



Lust Bites

THE WIND AND THE SUN

Vivian Arend

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The Wind and the Sun

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Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

THE WIND AND THE SUN

Vivian Arend

Dedication

For Bonne — the sunshine is always there, even if at times it's hidden behind the clouds.
Love ya, babe.

With Apologies to Aesop.

Chapter One

The Wind and the Sun were disputing.

Again.

It was a constant battle. They had begun while still youngsters because it was tradition for their families to feud about everything.

The argument returned again to the original contest of strength the Sun had won. Well, strictly speaking, it was the current Sun's grandfather who beat the current Wind's grandmother, the position being inherited...

* * * *

"You can't possibly think the record should still stand. When you read the stories it's very clear your grandfather cheated."

"Cheated? Pop-pop? I don't think so. You've just got a bad case of fable envy and that's why you insist on reading conspiracy theories and convoluted twists into the very clear records." Sunshine flashed a smile at Zephyr as she flipped her long blonde curls over one shoulder. She leant back in her recliner and took another sip of her Serengeti Smoothie. Her long tanned legs stretched in front of her, glistening from the thin layer of baby oil she'd applied minutes ago. She wore her favourite pale apricot sundress. It not only fit her extremely well but she'd once seen Zephyr walk into a pole when she walked past him wearing this particular dress.

He was fun to tease.

Sunshine flicked another glance at him. He towered over her, his feet spread wide as he glared at her. He ruined the total domination look by shifting to the side with an uneasy hitch to reduce his discomfort as his jeans visibly tightened.

Score One.

She reached over and placed her drink on the small table beside her chair, being careful to lean as far as possible to the other side before she released the glass. The move should

make her dress ride up another few inches, perhaps give him a flash of her pale yellow lace panties.

Except, oops, she wore a thong. It wasn't possible to flash panties, just cheeks.

Oh well.

With a slow and deliberate motion, Sunshine sat back and grasped the bottom of her skirt. She gave a couple of tugs to wiggle it into place then with a casual glance, looked back up. She started at his toes, and by the time she'd reached his crotch, she knew she'd been successful.

Score Two.

The jeans had gotten tighter than before. Poor boy. He really was *so* much fun to tease. It was her absolutely favourite pastime.

"Why don't you sit, Zephyr? You're giving me a headache twisting my neck looking at you. Sit or go away." Sunshine lifted her arms to place her hands behind her head, elbows wide, closed her eyes and pretended to relax. She took a deep breath and sighed in contentment.

Of course she knew deep breathing while her arms were raised produced a nice swell of her bosom to the top of the already low-cut neckline, but that was a mere coincidence.

It was hard not to let a little smirk show on her face. *Hmm, let's see. Three points?*

There was a rattle as Zephyr dragged a chair next to her. A soft rustling noise followed and she caught herself before she opened her eyes to see what he was doing.

She didn't care, except she liked to make sure he suffered torments of all sorts. It was a matter of pride to make the mighty Wind family suffer. They were the most annoying, the most irritating of all the families. Her mother, Dazzle, told her the secret was to find the proper way to torment them. Mom had a running battle pitched with Zephyr's Mom that involved showing up in public places wearing the same outfit Mistral just purchased. Of course Dazzle would manage to wear the outfit a couple of days before Mistral made an appearance. The constant media coverage all pointed out the obvious copycat tendencies of the Wind family in their attempts to reflect a little in the glow of the Bright family's exquisite taste.

Since Zephyr had little interest in a clothes competition, Sunshine had tried for years to come up with an appropriate method of sparring. The heat-up-the-bike-seat trick and the melting-ice-cream-into-puddles trick gained little more than rolled eyes.

She'd begun to despair of being able to maintain the family pride until they became teenagers. That was when Sunshine discovered she suddenly had the ultimate battle weapon.

Her hips.

Backup artillery – other portions of her anatomy.

Zephyr was now so outclassed in the competition Sunshine almost felt sorry for him at times. But only 'at times' and only 'almost', because, damn, it was good to be the Queen of the Hill.

The rustling sound stopped and there was the flick of a bottle opening beside her. She smiled. She had him drinking his sorrows away.

Score Four, but who was counting?

"What do you think about a rematch?"

Sunshine lifted one brow and turned to face him. She wanted to hit him with the full look of disdain she'd been practicing in front of her mirror.

Oh. My. Word.

Zephyr lay on a second recliner, mere inches away from her. The beer bottle she expected to see in his hand, the forlorn expression she expected to see on his face as he drooled over her...nowhere in sight. All she saw was skin.

Hot, naked, firm, glistening skin.

Did she mention naked?

Holy Sahara, the boy had gone mad. He'd dropped every last stitch from his body and slathered himself in oil before reclining like a Greek god on his couch. He rested on one elbow, his upper body flexing arms that would make Hercules a happy man. Firm muscles swelled under the skin of his chest, and Sunshine's fingers actually twitched with the need to press her palms against him to see if he was as solid as he looked. The ridges of his abs defined a beautiful six-pack, no eight, no... Hell, was it possible to have a twelve-pack? She couldn't be sure because she was...kind of distracted...from concentrating on counting...because a trail of intriguing curls led down to where one leg stretched out, one bent in a perfect frame around...

Well, let's just say someone was happy to see her.

Very happy.

Heat, like she usually only produced on extreme summer days, flushed over her skin and she took an involuntary lick over suddenly dry lips.

A wicked chuckle distracted her from her sightseeing excursion.

"So what do you think?"

Holy Zeus on a stick, what did she think about what? Sunshine forced her mouth shut and hurried to wipe the drool from her chin, trying to make it look like she had covered a yawn.

Yeah, right. A yawn. Only because the total oxygen level in her body had dropped to negative twenty in thirty seconds or less. If she didn't take in some air, she would pass out.

Come on girl, pull it together. This was war.

"I'm sorry, were you talking to me? I expected the cabana boy with a refill sometime soon. It's impossible to get good service anymore." Sunshine plucked a fan out of midair and waved it in front of her neckline. She wanted to produce a bucket of ice but that would have been a little obvious.

He was gorgeous. Why had she never noticed before?

"You know, maybe you're right. I mean, your grandfather did win the contest as it was established."

Sunshine froze in mid-fan. "Did you...admit Pop-pop won? Fair and square?"

Zephyr rolled to his back. Sunshine gulped and turned away to grab her drink. Anything to stop from looking at that flagpole rising bold as brass into the sky declaring, "Zephyrland – rides available."

"I said he won the contest as it was established. Personally, I think my grandmother was in the first stages of cyclone fever when she agreed to the terms. I mean, come on..."

Oh, not a good choice of words.

"...getting a guy to remove his cloak to prove who is stronger? Maybe Gramma was a few sheets to the wind, I heard she drank on occasion. Anyway..." Zephyr sat abruptly, swinging his legs between their chairs. His...attributes...were hidden by the bend of his body and Sunshine felt the loss.

"I'll admit your ancestor won. Still, I think it's time for another challenge to see who is stronger now." His voice was quiet and cool. It smoothed over her skin like a caress.

It made her shiver.

"What, you want to arm wrestle? That's really fair." Sunshine sat as well. Just because it was time to sit. Not because the view was better or anything.

Zephyr chuckled, a low sexy rumble that hit her hard and deep. "Oh no, not a physical challenge. At least, not physical that way."

His thigh rubbed against hers, creating icy fingers zapping up her skin towards her womb. Sunshine closed her eyes for a moment to concentrate. She didn't want any accidental bush fires on the African plains again. She took a close look at him for the first time in a long time. Zephyr's straight brown locks hung to his shoulders instead of his usual military crew cut. A couple of errant strands fell in front of his eyes and she reached without thinking to brush them back. Her fingers tingled as she touched him and she bit back a moan.

"What are you suggesting?" she asked. She swallowed hard as his gaze traced over her body, dark brown eyes with flecks of gold around the iris. "What kind of rules?"

"Strength can be defined as being the most powerful. If someone is powerful, they can rule or dictate and people have to obey. I think the most powerful things are not those forced upon you, but what you want to do again and again. Your grandfather said 'Kindness affects more than severity.' He was right in his challenge. For our challenge, however, I want it said 'Desire affects more than force.'"

He laid a soft hand on her thigh and slid his palm over her skin like a cool breeze on a summer day. In an instant, every nerve in her body went on high alert. Small circles traced by his fingertips slipped along her inner thigh then sadly back towards her knee.

"I challenge you to a contest of strength, Sunshine. Bright family against Wind family. You can use any trick in your repertoire and I can access all the emotions of the wind. At the end of the challenge, we will see what kind of desire rises to the top.

"The person who created that desire will be named the victor."

Sunshine leaned closer, angling her body to be sure he saw down her cleavage. She had to get back in the game. She'd lost ground big time in the past couple of minutes.

"We throw rays and gusts at each other? Let's be clear on the attack method."

