

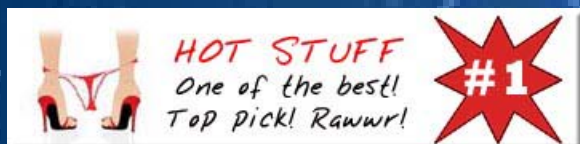
Heat with Heart



One Step Closer to Love

She's everything he escaped

...and all that he desires



MIZ LOVE LOVES BOOKS
NOMINATED TOP PICK OF JUNE



4.5 HEARTS - THE ROMANCE STUDIO



FOUR STARS - SENSUAL READS



BOOKJUNKIE

Recommended by
ARe (All Romance Ebooks)



5 STARS - ROMANCE WRITERS REVIEWS

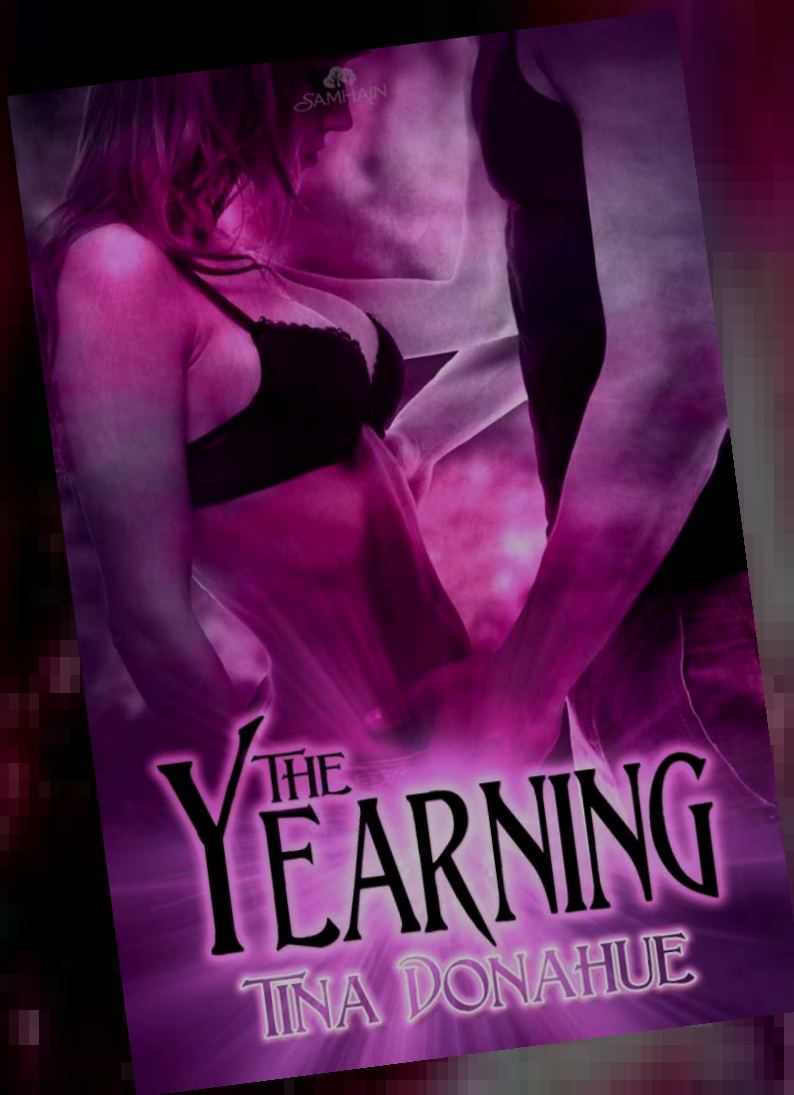
Three years ago, Kyle turned his back on a pro-football career and being the target of tabloids or gold-digging groupies. Craving privacy, he gets it at his roadhouse in Northern California until Lexi Sands invades his life. Indulged and surely phony, she's exactly what Kyle fled.

An actress since childhood, Lexi's fresh out of an anger management program, court-ordered when she lashed out at a badgering paparazzo. Weary of the press's harsh scrutiny, she sees Kyle's secluded cabin as the ideal place to hide out and him as a damn-near perfect alpha male. Deliciously virile. Protective. Principled. She offers him serious cash to let her stay for two weeks, assuring there will be no complications or touching.

Yeah, right. Passion flares, along with tenderness. Kyle recognizes how lonely Lexi really is, while she's falling hard. Through intimate days and impassioned nights, they explore their most shameless needs, until a cruel betrayal exposes their growing love, forcing a choice neither anticipated.

Ellora's Cave <http://www.jasminejade.com/p-9333-takeme-away.aspx>

The Yearning



NOMINATED FOR BOOK OF THE WEEK
WHIPPED CREAM REVIEWS



"The Yearning is the perfect blend of unbridled sex and sweet tenderness."

Sal - TwoLips Reviews

4.5 CHERRIES

WHIPPED CREAM REVIEWS

"My friends are going to love this book."

Myrtle - Whipped Cream



"A wonderful read that should not be missed."

LOVE ROMANCES & MORE

Cursed by a jealous rival over a man, Jasmine's conventional world spirals into one of insatiable desire, forcing her to seek pleasure no matter the danger. Haunting Key West's nightlife, she meets Mike, a commanding lover with psychic power and a guarded past. Desperately craving his potent masculinity, she lures then imprisons him so he's always available to feed her passion. Not about to be any woman's sex slave, Mike uses his power to secure his freedom, capturing her instead. Moved by her underlying vulnerability, he's determined to find the source of the curse and defeat it. Under his masterful rule, her ravenous yearning evolves into rapture as she surrenders to his hunger, her darkest needs, and the emotional connection that lies beyond.

<http://store.samhainpublishing.com/the-yearning-p-6248.html>

SAMHAIN - AVAILABLE NOW - TOP TEN BESTSELLER

Sensual Stranger

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2010 - EROTIC CATEGORY - BLUE MOON REVIEWS

Into his life she came—wanting...willing...wanton

It's no ordinary morning when Toni Starr arrives at Zach's garage. Flat broke, with a past she won't share, Toni's instantly taken by such a potently virile man. Direct and unashamed, she tells him she's a motorcycle performance artist who needs work and knows motors. Zach knows women, and Toni's unlike any he's met. Lushly sensuous, exceedingly assured, she'd easily be his match in business and bed. A provocative challenge that stirs him as nothing has since losing his wife. A chance he's reluctant to take, offering no more than a month's employment, then she'll have to be on her way. The hours tick by. Each word and glance intensifies their denied yet escalating desire, forcing them to surrender to passion and Toni's need for Zach's dominance. Driven by carnal hunger, conquered by yearning, they face the unforeseen truth of Toni's past and a future neither of them expected.

