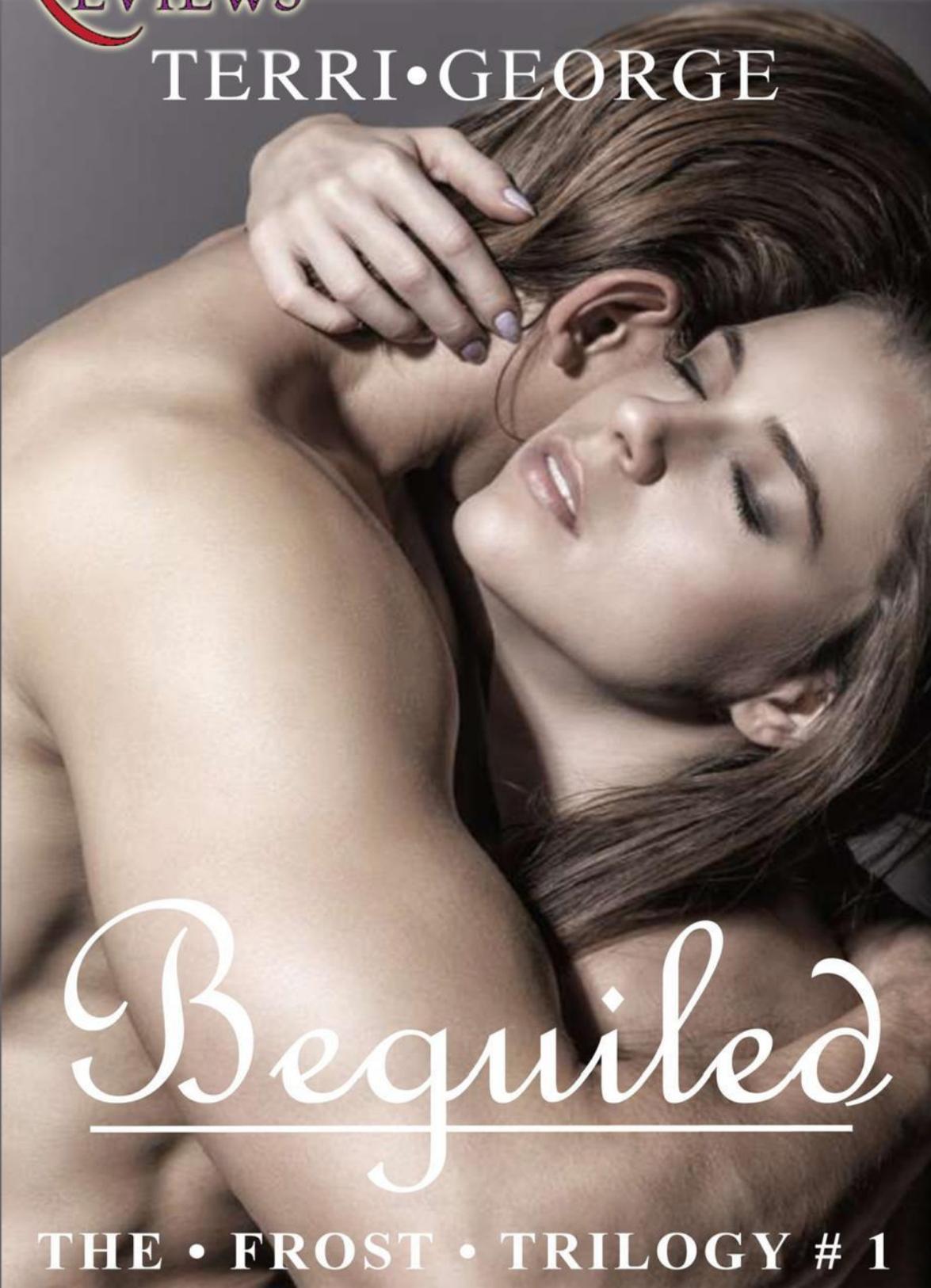


THE
ROMANCE
REVIEWS

August 2014

EROTIC ROMANCE FIRST CHAPTERS

TERRI•GEORGE

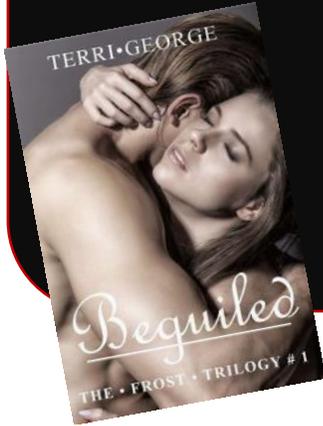


Bequiled

THE • FROST • TRILOGY # 1

Cover Story Excerpt

3 **TERRI GEORGE**



Beguiled by his masculine beauty, captivated by a pair of eyes of the deepest blue, Mia knows she's in trouble...

Dear Reader,

In this issue, we showcase the **First Chapters** of Erotic Romances!

For our cover story, we have Terri George's sexy cover of the first book in The Frost Trilogy, **BEGUILED** (p. 3).

Another book featured is:

PASSION'S FIRE by Jenna Rose Ellis (p. 16)

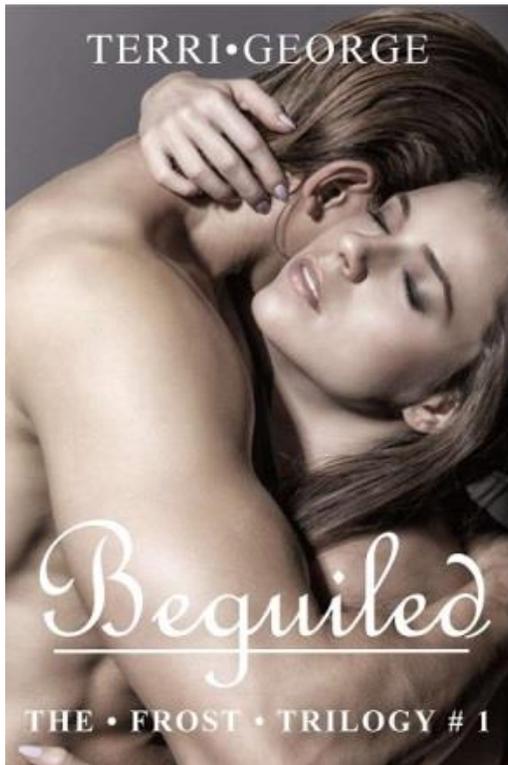
Happy reading!

