



Lust Bites
DISCOVERING DAISY
Lacey Thorn

A Total-E-Bound Publication



www.total-e-bound.com

Discovering Daisy

ISBN # 978-0-85715-159-9

©Copyright Lacey Thorn 2010

Cover Art by Natalie Winters ©Copyright June 2010

Edited by Claire Siemaszkiewicz

Total-e-bound Publishing

This is a work of fiction. All characters, places and events are from the author's imagination and should not be confused with fact. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, events or places is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form, whether by printing, photocopying, scanning or otherwise without the written permission of the publisher, Total-e-bound eBooks.

Applications should be addressed in the first instance, in writing, to Total-e-bound eBooks. Unauthorised or restricted acts in relation to this publication may result in civil proceedings and/or criminal prosecution

The author and illustrator have asserted their respective rights under the Copyright Designs and Patents Acts 1988 (as amended) to be identified as the author of this book and illustrator of the artwork

Published in 2010 by Total-E-Bound Publishing, Think Tank, Ruston Way, Lincoln, LN6 7FL, United Kingdom.

Warning:

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

Lottery Brides

DISCOVERING DAISY

Lacey Thorn

Chapter One

Daisy sat on the cot in the tiny jail and watched the redhead pace. She recalled the sheriff had called the girl Sarah. A pretty name for the girl. She hoped that the young woman would get a decent husband in the lottery drawing. She struck Daisy as a woman who would endure what she had to, the type of woman Daisy had once been. But every woman had her limits and Daisy had finally reached hers. And reaching them had landed her in this cell and in the bride lottery.

She'd come west to Texas with her sister and brother-in-law when their parents had died. She hadn't wanted to be alone in the big house. So when Clancy, her sister's husband, had made the decision to sell everything and start afresh out west she had offered no complaints and gone along with them. She could have stayed with her spinster aunt, could have accepted any of the numerous offers of marriage, but had hoped for adventure and instead... Well, she'd found her sister's life wasn't the fairy tale it seemed.

They'd bought a farm just outside of this sleepy little town and it had been up to her and Amelia to run it. Clancy had business in town and was gone often for weeks at a time. But Daisy preferred those times to when he would come back to the farm with mean-looking men in his company. She didn't like the way they eyed her and her sister, nor the way that Clancy didn't seem to care. She was almost certain that they were all up to no good but her sister didn't want to hear about it.

Daisy usually escaped for the few days when Clancy and his friends showed up, at her sister's insistence. She wanted Amelia to come with her to the little shack in the woods that they had discovered. But Amelia said that if they were both gone Clancy would just come to find them. She felt that it was her responsibility as his wife to stay. But Daisy noticed that her sister seemed to die a little more each time the men came and left. However, when she asked her what happened Amelia would just clam up and move to a different topic.

Daisy noticed the bruises, the haunted look in her sister's eyes and the way she showed real fear when Clancy could be seen returning. So the last time Daisy had snuck back late in the evening and watched through the window. She'd been sick at what she saw. While

Clancy sat and watched, each of the men who were with him took turns raping her sister. They were rough and violent and Daisy no longer had to wonder at the bruises that marred her sister's fair skin. She had been violently ill and wanted to barge in and save Amelia. But a hand had clamped around her mouth and strong arms had carried her away.

When she was released she turned to see what she was facing and was surprised at the old man who stood before her. He was an Indian, and she'd heard horrid stories of how they raped and took the scalps of their victims.

But he'd calmed her and using his hands to communicate had made her see that he wouldn't hurt her. A friendship had been born and she learned that he had been watching over her for some time. Or, sometimes she wondered if maybe he had just been following Clancy or one of his men? Either way she was glad that she had a friend. Over the next weeks she'd met him here as often as she could and he had taught her how to defend herself. The old man was quick and wiry and amazing. Clancy was gone for several months this time and as she watched her sister grow large with child she continued to meet the man she had dubbed Saviour and learned all that she could from him.

She now knew how to fight if she needed to. She could use her hands, her feet, a knife, and had proved amazingly adept. She had strength she never knew she had. He taught her other things as well, how to trap small game like rabbits and how to cook the most amazing things from the meat. She knew how to skin and clean and even how to make a fire in the open. She was no longer a city girl. She was a true frontier woman now. And all thanks to Saviour. Now they could even communicate better with each other. He was picking up some of the English from her and she had learned a few words from him as well. She still didn't know his given name as he seemed to like the name she'd given him.

But nothing lasts forever and soon Clancy was on the horizon again, with more friends. And this time she was not leaving. Her sister was almost six months pregnant and would never be able to stand the abuse these men would dish out. So Daisy made her stand. She thought nothing of the way she looked. But the men did. She had long blonde hair that was braided to the small of her back and big brown eyes. Her skin was no longer fair but had taken on a soft golden glow from her time outdoors. She was tall for a woman, five feet seven inches, most of it legs. But there was nothing she could do to hide the fullness of her breasts beneath the calico of her dress.

She felt their gazes, felt their hunger and shuddered. She hoped that she could take them, hoped that they left her sister alone. And she hoped and prayed that Saviour, who she knew watched over her, would stay away and not get hurt. He was like family to her and she didn't want to lose another member of her family.

The men settled in and Daisy laced their food with the powder Saviour had given her. It was supposed to make the men sleep. Then she could get her sister out of there, if only for the night. But Clancy didn't touch his food. He sat and drank and watched Daisy with a fiery lust in his eyes. Though he was only a few inches taller, the look in his eyes intimidated her. His arms were muscular and whatever he was doing for months at a time was keeping him fit.

"We need more water," he yelled and Daisy grabbed the bucket and headed out to the well. She noticed a few of the men yawning and hoped that soon they'd be asleep. But luck didn't seem to be with Daisy and Amelia tonight. A piercing scream sounded and Daisy dropped the bucket and ran at her sister's distress. When she reached the door it was to see two of the men tearing at her sister's clothes saying they had never fucked a pregnant woman. Her sister screamed and struggled between them but she was no match for the men who held her.

Daisy moved to help her but strong arms caught her from behind and she was jerked against the aroused body of her brother-in-law.

"No disappearing to help the neighbours this time Daisy girl. This time I'm going to fuck you like I've been wanting to since the day I married your sister." He began carrying her towards the bedroom and she lay still, saving her energy for when he released her. She kept her eyes on her sister trying to will Amelia some of her strength but her sister didn't see her.

The bedroom door slammed and Amelia's scream stopped. A cold chill washed over Daisy and she knew that her sister's life might depend on her getting to Amelia in time. She was thrown to the bed, knocking the air out of her and before she could catch her breath Clancy was over her ripping at her dress with one hand while he worked on releasing his pants with the other.

She lay stunned for only a moment before she went into action. Her knee came up and nailed him in the area he planned to use on her and her hands reached for his eyes. She clawed at them and must have reached her mark as he howled in pain and tried to roll away. But years of hatred were bottled inside her and she kept attacking. He groped blindly for his

boot and she noticed the sheathed knife that he was reaching for. Lost in the rage she took it before he could and felt cold satisfaction as the blade buried in his chest, a perfect stab into the heart, if he had one. He looked at her with surprise. His mouth opened and shut without uttering a sound and blood began to trickle from the corner.

