

*Tina Donahue's*

September 2011 - TinaDonahue.com

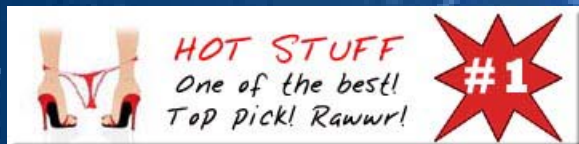
# *Heat with Heart*



*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

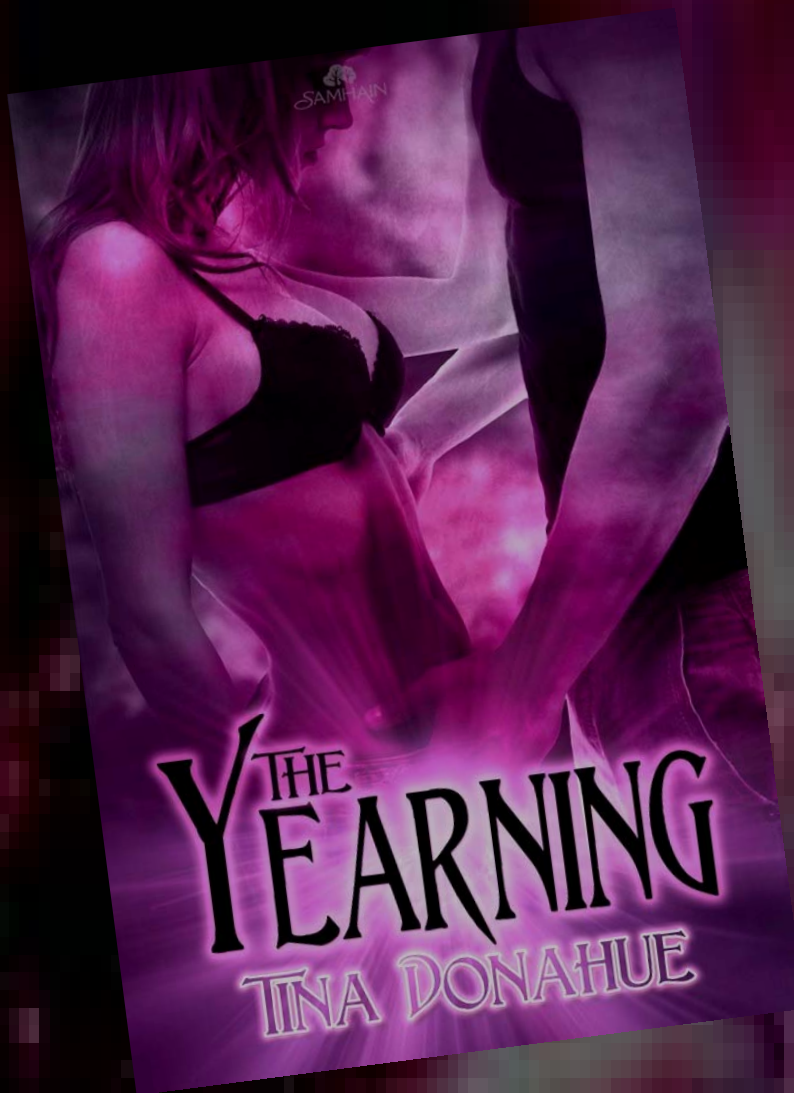
Three years ago, Kyle turned his back on a pro-football career and being the target of tabloids or gold-digging groupies. Craving privacy, he gets it at his roadhouse in Northern California until Lexi Sands invades his life. Indulged and surely phony, she's exactly what Kyle fled.

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

4.5 STARS  
SENSUAL READS



"A wonderful read that should not be missed."

LOVE ROMANCES & MORE

SAMHAIN TOP TEN BESTSELLER

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

# 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.

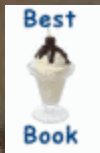


FOUR STARS - ROMANTIC TIMES

FIVE STAR REVIEW - TOP PICK - NOR



Brande - Book Junkie



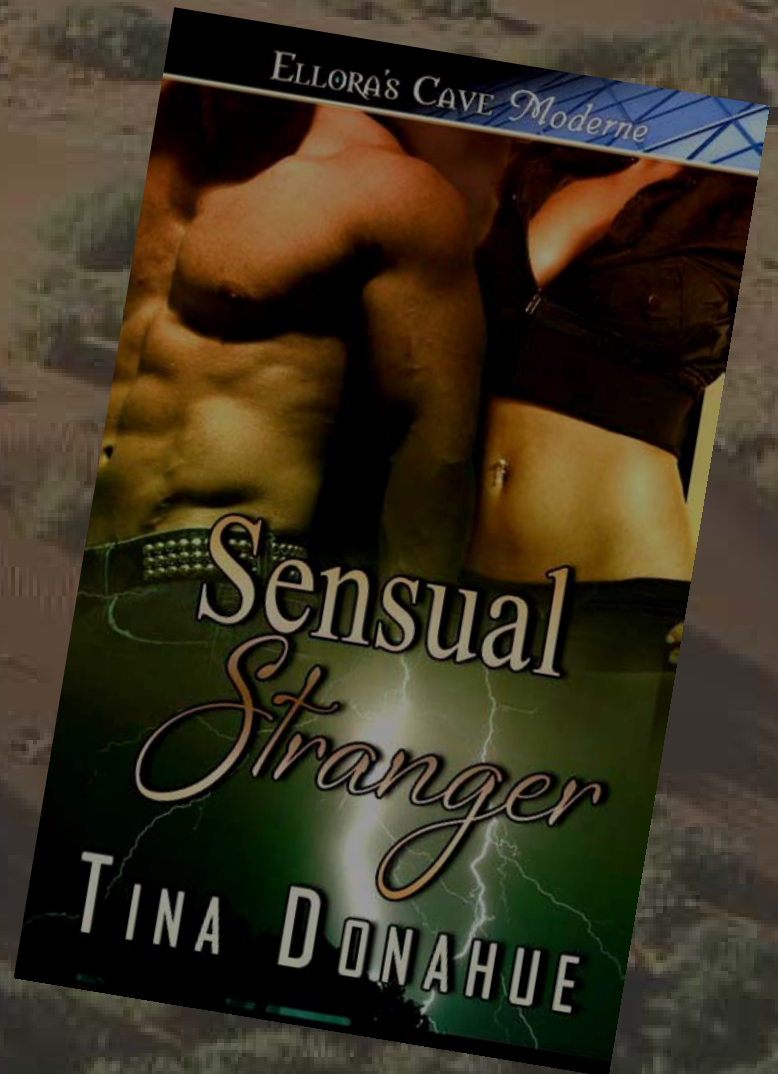
"This story is incredible."

