

Chapter Two

Callum MacGregor fought a chuckle at the frustration written on Georgia Paxton's face. Even frustrated, she was attractive. He'd have to be in a coma to not notice her gleaming whiskey-colored hair that framed her sun-kissed face. Or her light-green eyes surrounded by thick, inky lashes. Or her curvy body. The scent of coconut and mango surrounded her.

She was a burst of California sunshine on a moody Scottish day.

"There is a landline if you need it."

Puzzlement tightened her delicate features. "A what?" Hands full of her bags, as they were, he indicated with his head the traditional telephone with its polished brass dial, thick white base, and coiled wires in a rubber coating. He'd inherited it with the hotel and loved it.

Her eyes widened. "That works? I thought it was a decoration."

"A bit scratchy but, yeah, it works."

She stared doubtfully at the phone. "It will help when I need to get ahold of my boss, I guess. Her travel schedule is worse than mine, but I still need to send through updated plans. Attachments." She then riffled through a purse that could hold a small nation. "Do you want my credit card?"

"Are you planning on skipping out before ten days is up?"

"No." Her eyes snapped to his. Gorgeous, assessing eyes.

"Of course not."

"Then we're good. Your word is enough. We'll fix it up at the end."

Trust meant a lot around here and a lot to him. She'd trusted a total stranger getting into her car and helping her. He'd heard Leonard on the horn of his tractor from all the way down at the pub. The impatient farmer shifted paddocks late afternoon every day, herding his cows via the road to neighboring fields. Callum had wandered outside, and sure enough there was his American guest, her car sticking out like dog bollocks.

"Why don't you keep Kitty company while I light the fire in your room?"

"A fire?" The word faded to a whisper.

"Yeah. Guests love it." Enough guests stayed to keep him in the lifestyle he loved. He picked up her heavy bags and again felt the pull in his shoulders. The woman came with a lot of baggage. Would that be figurative as well? "Are you sure you're only staying for ten days?"

"My whole life is in those two bags," she answered in a soft, American drawl. "I'll be moving somewhere new in ten days."

"Corporate America," he murmured.

"Exactly." Again, the beautiful smile lit her eyes. "I love it."

Callum ignored the clutch in his stomach. He'd lived her life, moving from one project to the next, not knowing what city he was in, and he hated it. It was a life he'd left behind and would never return to. He'd found his place, here with family and friends in his charming, old-fashioned hometown. Her stomach rumbled loudly, and her face pinked.

"Tonight is Pie and Pint night at the pub, if you're hungry."

"I've never had a pint." Her face brightened. "What sort of pie?"

"Pork, I think. It changes weekly. People come from miles for Ainsley's pies."

Alistair's favorite.

Pain sliced sharp between his ribs. It had been over two years, but the pain of losing his best friend, friends since they were five years old, was still a scab that at unexpected times ripped to form more scar tissue.

Alistair's widow, Ainsley, and Callum got through some of the bad days together, though he caught her crushed face at times when she thought no one was looking. Tonight, he'd be on double duty since it was pork pie night. Alistair claimed she'd slain his heart with her brand of pies.

He walked toward a set of stairs that led to the guest quarters, but stopped at Georgia's shout and looked back.

"Wait, um, let me tip you." She riffled through her bag again, spears of copper and bronze dancing in her hair.

He rocked back in surprise. "No tipping," he said. "You'll offend people."

Leaving her wide-eyed, he walked up the flight of stairs to room number three. The corner room, the largest and coziest of the four guest rooms, looked out over green fields dotted with Highland cows.

Callum smiled. She'd appreciate the cows.

He was curious as to why she was here. The only people who ventured into the town were either lost or had researched the destination and wanted to explore the folklore of the countryside, which the people here held close to their hearts. As did he. She didn't seem the usual type, but then again, he didn't have a crystal ball when it came to reading people, especially women.

