



*Sexing Up*  
The Spy

Tina Holland

# *Sexing up the Spy*

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*Resplendence Publishing, LLC*

<http://www.resplendencepublishing.com>

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Edgewater, Florida, 32132

Sexing Up the Spy

Copyright © 2010, Tina Holland

Edited by Chantal Depp

Cover art by Chel Hickerty

Electronic format ISBN: 978-1-60735-126-9

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Electronic release: February 2010

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*For my friend, Lyn Armstrong. Thanks for introducing me to Resplendence  
and for traveling the publishing journey with me. It just wouldn't be the same  
without you. – Tina*

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## *Chapter One*

“You need more sex!”

“What do you mean?” Jake Stone listened to his agent, Mark Loewe. *What relevance could his sex life possibly have on his Killer spy series?*

“Our demographics show you are picking up more female readers.”

“That’s great,” Jake admitted. He wanted to branch out beyond his hard-core fans.

“It also means they want Killer West to have some romance, a woman in his life, or at the very least, some goddamn sex.”

Jake remained clueless how to make his spy have a sexual relationship. No experience of his own in recent history was worthy of his spy, Killer. “I’m not sure where to start.”

“No problem. I’ve arranged for you to meet with Lexi Andrews, a client of mine. She writes erotic romance. She’s selling off the shelves right now.”

“Mark, I’m sure I can handle this.” He didn’t need some mushy romance writer softening Killer’s character.

“I’m sure the two of you will come up with something. Lexi has your number. She’ll be calling you.”

“Great.” Jake rose from his chair. He had to move. Once Mark set his mind to something, there was no changing it. Jake didn’t even try.

“Okay. We have a plan of action... Finish the manuscript and Lexi can ghostwrite a little sex for you. Talk to you later, Jake.”

“Sure.”

“Hey Jake, don’t be put off by Lexi’s appearance. She knows what she’s doing.” Mark hung up.

What did Mark mean by Lexi's appearance? She was without a doubt some mousey thing. Jake found most writers, he included, preferred, hiding behind computers and the occasional typewriter instead of hogging the limelight. Jake still lived in Fargo, his hometown, with no intentions of moving. His studio apartment suited him well enough. Jake made good money and was content. The Killer Spy series was still earning him his keep and he wasn't sure new fans were necessary.

Jake was pretty pissed Mark thrust recent star Lexi into his lap. He was halfway through the current Killer book and now he needed to re-write entire scenes. Maybe Jake could let Lexi think he'd take whatever advice she offered and work on his own. The idea had merit. Who knows, maybe he could intimidate her? It wasn't his style to use aggressive tactics but they were talking about his character here. He didn't need some romance diva-making Killer all sensitive and sappy.

His pacing got faster as he strode back and forth across his apartment. The phone rang again, Jake looked at the caller I.D. and didn't recognize the number and no name was listed.

"Hello," Jake rumbled into the phone.

"Hi. I'm looking for Mr. Stone," the feminine voice purred into his ear.

"This is he."

"Mr. Stone. This is Lexi Andrews. I've spoken with Mark Loewe. He told me about your situation."

"Situation?" It sounded like a major problem.

"You need me for sex."

Jake wasn't sure how to respond to the lyrical and husky voice. He remembered the mousy librarian in his head. Spectacles, dull hair, baggy clothes, "I don't need you for sex. Maybe just a few pointers."

"Whatever you're comfortable with."

"Fine." Damn the woman for being agreeable.

"When would you like to meet?"

"Why can't we do this over the phone?" He did not want to deal with her.

"We can, but I'll get a better idea for the passion you have if we meet in person and talk."

"About Killer West, my character." Jake needed to remind himself they were meeting

for his character. His mind wandered to blonde bombshell with big boobs at the sound of her voice.

“Of course. I don’t know you well enough to understand just what you’ll require of me.”

Jake swallowed.

“When would you like to meet?” She repeated the same glaring question.

“I’m pretty open.” He gritted out between clenched teeth.

“Well, I have a prior commitment tonight, but how about tomorrow?”

“Nope. I’m booked.” Jake planned to use every stall tactic available.

“Thursday?”

“No, problems there, too. And you might as well forget about the weekend, I’m going out of town.”

“Next week, then?”

“Sorry big project at the Monday through Friday job.” He didn’t have a job during the week, but it seemed plausible.

“I’m starting to think you’re avoiding me, Mr. Stone,” she huffed.

Jake didn’t want it to get back to Mark he was being inflexible though. “Not at all. We can meet a week from tonight. I’ll be freed up by then.” *And with any luck, you’ll forget about this.*

“You’re sure there’s nothing sooner?” she asked.

“Nope. It’s too bad you’re unavailable, tonight was the one night I did have open.” He sighed in false exasperation.

“Then we’ll meet tonight.”

“You don’t need to cancel your plans.”

“It’s fine. I can squeeze you in. Does ten o’clock work for you?”

“Um, sure.”

“That’s great. I can put in an appearance and meet you. Do you know where The Starving Artist is?”

“Of course.” The Starving Artist was a local coffee house/bookstore known for being an artist hangout.

“Should we meet there?”



“Fine.”

“Great, I look forward to seeing you then.” The excitement in her voice made him look forward to it as well.

Jake spent the remainder of the afternoon going through his notes. If he had to meet with the repressed librarian, he needed be prepared. He decided to try his hand at a sex-scene, but fell short, not being able to work past the kiss. The three pathetic lines stared back at him on the screen. Jake admitted he needed a few pointers, but just enough to get through the first sex scene, and then he could handle it on his own.

When Jake looked at the clock, it was nine-seventeen. “Damn.” Jake rubbed his jaw-line; he needed a shower and shave before meeting with Lexi Andrews.

\* \* \* \*

Jake considered himself lucky that Lexi was late. Even though The Starving Artist was three blocks away from his studio apartment, he hated to drive. His walk was brisk and he arrived on time.

Jake watched each person enter the café. He was sure he spotted his rendezvous when a small middle-aged lady with brown hair and glasses walked in. She clutched a handbag in her hands as if her very life depended on it. The woman wore a long floral print skirt and a high-necked white shirt with sleeves covered to her wrists. No wonder Mark commented on her appearance. He found it difficult envisioning a little old lady writing anything sexual. She looked over at his table and waved. He waived back. She turned and walked away from him.

“What the—” Jake mumbled. He didn’t come here to pursue some biddy.

“I hear you need a little sex,” a voice whispered in his ear.

The hair on Jake’s neck stood on end as recognition dawned. He turned and stared at the woman who spoke. “Lexi?”

“Yep.”

Nothing prepared him for his immediate reaction. She was stunning. Chocolate hair with gold highlights framed her delicately carved face while large green eyes stared at him. He grew hard. He looked down the length of her. She wore a black leather bustier with ties down the front, a matching mini-skirt, fishnet stockings and thigh-high leather boots. He swallowed hard. The teddy bear coffee mug in her hand that read, ‘Bear necessities’ seemed out of place.

“You okay?” she patted his shoulder.

Her touch burned him. Jake very much wanted the spark she ignited. He nodded.

“I didn’t mean to startle you. I was just having a bit of fun.” She removed her hand before sitting in the lounge chair across the table.

His voice disappeared in his parched mouth.

“Sorry I’m late. I had this party to go to.”

“What kind of party?” He found the capability of speech.

“It was a Bondage themed party, to help a friend of mine celebrate the sale of her first book”

“Is that what you write?” What the hell was Mark thinking?

“Not at all.” She smiled.

“Oh.” He was relieved.

“You sound disappointed.”

“Just taken aback, thought maybe you dressed like this all the time.”

She waved her hand at him and leaned back laughing. He watched, amazed the cup of coffee didn’t splash over the sides.

“Now I know you’re disappointed. Sorry, I more often than not spend my day working in jammies.”

“Me too.” It was true.

“Do you want to talk a little or just get right to the sex?”

“Sex, please.” Jake mentally smacked himself. He said the first thing that popped into his mouth. He was sure Lexi considered him an idiot.

*Yummy* hummed in Lexi’s head when she saw Jake Stone sitting in a lounge chair watching the Starving Artist entrance. The look of eagerness as striking women entered the store, walked passed his table and followed by frustration was comical. She’d planned to approach from behind when Mrs. Tiedemann spotted her and waved. When Jake waved back, she realized he thought Mrs. Tiedemann was Lexi Andrews. Mrs. Tiedemann was the owner of Whimsy’s, a local lingerie store where an erotic book club meant once a month.

Lexi fixed her eyes in appreciation as blond hair reminding her of a surfer fell around his face. Jake’s intense features hinted at certain sensuality though he appeared appalled by what he’d said.

“That’s okay, Jake, can I call you Jake?”

He nodded.

“We all like a little sex from time to time.” Lexi giggled as Jake’s dark brown eyes looked somewhat glazed.

“I meant the book.” He faltered.

“So did I. Whatever did you think I meant, Jake?”

He shifted in his chair before speaking, “You’re not what I expected.”

“You expected Mrs. Tiedemann.”

“Who?”

“The woman you waved at. I bet you thought I’d be tedious; I’m sure you pictured a librarian or even a hermit. Are you a hermit, Jake?”