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 SEPTEMBER

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

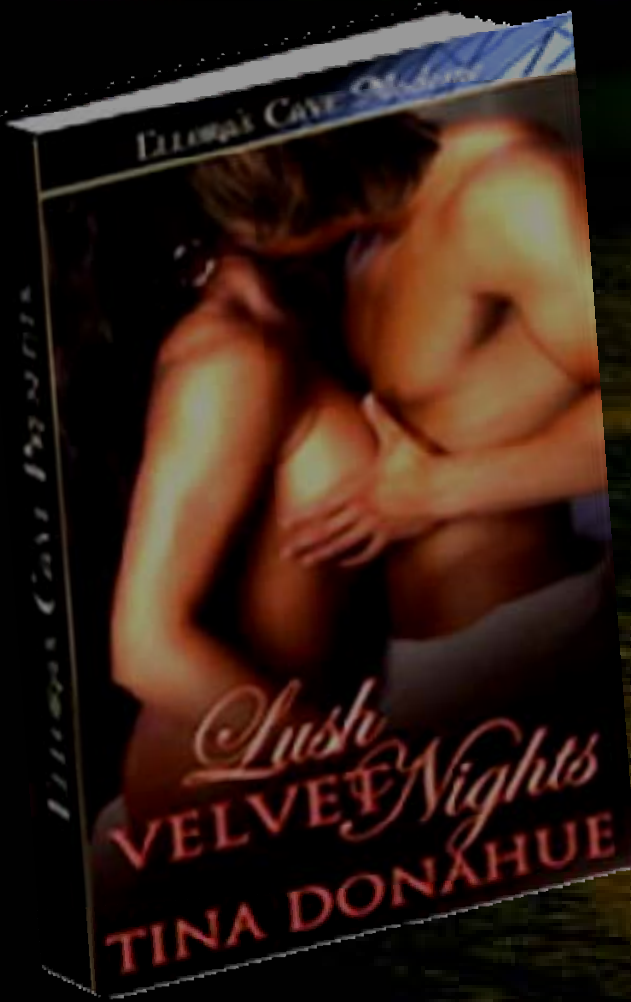


"Lush Velvet Nights is a winner." - Bella

FIVE STARS - JERR



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



## *A Word from Tina*



Hey, all!!

As usual, it's been a very busy month. Lost my email for several days because my service provider had a hardware meltdown. Arwkkkk! When it came back on, I had like a thousand messages to go through. Hope it never happens again.

Next month, my newest erotic paranormal *Unending Desire* is coming out from Samhain. It's already received 4.5 stars from Sensual Reads! Let me tempt you with the tagline and product warning:

*His hunger for one woman will make him a traitor to his world...*

**Contains a repressed scientist who likes to look, and the woman who delights in unleashing his inner caveman. And sex hot enough to burn a hole in all three dimensions...and maybe create a whole new one.**

Here's the link:

<http://store.samhainpublishing.com/unending-desire-p-6491.html>

As usual, I'm working on more erotic contemporaries and paranormals. When I have news of them, I'll be certain to share with you.

Until next month!

*Tina*



Hi, Tina -

I was just at your website to enter your monthly contest. OMG, the pictures you have of the contest guys and in some of your blogs are so hot. Where do you get them?

Lynne

Hey, Lynne -

One of my sources is photobucket.com. Just look under 'hot guys' or 'hot hunks'. You'll have to sift through a lot of photos, but there are some gems in there. The others I got from a model site called Model Mayhem. For my Greek Guys, I just googled 'hot Greek guys' and wow - tons of hotties came up. Happy hunting. :)

Tina

Tina,

Went to the Samhain site to look up *The Yearning* and saw you have another paranormal coming out. The cover is so hot, and the story sounds interesting!