A short time and a little work later, fire crackled in the corner. He pulled a metal screen around the fire and looked around the room, wondering how a woman like Georgia would see it. The Tiffany-replica lamp on the old mahogany desk cast a milky glow over the polished wood. A bed with a thick white quilt and a ridiculous number of colored pillows took up much of the space. Maud, who helped his mum and cleaned the hotel, said it made the room pop, as did the "snuggly" throw on the back of every chair and bed in the place. The room felt cozy. Lived in. Would his new guest agree?

After making sure the firewood was well stocked, he headed back downstairs.

Georgia sat in a chair she'd pulled closer to the crackling logs, a computer in her lap, her head down, her fingers flying across the keyboard, and one of Maud's throws draped across her legs.

He glanced at his watch. "I'm off to the pub. The Rose and Thistle is straight down the road. You can't miss it if you want a meal."

"Okay, thanks." Her hair spilled over one side of her face, giving her an angelic look. "I'll be down as soon as I've finished."

"Always in work mode?"

She looked up, a smile on her face. "Always."

Walking, talking corporate America.

"Help yourself to anything here." He pulled on his jacket for the short walk. He'd left his staff to open up when he'd seen Georgia holding up traffic, but as the owner, he liked to be there to greet everyone.

"Thanks." She frowned. "Do I flick the lock on the door or something?"

He tugged a beanie onto his head. The walk home later would be icy. "No one locks doors around here. Just pull it tight. There's a sign on the door if I'm not here. They know to find me down at the pub."

Her jaw dropped. "But what about security? The ledger with people's details in it. What about Hello Kitty? How will she get out?"

He grinned. "There hasn't been a crime here in years, the ledger is in a locked drawer, and Kitty belongs to everyone. She arrived one day and never left. She shares her time with whomever she wants. Everyone leaves a window open for her, including the one in my kitchen. She knows where it is."

Frown lines marred her smooth forehead. "Are your guests concerned by unlocked doors?"

"That's why you have a key—to lock your room's door if you feel the need." He stuffed his hands in his pockets.

"Don't worry, we're the only two here, and I don't sleepwalk."

She bit her bottom lip and went back to typing furiously, but he thought he caught a blush on her cheeks.

"Good crowd for a Monday." Ainsley walked past, carrying two plates.

Callum smiled and warmth spooled through him. Only two hours into the night, and the place was full. People from all over the county sat at tables, talking amongst themselves. The absolute familiarity and *rightness* of the atmosphere never failed to convince him that coming back here, buying the pub and hotel and renovating them, had been the best decision of his life. Now, families from miles around came for Ainsley's cooking and a refuge from their world. That the place was a success was secondary.

Everyone knew not to sit where brothers Jock and Dugal had sat for the past hundred or so years, bickering, playing cards, and complaining about the weather. Tired mothers had offloaded testy toddlers and were chatting at tables,

worry lines dissolved from their foreheads. Fire danced in a massive open fireplace surrounded by a wrought-iron screen. Ainsley delivered plates of pork pies and garlic potato mash to tables. A game of darts was being played, with the thwack of the darts hitting targets or not. Groups of farmers stood around tables, quietly drinking their pints, saying nothing but understanding the silent conversation.

Callum pulled a pint glass filled with Black Douglas Ale with a practiced hand. Bartending while at Cambridge University was now a useful skill. He pushed the pint across the old polished wooden bar toward Leonard, who tipped his hat. "On the tab."

The old farmer nodded in unspoken agreement.

Leonard and his herd were on hard times. The old man had been coming here since Callum was fourteen, working at the pub to "build character, work his ass off, and show respect," as his father had drummed into him from the day he was born. Callum had a lot of respect for Leonard, who'd always taken the time to talk while a then-teen Callum washed glasses out back.

He would never let Leonard pay the tab.

A flash of long, shiny dark hair caught Callum's eye.

Georgia moved through the crowd, stopping at tables and chatting.

