

LOVE Has NO Boundaries



Don't Read in the Closet Event 2013

FINDING THE TIME

Summer Michaels

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For the past few weeks, the man I love has been teaching at the local high school and taking classes for his master's degree at night. I haven't spent twenty-four consecutive hours with him in months. Our schedules haven't allowed it. Today I find him lying on his stomach reading for one of his classes. I have to be close to him, touch him. I climb onto his back and drink in the time we have together.

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Love Has No Boundaries

An M/M Romance series

FINDING THE TIME

By Summer Michaels

Introduction

The story you are about to read celebrates love, sex and romance between men. It is a product of the *Love Has No Boundaries* promotion sponsored by the *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* and is published as a free gift to you.

What Is Love Has No Boundaries?

The *Goodreads M/M Romance Group* invited members to choose a photo and pen a letter asking for a short M/M romance story inspired by the image; authors from the group were encouraged to select a letter and write an original tale. The result was an outpouring of creativity that shone a spotlight on the special bond between M/M romance writers and the people who love what they do.

A written description of the image that inspired this story is provided along with the original request letter. If you'd like to view the photo, please feel free to join the [Goodreads M/M Romance Group](#) and visit the discussion section: *Love Has No Boundaries*.

Whether you are an avid M/M romance reader or new to the genre, you are in for a delicious treat.

Words of Caution

This story may contain sexually explicit content and is **intended for adult readers**. It may contain content that is disagreeable or distressing to some readers. The *M/M Romance Group* strongly recommends that each reader review the General Information section before each story for story tags as well as for content warnings.

This story is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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Photo Description

Two dark-haired men are lying on a bed, one on top of the other. The man on the bottom is on his belly, propped up, reading a book, while the other man uses him as a mattress.

Story Letter

Dear Author,

They have been together for several years and very comfortable with each other (as shown in the picture ;)). But lately, work and life in general made them see each other less. The picture is shown where they were finally had free time together. Even though one of them was tired, he still made an effort to be close to his boyfriend by napping on him.

I would like the story to be a slice of life with some background on how they met. I would like them to be in their thirties and act like it. More of a story of how the couple makes efforts to spend time together.

Preferably, no misunderstanding or miscommunication.

I would like that when you get to know them, you knew they will be together and have a HEA.

Sincerely,

Pete

Story Info

Genre: contemporary

Tags: romance, law enforcement, teacher, established couples, men with pets

Word count: 7,467

FINDING THE TIME

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CHAPTER ONE

“Can I have an iced caramel latte, please?”

The small redhead behind the counter of Coffee Grounds looked me up and down like I was a drink of water, and she was a woman dying of thirst. Licking her lips, she thrust her barely-there breasts higher in the air.

“For you honey, anything,” she purred.

As I rolled my eyes at her outlandish behavior, I was thankful for the last minute decision to grab a pair of sunglasses from the airport. Don’t get me wrong, it’s flattering to be flirted with, but the over-the-top antics made my stomach turn. Guess I shouldn’t tell her that the nasty concoction she was preparing was actually for my boyfriend.

The front pocket of my khaki pants started to vibrate. “US Deputy Marshal Donovan.”

“Hey Memphis, just letting you know that we’ve located the silver Scion you put the BOLO on. It was just spotted turning into West Phoenix High School.”

“Thanks Randy, I’ll head over there now.”

“No problem, I’ll see you at the office. Don’t forget we have that asset forfeiture today.”

I groaned as I tucked away my cell. The U.S. Marshals Service is the nation’s oldest federal law enforcement agency. One of our responsibilities is to manage and dispose of seized and forfeited properties acquired by criminals through illegal activities. Currently, the department manages over two point four billion dollars’ worth of property and assets. I loved being a United States Marshal, but asset forfeitures were my least favorite part of the job. We were

basically landlords evicting our tenants. Not many criminals were happy to see us coming, so we were always on guard when handling this type of situation.

I normally don't handle forfeitures since I mainly work in fugitive operations, but as a marshal, we all chip in where we are needed. I often volunteered to assist other departments since I don't have a wife and kids to go home to. It never bothered me until recently. For the first time since I became a marshal I desired to be at home more, and I felt torn between the man I love and the job I love.

