

FINDING JACK

by Penny Brandon

“You’ve got to be crazy. You do realize you could get fired? Or your ass reamed?”

“That’s what I’m hoping.”

“To get fired?”

“Nope, to get my ass reamed. Hard.” Dale laughed, sticking his booted foot in the metal stirrup and hauling himself up into the warm leather saddle. He adjusted the reins, holding his bay mare steady as he grinned down at his friend. “Hard and good.”

“You sure you want to do this?”

Dale sobered a little from the high he was climbing. “Yes. If this doesn’t make him notice me, nothing will.”

“And what if he doesn’t? In the way you want him to, that is? Then what? You leave?”

Not wanting to think that far ahead, Dale shook his head. “When he knows how much I want him...” God, this had better work, he couldn’t keep loving a man who didn’t know he existed. Dragging in a deep breath, Dale twisted a little in the saddle and tipped the brim of the white Akubra hat on his head. “Just wish me luck, okay?”

The dark skinned face that looked up at him seemed grim, until it smiled and a bright flash of white teeth transformed the Aboriginal features. “Fella, you’re gonna need more than bloody luck. You’re gonna need a miracle.” Then in an act of resignation, Pete, the ranch manager and reluctant cohort in Dale’s desperate exploit, slapped the horse on the rump, setting it off on something Dale hoped he wasn’t going to regret.

The house was set back from the rest of the buildings, its weatherboard walls, despite the overhanging bullnose veranda, were bleached white in the harsh Australian sun. It had stood empty for years before the current owner had moved in, the land it stood on dotted by tall Eucalypt and Silver Gum. Dale liked that it stood a fair distance from the main house; the one now used for the ranch hands, it gave the owner privacy, and therefore Dale's open invitation some privacy as well. Not that there wasn't a single man on the ranch who didn't know what the hell he was doing and why. Except for Jack Hawthorn, the aforementioned owner of the ranch, and the sexiest man Dale had ever laid eyes on - *he* hadn't got a damn clue.

Dale's heart ached a little at that. For too damn long he'd waited for Jack to notice him, acknowledge him, want him, but his boss had hardly even looked his way, and Dale couldn't take it anymore. So today, after months of trying, he'd come up with this crazy stunt to get Jack's attention once and for all. And it really was crazy, and he *could* get fired, but Dale was prepared for that. Actually, if this didn't work, he was going to have to leave anyway. Living here, so close to the man he loved without being able to act on it, hurt, and Dale was fed up of feeling that kind of pain.

As he neared the house, Dale squinted against the setting sun's glare, frowning as he noticed Jack's horse standing listlessly in the shade of one of the gum trees. It wasn't tethered and Dale grew concerned, knowing Jack would never leave his prize Quarterhorse unsecured. Spurring his horse on, Dale quickly closed in on the black stallion, his concern turning to outright fear as he spotted blood on the stallion's shoulder.

Quickly dismounting, Dale grabbed the loose reins and while making soothing noises checked for a wound. Finding none, however, didn't alleviate Dale's fear, in fact it increased it. If the blood didn't belong to the horse there was only one other source – Jack's. Without a second thought, Dale threw himself back onto his own mare and while fumbling for his satellite phone to inform Pete, he took off in the direction Jack had gone that morning. Thank God he'd been watching Jack today. Well, he watched Jack every day and knew his obsession could be

classed as borderline stalking, but under the circumstances he was pretty glad he did.

An hour into a hard ride, with panic eating at him, Dale thought he saw some movement ahead. This was part of the ranch that didn't yet have cattle, but kangaroos and camels quite often roamed the open ground and though Dale didn't want to get his hopes up, the shadowed shape he now had his gaze trained upon looked nothing like a kangaroo or a camel, but like a man. Digging his heels in, Dale pushed his horse to go faster, mindful of the treacherous holes dug by dingos and wombats. There was nothing worse than being brought down by a misplaced hoof, and going as fast as he was now he'd hit the ground hard enough to break something, and he didn't even want to consider the possible damage to his horse.

As he got closer, the shape revealed itself and Dale could now clearly see Jack, standing with legs spread wide, hands planted firmly on hips, hat tilted across his smooth brow, waiting. Relief swamped Dale, blanketing every other thought, every other emotion, and he paid no heed to anything else other than to make sure Jack was okay. Reining his mare in, Dale instantly dismounted, his booted feet hitting the ground. Dust puffed up around him and stuck to his sweat soaked body, but Dale barely noticed.