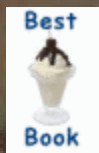


FOUR STARS - ROMANTIC TIMES

FIVE STAR REVIEW - TOP PICK - NOR



Brande - Book Junkie



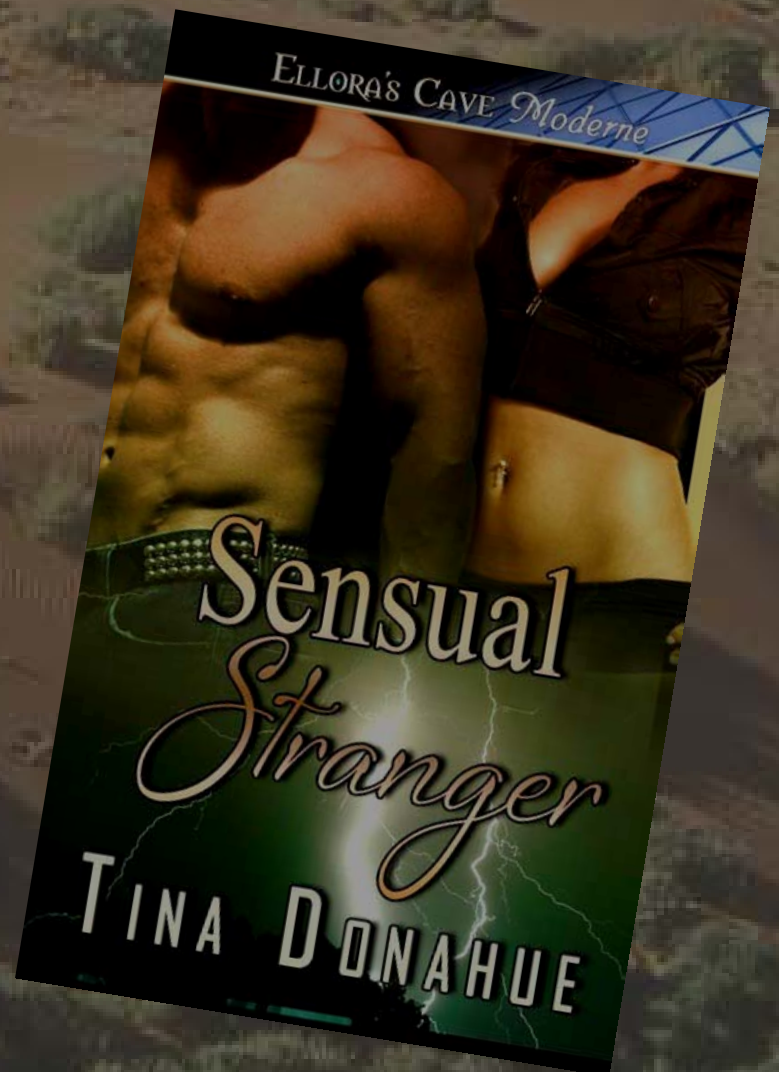
"This story is incredible."

Dahlia - [Whipped Cream Reviews](#)



FIVE SIREN STONES

[Siren Book Reviews](#)



Nominated for Book of the Week - WC Reviews
Nominated for Book of the Month - Siren Reviews

Buy link: <http://www.jasminejade.com/ps-8932-50-sensual-stranger.aspx>



IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS AUGUST

A Word from Tina.....	8
Mail.....	9
Water Cooler (Happenings & Other Stuff).....	11
Free Reads.....	13-26
Contest.....	27
Eye Candy.....	28
How to Reach Me.....	29

Owned by one man. . .loved by another

FOUR STARS - ROMANTIC TIMES



FIVE LIPS - RECOMMENDED READ



“From the first pages of *IN THIS ARMS* by Tina Donahue I was captivated, more like ensnared, actually commandeering every fiber of my heart and taking it for one heck of a wild ride!”

Brande - Book Junkie

“If you are looking for a book with an emotional punch, that has enough twists and turns to keep you guessing, then I highly recommend *In His Arms* by Tina Donahue.”

Lillie - RR&H Novel Thoughts & Book Talk

“*In His Arms* is at times dark and raw. Tina has delivered a story that not many authors, especially those who write romance, would think of writing. This is one e-book I recommend everyone download.”

Kate - Babbling About Books and More!



FIVE HEARTS - THE ROMANCE STUDIO



FIVE TEA CUPS!

HAPPILY EVER AFTER REVIEWS

Abducted and delivered into sexual slavery, Lori has surrendered her will in order to survive. For more than a decade, she's been known as Summer, a lovely submissive, her owner's possession until he gives her to his newest lieutenant, a mysterious man called RJ. Commanding and virile, RJ dominates without cruelty and possesses without threat, engendering a mixture of safety and passion. In his strong arms, Summer enjoys carnal pleasure she's never known and tenderness she's craved. In his heated gaze, she experiences a sense of recognition she doesn't immediately understand until it proves dangerous in a way she could never have imagined. Bound by desire and their growing love, RJ traverses the shadowy world of human trafficking, risking all for Summer's freedom only to learn she harbors a fateful secret that threatens to tear her from him, leading to an irrevocable event that risks both their lives.

Lush Velvet Nights

FINALIST - EPIC 2011 AWARDS

When wanton desires
& love demand all. . .

During the day, Adriana's a lonely corporate heiress, helming a supermarket empire. At night, she hires escorts, scripting provocative fantasies of kidnapping, lust, submission and endless longing. It's all she has to excite her until she meets Nathan Wynn. Tall, blond and muscular—like a modern-day Viking—Nathan's a labor relations attorney representing Adriana's union employees. His imposing presence intensifies her basest desires. When he protects her from an escort he believes is an attacker, she knows he's wonderfully dominant and unrestrained. Fascinated by Adriana's underlying sensuality, Nathan brings her to his secluded mountain estate, determined she submit fully to his hunger. At a gentleman's club, he makes certain she denies him nothing. Engaging in a seductive sexual journey, Nathan's caught off-guard by his stunning need for Adriana. An attraction he fears because of past events in his life. A growing emotional connection she will not let him deny.

FIVE SIREN STONES - SIREN BOOK REVIEWS



REVIEWER TOP PICK

"...a must-read!"