"Cops get their drinks for free, Sugar," said the redhead as she pointed to the silver star on my hip.

"Well thank you, ma'am."

Red leaned over the counter. "I wrote my number on your cup. Give me a call and I'll show you how to really use those handcuffs."

I felt my face turn as red as her hair. "Thanks," I mumbled as I ran for the exit.

The traffic was light as I drove to the local high school. I knew I would catch hell for using a BOLO to locate Jake's car. When you put the boss's son on a BOLO, it tended to be noticed quickly. His Scion was easy to spot in the nearly vacant parking lot. Jake was always one of the first teachers to arrive. I had no clue why he enjoyed getting to work so early.

Recognizing my SUV, he stopped walking toward the school, rested his lean frame against the trunk of his car, and waited. After nearly a month of not seeing this man, I slowly examined every inch of him. I could tell he was doing the same.

His usually-short, dark hair seemed longer, and I was glad to see he hadn't shaved in a while. I love the sensation of his facial hair against my own. His green eyes held mine as I walked to him. Over the weeks we'd been apart, we had been able to talk on the phone and Skype, but to actually be able to touch him... there just wasn't any comparison.

"Your hair is longer," I said out of nervousness. He smiled knowingly.

“I brought you something,” I said handing him his iced coffee. “The lady at the shop even gave you her phone number.”

He tossed his head back and laughed. “I’m sure the number is for you.”

Crowding his personal space, I grabbed the back of his head then crushed his lips to my own. At first he seemed surprised by the blunt gesture. Even at thirty-three, I wasn’t one for public displays of affection. But something about Jake just made everything right. I hadn’t had to pretend with him since we started seeing one another exclusively two years ago. While Jake wasn’t my first boyfriend, he was certainly the only man I ever loved.

Jake’s hands came to rest on my chest as our tongues danced and his fingers soon balled around my shirt, pulling me closer to him.

After a while, Jake began to slowly pull away, ending our kiss, “Mmmm, I’ve missed you. Are your SOB classes over?” Being taller than Jake, I could feel his erection against my leg.

I laughed, settling my hands on his hips. “You damn well know it’s SOG training, you little shit. I just got in this morning.”

The Special Operations Group is a highly-trained force of deputy marshals. It is a complete honor to be asked to join their ranks. The group responds to any emergency situations where federal law has been violated or federal property is endangered. The latest situation where the SOG was called in was the Boston Bombings. Since the bombings, recruiting for the SOG has been on the rise.

“How did everything go?”

“Good. I learned a lot, I’m just glad to be home,” I said brushing a kiss across his lips.

“Have you been to see your mother yet?” I knew he was trying to tone down our current situation, and as much as I didn’t want to let him go, I took a step back and jammed my hands in my pockets.

“I’m headed there for breakfast when I leave here. I swear she called me as soon as we landed, claiming she knew I was home.”

“She loves you, nothing wrong with that.”

I knew better, but I couldn't stop myself from coming closer to him. I combed my hand through his soft hair and looked into his eyes. “Let's cook dinner at home tonight. With the way our schedules have been, I feel like I haven't talked to you at all.”

“I know what you mean, but I won't be home for dinner. It's Tuesday. I have my night class tonight. I'll be home around nine thirty.”

I couldn't hide the disappointment from my face. Before I left for training, we were passersby in each other's lives. We barely snagged an hour here and there alone and I was hoping that would've changed when I returned.

“You okay?” he asked quietly.

“Yeah, I was just looking forward to spending time with you. I can wait, though.”

“I'm sorry, I know how you feel. Soon, I promise.” His voice was barely a whisper, like he was afraid to jinx himself.

He stood on his toes and kissed me lightly. “I've missed you, big guy.”

I pulled him close. The heat of him next to me made my body ache for more. I rested my head on top of his and whispered, “You're giving me a hard-on.”

“Want me to take care of that for you? No one is here. I've always wanted to be taken on my desk.” Jake moved the collar of my shirt out of his way as he licked and sucked on the cords of my neck.