Mary

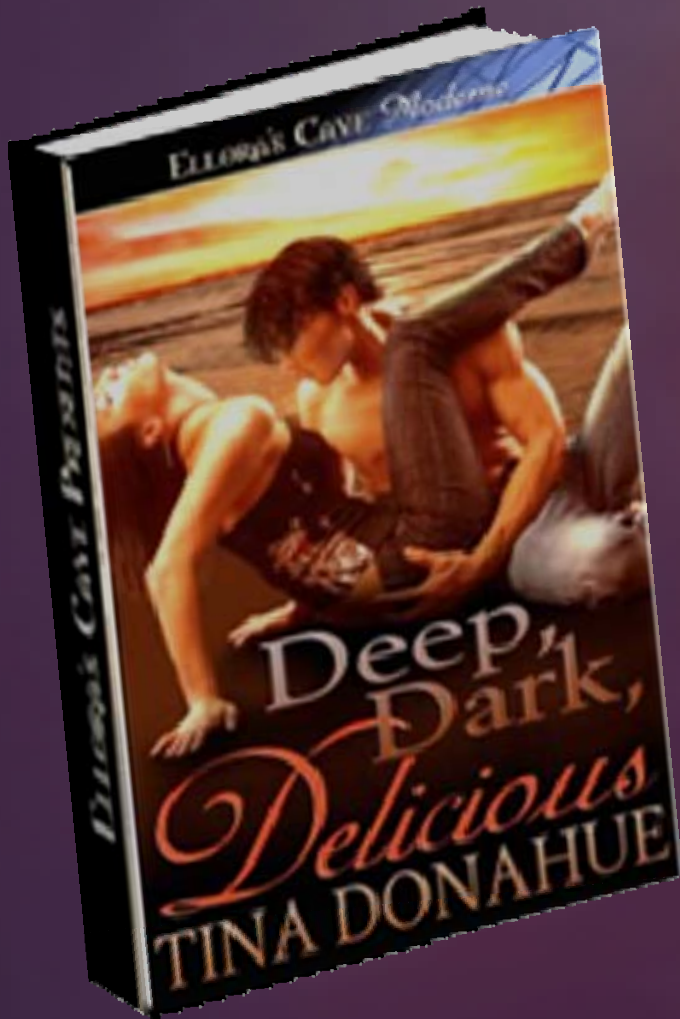
Thanks, Mary -

*Unending Desire* is my second erotic paranormal with Samhain and I believe a very unique take on vampires. Hope you enjoy 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/>

**SEPTEMBER 6 - I'M BLOGGING AT ROMANCE BOOKS 'R US**

**SEPTEMBER 8 - JK COI BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 12 - CYNTHIA ARSUAGA BLOGGING AT MY SITE  
I'M BLOGGING AT SWEET 'N SEXY DIVAS**

**SEPTEMBER 18 - FIONA MCGIER BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 20 - MACKENZIE MCKADE BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 21 - SKYLAR KADE BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 24 - CAROL STRICKLAND BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 25 - RENEE WILDES BLOGGING AT SWEET 'N SEXY DIVAS**

**SEPTEMBER 27 - RENEE WILDES BLOGGING AT MY SITE**

**SEPTEMBER 28 - CYNTHIA ARSUAGA BLOGGING AT SWEET 'N SEXY DIVAS**

**SEPTEMBER 30 - CAROL STRICKLAND BLOGGING AT SWEET 'N SEXY DIVAS**

### **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

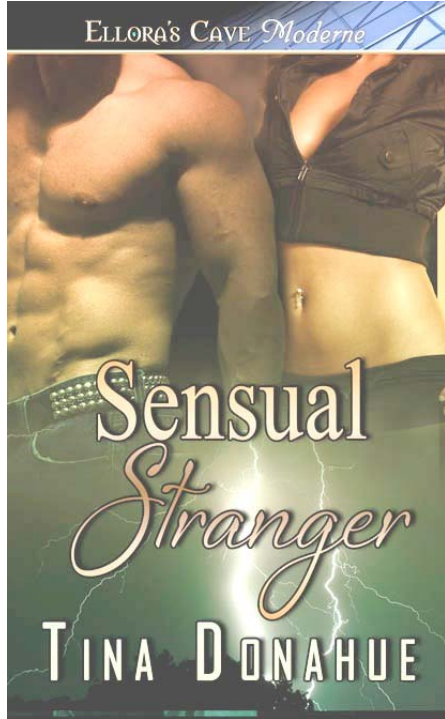
ELLORA'S CAVE – MODERNE AVAILABLE NOW IN EBOOK AND PRINT



# Free Reads

**SENSUAL STRANGER - CHAPTER EIGHT EXCERPT**

**TAKE ME AWAY - CHAPTER SIX EXCERPT**



## SENSUAL STRANGER

Frail threads of steam rose from the water spilling into the tub. It was scented with lavender bath oil that hadn't been in here when Toni showered this morning.

Had Zach left the garage to shop for it, settling on this scent because he knew she preferred it?

She sensed he had and it made her heart open a little more at his thoughtfulness, a romantic gesture she'd received from no other man. One she'd always value.

In a softened voice, she asked, "When are you going to undress?"

After testing the water's temperature, he shook his hand, flinging away beads of moisture, his eyes wandering over her nudity, his voice distracted by it. "When I'm ready."

She wondered about his leg. Did the scars trouble him? Did he worry she'd mind?

Padding to him, Toni rested her palms on his pecs, sighing at the solid planes of his body, the impressive thrumming of his heart. Eyes on his, she murmured, "I want to strip you." Not waiting for his agreement, she tugged the ends of the tee from his jeans and lifted the soft cotton past his torso and above his pecs.

He was all firm flesh, golden from the unrelenting Arizona sun.

Desire shivered through her. It was all Toni could do to contain her passion and keep from moaning. Lowering her face, she snuck out her tongue and licked his ruddy nipple.

It pulled an immediate groan, lusty and pleased, from Zach's throat.

Encouraged, she laved his nipple with her tongue, noting its tiny bumps and the faint saltiness of his skin. Her body trembled with delight. Unable to control herself, she ordered, "Lift your arms."

As if to prove he, not she, commanded tonight, Zach kept them at his sides.

Toni snuck a quick peek at him and whispered a humble, "Please."

He waited several seconds, then did as she asked.

Excited, Toni pulled the tee over his head, past his arms, blindly throwing it into the hall. Before he could lower his arms, she pressed her face into his pit, burying her nose in the dark tuft of hair, loving its utter masculinity and the musky scent it delivered.

Zach inhaled sharply.

She mewed, the sound rushing from her as she licked the fragrant strands and lapped the sensitive skin on his underarm.

Laughter bubbled from him. "What in the fuck are you doing?"

Feeling mischievous, she said, "Whatever I want."

He reacted immediately. "Uh-uh. No fucking way. I call the shots."

"As soon as I undress you." Her hands went to the button on his jeans.

Instantly, Zach's fingers curled around her wrists, stopping her easily.

Toni lifted her head, meeting his eyes. She murmured, "Let me take off your jeans."

He released one wrist, keeping his fingers curled around the other, leading her to the toilet. Sitting on it, he straightened his legs. "Take my boots off. Now."