Carole

P.S. SAVE THE DATE! **September 1** marks the start of our [Fall into Love Party](#). Lots of awesome prizes up for grabs. Don't miss it!

Beguiled

Terri George



Mia James' first solo event is going live and she's nervous – the fund-raising dinner for The Project's new rehab centre is a major do. The evening is going well and she's beginning to relax; if only she could shake off the inexplicable feeling she's being watched...

Still putting her broken heart back together, the last thing Mia's looking for is a man; that is until she's introduced to one of the charity's wealthy patrons.

Beguiled by his masculine beauty; captivated by a pair of eyes of the deepest blue, Mia knows she's in trouble...

Something shifts in him, momentarily revealing the depths of his true nature concealed beneath the civilised urbanity of his suit. Something untamed, carnal, animal. And all I can think about is sex: sweat-ridden, mind-altering, body-weakening sex. With him.

Nick Frost is a man with a past; a past he's trying hard not to go back to. From the moment he meets Mia he knows she holds the key to his salvation and he's determined to claim her. Now all he has to do is convince Mia to let him...

Available at: [Amazon](#) [Smashwords](#) [Barnes & Noble](#)

Praise:

"Sexy and steamy! Terri George's debut novel kicks the alpha male into high gear! Nick, oh so sexy Nick! This book has it all....sexiness, love, heartbreak, secrets, and steaminess! It was yummy! Wonderful debut novel." ~ **Heather Driscoll, Goodreads member**

"I love, love this book. From beginning to end, I simply can't put it down. Personally, it's something I will reread again. In the league of This Man, Driven, FSOG and In Flight." ~ **Diana Uy, Goodreads member**

"Beguiled captivated me from start to finish. Both characters have their flaws and emotional baggage lending to the credibility of this imperfectly perfect pairing. Mia and Nick's story holds no shortage of steamy love scenes and is sure to keep you coming back for more." ~ **Ella, Goodreads member**

Chapter One

28 May 2013

A passing taxi driver wolf-whistles as I cross the busy London street. This should cheer me up no end. It's always nice to get the admiring approval of a passing male, but he was fifty five if he was a day with more than a passing resemblance to Mickey Rourke – after the bad plastic surgery. But then a compliment is a compliment.

This is a big night for me and although I was happy when I did a final check in the mirror, as usual the doubts are setting in. It's a swanky do and I can hardly swan around in the jeans and T shirt I've had on all day, but now I'm wondering if I've gone too far.

Tonight is all about glamour and I've gone for the full-on Audrey Hepburn Breakfast at Tiffany's look. At five foot five I'm shorter than she was and I'm nowhere near as skinny – I have curves, but I also have good cheekbones and I am a brunette.

I've kept my makeup subtle, going all out with the hairdo. It's an incredible fuff, but worth it. The hardest bit is the French twist at the back, but after fifteen minutes I had my shoulder length hair piled on top, sprayed into submission and finished off with a diamante clip at the front.

What really sets off the whole look is the jewellery: diamond stud pearl drop earrings and my five strand pearl necklace. With its large cluster of diamonds at the front it's a fabulous statement piece. Not real – obviously. I wish. Thirty eight quid off Amazon, but it looks amazing.

My dress is real though: an authentic 1960s vintage black above the knee shift and well worth every single one of the four hundred and fifty pounds it set me back. It's classy and sensuous and in it I feel classy and sensuous.

I'm making my way back to the venue from the hotel. Not the plushiest in London by any stretch of the imagination, but it served its purpose, saving me having to trek all the way home to get ready.

Butterflies skittering in my stomach I walk around the block to the venue's entrance on the other side of the neo-classical landmark building. Like I said, it's a big night for me.

I've been working for Stephen's events and party planning company four months now. Until now I've only worked on projects with Julia, who in her time has organised everything from parties for the spoilt offspring of parents with more money than sense who think spending obscene amounts of dosh on a kid's birthday proves how much they love their little darlings, to Hollywood movie premiere after-screenings and BAFTA post-ceremony parties. She taught me all she knew.

Julia loved her job, but loves her husband more and wanted a family more and left us three weeks ago to have a baby. Stephen showered her with baby and leaving presents and a slap up farewell lunch at Restaurant Gordon Ramsay. Of course he doesn't actually *cook* there, he's far too busy shouting and swearing at people in other restaurants on TV. Foul-mouthed arse he may be, but he does know how to pick a good chef, hence the well-deserved Michelin stars.

So tonight I'm on my own, but it wasn't hard to organise. As soon as I saw it I knew this was the right venue. An event like this needs to be held somewhere elegant yet flamboyant and you don't get any more elegant and flamboyant than 1930s Art Deco. After that it was just a matter of booking Tom, one of our favourite chefs and choosing the right menu, tableware and floral displays.

Of course I went to Jen for the flowers. She did her apprenticeship at a florist's straight from school, learning the trade and making it to manager before striking out on her own. She's not only got incredible creative flair, she's got a good business head on her too, putting together a business plan that even the staidest of bank managers couldn't resist. She works long hours, but loves it.

'Tell me another job that can make people so happy. Who doesn't love to get flowers?'

Weddings are the mainstay of any florist and you'd think with all the bridal flowers Jen's done she'd be longing to do her own, but no way. Men aren't in the picture long enough to get anywhere close to the down on one knee stage. She says she's too busy building up her business and men just get in the way, but I have a suspicion her parents divorcing when she was fourteen, the hell that was my parent's marriage and what Martin did to me has something to do with her wanting to stay single. I don't think either of us really believes in HEAs. They belong in fairytales, not real life.

I wanted the flowers to be elegant and sensual. They had to make a statement. So they had to be lilies. White Callas are beautiful, but a bit... I don't know... demure. And a black and white colour scheme, although perfectly in synch with Art Deco, would be too stark. I wanted warm and bold so at Jen's suggestion I went with the deep pink Calla set against shiny green foliage.

So it hadn't been hard to pull this evening together, but it's a big deal. A huge deal. The Project is having a fund-raising dinner for their new rehab centre. It's a major do. The plates are a whopping fifteen hundred pounds and anyone who's anyone in well-heeled London society will be in attendance. This is my first solo project to go live and I'm as nervous as hell. I want tonight to be perfect, but not just for me and my career, for Samuel too.