I moaned, rocking my hips forward as he teased me. “As much as I would love to bend you over your desk, I'm gonna have to pass. When I finally get you all to myself, I plan to keep you there for several hours.”

“I'm going to hold you to that promise,” he warned, his green eyes dancing with excitement.

I brushed my hand over the bulge in his pants, doing a little teasing of my own. “As long as that's not the only thing you hold to me.”

Jake snorted. “Go and get out of here while I still let you. I have to think calm thoughts until the kids arrive. I don’t want to stand at attention in front of them all day. Thanks for the coffee.”

With that, I watched him walk into the school. Something unsettling started to plant itself in my stomach. I wanted to tell Jake about how I’d been feeling about our relationship lately, but trying to put all these emotions into words was overwhelming.

CHAPTER TWO

I don't know if I was blessed or cursed to be a Donovan. Being the youngest of seven children, it felt like both all the time. With five boys and two girls, my parents, Lucy and Michael, always had a packed house. My father passed away shortly after I graduated high school. All of the Donovan children had Dad's dark brown hair and eyes, and our teachers always used to joke that they could spot a Donovan coming a mile away.

My mom still lived in the house I grew up in. The two story brick home is your typical suburban residence, white fence picket and all. At least one of my siblings is always here; we are a close-knit family. Today, my sisters Lisa and Tonya were visiting with Lisa's two children. My brother Jack and I were the only ones without children, however we were never short on nieces or nephews.

"Ma! Memphis is here," yelled Lisa from the living room. She was nursing her newborn, my godson Ryan.

I wrinkled my nose, "I'll wait until you finish before I come and steal him."

"They're only breasts, Memphis."

"Yeah, but they're my sister's breasts nonetheless." I smiled as I heard her talking softly to Ryan as I entered the kitchen.

"What's wrong?" my mother said, as she stopped stirring her eggs. Her small hands were resting on her hips. I could feel her studying me as I walked to the coffee pot. Jake likes his coffee loaded with extras, I take mine unleaded.

"Nothing's wrong, Ma."

"I don't know why you kids think you can get anything past me. I know everything. Now spill."

I walked around the kitchen island and kissed her on the cheek, then crossed the kitchen to plant one on Tonya who was reading the paper at the kitchen table.

My mother was right. She always knew when something upset us, even something as small as the feelings I was dealing with now.

“I promise nothing’s wrong. I’m just working some stuff out in my head. Are you making French toast?”

“Of course I am. It’s your favorite. Don’t try to avoid the topic. What’s got that gloomy look on your face?”

“Just tell her, Memphis. We all know she is not going to let it drop until you do,” said Tonya.

“I miss Jake.”

I turned around to find all three of the women in my life staring at me. Lisa stood in the doorway, finished with Ryan’s feeding, the baby snuggled against her chest. They each waited for me to continue.

“Did he go somewhere?” asked Lisa.

Tonya was next with her question. “Did you break up with him?”

“No, he didn’t go anywhere, and no, I didn’t break up with him. Chill out and let me say what’s on my mind.” I took a deep breath. I hated having to put into words what I was feeling. I felt stupid because I’ve never been the one who could express my thoughts and feelings well.

“Good, if you would have dumped that boy, I would have disowned you,” my mother said, flipping the toast.

“Thanks, Ma. That makes me feel really, really loved.”

“Oh hush, you know I love you. Jake is the first decent man you ever brought around. You remember Tommy?”

My sisters joined in, mentioning by name all my former boyfriends they had disliked.

“Ladies! Enough! How the hell can your husbands stand to listen to this all day?”

I swear I didn't see the wooden spoon until my mom smacked my hand with it. "Watch your mouth, boy. I can still bend you over my knee," she warned.

"Yes ma'am." Lisa and Tonya snickered.

I stared at the island as I tried to explain what was going on. "Look, nothing is wrong with my and Jake's relationship, per se. I just feel... when I was with those other guys, I felt like I was stuck with them, kind of like two dogs that get stuck together after sex. I had my fun but, I wanted to get away and... couldn't. With Jake, I want to be stuck."

The look on my mom's and sisters' faces was priceless as they tried to figure their way through my maze of analogy of emotion.