Kim Early
The Pagan & The Pen

FIVE ANGELS - FALLEN ANGEL REVIEWS

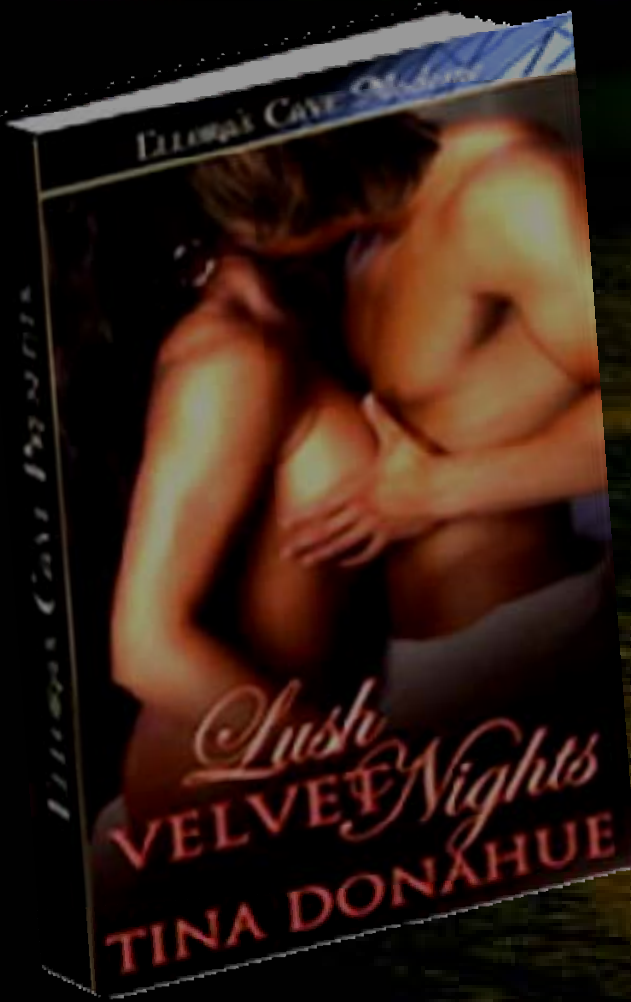


"Lush Velvet Nights is a winner." - Bella

FIVE STARS - JERR



"OMG! Lush Velvet Nights is a great read!"



A Word from Tina



Hey, all!!

By the time this newsletter gets to you, I hope my jury duty is over. Wow, this court stuff has been hanging on for about eight months now. First, I got the notice and had to request a three month extension because of business. When my extension was over and I showed up, I couldn't make that trial because I had to fly back East on business for a week. The court rescheduled me for the day after Memorial Day. Before that happened, I got a postcard in the mail stating that I had been rescheduled to July 23. Whew. Don't know if I'll have to actually serve, but I will be glad when it's over. :)

Just finished my latest WIP, the hottest contemporary I've written thus far and a bit different from my usual stories. Can't say more about it until I get the go-ahead from my editor. :)

My next Samhain release *Unending Desire* (erotic paranormal) will be out October 17. Sometime soon I'll be able to show you the cover (it is sooooo HOT) and give you a blurb and an excerpt or two.

For now, I'm gearing up to write its sequel, another first for me. But I do so love a challenge.

Until next month!

Tina



Tina,

I saw your great review for *The Yearning* at Whipped Cream Reviews and it convinced me to buy your book. Am I glad I did! Wowee wow wow. :) I loved the heat between Mike and Jasmine. The sisters were great too. I want to see them in a sequel, please!!! Thanks so much for writing this. Are you going to have another paranormal out soon?

Audrey

Hey Audrey -

Thanks so much for your kind words and I'm really glad you enjoyed *The Yearning* since it was my first paranormal. And yes, I do have another paranormal coming out in October from Samhain—yay! *Unending Desire* is just as sexy, I promise.

Tina

Tina girl,

Saw all the news on your website about your awards and great reviews. You go, girl. The first book of yours I read was *Adored* and it really hooked me, especially your sex scenes. I just bought *Take Me Away* but haven't read it yet.

Vondra

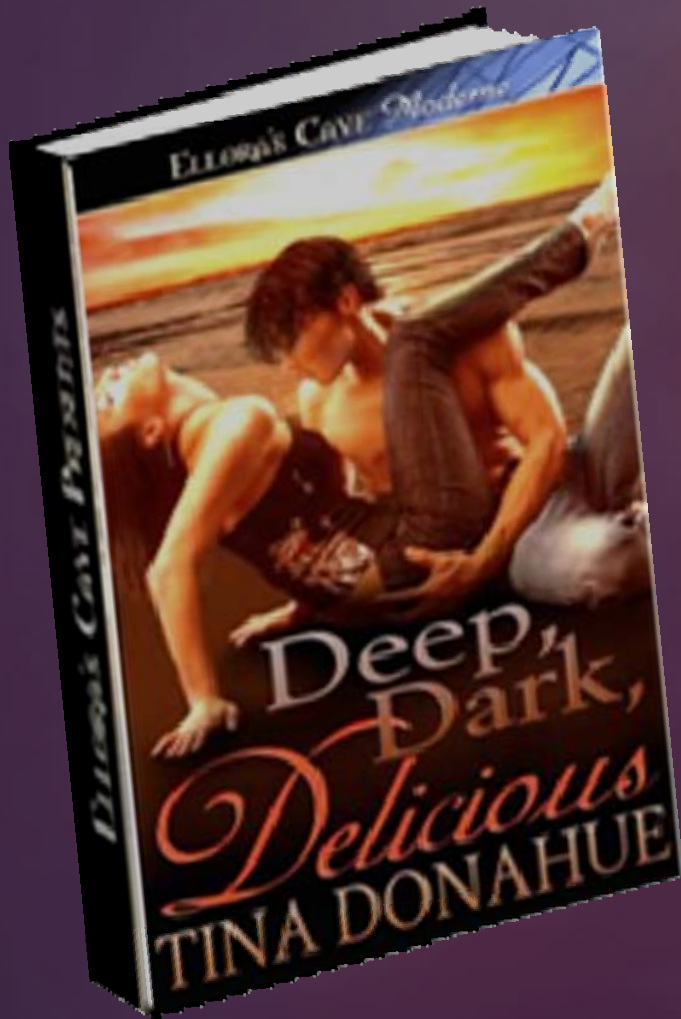
Vondra, hi!

I'm really proud of my awards. There are so many talented writers and to be chosen is a great honor. Hope you enjoy *Take Me Away* as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Tina

***At the worst time in her life. . .
she meets a man who'll turn her world upside down***

FINALIST - EPIC 2011 AWARDS / AWARD OF MERIT - HOLT



Eden DeCarlo may have narrowly lost Miami's best chef competition and the prize money she desperately needs, but she has caught the eye of dangerously virile Rafael Zayas, one of the judges and a wealthy restaurateur. Despite her vow not to let any man derail her life, Eden's captivated by Rafe's imposing masculinity, then challenged by the business deal he offers. He'll invest in her new venture if, for one month, she can satisfy his culinary expectations and the sexual attraction they both feel.

Dominant and unashamed, Rafe knows what he wants when it comes to carnal pleasure and will spare no seduction to have Eden in all the ways he demands – naked, wanting, submissive. Within thirty days, he will teach her the delights of yielding to passion, relinquishing all control to him and fulfilling her deepest, darkest and most delicious desires.