I took to Samuel Redman at our first briefing meeting. He lost his wife to drugs twenty years ago and now devotes most of his time and considerable wealth to helping addicts get off and stay off drugs and repairing broken families.

In his early sixties, his dark hair greying at the temples, Samuel still looks every bit the powerful captain of industry he once was, but there's an underlying kindness of a man who feels

deeply. I remember how his eyes lit up when he spoke about how happy they were when first married; how bright and vivacious his new bride had been. But then the pressure of being CEO and working ridiculously long hours changed everything. Laura had been lonely and started going out more rather than sit in splendour alone each evening. Fifteen years Samuel's junior she was still young and needed fun. It was the age old story. She fell in with the wrong crowd...

Pulling open one side of the heavy double wooden doors with more confidence than I feel, I cross the lobby into the Crush Bar.

The mirrored bars and strategically placed huge floral arrangements of lilies and wide glossy Xanadu leaves in bulbous glass vases are a glitzy introduction to the venue. It's a great space and, having more square footage than my entire flat, there's plenty of room for guests to stand and mingle.

With its side booths the Long Bar is perfect for a more intimate chat before going into dinner. I walk its length on my way to the kitchen, the colour scheme of deep pink and fresh green continued here created by subtle lighting.

After checking with Tom that he's on track for the magnificent dinner to be served promptly as the guests are seated at eight, I head into the dining hall to give it a final once over. I don't know why. I've checked it a hundred times.

The tables in the massive ballroom are covered with crisp white linen tablecloths with half covered with a top cloth in deep pink the other half in forest green. Exquisite smaller floral displays of magenta and green tulips that Jen created sit in the centre of each table surrounded by eight place settings of gold chargers and flatware. Shortly before dinner the candles in strategically placed etched glass holders will be lit; their glow sparkling off the cut glass wine and water goblets. When the main lights are dimmed a little it's going to look fabulous.

I head back into the Crush bar to the sound of corks popping as the bar staff start opening champagne, pouring the bubbly golden liquid into crystal flutes ready for when the guests start arriving, which will be in about ten minutes.

'Want one?' Spinning round I see Oz grinning at me holding out a glass of champagne. 'Go on. I won't tell.'

Laughing, I shake my head regretfully. 'I wish I could, but I can't.'

I could do with it to calm my nerves, but I never drink when I'm working. It would be unprofessional and although I'm only required to be here until the guests go into dinner I still need to keep a clear head.

'Shame to waste it.' He grins, knocking it back. Dangling the empty glass from his fingers he licks his lips. 'A bunch of us are hitting a club after. Want to come with?'

'Sorry, not on a school night.'

Oz looks confused. 'Huh?'

'Work tomorrow?'

'Shame. Could've been wild.' He smirks, raising his brows suggestively.

Oz has been flirting shamelessly with me since he arrived looking very different in his day clothes: the uniform's black shirt hiding the tattoos on his arms, the studs in his ears taken out and his wayward mess of dark hair slicked back. With a wicked smile and steady stream of sexy banter on the side he's got the whole bad boy thing down pat. He's definitely not boyfriend material – not that I'm looking for one – and I pity any girl who's foolish enough to think she can turn him into one. But he'd definitely show you a good time and a few years ago I would have gone for it, but these days I'm sort of sworn off men.

I had boyfriends at Uni. Well, 'boyfriends' is over stating. Liaisons would better describe them: mostly drunken, all seniors and all fleeting, which suited me just fine.

Truth be told, still reeling from dad's sudden death two months before, I was out of control my first year. Although I was offered a deferment I wouldn't take it. I thought getting away would help me sort my head. It didn't.

When it all got to be too much I found the oblivion I ached for in alcohol and meaningless sex, craving the closeness of another body, any other body, just to feel alive; to feel something other than crushing pain and emptiness.

My studies suffered of course, but I passed the end of year exams; just.

Jen was shocked by the change in me when I came home for the summer. I'd lost weight; my lacklustre hair, dull complexion and dark shadows under my eyes evidence of my errant lifestyle.

It took my mother longer to notice. She was too busy reinventing herself to see that her daughter was in pain.

It was Jen who, in her usual no nonsense way, got me to see I needed help, needed to talk to someone, needed to face and give voice to the maelstrom of emotions I was drowning under.

Then I met Martin. And I let down my defences.

From the moment we got together in the spring of my second year at Uni we were inseparable: studying together in the library, getting drunk together in the student bar, sleeping together in his narrow single bed. We moved in together after graduating and finding jobs and for a while we were happy. I thought he was The One and thought he felt the same way about me – he told me often enough.

But everything changed when he joined an investment firm in the City. He worked hard and played hard, but not with me: coming home in the small hours, off his face, stinking of booze, passing out on the sofa; or completely wired, pupils dilated, kicking off the bedclothes unable to sleep.

One Friday night Jen and I ended up in a west end bar we hadn't been in before and I caught him slobbering all over some slapper, his hand up her skirt. He saw me across the room, the shock registering in his drink glazed eyes. Yeah. Party hearty Marty.

God knows I should have kicked his arse out before then. It had been going on for months and I hated what the drink and drugs had made him become. But he'd always manage to worm his way back into my heart, begging forgiveness, swearing on everything holy that he loved me and wouldn't do it again. And I'd have my old Martin back and things would be great for a couple of weeks. But bad habits are hard to break.

Catching him with someone else was just the last of many straws and only confirmed what I already suspected. So I raised my glass to him before heading home and throwing all his clothes and belongings into bin bags, leaving them piled up outside the front door.

At least he had the decency to take them quietly the next day without knocking or using his key. He wouldn't have got in anyway. The chain was on and it stayed on all weekend until I got the locks changed Monday morning. Decency? Too cowardly to face me is probably nearer the mark. Five years, give or take, brushed away just like that in a west end pub with his tongue down some tart's throat.

That was nearly five months ago, just before I started working for Stephen and a week before my birthday – how's that for timing? So excuse me for not wanting to jump into anything new, however short-lived, for a while. I have no need of a one night stand and as for anything more? I'm in no rush to get my heart crushed again.

The champagne is flowing; the men in dinner suits and women in evening gowns that probably cost the equivalent of a month's salary to me clearly having a good time as waiting staff pass between them with silver platters of amuse-bouche. But even though everything is going smoothly I still can't completely relax.