Breathless, he took a step toward Jack, surprised when the man took a step back. "Are you all right?" he asked, eyeing Jack up and down, desperately looking for any sign of injury or harm. Jack looked all right. In fact, to Dale, he looked damn fine. Taller than Dale by a couple of inches, broad shouldered and solid with a tight ass and well-muscled thighs, Jack was everything Dale liked in a man, but what stood Jack out from any other was his beautiful green eyes. Eyes which usually flicked over him with the barest amount of recognition but which were now trained on him with an intensity Dale had never seen before. His stomach flipped a little, but he wasn't sure if it was from pleasure or alarm.

"I'm fine, just got thrown from my damn horse is all." Jack took off his hat and slapped it against his thigh raising a filament of dust. "I assume you saw him come home?"

Dale nodded, his attention caught on Jack's fine blond hair. "Yeah, he was standing next to your house. I rang Pete to come and take care of him and then came looking for you."

"Like that?"

Oh, fuck!

In his mad dash to find Jack, Dale had all but forgotten, but now, as he stood before his boss, stark naked except for his cowboy hat and boots, Dale realized how crazy he must look, and all at once his stunt to get Jack to notice him seemed the worst thing he could have done, because the kind of notice he was getting now was not the one he wanted. Jack looked positively pissed.

Jack's intense gaze travelled slowly down Dale's body and back up again, his perusal deliberately insolent. Dale felt the heat of it all the way through to his marrow, and despite the circumstances, Dale felt himself respond. He turned away quickly, but not before cursing himself for his stupidity.

"Um, well I was kind of in a rush. I saw the blood and thought you were injured," he mumbled in response.

"It wasn't my blood. I shot an injured roo and slung it over Dirk's shoulder. It fell off when he bolted."

Dale nodded to show he understood, but he didn't dare turn back around.

Jack was quiet for a moment, and as Dale fiddled with the stirrup hanging from its strap, he began to wonder what kind of fool he was to think flashing his naked ass at Jack would get him to see him for more than a ranch hand and someone that could be special. Why hadn't he listened to Pete, or to anyone else with a lick of sense for that matter?

"But what were you doing at my house with no clothes on?"

The softly spoken words forced Dale to face the man he'd loved for two long years. He searched Jack's dazzling green eyes looking for some sort of interest; he saw nothing but curiosity.

"Well, if you don't know by now there's no point in me telling you!" Dale snapped, finally losing patience, but he'd had more than he could take of Jack's lack of awareness. Or was it deliberate ignorance?

Then something flashed within Jack's green depths and though he shook his head, he smiled. Actually smiled. Dale sucked in a short sharp breath. Jack had never smiled at him before and seeing it now had him more aware of Jack than ever. The man was stunning, and the way his full mouth lifted at the corners had Dale's stomach flipping again, and this time Dale knew it was from pleasure.

"I never really thought you'd go to these lengths, Dale. I have to say I'm impressed, though I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do about it."

Dale bit back a groan and closed his eyes a moment. Jack had just said his name. God, there had been times when Dale was sure Jack didn't even know his name. Then the gist of Jack's statement sank home. Dale reopened his eyes and stared. "You know how I feel about you?" he asked, shocked.

"I'd have to be blind not to know, Dale. I've seen the way you look at me, the way you linger when I'm talking to Pete or one of the other ranch hands, the way you seem to hang around the stable when you know I'm coming in from a ride or leaving for one. I know you've been trying to get me to notice you, but I honestly thought you'd give up after a while." Jack looked down Dale's body and back up again like he had before, but instead of curiosity in his eyes this time, there was desire. "I guess I was wrong."

Dale ignored the hot sizzle that raced to his balls at that look in Jack's eyes, ignored it and even hated the fact he felt it, because now he was angry. He squared his shoulders and narrowed his eyes and only just kept himself from

clenching his hands into fists. "Why the fuck haven't you said something?" he demanded. "I thought you didn't even know I existed. My God, Jack, how could you know I love you and not have the courtesy to say something to me? I've been at my wits end not knowing what else I could do to get you to notice me, and all this time you knew? How could you do that?" Trying to control his breathing, and his anger, Dale knew he wasn't succeeding when Jack's hand on his arm failed to do anything more than make him want to shake it off. Not an hour earlier he would have done anything, said anything, to have Jack touch him.