And Daisy felt nothing. No joy, no pain, no shame for having taken his life. She was empty. There was noise behind her but she was too numb to care. She'd taken a life, had his blood staining her hands. And she felt nothing. She should feel something.

The pounding of footsteps broke her from her reverie and she realised someone was running from the house. She slowly left the bedroom and walked back into the other room to find her sister. She vaguely took note of the bodies of the other men around her. The two who had been attacking her sister were dead, and she knew without looking that Saviour had indeed come to try and save them. The other two men were gone and she didn't care if it was of their own free will or not.

Her gaze locked on the still form of her sister. Too still. Her dress was shredded and Daisy could already see the bruises forming on her sister's breasts, belly and thighs. And around her neck. Amelia's eyes were open, but sightless. And with a wailing cry Daisy embraced the still warm body of her dead sister. She felt Saviour behind her, trying to pull her away but she couldn't move and the old man seemed to understand.

She was still there when the sheriff came, still cradling her sister's body. Saviour must have left at some point and she was glad that he wasn't here to be blamed, glad that her friend would not suffer for trying to protect her.

Sheriff Duckett walked through the door with one of the boys from the ranch down the road behind him, the boy's eyes wide at the carnage that lay in the house.

"What in God's name happened here?" the sheriff demanded.

And with a deep breath Daisy answered. "I killed them. I killed them all."

And now here she sat on a cot in the local jail waiting to be given to the man whose name was pulled for her in the bride lottery. The sheriff hadn't believed her capable of killing but when she refused to say differently he'd had no choice but to bring her in. He'd talked to her about the wife lottery, explained it to her. Women were few and far between in the west and so many small towns had begun what was known as the bride lotteries.

Women who were accused of a crime were basically given to a man in marriage instead of prosecuted and sent to jail or hung. Honestly she didn't care, was still too numb to care. So she sat and she waited. She stood when the sheriff came for her, let him guide her to stand before the minister. She heard the mutterings of "half-breed" but paid little attention. When she was nudged she said the right words. Then she was led to a chair to sit while her new husband spoke quietly with the sheriff. She had no idea how much time passed before her husband came for her, led her out into the fresh air and over to two horses that were saddled and waiting.

"Do you ride?" her husband asked her and she finally looked up at him. He was a big man, towering over her. His skin was a dark tan, his hair a long glossy black that hung over his shoulders. But his eyes were a brilliant blue. Except for the eyes, he looked a lot like Saviour and she seemed to relax and breathe for the first time since that night.

"Yes," she breathed. "I can ride." And she softly smiled at him.

He seemed startled by her smile, almost alarmed by it. But whatever he was thinking he kept it to himself and lifted her easily into the saddle of one of the horses before mounting the other.

"Let's hope you can keep up," was all he said before leading her out of town.

And Daisy wondered if she would ever get the chance to see Saviour again and tell him thank you. Somehow she figured he would know even if she never saw him again.

It was a long ride and though she had become accustomed to the saddle, she hadn't slept well while in jail and was having trouble staying awake while they rode. Luckily she caught herself every time she went to fall off the horse. Had she known her new husband better, or, well, at all, she would have told him how tired she was. But though she had felt comfortable around him immediately, she'd learned through watching her sister that it paid to be a little leery of the people around you. So she struggled to keep her eyes open and her bottom firmly in the seat.

Jacob Donovan couldn't believe the position he'd found himself in. A bride! Who the fuck would have thought he would be heading back to the ranch with a bride? A woman who, according to the sheriff, had confessed to killing several men. He glanced back at the horse behind him and the woman who was falling asleep in the saddle. He just didn't think that she was capable of killing a man. She didn't look like she would have the strength to do

much at all. Which made him even angrier, since his dick had been hard since he'd first seen her.

She was beautiful to him, like a prairie flower. Her hair was as bright as the sun and hung in a braid down to the small of her back. Jacob wanted to see it loose around her, flowing around them both. Her skin wasn't the pale white of most women who had travelled this far west with their families but a soft golden shade that he longed to taste. She wasn't afraid of the sun at least.

But it was her eyes that called to him, that pulled at his soul. They were filled with a wisdom that didn't fit with her youthful figure. She had seen a lot, probably experienced more than anyone knew and it had left its mark on her. Her eyes were sad. And he wanted to erase whatever had put that emotion there and see happiness instead. He wanted to hear her laugh, to see her smile. And that scared the hell out of him. His life wasn't easy. Not his or his brothers'. That's what came with being the son of a Texas Ranger and his Indian wife. A half-breed. No life for a woman.

He had spent his years as a Ranger, following in his father's footsteps. And now he was done, returning home to help on the ranch that his dad had worked so hard to obtain. It was his younger brother's turn now and his turn to head home and take over. Dad's health was bad and their mom was a worrier. Plus with both of their grandfathers living there now it was sure to be stressful. At least the two men got along which was funny to see. The big Irishman with his black hair and blue eyes and the Indian with his long braid and weathered skin. It was the only family Jacob had ever known, though, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

He glanced back as his new bride wavered in the saddle again. The silly woman was going to hurt herself if she fell, but so far was too stubborn to admit she was tired. He'd push them just over the river and to the clearing on his father's land. They would be safe there to spend the night before travelling the rest of the way to the ranch in the morning. He wondered if he would be sleeping alone tonight or if his wife knew what to expect as a bride. He didn't think his body would wait much longer for the release it was in need of.

He turned his horse to cross at the shallowest part which would still have the horses swimming for just a few paces before they found solid ground again. It couldn't be helped and she seemed to be okay on the horse as long as she stayed awake.

He'd no sooner thought of that than a splash pulled his attention to the woman behind him again. She must have fallen asleep and fell. Thankfully the fall didn't seem to hurt her and she was swimming towards him. The current was with them so it wasn't as bad as it could have been. She grabbed the arm he held down to her and he easily lifted her into his lap.

She was laughing. Her face lit with the joy of her unplanned swim. And he felt his heart do a flip in his chest before settling back into a steady rhythm again. Her wet dress clung to her revealing the turgid points of her nipples. Water dripped down her face and where her dress rested on his legs he was quickly becoming wet as well. The weather was typically unpredictable. He could be scalding hot in the day and still feel a chill in the air in the evening. He would need to stop and build a fire so that they could both dry out.

But first he was going to do something that every bride should experience on her wedding day. Jacob leant down and captured her soft lips with his. He flicked his tongue and when she gasped slipped it inside her mouth to taste and explore. She was sweet and hot and he didn't want to pull away even when he knew they both needed air. Reluctantly he did and wasn't surprised to see the look of nervousness in her eyes. But he was surprised to take in the flush of desire on her face, the way her breasts rose and fell and the way her nipples were even more prominently displayed against the wet fabric of her dress. His little wife appeared to want him as much as he wanted her.

"Let's get settled in and get out of these wet clothes," he rasped out in a husky voice.

Her eyes flared and only when she wiggled on his lap did he realise that she probably felt how much he wanted her as well.

As soon as they were out of the water and on solid ground she slid from his lap. "I may be your wife but for right now that is in name only. You're bigger and stronger and if you decide to take what you want I might not be able to stop you. But I'll do my best to try."