Zephyr ignored her chest and reached for her hand instead. He brought it to his mouth and gave her palm a soft kiss before answering in his dark chocolate voice. "You know what I'm talking about, Sunshine. Fooling around, making out, getting down and dirty. Foreplay for hours. Then sex. I have nothing scheduled for a few days my assistants can't take care of. I suggest we find a nice location and prepare for the challenge."

Sunshine hesitated. Not that she was afraid or anything, but it *was* close to harvest season in the prairies and she'd hate to be distracted and cause —

Zephyr lowered her hand to his lap and wrapped her fingers around his erect cock. His very hard, hot and thick cock.

Sunshine gulped.

Zephyr leaned close, his mouth a whisper away from hers. "So, we are agreed. Let the competition begin."

Chapter Two

Sunshine gritted her teeth together and sighed. She caught her mother's eye and Dazzle winked at her. "Don't worry dear, you'll start the contest soon enough. Plan ahead. Remember to play to your strengths."

Sheer torture, that's what it was. Sunshine's dad had to be told about the match and he demanded to help establish the guidelines. Luckily, he thought it was a rematch with family rules, not triple X. As if having him involved wasn't embarrassing enough, Zephyr's father joined them as well. Then the moms insisted on coming. It was only by a fortunate favour Pop-pop was out of town. Having him there would have made it infinitely worse.

There were still too many large men in the room trying to out-intimidate each other.

Sunshine blocked out the low rumble of voices to concentrate. Her strengths, what were they? To be more specific, which of her strengths were the ones that could bring Zephyr to his knees? She glanced over at him and the image of him on his knees in front of her made the hair on the back of her neck stand up. This should be a fun contest, if the parents would ever iron out the details and let them get started.

"Alternating locations on Earth chosen by the contestants." Mistral's soft voice drifted throughout the room.

Blaze flared. "I don't see why they need to compete on Earth. So many other possibilities exist elsewhere. We're limiting their capabilities—"

"Hush, dear." Dazzle turned her radiant face towards the Wind family. "I apologise for my husband. He's still a little hot under the collar from visiting the equatorial region. Alternate locations will work fine. May I suggest two locations each? Of course, tradition dictates Zephyr, as the Wind representative, be allowed to select first."

"I think tradition should be set aside this time," Chinook said. Sunshine turned to examine Zephyr's father. He looked at his son, a gentle smile on his face. "Ladies first, that's what I taught you, son. What do you think?"

Zephyr leant back against the wall of the room, his strong legs crossed at the ankle. He'd put his jeans back on and replaced his T-shirt with a short-sleeved dress shirt in pale blue. It complemented her sundress to a tee.

Interesting.

"I think we have enough rules and you all need to leave. Sunshine will begin, as I always intended."

The room flooded with light as the Bright family flashed out, curtains flapping at the window as the Winds departed, leaving Sunshine and Zephyr alone in the room.

"Well, that was about the most horrible thing I've ever had to endure. The only thing that would have made it worse is if our parents found out we were going to do the nasty." Sunshine shuddered.

Zephyr grinned at her. "I agree, but we did need to ask your dad to fill in while we're...busy. I didn't realise he would turn it into a NATO meeting."

"Well, you know, family. I'm sorry."

Zephyr laughed. "I think you noticed *my* insane parents in the room being nosy, so I apologise as well." He held out his hand. "Take me away, my dear. And may the best man win."

Sunshine narrowed her gaze as she slipped her fingers into his. "Thank you. She will."

* * * *

They strolled the boardwalk, arms brushing together as they dodged the masses of people milling around them enjoying the beautiful summer day. Sunshine brought them to an amusement park near the ocean. She'd thought about her mom's advice, and she knew the times she received the most compliments were on the long, hot days of summer. Days that stretched out forever with nothing to do but spend time with each other. It wouldn't win the contest for her, but she planned on setting the foundation to blow him out of the sky with her second location.

A slow, simmering build-up.

They'd changed clothes as she flashed them to the park. Sunshine now wore a short and top combination in a pale gold. The shorts hung low on her hips and left her glittering belly

ring exposed. It flashed in the sun as they walked and she smiled at the admiration she saw in the eyes of men around them.

Zephyr drew closer, slipping a possessive arm around her waist. He had on a pair of boarder shorts with swirls of blue and grey and a matching grey shirt that said, "My Family is More Dysfunctional than Yours."

"Troubles, Zephyr?" Sunshine turned her face towards him and batted her eyes innocently. He growled at her.

Growled at her! *How wonderful.*

"The challenge is between the two of us, Sunshine. Don't involve anyone else."

Sunshine lifted a hand to her lips and smirked. "But, Zephyr, the Cloud family is a traditional part of the challenge. I'm sure the Cumulus twins would be happy to join us. I have to hide behind them at some point. Or may I should hide between them..." She tapped a slim finger on her lips as she pretended to consider.

Zephyr's nostrils flared. "No one will be joining us. If you thought you needed them to help you win, you should have arranged it before."

Interesting. He didn't like the idea of the Cloud boys coming around. Store that under intel-to-use-to-win-challenge category. She pointed to the fairgrounds. "I'd like to take in a few rides. Which are your favourites, Zephyr?"

He looked around the park before answering. "I suppose I should be predictable and say the roller coasters, but I get to do that all the time." He slipped his hand farther around her body to tuck her tighter into his side. "You are my guide, it's your location. Take me away, Sunshine. I'm all yours."

Oh, he was, was he? Sounded interesting. Sunshine licked her lips and wiggled her way out from his clasp. Taking him by the hand, she tugged him towards a ride. It was time to start winning the contest.

She selected one of the water rides. The log ride was one of the slower in the park but that was fine with Zephyr. It was obvious Sunshine was up to something and he was prepared for anything.

He hoped.

She'd been driving him insane for years and he'd finally had enough. The teasing and intriguing glimpses of paradise had taken their toll. He thought he would burst every time he got around her and he planned to make his revenge as sweet as possible. He might win the challenge in the process but frankly he didn't give a whistle.

He was going to make love with Sunshine. His heart pounded out a hurricane tempo. All the taunting over the years had brought him to a peak of desire for the beautiful woman at his side. Not only a physical longing, although he had that in spades. He desired her to be his companion in life as well as his bed. She may think this was a challenge for a title, he knew it was a challenge for her heart.

That was the challenge he intended to win.

Sunshine gestured for him to sit first before joining him in the long, narrow log-shaped boat. She didn't jump in and settle. She climbed in backward. Stepping on the seat with her crotch level with his eyes, she did a slow rotation until her delectable little ass was in his face. He was ready to take a bite when she finally sat, rubbing along his torso like a cat. Her ass cheeks pressed back against this groin and heat flared.

He'd ditched the jeans for a reason. He figured he would be hard as nails for most of the challenge. At least now there was a little room to expand so the blood wouldn't be cut off completely.

His rigid cock pressed into her. He was sure Sunshine could take his pulse through the vibrations pounding her. She leant back, forcing them tighter together.

Zephyr lifted a hand to twist one of her golden curls. "You've chosen the location. Do I have to sit and do nothing?"

She rested her head on his shoulder, her cheek brushing his. Her breath warmed him as she spoke. "You go right ahead and do whatever you think appropriate, big boy. This is a participation friendly challenge, right?"

Right. *Hot damn!*

He lowered his mouth and softly brushed her lips. A caress of a touch, like a gentle breeze through the trees of the forest. His fingers slipped over her belly to mould her against his torso. One finger traced the sparkling jewel suspended under his hand, the cool of the ring a sharp contrast with the warmth of Sunshine's skin.

She wasn't just warm, she exuded heat. His fingers tingled as he played with her belly button. Small circles increasing in size as he dipped his hand lower to the waistband of her shorts. The ride started and they slipped around smooth corners, the water gently rocking the boat from side to side.

Sunshine slipped her tongue past his lips, and as her taste filled his mouth, Zephyr jerked. His hand froze on her body for a second as he breathed her in, angling his mouth to taste her better.

Oh sweet heaven.

The ride rose on the tracks, preparing to send the boat into the first splash pool. Zephyr continued to stroke his tongue against Sunshine's, feasting on her. She was everything he'd imagined she would be. He slipped the button on her shorts. Slid his fingers into the dainty bit of lace covering her tight curls until his hand cupped the warmth of her pussy. She opened her legs to allow him easier access.

"Hmmm, you taste good, Zephyr." Sunshine licked his lips and kissed him again.

The ride reached the pinnacle of a slope, and with a whoosh, they sped downward. As the spray rose around them, he pressed a finger through the hot, wet folds of her pussy lips, swallowing the cry of delight she made. Around the corner from them, the mouth of the tunnel section was visible and Zephyr's mind raced. He wanted to give her pleasure. Not because of the contest, but because every inch of him demanded he make Sunshine need him as much as he needed her.