A wickedly sensual feast. . .4 Stars Romantic Times

BUY LINK: <http://www.jasminejade.com/ps-8080-50-deep-dark-delicious.aspx>

FIVE STARS - REVIEWER'S TOP PICK - NOR (Night Owl Reviews)

***A must read for those who love an emotional journey for both the hero and heroine. "Whipped Cream - 4.5/5 rating
Nominated for BOOK OF THE WEEK***

"This delicious tale did more than whet my appetite. . ." Seriously Reviewed - 17.5/20 rating

". . .a sinfully delicious and erotic story with two highly passionate lovers . . ." Book Junkies - 4.5/5 rating

"I was sad when this story ended. . .it's a story you must read." Rebecca Rose - 5 Blue Roses

Water Cooler (Happenings & Other Stuff)



WHERE I'LL BE & EVENTS ON MY BLOG IN AUGUST

<http://www.tinadonahue.com/blog/>

AUGUST 1 - NEW MONTHLY CONTEST ON MY SITE

AUGUST 6 - I'M BLOGGING AT ROMANCE BOOKS 'R US

AUGUST 10 - I'M FEATURED AT SAMHAIN'S PARANORMAL EVENT

AUGUST 12 - I'M BLOGGING AT SWEET 'N SEXY DIVAS

AUGUST 17 - GABRIELLE HEWITT BLOGGING AT MY SITE

AUGUST 18 - VONNA HARPER BLOGGING AT MY SITE

AUGUST 23 - PENNY EHRENKRANZ BLOGGING AT MY SITE

AUGUST 24 - I'M FEATURED AT SAMHAIN'S PARANORMAL EVENT

DETAILS & CONTESTS POSTED ON MY BLOG

She's wanted him for years. . .

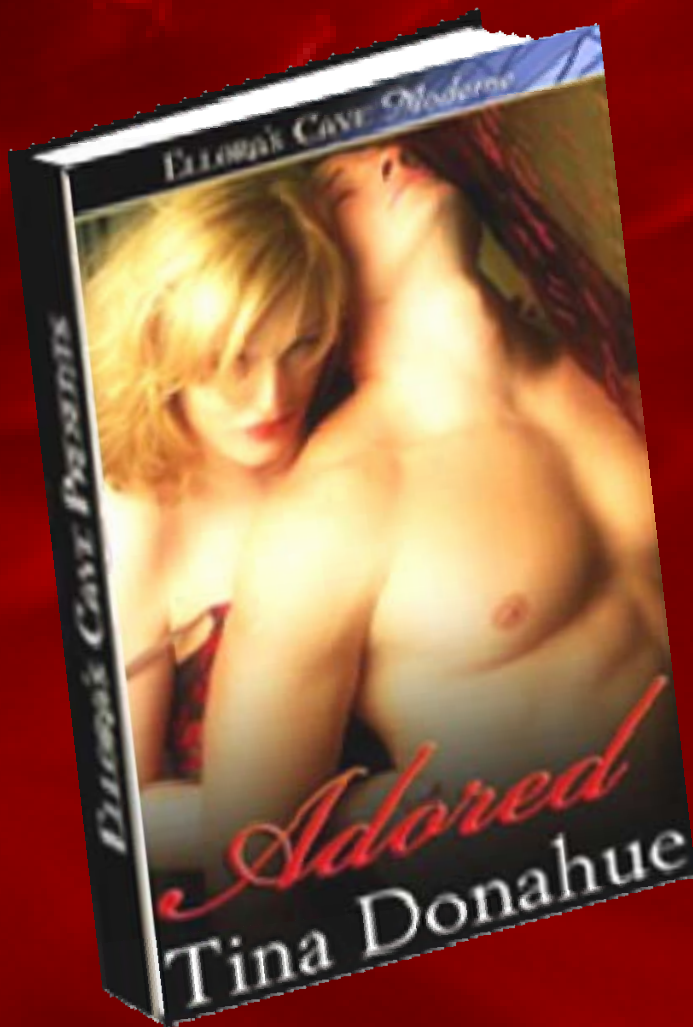
Now's her chance to make her wicked fantasies come true

FINALIST - 2011 EPIC AWARDS

When tall, dark and delicious Adam Farrell crosses Danni's radar at a trade show in Vegas, it's not lust at first sight. He's been the star of her wicked fantasies for a while, pleasuring her in acts of domination and submission that leave her breathless. Aching for his masterful touch, believing she'll never have it, Danni indulges in a public sex act Adam alone witnesses. What follows is a night of wild and unrestrained passion in his powerful arms. It's only the beginning.

An undisclosed business deal has turned Adam from competitor to Danni's new boss. His hunger for her is absolute and he'll make her fantasies seem tame as he takes her in ways she never imagined – whenever he wants, wherever he desires.

Seduced by Adam's plan to mix exquisite control with adoration, Danni's swept into a sensual adventure she can't resist. Until corporate politics intrude and she learns what Adam's been hiding to protect her. . .a secret he's long feared will tear them apart.



PRAISE FOR ADORED

Four stars - *Romantic Times* - Second Place Winner - NEC RWA Contest

“...the fantasy scenes are that hot and the real love scenes between Danny and Adam are even hotter. A truly beautiful love story.” Lilly – [I Do Not Want to Wait, I Want the Book Now](#)

“Fantastic!” Brande – [My Foolish Wisdom](#)

“I loved this!” Angelika Devlyn - [Alternative-Read.com](#)

“...erotic & imaginative.” Stacey Krug - [Siren Book Reviews](#) - FIVE SIREN STONES

ELLORA'S CAVE – MODERNE AVAILABLE NOW IN EBOOK AND PRINT



Free Reads

MY MAN - CHAPTER ONE EXCERPT

THE YEARNING - CHAPTER SEVEN EXCERPT



MY MAN

This was it. Alice Tanner eased her used Hyundai to a stop on the powdery white road. The engine shuddered its thanks, then continued to wheeze, wanting to go back to Wisconsin. The land of cows, milk and cheese.

Alice's mouth went dry. Her gaze moved past the bugs her windshield had murdered. This was home now. West Texas. The land of cactus, cowboys, and the Kandy Ranch. Such a sweet name. Alice smile at the thought, and the fact that she was actually part owner.

She'd sunk every last cent she had in the world into this land. Her fingers clutched the steering wheel while she admired the exhausted landscape.

It shimmered in the heat. It was close to a hundred and five now, at least in Alice's heart, which was beating fast. What had she done

Her Hyundai was asking the same question as it sputtered and died. Alice sagged into her steering wheel, resting her sweaty forehead against it. She reminded herself that dreams come hard. That persistence pays off. And that this was the first day of the rest of her life.

She wondered if some guy sentenced to death without parole had thought up that sorry phrase, and decided that was probably true. And that she'd best get going. Destiny awaited her at the Kandy Ranch.

It had more windmills and fences than trees of any kind even those thirsty-looking ones. Which was no surprise. The only moisture within a thousand miles was the perspiration Alice was blinking out of her eyes. Still she had expected this. After all, Del Kandy, the young rancher who was now her partner, had said the dry heat would make their dude ranch the perfect vacation spot for asthmatics and senior citizens who shivered through South Florida summers.

"We're just gonna make tons of money," he'd exulted over the phone lines. "You and me. We'll show Walker for sure."

"Walker?" Alice had asked.

Del's voice did a quick Texas two-step. "Ah, he's just a brother, you know."

Alice thought she did. "You mean a priest?" Or did they call those guys padres out

there?

"Walker a priest?" Del laughed at the concept before his voice started dancing again. "No. He's sorta can."

"Sorta can what?"

"Not can. You know...k-i-n, can!" Del shouted the word as if she were deaf. "He's my...brother. But don't you worry none, you'll never see him, believe me."