“Of course not.”

She’d bet money he was. He looked uncomfortable, “She owns a lingerie store.”

“Who?”

“Mrs. Tiedemann.”

“What does she have to do with anything?”

“Nothing. Just wanted to point out that you shouldn’t judge a book by its appearance.”

“That’s what people do in our business, Miss Andrews.” He smiled. It melted Lexi to her toes and sent a flush of heat to her loins.

“Touché,” It was a shame this needed to stay professional. Lexi wanted to evaluate Jake on a few things. “Speaking of business, did you bring your manuscript?”

“Damn. I knew I forgot something.”

“Well, that’s okay. We can just talk about what you want to work in and how.” Lexi settled back into her chair, wrapping both hands around her cup of java.

“I’d like you to look at it. I tried penning some stuff. I’m just not sure where to go with it. I can run home and get it.”

“No. That’s not necessary I don’t want you to drive all the way home.”

“I walked over, it’s not far.”

“Oh? Well I’ll walk with you, and then I don’t have to wait.” A chance to see where Jake Stone lived, breathed and slept was a real opportunity to get a feel for the man. Maybe even feel the man. *Calm down girl, he hasn’t agreed to anything, yet.*

He seemed to consider her words. “Um okay.”

Lexi downed her cup of coffee and stood up. “Let’s go.”

The walk over to Jake’s apartment was brief. Lexi slowed down a bit to get a look at his behind when he strode out in front of her. Damn, Jake was a fine looking specimen, broad shoulders, well-toned arms and a great ass to boot. Yummy. When Jake ushered her into his apartment, she’d expected something sterile, like most bachelor pads. Instead, café-au-lait walls and dark mission style furniture greeted her.

“Wow.”

“Like it?”

“And stunned.”

“Judging a book by its cover Miss Andrews?”

“Call me Lexi and not you in particular, but the general category you fall into.”

“You’ll excuse me if that made no sense at all.”

“I meant your sex.” Lexi looked down the hall wondering what his bedroom looked like.

“You have a one-track mind don’t you Miss An—Lexi.”

“You almost got it that time and as far as the sex, what can I say? It’s what I write.” She felt heat climbing along her collarbone.

His dimples showed when he laughed. Lexi’s knees weakened, “Where’s this manuscript?” She needed to concentrate on something tangible or she would maul him.

“Oh.” He moved across the room to a dark chestnut desk to grab a few papers. “You need to just read the last few pages.”

Lexi grasped the pages and skimmed through his story until she reached the last page.

Killer needed information, and soon. Natasha was an attractive woman. Too attractive. He took her into his arms. She didn’t protest. He bent his lips down and kissed her. She parted her lips and he plunged his tongue inside. She—

“What did she do?” Lexi asked flipping through the papers.

“I don’t know. I stared at the screen for a good half-hour trying to figure out what to do with her.”

“Do you stay in his point-of-view through most of the book?”

“Yeah.”

“How does he feel about kissing her?”

“What do you mean?”

“What’s his motivation?”

“He needs information.”

“Does kissing her get information?”

“I don’t know.” Jake shrugged his shoulders.

“Why is he kissing her?” Lexi rephrased the question, trying to figure out this character and the man who wrote him.

“Because I need to add sex.” He responded as if she interrogated him on a witness stand.

“Oh. No.” Lexi sat down on the brown leather and wood sofa, put her hand to her forehead and looked at Jake. “I’m sorry Jake.” She never once considered he might not want to change his character.

“What for?”

“Mark foisted me on you, didn’t he?”

Jake didn’t say anything.

“He did. Damn him.”

“It’s no big deal.” Jake shrugged his shoulders.

“Jake, I’m sorry. I thought you wanted to transform Killer, to let readers see another side to him.” She continued when Jake didn’t speak, “When Mark mentioned your growing female readership, and I told him if you were ever looking to branch the character in another direction I’d be willing to help. I’m a huge fan of your Killer West books.” She was a complete heel. “I thought you wanted this.”

“I—”

She cut him off, shock and surprise were written on his face, “its okay, I understand and again I apologize. I’m gonna head back to the café.” She needed to leave and soon. She grabbed her purse and made a beeline for the nearest exit.

Before she reached the door, Jake grabbed her arm and turned her around. Lexi expected him to kiss her as she’d seen in a million movies. He didn’t.

“Lexi.”

She remained silent.

“You’re a fan?”

“I’ve been reading you for three years.” That’s what he wanted? What happened to her magical movie kiss?

“I’ve been published for five.”

“I’m a late starter.”

“Do you think you can help?”

“Yes, but I don’t want you feeling like we have to do this. I don’t want to intrude on personal space or wreak havoc on your creative process.”

He took her hand and guided her back to the green sofa, “Lexi, I thought I’d have to change Killer but I’d like to see him grow too.”

“Oh.”

“So what do I need to do?”

Lexi considered one thing, “Kiss me.”

## *Chapter Two*

“Why?” Jake wanted nothing more than kiss Lexi, she was damn sexy. Part of him needed to know why she asked him to plant one on her.

“I think in order for Killer to be three dimensional we should experiment.”

“By kissing?” He was astonished by the words coming out of his mouth.

“Well, you want information from me, don’t know me well, it’s similar.”

“You’re not a spy.”

“I kut pretend to be vun meester Stone.”

Jake chuckled when Lexi faked a Russian accent, “I’m just not sure it’s a good idea.”

“Oh,” Lexi looked down at her feet, as if finding them fascinating, “I didn’t think you might...not—” she stammered, “um...well that is to say...never mind.”

Jake stared at her, mystified but wanting her nonetheless. “Lexi, what are you trying to say? Just spit it out.”

“I didn’t realize you weren’t attracted to me!” A look of embarrassment passed over her face.

Jake enveloped her in his arms and lowered his lips to her own. He inhaled. Her perfume reminded him of flowers on a beach. He ran his tongue over her bottom lip beckoning her to open to him. When she did, Jake delved into her mouth letting his tongue mingle with hers. His arms massaged her shoulders as he lowered her back onto the sofa.

Lexi moaned. Damn! Jake was a good kisser. She inhaled his masculine aroma as his weight fell over her. Lexi adjusted her legs and he nestled between them. She felt the hard bulge in his pants. Attraction wasn’t the problem. Jake deepened the kiss and Lexi arched up

against him.

Jake's hands pushed her hips back into the couch, "Wait." His voice was husky against her swollen lips, "I need to touch you."

He ran his left hand up her side until it found the curve of her breast. A restrained gasp escaped her throat.

"Lexi." His russet eyes bore into hers, "I find you very attractive."

Lexi twined her hands around his neck. "Jake," she whispered. "I find you very attractive." She arched back up against his erection.

Jake claimed her lips again as he cupped her leather-clad breast.

Lexi whimpered.

Jake molested her nipple through the leather, causing it to peak.

"Oh Jake." Her breast ached, yet she didn't want him to stop.

"Do you like that?" He paused as if unsure what she needed.

"What do you think? Continue...please," she implored.

Jake rolled the leather material around her sensitive bud between his thumb and forefinger. His right hand held her face as he traced a fingertip along her jaw line. He grasped her head and rolled, placing himself beneath her.

It was a fancy trick, Lexi commented, "Damn Jake, you've got the moves of a ladies man. Killer will be easy to write."

He blushed at her comment. Lexi leaned down kissing him to soften the blow. He removed his hand from her breast to place both hands around her neck. His tender fingertips pressed at the back of her neck and worked their way down her shoulders and arms as if she were a piano.

Lexi's hands feathered over his cotton-clad chest. She toyed with the idea of unbuttoning the shirt to see what lay underneath.

When Jake pressed her hips down against his rock-hard masculinity, she sighed. Lexi moved her hips in rhythm, meeting his dry thrusts.

"Lexi, sit up, please."

Lexi possessed no desire to leave the cocoon they formed. She lifted her eyes toward his face questioning, even as she did his bidding.

"We need to get naked."



His words hit Lexi like a douse of cold water. The reality of how far she'd let him go was unnerving and made Lexi wary. She'd managed to let this "kiss" experiment get out of hand. Now she'd have to cool the chemistry down, and fast, "Jake, I can't."

"What?"

"I'm sorry." Lexi found it difficult to rise off the Adonis-like Jake, but did it nonetheless. "I never meant to let it get this far and it's just that..."

He glared at her with golden eyes of fortitude.

"Don't look at me like that! I didn't mean to get you all hot and bothered." She defended herself.

His face relaxed a little, "Look, I'm frustrated. I was the only interested party."

"Interested party! I'd hate to correct you, Mr. Stone, but my erect nipples and damp panties beg to differ."

Jake smiled.

"If you gloat I'll throw something at you."

His smile grew wider.

"Ugh!" She stalked off down the hall.

"Where are you going?"

She turned on her heel to find him right behind her. "Where's your bathroom?"

"Next left."