Tamed and attentive, Toni sank to her knees. With his good leg between hers, she grabbed the heel of his boot and tugged hard. The footwear came off more easily than she would have imagined and impressed her with its weight. She tossed it in the hall, arching her brows at its solid thunk.

Her head swung from it to him. "Think it hurt your floor?"

Zach regarded her with hooded eyes, his expression hungry and male. "Screw the floor."

Toni's thoughts exactly. Tossing his other boot, she didn't bother to check where it had landed. Painstakingly, she peeled off his socks and cradled his right foot in her hands, propping it on her thigh. Although his leg weighed a ton, she was a strong woman, used to physical labor. Head lowered, she kissed the base of his toes, long, strong toes, perfect for such a tall man. With her tongue, she licked their length, ignoring Zach's choking laughter.

His toes kept curling. He wiggled. At last, he ordered, "Dammit, stop!"

No way. Toni needed to honor every part of him, beginning here. She pressed her lips to the tip of each toe, then trailed kisses up his foot to his ankle, suckling it even as her thumbnail stroked his sole.

On a strangled oath, Zach yanked his foot from her. Chin pointed to the ceiling, chest heaving, he blurted, "Fuck, I can't stand it."

Cocking her head to the side, Toni looked at him from beneath her lashes and used her most goading voice. "Baby."

A long moment passed. Water continued to flow from the faucet, splashing into the tub. Steam crowded the room. Zach's head lowered finally.

In his expression, Toni saw savage lust, all traces of propriety and civilization gone, leaving only a male determined to conquer a female. Moving his legs to the side, Zach stood and padded to the bath, shutting off the water.

When he looked over, Toni pushed to her feet, her body buzzing with unfulfilled desire and uncertainty as to his next move.

He didn't make her wait. Grabbing her wrist, he pulled her to the counter to face the oval mirror, a dated design matching the rest of the house.

From behind, he ordered, "Bend over."

Toni's cunt tightened, delivering a new rush of moisture to her vaginal lips. Not knowing whether he would punish her again or mount her, she gripped the lip of the marble counter. Arching her back, lifting her buttocks, she assumed a position that told him her readiness for anything...and everything.

Zach met her eyes in the mirror, its corners fogged from the steam. Intensity blazed in his expression, the powerful muscles in his pecs and biceps quivering with his movements.

Stepping behind her, he unbuttoned his jeans and yanked down the fly.

Blood rushed to Toni's face, its heat stinging her skin. Just as quickly, it receded, leaving her lightheaded at the thought of him mounting her, plunging into her depths, taking possession, fucking her until she screamed in pleasure.

Her eyes darted from him to his jeans. She wanted to see his cock, to marvel at its beauty.

Zach didn't allow it. He remained behind her, shoving his jeans and underwear to just below his narrow hips, no farther, his movements telling her he'd removed his rigid cock from its prison.

With one hand firmly on her hip, he used his other to bring his rod to her cleft, bathing its head in her slick moisture. His neck muscles corded, his shoulders bunched, his lids slipped down, leaving narrow slits.

The strain of waiting even a moment more to be inside of her toughened his voice. "Lift your ass." His fingers tightened on her hip, punctuating his command.

On a shallow, expectant breath, Toni obeyed.

Her mouth hung open, her lids fluttered as Zach entered her without pause, his thick cock stretching her channel to the edge of its endurance, spreading her to capacity. He drove deep, tunneling without restraint until she'd contained most of him and his plump balls snuggled against her ass.

"You like that?" he asked, his voice gruff from arousal, his fingers pressing into her hips.

She whimpered, then gasped, "Yes."

With one final push, he managed to go even deeper, the root of his cock hugged and sheltered by her opening.

Gulping air, she gripped the edge of the counter in a futile attempt to steady herself against the sensations rocking through her. Lust, need, a longing so deep it became frightening battered her body and heart, encouraging both to soften, to yield, to make the most of this time while it lasted.

Once more, she arched her back. The movement tilted her buttocks a bit higher,

the position giving Zach even greater access.

He blew out a breath and tightened his hold on her hips.

Too heavy to keep up, Toni's head hung between her shoulders. She swallowed, then moaned loudly as Zach slipped his fingers past her hip to her cunt, brushing her clit once, twice, three times. A riot of feeling shot down her thighs and up her torso. Her pussy clenched around his cock, encouraging him to stroke her sheath, to bring her to climax.

She cried, "Fuck me. Do me hard."

He ignored her, his fingers now circling her nub, rather than touching it. His cock's thrusts were measured and lazy, the meaty rod easing out of her, slipping back inside, massaging her flesh, using it at his pleasure, driving her nuts.

Toni bucked against him, trying to force his fingers back to her clit and increase his pace.

Zach slowed it even more, withdrawing his hand from her erect bud. He swallowed audibly and spoke on a tattered sigh. "Stop it."

"I can't."

"You will."

She bit her bottom lip to keep from arguing, knowing it would do her no good. She'd agreed to this game they played, she'd encouraged it and Zach intended to see it through. With a nod, she acquiesced to his command, the role she'd wanted him to take.

Seconds passed in silence, broken only by the steady dripping of water from the tub's faucet and Zach's forceful breaths. As he struggled to control himself, his cock grew even harder within her. Willfully, Toni tightened her sheath around him.

Zach responded immediately, his palm smacking her ass, more playful than anything, the crack sounding faint in the cozy room.

Chastised, she relaxed her muscles, her body telling him she'd take whatever he gave...whatever he denied.

He eased out of her and thrust back inside with such force, her body rocked.

Her mind whispered *yes*. Her manner remained meek, subservient to his desire.

Again, he plunged into her, bringing a rush of pleasure compounded by his fingers returning to her clit. He matched each powerful stroke of his cock with a delicate one on her firm nub, his pace still controlled, manageable, maddening.

Heat pooled in her groin, narrowing her channel, tightening it around his male flesh, proving to him that her orgasm whispered closer, closer.

