard.

I didn't get much of a chance to look around because before I knew what was happening he had me pressed up against the bricks and was kissing me like our lives depended on it. We fed on each other, neither able to get enough. Everything was spinning out of control and yet time seemed to stand still. My heart was pounding. My

blood was thick and hot with desire. I snaked my arms around his neck and felt that his pulse was as out of control as mine.

"I really wanted to get you home first," he said harshly. "Damn. We should talk before we go any further."

"I need you," I pleaded, finally feeling bare skin because I'd pulled his shirt from his jeans. I was right. His skin was hot, almost as if he were feverish but I somehow knew he'd always be like that. "We'll talk later. Please. I can't wait." I couldn't believe I was begging as I was. I'd never felt such a desperate need for anyone in my life before but I had to have him. "Please."

He rested his forehead against mine and sighed. I could see he was torn. His eyes were brimming with desire yet the restraint he was trying to exercise was shining brightly too. If he could resist then he was stronger than I was.

"Please," I repeated, struggling to open his jeans. Once I had, I pulled out his cock. His mind might be telling him we should wait but his body was as ready as mine was even though he'd just come back in the tavern.

He was still hesitating and it seemed awfully brazen, somehow, to remove my own jeans so instead I slid down his body to my knees. I looked up at him and smiled as I rubbed the knob against my cheek. I was thrilled when his breath caught.

Holding his eyes, I licked the underside of his shaft from base to tip and back again. I felt him tremble so I did it a second time. Then I swirled my tongue over the head and got my first direct taste of his pre-cum. Mm, the flavor of him, the satiny texture of the skin covering his rock-hard erection made me moan. I wrapped my lips around his cock, sucking the crown in and out of my mouth before swallowing as much of him as I could. It wasn't much considering how thick he was. I tried again and decided I would need many repeat occasions before I managed to take all of him in.

"Stop," he groaned, gently pushing me from him.

"What's wrong?" I asked, filled with fear that I'd done something he found distasteful, crushed that I wasn't good enough for him to want me to continue.

He must have sensed my distress because he pulled me to my feet and wrapped me in his strong arms. "Nothing. Not one damn thing."

"Then why'd you make me stop?" I was on the verge of tears.

"Oh no! It's not like that. I swear. It was too good and I wouldn't have been able to stop myself from coming. When I do that next I want to be inside you, feeling you come around me."

That declaration took me by surprise. No one had ever said anything even remotely similar. No one had even worried about whether or not I came before, let alone my coming with him. Every moment with this man showed me just how unique he was and I knew I had only scratched the surface.

Holding his gaze, I gathered my courage and unbuttoned my jeans. I slid them down over my hips and pulled one leg free. His expression darkened with even more desire though his eyes never left mine. I tugged his hand from my shoulder, guiding it down over my chest until it was between my thighs. Together, we traced my slit before I urged one of his thick fingers to dip inside.

"So wet," he whispered.

"For you." I slid my feet further apart and pressed his digit into my soaked pussy. "Please. I want you. I need your cock inside me." My words shocked me far more than they did him but I was beyond caring. The need I saw reflected back at me made me bold.

For a moment, he pumped his finger into me, watching me with an intensity I'd never known before. I wrapped my hand around his cock and matched his motions. Much longer and I knew we would both come. From his expression I could tell that he wanted to be inside me when we came as much as I wanted him there. I sensed his hesitation and tightened my grip, ready to beg again if I had to.

As it turned out, that wasn't necessary. He extracted his finger, sucking it into his mouth as he pried my hand from his bulging shaft. I was fascinated by his obvious enjoyment of my flavor. I knew without being told that we'd both be indulging in

lengthy tasting of each other. Later. Once it was licked clean, he reached for his wallet and pulled out a condom. Thank goodness one of us was thinking since protection was the farthest thing from my thoughts.

He was about to rip the packet open when he paused, catching my gaze. "Are you sure?"

"Yes," I answered instantly. "I need you more than I've ever needed anything. And I think you need me too. Please don't make us wait for what we both want."

He studied my face for a few seconds and then nodded. In a flash, he had himself covered. Looking at me intently, he hooked my bare leg over his powerful forearm and lifted me to him. It had been a long time for me and he was so thick. I had a split second of trepidation which he somehow caught.

"Easy," he whispered, rubbing the head along my slit. "Slowly," he said, nudging just the tip inside.

I stretched around him and oh my, was it delicious. "More," I panted.