Lexi found the door with no trouble and closed it behind her. She needed to collect her thoughts and herself. She took note of her appearance in the full-length mirror, behind the bathroom door. Her brown hair was tousled and her skirt was askew. Her ruby red lipstick was long gone, replaced by the swollen glow of kissing. Lexi straightened up her clothes, washed her hands and passed her fingers through her tresses trying to calm the strands. She took another assessment placing her hands on the knob but jumped back at the loud knock on the bathroom door.

"Lexi, are you okay?"

"I'm fine. I just need a minute."

"Okay."

She leaned her ear up against the door listening for retreating footsteps. She heard nothing. Lexi braced herself and wasn't surprised to see Jake standing right outside. "I need to

leave.”

“I didn’t mean to—” Jake started.

“Jake, don’t! This is a mess of my own making and nothing a cold shower won’t fix.”

“For me or you?”

“Both.” She smiled at him. “I meant it to be just a kiss. I didn’t intend more.”

“Why can’t it?”

“What do you mean?” her curiosity overwhelmed the good sense she possessed to keep her mouth shut.

“Why can’t we experiment beyond the kissing?”

“For your book?”

“Yes.”

Lexi leaned against the door jam and sighed. It was her idea, but to have her own words thrown back sounded clinical. It wasn’t like she wanted Jake Stone to profess undying love; it was just...well, complicated. *Uncomplicate things*, a little voice whispered.

“Jake, I think we need a few rules.”

Jake rolled his dark eyes at her.

“What was that for?”

“Rules just make matters worse.”

“Rules make sure no one gets hurt,” she responded defensively.

“Like you.”

“You too.” *Why was he fighting her on this?*

“Okay, let’s hear these rules.”

Jake didn’t want to listen to a set of laws. He wanted to kiss Lexi more, run his hands through her locks and maybe, just maybe, get her undressed. His cock twitched in his khakis.

“Rule number one—one step at a time.”

“What does that mean?” Jake didn’t recall skipping a step.

“It means we make a plan to experiment on whatever and then it stops. No deviation from the plan.”

“I think that’s a stupid rule.” *No nookie tonight*, Jake shook his head with regret.

“Why?” Lexi tapped her boot on the floor.

“Because that’s not realistic, and it doesn’t help me.”

“Or your libido,” she muttered.

“No, I mean, in order to understand everything I need to experience everything.”

“What if I don’t want to?”

“Lexi, I’d never make you do anything you didn’t want to. We stopped just now didn’t we?”

She had the good grace to blush.

God, his pants were tight. “Lord knows I’d like it to go a lot further, but you always have the right to say no.”

Her green eyes peeked up at him through her bangs. “Each individual has the right to say no. Sound fair?”

“I can’t imagine saying no to anything if you bring it.”

“You never know. I might push outside your comfort zone.”

Jake found her hard to believe, but he didn’t press her. Jake sought what Lexi brought to the table. She was smart, funny and sexy as all hell.

“Okay, we agree on the first rule.”

“Yep.” Her policy-making was painless.

“The second rule. Do you want to make the second one?”

Jake thought for a moment and inspiration struck. “Research shouldn’t be limited to the bedroom.”

“What do you mean? You want to have sex on the dining room table?”

He laughed. “No, but I like your idea better. I mean I find inspiration for stuff at the weirdest locations, art galleries, museums, that sort of thing.”

“Are we talking voyeurism here?”

“Lexi, I love how your mind goes to the gutter, but no, I’d like to spend time with you. It might help me with Killer’s growth. I’d like to bounce plots and ideas off you. I’d like you to contribute more than sex to my book.”

“Oh.” She seemed puzzled.

“Okay?” Jake was unsure how to gauge her reaction.

“Yeah, it’s an okay rule. I have just two more.”

“Which are?”

“We should be discreet.”

“What the hell difference does that make?”

“Jake, if I go out with you at some point someone will recognize one of us.”

“What is your point?”

“Don’t your readers have inquiring minds?”

“The majority of my readers don’t know where I live except I’m from the Midwest, and unless they’ve attended a book signing they’d have no idea what I look like.”

“I knew.”

“Because of Mark.”

“Because I researched you. Be warned, the local bookstores know what you look like. The Killer series is picking up steam and everyone wants access to the home town boy made good.”

Jake was flattered Lexi thought well of him, “What about you? I hear you’re ‘flying off the shelves’ as Mark pointed out.”

“That’s a different story. Because of what I write, I’m like the redheaded stepchild. Besides, being a military brat born in Lexington, Kentucky doesn’t help me much. I have no doubt every town I set foot in would claim me if I wrote mainstream or the next break out novel.”

“Your dad was in the military?”

“Yep. Colonel Andrews retired about ten years ago, although he still has his security clearance.”

“Colonel. Wow. Lexi, you might be more help than I thought.” Jake’s head rolled with questions he could ask a retired Colonel.

“How?”

“Well, I’d love to meet your dad, get some real insight into the military equipment, that sort of thing.” He leaned forward.

“Whoa! Back up the train, you are not meeting the Colonel.” Lexi held up her hands.

“Why not?”

“You just aren’t.” She crossed her arms over her chest.

“Should we add ‘no meeting parents’ as a rule?” He grinned as an outline of exasperation crossed her face.

“I believe that’s covered under being discreet.” Her emerald eyes flashed.

“And the last rule?”

“Since we’ll be spending a lot of time together, if either of us feels there is emotional involvement, the experiment is over.”

“Um, okay.”

“What?” she asked pointedly.

“I think you’re putting the cart before the horse here.”

“I don’t think so, but feel free to disagree.”

“It’s fine.” Jeez, why did she get serious on him?

“I think that’s enough for tonight, Jake.”

“Are you sure?” He leaned in hoping to kiss Lexi once more.

He got his wish; she tilted her head and let his lips caress hers. She ran her tongue over his lips before lifting her head, “Good night, Jake.”

“Lexi.”

“Bye.” She grabbed her purse and dashed out of his apartment.

By the time he’d gotten down to the street, Lexi was gone. “Call me! I want you to make it home safe!” Jake shouted into the night.

## *Chapter Three*

Lexi no sooner set her keys on the hook inside her door when the phone rang like a beacon. She dashed to the small table by her sofa. “Jake, I’m home and fine. Put your cock back to bed.”

“Baby, my cock is fine but maybe I’ll let him stay up for a bit. Shoot, you sure know how to get a guy’s boxers tight don’tcha?” Buck Caulfield drawled on the other end of the line.

Lexi didn’t contain her sigh of provocation, “Buck Caulfield! You got some nerve callin’ here this damn late.”

Lexi and Buck met when the Colonel was stationed outside Houston. Buck’s mom, Abigail, died a few months after the Andrews family moved. Lexi’s own mother doted on Abigail’s three orphaned sons, Buck, Dallas and Austin.

“I miss you darlin’.”

“That may well be but, sheesh, it’s like, one A-M.” It was hard to stay mad at a cowboy as smooth as Buck.

“I know, same time zone, sweetie.”

Lexi pictured the six-foot cowboy crossing his long legs and leaning back in a chair.

“Don’t pull that Texas good old boy shit on me.” She was irked, as usual when he was calm.

“That’s hardly fair Lex, I’m Texan and you know I’m a good boy,”

“Ugh!” Lexi didn’t argue with him. He’d always been good to her. Well except for the time she caught him with cheerleader, Susan Smith, and Buck had looked up ever so casual and said, ‘Lexi-girl, I think we’re broke up.’

“Who’s Jake?” Buck’s voice cut into her memories.

“None of your damn business.” Crap! She forgot Jake’s name was mentioned.

“I’m makin’ it my business.” She recognized that curious tone.

“A friend of mine.”

“Sounds like more than a friend if you know his anatomy should be in bed.”

“What do you want, Buck?” Lexi pushed his questions off.

“I’m comin’ for a visit.”

“When?” Lexi stilled the panic in her voice.

“Getting on the plane in a couple hours.”

“The hell you are.”

“I love how you get that southern drawl when you’re all upset.”

Lexi imagined him grinning, “Why?”

“I thought I’d stop in, see the Colonel and maybe ask for your hand.”

“Whatever.” A week after the Susan Smith incident Dallas ratted Buck out to the Colonel, who, promptly told Buck to start running while he loaded a shotgun. Buzz Caulfield had called asking why his boy’s ass was peppered full of pellets. When the Colonel told him, Buzz simply yelled, ‘Boy, you better start running again.’ Buck healed up after about a week and came knocking and asking for Lexi’s hand. The Colonel slammed the door and told him unless he acquired a taste for ‘Buckshot’, he’d better not come back around.

“Somebody needs to make an honorable woman out of you. It’s obvious you’re starved for male attention, writing girl-porn.”

“Get Fucked, Buck!” He knew better than to make fun of her writing, “Them are fightin’ words.”

Buck laughed in guffaws.

“Why do you insist on making more between us than there is, Buck?” Lexi no longer wondered why she put up with the cowboy’s antics. She did it because he was her friend.

“Because, woman, you gave yourself to me!” He spoke as if it was the answer and solved everything.

“Because, man, I’d, like, known you all my ‘effin life and figured if anybody should have my cherry it should be a Good Ole’ Texan like yourself.” It was a true statement. Her heart was no longer involved with the cowboy even if her libido was from time to time.