"Is the sex bad?" Tonya whispered.

"No, the sex is great," I whispered back.

"I'm lost," whispered Lisa.

"Why are you whispering?" asked Mom.

After a few seconds of silence, laughter filled the air. I had been carrying these feelings around for the better part of a month. Finally getting them off my chest felt like a burden had been lifted. Even if I was the only one to understand what the hell I was trying to say.

"So you want to settle down," my mother stated.

I paused to think about it. "Yeah, I want to come home every night to Jake. We live together but we never get to spend time with one another. I feel like we are roommates and not lovers. I just don't like it. We've both had our share of relationships, but this one is different. It's like he is my missing puzzle piece."

I looked back at my mom, who had a huge smile on her face. "That's how I felt about your dad. When he asked me to marry him, I knew I would love him every day for the rest of my life. I still love him. Have you told him how you feel?"

“No, everything else seems to keep pulling us in a hundred different directions.”

I helped Mom plate breakfast and carry things to the table. I could hear Ryan cooing, the sweet sound made my heart melt. Ryan would be the closest thing to a son I would ever have. I was okay with that. I wasn't secretly wishing for children of my own.

“You go and eat,” I told my sister as I scooped the little bundle in my arms. “Ry-Guy and I have some catching up to do.”

Ryan smiled and held onto my finger as we paced around the kitchen. He was two months old now. I couldn't quite get over how quickly he had developed and how different he looked from when he was born.

“Memphis, have you thought about going on a vacation?” asked Tonya.

I was so wrapped up in the changes of Ryan's features that I had forgotten anyone else was in the room with us.

Lisa agreed. “That's a great idea, Tonya. You and Jake need to go somewhere, be alone and away from the distractions in your life.”

With each step closer to them, I knew they were right. I had damn near two months of time off built up. I could feel the corners of my mouth turn up. For months Jake had gone on and on about Thailand and its rich culture and history. He even searched for credited classes so he could study abroad. Without a doubt, I knew he would love it.

“Thailand,” I finally muttered aloud.

“What?” my mother asked.

“Jake has always wanted to go to Thailand. His school is out for the summer in a few days, and the semester is coming to an end for his master's program. It's the perfect time for a vacation.”

My mom nodded and smiled. “That sounds perfect. Why don't you call Paul and have him set it up for you?”

Paul was my oldest brother, who ran a travel agency with his wife Helen. “I’ll call him on my way to the office.” I laid the now-sleeping Ryan in the playpen that stood beside his mother.

“Thanks guys, I mean it. I’m going to get going.” I started to turn and run for the exit when I was pulled by the back of my shirt.

“Park your behind in that chair and eat your breakfast,” demanded my mother.

“Yes, Mother.” I laughed as I took a seat at the table. The warm syrup was like heaven to my mouth.

CHAPTER THREE

“Pee?”

“Yes, pee.” I watched in amusement as the small group of teenagers turned to one another, not believing a word I said. Who said History couldn’t be fun?

I walked up and down the small rows of desks with my hands clasped behind my back. I could almost hear their brains turning as they tried to picture why urine and history were relevant. Honestly, I was just trying to stretch time until our guest speaker arrived. It wasn’t like him to be late.

“I’m not sure I want to know, Mr. Sanford,” laughed Diego.

I didn’t speak again until I stood beside my wooden desk, and upon noticing the desk, I felt my cheeks redden as I thought about my earlier comments to Memphis about it. I dipped my head, pushing the thoughts from my head so I could concentrate on my classroom.

“Have you ever heard the sayings, ‘so poor we don’t have a pot to piss in’? Or ‘we are piss poor’?”

A few heads bobbed up and down. “In the 1500s families earned a living whatever way they could. Some families stored their urine in a pot and sold it. They were called piss poor.”

A hand shot through the air. “Yes Jacob?”

“Who the hell bought piss?” The class erupted in laughter.

“Back then, urine was used to tan hides and skins.”

“Gross!” squealed Maria.

I chuckled. “Families did what they needed to do. There weren’t Super Walmart’s on every corner, like today. Desperate times call for desperate measures.” A hard knock on the door pulled our attention to the man standing in the doorway.