He grinned knowingly and lowered me, slipping further into my needy core. I clamped my hands around his biceps and felt how taut his muscles were. It was then that I realized what his incredible restraint was costing him.

"Please," I gasped. "I want all of you."

"I don't want to hurt you." He worked a bit more of his fat shaft inside and I could feel his pulse. How alive that made me feel!

"You won't." I squirmed, trying to take in the rest of him. "Let me have your cock. Give it to me." I heard the desperation in my tone and knew he couldn't miss it.

With a cry, he buried his cock to the hilt but instead of moving he held us both perfectly still. "So fucking good."

"Yes," I agreed. "Move. It'll be even better." Again, I surprised myself. I'd never made demands of anyone ever yet there I was, insisting he get on with it.

He chuckled as he began to shift me on his shaft. Every movement created the most wonderful friction. I knew it wasn't just my long dry spell that made it feel so good. No, it was all him.

"This what you want?"

"More," I commanded, squeezing him with my internal muscles. If he just would move as I wanted I would be out of control and I wanted him with me.

"Fuck," he groaned.

"Yes, please." I giggled, pulsing my sheath around him.

"Oh you think that's funny?" he asked, laughing with me. When I nodded he shifted me on his arms for better leverage. Soon his cock was thrusting fully. In a moment, all laughter had ceased, replaced by needy moans from both of us. "Say it," he grunted. "Come on. You know what I need to hear." His movements slowed and I knew he would stop if I didn't.

Amazingly, I did know what the magic words were. Words I'd never said out loud before. I couldn't have without dying of embarrassment. But with him, I knew I could. I knew I would many times to come. Taking a deep breath, digging my nails into his flesh, tightening my inner muscles, I looked him straight in the eye and said, "Fuck me."

He slammed his cock in deep. "Again."

"Fuck me. Harder."

"Again," he demanded as he did just that.

"Fuck me, damn it," I cried.

"Oh yeah," he gasped. "You want it, you got it."

He was as wild with lust as I was.

His cock pounded up into me, his expression intense. I knew he was close. So was I. I leaned forward and buried my face in his neck.

"Come," he commanded. "Now. Come now. With me."

And just like that, I did. Without conscious thought I bit his shoulder to keep myself from crying out. I don't know if it was that, the feel of my pussy clenching around him, or the shivers that racked my body as he held me tight against his sturdy form, his hard cock buried balls deep but whatever it was, it was enough to push him over the edge with me. The feel of his heat pulsing high inside drew my orgasm out until I was a quivering mass, clinging to him, my mouth still firmly attached even when the rest of me started to go limp.

"Sh," he cooed. I was thoroughly amazed we were still upright. If it had been up to me, we would have ended up sprawled on the ground. "You're okay," he whispered, slipping free, wrapping me in his strong arms. "Don't cry. Everything's going to be just fine. Promise."

I hadn't even realized I was crying until I heard him say that. "I'm sorry."

"Stop." He cut me off. Good thing since I wasn't exactly sure what I thought I was apologizing for. "Stay with me here." He steadied me on my feet before dealing with the condom and tucking himself away. He brushed my tears from my cheeks and then helped me with my jeans. His tenderness set me off again. "Aw," he crooned, hugging me tightly. "It's all right but we really need to get going now so we can talk." He gave me the sweetest kiss that made my heart swell. I suspect, judging by his expression in the waning light, that he could sense everything going on within my mind. "Ready?" he asked softly, guiding me to his side.

I nodded but stopped him. "Thank you," I whispered.

He smiled. The brightest smile I'd ever received. "No, thank *you*." Another gentle kiss. "You're beautiful." And in that moment, for the first time in my life, I was. All because of him.

* * * * *

In no time at all we were back at my car. I hadn't pointed it out to him but he knew it anyway. It made me wonder just when, exactly, he'd started watching me. Had he

been there when I arrived and I hadn't noticed? I found that notion difficult to believe since he was most definitely noticeable even in the distracted state I'd been in before he approached me on the beach.

We were standing behind it, both of us unwilling to unclasp our hands even for the few seconds it took to get into the car. We were grinning like fools and after a minute we began to giggle. How silly we were!

He pulled me to him for a sloppy, wet kiss, which made us laugh even harder. "We could walk if you want. It's only a little way up the beach. But I thought you might prefer to have your car with you."

I considered it for a moment. "Yeah, you're right. I do. If that's okay?"

He kissed me again, more seriously this time. "Of course it's okay. I want you comfortable. Always. Now get in."