“Shoot Lexi-girl, how can a man resist when you get to talkin’ sweet?”

“Well you come and say ‘hi’ to the Colonel. He ain’t too fond of you anyway.” The marriage proposition seemed an on-going ritual between the Colonel and Buck. Although it was nowhere near as serious. Firearms were no longer involved.

“Pa’s got me meeting with his broker up there.” His tone switched from playful to serious.

“Oh.” Her breath came out in a whoosh of relief.

“Aww Lexi-girl, I was just playin’ you. I do want to meet this Jake who has your knickers knotted up though. Gotta run baby, we’re loadin’.”

Lexi sighed as the phone clicked. She did not need Buck coming into her life and mixing her all up. He was sexy, wild and damn unreliable. Not like Jake. Whoa Girl! Where did that come from? It scared her more than a little. Lexi didn’t need reliable. If she did, Jake fit the bill. He was attractive, smart and her knickers were knotted up thinking about him. When he mentioned museums and art galleries, Lexi sensed he enjoyed those places. And Buck, well, he went hoping it led the roundabout way to a girl’s bedroom.

Lexi gave in to temptation a few times and slept with the laid-back cowboy, but she was smart enough to realize nothing would ever come of it. Unlike Jake. Jake’s kisses were addictive. Lexi was positive the sex would be even better.

“Omigod.” She dialed Jake’s number.

“Hello.”

“Jake. Lexi. I’m home.”

“It’s been like an hour, everything okay?” He sounded sleepy

“Yeah. Sorry, a friend called, didn’t mean to make you worry.”

“I wasn’t sure you heard me shout down the street.”

“Oh, I heard you.” She smiled remembering his voice in the night.

“Lexi, you wan to hit the museum tomorrow?”

“That sounds okay, what time?”

“Maybe in the afternoon, we can have lunch together.”

“Okay. Should I meet you at your place around noon?”

“No, I’ll pick you up. Give me your address.”

Lexi gave him her address and told Jake she needed some sleep. After she hung up the phone, she went to work picking up paper explosions around her house. Next, she tackled the



dusting and put some dishes in the dishwasher. She decided to put her feet up on the edge of the sofa, and grabbed the afghan her mother made for her last birthday while the dishes were washing, maybe a short cat nap...

\* \* \* \*

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

DING-DONG! DING-DONG!

“Lexi, are you in there!” A muffled voice came through her dreams. Lexi’s head screamed and she was damn uncomfortable, “Go away,” Who was at the door this late? Sounded like Jake, “Jake, Come back tomorrow!” She shouted back. Lexi rolled over. The sun blinded her. Oh, crap! Sunlight!

She shot up like a springboard.

“I’ll be right there!” She fell to the floor with a loud thud trying to run to the door. While she slept, Lexi’s usual thrashing tangled her up in the afghan. “Are you okay?” Jake called from the other side.

“Fine.” She started to pull the afghan off her feet, but the knots were stuck through her fishnets. Great, just great. She managed to raise herself up and shuffle to the door like a penguin. She threw the door open, but the action propelled her forward. Lexi lost her balance and collapsed once again.

Jake looked down at Lexi sprawled on the floor, “Are you alright?” he lowered himself to help Lexi get to her feet.

“Sorry, I’m all tangled. The knots of the afghan got caught up in my fishnets.”

“Why are you still wearing last night’s clothes?”

Lexi turned red, “I wanted to get some cleaning done before you came over. Guess I fell asleep.” She teetered forward, while motioning her hand around the house. Jake caught her along her back and under her knees, lifting her against his chest.

“Where do you want to go?”

“The bedroom.”

“Lexi, I do love your line of thought.” He winked at her.

“I need to shower and change, of course,” she hit his chest playfully, “Go that way,” Lexi pointed to the opposite wall. Jake started in the direction, “Turn right.”

Jake took in the surroundings of the room, soft green walls, dark brown wood furniture and sheer off-white curtains. It suited Lexi and more to the point, him. He could seduce her in this room. At least it wasn't pink with stuffed animals everywhere. He shuddered remembering his first time with his high-school sweetheart, Fran Something. Jake never was good at names.

"Do you need anything else?" Jake asked with anticipation, depositing Lexi on the bed.

"I don't think so."

"Alright I'll go wait in the living room."

"Okay."

Jake no sooner closed the door than a loud THUMP came from the other side of it, "Are you okay?" he peeked back into Lexi's bedroom.

Lexi was face-first on the floor trying to get back up. She looked like a bright caterpillar inching its way along the wooden floor. "It seems I need help taking off these stockings," she said without even looking up.

Jake smiled wide. "My pleasure." He helped Lexi back up onto the bed and looked into her sea-green eyes. She seemed to stare at him mesmerized, mouth agape. Lexi darted her pink tongue out to lick her lips. Jake let out a guttural exhale.

"The afghan," she spoke at last.

"Of course." Jake looked down at her black stockings and wondered how to accomplish the task at hand without seducing Lexi. Why not seduce her? It was good practice, and really, what was the worst that could happen? She might say 'no'. Jake could live with a 'no'. He wondered if he would regret not touching her.

Jake ran his hand up the inside of Lexi's thigh. He paused at her sharp intake of breath, "I need to find the waist band."

She gulped loud, "Sure."

When his hands skimmed along her feminine mound, Lexi sighed. He reached the top and put his hands on either side of her hips.

"Lay back, Lexi."

She complied. In one smooth motion, the fishnets glided over her hips and thighs, but stopped at her knees. Jake took the opportunity to touch Lexi's exposed skin. She shivered as his fingers tickled along her legs. He pulled one stocking down and off her foot. When he repeated with the other leg, Jake parted her thighs and pressed a kiss to her knee.

“What are you doing?” Lexi sat up.

“Exploring.” Jake whispered against her soft skin. He darted his tongue out and ran it up her thigh. “Do you want me to stop?”

“Um. I don’t think this is wise.”

“Do you want me to stop?” He kissed the inside of her other knee and planted tiny kisses against her inner thigh working his way up to the juncture.

Lexi worried her lip between her teeth, “No.”

“Relax, Lexi.” Jake kissed along her thigh until he drew closer to her black thong. He traced his fingers along the lace edge, his knuckles brushing against her silk-covered sex. Jake pressed his knuckles into the damp fabric, “You’re wet, my dear.”

“I know.” She panted.

Jake leaned down and pressed a butterfly kiss to her abdomen, “Should we take these off?”

“Yes.” Lexi answered.

Jake heard a throat clear and swung his head toward the doorway. Outlined in the frame stood a tall man in a cowboy hat who spoke up, “You must be Jake.”

## *Chapter Four*

Of all the times for Buck to show up, now was not the most convenient.

“Buck, go!” Lexi commanded Buck the same way she used to tell Schnitzee, her family’s German Shepard, to do her business.

“Why? I’m admiring the view. I’d like to see if surfer-boy has any talent.”

“Get out!” Lexi rose from the bed, she swayed as much from the image of having Buck watch as well as still having one foot tangled. Jake caught her with ease and got right up with her. Jake smoothed her skirt down over her hips, so she didn’t reveal quite as much.

Buck put his hands up in surrender, “Okay, I’m goin’. I’ll be down the hall if you need a third.”

“Ugh!” She groaned and collapsed back onto the bed.

“Are you okay?” Jake’s striking face loomed above hers.

Lexi reached up and traced his jaw. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s alright. Who is that guy?”

“Buck’s a friend of the family and a very old boyfriend.”

“How old?”

“High-school,” she sat up, “you want to take the other stocking off for me?”

“Sure.” Jake made short work of the stocking, but his hand lingered on her thigh,

“Anything else?”

“Not with Buck here. I’m gonna shower.”

Jake got to his feet and started toward the door.

“Jake, the kitchen is on the south corner of the house. Coffee maker is plugged in and ready to go, cups in the rack are for everyday use. Bread is in the cupboard above the toaster.

All condiments are in the fridge.”

He looked puzzled.

“Act like you own the place.” She suggested.

“Why?”

“Cause Buck can smell fresh meat.”

*Act like you own the place.* Jake walked with confidence he didn’t feel down the hall. He barely glanced at Buck, the cowboy, as he made his way to the kitchen.

“Lexi wants coffee. Do you want any?”

“Sure do. That sissy stuff they make on the plane don’t hardly wake a guy up.”

Jake heard the boots clicking on the wood floor behind him, “Yeah.” He started the coffee, “You hungry?”

“What are you makin’?”

“Nothing. We were going out for breakfast but...” Jake let the sentence trail off.

“Is that what you kids call it now-a-days?”

Jake shrugged, “What can I say? I’m easy to distract. We’ve got some bread up here though.” He opened the cupboard above the toaster. He got the bread down and put two slices in the small toaster.

“So how long you been sleepin’ with my Lexi?”

“She’s not your Lexi.”

“Is she yours?”

“Lexi is not anyone’s unless she wants to be.” Jake stiffened that Buck thought of Lexi as some kind of possession. Jake was not fighting over her. Well, maybe a little bit. She was worth a little competition.