“Class, I would like to introduce my father, US Chief Deputy Marshal, Morgan Sanford.” I couldn’t hide the pride that leaked into my voice.

I didn't know how I expected my class to react to my father, but stunned silence wasn't even close.

“Are you sure that's your dad Mr. S? I mean, he's so...”

“Black!” yelled Diego.

“I was going to say tall.”

My dad chuckled as he walked to where I was standing. “Sorry I'm late. Something came up,” he whispered.

“Is everything okay?” I hoped he heard what I really meant: *Was Memphis okay?*

“I hope so,” he replied.

I sat down on the corner of my desk. I knew if something were really wrong with Memphis, Dad would have said so. He was never one to play on another person's emotions. My head was telling me one thing while my heart sang another. *He was okay, he had to be.*

It was only two years ago when my dad invited Memphis to one of our weekly dinners. For months he talked nonstop about Memphis Donovan. I practically knew him already. At first, I thought he invited Memphis because he could be the son Dad always wanted, a son in law enforcement. It wasn't until Dad made up a lame excuse and bolted from the restaurant that we both caught on. We were being set up on a date.

It took a lot for my dad to introduce me to Memphis even though he'd never acted ashamed of having a gay child. The situation Morgan Sanford adopted me from was the cause of concern, and I shared in it. It was hard to tell a lover the whole truth about my past. Legally I wasn't allowed to, but there were a few times where I was tempted.

At the age of eight, I had a different name, a different family, and a different life. I was the state's only witness to the murder of my parents. My biological dad, Stephen Williams had gotten entangled in the Moretti family cartel. His need for cocaine destroyed our family. To this day, I didn't know if

my older brother, Carter, was still alive or if the Morettis had killed him as well, since his body had yet to be discovered.

Morgan Sanford wasn't working the New York case at the time. He was a friend of one of the marshals in charge of my witness protection. Since I was only eight, I couldn't live on my own and placing me into foster care was dangerous, so I was adopted.

Morgan and his wife Stacey had tried for years to have a child of their own. Their friend suggested I get to know the Sanford's after my case was over. I never met Morgan while the case was ongoing since they didn't want anyone to link the two of us together in case things didn't work in the end.

Stacey was an amazing mother. She never once made me feel unwelcomed or unwanted. This couldn't have been easy. The two were often asked why they had a white kid. She would calmly reply, "That's what God intended."

My mom later passed away from breast cancer. Dad said he didn't know if Memphis or I would make it as a couple, but he wanted to see me happy. It was hard being in a relationship with anyone. I always felt like I was lying to them since I couldn't tell them why I sometimes had a New York accent.

With Memphis, I could tell him everything. I had put a padlock around my past and Memphis had the only set of keys. I think my dad knew I could never have a relationship like he had with Mom unless I was completely honest with my partner. We both wanted that, that's why he brought Memphis to me. That, and the fact he was the first openly gay marshal, led my dad into taking the chance.

"You okay?" I looked up from my trance with my father looking down at me, his face full of concern.

I hadn't even noticed that the bell rang and my students had already moved on to their last class.

"Yeah, what's going on?"

"Donovan, Blevins, and a team went to one of the properties today to handle a forfeiture. Seems our local felon had objections to the marshal service

taking his home. He started shooting as soon as my team walked up to the door.”

I stood up so fast my chair crashed to the ground, “Was...” I couldn’t bring myself to finish the rest of my sentence. I knew better than to ask just about Memphis. The Marshal Service was a family unit. Everyone involved was important. “Was anyone hurt?”

“Randy was shot in the leg. He was rushed to the hospital. I haven’t gotten news about anyone else being injured. I knew if I didn’t show you would worry, so I came here instead of heading to the scene first. I’m headed out in the field and then to the hospital. I’ll let you know as soon as I know something, I promise.”

“Thanks Dad, be safe.”

“I will, kiddo.”

I knew there was no point in trying to think of anything else for the rest of the day. For the past several months I have been taking my master’s classes at night. I had an assignment due for tonight’s class, but instead of handing it in in person, I logged onto my school account and emailed it. I know as a teacher that technology is a powerful tool, but I just enjoyed sitting in class to learn. It’s kind of like having an electronic tablet—sometimes you just need to feel a real book to be reminded why you enjoyed reading in the first place.