As I flit between the bars conversing with staff and checking in on Tom in the kitchen, I can't shake off the inexplicable feeling I'm being watched. (And not by Oz. He's taken the hint and has been busy flirting with a more receptive female member of the bar staff.) You know that feeling of unease; the feeling of a Presence that gets your shoulders twitching. It's not that I'm overly worried. I'm in a very public place after all and I can look after myself. I'm just a little... unsettled. I tell myself I'm being ridiculous. Who'd be watching me? I'm no one.

Deep in my musings my body jerks, instinctively preparing for fight or flight mode as I feel a cool hand at my elbow and I spin round on my kitten heels.

A flicker of alarm passes over Samuel's face. 'Sorry. I didn't mean to make you jump.'

I relax with an exhale, smiling reassuringly. 'No it's me. I'm just a little on edge. Nervous about tonight.'

Samuel smiles warmly, his large hand now clasping my shoulder as he leans in giving my cheek a quick peck. 'There's no need. You've done a marvellous job Mia. Thank you.'

'It was my pleasure. I'm just glad I could help in some small way.' I'm not just saying it, I really mean it. I don't have the funds to be able to donate in any meaningful way, but I admire and feel for this gentle man and I'm genuinely pleased to have helped in raising funds.

Samuel's smile turns almost impish and his eyes dance mischievously. Well this is a side of him I haven't seen. 'There's someone here who wants to meet you.' He sounds downright conspiratorial.

My curiosity is piqued. Who'd want to meet me? And why? Stephen would be nothing short of ecstatic if I pick up another client tonight.

Samuel's eyes dart around the room. 'Now where is he?'

An unexplained shudder of anticipation shivers through me. *He?*

Spying who he's looking for, Samuel raises a hand, crooking a finger. My eyes follow his line of vision coming to land on the man he's beckoning over and the air leaves my body in a rush.

Martin and the flings at Uni had been just boys in comparison to the male who's approaching.

This is a Man. With a capital Muh.

Wow.

I'm stunned. I think my heart actually stops beating for a couple of seconds. Oh my God he's... *Beautiful.*

But his face is still strongly masculine. His dark blonde hair is swept back from his brow, falling over his collar, it's length a hint of defiance; a rebellious bad-boy edge at odds with his otherwise well-groomed, urbane appearance.

His jacket open, one hand in his trouser pocket he saunters over; his body moving with an easy, loose-limbed grace. A walk that's simultaneously relaxed yet supremely confident.

And damned sexy.

His body is made for Armani.

Giorgio himself would weep at the sight of his creation adorning such perfection; the sleek navy Tuxedo doing nothing to hide the hard muscular physique beneath the exquisite tailoring. He's well built, but not bulky; just sinewy, powerful and strong.

I wonder at the broad chest beneath the crisp white shirt; what it would be like to run my hands over those pecs... Down those abs...

I bet he's ripped.

I have to tilt my head back as he gets closer to maintain eye contact. He's tall. Samuel is six foot, but he's a good three, maybe four inches taller.

And he's here.

Touching distance away.

And I can't breathe.

He holds my gaze even as Samuel introduces me to him. I'm captivated by his eyes. Two pools of sapphire blue so deep I could drown in them. I just want to dive right in.

'Mia, this is Nicholas Frost. One of The Project's patrons.'

Okay I know I should say something here, but now he's up close I just... can't. His masculine beauty has me rendered speechless, gawping like an idiot; my body feeling things I haven't felt in an age. Oh who am I kidding? I've never felt this before. Is this what love at first sight feels like?

Love?! My inner hussy scoffs. Lust at first sight more like.

His penetrating stare is stirring something deep within me. It's unsettling and I wrench my eyes from his only to have them rest on his mouth. It doesn't help.

Now I'm wondering what it would be like to kiss that mouth; to have that mouth on me. He licks his lips and I'm lost in a private fantasy that involves that tongue expertly licking every inch of my naked body.

The corners of his highly kissable mouth twitch ever so slightly, almost as if he can read my mind as he extends a hand.

Okay, now you're supposed to offer yours. What is wrong with you? A pretty face and you go to pieces.

I silently gasp as his hand closes around mine, igniting a flame that licks up my arm; the heat spreading rapidly through my body discharging a burst of liquid fire on a direct trajectory to my groin.

His eyes widen a little in shock. He felt it too then; it wasn't just me.

Something shifts in him, momentarily revealing the depths of his true nature concealed beneath the civilised urbanity of his suit. Something untamed, carnal, animal. And all I can think about is sex: sweat-ridden, mind-altering, body-weakening sex. *With him.*

My body betrays me; trembling under the heat of his free hand on my bare skin as it wraps around my shoulder. The intoxicating scent of his cologne – a blend of cool spices and smoky woodiness with warm low notes of vanilla, invades my senses as he leans in.

He's going to kiss me. That's a bit bloody forward!

His lips brush my cheek in a barely-there kiss and I feel his breath warm my face as an almost inaudible moan escapes his mouth; the unequivocal sexual nature of the sound sending a shockwave bumping down my spine.

'Mia.' He whispers my name softly in my ear, all breathy and sensual, accentuating the syllables: My Ahh. Yet there's an underlying urgency in his voice and I'm off again; fantasising all sorts of scenarios where he's saying my name. In bed... In the shower...

Pulling back, his eyes latch onto mine again.

I suddenly realise he's still speaking. What did he say? I wasn't listening. Too busy getting lost in erotic wonderings of what it would be like to feel his strong, hard body against me... On top of me... Inside me...

I mentally shake myself out of my delicious, but highly inappropriate imaginings.

Jesus. Get a grip.

His wife is probably here. My eyes flick to his left hand and I clock the absence of a wedding ring, but that's inconclusive. Any man this good-looking is bound to have been snapped up. Probably by some blonde, willowy, long-legged model type. I hate her already.

'Mr Frost.' At last! I speak! Not only that, I manage to return his smile. Although I hope mine is a little more professional than the sexy smirk he's giving me.

'Nick.' He insists. 'My friends call me Nick. And we are going to be friends Mia. Close friends.' He emphasises "close".

I look questioningly into those azure pools. We are? How's that going to happen then? Once the guests go into dinner I'm released from my duties. I'll collect my belongings from the hotel and be on my way home, travelling across London as you sit enjoying the dinner with the other seven guests at your table.