The cowboy let out a hoot and smacked his thigh, “She sure does have you wrapped around her little finger, huh? Got you makin’ coffee, breakfast, sweet love.”

“That’s none of your business.”

“True. But I like makin’ stuff my business.” Buck drawled with a smirk.

“Well, you can butt the hell out Buckingham Caulfield!” Lexi stood in the doorway; hair wet, skin clean, wearing an old college sweatshirt, jeans that hugged her slender hips and a frown marring her otherwise pretty face.

“Lexi-girl, you look fit to be tied.” The cowboy started toward her with his arms ready to wrap around Lexi.

She raised her arms, palms out. “Forget about it. I’m pretty pissed at you right now.” Lexi pushed past Buck into the kitchen, grabbed a cup off the rack and filled it. She sauntered over to Jake, put one arm around his neck and kissed his jaw, “Thanks for makin’ the java, babe.” She pulled away and winked at him.

“No problem. I know how you need the jump start.” He smiled and hoped the statement was true.

“Ain’t that the truth? She’s a regular bear without a cup-a-Joe.”

“Not these days. I have other morning routines.” Lexi’s grin and wink extended to Buck.

“No lovin’ gets you ornery these days? Girl, I told you, you were repressed.”

“What I am is none of your business,” she leaned over the counter and poked the large cowboy in the chest, poking her round derriere in Jake’s direction. It took tremendous will power not to pull her back against him.

“I’m hearin’ that a lot today.” Buck looked like a child getting a lecture from a parent.

“Besides which, what are you doing here?”

“I told you last night, I’m meeting with pa’s broker.”

“No.” Lexi shook her head, “Here,” she pointed at the floor, “at my house.” Lexi straightened back up.

“I was bored.”

“I wasn’t.” Lexi leaned back against Jake. He folded his arms around her. Lexi’s butt nestled against him, and he pressed forward.

“Well I can always go meet Jackson.”

“No!” Lexi broke free and rushed forward to stop Buck from getting up.

“Who’s Jackson?” Jake asked

“You’re shaggin’ some nobody and he hasn’t met Jackson and Caroline?”

“Not yet.” Lexi shuffled her feet.

“Look, I’m gonna go. I’ll talk to you later.” The cowboy was leaving.

“Buck, wait!” Lexi called after him.

“Yep.” He turned toward her

She held out her hand, "Gimme my key."

Jake suppressed a chuckle at the dumb-found look that crossed Buck Caulfield's face as he rifled through his pockets and gave Lexi a single key.

After Buck left, Lexi turned to him, holding the key up, "I can see I need to find a new hiding place."

"Who's Caroline?" Jake was not letting her off easy.

Lexi sighed, "Colonel Jackson and Caroline Andrews."

"Your parents."

"Yeppers. You did great by the way. Buck thinks we've been dating for quite some time."

"Lexi, didn't we just break one of your rules?"

"I don't think so." She tilted her head at him.

"I don't think that was very discreet."

"It wasn't. Oh boy, there's gonna be trouble."

"Are we dating?" Not that Jake cared, he was curious.

"For Buck we are. He'll be less trouble that way."

Jake wondered why but didn't question it. He liked the facade that Lexi belonged to him in front of the arrogant cowboy. Jake silenced the inner voice that screamed he was being possessive.

"I think I like pretend-dating you. Does it have any benefits?" Jake crossed the room and closed his arms around Lexi.

"Such as?" She settled into him.

"What we started before we were interrupted."

"Maybe?" she toyed with the button on his shirt, "Don't we have a museum to go to?"

"I'm sure it will be there when we're finished."

"Perhaps, but I admit Buck kind of killed the mood for me." Lexi stared at the buttons on his shirt.

Jake hid his disappointment, "Well, let's go then."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure I want you in the mood."

Lexi was pleased with his answer as she wriggled free of Jake's arms and strode over to the table to grab her purse. She turned the coffee pot off and noticed the toast. Her stomach growled, "Jake?" she asked.

"Yeah." He was right behind her, "What's up?"

"Do you mind if we grab breakfast?"

"That sounds good."

"I know a great place." She grabbed her keys off the hook by the door and locked up the house. "I think you'll like it."

"Okay."

She let Jake open his car door on his Aston Martin and slid into the leather seat with ease. A car wasn't allowed to be this cushy. The way it cradled her body despite the hard lines was incredible.

"Where are we going?" Jake started up the car.

"Pierre's Pancake House on South Eighth."

"I haven't been there."

"Man, they have the best selection of pancakes."

"Not a pancake fan."

"That's okay. Pierre's has muffins, omelets, and all the usual breakfast stuff."

The drive to the restaurant was quiet. Lexi observed Jake's taste in automobiles, and saw how the car seemed to be more of an extension of the man than a machine. Jake was turning out to be an ever-changing mystery. He was strong, supportive and sensitive. Lexi was falling for his subtle charm. If Jake put on just a little more pressure this morning, she would have given in. The fact he wanted her ready as well made him all the more attractive. Lexi almost changed her mind. She didn't want to look like a total flake and the moment slipped away.

When they arrived at Pierre's Pancake House, Jake opened the passenger door before her seatbelt was undone. Lexi wasn't used to the gentleman treatment. She dated a string of guys more into themselves and what they wanted and less about her needs. Jake's concern and attention was a nice change and a dangerous temptation.

Upon entering the restaurant, they were greeted with the fast-paced morning rush when a young blond hostess dressed in French maid garb came to greet them. Lexi waited for some



ogling on Jake's part. All the servers were dressed in different costumes, which added to the charm, but he seemed more entranced with the celebrity wall off to the back. The wall contained North Dakota's hometown heroes and a few celebrities who passed through the area.

When the hostess managed to grab his attention he asked, "Can we sit over there?" and pointed to the one booth beneath the attraction.

"Sure." She responded with a slender smirk. The Hostess nodded to Lexi. "It's nice to see you again, Miss Andrews."

"You too, Rose."

After they sat down, Jake looked at her, his head tilted slightly as he leaned forward, "Do you come here a lot?"

"Maybe, a couple times a month at the most."

"Fans?"

"Not mine. Over there?" Lexi nodded to the picture right behind him on the wall.

Jake turned and read the plaque beneath the photo, "Colonel Jackson Andrews, American Hero."

"He'd beg to differ with that statement."

"Oh." Jake was curious, "What did he do?"

"Survive." Tension darkened her features as she spoke the single word.

"What looks good?" Jake sensed Lexi didn't want to talk about her father. He changed the subject.

"I always get the German pancakes, they're scrumptious. They have twenty plus syrups here too. My favorite is plum."

"Yuck."

"Don't knock it until you try it. What do you like?"

"Maple. It's a classic."

"Of course, why doesn't that surprise me? Classic style, clothes and car."

"Classic moves?" He smiled at her.

"I'm not sure. I haven't seen a wide variety."

He winked at her.

"Stop that."

“Sorry. Couldn’t help but be flattered with such an off the cuff compliment.”

“I’m glad you took it that way. I must admit I find your technique—”

“Are you ready to order?” A waitress dressed like a naughty little Dutch girl interrupted.

Jake wasn’t ready. He wanted to know what Lexi thought of his technique. Was it good? Bad? Ugly?

“I’ll have the German pancakes with plum syrup and a pot of coffee.”

“And you, sir?”

“French toast with maple syrup.”

“Anything to drink?”

“Orange juice.”

The waitress left. “You were saying?”

“What?”

“About my technique?”

“Oh. Never mind, it’s not important.” Lexi began rearranging her silverware on her napkin. The fork, knife and spoon were now spaced in an even way.

Not important! Jake’s sexual prowess was hanging in the balance, “That bad, huh?”

“Of course not. What makes you say that?”

“I thought maybe you wouldn’t want to share bad news.”

“Jake, don’t assume something just because I didn’t say it. Your technique was fine but you shouldn’t ask a lady these things.”

“You like my technique?”

“Yes.” She clipped out when the waitress arrived with coffee and OJ.

*Let her be* his inner voice pricked at him. He’d settle with ‘fine’, for now. As he looked at Lexi, a moment of brilliance overtook him. Jake took out a pen and jotted down a couple notes on his napkin.

“Inspired by something?”

“Sort of.”

“I have a notepad in my purse you can borrow.”

“I’m good. Do you mind if we stop by my apartment on the way back to your place?”

“No. What do you have in store?”

“I was thinking we skip the museum and spend the day writing if that’s okay.”

“Sure.”

“Great. I’ll pick up my laptop and then we’ll head to your house.”

“Let’s go to the grocery store too. I need to pick up a few things.”

“Sounds good.”

The pancakes arrived and Jake admitted that they were some of the best he experienced aside from his Grandma Gina’s. Once they finished breakfast, they drove to his apartment. Jake left Lexi in the car while he ran in to grab his laptop and a reference book off his shelf. He made it back in record time. Just a quick trip to the store, and then off to create the rest of the afternoon. Jake stopped at a grocer’s around the corner from his place. It was a mom and pop operation but the store included everything he needed. He looked at Lexi after he parked, “This okay?”

“Yep.”

She grabbed a grocery cart on her way in, “Sandwiches okay for lunch?”

“Sure.” Jake wasn’t picky.