He thrust in and out of her heat, moisture coating his fingers. He pressed with his palm on the ridge of her erect clitoris and she moaned against him. As the darkness of the tunnel surrounded them, he adjusted their bodies, giving him more room to manoeuvre. Reclining back in the seat, he set up a rhythm over her heat, a slow and consistent assault on her senses. He added a second finger, pressing against the walls of her sheath.

"You are so tight, Sunshine, so hot and wet and tight. I'm going to go insane when I get to bury myself in you. You're going to squeeze me so hard I'm going to have to fight coming before I can push all the way in." Zephyr stroked little farther and swept his fingertips over a new spot and Sunshine jumped in his arms.

"Oh, yes."

He stroked again while his other hand rose to surround her breast under her tank top. "Holy tornadoes, girl, you're not wearing a bra. That's not fair." His fingertips tweaked the hard nub of her nipple as she pressed into his hand and arched into him with need.

"Oh, Zephyr, just a little more, oh, please..." Desperation tinted her voice.

He rubbed her clit harder. The sounds rising from her flowed straight to the base of his cock. His balls drew up so tight he held onto control with a fine thread. The light at the end of the tunnel approached and he drove his fingers into her quicker. His fingers tightened over her breast again, plucking at her nipple, dragging it away from her body slightly before releasing it and cupping his hot palm over the stinging tip.

She cried out as her release shot through her whole body, her sheath clutching around his fingers, hot liquid pooling around his knuckles. He gave her only a second to calm before he withdrew his hand. He sat them upright, nuzzling against the back of her neck.

"You need to do up your pants, baby, before we get to the end of the ride. Don't want to upset any families." He licked at her ear as he tugged her top straight, nestling her back against his body.

Sunshine closed her waistband, then her hands rose to join his where they hugged her waist. She lifted his hand to her mouth and proceeded to lick his fingers clean as his cock jumped in reaction between them. Their boat came to a rest and they disembarked. Sunshine started to drag him down the ramp towards the common area.

"Hey, slow down, we're not on any kind of a timeline here, are we?" Zephyr tried to walk without looking like he had a hard-on from hell. Racing anywhere right now was out of the question.

Sunshine turned and fell into his arms, wrapping herself tight against him. She stared into his eyes. The crystal blue heat he saw did nothing to relieve the pressure continuing to build in his groin. "Thank you, Zephyr, what a lovely way to start the challenge. I..." Her gaze dropped to his lips and she reached on her tiptoes to press a soft kiss on the corner of his mouth. She pulled back, a strange expression on her face.

Zephyr glanced around quickly to make sure no one was watching before he adjusted himself. "So, are we going to take a few more rides?"

She shook her head. "We're going to the beach. I think I need a little bit of rest time before we finish this stage of the game." She flashed him that killer smile, the one set to a million watts, and his heart pounded.

Beaches meant bikinis, sunscreen and lots of eye candy. All of it Sunshine. He could do beach with her. Beach sounded just fine.

Chapter Three

Zephyr and Sunshine walked hand in hand along the beach. He glanced her way a few times but she seemed intent on beachcombing, her gaze glued to the sand stretching in front of them. The sounds of laughter and the smells of popcorn and hotdog stands faded as they walked the beach away from the main seating area.

Zephyr lazily ran his thumb over her knuckles, the gentle caress more for him than to remind her he was still there.

Her skin was so soft.

"I used to love to come here when I was little," Sunshine said quietly. She freed her hand from his, and opening her arms to the sky, she spun in a slow circle before him. He drew a quick breath as she rotated, her body on display for him to enjoy. Yet she didn't seem to be trying to tie him in knots this time. The flirty, almost cruel sexuality she used like a weapon was under wraps, leaving in its place a softer, more desirable woman.

Maybe it was a ploy in the contest, but it worked.

She stopped, dropped to her knees and scooped at the sand, pulling it into a pile in front of her. "I was the best castle maker in the family. Mom always tried to get too fancy using extra shells and stuff and Dad was always in such a hurry he tended to end up with parts of his castle moulded into glass!" She smiled at him. "How are you at playing in the sand?"

Zephyr dropped to his knees beside her. "Is this a part of the contest? Because Wind does sand very well, thank you. Think deserts, dear..."

Sunshine flipped a hand at him. "Pssah. I don't mean picking it up and dumping it all over and I don't mean for you to build a castle alone. Come and help me build mine. Well, ours. Let's build a castle together."

This was a side of Sunshine he hadn't seen for a long time. The little girl who wanted to play. He lifted her chin, bringing her eyes to meet his. "Is something wrong?"

She pulled away and sat back on her heels. Her head dropped. Golden curls tumbled around her shoulders, blocking her face from his view. Slowly she squared her shoulders and

spoke. "We've got a contest going and everything and I know we're going to have sex." Sunshine turned her face towards the gently surging waves. "It seems kind of cold, jumping to the attack and going at it like..."

She looked back at him. Her big blue eyes held a drop of moisture and Zephyr's heart clenched. If she was playing with him, she was doing a damn fine job of it.

"We've never kissed before today. You touched me and I enjoyed it. Oh, boy, I really enjoyed it, it's not that. Maybe, if you don't mind..."

He stroked the silk of her hair away from her face. "You want to go a little slower? I can do that. If you remember, you're the one who's kept me in a constant state of arousal."

Sunshine stuck out her tongue. "Yeah, well, you stripped naked in front of me. I've never stripped in front of you."

Holy jet stream, it's a good thing she had never stripped. He would have totally lost it. Zephyr looked closely at her. Glistening tears in her eyes, smooth skin that begged to be touched. The rounded curves of her body tantalised him as she sat there, knees dusted with fine sand.

She was beautiful.

He would do everything he could do make her feel comfortable with him again. "Well, Sunshine, I have to tell you I am the champion castle builder in my family as well. May I suggest we go for the moat-that-fills-with-water design? It's my favourite."

Sunshine lit the area with her smile and together they turned to dig and play while the sun shone on them and the soft sea breezes chased each other over the waves.

He nudged her hip for the third time in a minute. Sunshine looked up from where she worked on the corner of their massive structure to see Zephyr bent low, head and shoulders nearly to the ground. He blew, slow and soft, and the sand underneath the arched bridge flew away. He bumped against her again, his hips twisting to make himself as low as possible.

She giggled.

Zephyr jerked and swung around to face her, his dark eyes questioning.

"You're getting into this," she said.

"I'm good at what I do."

Oh, yes, he was. Sunshine slipped around to the far corner away from him and pretended to fix...something. She didn't want to look him in the face while she remembered the feel of his hands on her body.

She may have been the one to slow things down, but that didn't mean her body wasn't strumming with need at his mere proximity. Damn the contest anyway, she wanted to lick him all over.

Right now.

"Sunshine, I think you need to come over here." Zephyr sounded concerned and she scrambled over. It was a sandcastle. What could possibly cause that note in his voice?

She looked all around the edges. Moat was fine, the wall was fine. The tall towering turrets they'd managed to get to rise to waist height stood solid.

"What do you need?" Sunshine flicked a glance at his face and suddenly his arms were around her, drawing her body tight against his torso.

She melted. It was the only way to describe it. Every inch of her skin nestled against his. The slight dusting of sand caught between them tickled in some spots but she wasn't about to complain.

Zephyr slipped a hand into her hair. "A kiss." He guided their mouths together, controlling the movement to keep it slow and gentle. Closed lips brushed over hers, hot and brief, like a small gust over desert sand. He pulled away and she heard someone make a horrible whining sound.

Oops, it was her.

"Zephyr?"

"Yes, babe?"

"More? Please?" Sunshine leant in and kissed him back. She let her hands rise around his shoulders. They were both sweaty and covered in sunscreen and everywhere there was sand, but she didn't care. She touched him lightly to keep the harsh grit from scratching him, unable to stop her need to caress her palms over his back, down his waist, over his firm butt.

He opened his mouth and their tongues touched. His taste filled her, made her want to ignore the let's-go-slow message she'd sent earlier and throw herself backward in the sand and cry "take me."

Of course, that would be fairly painful with the sand everywhere.

All she cared about was getting more of Zephyr. More of his kisses, more of his touch. She pulled loose the back tie on her bikini, reached higher to slip the top knot. She grabbed his wrists and dragged his hands down her body.

“Touch me, Zephyr.”

He groaned and pulled back. “It was too fast before. I didn’t get to enjoy touching you. Oh sweet mercy, Sunshine, you’re gorgeous.” His gaze fixated on her breasts and she arched her back slightly to make sure he got the best possible view. His hand cupped her, lifted her. He slid his thumbs over her nipples like a whisper and they pebbled into tight peaks.

Their bodies moulded together at the hips, his rigid length pressing into her belly. She shifted slightly, rubbing against him and Zephyr sucked in air.

“I thought we were going slow, sweetheart? If you do that again, I might forget, and as much as I want you, I want to taste you first. I want to see if those rosy nipples are as sweet as the berries they look like.”