I feel an inexplicable stab of jealousy at the thought; that they get to spend the evening with this beautiful man while I only get to go home. Alone. We travel in very different social circles. It's highly unlikely I'll ever see him again. The realisation leaves me feeling suddenly bereft.

His eyes are riveted to mine and it's taking everything in me to stop my body buckling under the intensity of his stare. 'So, Mia. You work for Singular Events?'

'Yes.' Samuel just said that.

'I've heard good things about them. Have you worked for them long Mia?'

'About four months.'

'And tell me Mia...' *Oh you really must stop saying my name.* 'Do you enjoy your work?'

'Yes.' Why is he asking me this? What does he care how long I've been doing my job and if I enjoy it? And why is he still holding my hand?

'You're very good at it.' Frost's eyes smoulder as his hand tightens a little around mine. 'But then I think you're probably very good at a lot of things.'

Bloody hell.

There's no mistaking that was a come-on. Okay we're way past forward now and into pushing it territory. How do I respond to that? I feel the transparent evidence of my discomfort rising as my cheeks flush embarrassingly. Oh God, what must Samuel think?

A staff member coughs politely at my side and I drag my gaze away from this awesome hunk of male.

'I'm sorry Miss James, but you're needed in the kitchen.'

'Okay I'll be right there. Thanks.'

Having delivered his message the staff member leaves and I return my gaze to Frost as he still has a hold of my hand.

'You have to go.' He sighs.

Loosening his grip, his middle finger traces a path down my palm to my finger tip sending an echoing shiver coursing down my body. 'We'll meet again...'

I swallow hard at the unquestionable assuredness of his words. We will? When?

'Soon.' He insists; reading my mind.

Turning to Samuel to apologise for having to leave so abruptly; I'm dismayed to see the amused smile playing on his mouth. He obviously knows Frost well and has probably seen him coming on to women before; and seen their reaction to this breathtakingly gorgeous Man. I blush again at being found out.

Thankfully the need for me to attend the kitchen turns out to be a minor problem.

Crisis averted I scan the bar area, ostensibly doing my job checking all is well, but I know I'm looking for one person in particular. My senses prickle. I can feel his presence; like we're connected by an unbreakable invisible thread winding its way unseen around and between the guests in the crowded room.

I find him and my breath catches in my throat.

Frost is standing alone leaning against the wall, his long legs crossed at the ankle. He's blatantly staring, his eyes boring into me from twenty feet away. It's so unnerving. Oh God, I need a drink in the worst way.

I look away, but my eyes are immediately drawn back to him like he has some kind of magnetic pull on me. I'm totally transfixed. The background music and voices around me fade to a low muffled hum, drowned out by the sound of my rapid heartbeat pulsing in my ears. Figures surrounding me blur and all I see is him; the desperate need to grab his hand and drag to my hotel room and get him naked and inside me, overwhelming.

My eyes focus in on his mouth as it slowly spreads into a half smile that's so full of knowing. He nods his head slightly in answer to my unspoken desire – can he read my mind?

Face it girl he doesn't need to be telepathic to know what's going on in your head, it's written all over your face! He's got my mind in a spin and my body in a whirl of longing.

And he knows it.

The chiming ring of something metal tapping a crystal glass snaps me out of my trance and a male voice announces: 'Ladies and gentlemen. Dinner is served.'

The guests coalesce into a solid crowd making their way into the ballroom shrouding my view of Frost and I exhale the breath I hadn't even realised I'd been holding.

My reaction to this man has left me shaken and confused. I need to regroup, get a grip on my emotions. Grabbing a glass of champagne from a passing waiter I make my escape to the ladies' loos.

I down the champagne in one, the crystal flute chinking as I set it on the vanity unit. My hand is shaking. My hand? My whole body is trembling. Gripping the edge of the porcelain sink to steady myself, I draw in deep breaths until I feel the pounding of my heart slowing.

How can a man – even one as jaw-droppingly gorgeous as Frost – have such an effect on me?

My subconscious rolls her eyes at my naiveté. Because you've just been subjected to the seductive techniques of a Player of the highest order, that's how! A man doesn't get that self-assured and skilled in the subtle art of flirtation without plenty of practice. And face it, he'd have had ample opportunity to hone his skills. A man that stunning must have women throwing themselves at him on a daily basis. And you're clearly no exception, my inner voice sneers with disdain. You couldn't have been more obvious.

I look at my reflection in the mirror. Well it's all a moot point now girl. He'll be finding his seat in the ballroom by now and you'll never see him again.

My reflection stares back at me. She doesn't look happy.

'So how did it go?'

Jen made me swear to call, eager to hear about my first live solo event. So as soon as I got home and changed into my comfy sweats and T shirt, my hair brushed out, I settled down on the sofa with a large glass of wine and made good on my promise.

I tell Jen everything and she me. We're more like sisters than best friends. She's the one school friend I kept in touch with when I went off to Uni. She was there for me when I had my meltdown and when I found out for sure Martin was cheating on me; coming round armed with wine and ice cream – the standard pre-requisites for mending a broken heart.

'Fine.'

I hear Jen's impatient huff. 'Fine?'

'Okay, great.'

'Too right it did. The place looked amazing. You're great at your job Mia. You just need to believe in yourself more.'

'Yeah, I know.'

'That bastard Martin stomped on more than your heart when he screwed you over.' I wince at the mention of his name. 'So were there any eligible men there?'

Oh you have no idea.

'Are you psychic?' I laugh.

'No just hopeful. It's about time you met someone. Wait. Does that mean there was a guy?! You met someone?!'

'I did. Sort of.'

'Okay, spill. Leave nothing out. What's his name, what does he look like, what does he do, what did he say, *what happened?*'

'Jesus Jen, slow down. There's not that much to tell. His name's Nick Frost and I have no idea what he does. Samuel introduced me to him.'

I can almost hear Jen's brain working. 'So he knows your client and he was at a fancy fundraiser. Must have plenty of dosh then.'

'Probably, I haven't thought. You know I don't care about things like that.'

'Yeah, but it doesn't hurt, right? So if he's wealthy I'm guessing he's older?'

'Yeah. Maybe mid thirties.'

'Hmm. *Older guy...*' I swear I can hear Jen's dirty smirk. 'Go on.'

'It's stupid really. I mean it doesn't matter. I'm hardly likely to see him again.'

'So what? What happened?'