Despite his vigorous thrusts, he kept his slow, steady pace from earlier. How he managed it, Toni didn't know. She mewled repeatedly, so focused on relieving the building pressure between her legs she couldn't form words.

A bead of moisture ran from her temple to her cheek. Gritting her teeth, Toni forced her head up, seeing Zach's reflection, a thin sheen of perspiration on his chest, his muscles taut, his expression tight, his eyes focused on his cock invading her flesh, plundering it.

Lids sinking, she lowered her head, imagining what he saw. His shaft glistening from her moisture, the thick, distended veins on the hard column, its flesh reddened with lust and the friction of their bodies. His lightly furred balls, rounded and firm, close to his groin, barely swung into her ass with each dominant thrust. The tips of his fingers blanched from holding her hips so tightly. His naked chest expanded and fell with each taxing breath.

He drew his thumb over her clit, harder, more prolonged than his previous strokes, sending a torrent of pleasure through her body.

Toni's scalp tingled, her limbs weakened, breathing became impossible, all feeling concentrating in her groin. She neared the peak.

Zach sent her over it, teasing her nub as he pumped quickly, heatedly, his body smacking against hers.

Her voice rose in a cry of exquisite reprieve above the sounds of their lovemaking. Zach's bellow of delight followed.

Alternately swallowing and panting, Toni folded her arms over the counter, resting the side of her face against them.

Equally spent, Zach draped his torso over hers. His bursts of air heated her shoulder, pushing his chest into her back as he fought for a full breath. The moment he'd managed one, his hand returned to her clit.

The first brush of his fingers made her shiver. The second found her protesting from her bud's sensitivity that was so great, she couldn't tolerate it. "Noooooooooo." Bucking her body against his, she tried to get him to stop.

He would not. As he suckled her shoulder and trapped her with his big body, he worked her clit mercilessly, stirring new desire, more intense than what went before. Toni was reduced to tortured whimpers and incoherent words, babbled as her new orgasm broke.

She'd barely caught her breath, her pussy continuing to pulse in climax as Zach straightened and released himself from her cunt.

Immediately, her body, mind, heart recorded the emptiness. She was about to complain when his leg bumped hers followed by a zipping sound.

He'd pulled his jeans up and fastened them?

She had no chance to ask. Arm around her waist, Zach eased Toni to a standing position.

Slumping into him, she rested her head against his smooth shoulder, inhaling his scent as he walked her to the tub. There, he kept her close while he reached down and

tested the water. After an abbreviated yawn, he brought his damp fingers to her throat, trailing them to her breast.

Her nipple tightened instantly.

“Warm enough?” he asked in a tired voice, his head tilted to hers, his bristly cheek scraping her skin.

Trembling at the sensations he generated within her, she hushed, “Perfect.”

He helped her into the tub. Every bone in her body seemed to dissolve at the water’s balmy caress. With as much grace as possible, she sank into the silky cocoon. Head against the tall back lip, hands on the edge of the porcelain, Toni sagged beneath the water’s surface. It lapped the lower edge of her areolas. Bending her knees, she allowed her legs to dip to either side, exposing herself fully to Zach, inviting him to come inside and join her.

With her head turned to him, she met his gaze.

Contentment radiated from her, relaxing her features, revealing her underlying vulnerability. So different than the ballsy expression Zach had seen yesterday as she’d claimed to be the best damn mechanic around. At the time, he’d also caught despair and caution so deep, he sensed she’d been hurt frequently by others and didn’t know what to expect from him.

Her measure of trust at this moment humbled Zach as few things had.

Whatever he proposed, he knew Toni would welcome it eagerly, the same as when he’d spanked her. A stunningly erotic game she’d willingly introduced to him as though she had no qualms about putting her safety into his hands.

His gaze lowered as Toni reached out, running her damp fingertips down his fly to his bulge. Through the denim, the heat of her fingers, their gentle stroking, tightened his balls and dried every bit of moisture in his mouth.

She purred, “Take your clothes off and join me.” As an added inducement, she swished her legs back and forth in the water.

Torn between a groan of pleasure and a smile, Zach settled on the latter. “The tub’s not big enough for both of us.”

Her fingertip traced the outline of his thickening cock. He’d been out of her for only a few minutes and already he was ready for more, a record he hadn’t experienced in years.

“You are a huge guy,” she murmured.

Like an idiot teen, he grinned.

Toni’s eyes met his. Her expression grew serious. “You’re tired, right?” She hesitated a moment, seeming to struggle for her next comment. At last, she flicked her gaze at his knees, just as quickly averting it as though embarrassed. “Shouldn’t you at least sit down?”

Zach's smile hung on for a second longer before it felt foolish. She'd noticed again how he favored his good leg, no doubt curious what had caused it.

He steeled himself for her expected questions. They didn't come. Gratitude washed over him. Tonight, he didn't want to face anything bad, preferring to let desire take the edge off his incessant pain. In a surprisingly steady voice, he said, "I'm fine."

Braced against any discomfort, Zach sank to his knees beside the tub. He selected a sponge from the small cabinet to the side and dipped it into the fragrant water. "Drape your arm over your head."

Toni did as he asked, her eyes never leaving his, her actions fluid with no hint of embarrassment. As though having a man bathe her was normal in her world. Maybe it had been.

He squeezed the sponge tighter than he'd planned, wondering about the men in her life, surprised at the surge of jealousy pumping through him.

Ignoring it, he ran the sponge down her arm, pausing at her elbow. There, he saw a faint scar he hadn't noticed earlier, the skin a shade paler than the rest and puckered slightly. "How'd you get this?" With his fingertips, he traced the contours, noting the difference between it and the surrounding flesh, wondering if a man had caused it. Some bum she'd known. Some prick who'd hurt her.

Toni's lids fluttered. She spoke on a sigh. "Overshot a jump during one of my performances."

Zach's eyes moved to her face, then returned to the scar, his fingers stroking it. "You crashed?"

