

Burn on the Western Slope Excerpt:

“The snow’s great, the skiing is great. When are you going out to ski?”
Garret asked.

Reagan fumbled with the button on her sweater. When Chayton set her drink on the bar, she tightened her hands around the glass to curb her jitters.

“I hate to admit it, but I don’t ski.”

“You don’t ski?”

“I mean, I never have.”

“You have to be tempted, right?”

“Uh, not really.”

This was where he’d leave. He would think she was crazy, boring, uninteresting, and he’d find someone more fitting to talk to. Only, he didn’t. He smiled, his eyes twinkling with interest. At least, she thought it was interest. It could have been pity, or mockery, or...

No. She cupped a hand over her cheek, as if that would soothe her insecurities. The cold condensation from the glass she’d held sent a chill between her shoulder blades.

“How long are you staying?”

“A month, at least.”

“Do you want to learn to ski? Because I’m a pretty good teacher. And Tanyon is a great place to learn. It’s busy, but not as busy as some of the bigger resort towns.”

“Oh, I don’t know.”

“Yes. You have to try it at least once. You’ll love it. Chayton can hook you up with gear.”

“Well, I’ve always had a secret desire to plunge down a twelve-thousand-foot drop.”

Garret’s eyes sparkled, like sunbeams skipping across the ocean and landing under her skin. But even sunbeams on a clear summer afternoon wouldn’t affect her like this.

“It’s not so bad,” he said. “We’ll start on the bunny slopes. Then, if you fall it’ll only be half that.”

“I’ve seen the size of these mountains and there’s not a bunny slope in three-hundred miles.”

“Sure there is.”

Reagan clamped her mouth over the straw and slurped the cocktail. It tasted divine, the sugary, minty flavor inciting sweet thoughts of Garret’s lips.

“I’m not sure I’m ready for that,” Reagan said, running her tongue over her lips as she rested her glass on the counter. “Skiing, that is,” she quickly added. He would never know she’d been thinking of kissing him, but she had to force herself to look away from his mouth. Nudging Naomi, she stood. “It’s time for me to go. I need to settle in. I haven’t even unpacked yet.” And she had no intention of doing so now, but it was a good excuse to leave. She wiped her hands on her jeans before extending her hand to his, praying hers weren’t clammy. “It was great to meet you.”

Garret grasped her proffered hand and nested his other on top, engulfing her hand. She burned. Everywhere. “Meet me on the slopes tomorrow?”

Reagan bit her lip and glanced at the floor. “Tomorrow? I don’t know. I might need a little more time to get used to this place.”

“We’ll start with sledding. You can’t not like sledding.”

She didn’t know, seeing as how she’d never done it, but cozying up to him at a hundred miles an hour would probably be amazing.

“I’m safe,” Garret said as he dropped his hand.

“You’re what?” she asked, meeting his eyes. Maybe he was a good guy in most people’s standards, but he made her heart beat too fast to be anything but dangerous.

“I’m harmless. Several people in town will vouch for me.”

“But I don’t know them either.”