Finally. They'd be running out of Ainsley's pies soon, and he had an unexpected and overwhelming urge to see that she had something to eat.

What was *that* about?

Irritated with himself, Callum got back to keeping busy, but he managed to keep an eye on his hotel guest as she walked the room. She'd changed into a purple jumper that followed the line of the curve of her hip to the denim that hugged her legs. Dark, knee-high riding boots with a sexy heel completed a very tasty-looking package.

Every male head turned as she passed, damn it.

He shook his head. The woman clearly had a knack for engaging people. Everywhere she went, excited chatter and laughter rose up over the usual hum of voices.

"That's your lassie?" Leonard indicated Georgia. "The one who cannae park?"

"That's her." Callum pulled another pint of ale, angling the glass to get the perfect head. Not that Georgia was *his*, but no sense in correcting the man.

Georgia made her way over to the bar and smiled. "I'd like a pie and a pint, please."

His cock stirred. Her American drawl really did a number on him. Or maybe it was just her. He dug a hand through his hair. What the hell was wrong with him? Lusting after a guest was new to him. Even a beautiful guest he could imagine staring up at him from under his body.

Yeah, not going there.

She scanned the blackboard menu above the bar, showcasing the different days and themes. "Might have a

sandwich on Callum's Haggis and Hair of the Dog night, but excellent idea having different themes on different nights," she said, grinning. "Do you have Mojito and Meatloaf Monday?"

"Afraid not. Never have been a fan of meatloaf."

She blinked. "Wait. Is this *your* pub?"

Pride swept through him. "It was a rundown heap when I purchased it. The renovation took longer than I thought, but it brought the community back together. It's the only place around here where people can gather except for the drafty town hall."

"It gets better and better," she said cryptically.

Ainsley stopped and introduced herself to Georgia. "I don't know. Mojito and Meatloaf sounds awesome to me, Sofa." She gave him a small smile then moved toward the kitchen.

Georgia's eyes widened. "Sofa?"

He grinned. "Apparently I'm that laid back."

Pink streaked her cheeks. She must have thought his nickname meant something else that happened on sofas.

He could handle her thinking of him on a sofa. Preferably with her on it, too, her bedroom eyes roaming over his body before dropping to his lips.

Georgia cleared her throat. "My sister Indiana calls me 'Twitchy' because I can't keep still."

"Indiana and Georgia?"

"Yeah, my parents never stay in one place very long.

Indiana and Georgia were the states we were born in." She grinned. "Not that I have anything against Wisconsin or Arkansas, but I'm glad I didn't have to try to pull off either of those. And I'm *really* glad we weren't named after cities. Imagine if we were born in Coupon, Chicken, or Fertile?"

He laughed. "You're serious, those are cities?"

She put her hand over her heart. "Coupon, Pennsylvania. Chicken, Alaska—which I bet has a sign 'I got laid in Chicken, Alaska'—and Fertile, Iowa."

He chuckled. Nope, she was definitely a Georgia.

Grabbing a glass, he asked, "Do you have plans for the ten days you're here?"

"I do. I'll tell you about them soon." Her gaze drifted over the blackboard menu again, and her mouth twitched.

"Should I be looking forward to Callum's Spotted Dick and Stout night?"

Callum finished pouring her a pint and pushed it toward her. "It's a real hit with the ladies. I've been told it's the highlight of their week."

Georgia choked on her beer. "Really?"

He grinned. "Aye. If you want, I'll give you a wee look. A preview."

She laughed and, damn, if that didn't pull a smile to his lips. "And ruin the surprise? Absolutely not. I'll wait with bated breath until Friday."

She gave him a saucy grin and weaved her way back

toward a group of women. He really shouldn't notice the way her hips swayed, but damn him, he did. And so did another part of his body.

He mentally clocked himself. Yeah, it had been a while, but still.