'He came on to me that's all.'

'No that's far from all. You finally met someone. I need details! What happened?'

What did happen?

'He held my hand for longer than necessary, kissed my cheek and said something.'

I don't have to see her to know Jen's rolling her eyes. 'Okay I'm damned sure you could be telling it better.' She huffs. 'I mean it had to be better than that. What did he say?'

'Well it wasn't so much what he said as how he said it.'

'Jesus Mia I'm losing patience here. What did he say?'

'He said I was very good at my job and that he thought I was probably,' I imitate Frost's seductive drawl. '*Very good at a lot of things.*'

'Cheeky sod! I like him already. Is he good looking?'

'Yes.'

'How good looking?'

I picture that kissable mouth and those deep sapphire eyes. 'Gorgeous.'

'Ooh, now we're getting somewhere. So what are we talking? Ryan Gosling beautiful, or the full-on Hugh Jackman, Wolverine knicker-wettingly gorgeous?'

It's a tough call. Frost is undoubtedly beautiful, but I have the feeling he's a wolf in designer clothing.

Available at: [Amazon](#) [Smashwords](#) [Barnes & Noble](#)

About the Author, Terri George:

I've been writing for years now, mainly plays and poetry. I've won competitions and had a short comedy performed at The Bush Theatre in London and my poetry has been published in several anthologies.

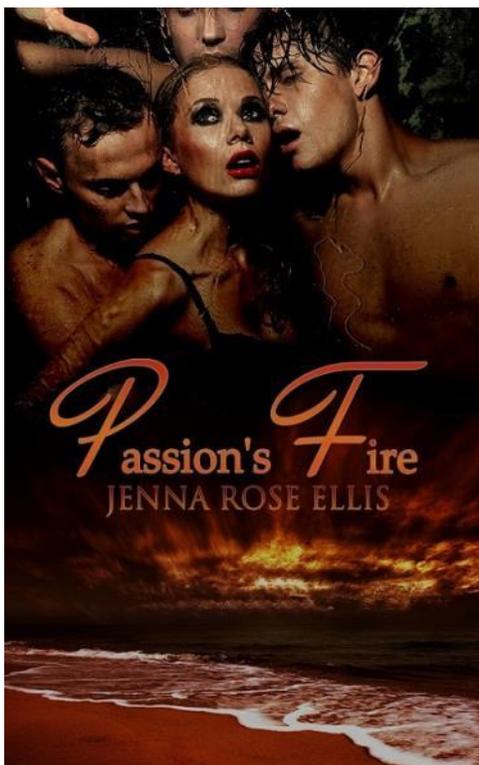
Like many people I've started several novels and never finished them. Then I discovered erotic romance and, loving the genre, realised this is what I want to write.

I had an absolute blast writing, *Beguiled* and hope you enjoy it. I realise the colloquial dialogue and British idioms may be new to some readers, but Mia is English as am I and she speaks with a definite English voice (my voice) - I couldn't have written my feisty, well-educated, well-read heroine any other way. Maybe I should have included a glossary! LOL

Visit her at: <http://terrigorge.co.uk/>

Passion's Fire

Jenna Rose Ellis



Three's a crowd. Four is passion incarnate.

Her cousin's plan sounds just like what the doctor ordered: Spend time--much naked time--with a hunky man or three to forget her vile ex, who'd called her a cold fish or worse. Claire's determined to prove him wrong.

And prove him she does--in an incredible foursome that stretched her boundaries and gave her more orgasms than her ex ever did.

When she finds herself falling for one of the guys, would one man be enough for her or would she need all three men to ignite passion's fire?

Note: This book contains explicit sexual situations, graphic language and sexual situations such as m/m pairing, four-way sex involving m/f/m/m pairing, and triple penetration. Happy-Ever-After included.

Available at: [Amazon](#) [Smashwords](#)

Praise:

"Fantastic read, I look forward to more books from Jenna..." ~ **Crystal Sin (Amazon)**

"Awesome! I like how understanding Michael is of Claire, how he soothes her and bolsters her courage and confidence regarding her sexuality. Great hero, and totally made the book for me..." ~ **Ashia (GoodReads)**

Prologue

"Here's what we'll do." Her cousin Jenny's aqua blue eyes gleamed with mischief.

Claire giggled, then stopped short. She'd never giggled before. At least, not since she'd left her teen years behind. Oh well, it was a good feeling, a liberating feeling. She couldn't believe she had come to Jenny in tears earlier this afternoon.

After Claire had poured out her tale of woe in between sobs and sips of brandy—Whew! That was one fiery stuff!—Jenny had patted her back, poured more of the brandy into her glass and told her to drink up. Claire had been in need of comfort, and Jenny had met her needs in doses.

"I want-want to prove the bash-bastard wrong," Claire had declared. Even her fuzzy mind believed that was the best revenge she could have on her ex.

"That's the spirit!" Jenny's eyes had glittered with an idea. "And who better with than hot, eligible, attractive men? I know a few who've acquired quite a reputation with the ladies. The women all cried when the men dumped them; they were *that* good in the sack. Do you want to have sex with one of them?"

Sex. What did sex have to do with revenge?

Oh yes. She'd heard of sex that was supposed to move mountains and cause earthquakes, but she had never experienced it. At least she didn't think so. Her mind was covered by a fine mist and she couldn't be sure. Was Jenny proposing to have her experience one?

A glimmer of excitement took seed beneath the layers of liquor clouding her responses. Having earthshaking sex would certainly restore her confidence. Then she'd tell her ex to shove his dick up his ass.

"I'm sure that's the right medicine to cure what's wrong with you." Jenny smoothed Claire's hair back from her face. "Not that there's anything wrong with you, love. You just need to find the right man. I hate to see you like this." Her face closed, taking on an angry expression. "Damn that odious man! If I see him, I'll—" One hand clenched into a fist that she slammed into the table.

The thud sounded loud in Claire's ears. She swallowed another sip of the brandy, trying to wet her dry throat. No, she wouldn't lie to herself. She wanted to occupy her mind with something else so she would forget her ex's loathsome image.

Why not replace weeks of bad sex with a night of good one? Experienced men seemed just the ticket. Or would that be tickets?

Claire's heart thundered loud in her ears. "Let's..." her voice croaked. She tried again. "Let's go for it."