He rolled the aching tips between his fingers. Heat flashed to her core, boiling her blood and yet causing icy tingles to race up her neck at the same time. His head dropped and he lapped at her skin, biting her shoulder, her collarbone. Licking a line to the top of her right breast. Zephyr sucked lightly to pull her skin against his mouth. He nipped the spot, kissing away the snap of pain that resulted. The lingering after-effect was nothing but pleasure.

Then he blew.

His breath, warm and firm, brushed over the line of moisture he’d left behind as he descended and rays of heat shot over her breast. Pleasure mounted in her pussy, tight, hard jolts of pleasure tweaked her again and again as he lowered his attack, sliding towards her straining nipple.

He touched her. A soft lap. Sunshine closed her eyes and rocked at the sensations rippling through her body. He pulled the tip into his mouth and suckled. Another jolt of pleasure followed and her knees began to shake. His arm rose and slipped around her waist to support her before she collapsed. His teeth closed on the very tip and he paused.

Sunshine held her breath. What was he waiting for? Her breast throbbed with the need for more of his touch. She locked her fingers tighter in his hair and pulled him, wanting to crush him to her breast.

He resisted and kept his distance. Just the right distance to be able to touch at his own pace.

He lapped.

He sucked.

He lapped.

Sunshine cried out, her complaint unpronounceable. He was a bastard in twenty different languages and if he didn't give her what she needed —

He sucked.

"Zephyr!"

He nipped, then covered her breast with his mouth. Sunshine gasped as the moisture in her core threatened to boil over. He didn't touch anything but her breasts and she was on the verge of climaxing again. Her head spun with pleasure, her sheath tightened, longing to be filled.

Then he switched to her left breast and she screamed. Because he lapped. He suckled.

"Oh, please, Zephyr, gods, don't tease me anymore."

He attacked her mouth, his tongue swirling into hers, his hand cupping her throbbing breast. He spoke against her lips. "I'm not teasing, dear. I said I needed to taste. The berry is sweetest when it's picked ripe."

He left her mouth and kissed his way down again. This time he circled her whole areola, moistening it with his mouth.

He blew.

Heat increased tenfold. The column of air wrapped around her sensitive nipple, flew over her burning skin, slipped down her belly and slid past her throbbing clit to explode with a blast as it entered her pussy.

Sunshine fell apart.

She had never climaxed as hard. Or as completely. Or for as long. The shudders racking her body went on for a long, long time. Zephyr cradled her in his arms, his dark midnight eyes watching her, watching her belly quiver, her breasts heave and her mouth move with silent moans of desire.

When she finally opened her eyes, he was gazing at her intently. She thought maybe somewhere in his eyes she'd see a hint of triumph, an inkling that this was nothing more

than another step to win the challenge. But he wore such a tender smile she lifted a hand to his cheek and leaned to brush her lips over his softly in thanks.

All without a word.

Zephyr rose to his feet, still cradling her in his arms. He turned until they could admire the castle they'd created together. It rose high into the air, bold against the setting sun and the bright colours of the sunset.

"Very nice," he whispered. He dipped his mouth and planted a kiss on her hair.

"I think better than nice. That was amazing." Sunshine pulled his face towards her, smiling shyly. "I'm an awfully selfish little girl. I've gotten happy twice and you must be—"

"Very happy as well. Dust devils, you kiss like a dream and watching you..." Zephyr shook his head slowly, his beautiful smile sparkling at her. "Oh, sweetheart, I'm not sad at all. Don't ask me to compete in the high jump right now, but other than that, I'm completely pleased with how the day has gone. Come on—if you're willing—I think it's time for me to select a location for our next date."

"Date?" What was he up to now?

Zephyr slowly walked back towards the amusement park. "Is that okay with you? Can we change from calling it 'locations for the challenge of who is the strongest' to just calling it a date? In the interest of brevity."

She snuggled into his arms and sighed with contentment. "Fine by me." She rocked gently, her cheek against his warm chest, when she suddenly shot upright. "My bikini top!"

He dropped the missing article onto her belly. "Not that I care if you put it back on, but I thought you might not want to lose it."

Sunshine snorted.

Oh, yes, he was good.

Chapter Four

Sunshine looked around with curiosity as they were led into the rustic seating area. The smoky smell of BBQ drifted past her nose and made her mouth water. A honky tonk song played over the speakers, and everywhere there were cowboy boots, hats and more flannel than in a pyjama warehouse.

Umm. Cowboys.

Zephyr's hand rested lightly on her hip as she followed the waitress to their table in the back of the restaurant. His fingers caressed the strip of bare skin between the top of her low rider jeans and bottom of the fitted leather vest she'd put on when he'd announced their destination. Both the vest and her boots were made of bright red leather and she knew she looked mighty fine.

A loud growl rolled from her stomach and Zephyr laughed. "I told you to dress faster."

Sunshine slipped onto the bench on the right side of the booth, expecting Zephyr to sit facing her. Instead he joined her, snuggling their thighs together.

He tried to hand her a menu. "The back ribs are wildly spicy and very tasty, if you're interested."

"Order for me, please. This is your choice for a date and I'm completely in your hands." Sunshine leant back and relaxed, only to hear her stomach give another loud complaint. "Maybe an appetizer or two on rush order?"

Zephyr chuckled. "Agreed." He motioned for the waitress and whipped off an order without a glance at the menu. As the waitress walked away, his fingers linked their hands together under the table.

He placed his mouth close to her ear. "I did think about taking you –"

"Zephyr! What are you doin' here, man?"

Sunshine glanced up into the faces of two large, dusty cowboys.

"Hey guys, long time no see. Come join us." Zephyr rose and shook hands firmly with the two men, gesturing to the open bench at their table.

"Nah, we're not sitting. Pickin' up a to-go order for the crew back at the ranch." The spokesman for the two nodded politely at Sunshine. "Evening, little lady. Name's Jon and this here is my little brother, Jim."

'Little brother' towered over the six-foot plus Jon by a good three inches.

Sunshine smiled at them. "Nice to meet you, boys. I'm Sunshine. Are you sure you don't want to sit with us while you wait for your order?"

Jon shook his head. "Not going to mess up your time out on the town. Such a pretty little filly like you deserves a man's complete attention." He winked and Sunshine's skin flushed with delight.

She never blushed.

Zephyr placed his arm around her shoulders and pulled her in close.

"Staking your claim, cowboy?" she whispered.

"You know it." His whispered words sent a shiver up her spine while a warm bubble grew deep inside her. Something about his tone made her snuggle in tighter.

"You've got a mighty fine fellow there, Sunshine. You make sure you treat him right. Zephyr, you stop by anytime and say hi. And you tell your daddy the same thing."

"I will."

Jon tipped his hat and the brothers walked away towards the takeout window around the corner. Zephyr waved goodbye and Sunshine watched his face carefully.

"What was that all about? How do they know Chinook?"

Zephyr shifted in the seat to stretch his legs a little farther under the table. "My dad? Honey, we're in Alberta. Everyone knows Chinook. He's brought me here since I was little and I've gotten familiar with a lot of the area ranchers."

He paused and took a sip of his beer. "They're good people. I like to go visit Jon and the boys every now and then, but I haven't made it out yet this year. Hopefully after the challenge...."

A little flash of pain shot through her and Sunshine sat straighter, pulling away from him. She didn't want this to be about a contest anymore. She bit her lip and watched as the first part of their massive order was delivered to the table. "It's not a challenge anymore, right? It's a date. Well, a couple of dates."

“Right. Now’s the feeding time of this here date, little lady, so mosey on up to the feed trough and let’s put on the nose bag.”

Sunshine laughed out loud. “People don’t really talk like that, Zephyr.”

“I just did.”

“Yes, but I—”

“Jon called you ‘little lady’,” Zephyr pointed out.

“He did but—”

Zephyr placed a finger on her lips. “Hush, I’m teasing. Let’s eat before the bear in your stomach makes a break for it.”

She had the most atrocious manners and she was driving him wild.

After the first feeding frenzy to fill the empty pits in their stomachs, Sunshine turned the meal into an exotic form of torture.

She picked up another rib, the sound of her delight catching Zephyr square in the balls. She licked her little pink tongue along one side of the rib and over the other before inserting half the bone into her mouth. Her lips closed around the meat and she pulled her hand away, her teeth rasping lightly over the partially clear bone. She seemed to swallow the meat whole before licking every bit of sauce off her rosy lips.

Zephyr watched, mesmerised, as she flipped the bone around and cleaned it off, her mouth working in a way he had only seen in a dream.

He began to lose sensation in his legs and couldn’t sit still for longer than five seconds without wiggling to relieve the pressure.

Only one thing would relieve his pain. Well, two. Well, maybe more—he had a good imagination. It didn’t seem like any of them were going to happen in the next two minutes, which was when he would like something to happen.