"Dale —"

"No. don't! I don't want your sympathy. How could you be so callus?" Fuck, he hadn't thought Jack was like that. He just assumed Jack didn't know, but Jack did know, and hadn't cared. He turned away, tears stinging his eyes, angry at Jack, but angrier at himself for loving a man who was so obviously heartless.

"Dale, honey..." Jack's fingers tightened on Dale's arm and turned him back around. His green eyes had darkened and were staring at him with both compassion and a little confusion. "I didn't know you loved me. I just thought you wanted to sleep with me."

Dale lifted his chin and bit his lip to stop it from trembling. He searched Jack's face wanting to find the truth in his words. "You said you knew how I felt," he got out, hating that his voice was shaking.

"I thought you were in lust, not in love." The pad of Jack's thumb slid along the inside seam of Dale's elbow. Dale couldn't stop the shiver that shook his body. Being this close to Jack just did things to him he had no control over. Even now, when he knew he should be withdrawing, he wanted to step closer, wanted to have Jack wrap his arms around him.

"I'm sorry."

God those words hurt. Dale knew there was a possibility of rejection and knew he wouldn't like it when it came, but it hurt far more than he'd thought it

would. "Yeah, so am I," he replied, unable to stop a bitter edge creeping into his voice, still smarting from being so rash and naïve. How could he have thought Jack would want him?

But when he tried to pull free of Jack's grip, Jack stopped him. "No, I don't think you understand. I'm sorry because I didn't realize. If I'd known I would have said something. Definitely would have said something, but I didn't know, and as I don't do casual hookups..."

"Neither do I," Dale said quickly. Since meeting Jack, Dale hadn't let another man touch him, and he really wanted Jack to know that, though he wasn't sure if that would help any.

"That's good to know." Jack stood back and released him and Dale felt the loss intensely, but he warmed at Jack's words. "Come on, let's go home," Jack said, taking the reins out of Dale's hands.

Dale nodded, feeling a little lost and confused. He slid his foot into the stirrup and swung his leg over the saddle, then removing his foot to give Jack purchase, helped him up. Jack came up behind him and settled in comfortably. It was in that moment that Dale realized how intimately close they were going to be and as his stomach did a flip, he also panicked. After so long wanting Jack he knew how his body was going to react, but he wasn't sure if Jack would understand. But whether Jack would or not, Dale wasn't left with any choice when Jack's arms came around his waist and pulled him into the cradle of Jack's spread thighs.

"Okay?" Jack's strong chest was pressed closely to his back and the arms Jack left around his waist were warm and heavy and comforting. His breath washed over Dale's nape causing goose-bumps to form across Dale's bare skin, which Jack was sure to notice. But Dale's problem was Jack's hands. They were loosely cupped over the pommel, and as Dale looked down he noticed they were within scant inches of his cock.

"Fine." The word came out as a squeak and the resulting hot wash of

embarrassment was doubled as Jack chuckled against his nape.

“Just take it easy,” Jack said, squeezing his thighs and encouraging the horse to move on.

Dale held onto the reins hoping it would give him an anchor to the reality that was slowly slipping away. Jack was plastered to his back, arms around his waist, hands inches from his cock, and Jack was fully aware of how Dale felt about him. Jack had even implied he was okay with it. Sweet fuck, but Dale had never thought he’d get this chance with Jack. Hoped he would, yeah, but believed it? Dale closed his eyes and bit his lip again to stop the moan that was building in his chest a place to escape.

“Relax, Dale”

Dale nodded, but when he opened his eyes, instead of seeing the deep red of the Australian bush spread out before him, he saw himself, spread out on a bed with Jack kneeling between his thighs.

“Kind of hard to do that when I’ve finally got you where I want you,” he said, drawing on the cocky courage he’d had when starting out to snag Jack once and for all.

“And where is that?” Jack’s low murmur as he leaned in close to Dale’s ear caused another shiver to rack Dale’s body, and Jack obviously felt it.

“With your arms wrapped around me, holding me.”

“But I’m not holding you, I’m holding the saddle.”