She rolled the back of her head against the tub. Her arm moved with it. "Not even close. Cycle came out with just a few dings, though I hit the gravel pretty hard and tore the sleeve of my jacket. Cost me big bucks to get the leather fixed."

Surprised at her indifference, Zach glanced at the rest of her, looking for other injuries, not certain if the water masked them. He spoke without thinking or pause. "You've been hurt?"

A throaty chuckle bubbled from her. As he withdrew his hand, she lowered her arm and clawed damp hair from her neck. "Only when I screw up. And I don't do it all that often. Can't afford to keep getting my leather pants and jacket fixed, you know?"

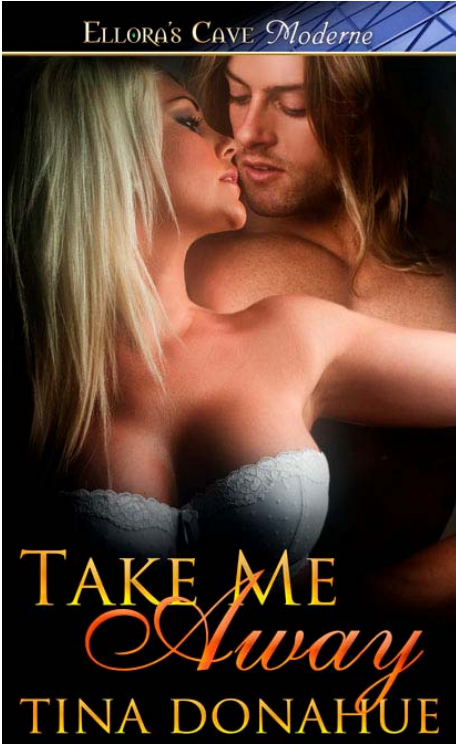
He didn't. She worried more about hurting her clothes than injuring her body. "What exactly do you do in your performances?"

"Just the usual stuff." She ticked off the acts, each new one sounding worse to him than the others.

At last, he interrupted, "T-bone? Roll-over? Suicide twist?"

Composed, her lids heavy, she regarded him. "There has to be a little danger involved or no one would come."

And then she wouldn't make a living. She wouldn't have a place to stay at night.



## Take Me Away

With nowhere else to go, Kyle returned to his cabin, drained to the point of weariness from his lewd thoughts of Lexi.

Pausing just outside the front door, he noted the living room lights were still burning, the same as when he'd left. Had she been reluctant to turn them off because it wasn't her place? Or had she forgotten about them as she'd fallen asleep? Not on the sofa in front of the fireplace, but in the spare bedroom where she'd hopefully still be tomorrow morning. That way he could leave here without being tempted by her. He could flee to the roadhouse like the coward he was, arriving hours earlier than he needed to.

With that plan in mind, Kyle opened the door and let out the breath he'd been holding. Lexi wasn't

stretched out on the sofa, skirt hiked past her upper thighs, showing him she wasn't wearing panties and exposing the light brown curls he just knew would be between her –

His thoughts halted at the faint clicking noises coming down the hall. Seconds later, Buddy Baby appeared, tail wagging, ready for some serious love.

Scooping the pup in his arms, Kyle whispered, "What are you doing up? Where's Lexi?"

Excitedly, the dog licked Kyle's cheek, ear and throat. Too bad he couldn't talk. Padding across the room to put the critter in his bed, Kyle stopped short of it, hearing what sounded like a hitching breath or a sob.

"That's not true," Lexi said, her voice wobbling, "how many times do I have to tell you that?"

Who in the fuck was she talking to? Stepping to the side, Kyle looked over. Down the hall, light spilled from his room. His heart stumbled on a beat, then raced out of control. Head swinging to the front door, he tried to recall the last time he'd seen Jacqueline tonight. Had she been in the roadhouse's kitchen as he passed and left the building? Had she been in the bar?

Had she guessed his interest in Lexi and come here to confront her?

"Please, just listen to me," Lexi said, her voice thick with tears.

Fuck. Kyle headed down the hall, then pivoted, remembering Buddy Baby, taking him to his doggie bed. "Stay," he warned the pup, his voice low but harder than it had

ever been.

The animal gave him a startled look, then hunkered down to the corduroy cushion, its small body shaking.

Oh hell. "Please," Kyle added in a nicer tone, patting the poor little thing on its head. With a parting wink, he hurried down the hall, stopping just short of his bedroom door. Head cocked, he listened.

"You have to quit worrying about me," Lexi insisted, her tone stronger now. "I'm fine. I want you to concentrate on school. That's your job."

Okay, so it wasn't Jacqueline in there with her. Kyle waited through a long pause filled with silence, as though Lexi was listening to someone on the other end of a call. On his phone?

"I know it's summer vacation," she said, "but you have a reading list for fall, right? So get on it. Do good. That's what will make me happy, Autumn."

The name registered immediately. She was speaking to her kid sister.

"Please," Lexi said, "don't let them do this to you. No, no, no, no," she insisted, clearly interrupting the girl. "Don't do it out of guilt or for any other reason. I'll be there for you. I'll never let you down, no matter what I have to do."

Kyle wasn't about to consider what they might be discussing. Feeling awkward for having eavesdropped, intent on returning to the roadhouse and sleeping on his office sofa, he backed up. Straight into Buddy Baby.

Before Kyle could untangle his feet, his shoulder hit the wall. As he spit out a curse the pup yelped, then ran around his legs into the master bedroom.

"Sweetie, I gotta go," Lexi said, her voice low and breathy. "I'll call you tomorrow."

The phone's receiver clacked as she dropped the thing into its cradle.

Uncertain what to do, Kyle waited for Lexi to join him in the hall, confronting him about sneaking up on her like countless paparazzos.

She didn't.

He heard her rough sighs and Buddy Baby's whimpers. Rubbing the back of his neck, Kyle entered the room. The pup lay near the nightstand, chewing on another of Kyle's old mocs, its manner tentative as it eyed him then Lexi.