“It’s all really good, Zephyr. I especially like the steak. Want a piece?”

The little minx cut a thin slice and placed it on her fork, hovering inches away from his mouth. She stared at him, the corner of her mouth lifted in a pixie smile. He opened his mouth and let her feed him. He closed his lips over the tidbit and jerked. Sunshine had slipped her free hand under the table and it rested on the front of his jeans. The very hard front of his jeans.

He swallowed quickly.

"I think," Sunshine said, "the best part of the meal is all the flavours. The way they mix and combine. The sweet of the BBQ flavour with the tang of the baked beans." She rubbed up and down along his length, hard enough the far too sensitised head of his cock began to weep with joy.

He was not going to come in his jeans like a teenager. He was not.

Please, don't let me come in my jeans.

Sunshine's lilting voice continued. "I think that's the best part. Don't you? I like the more savoury flavours. In fact, I think I know exactly what I want for dessert."

She didn't mean...

Sunshine kissed his cheek and with a quick glance to make sure no one was looking, she slipped under the table.

She did mean. Holy cyclone.

Zephyr checked the room. They were far in the back corner, the table set low to the floor. Someone walking by wouldn't see Sunshine unless they specifically bent down and looked. The waitress had checked on them a minute ago. They were actually very private.

Of course, the option of flashing them anywhere he wanted in the blink of an eye was always available, but that wouldn't be in keeping with the spirit of the challenge. And to tell the truth, what she suggested made him hotter than hell.

He slid his hips a little farther down the seat and opened his legs wide as she nudged between his thighs. Soft hands tugged at his belt, unbuckling. Unsnapping. Carefully unzipping. His cock strained against the fabric of his boxers, attempting to be free of the damn material.

Then her hands, surprising cool, pulled him through the fly. His cock leapt, bumping into her palm, and she squeezed slightly.

Zephyr fought to keep his eyes open. The surest way for them to get caught was for him to give them away, but her touch was like an addiction. His already over-sensitised nerves screamed for more.

He pushed his water glass a little farther away and nearly crashed it to the table when she took him into her mouth. Heat and moisture covered him and the pleasure of finally being touched by Sunshine brought him close to finishing right then and there.

Her tongue swirled over his engorged cock, slick and wet as she caressed the ridge. She surrounded him, bit by bit. Each time she slid a little farther down his shaft, leaving a trail of moisture behind that eased him deeper into her mouth on the next pass. Her lips dragged over him, adding more friction, adding more heat to his already torch-lit nerves.

The crest of his erection hit the back of her throat, her mouth convulsed around him and Zephyr's eyes threatened to pop out of his head. He reached under the table and threaded the fingers of one hand into her hair, feeling the strands smooth over his skin like satin.

She sucked.

Zephyr's heart raced up to his throat, his muscles tightened and he pushed upright to tuck his chest against the edge of the table.

"Would you like some more water? Any dessert?" The waitress stood next to the table, blinking innocently, totally unaware of the whirlwind occurring under her very feet. Zephyr managed to grin at her, feeling pleased for a second he'd hid his body's reaction to the steamy hot temptress tormenting his cock.

Sunshine deep throatled him again and, damn the north wind, she hummed. Zephyr choked before he found a voice.

Not his voice. This one sounded like it belonged to one of the twelve dwarfs.

"Nothing else, just the bill."

The waitress walked away and Zephyr sat back slightly, glancing towards his crotch. Sunshine looked up at him, her blue eyes enormous in her face, her wet lips cupping around his cock as she sucked him. She pulled back, swirled her tongue over the slit then closed her eyes and pressed until her nose was buried in the fabric of his boxers. She swallowed, the muscles of her throat squeezing him, clutching around him.

Zephyr's balls tucked up into his body like rocks. Sunshine took one more plunge over him and he exploded. Streams of semen shot down her beautiful throat, her mouth sealed tightly over him as she sucked him dry. She swallowed and licked until he was clean before tucking him back into his shorts. She crawled back on the seat beside him, tugging back her mass of curls into order before turning to smile at him.

A drop of his semen clung to the corner of her mouth and his body jerked in reaction. Even after coming, he wanted more. More of Sunshine touching him, more of her taste. He wanted her under him and over him and —

Her tongue slipped out and found the errant moisture and he started to get hard all over again.

She raised her glass in cheers, her bright eyes twinkling with mischief.

“Wonderful place for a date, Zephyr. I’ll have to recommend it to all my friends.” She leaned on him, slipping under his arm to whisper in his ear. “Only I don’t think I’ll tell them about the dessert. I want to keep that all to myself.”

Chapter Five

She tugged him by the hand. Finally she had him where she really wanted him. "Come on, I promise it's not too cold."

Zephyr made a show of wrapping his arms around his body and pretending to shake. "Nope. I'm sure I blew by here last week and there was ice on the pool." He walked towards the bar that was tucked along the edge of the trees.

Sunshine pouted. "You're on a date with *the Sun* and you're afraid the water is going to be too cold? Are you thinking, Toyboy? 'Cause that doesn't make a lot of sense."

"Toyboy. I like it." He poured a drink for each of them. "I think I'd have to be a whole lot younger than you for that to apply."

She giggled. "Well, I didn't think you'd like Gusty or Blowjob or Windman."

He wiggled his brows at her. "I loved the blow —"

"As a nickname. Wow, can you ever be dense sometimes." When had he become this much fun to be around? Teasing him this way felt so natural, not like she was trying to make a point. Just...have fun.

Zephyr handed her a drink. He took his free hand and pulled her against him, hard, hip to hip. He lowered his mouth to inches away from hers. "I can be very, very dense, and I think you like that very, very much, my little ray of mischief." He kissed her lightly and walked away. Sunshine looked him over with a growing admiration.

He was solid, like a rock. But he showed more and more depth the longer she spent with him. The guys at the restaurant liked him for who he was, not for his position. There had been others who'd greeted them when they had gone next door to the dance floor to enjoy the music. People had just come up and chatted for a bit.

No one chatted with the Bright family. Her parents taught her to 'look out for number one' and not to fraternise with those lower than you.

Which pretty much left out everyone. Being the Sun and all.

Except the Wind family wasn't on the avoid list. For some reason, they were on the taunt list. Sunshine followed Zephyr to the edge of the pool, joining him as they dipped their feet in the water.

"It's a beautiful place, Sunshine," Zephyr said, turning his head as he admired the view.

Tall walls of rock surrounded them on three sides with a lush jungle protecting their backs. A waterfall burst from the rock at the far side of the pool and everywhere the lush smells and sights of the tropical rain forest filled their senses.

She took a big breath and sighed with contentment. It was her favourite spot, made even more special with Zephyr there. "It's where I come when I need to get away from everyone."

Zephyr's head jerked. "You brought me to your personal retreat? Why? This should be a place for you to be alone and relax, not a place to bring the memories of this contest." He struggled to his feet. "Choose somewhere else."

Sunshine tugged at the bottom of the boarder shorts he wore. "Sit. It's not some mystical secret place. The grove is accessible by invitation only, but I've brought others here before. My dad installed the bar."

She looked up at him, concern written all over his face, and she hurried to reassure him. "I want our third date to be here, somewhere I feel comfortable." Sunshine ducked her head, embarrassed she'd given away too much of what was running through her heart. How quickly this had turned from a contest of strength to one of sheer desire. It was no longer about the challenge.

She wanted him to win, as long as it meant she got to be with him.

He remained standing, staring off into the distance. He spoke softly. "Sunshine, we don't have to finish this contest. In fact, I think we would be better off calling it a night and we can—"

"No!" Sunshine jumped up and clasped him tight. She buried her face in his shirt. Slowly his hands rose to hold her. If she let him go now, she might lose him. "I want you to stay. I want..."

She lifted her gaze to his. "I want to make love with you. Here. Please?"

His arms tightened around her and he closed his eyes. When he finally opened them, he smiled. "I don't think you planned this very well, sweetheart. It's a beautiful place and I'm

looking forward to becoming more intimate with you, but I kind of hoped for a bed for our first time."

Yes!

He was going to stay. Her heartbeat increased and she felt her skin flush. "I have everything planned fine, oh ye of little faith. You need to slip behind the waterfall to find the rest of the surprises."

Zephyr's eyebrows lifted and he turned to check the waterfall more closely. "I don't see a thing. I've blown through here before and I've never seen anything out of the ordinary."

Sunshine shimmied away from him and slipped into the pool. "Because you didn't know where to look. Let me go first and get things ready. Follow me under the falls and you'll see the passage to the right." She kissed her fingertips and glittered away along the surface of the water towards her sanctuary.

It was time to give him the surprise of his life.

Zephyr returned the glasses to the wet bar. Figures Blaze stocked the thing. There were lots of heavy, manly drinks and not a lot there for the women. One thing Chinook had taught Zephyr was keep your lady happy and you'll be happy yourself.