I know he meant for me to hop in the driver's side but I didn't. Without hesitation, I turned over my keys and got in the passenger's side. That gesture alone held great significance for me since it was one I never made. With anyone. Ever. I'd never owned the best of cars but they've always been very symbolic. To me, handing over my keys was the equivalent of handing over my freedom. I was definitely going to need to give that one some very serious thought along with everything else.

He slid in behind the wheel and turned to me. "Thank you," he said sincerely. The way he said it, his expression made it clear he understood what I'd just done. How was that possible?

With a kiss to my palm, we were off. The road wound a bit away from the shore but soon we were pulling into a drive that led to what appeared to be a huge house overlooking the beach. I couldn't wait to really see it in the daylight. He hadn't been kidding when he said we could easily have walked there. Still I was glad to have my car on hand, not that I was planning on going anywhere any time soon.

He grabbed my duffle without being asked and returned my keys before reclaiming my hand. My heart was in my throat as I crossed the threshold into his home. I felt, I

don't know what exactly it was, but one thing was for certain. It was bigger than anything I'd ever known before. By walking through the door I couldn't help feeling my life had been irrevocably altered.

Something must have showed on my face because he put down my bag and pulled me to him. "You okay?" he asked quietly.

I looked up and saw his eyes were full of concern. He was holding me like I was some fragile thing that might break. "I think so," I replied. I hated seeing the worry etched on his face so I stood on tiptoe, wrapped an arm around his neck and urged him to kiss me.

I meant it to be reassuring, but instantly the heat flared. Soon I was moaning. I wanted him again even though I'd just had him. Amazingly, I felt his cock swelling against my hip and knew he wanted me again too. His breathing was as labored as mine by the time the kiss ended.

"We really should talk," he said without any conviction.

"We will," I answered in kind. "Later?" I ran my hands up his chest, making sure my nails caught his nipples.

"Yeah. Later," he agreed. "Come with me."

He led me upstairs to his bedroom. I waited breathlessly while he lit candles around the room. I didn't need to wonder if he did this often. No, somehow I knew they'd been placed there in anticipation of my arrival.

When he returned to me and our eyes met, I could easily read the raw desire in his expression. I was positive mine matched. Again, I slid my palms over his torso, this time beneath his shirt. I pushed it up to his chin and he pulled it over his head. It was all I could do not to pant. His chest and arms were as powerful looking as they felt. Defined yet not bulky, which almost surprised me, considering his size. Plus he was so drool worthy I had trouble containing myself. As it was, I leaned forward and licked him.

Again, my boldness probably should have shocked me since I was never very aggressive when it came to sex, but there was just something about him that made me feel almost feral. My tongue circled his nipple, coaxing it to a stiff peak. I scraped it with my teeth and heard him gasp. His hand cupped the back of my head, holding me to his chest. I latched onto his flesh, sucking hard as he groaned. He guided my head and I switched sides, licking as I went. Mm, he tasted even better than he looked. His skin was a little salty, a little earthy and pure male. I couldn't wait to have his cock in my mouth again. This time I wasn't stopping as I had in the courtyard.

I reached for his zipper. He let me open his jeans and slide them from his hips. He gave me a minute to look him over but stopped me when I reached for him.

"Hang on. There's no rush now." With that he caught me for a searing kiss. It went on and on until I thought my knees would buckle. When we parted, he said, "Your turn." Then he stripped me.

I might have been embarrassed, being the object of such close scrutiny. In the past I would have been. But I saw nothing but appreciation in his hungry gaze. The way he was looking at me made me feel more desirable than ever before.

"As I said. You are beautiful." His voice was husky and deep.

I shivered and not from the chilled breeze wafting in from the open balcony doors. He reached out, his large palms covering my heavy breasts as his mouth found mine once again. I wrapped my arms around him and gripped his firm ass to pull him closer. His cock was stiff and hot between us as it pressed into my belly. God, I wanted him!

After a few moments, his hands left my chest to mimic mine. It was all I could do not to wrap my leg around his to try to climb him. I was so aroused I was shaking. The state of his thick shaft told me he was as well. Now that I'd had an unhindered look at it I was amazed I stretched around him. Without being so thoroughly soaked I probably would have been hurt. As it was, I knew there was no danger of that. I was wet and more than ready to have his cock plunging deep inside me once again.