Her hair was slipping free of its binding. Her legs were braced about shoulder width apart. Her hands on her hips and her chin back as she looked up at him with fire in her eyes.

With a deep breath he nodded and rode forward leaving her to cool off and giving him a few minutes to deal with what had just hit him. Jacob Donovan was going to fall in love. And he was going to fall hard.

Chapter Two

Daisy didn't know what to think. Her breathing had increased. Her breasts ached. And she wanted the man who was now her husband like she had never wanted before. His kiss had awakened something inside her, something scary and yet exciting. She found herself wondering what it would feel like to let him touch her as a man touched a woman. How it would feel to let him see her body unclothed, to run his hands and mouth over every inch of her skin. She shivered and it was just as much from her thoughts as from her wet clothes in the cooling evening air.

His horse was ground tied just ahead in a cluster of trees. She could tell that he intended to spend the evening here and wondered if he had more than one bed roll or if she was supposed to share with him. She gulped as she realised that she didn't know which one she wanted. She started picking up kindling as she headed to the camp and he smiled at her as she dropped it when she reached him.

"Do you know how to make a fire?" he asked.

"Yes," she nodded thinking of Saviour and all the things that he had taught her. They would come in very handy now.

"We are on my family's land now," he said. "We'll be safe enough here."

"If your family owns this then why don't we just go to the house?" she asked suddenly, wondering if he was ashamed to show his lottery wife to his family.

"The house is still a good ride from here and you're falling asleep as it is," he stated. "We'll pass the night here and go the rest of the way tomorrow."

She nodded once, still uncertain but not willing to ask him yet. She couldn't blame him if he was having second thoughts about her as his wife. She wasn't sure she'd make a good one anyway. She knew for a fact that she would not be able to tolerate the things that her sister had. No man would ever strike her in anger. Not as long as she could move.

"Start the fire and I'll grab some bigger pieces of wood," he grunted throwing his saddle down beside her. "Then we'll fix something to eat."

She nodded again and knelt to do what he said. She would rather be busy than just sitting around not knowing what was coming. She was nervous, scared, and heaven help her even a little excited. Jacob Donovan honestly seemed like a good man. He hadn't yelled at her or struck out at her for slowing him down on the trail today. He had been patient and silent which she much preferred.

A loud shot jerked her from her thoughts and had her up on her feet instantly searching for any type of weapon that he might have left behind. A rifle lay next to his saddle and she grabbed it with both hands and tucked it close to her shoulder just in case.

Jacob came back into camp with his game only to see his new wife holding his gun on him. Not exactly the way he wanted this evening to go. The sheriff had told him that she confessed to murdering a group of men. Jacob had thought he was joking but then Duckett had never really been known for his humour.

"Want to ease that down, sugar," he said calmly as he walked up next to the fire she had built. She did appear to know how to do some things.

"I heard a shot," she whispered as she eased the gun from her shoulder and then being sure to keep the barrel down handed it to him. He took it and laid it back by his saddle before looking up at her.

"You know how to shoot that thing?" he asked.

"Yes," she said and there was a fire in her eyes. "I practiced every day my brother-in-law was gone."

"You any good?" he had already skinned and cleaned the rabbit and now made a spit over the fire and put the rabbit on to cook.

"I can hit what I aim at," was her only response but he noticed the shiver that went through her and wondered if it was from more than the cold.

"Why don't you get out of those wet clothes," he told her turning towards his saddle bag and rummaging inside. He pulled a clean shirt out and held it out to her. It should cover her well enough. "This will have to suffice until your clothes dry out. Then we'll worry about getting your stuff once we reach the house."

"My stuff?" she queried as she took the shirt he held out to her.

"I figured you'd want your clothes and personal stuff from the house you lived in," he said and looked up in time to see one tear leak from her eye and trail down her cheek. She wiped it away and staunchly held back the rest he could see shimmering.

"Thank you," she said. "I'd like that."

She hadn't actually thought that he was going to leave her with just the clothes on her back, had she? What kind of men had she known in her life? Obviously not very good ones. He had his work cut out for him where his new bride was concerned. But then he figured she'd be worth it.

"Go on and change," he said turning his eyes back to the rabbit cooking. "Hang your stuff over the lower limbs to dry and then you can lay the bedroll out and go ahead and climb in if you want."

"Is there only one bedroll?" she asked.

"I only carry one," he said and wondered if now would be the time that she told him she would not sleep with him.

She said nothing and it took all he had not to turn and watch her as he heard the rustle of her clothes coming off behind him. It was long agonizing minutes later before he heard her finally grab the bedroll and smooth it out. She cleared her throat twice before he heard her say, "You can look now."

He turned and lost his breath. She sat on top of the covers with her knees tucked to the side. His shirt was long but every time she shifted it did as well giving him glimpses of her creamy flesh. She was unbraiding her hair, a brush in her lap. He loved the way her full breasts pressed against the material of his shirt and knew that she had no idea just how gorgeous she was.

"Dinner will be ready soon," he grunted as he shifted his position trying to find relief for his swollen cock.

"What should we do in the meantime?" she asked and he wondered what she would do if he said he wanted to take her right now, to hell with ever eating.

"What would you like to do?" he asked instead.

"We could talk," she offered. "Maybe get to know a little about each other?"

"Alright," he agreed. "Sheriff said you killed a group of men. That true?" He watched her closer. He was a damn good Ranger. He could spot a lie a mile away. His new wife looked him straight in the eyes, never blinked, and lied.

"Yes," she said and he was damned if he wouldn't find out just who she felt such a strong need to protect.

"Want to tell me why?" he asked.

He caught the flashes of emotion she was struggling to hide. Fear, anger and a deep sorrow.

"They killed my sister," she said. "And the baby she was carrying."

"What?" he thundered and his voice must have startled her because she jumped, his shirt riding up to the top her thighs. It was a site that had his dick jumping and begging for release. "How many men? Who killed your sister? How the hell did this happen? And how did you do it on your own?" He'd seen a lot in his life both in and out of the Rangers. Enough to know that one woman would not have been able to kill the three men that Sheriff Duckett had said were found dead. And the sheriff had found footprints to indicate that there might have been more. His new wife was about to learn that there would be no lying to him. Ever.

"I did," Daisy stated and a calm seemed to fill her. She would never let a soul know that Saviour had been there, that he had tried to save her sister. As far as she was concerned she had killed one man so what did it matter if she claimed two others.

Jacob's gaze seemed to probe inside her searching for the truths she couldn't tell. "I can spot a lie a mile away, wife," he assured her and she felt a shiver work its way down her spine again. "You sure you want to stick with this story?"

She didn't want to lie to him, didn't want to start their relationship out this way. But honestly what choice did she have. No one had been there to help her and her sister. No one had cared. Until Saviour. And keeping him out of what happened seemed such a little thing to do when trying to repay him. "It was me," she said again but even she could hear the uncertainty in her voice.

"Eat," he said and handed her a plate. She could hear the truth of her lie in his voice and worried that she may have already killed what could have been.

They ate in silence and were done far too quickly to suit her. He took their plates and set them aside before turning back to her. He stared at her for a long moment and she couldn't help the way she fidgeted. It was as if he was waiting for her to confess, but that was something she couldn't do.