Alice figured Walker Kandy must be the family's genetic mistake or the invisible man.

What had she gotten herself into?"

She coaxed her revived Hyundai until it finally reached a series of squat adobe buildings that looked like something out of a low-budget western. There was even an aging mutt that had either fainted or died in front of one of those shaded doorways. Any moment Alice expected to see a young Clint Eastwood swaggering out, then squinting at her from across the dusty yard. After which, he'd flip up his poncho, whip out his gun and shoot her between the eyes.

Alice's knuckles popped as she pried her fingers off the steering wheel. The second she was out of the car, a wave of heat hugged her so hard it squeezed every last bit of sweat out of her. The way her top was sticking to her boobs, she could have won a wet T-shirt contest. She pulled the fabric away from herself, then glanced over her shoulder at men's voices.

They seemed to be coming from the corral to the left side of the buildings. Alice closed, then locked her Hyundai just in case Walker Kandy clawed out of his padded cell and wanted to use her car to make his escape.

Her cowgirl boots stirred up tiny whorls of dust as she dragged through the heat towards those voices. As she rounded the side of the building she saw a helicopter and wondered what it was doing there. Just outside the corral were two men, both wearing black Stetsons.

The one facing her was a young Chicano who was probably only a little taller than her five-three, but the man who had his back to her was easily over six feet. His build was rugged and lean beneath a white T-shirt, boots, and jeans that molded themselves to every inch of him. On top of those were the leather things cowboys wore when they rode.

The horse between the two men was the same color as a hunk of Wisconsin cheddar cheese, and about as tall as her parents' RV.

Alice rested her hand against the rail as the young Chicano held the horse, keeping it from sidling away from the cowboy.

"Easy," the cowboy coaxed.

Hmmm. Alice liked the sound of his rumbling male voice that was also strangely gentle. Even tender. His large hand stroked the horse's reddish-brown mane.

The animal was not impressed. It snorted like Alice's Hyundai had the moment they entered Texas. Still, the cowboy was as patient with the horse as a parent would be with a beloved child.

Alice smiled and pushed away from the rail so she could climb the rungs and sit on top. The moment she rested her arms on her bluejeaned thighs, the cowboy must have sensed his chance, because his boot was in the stirrup, and he was swinging his large body onto the horse's back.

For a moment, nothing happened. Man and beast fit as perfectly as two lovers...until the cheddar cheese horse decided it wanted a quickie divorce.

Alice straightened and leaned back. The cowboy was suddenly riding the animal as if it was a pissed-off pogo stick. They bounced-bounced-bounced to the right. Then did a couple of leap-kicks to the left that would have made Baryshnikov jealous. After that, it was a free-for-all with the horse doing everything but pirouettes. That Stetson didn't budge from the cowboy's head, though his right arm did spin like a windmill while his fingers tried to grab air.

He was out of luck because the horse was seriously irritated now and stirring up so much dust that Alice had to swat the air to breathe and to see. When her eyes finally stopped stinging, she blinked.

The cowboy was back on land and suddenly walking out of that swirling cloud of dust in her direction. So where had the horse gone? She looked to the right. Empty. The left. Ditto. Her gaze finally traveled up. Unless the animal was hiding behind one of those wispy clouds, it was still on the ground.

Alice looked down. At just that moment, the cowboy reached her. Without pause, he knuckled his Stetson off his forehead, then planted his hands on either side of her and drawled, "Howdy."

He grinned as if to emphasize the friendliness of his greeting. She took a really good look at him. Dark brown hair trailed lazily over his tanned forehead. Laugh lines caressed the corners of his beautiful hazel eyes. There was a day's growth of beard on his firm jaw and cheeks, thanks to the miracle of testosterone, which this guy had in abundance. He was the most *male* male Alice had ever seen. His gaze boldly roamed her features as if she were a heifer for sale.

He took in her gray-green eyes first, her small nose, then her blond, shoulder-length hair. When he got to her Wisconsin-pink cheeks and lips, his nostrils were flared. By the time his gaze returned to hers, his eyes had darkened with something that looked like desire.

Her thoughts whispered *okay*, while wanting quickly tore through her, leaving her breathless and weak and all too ready to do whatever this cowboy wanted. So maybe it was time to return his howdy. "Hi."

His gaze remained steady, intoxicating, pulling her into its heat. All of a sudden,

she felt soft, weak. And all too vulnerable.

The cowboy seemed to like that.

At least until he turned his head away and looked to the side.

Alice briefly closed her eyes and forced her heart to return to a safe idle, while she ordered her brain to take stock of the situation. She wasn't on a date for heaven's sake. So why was she acting so stupid and letting this guy arouse her so much? Who was he anyway? Couldn't be Del Kandy. Alice had had enough phone conversations with her partner to recognize his howdy. It just didn't have the same rumbling masculinity. Maybe this was Del's assistant. And it was probably time for introductions so that they could establish some kind of hierarchy.

Though Alice knew she'd never be able to boss this man around or resist his caress. She inhaled deeply and tried to make her voice sound businesslike, though it still came out all too yielding as she breathed, "Ah, I'm Alice Tanner."

The cowboy continued to look to the side as if he just didn't want to hear that.

"Excuse me," she finally said, her gaze dropping to his broad chest, noting his deep, even breaths, "I'm Alice -"

"Yep, I know." The look in his eyes was nonchalant, but his voice held the authority hers lacked.

He pushed back and moved to her side. Then, with one hand on the top rail he easily vaulted over.

Alice looked over her shoulder, then leaned back when the corner of his Stetson nearly poked out her eye. "And you are - what are you doing?"

He let his arm answer her. It was suddenly around her waist as if it had always belonged there and knew exactly what to do. With one deft movement, he turned her around, easily lifted her until her body briefly caressed his chest, and then he deposited her on the other side of the fence.

When he finally let her go, Alice frowned. "Who do you think you are?"

He lowered his face to hers once more. "The guy that's telling you *hasta la vista*. By the way, that's Texan for this is private property and you're trespassing. Come along." He captured her wrist, pulled her away from the rail, then gave her a playful pat on her butt. "Now scoot."

Alice spun around. "How dare you! I'm Alice -"

"Yes, darlin', I know." He captured her wrist once more, and still held on even though she used her other fist to beat up his arm. It didn't faze him at all. After one brief sigh, he said only, "Come along, or I'll be forced to haul you back to your -"

The cowboy's words were suddenly cut off by a pickup's horn, which pierced the blistering heat with its relentless shriek. This was followed by the sound of spinning tires, then a man's shout.

"Hey, you get your hands off her! She's mine!"

The cowboy's fingers tightened around Alice's wrist as he shouted back, "Yeah, I know, that's why she's goin' with me!"

The door to the battered pickup popped open and a man in his mid-twenties jumped out. He settled his Stetson on his head and strode across the yard. "I'm warnin' you, she's mine!"

"Not for long," the cowboy bellowed back. "She's goin' with me!"