"Great!" Jenny's voice was deep with satisfaction, though she sounded so far away. "This is so exciting! You'll be safe with them, Claire, any one of them. I promise. The guys I have in mind

are my brother's friends. I know them well and can vouch for their character. I'll send each an invitation and you get to choose whoever turns up at the beach cottage and..."

Claire didn't hear anymore as she slid into darkness.

Chapter One

Just go to the cottage this weekend, love, and enjoy!

The text message was from her cousin Jenny, and two days after receipt, Claire still felt a faint reverberation of excitement. The wild plan she had agreed to in her drunken state had come to fruition a week after its conception. Before this, she hadn't known Jenny possessed such a naughty streak.

Then again, Jenny hadn't asked the guys to RSVP, so Claire didn't know if anyone would be there, if at all. Jenny said it would be more fun this way.

Claire snorted. Where was the fun in that? She had agreed to this weekend tryst because she thought good sex would erase her nightmares and cure her battered confidence. But if not one of those hunky man-sluts turned up, how would that serve her?

For a moment, her lips tightened as her mind filled with images of the one man responsible for her condition. She rued the day she met him and wished she could've warned her then-self not to accept his invitation for coffee. He was handsome and charming, and she couldn't have guessed the misery he would make of her life. Appearances truly were deceiving. Damn Robert Coleman to hell and back.

Thank goodness she was free of him.

The worst of it was that he'd left her with scars on her soul, and it was to heal these very scars that Jenny had hit upon the wild and reckless idea.

I have an idea it's going to be the best weekend of your life. ☺

Claire hoped so.

Hmmm. The second message was a bit suspicious. Did Jenny know something that she was keeping from Claire? The way the message was worded, it seemed Jenny knew somebody would be there.

Maybe somebody had RSVP after all.

Her heartbeat raced in a fast gallop that threatened to steal her breath.

Could it be him?

She had met Frank's friends on the occasion of his wedding three weeks ago, but the introductions were hurried and there were so many of them that all she could remember was a

parade of attractive men. There was one guy there though who had given her the shivers—good ones—and whom she hoped would answer Jenny’s message.

Claire cursed then, remembering. *That* guy hadn’t shown the remotest interest in her. Although they were seated together during the wedding dinner, he’d been on the phone the entire time with barely a second to eat, let alone talk to her. Someone that busy wouldn’t have the time to spare for a tryst. More to the point, someone that attractive wouldn’t lack for women falling at his feet.

Right. No use thinking about him, so stop.

Due to an emergency at work on this particular weekend, Claire couldn’t get away early in the morning as she’d planned. Therefore, it was already very late at night by the time she reached the end of the narrow dirt road that led to the beach. She slung her handbag onto her shoulder and gathered her overnight bag, got out of the car and slammed the door shut with her hip.

The night was dark and eerie, and only a dim light lit her way, a sliver of light that slipped through the leaves of the trees from the quarter moon overhead. Familiar with the ruts and holes on the dirt road, she walked confidently onward, the fallen leaves crunching under her feet.

Soon, she left the copse of trees behind and stopped short, her heart lurching then speeding uncomfortably fast. She’d guessed right. Lights blazed brightly from the cottage. Someone was in there.

Claire took several deep breaths to fortify herself, then trudged down the well-worn path and slid a little as the sparse grass-decorated ground gave way to soft, shifting sands. The light sea breeze cooled her perspiring forehead and lifted her chest-length hair. Weighted down by her bags, she sank a little into the sand with each step, feeling the irritating grains scuttling about inside her shoes. Damn, she should have remembered to change into her beach slippers. Soon, she reached the familiar door of the cottage. She placed her overnight carrier on the floor with a deep, grateful sigh, then bent and turned out the pebbles in her shoes.

She lifted the knocker and rapped firmly on the door. In line with the rustic appeal of the surroundings, Jenny’s brother Frank had never changed the knocker for the more modern doorbell. She was very thankful though that Frank loved the convenience of electricity and indoor plumbing.

Claire shifted her feet impatiently as raucous men’s laughter drifted out from beneath the closed door. Oh God. Her pulse speeded up and she could hear her heartbeat loud in her ears. There was more than one of them in there.

She wished, oh she wished *he* would be here—

The door jerked open, and Claire found herself staring into the attractive face of the man she’d seen before at Frank’s wedding, a face that had set her heart beating with unaccustomed rhythm three weeks ago and which was having the same effect on her tonight.

It was *him*. He had come.

"Yes? You're the woman Jenny texted us about? We thought you weren't coming." He came a step forward and looked at her closely. He snapped his fingers. "You're Frank's and Jenny's cousin, right?"

"You know me?" She was horrified to hear her voice squeak. He knew her from Frank's wedding? She couldn't quite credit it. But if not from there, then from what occasion did he identify her? They certainly hadn't met before, and she knew Jenny hadn't revealed her identity in the text messages.

Perhaps she had left a little impression on him after all.

"But of course. Claire Gilliard. What red-blooded man wouldn't remember Frank's very sexy cousin?"

His voice was too smooth and too charming. That was probably how he enticed women into his bed. Unfortunately for him, its effect on her was the opposite, and she saw past his words to the logic behind.

"All right," she said wryly. "Let's cut the crap. I look enough like Frank and Jenny to be their sister, and you have probably heard enough about me from them to remember my name, seeing as I'm his *only* cousin. I'll be honest and tell you I've seen you at the wedding."

The understatement of the day. Having her fantasy man appear in front of her had already placed her at a disadvantage, and she wasn't giving this man more bullets to throw at her.

"But you don't remember my name." He finished the thought she deliberately left hanging, because she would've been lying if she'd said it. This way, she needn't confirm or disprove his assumption. His deep-set brown eyes twinkled. "Ouch. My ego's hurt."

"I daresay you'll survive."

"Michael Lane."

I know.

She didn't think he'd bow but he did. "I'll introduce you to the other guys in a minute. Come in, Miss Gilliard. Allow me to get your bag." He stooped, picked up her overnight carrier and gestured for her to precede him into the cottage.

She went in, conscious of his presence behind her. She took her time looking around the tiny living room, though the cottage hadn't changed much since she was here a few months ago. She was buying time for herself, because she didn't know what to do.

How did one start a one-night stand?

Jenny did say she hoped more than one man would answer the call so that Claire could have several men to choose from. Should she ask Michael to arrange the men to parade in their swim trunks and evening clothes, like those in the beauty pageants, so she could judge and make a decision from among them? On the other hand, why bother when the man she wanted was right there—

The cottage door slammed shut behind her.