Shit, that wasn’t what Dale meant, but as Dale glanced down and watched his cock stir and to come to life, he decided that maybe that wasn’t such a bad idea after all. “You could hold me,” Dale whispered, wanting to feel the warmth of Jack’s fingers wrap around him, stroke him. Want it? Hell, he was ready to beg for it.

But Jack shook his head. "No, Dale. I don't think so."

Like a dagger to his heart, Jack's words bit painfully deep, and everything Dale might have thought was happening between them crumbled catastrophically around him. He stiffened, his hands tightening around the reins that were threaded between his fingers.

"Do you know why?" Jack's quite question was a surprise, because they both knew the answer.

"You don't want me." Dale tried to keep his voice even, but it was hard when his chest ached and his throat was closing over in humiliation and pain.

"Oh no, babe, I want you, and I have done for a very long time."

Dale quickly twisted in the saddle, looking back into serious green eyes. "You want me?" Jack's slow, sexy grin was his answer, and Dale's stomach did that slow flip again. Positive he was coming apart at the edges, he shook his head. "Then why won't you touch me?" Dale didn't get it, and he didn't understand what Jack was playing at.

"Because I have to punish you first."

"Punish me?" There wasn't a single thing Jack could have said then that would have surprised Dale more.

"Yes. Punish you. Do you honestly think you can gallivant around on my ranch, on my horse, stark naked and get away without having to suffer the consequences?"

Though Jack's eyes remained serious, Dale could see a light smile play about Jack's lips. He focused on that, suddenly wondering if Jack *was* playing with him. "What kind of punishment?"

“You’ll find out when I get you home.”

“Are you serious?”

“Deadly.” And by the look Dale could see in Jack’s eyes, he was.

Twisting back to face the front, Dale worried his bottom lip. He wasn’t sure he liked the idea of being punished, but that was secondary to everything else that was going on in his mind. Jack wanted him, and for the first time since getting on his horse to start this crazy stunt, Dale smiled.

His smile didn’t last long though. After less than half an hour, the long trek back to the ranch began to feel like torture. His erection hadn’t gone down and he was feeling the ache deep in his balls. At one stage he’d been tempted to stop and tell Jack he was going to take a piss, just so he could give himself some relief. The only thing which stopped him was the possibility that Jack would know what he was doing. And just now, Jack had moved his hands so they were no longer on the pommel but were resting on Dale’s thighs. The agony of having Jack touch him and not able to ask him to do more for fear of further punishment, had Dale gritting his teeth and wondering if Jack was deliberately trying to keep him aroused. He was positive of it when, a few minutes later, he felt warm lips press against his nape.

Holding back a soft moan, Dale started counting the steps his horse took to keep him focused on something else other than the raging need to twist back around in the saddle and claim those lips with his mouth.

“Dale?”

Dale almost jumped at the sound of Jack’s voice so close to his ear. “Yes?”

“Why me?”

Dale didn’t try to pretend he didn’t know what Jack was talking about though he was surprised Jack was asking him. “Why does anyone fall in love with

someone?" When Jack didn't reply, Dale decided to explain further. "I was instantly attracted to you. You are gorgeous you know." Tempted to turn round and face Jack to see his reaction, Dale restrained himself. Maybe there was a reason Jack was asking him now and like this.

"What else?" Jack asked softly.

"I like the way you treat the men. You expect hard work, and we all give it, but you don't then just demand more, you actually appreciate what we do, and you also ask for suggestions and take on board anything that's said. You're fair, allowing the men to take time off if they need it. And you give bonuses." Dale grinned a little at that, though he wasn't sure if Jack would think it funny considering the money came out of his pocket.

"That it?"

No, there was more, so much more, but they were little things. Like the way Jack had moved to the smaller house to allow the ranch hands a bigger, more comfortable place to live. The way Jack took care of his horse, the way he sometimes looked when riding out to either inspect fences or stock. The way he laughed or sometimes cracked jokes, the way he often sang when cleaning his house. There were a lot of things, probably too many to mention, but maybe he'd get the chance if this worked out the way Dale hoped it would.

In answer to Jack's question though, Dale said one more thing. "I love the fact that you have integrity."

"How so?" Jack's palms flattened out a little, the heat of his hands now burning into Dale's skin. Dale tried to concentrate on Jack's question, but with every passing second he found it more difficult to do so.

"You could have just taken advantage of me once you knew how I felt," he said, remembering the look in Jack's eyes when he'd said he wanted him.