Head down, she sat on the edge of his bed, her hair hiding her face.

Kyle stared at the strawberry blonde color and what he could see of her mouth. Free of the black lipstick, her lips were now the color of a blush. An oversized blue tee, large enough to fit him, hung limply on her narrow shoulders. Her legs and feet were bare, her toes long, the nails unpolished.

A surge of lust battered him, complicating the sympathy beneath. The way Lexi held herself reminded Kyle of how cowed his pup had been when he warned the ani-

mal to stay in its bed.

Did she think he was going to bitch at her for using his phone?

On what sounded like a cautious breath, she fisted her fingers into his bedspread, no doubt waiting for the worst.

It broke his inertia. Giving Buddy Baby a stern look to stay where he was, Kyle went to her. "You okay?"

She brushed the tears from her face and looked up, the skin around her eyes puffy and red. "Sure." Her mouth trembled.

Kyle's heart made a funny turn in his chest. "Lexi?"

Sucking her lower lip, she shook her head.

At any other time, with any other woman, Kyle would have offered a word of comfort or whatever plausible lie he could think of, then escaped as quickly as possible. After a moment's hesitation, he sat next to her on the bed, his weight shifting the mattress, causing its springs to squeak. With even less pause than he would have guessed, Kyle took Lexi's hand.

Her fingers curled around his as Jacqueline's had in his office. Unlike that moment, Kyle squeezed Lexi's hand, holding it gently but firmly, letting her know he didn't want her to pull away. "What happened?"

She cleared her throat. "Nothing."

He waited.

She sighed. "I was just talking to my kid sister, that's all. I'm in here because I didn't want to use my cell phone, I don't know who's listening in or intercepting the calls. I'll pay for the long distance. Forty dollars should cover —"

Gently, Kyle interrupted, "I don't want your money. Use the phone all you want." He laced his fingers through hers and rested their hands on his thigh. "What happened? Is she all right?"

Lexi's head remained tilted to their hands. A moment passed and then another and another. At last, her thumb stroked his.

The tingle it created shot up Kyle's arm to the back of his throat. Every hair on his body felt as if it were standing at attention.

She nodded, then shook her head.

At a loss as to what she was trying to convey, Kyle was about to ask her when he recalled his question about Autumn. Taking a calming breath, he tried to steady his voice. "What happened with her?"

A faint whimper escaped the back of her throat.

"Lexi?"

She spoke quickly, the words rushing out as though she could no longer stop them. "The paparazzi are starting to gather outside my parent's house, waiting to see if

I'll show up there. I wanted to protect Autumn from them, but the bastards are beginning to hound her too. Do you know what that's like for a fifteen-year-old kid? If they take her picture and splash it all over a magazine, making her look bad, do you know what that will do to her self-esteem and confidence?"

After seeing the press's effect on Lexi, he had a fair idea. Even so, he assured, "They can't do that. She's not a public figure like you are."

"You think they care about that?"

"What about your parents, can't they call the cops or something?"

Tightening her fingers around his, she spoke in a voice limp with despair. "My mom's out, probably with her latest lover, and no way would Dad chase them off and risk losing the publicity. He lives for stuff like this. He and Mom always insisted that Autumn be in the business like me. I told them to back off from her. To let her be whatever she wants, that I'd make enough for everyone, but only if they leave her alone."

Stunned to silence, it took Kyle a moment to find his voice. "And they aren't doing that?"

She whimpered. "Not since I went into treatment. They've been pressuring her to go to The Disney Channel's stupid cattle call. Disney needs a fresh face for a new series like their Hanna Montana franchise. My parents think Autumn would be perfect for it. She's even willing to try out for the part and every commercial that's being made if it means letting me quit the business. I told her I don't want her doing that. That I'd make back the money Dad lost on his dumb investments."

Another surprise. "Your father's a day trader?"

"I don't know. I guess. He was my financial manager until I fired him. He's still not talking to me. The last I saw of him was in court when he gave a statement that he knew I was out of control and that I should stay in treatment no matter how long it takes. In other words, until I let him control my money again."

Kyle's belly churned. He couldn't find the words to describe a parent that would do such a thing to their own child.

Lexi's body trembled with her quiet weeping. She whispered, "I've got such a fucked up life. I can't let that happen to Autumn."

"It's okay. Everything will work out." Lame advice Kyle knew, but he hadn't a clue what else to say. Wanting to comfort, he wrapped his free arm around Lexi's shoulders.

They were narrower than he would have guessed, so delicate he couldn't quite catch his breath. On her own ragged sigh, she released her weight into him, her cheek to his shoulder, her free hand on his torso.

The warmth of her body seeped into his, relaxing his joints, weakening his resolve to simply offer a good hug, to assure her that things would look better in the morning,

then let her have his room while he slept in the spare.

At the heat of her breath on his throat, its feathery touch, Kyle's lids sank. Beneath her palm, his abs jumped. Their other hands remained joined, Lexi's thumb still stroking his.

Kyle bit back a moan at the intense pleasure such a small movement created. He inhaled deeply, captivated by the fresh scent of her shampoo, a fainter rose than her perfume. Stirred by it, his cock continued to thicken.

She knew. Her hitching breaths quieted, signaling an end to her tears and the start of something else. Kyle felt it in the way her body softened against his, her lack of resistance, the same as when he'd kissed her earlier.

*Don't do it, Kyle's mind ordered. Let her go.*

His arm tightened around her shoulders.

In response, Lexi yielded even more. Her cheek brushed his shoulder as she lifted her head, her lips seeking his throat.

Raw desire tore through Kyle, shaking him to his core. Lexi's gentle suckling, the sweep of her tongue on his skin, so wet and hot, pulled a raw groan from him.

Together, they fell to the mattress, their hands unlacing, fingers exploring, touching as much as they could while they kissed. He cupped her breasts, she cradled his balls, her touch sending sparks of sensation to every part of him that mattered. Angling his mouth, Kyle deepened their kiss, tasting the chili she'd eaten, oddly aroused by it as he was by the rest of her.