Who were these guys? Alice dug in her heels when he began to tug her away from the younger man. The cowboy frowned at her over his shoulder, then pulled her along as if she were a wayward child or a temperamental calf. "Let go!" she shouted.

"No ma'am!" the cowboy shouted back.

"Walker!" the other man yelled.

Walker? Alice's gaze shot from the younger man to the tall cowboy. So this was Walker. Uh-oh. He'd broken out of his padded cell. "Help!" Alice yelled.

"For God's sake," Walker snapped, "will you quit shrieking!"

"Let go or I'll call a cop!"

"We don't have cops out here, lady, that's why we wear guns."

Dear God. He was armed. Alice fought like wildcat. After she'd clawed a layer of skin from Walker's hand, he swore loudly, but did finally let go. As he sucked his wounds, Alice stumbled backwards and would've fallen on her butt if the other guy hadn't been there to catch her and put her back on her feet.

"Hey, you all right?" he asked very politely.

Alice scrambled away from him and made fists. "No, I'm not okay. Who are you?"

Walker answered for the younger man. "We call him numbskull."

Oh, no. The Kandy clan was anything but sweet. They faced each other with hunched shoulders and made low growls like rutting bulls with a cow to fight over.

"Del! Del!" Alice yelled, hoping to alert her partner.

"Yes, ma'am," the younger man said quickly, nice as could be.

Alice closed her mouth around her next shout. "Del?"

He swept off his Stetson and held it to his chest while he offered his hand. "Nice to meet you finally, Al—hey!" he shouted at Walker when the man punched his hand away.

Suddenly, the two brothers were back to hunching their shoulders and growling.

"She's leaving," Walker snarled.

"Fraid not," Del spat..

"Wanna bet?"

"Wanna fight about it?"

"Think you can win, Junior?"

That really made Del growl. Before he pulled out his gun, wherever it might be, Alice stepped between the two men. Without pause, Walker wound his arm around her waist, swung her to the side and set her down. Before Alice could complain about that or even catch her breath, Walker had grabbed Del by the back of his T-shirt and was hauling him away.

The younger man swore, he hissed, he fought, but Walker was taller and stronger and definitely in charge.

"Walker, let go," Del snapped.

"Not a chance," Walker said. He hauled his younger brother across the yard until they were nearly to Alice's Hyundai and certainly out of earshot. Only then did Walker release him, but he quickly pushed his face into Del's until the brims of their Stetson's touched.

"Have you lost your mind?" Walker growled. "You're not going to build a dude ranch here. I won't have it. I don't intend to share my space with a bunch of loony strangers and their snotty kids."

"You don't got a choice." Del frowned, holding his ground even though Walker was taller and outweighed him by thirty pounds.. "Daddy left a portion of this land to me and I'll develop it any damned way I want."

"Like hell. This is a ranch, not a resort."

"Look, Walker, you are not gonna stop this. Blaze and me are fixin' to get married and help Alice run this place. If you don't like it, just stay outta our way."

Walker grabbed Del's arm and hauled him back. "How much you want for your half? Name your price."

"Are you loco? You're already in debt up to your eyeballs with them Arabians you bought, not to mention that you didn't get that good a price for the sorghum and alfalfa last year. 'Sides, you know I don't wanna sell my land."

Walker shook his brother hard and hollered, "You sold some to her. A damned stranger."

Del picked his Stetson from the ground and slapped it against his thigh to get the dust off. "She ain't a stranger. She's a real estate agent and now she's my partner." His brows lowered, he leaned closer and said in a hush, "Damn fine-looking too."

For the first time since Del arrived, Walker was not about to give him an argument. He gave Alice Tanner a sideways look. Her arms were crossed over her ripe breasts; her round rear strained against the confines of her snug jeans, then bounced as she continued to pace. Walker regarded the length of her legs. Not bad. Very nice in fact. And that blond hair. What wasn't plastered to her damp forehead and neck was

blowing in the wind. Some of those strands were honey-colored, others were closer to ripened wheat. Of course, it was her green eyes he'd noticed the most when she'd been perched on that rail and looking at him as if she expected to be kissed. Not fast, either. But slow and thorough. It heightened that sweet pink in her cheeks. One second she looked like she should be milking a cow and the next getting loved real good by some lucky man.

"Where's her husband?" Walker asked before he knew he would.

Del snickered.

"Answer the damn question, you hear?"

"Why do you care if she—awright, awright," Del growled. "She ain't got a husband. Last I looked, you ain't got a wife. Hell, you ain't even got a girl - "

Del successfully ducked Walker's whack. The younger man just laughed, then hurried back to Alice.

Walker noticed she had stopped pacing in favor of wringing those pretty hands that should've been caressing a cow...or a man. She looked up at Del and said something fast. Del patted her shoulder as if to comfort her and welcome her to this ranch.

Walker strode across the yard and didn't stop until he was smack in front of her, just as he'd been when she was sitting on that rail.

This time Alice was far more cautious. She took a step back before she looked up at him. Those milkmaid cheeks were burning now just as if she'd been loved real good by a man. Which certainly made Walker's briefs feel far too snug. The ache in his groin was getting downright painful.

Despite his arousal, Walker made his voice as stern as he could. "You're gonna have to call the deal off. It was a mistake. Del doesn't have the right—no, you do not.," Walker said over his younger brother's muttered protests. "He doesn't have the right to sell off land without my permission. That's why he's gonna give you your money back. Right, Del?"

Alice looked at Del for confirmation of this. The younger man was scratching his temple, which caused his Stetson to bounce slightly on his head.

Walker whapped it off, then snapped, "Del. Tell her."

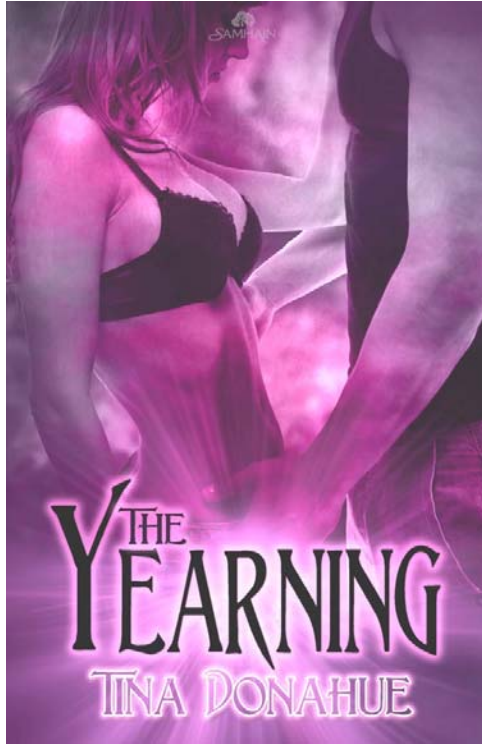
"Can't." He frowned. "There ain't no way in hell I can refund her money. It's already spent."

"Whoa. Easy," Walker said, slipping his arm around her waist to steady her. No good. Her knees still wilted. She sagged into him.

"Spent?" she breathed.

Walker made his voice extra gentle. "He's just kidding.."