"I wouldn't do that, Dale, and anyway, I don't think you'd let me."

Dale wasn't so sure. If Jack had shown the slightest interest in him, Dale was pretty sure he would have spread his legs and just been grateful. As if sensing what might have been going on in Dale's mind, Jack slid his arms around Dale's chest and hugged him. Dale couldn't stop his groan of pleasure at the unexpected affection and he leant back into Jack's embrace.

"I'm not going to take your love lightly, Dale. In fact..." Jack sighed, his hot breath misting over Dale's neck as Jack rested his chin on Dale's shoulder. "I think I love you too."

Stunned, Dale pulled on the reins and slowly looked over his shoulder so he could stare into Jack's dazzling green eyes. "You love me?"

"Is that so difficult to believe?"

Not sure what to say, Dale didn't say anything, but he damn well wasn't going to sit there any longer and not *do* something. In a move that was not very graceful, but absolutely necessary, Dale turned around completely in the saddle so he was now facing Jack. Thigh to thigh, chest to chest with not a spare inch between them, Dale damned the consequences, and giving in to his earlier need, took Jack's lips with his own.

Jack's low growl warned him this kiss wasn't going to be a simple joining of mouths, and Dale wasn't disappointed. Jack tightened his arms around him and pressed forward with his tongue, and when Dale opened for him, Jack plunged in deep, claiming Dale's mouth the way Dale wanted him to claim his body. He shuddered as Jack's tongue swept against his own and groaned when Jack encouraged him to suck on it.

Dale had no illusions about who would be the most dominant in their relationship, and he was more than willing to submit to Jack's strength, but tasting Jack, having him hold him, want him, had Dale dizzy for more. He shifted his hips, rubbing himself up against the hard bulge now evident in Jack's jeans. He'd held back way too long and now he couldn't help himself, searching

for and finding just the right friction in a bid for release.

“No, Dale.” Jack’s firm hold stopped him and Dale threw his head back, surprised.

“Need it. Need you,” he whimpered, afraid but unable to suppress how he felt.

“I know, but we’re not doing it on the back of a horse.” Jack’s smile took the sting out of his refusal. “We’ll be home in a few minutes, Dale. And then I’ll have something better for you.”

The promise in Jack’s words didn’t alleviate the tension in Dale’s body; it tripled it. He groaned and dropped his forehead on Jack’s shoulder. Jack moved his hand down Dale’s back in an effort to soothe, but Dale was so strung out, the touch just turned him on more. He was hanging on by the barest thread and when Jack prompted the mare to start walking again, Dale closed his eyes and silently urged her to go faster.

He barely noticed when the horse stopped, but was fully aware when Jack slid warm lips against the side of his neck.

“We’re here,” Jack said, grinning down at him.

Dale smiled back, but he was suddenly nervous, worried about the punishment Jack had mentioned. As they dismounted, Jack linked their fingers together.

“I’ll get Pete to come and pick her up and I’ll ask about Dirk.”

Dale nodded absently, his mind on what would happen once Jack got him inside the house. He was shaking slightly and he wondered what Jack would think of his obvious lack of confidence. But Jack didn’t say anything as he led Dale up the wooden steps of the porch and in through the front door.

Having never been inside the house before, Dale took a quick opportunity to look. Neat, but sparsely furnished, Dale noticed a soft leather lounge, polished wooden floors, and a huge flat screen TV, but he had little chance to see

anything else as he was ushered into a room which housed a beautiful four poster bed, two bedside tables and an old rocking chair. Even all that was taken in with a cursory glance as Jack didn't stop there but drew him into a smaller room off to the side.

"You need a shower," Jack informed him.

Dale couldn't really disagree, but he was surprised when Jack just left him there and disappeared back into the bedroom. Confused, but not wishing to prolong the time away from Jack, Dale peeled off his boots and placing his hat on a chair that sat next to the sink, stepped under the hot water spray. He'd barely finished when Jack came back. Overly conscious of the way Jack looked at him with a hooded gaze that was full of desire, Dale marveled at how quickly things had changed. Two hours ago, Jack would never have looked at him like that, and despite the nerves that were biting at his stomach, Dale grinned.