He lifted his head and chuckled. Obviously he could tell what I was thinking. I wondered how that was possible and why it didn't upset me in the least, but only for a second because it was then that he bent to take my engorged nipple between his teeth. He bit down, startling me but immediately soothed the sting with his tongue. It was a yet another new experience for me and it excited me beyond belief.

I arched my back, offering myself to his mouth. He accepted by repeating the sensations, first on one side and then the other. He devoured my breasts endlessly, his strong arm wrapped around me, supporting me. Good thing because otherwise I might have melted. His attentions grew harsher. He bit more and sucked harder and I loved every bit of it. When I heard him growl it sent a spike of pleasure directly to my core. Had I been able to speak, I would have begged him to fuck me again as I had in the courtyard. As it was, my mind was having trouble focusing on anything but the feel of him marking me as his own. Yes, I knew without needing to look that I would bear evidence of his ministrations for many days to come. And oh, how that realization thrilled me!

He lifted his head, his expression intense as my eyes met his. With a wicked half-smile, he pushed on my shoulders, sending me sprawling on the bed behind me. I gasped, startled because it was about the last thing I expected. His husky laughter went straight through me, making my pussy physically ache for him.

Before I could react, he dropped to his knees between my thighs. He leaned in, inhaling deeply, scenting my desire. His face radiated with the same hunger I was feeling. He shifted closer, his broad shoulders spreading my knees wide, stretching me open, allowing him to see all. Again he inhaled. He smiled in delight. He was so close I could feel the warmth of his breath as well as the warmth of his body. He continued to study me to the point where I thought he would never touch me. The anticipation was excruciating yet exhilarating.

"Beautiful," he declared just before he moved and swiped me with his flattened tongue. I was so excited by then that I almost came right on the spot. He licked again on the outside of my folds. My God it was so good I couldn't wait for him to delve inside.

His hands slid beneath my ass and he pulled me to the very edge of the bed. He curved his fingers, lifting me slightly as his thumbs caressed the crease where my legs joined my body. The next time he licked he lengthened the scope, teasing my anus just enough to pique my curiosity. Another thing I hadn't done previously and one I knew I would be experiencing soon enough. I'd never even considered it before but he had me wanting it. It was then that I accepted there was very little I wouldn't do with this amazing man.

He pulled my lips apart and swirled his tongue through my nectar. "So sweet," he said. His tone notched my excitement level up even further. I felt like the most desired woman ever and at that moment, I believed I was.

"Please," I gasped. I thought I might die if he stopped just then.

"Sh," he whispered. "No rush, remember?"

"I know. But I want... I need..."

"What is it? Tell me," he urged, letting me feel his words.

"You. More. Please," I begged breathlessly. And needlessly. Without a doubt, I was certain he would provide everything I ever desired and things I had yet to discover.

"This?" he asked, dragging his tongue along my inner lips.

"Yes," I gasped.

"And this?" He pointed it, penetrating me.

"Yes!"

"And what about this?" The tip teased my anus.

"Oh yes!"

"Maybe this too?" It circled, then fluttered over my clit.

"Oh God, yes!"

His chuckle sounded almost sinister as he began to administer a combination of all of the above. My back arched as I writhed on the bed. His hands clamped tighter, holding me in place. As he latched onto my tingling bud, his thumb stroked through my wetness. He teased my pussy, sliding it inside, curling it to stroke me. Over and over he did the same.

I was so close but then he withdrew. I whimpered and would have begged but then I felt him pressing against my pucker. I went still and held my breath.

"Relax," he urged, moving his thumb back to my pussy, coating it with more of my freely flowing juices. "Breathe. I won't do anything you don't want me to."

"But I do. I just never did."

"Sh." He heard the distress mixed in with my desire. Probably the curiosity as well. "It's okay." He returned to my ass. "I'll go slowly." And he did until the tip was inside. "Okay?"

"More," I pleaded, attempting to impale myself.

He chuckled again, this time in pleasure. "As you desire," he said, pushing in fully. His mouth returned to my pussy, penetrating me there with his stiffened tongue as his thumb mimicked in my ass.

The feeling of being invaded vanished, replaced by newfound pleasure. I wanted more. I wanted to feel his cock there but wasn't ready to ask. As it turned out, I didn't need to.

"In time," he declared, smiling at me as he slipped two fingers into my needy pussy. He squeezed, pressing them with his thumb, stroking the thin barrier inside and sending sparks racing throughout.

"Oh my God," I panted, shivering in delight.

"Beautiful," he repeated yet again.