Lexi grabbed some bread, cheese and meat from the deli selections. Jake followed her,

“You stayin’ for dinner?” She threw a look over her shoulder at him.

“Not sure.” Even as Jake answered, he liked the idea of spending the whole day with Lexi.

“I’ll pick something up. Fish okay?”

“Sure.”

Lexi addressed the butcher, “Can I get four Tilapia filets?”

The butcher processed her order.

“I’ll get some veggies and baby reds for sides. Cheesecake for dessert sound okay?”

Jake was starting to get hungry again, “Fine. You need me to get any of that?”

“No it’ll only take a few—”

“Lexington!”

The expression that washed over Lexi’s face was one of pure terror. “Oh my God, what is she doing here?”

“Who?” Jake turned to see a woman with short brown curls heading for them. “Who is that?” He turned back to Lexi.

“My mother.”

## *Chapter Five*

Lexi's mother reached them with her shopping cart already filled.

"I thought that was you. What are you doing over on this end of town? You shop at Guses."

"So do you, mom."

"That's true, but Valerie Wagner always recommends this store and I was up here anyway. Buck's in town you know."

"I know." Lexi wondered if all these interruptions with her friends and family were a sign.

"I swear that boy will eat us out of house and home. What are you buying?" Caroline tried to peer around Jake but Lexi dodged him from behind.

"Some stuff for the day." Lexi spoke into his shoulder.

"And who is this?" Lexi's mom stared straight at him.

"Jake Stone, Mrs. Andrews." He held out his hand, offering a greeting.

"You're Lexi's new man." Her mother's blue eyes narrowed on him as she whispered in a voice like he was the very devil.

Lexi thrust herself in front of him. "Mom, do not interrogate him. Jake is just a friend."

"I understand he was at your house this morning."

"Yeah, as in that's when people get up. We had a breakfast date."

"That's true, Mrs. Andrews. We're just picking up some stuff because we're going back to Lexi's to wri—" Lexi's elbow to his stomach rushed the air out of his lungs.

"Work. We are doing yard work," Lexi's voice cracked. "Not sure how long it will take. Just picking up some stuff." She thought if she repeated herself, her mother might believe her.

Caroline looked into Lexi's basket, "Lexington, a man can't survive on sandwiches. Why don't you two come over tonight? We are already barbecuing. It's no trouble."

"That's okay, mom."

"Jake, would you like to come?"

"I'm not sure." Jake said the words hesitantly as if testing the proposal.

"You'll come. Be there at seven, Lexington, or I'll send Buck to get you." Caroline Andrews walked away, leaving no room for argument.

"Ugh!"

"No kidding, why did you hit me? Geez, I think you punctured something." Jake rubbed his stomach.

"I'm sorry. My parents don't know I write erotic romance."

"What do they think you do?"

"They think I'm a paid book reviewer."

"Don't they ever ask about Lexi Andrews the writer?"

"It's never come up." She crossed her arms.

"And if it does?" he pressed

"It's a simple coincidence, Jake, that's all."

"Does anyone know?"

"Buck, and my sisters, Alexandria and Savannah."

"She called you Lexington."

"Yeah. We're all named after the cities of our birth. Alexandria, Virginia. Lexington, Kentucky and Savannah, Georgia."

"Unusual."

"At least I wasn't named after a palace"

"Buck?"

"Yep. Short for Buckingham, his mom always wanted to visit there. I always call him Buckingham when he's gotten under my skin."

"I'll remember that."

"You still want to spend the afternoon writing or did my mom kill your creativity?"

"I'd still like to work on my story."

"Okay. Mind meeting my folks?"

“I remember you saying I wasn’t going to.”

“Yeah. Well the best laid plans...”

“I haven’t gotten laid yet.” He smiled broad.

Lexi punched him without any force in the arm, “Keep that up and you won’t.”

He held his hands up in mock surrender, “Okay. Okay.”

Lexi continued through the store picking up the last few items before checking out. The drive back to her place was quiet and once they arrived, both delved into writing. It was a few hours before they surfaced from their creative sides of the room.

“I’m starved.” Lexi was the first to need a break.

“Me too.” Jake’s stomach growled confirming the statement.

“Want those sandwiches?” she asked, getting up and moving toward the kitchen.

“Of course.”

Jake watched as Lexi moved around her kitchen.

“Wheat okay?”

He nodded.

“I’m just going to lay out all the meat and cheese okay?”

“Fine.”

“Cool.”

Lexi proceeded to set the food out on the counter next to the pass-through where she had interrogated Buck earlier. Jake wanted the food she spread out almost as much as he wanted her as she bent over giving him a glimpse of her heart-shaped derriere.

Jake groaned.

“Hungry, huh?” She turned to face him.

“For more than food, Lexi.”

“Oh?” she took a swift gulp of air.

“Yeah. Watching you bend-over was enough foreplay for me.”

She giggled. “We’ll see. Let’s hear what you have.”

Jake was a little embarrassed but he read aloud while Lexi drank a log sip off her ice-tea.

*Killer gathered Natasha up in his arms. He was a professional, Dammit. He shouldn't care that she'd been hit, but he did. Maybe he was burned out. He needed a distraction and Natasha would do as well as any. Killer lay her back on the bed.*

*"Killer, you must stop them." She muttered in her sleep.*

*"Shhh, Babushka. Do not fret. I will kill them all."*

*Her emerald eyes fluttered open. "I need you, my love."*

*"You've been shot."*

*"I need to feel alive."*

*No one understood better than Killer. He kissed her lips, feeling their softness. Her legs opened to him and he nestled his hand against her. She tugged at her nightgown, exposing the apex of her thighs to his vision.*

*Killer ran his finger over her slit. Natasha was wet, ready and all his. He shrugged out of his pants as fast as he could. In one swift movement, he mounted her. It didn't matter what she knew or what the mission was. All that mattered was that with her, he felt human. Not some government agent. Just a man.*

Jake couldn't help but be embarrassed. He'd never read anything so intimate aloud. Along with the embarrassment came a sense of curiosity on Lexi's thoughts

"Oh my." Lexi fanned herself.

"Are you mocking me?"

"Of course not. I like it. I was wondering how you would write the sex in. You've managed to capture a sexual side of Killer that I think your readers will enjoy. I know I did."

"What?" He noticed her blush.

"I admit I'm a little hot and bothered."

He smiled, "It's obvious you require a little more foreplay than sandwiches?"

"Yep, and that scene of yours did it." Lexi climbed over to where Jake was lounging in one of her Queen Anne chairs and slinked onto his lap. She delved her fingers through his tousled golden hair. Lexi leaned over, rubbing her breasts against his hard chest.

Jake didn't move.

"Do you want to?" She breathed against his lip.

He had the nerve to shrug.

Lexi ran her tongue over her lips, wetting them. She was wired. Amazing how good erotic writing did that to her. Lexi craved release and Jake was the man to give it. She didn't even mind his hard to get act, since the hard length of him pushing up against her belied his indifference.

Lexi pressed down against his covered shaft and moaned, "Are you sure, Jake? I need a little something." She began undoing the buttons on his shirt, baring his chest.

He murmured a rasping sound.

"I'm gonna take that as a yes." She straddled him and moved her hands to the bottom of her sweatshirt, pulling it in one quick motion over her head.

"Lexi." Her name was a sigh on his lips. Jake's hands came up and explored the pink lace-covered orbs with gentle skill. He placed feather-light kisses to the exposed skin then ran his tongue along her cleavage. Jake managed to unclasp the bra, while Lexi remained focused on his lips against her flesh. It was damn distracting.

"Yes, Jake." She managed to get the words out.

"Are you sure?"

"Jake, don't ask ridiculous questions. You're about to get lucky here." She lifted his head to look into the clear-cut lines of his profile.

"Am I?" His brown eyes looked glazed as he asked again.

"Oh yeah." Lexi lowered her mouth to shut him up.

Lexi felt Jake's hard cock bucking up against her. He wanted her. She drove her fingers through his hair. He moaned into her mouth. Jake reached his hands up to cup her breasts. He moved to play with her nipples. When he rolled the erect tip, Lexi broke the kiss to arch, allowing him to replace his fingers with his mouth. He drew a nub into his mouth and sucked. Lexi whimpered.

"You okay, sweetheart?" Jake lifted his head. Concern etched his features.

"Oh yes," Lexi breathed.

Jake dipped his head to her other breast allowing his tongue to move in lazy circles around the tip. He moved his hands to the back of her shoulders to support her. She relaxed against his arms and allowed him greater access. Jake laved her nipple until the peak swelled between his teeth. She was on the brink of an orgasm when Jake ventured south. He allowed his tongue to trail to her navel, and placed subtle kisses around her belly button ring.



Lexi couldn't bear the sensuous torture that Jake performed with his magical mouth. She panted, "Jake, I need—"

"What darling?"

"More." The words haunted her. Physical desire overwhelmed her, but that wasn't all she craved.

"Let me give you more," his voice was a whisper and yet his tender expression and passionate dark eyes answered her deepest longing.

Lexi leaned down and whimpered against his lips. "Please."