"On the bed and wait for me," Jack instructed. His tone brooked no argument, but the light shining in Jack's eyes gave Dale room to ask why, and he would have done, if Jack hadn't started stripping just then. Riveted, Dale watched as clothes peeled away to reveal toned, tanned skin and a hard body with well-defined muscles, but before Dale had a chance to see the one thing he was dying for, Jack stopped and turned his back.

"The bed, Dale," Jack said, his fingers hooked in the waistband of his jeans, denying Dale even a view of his ass.

Reluctantly, Dale headed into the bedroom, and as he heard Jack restart the shower, Dale lay down on the bed. The mattress was soft, the covers cool, but Dale wasn't particularly taking much notice. His attention had been drawn to the four timber posts that cornered the big bed, and the leather straps which hung from each one. Dizzy excitement suddenly twisted through his chest as he begun to figure out what his punishment might entail. Fingering one of the thin pieces of leather, Dale was imagining having it wrapped around his wrist when Jack spoke from the bathroom doorway.

“Are you into leather, Dale?” The question had a little edge to it that ramped up the anticipation already pumping through his veins. Dale nodded and the slow smile Jack gave him was filled with such pleasure Dale couldn’t help but smile back. “Maybe your punishment is not going to be so much of a punishment after all.”

Jack came into the room, his hips covered by a white towel. Dale eyed it with resentment. He wanted to see Jack nude, wanted to see all of him, touch all of him. But Jack wasn’t giving in to Dale’s wants. Not that one anyway.

“Turn over.” Instantly obeying, Dale rolled onto his stomach, feeling the dip of the mattress as Jack climbed on behind him. He twisted back to look over his shoulder but Jack shook his head. “Eyes forward.”

Closing them, Dale rested his forehead against the feather pillow, but when Jack reached for his wrist and he felt the warm, supple leather bind around it, he snapped them open to watch.

“Am I going to have to blindfold you as well?” The threat was real, but that would have been pushing Dale one step too far. If he was going to be bound, he needed to see. He shook his head quickly.

“No, don’t. Please.”

Jack’s hand smoothed up his back, his palm slightly rough, but gentle. “I won’t do anything you don’t want, Dale,” he said, his voice as soothing as his touch.

Dale believed him, he knew how Jack treated people, and he knew Jack wouldn’t harm him. “I know,” he said, just in case Jack needed him to say it. And as if that was exactly what he was waiting for, Jack moved to Dale’s other wrist and bound it as tight as the first.

“Okay?”

Tugging to see how secure they were, Dale swallowed audibly, a tingle of

eagerness flowing across his skin. “Yes.” He squirmed a little, getting comfortable, but wondering what else Jack was going to do.

“Don’t move,” Jack said.

“In case you haven’t noticed, I can’t.”

Warm lips pressed against the back of his neck, and then a wet tongue snaked across Dale’s shoulder. “Yeah, I noticed. Kind of hot.”

Dale groaned and shuddered as Jack’s tongue continued down his back, then he jerked against his bindings when Jack spread his ass cheeks apart and slid deep between them. “Oh fuck, Jack!”

Jack didn’t answer, unless the soft probe of his tongue was his way of communication. Moaning, writhing, Dale managed to bring his knees under him which pushed his hips up off the bed, effectively offering himself to Jack for more of what Jack was giving him. Except Jack stopped and gave him a hard slap across the backside instead.

“Ow!”

“I said don’t move.”

Dale bit his lip to stop a retort, but he couldn’t hold back on a low moan when Jack rubbed the spot he’d just smacked. Heat spread from the spot and goddamn if it didn’t spread to his balls. He waited, not knowing what Jack was going to do next, and was surprised when he felt a slicked finger press against his hole.

“So hot, so sexy.”

Yeah, it was. The way Jack slowly pushed into him had Dale panting and straining not to lift his ass a little higher, but though Jack didn’t want him to move, he didn’t seem to mind when Dale made noises of any kind. In fact, the

more Dale moaned, the more Jack did. With two fingers now inside him, Dale gasped when Jack slid his free hand underneath and cupped his balls. Unable to help it, Dale spread his legs a little wider to give Jack better access, and was rewarded by another hard smack.

“Shit, Jack!”

“I’m not going to warn you again, Dale. You wanted me to notice your ass. I have. You don’t need to keep thrusting it into my face.”