"Let's just go to sleep," he said and began to pull his boots off, removing his gunbelt and moving it by the top of the bag she was lying on.

"Where are you sleeping?" she queried though she was sure she already knew the answer.

"I only have one bedroll," he informed her as he shifted closer. "You're my wife and it is too cool a night to try and sleep somewhere else."

She nodded and moved to slide in turning to her side and trying to make herself as small as possible. He moved in behind her and she trembled as she felt the hardness of his arousal along her bottom.

"Easy," he murmured. "We'll just sleep for tonight."

The sad truth was she wasn't sure if that was all she wanted or not.

Jacob just might die before the night was over. The way his wife was cuddled into him had his cock screaming in his pants. One long leg was thrown over his and he could feel the heat of her pussy. His shirt had twisted around her waist leaving her lower half uncovered and only the strongest of will power kept his hand from creeping lower to explore her. But the way she was wiggling and stroking him was about to change all that. If she was a virgin maybe it would be better to claim her while she was half in, half out of sleep, when her dreams were still fresh in her mind.

He groaned. He wouldn't be able to take her that way. Virgin or not he wanted her wide awake and calling his name when he took her. If she moved one more time it would definitely be tonight.

Daisy sighed his name and her knee moved up to rest over his swollen groin. That was it. It was time to seduce his wife awake. She was his wife. That gave a man certain rights, and he was asserting one of them right now. the right to seduce her.

He rolled so that he was on his side and she lay on her back with one leg between his. The other was still up, bent to the side and he groaned as he glanced down at the flushed pink folds of her pussy. He could see the moisture and when she moaned again he couldn't help but wonder just what she was dreaming. He moved his hands and slowly began undoing the buttons on the shirt she was wearing. It was his after all. The thought made him grin. Somehow he didn't think Daisy would buy that as an excuse if she awoke while he was removing it.

Finally releasing the last button he tugged the material apart revealing his wife's naked form to his eyes for the first time. She was gorgeous, everything that a woman should be. Soft skin and rounded curves in all the right places. Her skin was cream and tanned, her breasts high and firm topped with sweet peach tinted nipples. Even as he watched they beaded in the cooler air and seemed to point up at him begging for his touch. He barely held himself in check. But there were other places he truly wanted to touch and explore first.

He bent low and nuzzled her neck and cheek just beside her ear. He had shed his shirt some time earlier and he groaned as his skin met hers and her nipples grazed his chest. Daisy arched into his touch, moaning, and he froze in place as shock moved through him, quickly replaced by a euphoria that had him nuzzling closer to her lips. She had called his name, had moaned it as he touched her. He could only hope that meant she was dreaming of him.

One hand swept down her body stroking her flesh from shoulder to hip and then back up. He caressed the side of her breast growing closer to the turgid point of her nipple with each new stroke. His lips found hers and he licked and nipped at hers before tracing them with his tongue. When she sighed this time he used that unguarded moment to slip his tongue inside and taste her.

She was sweet and hot and more responsive than he could have imagined. She tentatively moved her tongue along his. His hand found her nipple and his fingers plumped and squeezed before zeroing in on the point and plucking it. He tugged and she moaned again and her kiss lost its tentativeness.

He opened his eyes and she was looking at him. He reluctantly pulled from the kiss but kept his fingers stimulating her nipples. He wouldn't lie to her.

"I want you, Daisy," he told her and she shyly nodded her head. He could see the beginning of passion darkening her eyes, the flush of desire staining her cheeks. "Will this be your first time?" He had to know, as it would make all the difference in how quickly he claimed her.

She nodded her head and he almost came in his pants at the idea that he would be her first. For a man who had never planned to get married, he was certainly enjoying his wife.

"I'll be as gentle as I can," he promised. "But I've heard that it can be hard on a woman the first time she sleeps with her husband."

"I trust you," she said softly and his heart melted. One day, maybe sooner than he believed, he would whisper to her that he loved her, and he would mean it with all his heart. Daisy would be an easy woman to love.

He moved his mouth back down and let it slide down her throat to her chest. He let his hand glide from her nipple down over her stomach to the nest of curls that crowned her sweet pussy. He nuzzled her flesh letting his tongue taste her as his fingers sifted through the curls. He could feel her body tensing and knew that though she said she trusted him, she was still nervous and perhaps even a little afraid.

He ran his tongue over one nipple and felt her shudder beneath him. He licked and laved at it with his tongue before finally wrapping his lips around it and sucking it gently into his mouth. She seemed to come undone. Her moans filled the air and the hands she had kept so carefully at her sides now rose to twine in his hair and hold him close to her. She arched into him and he sucked greedily at her, tugging and pulling the nipple towards the roof of his mouth.

When she cried out again he used that moment to slip one finger inside her up to the first knuckle. She was tight, so tight around his finger but so hot and wet that it was easy to slide in and out. Soon she was shifting her legs restlessly and he was working his finger all the way inside her. He switched to the other nipple and added a second finger. She tensed but as he worked slowly she gradually accepted him and soon was lifting to meet his fingers.

He trailed kissed down her stomach, loving the soft skin and slight roundness there. He inhaled the sweet musk of her sex and using his other hand opened her to his gaze. She was soft and pink and dewy. The gleaming pearl of her clitoris called to him and he licked and probed it with his tongue. He kept his fingers slow and easy inside her but he could feel her release building.

He took her bud in his mouth and gave it a soft, slow suck before licking at it again. He continued doing this going back and forth between soft and hard until she was thrashing moaning. Finally he wrapped his lips around her clit and sucked greedily at it while thrusting his fingers fast. She exploded with a harsh cry as he worked her, keeping her in the orgasm for as long as he could. When she finally softened beneath him he slowed his fingers and pulled his mouth from her.

She whispered his name and he looked up at her and thought that she was truly beautiful in her passion. Her cheeks were rosy and flushed, her eyes bright and her hair was

a golden blanket around her head. Her lips and nipples were swollen from his touch and he wanted to taste her again.

He shifted over her, reaching to undo his pants and let his cock out as he moved between her thighs. He bent to kiss her, blocking her view of his size so as not to terrify her. He would fit but she might not realise that at the moment. He possessed her mouth, claiming every inch of it as he used one hand to guide his cock to her wet pussy.

She tensed at the first probe of his cock but he held her in the kiss, stilling until he felt her relax again. There was only one way to claim her, one way to eliminate the pain as quickly as he could. He slid his hand to her hip and held her in place before tensing and thrusting hard inside her. She was slick and wet and he managed to get almost all the way in but her sharp cry of pain filled the air.

"I'm sorry," he whispered then groaned as she tried to shift and move beneath him. "Stop," he urged feeling his orgasm building with each wiggle. "Try to be still while your body adjusts to me."

"I don't think that's possible," she moaned. "You're too big Jacob. I can't take you."

"Yes, you can," he did his best to assure her. "Just a little more and you'll have all of me."

"There's more?" she exclaimed and he almost chuckled at the way her eyes got bigger. She was certainly good for his ego.

She shifted again and he used her movement to slide the last few inches into her. She was snug and hot and so wet that it was all he could do not to just take her hard and fast until he came. She was made for him, made to cradle his flesh inside her. But if he didn't do this right, she would fear sex with her husband and that was the last thing he wanted.