"Nope, I'm not."



THE YEARNING

Jasmine noted how Ben took charge immediately, the young lion trying to oust the virile male who ruled.

“Move your legs to the left,” he ordered Mike, gesturing with the gun as he would with his hand. “Jas needs to sit down.”

“I’m fine.” Jasmine took another halting breath and turned into Ben so Mike couldn’t hear her. “Give me the gun.”

“I can’t do that.” He held it out of her reach, nearly poking Lily with the barrel. Lightning streaked across the sky, fainter now. Several seconds passed before thunder followed. “You’ll let him go.”

“And you’ll hurt him, me, Lil, or yourself if you keep swinging it. It’s not a toy, Ben. Put it down, away, I don’t care. Just get rid of it.”

“I’ll be careful. Promise.” He touched her cheek. Rain and wind buffeted the roof. “Go on and sit down, please. Help her,” he ordered Lily.

She leveled her gaze on him. “Knock it off, Ben. You’re here to help Jas, not prove how macho you are.”

The corners of his mouth turned down in indignation and embarrassment. “I just thought you should help.”

“I can get there myself,” Jasmine said. Reluctantly, she turned to Mike, expecting to see more fury or disgust. He observed her and Ben with a dispassionate expression. She sensed he was trying to figure out their relationship or his next move. Worried, she sat at the footboard, resting her head on her arm.

He drew his legs up, away.

Heart aching, she pressed her fingers to her forehead, struggling not to cry. As she’d feared, he couldn’t bear to be near her now. Who could blame him?

“Are you feeling ill?” he asked.

Lily answered. “She’s exhausted.”

“Why haven’t you been sleeping?” he asked Jasmine.

“She can’t,” Lily insisted.

“Let her answer,” he ordered the girl. “Jasmine, tell me – why can’t you rest?”

The unexpected worry in his voice shamed her further. He should be yelling, calling her a damned liar, threatening to bring the wrath of the federal government down on all of them. It would have been easier for her to accept his rage than his kindness. "It won't let me."

"What won't?"

Lust. It roiled through her blood, insistent and grinding. "The yearning."

"What's that?"

Ben's feet smacked the floor with his quick approach. "Leave her alone."

Jasmine dropped her hand.

"Fine," Mike said in an unshaken voice. "You have the Glock. I'll do exactly what you want."

"You better or you'll regret it."

She straightened and hollered at Ben, "Stop it! Lower the gun and get away from him!"

He didn't move. "Now!" she warned.

Lily fisted her fingers in Ben's tee and pulled him toward the bath. "Okay, okay," he said, shaking her off and pointing the gun's barrel at Lily's feet. "I'm not near him, all right? I'll stay here, but I am not leaving."

Violet ran into the room, a stack of photos and Jasmine's laptop in her hands. Her head swiveled from one to the other. She huffed out her words. "What's wrong now? What happened?"

Lily muttered, "Ben had a testosterone attack."

"Violet." Jasmine paused to swallow. She inclined her head toward Mike. "Give him the pictures and bring up what I found on the Wanderers."

From the corner of his eye, Mike watched Ben lift the pistol's barrel. The muzzle stayed trained on him as Violet got close enough to drop the pictures near his knee. She opened the laptop, hit numerous keys, and put the computer near his cuffed hand. With the items delivered, she backed away quickly.

"Ben," Jasmine said.

Like a good boy who didn't want to piss her off, he lowered the barrel. It pointed at the bed frame. Mike knew if Ben fired now, the round could ricochet and hit him or one of the women.

"Lil, Violet," Jasmine said next. "I want you to leave."

They shared a quick look and shook their heads.

Jasmine's eyes closed. She remained so still, not even seeming to breathe, Mike wasn't certain if she'd fallen asleep or passed out. He expected her to slump over. She did not. Her lids opened slowly. He stared. In the bleak gray light, he saw desire, hun-

ger, lust flaring in her blue-green eyes.

She whispered to the women. "It's building again. I don't want either of you to see."

"Go on," Ben said to them in a gentle voice. "I'll stay and make sure she's safe."

"She's our sister," Lily countered.

"Then do as I ask," Jasmine snapped. Thunder rumbled rather than roared, its force subdued by distance. "Ben, lock the door when they leave."

Violet pleaded, "Don't let anything happen to her."

"I won't." He ushered them into the hall, closed the door on their scared faces and turned the lock.

The sound seemed final. Mike regarded Jasmine. Her face and body bristled with what went on inside. She fought it, her jaw clenching. His heart rate climbed at the nightmare he was witnessing, his foreboding focused fully on her now. To distract her and possibly lessen her misery, he said, "Tell me about Desiree."

She gestured to the pictures and laptop with a shaky hand. Her voice seethed with frustration. "She's beautiful and insane."

He grabbed the color printouts. Jasmine had enlarged Desiree's image in the photos, some candid and some posed, taken at a mobile home park and at a variety of storefront businesses. The grainy quality didn't compromise her impact. She had an unholy beauty that didn't look real. Mike could recall only two other women with the same perfection: Liv Tyler and Angelina Jolie. Hollywood stars with makeup people, hairdressers, professional lighting and award-winning photographers.

Desiree didn't need any of it. Her wheat-colored hair, caramel-colored skin, and green eyes—so pale they looked see-through—would have generated envy in a starlet or an angel. Her expression, though. Mike saw obsession, anger. Jasmine's earlier comment returned. "She blamed me. I tried to fight it and stop, but..."

He asked, "How did you meet her?"

"I didn't. I met the man she wanted."

His face lifted at the slight change in her voice, its dull, absorbed quality. She'd stopped fisting her fingers. They ran down her robe, opening it so he could glimpse her nudity. "What man is that?"

Her fingers slowed. "Connor."

"How did you meet?"

"Why?" Ben asked.

Mike wanted him to shut the fuck up. His Glock in the boy's hand warned him not to be too blunt or to make any unnecessary moves. "I'd like to understand what's going on." Certain Ben would question him—as he had on every other point—Mike spoke quickly to Jasmine. "Did Desiree see you and Connor together?"

"Not at first." Her gaze turned inward. Rain streamed down the panes, creating shadows on her cheek that looked like falling tears. "I met Connor in Miami at a business management seminar. He runs, or rather ran, a financial services business. I was at the conference to get some ideas on operating my sisters' dress design shop." Her brows drew together. Renewed shame rose in her eyes. "I didn't want to lie to you, Mike. I just couldn't allow them to be involved." She leaned forward suddenly, her hand on his ankle. "It was my idea to bring you here. I only wanted to do it until I could find Desiree and stop this. When it's over, promise me you won't tell the authorities about my sisters. I don't care about me, but I can't let anyone hurt Violet and Lily."

Too many questions played in his mind. Stop what, exactly? How and when would it be over? "No one will know about them or you."

Her hand remained. She lowered her face.

He could see she didn't believe him any more than he'd believed her a few minutes ago. The mounting lust he'd seen in her eyes had changed his opinion on one point—no actress could produce the agony he kept witnessing. "You met Connor at a seminar?" he asked, wanting her to talk so he could gain her trust.