Had he made Sunshine happy? He hoped so. She was everything he'd dreamt she would be. More responsive sexually than he hoped. Oh, she played at being a sex kitten, but underneath he was sure that was all it was — play.

She needed him, he needed her. Soon they would be together. Forever, if he had his way.

Zephyr stepped into the water and shivered briefly. *Not too cold, my ass.* A spark lit around him and the water warmed to the perfect temperature for wading. He grinned as realised Sunshine had planned it so well she cared for him even when she was out of sight. His heart was going to break through his chest if it expanded anymore.

The warm water also helped restore a little life to a certain extremity and that was a very good thing, all things considered.

He ducked under the curtain of water at the cave's entrance, astonished by how completely hidden they were. A faint path led to the right and Zephyr paced slowly, trying to take in everything around him. The walls of the passage shimmered with light, glittering

rocks guiding his steps. It was one of the most incredible sights he'd seen, but he was distracted by need.

"Sunshine, are you there?" The hint of a larger room and more light appeared around the corner.

He slowed to a snail's pace, enjoying the anticipation. This was what he had waited for, for so long, the chance to be with Sunshine. He rounded the corner where the pale light revealed a beautifully decorated room lit with hundreds of small twinkling candles. The centrepiece of the space was a king-sized bed with Sunshine right in the middle.

She wasn't alone.

Zephyr's heart shrivelled. The Cumulus twins, Cirrus and Claude, sat on either side of the bed. Their hands stroked her arms and legs which were outstretched and tied to the corner posts.

"Damn it, what are you doing here? Get out, now," Zephyr roared as he rushed at the men.

"Hey, hold onto your pressure tank. We were invited." Claude lifted his arms to block himself from Zephyr's attack but none came.

Zephyr froze in mid-stride halfway to the bed, Sunshine's words echoing in his head.

The grove is accessible by invitation only.

I have everything planned...

You need to slip in behind the waterfall to find the rest of the surprises.

Let me go first and get things ready.

Heartache hit him, hard and deep. She had planned this all along, even after he'd warned her didn't want anyone else joining in. If this was what she thought was going to happen, she was very much mistaken.

"Sunshine, what is going on? Because if this is your idea of a joke—"

"You really are a stupid thing, aren't you, mate?" Claude chortled, his finger slowly tracing the thigh beside him. "She looks like she's ready for us to give her a little loving. I'd think any man with half a dick would get the picture," Claude stage-whispered over Sunshine's body to his brother. "Frankly, I think he should only get to watch. Don't know if he's intelligent—"

"Stop!" Zephyr slammed his fists into his thighs. He stared into Sunshine's eyes, trying to see the woman he'd spent the past day with. The woman he'd fallen in love with over the past days and years.

No matter how annoying she had gotten, she'd never been cruel.

There was nothing there in her eyes. It was like she'd turned off her heart and Sunshine was gone, hidden behind a mist. His stomach fell.

"You have nothing to say? Is this what you want, Sunshine? These clowns in your bed, or do you have the sense to see you want me? Because, damn it, those are your choices." There was no response. The only thing Sunshine did was to look up at the Cumulus brothers, pleading in her eyes.

Zephyr gasped at the shot of pain that raced through him. She'd chosen.

It wasn't him.

He took a half step back, struggling to stay on his feet. He turned to go, pausing for a second. There was something...he could almost remember. Then it was gone. He stared intently at the brothers where they remained, separating him from Sunshine. Stealing his warmth forever.

He glared at them hard, his fists tight to his sides. The tone of his voice carried all the emotion he felt and sounded like a hurricane hitting landfall. "If I find out you've hurt her, either of you, I will take you apart with my bare hands. You know I can do it, and I will. Understand?"

Claude's expression grew a whole lot less cocky. Cirrus gulped and opened his mouth to speak. His brother cut him off. "Yeah, we hear you. Now go, so we can give the little lady what she needs."

Zephyr stumbled out of the room before flashing himself home, his broken heart making the journey a thousand times lonelier than ever before.

Chapter Six

Zephyr dragged himself to his couch and flicked on the widescreen television. Over twelve hundred channels and the first thing that popped up was a couple in a hot embrace, mouths locked together.

Of course they were on a beach.

Fuck.

He threw a pillow at the screen and stomped off to the kitchen. What a horrible twist of fate. He was sure something had happened, some connection made between the two of them. Instead it seemed he was an idiot and Sunshine really did want the Cumulus brothers between them.

He flicked open the fridge and the light didn't come on. Distracted, he closed the door and opened it again. Nothing. He still couldn't see to the back where he knew there was some ice-cold beer.

Yeah, he could 'poof' one up, but it tasted better out of the fridge. He planned on taking all the 'better' pleasures he could find. He leaned over and checked the sensor that signalled the light to come on. It was cloudy, covered with spilled milk or cream. He wiped the lens clean and instantly the bulb lit, shining brightly.

He grabbed his beer and plopped down again. *Monster Trucks and the Monster Men that Drive Them* was on and he tried to get into it. Bigfoot in a High Toy. What would they think of next? He couldn't stop imaging the scene from earlier all over again and again. Sunshine hadn't spoken. She'd just lain there. Barely moving. She hadn't lit up...like she usually...

Zephyr roared in anger. Damn it, why didn't he see it? Of course she couldn't speak; of course she couldn't make an impact. The Cumulus boys had been between them. Creating a barrier between Sunshine and him.

Heads were going to roll.

* * * *

"Get off me this instant, you watery masses of... ooohhhh! Don't make me lose my temper. Right now. Untie me and let me go."

Once Zephyr flashed out, Sunshine could finally speak. Her anger burned hotter than she could ever remember it. She'd walked into the hideaway to set up the candles, all the while dreaming about Zephyr. Then, out of nowhere, these jerks appeared and manhandled her to the bed.

She had managed to hit Claude in the bollocks, but obviously not hard enough.

"Hey, FYI, not our fault he got the wrong idea. Guess he's not the one for you, is he, if a little thing like getting tied up by two very nice young men is going to make him walk away." Claude touched a finger to her wrist and slowly dragged it towards her body. The sensation made Sunshine hiss in anger. He'd always had been an asshole, even back in school.

"Claude, lay off," Cirrus said quietly. He began untying Sunshine. She struggled to sit as he released one wrist.

"What are you doing?" Claude gave his brother a push. "This is the chance we've been waiting for!"

Cirrus' face filled with disgust and Sunshine hoped she had an ally. That this wasn't a 'good-cop/bad-cop' thing, because while they were here, she couldn't flash out of the room to safety. Whoever had come up with the whole idea of the Clouds messing with the Bright family's abilities should be *shot*.

"If your idea of a good opportunity is hitting on Sunshine right now, you're a bigger wet head than I thought." Cirrus helped her up. "Sunshine, I'm sorry. This was supposed to be some kind of joke. I never realised Zephyr and you were getting along so well. I mean, I heard Blaze asked Claude to keep an eye on you —"

"He what?" Sunshine flared. It was her father's brilliant idea to interfere with her date with Zephyr?

Claude retreated to the back of the room, right up against the wall. "Yeah, I think he only wanted you to be safe. I overheard you teasing ZeeMan about having a ménage with us and I figured this would make things interesting. Funny. Ha-ha?"

Sunshine might not be able to flash out, but she could get rid of the jerks. She turned to Cirrus. He, at least, had shown *some* brains in the end.

“Apology accepted, Cirrus. Dissipate in three seconds or I’ll—”

And the room exploded around her. The candles blew out, bed sheets flew into walls and a hot harsh wind whipped her hair around her body.

Zephyr had returned.

And Sunshine couldn’t speak. Again. This was getting really old, really fast. The room lit up as Zephyr flicked on the lights. Claude and Cirrus huddled against opposite walls.

Zephyr’s gaze raked her body. “You okay?”

She nodded and rushed into his arms. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Cirrus creep out the doorway. Claude had the whole perimeter of the room to travel. A flash of hot satisfaction thrilled her at the knowledge there was no way *he* was getting out of the room unscathed.

Zephyr lifted her chin and gave her a quick kiss. “Let me throw out the trash, sweetheart, and we’ll be able to talk, right?”

She nodded quickly and stepped back to let him do his magic.

Wind had such a way about him. The Claude that left the room was still intact but a little more ‘compact’. A little thinner around the edges. He would need some serious R&R to be able to do anything but float gently for a while. And even that was going to hurt.

Zephyr brushed off his hands and turned towards her. “You really okay?”

“I am.” Her body relaxed and she let out a big breath of relief. “That was so scary, to be frozen behind them, unable to speak. I never want to feel like that again.”

Zephyr pulled her tight against him. “You never will. I’m going to speak to the council and make sure they change the rules. I mean, a cloud stopping your light from hitting the earth is one thing, but them being able to make you vulnerable like that? I won’t allow it.”