"Of course." Jake tilted her back with no effort and gathered her in his arms. He held her close to his chest, his skin smelled like aftershave. The scent was crisp and clean. Lexi inhaled his scent deep and leaned closer to him wrapping her legs around his hips. She snuck her tongue out to taste him. Salt with a bit of mint, she licked up his neck until she nibbled his earlobe, "Jake, take me to bed."

"My pleasure." Jake wasted no time and took long strides to her room.

Once they reached the bedroom, Jake was gentle as he laid her back with her head against the pillows before shrugging out of his white shirt. It contrasted with his subtle tan. She ached between her legs. He knelt, unbuttoned her jeans and placed his hands inside them before taking them off. Jake handled her as a valued treasure. It was intoxicating to be worshiped. The feel of his hands caressing her skin left Lexi shivering.

"You okay, Sweetheart?"

All she managed was a nod. Instead of sliding off her thong he stared at her before speaking, "You have metallic threads in your panties that match your belly button ring"

It was a subtle thing, yet no other man ever remarked on how her lingerie matched her bejeweled navel, again she nodded.

"It looks nice."

"Thanks." She was right. This man ruined her in his moments of sincerity. His compliment about such a small detail softened her. If she felt this way before they made love, afterward would be much worse. His breath shuddered over her abdomen, before he slid his tongue under her thong. She gasped in wicked delight.

Jake explored underneath the edge of her thong and slid his hand under her backside.

He squeezed her buttocks with his palms before lifting her to his mouth. His tongue explored the border of her thong. Jake pushed it against her skin until the material outlined her feminine flesh. The devil inside him came out. He pressed his tongue up her cotton-covered folds and then nibbled on her clit. Jake raised his head at Lexi's moan.

She looked at him in dazed passion. "Don't you dare stop."

Her command was his wish. Jake rubbed his knuckles against her hole while teasing her clit with his tongue. He pulled the cotton-covered bud into his mouth sucking both the material and her hardened clit. His knuckles felt her moisture breaking forth. Lexi's hips ground upward as he continued to suck on her until she screamed, "Oh Jake! Jake! I'm coming!"

Jake lifted his eyes and witnessed her writhing rapture. She was beautiful, her eyes glazed over, her skin flushed and her mouth open in awe. He lifted off her, trailing his way back up. "Lexi?"

"Mmm. Yeah?"

"How do you feel?"

She smiled, "Like I still want you inside me."

"I'm here to accommodate." Jake stood to remove his khakis. They came off with relative ease despite catching on his erection that peeked out of his silk boxers.

"Allow me." Lexi rolled her tongue over her upper lip, staring with wide sea green eyes at his penis.

Jake watched as she crawled across the bed, her ass in the air, her thong still on. He found the scene before him intoxicating.

Lexi snuck her tongue between her lips to lick the tip of him. He groaned in response. Jake stared motionless as she swallowed his cock. Her wet mouth closed around him like warm honey. Lexi stroked her tongue along his length like a feather. It was more than Jake could stand.

"Lexi, stop sweetie."

She gazed up. Her eyes were wicked and she applied more pressure.

"Oh," Jake gripped her shoulders to keep from crashing to the floor. "I won't be able to stop." He needed to tell her before it was too late.

Lexi increased the tempo, sucking and allowing no escape for either of them.

Jake threw his head back allowing the sensations of Lexi's sweet mouth to engulf him.

He thrust, allowing her to lead him to the act's inevitable conclusion. When his orgasm took him, he was more than amazed at the moment of pure pleasure. It was unlike any before and Jake's stomach churned with frustration at the thought he might never experience this with anyone else. Damn!

Lexi lay back against her arm watching the sleepy smile play across Jake's features. He passed out after she'd gone down on him. Lexi wasn't bothered though, since other parts of him seemed to be waking up. She trailed her index finger over his chest and down to his abdomen. The darker hair tickled her nose earlier. Now it crinkled under her fingers. She raised her eyes when Jake moaned.

"Are you awake?" she asked.

"Oh yeah." Jake answered.

Lexi responded by grasping his manhood in her slender digits.

Jake's inhalation was sharp.

"Too rough?" she loosened her grip, not wanting to hurt him.

"No." Jake placed his hand over hers.

"What then?"

"Just...nice." He moved his hand over hers showing her how to stroke him.

"Like this?" Lexi continued her caress.

She brought her fingertips to the top and ran her thumb along the underside of the sensitive tip. Lexi continued to caress him while Jake's breathing increased.

"Lexi, you need to stop, unless this is how you want it?"

Her hand stopped mid-motion for fear she might lose Jake.

Jake was in dire need. If she didn't do something soon, he might explode. He was close. He bit his lower lip to keep from embarrassing himself.

"What do you want?" She looked at him with those amazing sea green eyes.

"You...on top...now." He forced the words out between gasps.

Lexi straddled him in a fluid motion by throwing her leg over him and pressing herself against his straining length.

"God, you're wet."

“I aim to please.” She rubbed against him until he felt her clit pressing against the bulb of his penis. She writhed like an exotic dancer, breathing, moaning until Jake thought he would expire. Before he stopped her, Lexi leaned down and a feminine guttural cry filled his ears with the most exquisite sound he imagined. Her orgasmic scream tugged at his heart and he longed to hear the noise again before his own orgasm took him.

He grasped her hips and rolled her under him. “Sorry Lexi, I need you too much.” He whispered against the column of her throat.

“Yes,” she arched her hips up.

Jake snaked his hand between them and rubbed her heated flesh.

“Jake, don’t baby, I’m fine. Besides, it’s your turn.”

“Not yet.” He continued to assault her erect button and leaned down to capture a nipple between his teeth.

“Oh yeah. Bite it, just a nibble”

Jake grazed his teeth on her pert bud, and drew the globe deeper into his mouth.

“Jake, please?”

He lifted his head, “Yes?”

“Take me. I can’t wait.”

Lexi sounded tortured.

“Condoms?”

“Nightstand. Top drawer.”

He reached over her and grabbed a foil packet from the drawer, and quickly sheathed himself. It was a lucky thing because Lexi was no longer waiting; her thong was peeled away, revealing her wet pussy. He moved forward resting his cock against her entrance. She wrapped her thighs around his flanks, digging her heels in and drawing him toward her liquid heat. Through the thin material, he felt hot softness.

“Lexi...you’re so...”

“I know. You too.”

When she nibbled at his Adam’s apple, it was his undoing. He pumped into her like a wild animal. The words to describe his emotions registered his mind. Primal—Jake needed Lexi in a way he didn’t question. He claimed her as his own with each thrust.

Lexi met every thrust in time, her inner muscles clenching his rigid member, pulling

him closer. When she climaxed, waves tickled along his cock.

“Oh God, Lexi!” He threw back his head and cried out.

When he cried out her name and his cock pulsed within her, Lexi never felt as needed or cared about in a single act. It didn't seem possible but it was how she felt. Sleeping with Jake was addictive. She pressed her fingers along his back, his muscles tensed beneath her. Lexi reveled in the feel of muscles clenching above her while he spewed into her. He hadn't allowed her to be pliant. Her active involvement in their lovemaking threw him over the edge. The idea thrilled her to her core.

Even now, the look of concern that crossed his features looming above her wrenched at her heart.

“Did I hurt you?”

“No,” she spoke with honesty. “I might be a little sore tomorrow but it'll be a nice kind of sore.”

“Don't ever let me hurt you.”

“Jake, I wouldn't have stopped at any point. It was perfect.”

He rolled onto his back, “I couldn't agree more.”

“I'm gonna go clean up.” Lexi planted a quick kiss to his jaw before rising and shuffling toward the bathroom.

As she entered the shower, warm water sprayed her sensitive skin and she shuddered in remembrance of what she and Jake shared.

“Lexi!”

She popped her head out of the shower and found Jake right outside the curtain. “Yeah, Stud. You want to join me?”

“Lexi,” Jake blushed and stuttered, “The condom broke.”

“Don't worry about it.” Lexi wasn't surprised. She didn't even know when she bought those condoms. They might be expired.

“How can you say that?” He seemed stunned.

“Easy. Don't worry about it.” She just had her monthly visitor the week before, so pregnancy seemed unlikely, there wasn't a need to worry just yet. They would take extra precautions going forward. She'd call her doctor on Monday about going on the pill.

“But—”

“Jake, if there’s something to worry about I’ll let you know, and if there’s something to worry about you’ll let me know, sound good?” She shut the curtain in effect ending the conversation.

“Will you?” he called from the barrier.

“That’s the responsible thing to do.” Lexi began to soap her breasts.

“You’ll let me know if I have an obligation won’t you, Lexi?”

She dropped the soap and threw back the shower curtain casting water onto his bare chest.

“Obligation! Gee Jake. How much more clinical can you get? It would be a baby and I don’t know if I want my child to know his dad’s a jerk.”

Water continued to spill out onto the ivory tiles.

“Look, Lexi. I’m sorry. I just want to know.”

“I do too but even if I rush out and get a test right now we wouldn’t know anything. You are putting the cart before the horse. Getting other tests is a good idea. I’m going to seem my doctor on Monday.” She fairly growled at him.