Her hair bobbed over her shoulders with her nod. "I had some questions about one of the presentations. He explained it to me over drinks and got to talking about his job in financial services. I didn't understand a lot of the jargon he used, but I didn't let on. I was flattered he would even be speaking to me. Every woman there thought he was so hot. They called him the eight-by-ten glossy, referring to the headshots actors use as they try to get parts. As far as I was concerned, he was better-looking than any actor I'd ever seen. When he asked if I wanted to have dinner when we returned to the Keys, I said yes. I didn't know about Desiree."

"Because he didn't tell you," Ben said, then spoke to Mike. "That bastard didn't do squat to protect Jas. He lied about knowing Desiree. When she started stalking Jas, and we needed to know what he knew about her, he disappeared suddenly. Poof. It's like he fell off the face of the earth."

Mike followed the boy's flailing arms, the pistol swinging wildly in his hand. "Connor's missing?"

Jasmine answered. "Shortly after Desiree saw us at the restaurant for our date, she started to follow me. I figured then that Connor had to know her and they were involved. Why else would she be behaving so irrationally? I called his office to find out what I was dealing with. His secretary said he'd taken a leave of absence. She didn't go into detail, but it sounded like his departure was unexpected. I got his address and went to his condo. He didn't answer his door. His neighbors said they hadn't seen him. I looked for his car in the lot. It wasn't there. I kept returning at various times during the day, thinking he'd have to return. He didn't, but Desiree was always nearby, watching me from beneath a tree, the street, or the next building."

Mike looked down. Jasmine was twisting the sheet in her hand, her face filled with pain and animal longing. The linen slipped from his navel to his hips as she stripped him slowly, deliberately. He slanted a gaze at Ben to see if the boy noticed. No. The gap in Jasmine's robe held his attention. "Where's Desiree now?"

The sheet moved another inch. "I don't know. After she cursed me, I tried to find her to explain again that I barely knew Connor. I had no idea he was involved with her. I wasn't trying to steal him away."

With his free hand, Mike held on to the sheet so it wouldn't fall below his groin. He didn't want Ben going ballistic at the sight of his cock. "She cursed you?"

Tears welled in her eyes. "You don't believe me. How could you? I can barely believe it myself."

Mike kept his tone and manner nonjudgmental. "How did she curse you?"

She released the sheet. Leaning forward, she ran her hand up his calf. "She watched me first. I changed my routine, thinking it would help. It didn't. No matter when I went out or what route I took, she found me. I got so spooked I decided to stay home for a while, thinking I'd be safe." Her free hand flew to her head, the heel against her temple, the words wrenched from her.

"When I went out on the front porch to get the mail, she grabbed my wrist. I hadn't seen her to the side of the door. Her eyes were wild. I wanted to run, but I couldn't move. What I felt was worse than fear. My sisters and Ben were gone. The neighbors were all inside their houses. The street was empty. No one was around to help me. I tried to explain that she had it all wrong. I wasn't stealing her guy. He didn't want me. I wasn't pretty enough for him. If anything, he asked me out so he could talk about himself. Guys like that use women like me all the time as adoring fans. She wouldn't listen. She chanted in a language I've never heard. I clawed her arm, trying to get away. I shouted for her to leave me alone. She smiled. I know this sounds nuts, but in the same instant, I felt something slice through me, hot and cold at the same time, like being on fire while encased in a block of ice. I started to shake. She let go of my wrist and murmured, 'He is mine.' As she backed away, she told me I'd want as she did. Like her, I'd never have any peace. I'd know only insatiable lust."

It blazed in her eyes now. In a normal world, her intensity and ravings marked her as a lunatic. Mike knew better, in spite of his previous misgivings. From birth, his mother's mysticism and his telekinesis tied him to a shadow existence. "How long has this been going on?"

"An eternity."

"Five months," Ben mumbled. "She's tried everything to get rid of it. Chants. Potions. Self-proclaimed witches. Prayers. Nothing's worked."

Jasmine's words caught on her hitching breath. "It started slowly at first. For reasons I couldn't understand, I'd be drawn to guys completely different from Connor,

men I would have never chosen in the past. And yet one thing didn't change. It seemed as if Desiree wanted me to crave men who wouldn't give me a second look. They preferred someone sexier, prettier, less reserved. It wasn't like I could pick just anyone. I had to feel a connection with the man or I wouldn't get even a second's relief from the yearning."

The floor creaked beneath Ben as he shifted his weight. Mike suspected he'd already offered himself to help her out and she'd refused. "The guy on meth that you told me about, was he someone you chose?"

Ben answered first. "The prick could've hurt her. We couldn't risk that again. We had to control the situation."

By bringing him here and keeping him prisoner so he'd be available to relieve her craving. He'd wanted to know why she'd chosen and lured him. The truth didn't make it any better. She'd felt a connection to him because of the curse. She'd found him attractive for the same reason, the only reason. He told himself he shouldn't care, but he did. Last night, she'd touched his soul in a way he'd never experienced and so he acted like Super Cock, needing to pleasure her as no man ever had. He wanted her to find him special. He knew now he could have been any of a hundred other men.

The reality of it should have made him feel differently about her, only it didn't. Like a lovesick adolescent, he still desired what she obviously would never be able to give. Suppressing a sigh, he asked, "You said you don't know where Desiree is. You went to where she did live?"

Her fingers circled his knee. "Where the Wanderers lived. They left the Keys months ago. I thought she did too, she's one of them, but I couldn't locate her in Louisiana where they relocated. The papers called the group modern-day nomads. There were numerous articles about them a few years back. Violet and Lily remembered the pieces and made the connection to Desiree after I told them what happened."

Mike put the computer on his lap, moving his knee away in the process. Jasmine's hand fell to the mattress. He stopped himself before he laced his fingers through hers, an unconscious attempt to console, and concentrated instead on the screen. It showed one folder titled Desiree. He clicked it open and read the file tags. Three bore the names of area newspapers. Others sounded like ordinary places of business: Tatiana's Speedy Alterations, Nick's 24-Hour Plumbing, Susanna's Home Care. "They operate scams?"

"They don't have to." She went to her knees. Her robe fell open as she crawled to his side.

Ben's stony silence evidenced his disapproval. Mike wasn't willing to chance a look at the younger man's face. "What do you mean they don't have to?"

She reached across him to touch his tattoo. Her proximity brought a trace of her still-soapy scent, just as intoxicating as he recalled. He didn't allow himself to inhale too deeply.



Contest

Chance to win a copy of one of the following:

Adored

The Yearning

In His Arms

Sensual Stranger

Lush Velvet Nights

Deep, Dark, Delicious

Comment about the WORKING HARD photo & you're entered!

Details on my website www.tinadonahue.com



Eye Candy

Photos
Courtesy
of Photobucket



Photobucket

Want to Get in Touch With Me?

tina@tinadonahue.com

© Tina Donahue 2011

Sign up for my monthly newsletter at www.tinadonahue.com