He swept her into his arms. “You can call me a brute and a chauvinist and all those things, but I’m taking over. We’re not staying here where everyone can get at us. You’re coming to the only place that I know is completely safe.”

Sunshine’s heart began to beat wildly with hope. “Where are we going?”

Zephyr kissed her. “Home.”

Chapter Seven

He flashed them to the front porch of a beautiful log cabin. She looked around in awe at the mountains, the tall spruce trees and the lush forest for a minute, taking slow deep breaths of the crisp air.

"You live here? Where are we?" It was the most beautiful setting she'd ever seen. And she'd seen pretty much everything.

"Rocky Mountain High, baby. No neighbours. Well, except for old Shoethief the Black Bear." He lowered his voice to a whisper. "Never leave your slippers on the porch or he'll be wearing them before the night is out."

Sunshine giggled and shifted in his embrace. "Umm, Zephyr? I can walk,"

"Nope. Mine. My toy and I'm not done playing with it yet." She laughed at him, snuggling in tight.

He blew at the front door and it swung wide open. A beautiful stone fireplace with a mantle cut from a solid cedar log, hardwood floors and a glistening modern kitchen were the first things she noticed. The second was she was being carried into the cabin and slowly lowered against his body, the view of his dark eyes more incredible than the craftsmanship in the house.

It felt so right to be there. In his house. In his arms.

"I didn't invite them there," she said, her fingers brushing over his cheek. "Cirrus told me Blaze asked them to follow us. It must have been him who invited them. I've never asked either of them to the falls and I've never..."

Zephyr's hands were tight on her body, his anger still simmering under the surface. "Blaze. I should have figured. Your dad likes to be in control a little too much. Especially when it comes to you." He kissed her softly, but before it got really interesting, he pulled away.

"Come on, I'll show you around. I'm proud of my house. Did most of the work myself."

Sunshine linked their hands together again and wandered through the comfortable home with great interest. He'd used soft colours to decorate throughout, pale pastels in the

living room including stained glass covering one upper window completely. When it was daylight it would reflect all the colours into the room filling it with a rainbow of jewels.

As gorgeous as the house was, the man was better. Her heart pounded. Would he believe that she never meant to hurt him? There was so much that she wanted to say to him she didn't know where to start.

"Zephyr, I need to tell you. I've never been with the Cumulus... I mean, I would never..." Sunshine wasn't sure what she could say that would make this better.

"Hush," Zephyr said, kissing her fingers. "I know. I'm sorry I didn't realise what was going on sooner, why you didn't speak to me. It happened before, in grade school, remember? Before they transferred the Cloud boys? I should have remembered. I should have been there for you a whole lot faster. I'm glad they didn't try anything."

Sunshine shivered. "I was pretty safe. Once you left, my ability to heat returned. When you showed up, they were seconds away from being evaporated."

Zephyr laughed, the deep tones stroking over her skin like butter. "It's done and past, other than a little talk I plan to have with your father. Go look around and I'll join you in a minute. I need to get a couple of things together." He kissed her again. Sweet manna on her lips, the feel of his mouth brushing hers.

He patted her on the bottom and guided her towards the back of the house as he headed to the kitchen.

Sunshine walked down the hallway, opening side doors and happily peeking her head into rooms. Finally she found the door to the master bedroom.

It was amazing. She'd never seen anything like it. The enormous room was divided into three spaces. The first was a sitting area around a fireplace, small bookshelves built into the walls. It was cosy and comfortable and she imaged relaxing here in the evening after a day's work.

The bed itself was raised on a platform. His sheets and pillows were all dark shades of burgundy and her skin tingled. She was going to be in the bed. Soon. With Zephyr. Anticipation made her heart skip a beat.

A beautiful bathroom was tucked around the corner. Jacuzzi tub, side shower stall, granite counter tops and everywhere the rich colour and scent of cedar. He'd done a wonderful job building his home.

French doors opened onto a private section of deck. Heat waves shimmered above the hot tub and Sunshine smiled.

Zephyr had good taste in pleasure.

She went into the bathroom and slipped off her things, reaching for the robe on the back of the door. Sunshine hesitated when she saw there were two robes, one too small to be Zephyr's. It was also a pretty yellow she didn't think was Zephyr's colour.

She picked it up tentatively. Hopefully he'd flashed it here for her. She didn't want to know if another woman was in his house regularly enough to have a spare robe. Not that she had any right to be jealous. None. The soft texture of the robe teased her fingers. She lifted it cautiously, sniffing to see if any perfume lingered on it.

"You can put it on, if you have to. I like the view very much without it, but you might be chilly on the deck. It's yours. The robe, I mean."

Zephyr stood in the doorway, his gaze roaming over her appreciatively before he walked up and flipped the robe over. Her name was embroidered on the breast.

"Wow, you thought of everything, didn't you? I'm touched." Sunshine said. He helped her put on the robe, smoothing his hands down the silky fabric, over her shoulders, her breasts, around her waist. She dropped her head back on his shoulder for a minute, his touch so good she could barely think. And that was over material.

He grabbed the other robe and gestured to the main part of the room. "If you'd like, I've lit the fire. Or we can pop into the hot tub."

Sunshine wandered out. The fire crackled, and a tray with snacks and two glasses of red wine sat nearby on the low table.

"I think the fire, please. Hot tub later?"

He sat on the soft sheepskin rug and leaned against the couch, patting the space next to him. Instead, Sunshine crawled into his lap. She was too eager to go slow. As they nestled together in front of the fire, the heat built higher in her body.

Zephyr traced a finger over her cheek, down her neck, to the vee of the robe. He cleared his throat a few times.

"Do you know what it does to me knowing you're naked under that robe? That you're naked and in this house? Naked and sitting in my lap." He stared at her for a long moment. "I want you, Sunshine. Completely."

She answered by slipping the robe off her shoulders and letting it fall into a puddle in his lap, the sheer fabric pooling around her hips. His gaze traced her body and her nipples responded. Just the thought of him staring made the tips pucker, tingles of need shooting to her core. She slipped her hands through the opening of his robe and stroked her hands over his warm chest. He was as solid as she imagined, the slight dusting of hair on his chest tangling under her fingers. She leant in, swept her arms around his neck and pressed their bare torsos together as their lips met.

Zephyr took control of the kiss, feathering her mouth, pulling her body tight to him, crushing her breasts against his firm chest. Sunshine bit his lips while his tongue explored, his hands possessively running down her body. He stroked her shoulder blades before grasping her gently around the neck. He tugged his fingers through her long curls to splay her hair over them both like a curtain of white silk.

He kissed her ear, her jaw, her neck. He dragged his teeth over her skin then licked the sting away. There was not a whisper of air between their bodies, not a speck of light passing between. Skin to skin, hands touching, nails dragging, hot caresses that left no inch lonely for contact.

Through it all, they kissed. Sunshine had never felt so connected, so cherished. Zephyr consumed her completely, not a flash fire, but with glowing coals that burned brighter and brighter. His mouth was the only way to drag air into her body, his skin under her hands the only way to keep her heart beating.

Still her need grew. Heat rose from the inside out, her core demanding she be filled. Under her hips she felt need rising in Zephyr as well.

Actually, if he rose much more, they'd be on the ceiling.

Suddenly aloft in his arms Sunshine opened her eyes to see the bed in her peripheral vision. Zephyr was tender as he laid her down. He dropped his robe to the floor and stalked his way up her body to finish suspended over her, the warmth of his skin reaching to touch her.

He lowered himself. Skin contact sent another shot of electricity through her and she opened her legs, inviting him to nestle more intimately against where she needed him the most.

"Oh, no. Not so fast. First, I'm going to taste every inch of your body, Sunshine. Only after you're good and ready for me will I take you.

"I'm ready." Sunshine struggled to lift her hips. The head of his shaft nudged her pussy lips. If she just...

Zephyr dropped his weight on her and pinned her in place. "Ah, ah. None of that. You can't get out of your responsibilities that quickly." He grinned at her like the Cheshire cat.

She'd never liked cats.

"Zephyr, please, I need you." She wanted to be one with him more than anything she'd ever wanted before.

His grin faded. Dark need filled his eyes and he lowered his head to her shoulder. To her collarbone. To the top of her breast. Zephyr kissed her skin, suckled on her. Biting and nipping and caressing with his mouth. His hands were everywhere, his mouth laying a line of gunpowder down her body. He lapped at her belly button, his teeth dragged on the belly ring with a tug then his mouth shifted lower and his kisses became yet more intimate.

The temperature in the room rose as her body responded. She tried to keep within the safe zone she'd been taught but Zephyr's touch erased the rules. Sweat formed on their bodies, and when his tongue laved from crotch to clit, she heard the fire blaze and sparks roar up the chimney into the night air.

"No, Zephyr, we have to stop. It's too much. I can't control it." She shook, whether with the need to stop or the need to finish, she honestly couldn't say.

