

HEATWAVE
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Settling onto the narrow wooden bench, she leaned back, stretching her long legs out in front of her. Languid with the heat, she sipped her tea and gazed around her neighborhood.

Somewhere a dog barked in the deepening twilight, and she heard the faint *swoosh, swoosh* of somebody's sprinklers. The banging of a screen door caught her attention, and she watched her new neighbor across the street step onto his lawn. He was a large man, his height and bulk casting a long shadow in the amber glow of his porch light.

She'd noticed him before, had watched the muscles in his big forearms flex when he'd moved his furniture in a week earlier. He was built like a football player, with broad shoulders and a narrow waist that tapered into a pair of low-slung cargo pants. His sun-streaked light brown hair was a bit too long and fell into his eyes. She hadn't been close enough yet to see what color they were. But the man was sexy as hell, and she'd been waiting to catch another glimpse of him.

Leigh liked big men. She was tall herself, and a large man always made her feel more feminine. Her ex-husband had been well over six feet tall. *Don't think about that now.* No, better to think about the basketball player she'd dated briefly in college, his long, lanky form draped over hers on the too-small single bed in his dorm room. Sweaty afternoons

there when she should have been in calculus. Math had never done her as much good as an afternoon of sex had.

She stroked the beads of sweat from her icy glass with an absent finger as she watched her neighbor move across his lawn to bend down and pick up a few tools at the edge of his driveway. Like her, he'd probably waited until the heat of day had passed before venturing outside. He was graceful for a man of his size. Even in the dark she could see how the fabric of his pants stretched taut over his firm backside. *Nice*. Made her want to cross the street just to touch it.

It had been a long time since she'd touched a man, which was probably why her thoughts were treading down such a lustful path now. She'd been divorced for about a year, and hadn't dated since she'd caught her ex with a co-worker. The woman was everything Leigh wasn't: petite, with a lush figure, dark and exotic. Leigh herself had always been too tall and lean for her own taste; she stood five-foot nine and had an athletic body with small breasts. But her ex hadn't cheated because of her breasts. He'd cheated because he was a selfish bastard with no self-control.

He'd blamed Leigh for his infidelity. He'd claimed that she lacked passion, that sex with her was boring. Well, it hadn't been great for her, either, but she hadn't cheated on him. *Asshole*.

Enough of that, she chided herself, drawing her attention back to more pleasant thoughts and her gaze back to the

appealing sight across the street. Her new neighbor peeled his T-shirt over his head and she watched as a narrow waist gave way to a tight six-pack. Then as he whipped his shirt completely off, his beautifully muscled chest came into view. Leigh allowed her eyes to rest there for a moment before letting them wander to his strong shoulders and then to his arms. His biceps flexed as he loaded the tools into a small wheelbarrow. His arms looked as big around as one of her thighs. *Very nice.*

The sudden flash of heat between her legs surprised her. She shifted in her seat, trying to ease the sharp stab of need soaking her panties. When was the last time she'd had this kind of reaction to a man? Maybe when she'd been a teenager and those first surges that came with the shift in hormones had assaulted her innocent body. Certainly not since then.

Her mind wandered as she watched him work in his yard, imagining those big hands on her, slipping over her sweat-dampened skin, and the heat between her legs spread into her belly and become a jagged throb.

Her neighbor stood and ran a hand over his stomach, making hers tighten in response. *Let me do that for you next time.* She wiped the beads of perspiration from her upper lip.

"Oh god," Leigh groaned quietly as she rose to escape back into the hot, stuffy house. Her body was screaming for release, just from seeing a half-naked man in the dark. A big,

muscle-bound man with a sexy line of hair that led from his navel to places she almost didn't dare to think about.

Inside, she turned the lights in the living room down low. Moving across the room, she switched on the radio to a classic rock station and flopped onto the couch in front of the one small fans she owned.

As the sultry tones of an old, bluesy Janice Joplin song played in the background, Leigh released the top two buttons of her sundress to catch as much of the cool air as she could. The breeze played over her damp skin. It felt good, but did nothing to cool the lustful thoughts she'd been having about her new neighbor. If anything, the sensation of air blowing teasingly over her skin heightened her senses even more.

She undid another button and moved the fabric aside. Her nipples peaked as the artificial breeze played over them. Her hands drifted over them, her fingertips brushing the hardened tips.

A soft moan escaped. She needed so much to be touched, and not by her own hands. Her mind went immediately to the man across the street, to the image of his naked torso gleaming in the moonlight and the faint glow from his porch.

She moved her hand lower to lift the hem of her dress, slid it up over her damp thighs. Her body went rigid as she moved the elastic of her bikini panties aside. They were soaked.

She sighed as her fingers brushed the rough curls there...and froze at the loud knock on her front door.