His mouth sought my clit. He sucked and licked while his hand continued to pump. I was nearly there and then his teeth caught my highly sensitized bud. I screamed out

my pleasure. As I came for what seemed like forever, I felt his tongue licking up my cream. Eventually the pounding of my heart subsided enough for me to hear his sighs of appreciation. He truly was enjoying himself, almost as much as I was. How amazing that was to me who had never received such thorough attention before.

When I finally stilled, he looked up at me with a satisfied smile. "Hey."

"Hey yourself."

"Don't move," he ordered.

I didn't. He disappeared for a few seconds then returned with a handful of condoms.

"Can you handle more?" he asked, stroking his already hard cock as he watched me watching him.

"Oh hell yes," I announced, much to his amusement. "Fuck me." I sat up, intending to reach for him but again, he stopped me. He urged me to the middle of the bed and joined me.

"Not this time," he responded.

I was confused but his kiss soon wiped away my ability to think.

"This time, we make love," he added.

His expression was so tender. His kisses, so sweet. His caresses, so gentle. The contrast in him filled me with such love, yes love, that I couldn't think. All I could do was feel.

I returned every touch, every kiss in kind. Each time our lips parted I saw that he was experiencing the same things I was. After an eternity, he covered his silky steel cock and moved between my thighs. I lifted my hips, meeting him, engulfing him in my drenched sheath. Our eyes remained locked, gazes never wavering as we took each other higher and higher. The friction between us was perfect. Our bodies soared as one. Even our breathing was in sync. It was like we'd been together forever. Amazing,

since we'd only met hours earlier. I couldn't begin to imagine how much better we'd be once we truly got to know each other.

He thrust into me, slowly and deliberately. I clenched, squeezing myself around him. On and on we went. He lowered his torso until we were in full contact. I savored his weight on me. His hands linked with mine, pulling my arms above my head with his covering mine. Our legs tangled.

"Come," he whispered.

And, simply because he desired it, I did. As soon as he felt my ripples, he did too. Ah, how exquisite it was, coming with him. All the while I quaked with pleasure, he continued to stroke, prolonging the moment for us both.

We separated but just for an instant in order for him to dispose of the condom. Then we were back in each other's arms and nothing had felt more right in my life.

Chapter Three

I fell asleep then. I didn't mean to. But it wasn't bad since he did as well. When I awoke I was still encased in his strong embrace. Mm, was it good. I felt safe and loved. And scared, once I let myself think about it.

Very carefully, without waking him, I extracted myself. I grabbed the quilt from the end of the bed and wrapped it around me before wandering out to the balcony. There, I discovered a captain's glass. It was gorgeous and I'm sure, very old. It made me wonder about the house because somehow I knew it had always been there. And that was so much easier than wondering about the man. So many questions. It really was time to talk just as soon as he woke up.

I didn't have long to wait. The next instant I felt him watching me. I turned and there he was, standing in the doorway in all his manly glory. My God, he was magnificent. I could easily have been distracted but for the concern showing on his features.

"You okay?" he asked quietly as if not wanting to break the hush of the night. Even the ocean seemed subdued.

"I don't know," I answered honestly.

"Why? What are you thinking? Talk to me."

"Well..." I couldn't help it. Even though it was a serious moment I couldn't help my eyes wandering over his body. Of course he noticed. He held out his hand and led me to the oversized chair I hadn't realized was there.

He sat, pulling me onto his lap. "Better?"

"Yeah. Thanks." I fell silent, collecting my thoughts. He waited patiently, holding me loosely, giving me all the time I needed. "I'm afraid." I was going to be open about everything. I knew it was too important not to be.

"Of me?"

"No. Yes. You. And all that's happening." I gulped nervously, feeling like a fool because I was suddenly tongue-tied and unsure of how to proceed.

"It's okay. I promise." He soothed gently.

"How are you so calm?" I blurted.

"Because I've been waiting for you for a long time and recently, expecting you."

Well, that was a hell of an answer and not one I anticipated. "Huh?"

His smile was illuminated by the light of the full moon. "Let me start at the beginning. Feel free to interrupt."

"Okay."

"There's a legend in my family associated with this house. You see, it's always been passed down to the unmarried sea captain."

"You're a captain?" Yes, I was being cowardly, latching on to the easiest thing.

"Kind of. On occasion I help out a friend who has a charter fishing business so even though I don't have my own boat I do technically qualify as a captain."

"All right. Go on."

"The legend says that before the house is his, the man will be alone. I mean really alone. Nothing even close to a serious relationship. Once it's in his possession, his one and only love will appear on the beach during a full moon and they'll never be apart again."