He bent his mouth back to her nipple and slid his hand from her hip over to where his groin rested against hers. He rose just the slightest bit, changing the angle and allowing his fingers to find her pleasure centre again. Jacob plucked the nub then pressed softly against it while tracing circles. He took her nipple hard, sucking greedily once more and she came back to life beneath him. He knew there would be discomfort, knew there would be pain later, but for right now he wanted to try to bring her back into the pleasure with him.

Finally she was moving under him and he slowly pulled out until only the head of his cock remained and just as slowly slid it back in. This would kill him but as she began to moan with pleasure he knew that it would be worth it. Back and forth he went between her

nipples, sucking and pulling at each in turn. He pressed his thumb just a bit harder over her pearl and increased the rhythm of his thrusts. He was close, so close to filling her with his seed, to marking her as his and only his.

He lifted his head to look at her once more and revelled in the sight of her. Her head was arched back, her lips parted as she moaned and panted. She was going to come again. He could feel it and he would do his best to make sure he didn't short her by coming before her. He bent to take her kiss once more to feel her tongue against his own. He loved the way she tasted the way she kissed shyly but eagerly. She lifted her legs to brace his hips and that was all it took.

He thrust hard and fast running towards a finish he knew would leave him feeling like a dying man, one who had finally found heaven. He felt her tense, felt her pussy ripple around him just mere seconds before he found his release. His cock jerked and pulsed as he came and he would swear he could feel it all the way from his head to his toes.

He collapsed on top of her unable to hold his weight from her but she only wrapped her arms around his shoulders and held him to her.

"Will it always be like that?" He heard her whisper and he lifted his head wearily to try to reassure her.

"I've heard it only hurts the first time," he promised. "It should only get better."

"If it gets much better than that I just might die," she sighed and this time he did laugh. His life would never be the same now that he had discovered Daisy. And he honestly couldn't wait to get to know more about her.

Chapter Three

Daisy awoke to a delicious ache between her thighs. She was completely naked and her husband was already deep inside her groaning with pleasure.

"I thought you'd never wake up and join me," he whispered as he bent closer to kiss her.

She was leery and self-conscious. She must look a dishevelled mess, no bath last night, no brushing of her teeth, and she could still smell the sex they'd shared last night on her skin and his. But as he continued to move, all of that fell away. She was sore and there was a discomfort as he stroked his cock in and out of her. But the ache paled in comparison to the sensations his body awoke inside her.

His lips on her skin, the way his hands stroked over her flesh, and the sharp tug between her legs and he thrust in and out. It was an overload of too many sensations at once. She moaned and he stilled again.

"Am I hurting you?" he queried and somehow she knew that if she said yes he would stop no matter what it cost him. But she didn't want him to stop.

"No," she moaned again and lifted her legs to clasp the sides of his hips. It just seemed like a natural thing to do and the way it opened her up to his loving, the way he moaned, made her shudder. "I've never felt anything so wonderful in my whole life," she added in the barest whisper.

He heard her, though, as he stilled deep inside her and bent to taste her lips again. "I've never either," he swore and she believed that he meant it.

Words became too hard as he used hands, mouth and the hard thrusts of his body into hers to take her closer to orgasm. Her nipples were beaded points that seemed to call to his mouth. He sucked and nipped at them and the sensation seemed to travel a straight path to her womb. His strong hands cradled her hips and helped to lift her up to his thrusts. She was pure sensation, pure emotion.

She was on the edge of the pleasure she had felt for the first time last evening. He slid one hand between their bodies and rubbed the tightened pearl that seemed to trigger her

release. It ripped through her like an explosion of thunder and lightning. She had always loved a good storm and this one that raged inside her was the best she had ever experienced. She cried out and wrapped arms and legs around him, holding tightly as if in fear that she might fly away.

He held her to him and in moments she could hear him reach his pleasure, could feel the spill of his hot seed deep inside her. It seemed to trigger another smaller yet just as intense orgasm inside her. She shuddered and felt as if the world spun away, as if she floated on a soft breeze. She felt him collapse to her, the slide of his flesh against hers and she shuddered again.

"I could awake to this every morning for the rest of my life," she murmured and then gasped as she realised that she'd said that out loud.

He chuckled and moved to lie next to her. The tug of his penis pulling free of her pussy had her shuddering again. He leaned to her and kissed her brow. "I could too, wife," he told her.

She was his wife. His. Would he always treat her like this? Would there come a time when he shared her with others while he lusted after some other woman? Would he be like her brother-in-law had been? She shivered and went to roll away but he held her to him.

"There are things that we need to discuss," he said as he held her gaze. "Things that we must share with one another if we are to make this marriage work."

"Work how?" she asked and she wondered if he could see all the questions and doubts swirling in her eyes.

"If we are to build something to last a lifetime," he said and ran his fingers down her cheek until he cupped her chin and lifted her face to his. His lips were soft and gentle as he kissed her sweetly. "I would love for us to create the bond that my parents share."

"What is that?" she asked.

"We'll talk all about this and other things soon," he promised as he shifted from their bedroll to stand beside her unashamedly naked. He looked gorgeous from head to toe. His muscles bulged and rippled as he stretched and she could have watched him for hours. But he bent back down and with a squeal she found herself lifted high against his chest as he rose once more. "But first I think we should wash."

She looped her arms around his neck and held tight to him. He walked into the trees and soon she saw the pond that lay before them. The water looked crystal clear and

beautiful. He stepped in with her still cradled in his arms. She didn't expect the cool of the water against her flesh and squeaked as her feet hit the water followed quickly by her legs and bottom. Her husband laughed as he waded further out until the water was to the middle of his chest. She clung to him as the water washed around them.

"You could have warned me that the water was so cold," she told him and he laughed again. His face seemed to soften and look almost boyish when he laughed and she hoped that he did it often in their life together.

She felt the bulge of his swollen cock between them and squirmed closer to the heat it emitted. He groaned as he lowered his hands to cup her ass and pull her snug against him.

"I thought we were here to wash away all of this," she said but wrapped her arms around him tighter. She loved the slide of their wet flesh together, the way her nipples rasped against his chest. She wrapped her legs around his waist and felt the nudge of his erection against her bottom.

"I want you again," he groaned as he held her tight. "I can't imagine not wanting you."

She smiled at his words and hoped that he meant them. "I didn't see you put your name in the drawing," she whispered. It was a tiny thing that had bothered her from the beginning.

"I didn't," he said as he held her. "Duckett set it up. He said that you needed me. That I was exactly what you needed to heal."

"What?" she leant back and looked into his face. "Why would he say that? Why would he do that?"

"Duckett tends to do a lot of things that don't make sense at first," Jacob said and she sensed that he knew the sheriff well. "But the man is usually right."

"How did he know that you would be stopping through then?" she asked the next question that came to her mind.

Jacob laughed. "He sent me a wire at the Rangers office before I left for home. Said that he had something very important for me that couldn't wait."

"Me?" It was a whispered question.

"You," he agreed and bent to kiss her lips softly again. "And I'm glad that he did."

"Why were you at the Rangers office?" she asked.