To his delight, Lexi responded like a wild woman. They made sloppy sounds, more animal than human, betraying their hunger.

She kept rolling onto him, doing her best to stay on top. Not about to let her, Kyle easily pushed Lexi onto her back, draping his body over hers, trapping her beneath him.

Elbows on the bed, hands on either side of her face, he tore his mouth free and opened his eyes. Shoulders heaving with his fitful breaths, he stared.

Lexi's hair snaked out in all directions, tangled and abused by his hands. Her lips were puffy and reddened from his brutal passion, the neck of her tee hung precariously close to her right nipple. With each of her gasping breaths, the hard tips touched his pecs.

Hard lust slithered down Kyle's spine. It took all of his will not to react in the way he wanted – with a feral craving that would please the hell out of him but might scare her.

Beneath his body, she was both sluggish from desire and restless for more. Her building tension evident in how her legs pressed against his and in the way her fingers clutched his arms. She blinked slowly, as though she couldn't manage a more taxing movement.

He wanted to ask if she was okay, but didn't dare, didn't have to.

"We shouldn't be doing this," she whispered.

He should have been surprised, but wasn't. In the part of his brain that was still working independently of his cock, he thought the same. "You're right, we shouldn't."

Neither of them moved. For a moment, Kyle knew they didn't even breathe.

Lexi's throat bobbed with her swallow. Holding his gaze, she squeezed his biceps, her nails digging into his skin.

The slight sting didn't come close to the savage ache in his groin.

She made a mewling sound, one of frustration, perhaps caution, telling Kyle she was worried that if she let down her guard, if she allowed them to make love, he might hurt her as so many others had.

He didn't have an answer, at least not one that would have pleased either of them. What time they had was measured by her stay here, no more. He should get up. He had to leave before this went too far.

He shifted his weight.

Lexi's nails dug deeper. She murmured, "Don't leave me, please. I want you, Kyle. God, I want you."



# Contest

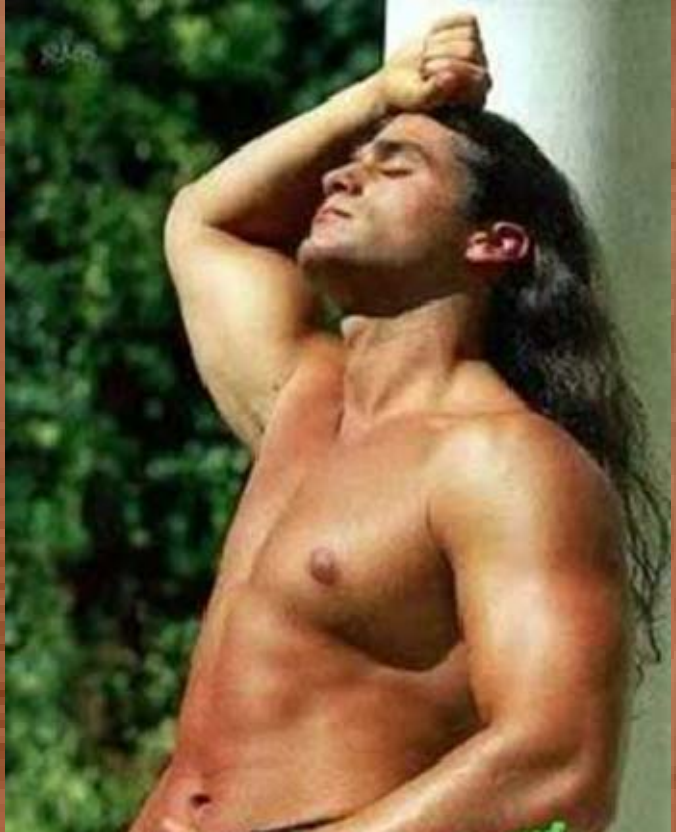
Chance to win a copy of one of the following:

*Adored*  
*The Yearning*  
*In His Arms*  
*Sensual Stranger*  
*Lush Velvet Nights*  
*Deep, Dark, Delicious*

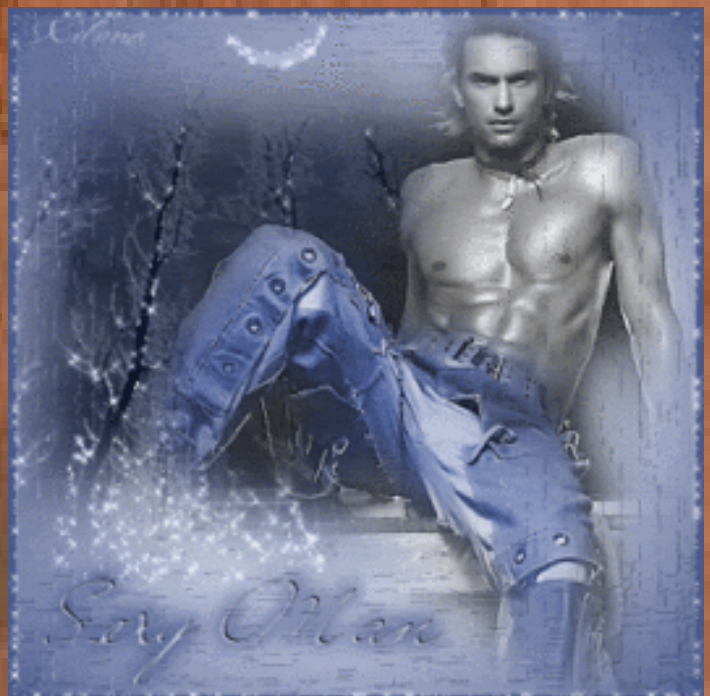
Comment about the Whoa, Cowboy! photo & you're entered!

Details at the monthly contest link at my website: [www.tinadonahue.com](http://www.tinadonahue.com)

# Eye Candy



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