He caught sight of a white cross against a blue background of the Scottish flag and sighed. He scanned the crowded area to see if anybody needed saving from Kathleen, home from university and enthusiastic about her new-found religion—politics. Last week, he'd had to rescue a bewildered Welsh family passing through for lunch from her opinion on Brexit and its effect on the Scottish economy.

Protectiveness pooled in Callum. His pub was a refuge against the growing commercialism of neighboring towns that were being pressured to sell their land to make way for affordable housing. Not that he had anything against modernization—being an architect, he'd helped design some of the most prestigious, soulless buildings around the world—but this town was unique. The folklore, the fabric of the people, the history, were being sucked out of cities and individuals. It had nearly been sucked out of him.

Georgia made her way back to the bar. “This place is exactly how I pictured an English pub.”

He cocked an eyebrow. “Easy now. Some people in these parts don't like to be called English. Stick to ‘Scottish,’ and you'll be fine.” At her enquiring glance, he held up his hands. “Strict rule. Don't talk about politics, if *Braveheart* is fact or fiction, or what a man wears under his kilt.”

She propped her elbows up on the bar, a dangerous glint in her eye. “Oh, but that's why I'm here. Is it folklore that you wear *nothing*? Do you even have a kilt?”

“Aye.”

She laughed and bit into the pie Ainsley had placed before her. A dreamy expression crossed her beautiful face.

“Oh, wow. This is incredible.”

“You have the look of a *thoroughly* satisfied woman.”

She smiled. “Every girl dreams of being totally and utterly satisfied. Me included.”

He cleared his throat. “Is that so?”

“Yeah.” Her voice, low and husky with a soft drawl, hit him right between the legs.

Jesus. At this rate, he was going to need a new pair of jeans. He cleared his throat again and shifted gears back to neutral territory before the image of her being satisfied—by him—set up camp in his brain.

“You're going to love it here, kicking back for ten days.”

“Oh, I'm not here to kick back.”

He stilled. “Isn't that why you're here, to get away from it all?”

Her smile, slow to start, built into a flat-out grin. She leaned forward, and he breathed in coconut, sunshine, and vanilla. His mouth watered at the combination and he stared at her lips, willing her to come even closer. He was a man

whose functioning parts were programmed through years of DNA to respond to soft, female body parts, and—

“I’m here to convince you to partner with my vacation company LiveAbout. After a quick renovation, you’ll be raking in the money.”

She sat back, pride shining from her eyes like a damn summer’s day on a Californian beach—golden sands, scented sunscreen, and perfect tan—and all thoughts of acquainting himself with those plump lips scattered. He glared at her.

“You’re off your head.”

Her smile faltered.

“Your hotel. I’m here to convince you to partner with my—”

Yeah, he’d heard what she said. He straightened and folded his arms across his chest. “You’ll be doing that over my dead body.”

Chapter Three

Wait. “What?”

Maybe she’d heard him wrong, because who wouldn’t want to be raking in the money? The pub would even make cash with the extra guests, so in her book, it was a win-win situation.

“You didn’t hear me wrong.” He glanced at a large oldfashioned clock over the bar. “We need to talk about this, but not here. We’ll be closing in an hour.”

Georgia studied him, but the man of the hour turned away.

Huh.

She finished the beer, rattling the glass on the bar. If he thought she’d give up and slink away, he had another think coming.

Sleep. That’s what she needed. She’d get a good night’s sleep and work out another angle, because she was *not* giving up. She hadn’t even delivered her full pitch yet. The heat of the fire, a full belly, and a pint of her second-favorite drink, ale—because nothing beat a frosty, minty mojito on a sweltering California night—had her dreaming of curling up with Hello Kitty and passing out until the alarm on her phone kicked into life at six a.m. Once she was recharged, she’d try again.

“I can meet you there.” She moved off the barstool, but Callum materialized at her side.

“I’ll walk you. It’s raining cats and dogs outside.”

She craned her neck to look out the window. “Don’t see any cats or dogs. I’ll be fine.” She headed for the front door, but his hand on her shoulder halted her progress.