"It's full moon now."

"Yes. And you're here."

"You think I'm your true love?"

"I know you are." He paused. "I've sensed your restlessness for a long time but lately, it's been getting stronger. Am I right?"

"Um, yeah."

"I thought maybe you'd come last month but right before full moon, I knew you wouldn't. Did something happen to keep you there?"

I considered it for a moment and then nodded. "I was seriously thinking about leaving. I was going to but then my best friend from high school's mom died. She came back for the funeral and I wanted to be there for her."

"Was her mom your last tie to where you were?"

"Yes," I whispered, tears in my eyes as I shivered at his perceptiveness.

"So you thought about it for a month and what, four days ago decided to set out?"

"Yes," I confirmed breathlessly.

"I knew it. I sensed you were finally on the way. It was so damn nerve-racking, waiting for you, knowing you'd be here soon. I couldn't sleep for fear of missing you even though I knew you wouldn't get here until today. I felt you coming. I was out here watching for you and I was positive you were the one as soon as you pulled up."

"How can you be so sure?" I was fascinated. What a bizarre conversation this was becoming. How did he know these things? Could it all be true? Was this the reason why I ended up on this particular beach at that exact moment? Had he drawn me to him? Was it possible?

"I just knew. It's been this way in my family for generations. When my grandfather died he left me the house even though two of my cousins were also unattached at the time. I talked to them about it. I even offered to share the house with them. They turned me down flat. They didn't want to interfere with my destiny and Pop had chosen me. I'm not sure how but it's believed that the person who has the house always knows who it should go to and when that should happen. There've been times when the couple living here have moved out because it was time for the house to belong to the next pair."

"But how do they know?"

"Honestly, I have no idea. No one's ever really explained that part very well. It seems that if you live here you just know."

"So when the time comes it'll be up to you?"

"It'll be up to us. His will said that he and my grandmother both wanted me to have it. She only passed a few months before he did."

"Us."

"Yes, us. But we have years for that."

"Years."

He laughed and hugged me hard. "Relax. It'll all be okay. You'll see."

"How can you say that?" I asked, though it lacked conviction. I should have been much more upset than I was. Shouldn't I?

"Because I know. The house has never been wrong. It's not now." He paused for a quick kiss. "Tell me something, if you would."

"Okay."

"Have you ever in your life reacted to anyone the way you did me? Have you ever done anything remotely close to the things we did today with another perfect stranger?"

"No. Never."

"Me either. Not even close to tempted before."

"Oh. And you think it's the legend coming true?"

"How else would you explain it?"

"We lost our minds?"

He chuckled. "Not hardly. But seriously. Does it feel like that to you?"

I thought about it for a few minutes. "No," I replied in a small voice.

He tipped my chin for a kiss. "I know this must all sound a little overwhelming to you now. But, if you just give it some time so you can get used to the idea—"

"Oh and then what? We live happily ever after until it's time to pass on the house?" I don't know what was wrong with me, snapping at him like that. He didn't respond instantly so I felt I had to apologize. "I'm sorry."

"Sh. Don't be. Please. It's a lot to take in all at once especially on top of the highly charged day we had. I've known this happens in my family my entire life and I'm still pretty damn amazed you're actually here. I'm so impressed that you don't think I'm completely insane. Or do you and you're just hiding it well?"

I laughed. I couldn't help it. I had to. I knew he was trying to tease to lighten the moment but also seriously asking. He might believe in the legend of the house but he wasn't as certain about me as he was trying to seem. Or maybe he was sure, but just not sure of my reaction. Well, that made two of us. Part of me said I should grab my clothes and get the hell out of there. A very small part. The rest of me was beginning to hope against hope that the whole thing was true and I was finally where I belonged. That I had ended up exactly where I was supposed to be. That, after all the years of searching, I had somehow, against the odds, found home.

"Calm down. I don't think you're at all crazy."

"So you'll stay?"

Stay? I knew he was asking more than just that. I looked at him and could read the nervous expectation he was feeling. I took a deep breath and nodded. "Yes, I'll stay."

About the Author

For Barbara Huffert, reading has always been a favorite pastime. A few years ago, she started her first novel after one of the friends she trades books with challenged her to write something better than the last book they read. Barbara's been writing ever since. With her opinionated cats sprawled wherever is most inconvenient, she now spends her time happily wandering through the worlds of her characters.

Barbara welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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