The giggle that slipped out of Dale’s throat couldn’t be contained, but as he felt the gentle rub of Jack’s palm against the sting it turned into another moan.

“Okay, no moving,” Dale promised, but it was so hard when Jack started to stretch him in earnest, adding another finger to make him ready. And Dale hadn’t even seen what Jack was going to put inside him yet.

He wanted to look, wanted to see how thick, how long Jack was, but he held still, even when he felt Jack remove his fingers and heard the sound of a foil packet being ripped open.

“How long has it been for you, Dale?”

“You won’t hurt me,” Dale answered, tensing a little as something heavy and thick rested against the entrance to his body.

“That’s not what I asked,” Jack said, his fingers finding a tight grip on Dale’s hips. “How long?”

“Just over two years,” Dale told him wondering why Jack wanted to know.

“Since you met me?”

Dale nodded, hoping Jack was going to allow him that movement. “Since I fell in love with you.”

“Jesus, Dale.” The soft whisper was accompanied by that thickness pushing into him and Dale instinctively arched his back to accommodate it. Jack’s fingers tightened, holding him steady as he pushed deeper still.

“Christ, you’re so tight.”

Dale didn’t think it was that, just that Jack was so thick. He grunted, clenching his hands into fists as the burn of Jack entering him peaked, then thankfully, as Jack seated himself fully, Dale felt the pain ease into pleasure. He hung his head, sweat dripping from his brow into his hair. God he was full. How big *was* Jack?

“You okay, baby?”

“Yeah, just... don’t move for a second.”

“Did I hurt you?” The concern in Jack’s voice had Dale’s heart expanding. He shook his head a little.

“No, I’m fine, but I’ve never had anyone as big as you before. Why didn’t you warn me?” Dale wanted to look over his shoulder, wanted to look at Jack but he didn’t dare.

“I’m not that big.” The smile Dale heard made him smile in return.

Dale knew he could argue the point, but he couldn’t be bothered. There were more important things to say. “You can move now.”

“Thank God.” Expecting Jack to pull out and shove back home, Dale was pleasantly surprised when Jack bent over him and kissed his shoulder first. “When you come, do it crying out my name,” he whispered, his breath warm and moist against Dale’s skin. Then he kissed Dale again, softly, just before he eased most of the way out to effortlessly glide gently back in.

Dale moaned, and started to lose himself in the pleasure being filled by Jack

gave him. Just that morning he'd thought about this, of being taken by Jack, of giving himself to Jack, and now he was, and it was better than anything he could have imagined.

The heat that began somewhere in his stomach spread quickly, consuming every muscle, every cell, every nerve until Dale felt as if he was close to combustion. Jack's thrusts had become harder, longer, deeper and his rhythm had become faster more instinctual than calculated. Dale could tell Jack was beginning to lose it and that knowledge pushed Dale closer to the edge he was already skating along.

Pleasure pumped through vein and heart as physical as Jack's cock pumping into Dale's body. He whimpered, and despite Jack's warning, Dale pushed back to meet each of Jack's perfect thrusts, but Jack didn't punish him; the time for smacks was over.

Dale was close to coming, and by the feel of it, so was Jack. Each glide of Jack's cock was now hitting Dale's nerve rich gland and the build of his climax was becoming intense.

"Jack." The plea in Dale's tone would not have been hard to miss and Dale expected Jack to curl an arm beneath his hip and help him, because tied as he was, Dale couldn't help himself. But Jack didn't move a muscle except the ones he was using to snap his hips forward and bury himself deeper into Dale's ass. "Jack, I need to come. I need you to touch me," Dale added, just in case Jack hadn't caught on.

Jack slowed a little, just a little, but his fingers never let up on their grip on Dale's hips. "No, you don't."

For a second Dale wasn't sure he heard right. "Fuck, Jack." He'd never come like that, without a hand on him and he wasn't sure he could now. "Jack, please!" Dale started to strain against the bindings on his wrists, though God knew why. He was tied up tight; he wasn't moving an inch.

Jack slowed a little further, but it was only to lean over Dale's back again. The

pressure and heat enveloped Dale, drawing him deeper into the web of need Jack had woven around him, but he was suspended there, unable to go any further. Until Jack spoke.

“You can do it, Dale. Come for me.”