I had never been more grateful for having the last hour of the day as my planning period. I threw my things in my briefcase and headed home.

CHAPTER FOUR

It was now way after midnight and I had cleaned every surface of our home. After I left school, I headed over to Mama Donovan's house and waited with some of Memphis' family. Usually just being with them put me at ease, but not today. Every time I turned around, I found another reason why he had to be okay. Eventually all those faces became too much to bear. After my father called to say the situation was under control and that the suspect was in custody, I came back to the home Memphis and I share. I thought about catching up on the few episodes of *Justified* that I had missed while attending my classes, but the storyline hit too close to home for comfort.

Instead, I started in the kitchen and made my way around the house until every nook and cranny was sparkling. I scrubbed the floors by hand, wiped every baseboard, and even cleaned the washing machine. My hands were raw from the harsh chemicals and my back ached. Still it wasn't enough to take my mind off of Dad's crew.

I knew that Randy was in surgery. I didn't know the extent of his injuries, but I knew my dad had gone to Randy's wife to deliver the news. He said he was okay, but I could hear the pain in his voice as he tried to seem cheerful.

It was like a morose fog had settled onto my life. I thought cleaning would help remove that feeling. It didn't. Nothing would be right again until I held Memphis in my arms. I could tell something had been bothering him, and waiting for him to talk about it was driving me insane. Whatever it was, I was worried.

The ranch-style house we rented had two bedrooms, one with a master bath, and the other we used as a spare and office. Memphis was already renting the house when we first met, then after three months of dating, he asked me to move in with him.

Straight people always balk when I tell them how quickly we moved in together. Unlike straight couples, gay couples don't have a cloud of expectations looming over their heads when they start to date. There's no pressure to do things in order, like the assumption is with most straight

couples. I didn't feel the pressure of checking each box off as our relationship progressed, and we easily moved at our own pace.

Inspecting the living room one last time, I flopped down on the leather sofa and rested my feet on the coffee table. I could feel exhaustion pulling at me, but I ignored the weariness and picked up the picture frame from beside me.

The photo was my favorite in the entire house, a picture from the weekend trip Memphis and I took to see the Grand Canyon. We had asked the couple next to us to take our picture. Memphis was smiling brightly for the camera. His brown eyes glistened with happiness. Our arms were wrapped around one another, as the sweat from our hike slid down our faces.

Memphis didn't understand my attraction to this photo. "You aren't even looking at the camera," he would complain. I've never told him what the picture really meant to me, but it represented the moment I knew without a shadow of doubt that I would love Memphis until my last breath. I told him it was my tsunami moment. It was like everything just hit me at once.

"He's not dead," I reminded myself.

I set the picture down as my stomach did an amazing impression of a growling lion. Two o'clock in the morning was not the time to prepare a feast, so I settled down with a bowl of Lucky Charms instead. Leaning my shoulder into the door frame, I concentrated on searching for the marshmallows so at least my mind would be busy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Today had been hell. Randy was going to pull through, but he would be out for a while. He would have to learn to walk again on his new prosthetic leg. His wife and family would be at his side to take care of him and give him the drive he needed to walk again. He also would have the members of our force banging down his door willing to help in any way we could.

I kept going over every second we were at the Randall house. Was I paying enough attention? Was there anything I could have done to prevent the situation? I knew in my heart what the answer was; it was just part of being in law enforcement that drove that mindset.

I pulled my tired body from the SUV and climbed the front stairs of our home. Opening the door, I was greeted with the most amazing sight. Jake didn't hear me come in, so I had a few moments to watch him as he leaned against the doorframe in only a T-shirt and boxer shorts, eating a bowl of cereal. I could tell it was a bowl of Lucky Charms. Jake only ever ate the marshmallows before tossing out the rest. I always teased him about it.