"I've spent that last six years riding as a Ranger, just like my father and older brother before me," he said. "And once we reach the ranch house my youngest brother will take up where I left off and head to the office to sign up. It's sort of a family tradition."

"So will you be gone a lot?" She had to know if he would be leaving her for long periods of time. Where would he leave her? What would she do?

"No," he answered and bent to brush his lips over hers again. "My time is done. I'm heading home to stay, work the land, and breed horses, the best horses in the state."

"So you won't be leaving me?" She asked and hated the neediness in her voice.

"Not for a while," he vowed. "But there will be times when I might need to spend a night or two out on the range. Days when I'll need to travel to deliver horses or check on things."

"Can't I go with you?" she asked and he seemed to pause for just a moment. "I won't get in the way. I'm a quick learner and maybe I could even learn to help you." She rushed to add these before he could say no.

"I'd like that," he said and she could see on his face that he meant it.

She lifted higher and felt his cock slide in towards the opening of her pussy. She was sore but she wanted him again. It was as if he had awakened something inside her that only he could satisfy.

He groaned as she pressed down so that he lodged in the flared opening of her pussy.

"I don't want to hurt you," he groaned but he didn't pull away from her.

"Just once more," she begged. "Here with the water cradling us."

He moaned again as he gripped her hips and helped her slide down his length until he filled her once more. She leaned her head back and arched her body closer to him taking him all the deeper. It was incredible the way his body made hers feel. She was soft to his hard, smooth to his rough, flame to his fire.

He cupped her buttocks and helped her to rise and lower on his flesh. His lips found one of her nipples and sucked hard at it drawing the tip against the roof of his mouth as he seemed to feed on her. Their rhythm was soft and slow. It was a loving that she would always remember. A loving. That is exactly how she looked at it. They may not know all there was to know about one another but she already felt a strong physical link to him. As if he was the real reason she had come west with her sister.

The thought of her sister sent so many conflicting emotions through her. She held tight to Jacob as a storm raged inside her. Hope, fear, loss, love, anger, resentment, confusion. The emotions that raged inside her were diverse and intense. It felt as if she were swimming in a lake of her own making, trapped beneath the water. But then Jacob was there. And his every touch centred her, brought her back to the moment with him. His flesh against hers, inside hers. His touch both soft and hard at the same time. The sheriff was right. Jacob Donovan was exactly what she needed, who she needed.

They came together and she relaxed against him as the orgasm washed through her, slow and soothing to her raw nerves. She shuddered and at some point her ragged breathing gave way to wrenching sobs. Why couldn't this have been the way her sister's life had gone? Why couldn't Amelia have met a man like Jacob? Why did her sister have to die? Why?

Jacob held her to him soothing her hair from her face, running his hand up and down her spine as she sobbed. When she was too exhausted to do much of anything he slid free of her body and, holding her like a child, he dipped her beneath the water so that only their heads remained above. His hands brushed over her, stroking and soothing as he helped the water to wash over her skin.

When they were both as clean as only water could get them he waded out with her once more held high and tight against his chest. He carried them back to the campsite where the fire was just embers and, standing her on the bedroll, pulled a cloth from his saddlebag and briskly dried her before easing her arms once more into his shirt.

"Lie back down for a bit," he urged her as he helped her lie once more in the bedroll. "Rest while I get the fire going and get some food. You're safe here," he vowed and ran his hand over her cheek in a soft caress.

"Safe," she whispered and realised that she did feel that way with him.

"Rest," he said again and stood once more. She watched as he pulled his clothes on. He was truly the most beautiful man she had ever seen. His dark skin, the black hair that was unbound and spilled around his shoulders and face. The high cheek bones, the hard contours and bulging muscles. And yet there was tenderness in his touch, a comfort in his soft smile. She let her eyes flutter shut, let the exhaustion take her off to a deep, dreamless sleep.

Jacob glanced down at the woman sleeping so soundly. His heart gave a tug as he took in the dark shadows under her eyes. It had been easy to miss them when her gorgeous eyes

were open. But in sleep she seemed so fragile and broken. The way she had come apart in his arms, the sound of her sobs had nearly killed him. All he could do was hold her and offer what comfort he could.

He wanted to go back and find her before whatever had happened. He wanted to erase whatever pain she had known. He wanted to kill the men that had dared to hurt her so deeply. He would wake her as soon as the food was done and after he fed her it would be time for her to talk, time for her to quit holding back and tell him exactly what had happened. It was just as important for her to share it as it was for him to hear it. She needed to unburden herself, to understand that what happened was not her fault and that she had done everything that she could.

He didn't know yet exactly what had happened but he did know that there was no way that Daisy was to blame for any of it. What had she seen? What had she done? What had been said or done in the time before the sheriff was brought to that place and found Daisy surrounded by dead men? Sheriff Duckett had said that Daisy was cradling the body of her pregnant sister at the time he arrived, that it had been hard to pull her away. He had also said that she seemed like a shell of a person and that she had claimed to have killed them all. Three dead men and a dead pregnant woman. It was a lot for anyone.

She murmured in her sleep and he reached out to sooth her brow. She whispered his name and seemed to settle once more in sleep. It touched him in ways that he couldn't explain to hear her call his name in her sleep. They had only just met, still had so much to learn about one another and yet it seemed as if she was the person he had waited his entire life for. There had been other women, here and there, but never more than a moment was spent indulging his sexual need. And he'd been sure to never be with a woman more than once as he didn't want to mislead them into thinking he was a forever type of man.

But Daisy was making him into a forever type of man. He wanted to wake every morning with his wife in his arms. He was delighted that she wanted to be with him always, even when they were out sleeping under the stars. She made him think of forever, of children and growing old, of seeing her face soften in a smile meant only for him. At last he knew why his dad had given up being a Ranger and settled with his mother. He understood why both of his grandfathers were still alone after the deaths of his grandmothers. And it was all because of one woman. As he learned more about her he seemed to learn more about himself and his family as well.

He let his glance fall to her face again and was loath to wake her even though he knew she needed to eat. He had decided that they would spend the evening here and head on to his family's home in the morning. There were things they needed to discuss before he introduced her to his family and had to share her with them. The men would adore her and see her as another woman to protect. His mother would love her and see Daisy as another source of strength to bind the Donovan men together. Daisy would also be used as the example for his brothers as his mom spoke of the grandkids she longed for. He grinned and barely held back a laugh. None of their lives would be the same once Daisy took her place at his side.

But first he had to know everything about the night that had led to her being with him. He knew that only by discovering what had really happened that night would he gain her full trust. And according to his mother there could never be love without trust. More than anything he wanted his wife to love him as he could already feel love for her building in him.

Chapter Four

Daisy awoke to a soft caress and smells which had her tummy rumbling in hunger. She opened her eyes to Jacob. His hair was dry but still loose around his shoulders and she liked it that way. Without thought she reached out to run her fingers through the strands and sighed at the softness.

"I love your hair," she murmured and he laughed.

"I love yours too," he said. "Especially the wild mane it becomes after we love."

She blushed but felt a pull at her heart the way he called what they shared an act of love. She wondered if her sister had ever once known a moment like this with that scumbag she had married. She felt the tears inside her but was honestly too empty to cry them.