He raised his head far enough to see straight into her soul. "You can't control it, I can't control it. But together we'll be fine. Trust me, Sunshine. Let me love you. Love me back."

Sunshine dropped her head back into the pillow with a cry as he licked her clit. Didn't he realise his beautiful house could go up in flames? She'd rarely lost control of her powers but she'd never felt like this before either.

Zephyr slipped a finger into her sheath and drew her rigid clitoris into his mouth. He suckled, softly, but it was enough to cause the wine in the glasses to bubble, steam rising from the surface.

"Oh solar flares, Zephyr, no!" Tears slid down her face as the tension in her built to a crest, as the feeling of ignition grew to the point of no return. He added another finger, putting more pressure on the sensitised nerves of her pussy, and the sound of sparks

flickered throughout the room. His mouth was on her, hot and wet and pressing hard on her clit, then suckling again.

Flames burst around her, her womb clenched and drenched his fingers with fiery liquid. Her breath caught in her lungs and she melted into the bed, pleasure pulsing through her veins like mercury in the desert heat.

Zephyr rose and pressed his cock into her, the bulging head stretching her wide as he forced himself into the still convulsing walls of her vagina. "Let me in, Sunshine, let me take you." He stroked her cheek gently as he slipped another inch into her body. He pulled back, pushed in, driving her higher into the danger zone.

Sunshine saw sparks in the air around them, a haze of heat rising from the floor like on a sun-baked road in Arizona. She couldn't understand why the room hadn't exploded with a flash.

With a final thrust, Zephyr filled her. Filled her body and soul, his eyes staring into hers as he paused, an expression of incredulous joy on his face.

"You feel so right around me, Sunshine. Hot, wet. Never let me go." He pulled back slowly and every inch of him, every ridge and bump, massaged the walls of her sheath. The heat of his cock warmed her to scalding from the inside out.

He pressed in, steady and sure, his hips driving her into the mattress as she wrapped her legs around him. She opened herself to allow him to fill her another inch, another small bit of pleasure squeezed from her body.

They shook the bed, the curtains at the window gusting each time Zephyr drove into her. Pleasure tingled, her blood pounding in her clit as his body dragged over her again and again. He dropped his mouth to suck at one breast, then the other. Never breaking stroke with his hips, he covered her breasts with kisses that tore through her defences and left her barely able to breath.

Sensation overload was imminent.

"Come for me, Sunshine. Squeeze me with your beautiful pussy so I can feel you around me forever."

She closed her eyes and saw fireworks. As dangerous as it was, she let go her control and let the passion that had built to overwhelming temperatures burst out of her. Her pussy grabbed Zephyr, clutching his shaft as he dragged out and thrust once more. A thousand

waves compressed him as the heat flash from her body raced through him and into the air beyond them.

Zephyr cried out, his seed spurting impossibly hot into her depths as he pulsed within her. They collapsed, still locked together, Zephyr pinning her to the bed. His chest heaved as he tried to suck in air from the oxygen-depleted room.

Sunshine lay with her eyes closed, heart wildly pounding. The crackling sound of fire filled the air around them but it was familiar, comforting. Their lovemaking had been everything that she'd hoped it to be. His body and hers fit together so well. His tenderness fit even better.

Long minutes later, Zephyr rolled to the side and turned her to nestle into the curve of his body, her butt snug against his slowly flagging erection.

"I hope you're planning on me staying the night because there's no way I'm getting up on time tomorrow. I might sleep until noon. Two days from now." Sunshine tucked his hand tighter against her belly.

Zephyr kissed her shoulder. "I'd like you to stay the night. In fact, I'd like..." He leaned his head on her shoulder and fell silent. Sunshine rolled over and opened her eyes to see what was the matter.

She shot upright in the bed.

The entire room around them was filled with flames. White hot around the bed, cooler shades of blue and purple towards the edges. "Zephyr, your house. I'm so sorry, I forgot. What have I done? Let me—" She frantically waved a hand towards the flames to extinguish them but nothing changed. Heat pulsed around them. She gave a little cry of fear.

Zephyr pulled her back into his arms. "Hush, it's all right, Sunshine. The room is safe, we're safe. It's the residue of our lovemaking. You can't wave it away. Give it a little time and it'll calm down."

She straight-armed him to his back and crawled on top, pinning him to the bed. Zephyr chuckled. "Well, it will calm down unless you go and do something like get me started again." The long length of his cock under her hips rose with interest and she shifted away to safety.

"How is this possible? What is going on here, Zephyr?"

He looked impossibly sexy, lying under her. Impossibly guilty as well. Sunshine narrowed her gaze at him.

"I made a few custom design changes when I built the house." She continued to stare, her finger poking him in the chest. He pulled a funny face. "Fine. I asked your dad what kind of precautions I should take to make sure we didn't set off solar flares when we made love."

No. Way. "You asked my *dad*?"

Zephyr had the grace to look embarrassed. "Well, he and Dazzle have obviously survived and they had you, so I figured –"

"You asked my *dad*?"

"I just wanted to –"

"You asked –"

Zephyr flipped her off and dragged her into his arms while she struggled to get away.

"Stop it, Sunshine. Don't run away from me. Not now. Not ever."

She slapped at his shoulder. "I can't believe you asked my dad about safe sex. Do you know how embarrassing that is?" She wiggled for another moment as he pinned her in place, his hand stroking over her back to soothe her. Was it really so bad? Sunshine stared up at him, his dark eyes filled with deep emotion.

Zephyr kissed her softly. "Do you remember how embarrassed you were when you lost your virginity and unwittingly burned down half of Chicago?"

"That wasn't me, it was the cow's fault."

He stopped her protests by kissing her so thoroughly she couldn't think. When they came back up for air, the flames were still there but now a very comforting and familiar pale blue glow.

"So..." Sunshine said, "are you going to tell me what this is all about?"

Zephyr stroked her cheek. "I love you, Sunshine. I have for a long, long time. I want you to live with me. I want you to marry me. I built this house for us. In fact, we can safely fool around in every room, except the wine cellar. Heat and good wines don't mix."

Sunshine stared. She was sure her jaw was on the ground. He wanted to marry her? He built the house for them?

He was insane.

Wasn't he? A little corner of her heart began to hope. Maybe it was more than just a contest. His caring, his tenderness. All of it was real? Sunshine held back a little, fearing rejection.

"It was just a contest. You don't even like me."

Zephyr groaned and pulled her close. "I've loved you since you gave me a hotfoot in third grade. That's why I've chased off the bullies and blown up at the girls who teased you. That's why I let you provoke me for years, hoping you'd see... Well, Sunshine, I hoped you'd see that you love me too."

Sunshine looked around at the glowing walls that seemed so familiar. The memory of her family home, growing up with the same blue lighting the halls, made her eyes widen.

"It's love!" She pointed at the flames. "The colour, the flames. It's what happens when the house is filled with love."

Zephyr nodded.

"Wow."

They grinned at each other. Sunshine's heart overflowed with emotion. It was real. He loved her.

Zephyr lifted a finger in warning. "I'm still giving your dad a piece of my mind for pulling the Cumulus boys into the picture —"

She silenced him the best way possible. Many minutes later, the room was once again brilliant white and they were on the floor of the bathroom.

"Wow. Again." Her body glowed, her heart was full.

Zephyr turned his head to look at her as they sprawled on their backs on the cool tile. "So, are you going to answer me?"

"I didn't hear a question." Sunshine said as she examined her nails. "Damn, I broke one." She giggled for a second. Old habits died hard.

Laughing, Zephyr swept her into his arms. "For that, I'm not asking, I'm going to assume the answer is yes. Oh, and there is enough room for at least five children."

"Five?" Her eyes snapped open in shock.

"Eight, if we get bunk beds. I made sure everything is fireproof and draft-free until they're trained. I didn't want them to burn down the place or be able to sneak out of the

house without us knowing it." Zephyr spoke knowingly then chuckled. "Not that *I* ever did that."

Sunshine closed her mouth and hid a smile. Gods, they would have the wildest children around. She slipped her arms around his neck then wrinkled her nose. "So do we have to declare a winner? Was it a real contest?"

The expression of adoration on Zephyr's face was priceless and she smiled back with delight.

"Oh, it was a real contest all right. I win." He held her body tight to his. "You can claim any title you want, but I still win."

About the Author

Vivian was playing hooky the day they taught about the importance of getting a 'real' job; she was hiding out at the local library rereading everything for the fifth time. Since then she's become a Jack-of-all-trades with a job experience list only slightly smaller than the average phone book.

She's hiked, biked, canoed, kayaked and camped throughout Canada, Europe, England, and the States, including Hawaii and Alaska. All these adventures have now become settings for her overactive muse to wander.

Vivian lives in Western Canada with her long-time sweetie, two wonderful kids and a dog that looks like a stuffed dog.

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