As I watched him, I took a deep breath and inhaled the smell of cleaner and bleach. Jake had been cleaning. He always cleaned when he needed to keep his mind off something. My mom had called to say Jake was there one minute then gone the next and one of my nephews had seen him crying on the back porch before he made a dash down the driveway. My chest ached to think of him alone and worried. I never wanted my job to cause him any discomfort, and it had always been a problem in my past relationships.

All of a sudden, I felt like I was hit by a tidal wave of emotion. The simple man eating a bowl of cereal was everything to me. I needed him more than I needed my next breath. One minute I was standing in the door way, and the next I had Jake pinned to the wall.

He was startled at first, but once those green eyes caught my own, a sense of understanding calmed him. Jake's breath was shaky as he pulled me closer to him. He threw his arms around my neck and I lifted him off the floor. The best part of being six foot three was how Jake could hang from my body. He

wrapped his legs around my waist, and I held him as his lips peppered my face in a flurry of motion. He kissed every inch of my face before he touched my lips. At first, his kiss was light like the others, but then the need for comfort took over.

Jake tried to pull away but I pushed him harder against the wall. I needed him, we needed each other. Our tongues slid together, caressingly, as moans filled the air. I could feel Jake tearing at my shirt. “Skin,” he demanded.

Setting him on the ground, I lifted the T-shirt over my head and dropped it to the floor. Jake ran his hands over my pecs and his mouth over the left side of my chest. He licked and sucked my nipple while pinching the other. Soon his free hand fumbled with my belt. I could tell he was torn between taking his mouth off me and undoing the troublesome buckle. I took the decision out of his hands, unfastening my buckle and then letting my pants fall to the floor.

When Jake cupped my ass he froze. “You’re not wearing underwear.”

“I had to change at the hospital,” I explained.

“I need you,” Jake pleaded. I understood how he felt.

I backed Jake into the wall once more, ripping his T-shirt from his body. I kissed my way down his torso, taking time to explore each nipple as Jake’s fingers dug into my back. I loved when he did that. It was like he was claiming me in some way.

When I finally reached the band of his underwear, I yanked them down and took his prick in my mouth. Jake came to life, rocking us both forward, panting with desire. His fingers started to comb through my hair, before he tugged using my hair to pull my head closer.

“Yes,” he hissed.

I moaned when Jake pulled my head away from his cock. “I love what you’re doing, but if you don’t get inside me now, I’m going to come.”

I picked Jake up and once again his legs wrapped around my waist. Our eyes locked as I entered his body. Moving slowly at first so he wouldn’t get

hurt, we soon picked up the pace once Jake leaned further into the wall, using it as leverage to thrust harder against me.

I held onto Jake as he moved up and down my cock, his fingernails digging into my shoulders. When he yelled my name, I knew neither of us was going to last long. We needed to feel the other alive in our arms.

I picked up speed as the worries of the day melted away and soon Jake's spunk shot from his body and onto my bare chest. The warm seed triggered my own release as I pumped into his ass. He threw his arms around my neck as I held him until his harsh breathing returned to normal.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"I was a little shaken up earlier, but I'm solid. I'm sorry you had to worry."

Jake's sharp teeth dragged across my skin.

"Ouch!"

"I don't mind worrying as long as you walk through that door every night."

I smiled and started to carry him through the house.

"Where are we going?"

"I told you earlier that once I got a hold of you, I had no plans of letting go for hours. I'm sticking to that promise."

CHAPTER SIX

The sun streaming through the windows woke me up, our sheets a tangled mess at the bottom of the bed. I removed Memphis' arm from my chest as I got up, my body protesting as I stretched. The alarm clock said 11:23 am. I was thankful I had called my principal last night and told him I needed a sub since Memphis and I had stayed up the rest of the night talking about the shooting and other things.

The smell of coffee soon brought my brain to life. After making myself a cup, I decided Memphis needed his sleep. While he caught up on some much-needed rest, I got started on my final paper for class.

When I was halfway through the book I was reading, light kisses traveled up my back. "Morning," I laughed.

"It's more like late afternoon. Why didn't you wake me?"

"You needed the rest. How are you feeling?"

Memphis lowered his body onto mine, his head coming to rest on my shoulder. His bare chest nestled on top of my bare back. The warmth of him was welcoming. It was hard *not* to get an erection with so much of his skin touching my own.