“Oh.” He gazed at her breasts.

“Quit staring at me.”

“Lexi I—”

“You ruined a perfectly good moment with your poor choice of words. It’s no wonder you need help.” The moment Lexi vocalized her thought she regretted it. Insecurity crept into Jake’s expression and made Lexi feel like a complete bitch. “Oh Jake, I didn’t mean it. I’m sorry.”

“I better go.” Jake turned and left the bathroom.

Lexi’s skin felt raw as the cold water beat onto her. She grabbed a towel to stop Jake but by the time she reached the bedroom he was gone and the loss was more than she expected.

## *Chapter Six*

*“It is no wonder you need my help.” Natasha’s words lingered in Killer’s mind. It was true. He lost his edge and Natasha had died for it.*

*Killer never expected to fall in love. It hit him suddenly, and now she was gone. He would never forget her brown hair and twinkling green eyes. They were etched in his memory.*

*Whoever said it is better to have loved and lost deserved a slow painful death. The only thing that remained was death. His mission was officially complete even if he was not. He needed to move on to next mission. It was time to close this case.*

*Killer opened the envelope: MISSION HEIRESS.*

*The End*

Jake stared at the page. He admitted *Killer Sex* was his best work. It was a shame that much of himself was poured into Killer and the book. Jake doubted he could repeat the results again, not without Lexi. Every time he thought of Lexi, his heart tore open anew. Four weeks passed since he last saw her—dripping wet and angry as hell. The image of her fiery emerald eyes and her glistening skin made him hard. He shook his head.

Jake worked through all his feelings of inadequacy, frustration, anger and love. He remembered writing Killer’s thoughts on paper, not realizing until later that they were his own. It didn’t seem possible to fall in love in such a short period of time but he had. Jake loved Lexi. It was a painful realization that he meant nothing to her.

Jake walked around the corner to mail his manuscript off to his agent, Mark. He already sent an e-mail of the novel but Mark liked both copies. After his errand at the post office, he

stopped in at The Starving Artist Café. He lounged in the corner watching the door. Maybe she would come in for a cup of coffee and he could say...something.

Jake felt like a voyeur and coward. He watched as couples embraced or held hands and longed for the courage to call Lexi up and say the right words. Jake missed her. He spent two days with her and now he treasured those moments. Jake killed Natasha to give his emotions an outlet. He needed to take a break from writing. Jake wasn't ready for another female character in Killer's life or his.

Jake like a ghost walked the streets until he arrived home. He checked his mailbox and walked the steps up to his apartment. Jake threw the mail on the table but one envelope caught his eye. He grabbed it and tore it open:

*Dear Mr. Stone,*

*Your test results for HIV are negative*

*Sincerely,*

*Search for a Cure*

Jake was relieved, not as much for the results but now he acquired an excuse to call Lexi.

He dialed her number. One, two, three rings, on the fourth ring her machine picked up. He left a message.

\* \* \* \*

"Hi. This is Jake. I just called to tell you that my...um...well my test results came back. They were...uh...negative. Let me know how yours went."

Lexi listened to the machine click.

"Are you going to call him back?"

"No, Buck. I'm not." Lexi continued to pout.

"Do you want me to call him back?" Buck made no attempt to move.

"No. Why would I want you to do that?"

"Cuz you love him, Lexi-girl."



“How could you know that?” She was distressed with the fact that Buck spoke the truth.

“You may not remember much from your ma’s barbeque since you were knee-deep in Mojito’s but I do.”

Lexi’s stare was blank as she tried to remember that day. She dreaded asking, “What did I do?”

“I believe it started with how he didn’t show up and progressed to the best sex you ever had, but you weren’t sure if that was because the condom broke.”

“Oh dear.” Her face flushed with mortification and resentment at herself. Sadness crept in as well. She hadn’t been pregnant either. Lexi still couldn’t fathom how she could miss a child that never was

“Needless to say the Colonel was mighty fidgety but your ma calmed him down sayin’ he was a nice boy and seemed honest. Why she even met him at the grocery store therefore why wouldn’t he be?”

Lexi’s mouth was dry.

“And then you spouted how you were an expert because of that girl-porn you write, and then the Colonel reassured Caroline.”

“Oh. No.” Lexi sank lower into the chair.

“I admit, I hoped to be the best sex-ever, but I’ll surrender the title for true love’s sake.”

“Go on.” Lexi waved for him to continue speaking.

“Anyway, your ma asked what happened. The minute you confessed the harsh words, you said to that surfer everyone in that room knew you loved the fool. Why do you think your folks haven’t called?”

“I thought you were my watch-dog,” she threw back.

“No, but you deserve a friend. I’m gonna miss being your boy-toy when I’m in town Lexi.”

“That doesn’t have to stop.” Lexi said with bravado she didn’t feel.

“Yes, it does. Somehow, you kids will patch this up. If you don’t do it soon, I may have to play cupid.”

Lexi smirked at the mental image of Buck in a diaper with a mini bow and arrow; she rolled on the floor in peels of laughter.

“What?”

“Nothing. I needed a moment of silliness.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah or I was gonna—” Lexi hiccupped and fell into tears. She yielded to the compulsive sobs that took her.

“Come here now.” Buck crossed the room, picked Lexi up and held her against his chest. “It can all be fixed.”

“It can’t, Buck,” she sniffled. “The worst thing is I made these stupid rules!”

“Did you now?” He rubbed her back as if she was a child.

Lexi bit back a sob. “Even if I told him I loved him, Jake would run for the hills. That was the third rule.”

“Lexi, rules are made to be broken.”

“Well we have broken some other ones. At least I have.” She rubbed her sore eyes.

BEEP

“Damn, that boy’s persistent isn’t he?”

“I guess so.” Although, this was the first time she had seen it.

They sat in silence listening to the machine pick up.

“Lexi, this is Mark.”

Lexi ran to the phone. “Yeah, Mark.” She managed to sound composed.

“You did a hell of a job with my boy Jake.”

“Pardon?” Lexi listened in bafflement.

“I just got the electronic copy of his latest book *Killer Sex*. You even made the dedication.”

“I did?”

“Yeah, here let me find it. It says: *To Lexi Andrews whose words not only inspired love in Killer, but me as well.*”

Lexi dropped the phone.

\* \* \* \*

Jake waited an hour for Lexi to call back. When she didn’t, he took a walk. He ended up at The Starving Artist again. Jake saw a book-signing going on and rushed in. He made his way through the gaggle of women to find an unknown author.

“Sorry, thought you were someone I knew,” he muttered before making his way over to

a table. Jake sat facing away from the door. He couldn't keep coming here and wishing to see her. It was hopeless.

"I love you." A familiar whisper echoed in his ear.

"Lexi?" He turned around.

"Yeah." She looked guilty. "I'm sorry Jake. I was a complete bitch."

"What did you say?" He hadn't heard her right.

"I said I was a complete bi—"

"No, before that."

"I'm sorry."

"Before that."

Lexi's eyes squinted as if she were trying to remember, "I love you."

"Do you?" he asked without hesitation

"Yes. But it took my mother's Mojito's to get it out of me."

Jake shook his head. "Am I supposed to know what that means?"

"You would if I hadn't scared you off."

"Lexi, you are not making sense."

"Sorry." She drew back and stared at her toes.

"I love you too." He spoke with all sincerity.

"I know. Mark called me."

"Oh." That took the steam out of him.

"It's nice to hear you say it though."

"Lexi, are you sure? I know what you think of me."

"What are you talking about?" Lexi leaned back and placed her hand on her hips.

"That I'm a hack of a writer."

"I do not think that." She shook her head and lowered herself onto his lap, caressing his jaw, "I said that when I was very angry about your obligation comment."

"I'm sorry. I was stunned by what happened."

"I'm not pregnant." She blurted out.

"How are you doing?" He looked at her with concern.

"Okay. I didn't expect to be disappointed." Her voice cracked. She rubbed her eyes.

Jake wrapped his arms around her and after a few moments, he spoke in a quiet voice,

“And Test-wise?”

“Good. I’m still waiting on some results from my doctor but I’ve only been with Buck besides you and that was a few years back so I expect they’ll be okay.”

“So where do we go from here?” He asked.

“Your place?” Lexi whispered against his skin.

“I love that idea.” Jake caressed her backside.

“I do have some good ones.”

“You sure do Lexi, you sure do.”

Buck watched his friend be carried away by the man she loved. He trailed the couple out and tipped his hat to the waitress as he passed.

***The End***

## *About the Author*

Tina Holland was born in Frankfurt, Germany to military parents, and is a self-proclaimed military brat. She has been writing since childhood and continues to be prolific at least in starting manuscripts.

Tina began her career by attending a Romantic Times Convention in 2003, and writing a short story for Kathryn Falk's Bordella series.

Tina continues to write as her schedule allows. She is a member of Romance Writers of America Online. When Tina is not writing, she can be found enjoying her hobby farm in North Dakota. It may seem like a desolate place but with her husband, horses, cats, dog and chickens, it's rarely lonely. It's the perfect fit for a wonderful imagination and an opportunity to be a little naughty.

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