“Oh, God!” Dale almost wept, it wasn’t going to happen and he almost begged Jack again, but then he felt it, that deep, concentrated tightness that was like a coil ready to burst. Dale sucked in a sharp breath, reaching for it, praying for it, his body bowed and trembling.

“That’s it, babe. For me.”

Whether it was an instruction or a plea, it was enough. An explosion of pleasure erupted through Dale pulling a shocked cry from his throat while a hot pulse of thick cum splattered across his stomach at exactly the same moment Dale felt Jack’s cock expand and throb inside him.

“Jack! Oh shit!” Again, mind numbing bliss poured through Dale’s body, again he felt the wet spatter of his release, again Jack’s cock, buried deep, pulsated and emptied. And again, and again until Dale collapsed, his final cry lost somewhere in Jack’s mouth as Jack quickly turned him over and kissed him. Arms crossed above his head, Dale couldn’t move, but he didn’t have the energy to even try. The best he could do was kiss Jack back and make a small sound of protest when Jack slowly released his mouth.

Green eyes stared down at him, the depths of them sparkling. “That was beautiful.”

Still feeling the effects of coming like that deep in his balls, Dale couldn’t help but agree. He’d never come so hard, but then he’d never had Jack inside him either. “Yeah,” he said, knowing how inadequate he sounded, but there really wasn’t anything else he could have added. It *was* beautiful, more than beautiful; it was amazing.

Jack smiled, smoothing Dale's sweaty hair away from his face. "I've wanted to do that to you for months. Thank you for letting me."

"My pleasure," Dale said, grinning now he'd got his wits back.

"So you'll let me do it again?" Jack asked, reaching up to untie the leather wrapped around Dale's wrists.

Dale rubbed his skin, but he hadn't been marked; Jack obviously knew what he was doing. "As long as you let me do it to you sometime."

"That would be *my* pleasure." Jack's smile turned into that slow, sexy grin Dale was seriously in love with, and as Jack pulled Dale into his arms and hugged him close, Dale felt he couldn't love Jack any more. He snuggled into Jack's warm body, content, replete, happy.

"Thank you for finding me today."

Dale lifted his chin to stare into Jack's face. "You don't have to thank me for that. Anyone would have done it."

'Yeah, but no one would have done it while wearing nothing but their boots and a hat. I'm glad it was you, and I'm glad you hadn't given up on trying to get me to notice you.'

Dale couldn't quite hide the shiver that raced down his spine as he recalled his promise to himself if it hadn't worked. God, he couldn't even contemplate leaving here now.

"What?" Jack tilted Dale's chin further, holding him so Dale couldn't look away. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, but..." Did he want to say this? Did he want to admit he'd been close to giving up? At the questioning look in Jack's eyes, Dale knew he had to. "That was my last ditch attempt. After that..." He shrugged. "I was ready to leave."

“Too late, Dale. You’re not leaving me now, not ever. I did tell you I love you, didn’t I?”

Dale smiled. “Yes, you told me.”

“And I meant it. And with my love comes commitment.” Jack looked so sincere that Dale was scared to say something, but Jack was waiting.

“I love you, too. And I’m not leaving you, not now, not ever.” Dale repeated Jack’s words, turning them into a commitment to match the one Jack had given him.

“Good. Now go get your hat and boots. The way you looked on that horse today has given me an idea.”

Without a second’s hesitation, Dale ran to the bathroom and grabbed his gear. When he got back, Jack was stretched out on the bed and had started stroking that enormous cock. Dale’s mouth watered, his ass clenched, and when Jack grinned, his stomach flipped, but it was Jack’s next words that had Dale’s heart racing and his blood pumping. It also had him crawling onto the bed with a grin as big as Jack’s own.

“Climb on, cowboy. You’re gonna go for a ride.”

THE END

Author bio: A lover of books since before she could read and a maker of stories before she knew how to talk properly, it was only natural that Penny started writing when she could hold a pen. From fairytales to teenage romances to the hot, erotic stories she writes now, she’s always held the same belief; to love what she puts down on paper. Which means she doesn’t love cooking, cleaning or weeding the garden. She does, however, love to travel and has lived in England and Ireland and now resides in Australia where she intends to stay and discover all that she can of this beautiful country.

Penny would love to hear from you and can be contacted at myheartschoice@hotmail.com. She also has a blog address where you can read her comments and story ideas in progress at <http://www.pennybrandon.blogspot.com/>