"I called the hospital and talked to Randy's wife. He's in his own room and she suggested we stop by."

"That's good to hear."

"What are you reading?"

"A historical piece for my class, it's my last assignment." Before I could say anything else, I heard a soft snore. I laughed silently, trying not to wake him.

A soft meow sounded from my left. Our cat, Thom, purred and hopped onto Memphis' back for a nap as well. I wasn't being dog-piled, but kitty-piled.

CHAPTER SEVEN

I woke to sharp claws digging into my back. “Thom,” I yelled as I rolled off Jake.

“Enjoy your nap?” he asked, laughing at me.

“I was until your demon sank his claws into me.”

Jake sat up and stretched.

“How long have you been finished?”

He shrugged with a smile. “For a while, but I loved the feel of you on me, so I didn’t wake you.”

His smile soon faded as he took in my serious mood. “Are we going to have that discussion now?” he asked scooting closer to me.

“What discussion?” I tried to remember if I had said anything to him.

“You’ve been acting as if you’re going to say something for a few months now. I’ve been trying to wait patiently, but it’s killing me. Please, whatever it is, just tell me.” He took my hands between his, rubbing softly over my knuckles.

“I have been trying to find the right words,” I admitted.

“Just say what’s in your heart,” he prompted.

“I love you.”

He smiled. “I know that, and I love you too.”

“I hate where we are right now.”

I watched as Jake looked around the room.

“Not the house, but where our relationship is. I feel like your roommate.” Like Jake’s demon cat, I watched as his back arched.

“I’m saying this all wrong. I love our relationship, I just miss you. We’ve both become so busy with real life issues, that we’ve put our relationship on

the back burner. I hate it. I want to come home to you every night and tell you about my day. I want to cook for you and hear your laugh.”

Jake moved closer, taking my face in his hands. “Is that all that’s bothering you.”

I stilled and looked into his eyes. “Is that all? Isn’t that enough?”

“I understand what you’re saying. I feel the same way. It isn’t that we don’t love one another, we’re just busy right now. With your SOG training and me taking night classes, it has cut our time together in half. We can find the time, Memphis.”

“So we rob Father Time?”

His green eyes sparkled. “We rob Father Time,” he laughed. “Every relationship has its ups and downs, we just have to ride this coaster down until we start to climb again. That’s all.”

“So you feel it, too?” I asked.

“Yes, I hated going to work in the morning knowing you haven’t come home from work yet because you were working on a case. I’ve missed everything about you. I know your work is important and you aren’t not here out of choice but out of necessity.”

“You are the first man who has made me want to balance work and a home life. I want to find the time for you. I want to make things work.”

“Then we find the time. It’s as simple as that.”

“I robbed Father Time already.”

Jake’s facial features crunched together. “What?”

“I called Paul yesterday. He’s waiting on standby to book us a vacation to Thailand. All we have to do is tell him when, and we are there.”

Jake launched himself into my arms. “Really?” he screeched.

“Really, just let me know when you want to go, and I’ll tell the Chief. I’ve already talked to him about it, too.”

“You talked to my dad?”

“Yeah, he came to the hospital yesterday. He said he was at your school, and that you knew what was going on. I just blurted out, ‘I love your son.’ He laughed and said he knew that already. I told him about my plans. He said it was about time.”

“I love you, Memphis. You are the only man I’ve allowed past my walls. You give me strength and confidence I’ve never known. You make me want things I’ve never wanted before,” he said as he pushed me onto my back.

“What are you doing?”

“Finding time to show you just how much I love you.”

THE END

Author Bio

Summer Michaels lives in a small Kentucky town best known for its horses, basketball, and whiskey. An avid reader, she discovered her author voice and unleashed her love for all things romance. With a belief that love should be shared no matter the form, she enjoys telling stories of rowdy cowboys, reunited lovers, and steamy shifters. When she's not reading or writing, usually she can be found screaming for the beheading of King Joffery or with her four children and supportive husband.

Summer's first book, Substitute Heart, was published by Less Than Three Press in 2012. She loves hearing from passionate readers and fans of all genres.

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