"Let's eat," he said helping her to sit up and handing her a tin bowl with something that looked and smelled delicious. "Then it's time to talk, Daisy, time for you to tell me the truth."

She nodded as she took the first bite. He was right. If they were to go forward he needed to know what she came from, what she was capable of doing. She had killed a man and Jacob was a lawman. He deserved to know that his wife truly was a murderess.

They ate in silence but it was comfortable atmosphere and it helped her focus on what she needed to say. But before she could start he did.

"How old are you, Daisy?" he asked and she almost laughed at the fact that he was asking after they were married.

"Twenty-one," she replied honestly hoping that he wouldn't care that she was a little old to be a new bride. She just hadn't found anyone that interested her before and her father had indulged her.

"I'm twenty-eight," he said without her asking. She didn't know what to say so she just nodded.

"Where did you live before you came west?" he asked.

She smiled remembering how it had been growing up back east. "Virginia," she said. "My dad was a banker there and we lived in a big house that my mom spent most of her

time cleaning. Even though we had staff she had to have her hands in everything. My dad used to laugh at her when he would come home."

She hadn't thought about her parents in a while and it was a bittersweet to look back.

"Did they move out here with you?" he asked as he took the bowl from her and moved it aside.

"No," she whispered as that day came back to her with clarity as if it had only been yesterday. "They were killed when the wheel came off of their carriage. It flipped and Momma was thrown from it. My dad was pinned beneath it and died that same night."

"So what happened then?" he queried as she grew quiet.

"My sister was already seeing Clancy, though my father made it known that he didn't like him," Daisy replied. "So they married and Clancy took over everything."

"No brothers or uncles to look out for you?" Jacob asked wondering how a man that was not yet family had been able to step in and take control.

"Both of my parents were only children," she said.

"So what made Clancy decide to come west?"

"Adventure and the possibility of building something bigger and better than what we had in town," she sighed as she really thought about what was going on then. "Plus I think my dad's business partner was planning on making things difficult for Clancy. So he wanted to leave."

"And you had to go with them?" Jacob wanted to know why a woman who was obviously of age had been forced to go with her new brother-in-law.

"No," she admitted. "I had plenty of offers from friends of my parents to stay and live with them. But Amelia was all I had left and I wanted to be with her."

So she had come west to remain with her sister. He understood that. "So when did things start going bad?" Because he had no doubt that there was a reason why her dad and others hadn't liked or trusted Clancy.

"I guess looking back he must have started hitting her and stuff while we travelled, but he never did it around me. I would hear noises and stuff and when I asked he would just say that when I got a man of my own I'd find out." She shook her head in confusion. What she and Jacob had shared hadn't made her cry out in pain as she had heard her sister. Would that change?

Jacob seemed to read her thoughts. "I will never hurt you physically," he swore. "My father and mother raised us better than that." Somehow she sensed he was being honest.

"When he bought the homestead we all moved out to the house and tried to make a go of it," she stated. "But it wasn't as easy as Clancy had thought and he began to leave for long periods of time. And then he started coming back with other men, hard men."

"What do you mean, hard men?" Jacob asked.

"They wore guns. It was the way they spoke, the way they walked," she shook her head in aggravation. "I don't know how to explain it. They just were hard."

He nodded his head. "So what happened?"

"My sister would send me away while they were there and I would stay gone until I saw the sign from her that it was okay to come back," she whispered. "She would light a big fire in the yard and I would know that it was time to head back."

"And?" he queried as she faltered again.

"I noticed that she was getting quieter and quieter with each visit," she said and a lone tear tracked down her cheek. "I noticed bruises and the fact that she would have trouble moving and lifting or carrying anything for weeks after they left. She denied anything was wrong, but I knew. I knew, and still I left when she told me to. I left her to what they did to her."

He reached out and pulled her to him holding her in his arms as she cried. Not the harsh sobs of last time but softer sobs that seemed to come straight from her soul.

"You did what she told you to," he whispered. "And you can't know that your being there would have made a difference. It could have made it worse for her and for you." In fact he knew it would have and he might have lost her before he ever found her.

"So tell me about that night," he urged as she quieted in his arms.

She shook her head. "I have to tell you something else first, about someone else." He tensed as he watched her face soften at the mention of this other person. Was it possible that his wife was in love with another man?

"I stayed close one night," she said. "I was determined to find out what they were doing and stop them from hurting her. I heard her scream and saw her being grabbed by two of his friends." Her breath caught as she relived that moment. "They were hurting her, raping her, and he just sat there and drank and ate. He didn't care. I wanted to get to her, to help her, to protect her but someone grabbed me from behind before I could move."

She shuddered and he ran his hand up and down her spine in slow soothing strokes. "I will kill any man who dares to try and touch you," he swore and she shuddered again this time in relief. "Who had you?" He needed to know.

"He took me to a cabin that I hadn't realised was even there," she said. "When he let me go I turned around and almost died of fright." She looked him straight in the eyes before continuing. "He was an Indian. An older man and I had heard all the horror stories about what they were capable of."

He swore under his breath. "But he didn't hurt you?"

"No," she said and smiled for the first time since she had first spoken of her parents. "He saved me and he taught me how to survive. He was my friend, the only one I had."

"So he taught you what?" Jacob wanted to know.

"He taught me how to live off the land. How to cook, how to trap, how to fight." She looked Jacob in the eyes. "He taught me how to defend myself."

"And?" He wanted to know about that night, about the bodies and what she had lived through.

"And there came a time when they came back and I didn't leave. My sister was pregnant and I didn't trust them to leave her alone. So I stayed."

"What happened, Daisy? What did they do?"

She seemed lost in the past, in that day. "I went out for water and I heard her scream. I ran back and there were two men pawing at her, ripping her clothes from her and saying that they had never fucked a pregnant woman before."

It tore him up to hear such a vulgar word escape her lips but she didn't even seem to realise that she had said it. She seemed trapped in that day, that moment and he just held her to him.

"Clancy grabbed me and pulled me against his body. He said that he was finally going to take me that way he'd wanted to since the first time he'd seen me. He carried me back to the bedroom and shut the door. I could hear her screaming and I couldn't get to her. I couldn't get to her." She shuddered and he held her, just held her trying to soothe her with his touch. "He threw me on the bed and climbed on me. I fought him. I fought him and caught him by surprise. He didn't think that I would know how to fight. But I fought and fought knowing that I had to get out there and help my sister. Amelia needed me and I had to get to her. I hurt Clancy and he reached for his boot. I knew he was going for something, a

knife maybe, and I beat him to it. I remember the feel of the knife in my hand. I remember stabbing him, the look of surprise on his face as he stilled. I remember thinking I should feel something, some remorse as he died. But I didn't. I killed him and I didn't feel a thing."

She seemed shaken and confused by this. "You did what you had to do to survive. No one, man or woman could ever fault you for that. You saved yourself when there was no one else there to protect you." He tilted her head up to his. "I promise you that you will never be alone again. I promise you that even should I not be there, one of my family will be, and you will never stand alone again."