She pasted a bright smile on her lips and turned. "Which bedroom should I use?"

He quirked an eyebrow and set down her bag. He walked the few steps toward her with such predatory grace that her heart thudded against her rib cage and her shoulder bag slid to the floor from her nerveless hand, the strap having slipped down her shoulder ages ago. His lazy gaze strayed from her head down to her toes and lingered at some prominent places that had her tingling, something she hadn't experienced before. He stopped in front of her and stared at her with a faint smile, his hand coming up to caress her cheek. "Maybe you should share mine."

The supreme male confidence of those words made all her insecurities rise up to overwhelm her. What was she doing here? How could she bear it if another man—this sexy, attractive man—confirmed Robert's opinion of her? Yet, was that frank male appreciation she saw in Michael's eyes?

"Sh-should I?" she stammered.

He frowned. "Did I get Jenny's message wrong somehow? Didn't you come here for sex?"

Claire wasn't used to such straight language and she blushed. "Um, ah..."

"I'm sorry." He laughed softly, taking her hands in his. "I've embarrassed you. We'll take it slow."

His laughter somehow caused her discomfiture to vanish. "It's just that when Jenny and I were planning this, it didn't seem so real then."

"Why don't you come and meet the other guys then?"

A reprieve. "Sure."

He ushered her into the next room, and the sight that greeted her stunned her into immobility. Michael bumped into her and heat emanated from his body, contributing to the rising temperature within her.

Moans, groans, and wet, slurping noises.

A handsome, naked, blond-haired man sat on a chair, and his fingers gripped the dark hair of another naked man, who was on his knees between the blond's legs. The blond moaned and arched his back as the dark-haired man went down on his cock.

Oh God, the heat. Scorching her, taking away her breath.

"Sam? James? Uh, guys..."

"Sorry, Mike," the blond replied, his eyes closed as he shook his head from side to side. Amazing, his hair was swept back from his face, as immaculate as though it had just been combed. "You took so long...and we just...just...ah...yes, yes...suck harder. Harder!"

She couldn't take her eyes off the two men. They were so beautiful together, giving and receiving passion. The color of their hair and bodies also provided contrast and highlighted their individuality—the blond so creamy and fair as though his body hadn't seen the light of the sun

since young, while the dark-haired man was tanned all over. She'd bet even his cock was a deep brown color, even though it was hidden by his thigh all this time.

"Are they...are they always this intense?" she whispered.

"Yes," Michael whispered back, his hands coming around her waist and pulling her back against him. He nuzzled her throat, kissing and nibbling. "Seeing them made me realize how lonely I am. I'm glad you came. I want you, Claire. Feel this." He took her nerveless hand and cupped it around his cock, his throbbing, iron-hard cock.

Oh my. Her dream came true. This very attractive man wanted her.

She lost her breath. She shifted her hand up and down his length, and even through his trousers, he seemed to be...huge, so huge that her mouth watered.

"Want to join them?" He sucked on her ear and a pleasurable tingle spiraled through her. She had never known her ear could be so sensitive. "Or do you want to go upstairs to my bedroom?"

Bedroom.

Her hand jerked away from him.

The word brought back all the ugly memories of the time she'd spent in that very room with Robert, fourteen nights of the worst nightmare she'd ever had. It was as though water was thrown on the budding tendrils of desire she was starting to feel, and she shivered, though she remained wrapped in Michael's arms.

"Claire? What is it?" He turned her around to face him, but she kept her head down until he placed two fingers beneath her chin and forced her to look at him. "Claire?"

She gazed into his deep-set brown eyes, which brimmed with concern and kindness. He touched something within her, and he made her want to confide in him. Somehow, he also imbued her with strength, because she was determined to discover her sexuality and all that entailed tonight. Robert and all that he'd shown her could go hang for all she cared.

But first, Michael had to know what he was dealing with.

"I do have something to tell you before we start."

"Oh yeah?" He caught her seductive tone, and fire kindled in the depths of his brown eyes. He pressed her lower body against his, and she caught her breath as his hardness rubbed her soft belly. She wanted to tear his trousers open and hold him in her hands. He was making her crazy.

Robert hadn't been able to make her respond this way.

For a woman who has had her confidence whittled away on a nightly basis, that thought was like a revelation and it sizzled through her.

"Claire?" Michael prompted.

Before she could say a word, the other two guys released furious shouts, and she whirled around, afraid something might have happened to them. She saw frenzied bucking and jerking as the dark-haired guy pumped his cock into the blond man's ass. Heat traveled up her spine, and

Michael pulled her back against him, his cock pushing into her buttocks as he shoved her hair aside and dragged his tongue across her nape.

Oh God, it felt so good. *He* felt so good, pressed up against her, his heat covering her, surrounding her.

The two guys collapsed on the floor, and the dark-haired man withdrew with a groan. At that moment, the blond guy opened his eyes and saw them. "Hey, Mike, is that the chick?"

She thought she heard Michael mutter "Damn" as he stepped back from her, though his arm remained about her waist. His voice was cheerful though as he introduced them. "Yes, this is Claire Gilliard. Claire, these two—"

The blond guy did a double take. "Gilliard? As in Frank Gilliard?"

"Yes," Michael answered dryly. "The blond's Sam Winters, and the other one's James Farrell."

"Nice to meet you, Claire," the dark-haired guy said, then turned to Michael. "I share Sam's sentiment. Hell Mike, Frank's...I thought he only has one sister."

"Claire's his cousin." Michael tightened his arm around her and quirked an eyebrow. "So?"

"What will Frank say when he finds out we've been doing his cousin?" James Farrell countered.

"I'm known to be an arrogant ass," Sam Winters lifted a blond eyebrow, "but even I would stop short of fucking a friend's relative."

Oh God, they're right, Claire thought in horror. Of all the things, she and Jenny hadn't thought of that. They had assumed Frank would never know.

Available at: [Amazon](#) [Smashwords](#)

About the Author:

When Jenna learned that the original fairy tales are not that innocent, a whole new world was opened up to her. She delights in the wild and wicked, and in subverting the fairy tales into her brand of naughty. However, she doesn't restrict her magic wand on fairy tales. Nothing and no one is safe from her vivid imagination.

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