She nodded her head and more tears fell. She had cried so much that he wondered that she had any fluids left inside her. "The silence was the first thing that I noticed. Amelia wasn't screaming anymore. There was no noise at all. I shoved Clancy off and went to open the door. I saw the bodies of two men, the two who had been attacking my sister and then I saw her. She was so still, her eyes open. I could see the bruises forming on her. I ran to her and tried to get her to focus on me, to breathe, to speak. But I was too late. I was too late to save her."

"You did what you could, Daisy," Jacob said as he shook her until her eyes focused on the here and now. "You did what you could and your sister would not blame you."

She nodded knowing in her heart that he was right. Amelia had protected her. The last thing her sister would do is blame Daisy for not being able to protect her.

"So who killed the two men?" Jacob asked already knowing that those two men had killed her pregnant sister.

"Saviour did," she whispered. "He came to save us. He tried to get me to leave before the sheriff got there but I couldn't leave her. I couldn't."

"So you lied to the sheriff about killing all those men." It made sense to Jacob. She would want to protect the only friend that she had. He understood that.

"I had killed one man," she sighed. "What difference did it make if he thought I killed all three of them?"

Jacob held her close to him, just held her, taking comfort in the feel of her in his arms. It stunned him to know that he could have lost her. He could have never known the feel of her in his arms, the feel of her body as she took him inside. He could have lost out on discovering the most important person in his life. Daisy. She was strong and brave though perhaps she

didn't realise it yet. She was perfect for him and he had fallen that final bit in love with her as she told him what she had lived through.

"You did what you had to," he whispered to her. "There is no shame in what you did. You are a survivor and I could ask no more of the woman who will be mother to my children."

She gasped and looked at him. He could see that she hadn't thought about the fact that all the loving they had been doing could lead to a child. So brave and strong and yet still naïve in so many ways.

"I have killed more men than you can imagine," he said. In fact he had killed several women as well but wouldn't tell her of that just yet, though he knew one day he would share all with her as well. "I did what I had to do to protect the lives of those around me. And that is what you did as well. You did what you had to and I am very grateful that you did."

"You don't think less of me knowing that I murdered someone?" she asked.

"You are no more murderer than I am," he vowed. "You are a woman who stood alone and did what she had to do. I admire you. You have strength and courage that sets you apart from others. You are a woman to be proud of, a woman to love."

She caught her breath. "Does that mean that someday you might love me?"

He wanted to tell her that he already did but she wouldn't believe him, not yet. So he told her what she could accept. "I am falling in love with you, Daisy," he said and bent to kiss her softly on the lips. "Everything I learn about you only makes me fall a little more."

She smiled and reached up to run her fingers over his cheek. "I am with you too," she said and he felt his heart swell. "You are everything that I prayed for and never knew existed outside of my father."

"I will never willingly hurt you," he promised knowing that he might hurt her unknowingly as they went through the journey of life together. "I will protect you to my dying breath and no man shall ever bring fear to your eyes again while I am alive."

She leaned up to kiss him, the first time she had initiated it on her own. He took her kiss and deepened it, seeking entrance to her mouth and exploring it once more with his tongue. She met him stroke for stroke, no longer shy or timid in their kissing. It fired his blood and he could feel his cock swelling with need once more. This woman would be the death of him. His body would surely give out from all the loving he would have with her.

"I wish that my sister could have found a man like you," she whispered as she pulled free. "I wish she could have known a better life than the one she had with Clancy."

"She had the life she chose for whatever reason," he said. "You can't go back and change that. You can only move on and honour her by living the life she would have desired for you."

"Yes," she said and snuggled closer to him. "I can honour her by finding happiness where it is offered."

He smiled at her, loving the ease with which she fit against him, the way her body seemed perfectly suited to his.

"When do we head out to meet your family?" she queried as they sat there.

"Sooner than I want," he said. "My grandfather will know that we are here, on the land. The braves that live on our land will have told him. So I don't expect for us to be alone much longer."

She shrieked and tried to pull from his arms though he held her easily in place. "You mean that there have been people watching us? Watching what we were doing?" And the thought seemed to horrify her.

He couldn't help it. He laughed. "No, Daisy they would know that I am here with a woman, that I have claimed her as my woman. But they wouldn't have watched what we were doing."

She seemed to relax again but still kept glancing around them. "You should really let me get dressed then, Jacob. Before someone does find us."

"I kinda like you in just my shirt," he admitted with a wicked grin. "Even better in nothing but your skin. You are one beautiful woman," he teased her.

"Then it wouldn't bother you for one of your brothers to see me in nothing but your shirt or just my skin?" she asked with a wicked grin of her own.

His eyes burned as he rolled so that she lay beneath him on the bedroll once again. "I will share you with no man." He smoothed his hand up her thigh taking his shirt with the motion. He let his hand find her warm centre, let his fingers feel the heat of her core. "Only I will see the flame that fills your eyes when you find release. Only I will feel the softness of your skin and know the pleasure that awaits inside your body just for me."

He slid inside her and she realised that he had released his engorged shaft at some point while he was talking. She gasped as he filled her and her legs lifted once more to wrap

around his hips. Slow and smooth he rode between her thighs whispering words of love, of happiness, of forever. She was a lucky woman and she would thank God for the rest of her life for sending a man like Jacob into her life. She closed her eyes and held tight to him as he took them once more to a place where ecstasy awaited.

Daisy was finally discovering what life could be when you were with a person who made you feel stronger and better than you were alone. She knew that every day with Jacob would bring new discoveries. As she felt her release approaching she found his eyes with hers and held them as they rode the wave of pleasure together.

Jacob was her future and Daisy was discovering that her future was as bright as the sun in the noon sky. She held him tight to her as she felt the wash of his seed deep within her again. Looking in his eyes she saw forever and knew that her life was finally beginning.

From the shadows an old Indian turned and made his way back to where he had ground tied his horse. He should not intrude on such a private moment in his grandson's life. It made him happy to see his Jacob so happy. And he couldn't have picked a better bride for his boy. He'd have to remember to stop in on his next jaunt to tell the good Sheriff Duckett that all was well on this front. Perhaps he should disappear for a while and let the two adjust to married life before the young bride spilled the beans. He doubted the girl would hide her joy at seeing her Saviour again. Plus there might be hell to pay when she found out that he spoke as good English as she did.

But all was fair in love. And looking at his Jacob and Daisy, it was easy to see that love was in the air.

About the Author

Lacey Thorn spends her days in small town Indiana the proud mother of three. When she is not busy with one of them she can be found typing away on her computer keyboard or burying her nose in a good book. Like every woman she knows just how chaotic life can be and how appealing that great escape can look.

So toss aside the stress and tension of the never ending to do list. For now sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride with Lacey. It's your world...unlaced.

Email: lcy_thrn1@lacythorn.com

Lacey loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at <http://www.total-e-bound.com>.

Also by Lacey Thorn

The Debtor's Daughters: Faithful Beginnings
The Debtor's Daughters: Claiming charity
Lottery Brides: Saving Sarah
Legend Anthology: The Debtor's Daughters: Gaining Hope
Brit Party: Maggie's ménage
Finding Home

Total-E-Bound Publishing



www.total-e-bound.com

Take a look at our exciting range of literagasmic™
erotic romance titles and discover pure quality
at Total-E-Bound.