He eyed her, a frown on his face. “Where’s your coat?”

“The weather didn’t seem too bad when I left, and my coat was damp, so I left it drying.”

He draped his woolen coat around her shoulders. She breathed in notes of whiskey, a smoky scent she couldn’t place, and something unique to the man the coat belonged to.

“You don’t have to give me your coat,” she said, touched by his thoughtful gesture. “I’ll be fine, I promise.”

He cocked an eyebrow, then opened the door. An arctic blast ripped the air from her lungs. On cue, the skies opened, and fat raindrops hit her face like icy grenades.

She stared at the sky. *Seriously?*

Callum reached into the pocket of his jacket, pulled out a beanie, and stuck it on her head.

“There you go, saving me again,” she managed.

“We’d better make a run for it.”

“Wait, what?” She gaped at him. The ground was covered in *ice*. They’d kill themselves for sure.

But then he was gone, moving like an athlete as he sprinted ahead. Georgia closed the door and hurried after

him, but only managed to skid across the wet cobblestone with all the finesse of a skating sumo wrestler in high-heeled boots. Right as she was about to land flat on her ass, he reached out, grabbed her hand, and kept her upright. He somehow managed to pull her across the slippery road, while she cursed her choice of heels. Together they would not be taking any skating medals at the Olympics. Well, she wouldn't.

They reached the hotel. He dropped her hand to open the door, and she registered the loss of warmth. His big hand had engulfed hers. Kept her safe.

She stomped the water from her feet, took off his hat and shook it out, and did the same with his coat. "Seems you've got a thing for saving American women today." "Your time runs out at midnight." Not a muscle moved on his face.

"If you murder me in my sleep, I will haunt you like one of those ectoplasm-shooting things from *Ghostbusters*." A hint of a grin curled his lips. "We'll talk tomorrow, yeah?"

"Okay." She stifled another yawn.

He pulled on his discarded coat and the hat and headed back outside.

"Callum," she called.

He turned.

"Thank you for today. Helping me park, making sure I didn't get hypothermia."

He nodded once, then headed back out to weather that would have Noah putting in an extra order for wood to build an ark.

Georgia made it up the stairs, unlocked the door, and stepped inside. A soft gasp dropped from her mouth. A fire slumbered in the hearth, the glowing embers throwing warm shadows across the room. A huge bed sat in the corner. Pillows in all colors of the rainbow were scattered across a thick, white quilt. The room had a woman's touch.

Interesting.

Would she be sitting down tomorrow morning with Callum and his plus one, or the man himself? She threw on a thin T-shirt that was inappropriate for the climate of Scotland, but she'd left before Macy's could deliver, and she had no time to hit a mall, find a parking spot, and battle it out with hordes of shoppers before she left L.A.

That was her brand of purgatory.

She pulled on thick socks, climbed into bed, and snuggled in. Sleep claimed her almost immediately, and she only stirred during the night when something landed on her bed, started purring, and curled into the crook of her legs. Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture pulled Georgia from a dreamless sleep. She groped for the phone, disoriented that it wasn't on the nightstand by her bed. As the music continued to blast a hole in her skull, she remembered where she was, rolled to the other side of the bed, grabbed her phone, and

swiped the screen for a snooze—something she never did, but her brain was still on California time, and it wasn't even close to morning there.

When trumpets shattered her sleep again, she dragged herself from the bed, rubbing Hello Kitty who purred a good morning. Yawning, she pulled on her robe and headed downstairs with caffeine the only thing on her mind. She made it down the creaking stairs, pulling her silky blue robe tighter against the chilled air. Once heat was installed, the mornings would be toasty for the guests.

She walked into the kitchen at the back of the hotel and smiled when she caught sight of a sparkling, commercial coffee machine.

Yes.

She found a cup, had milk in a metal jug ready to froth, and stared at the machine.

The on switch has to be here somewhere...

After five minutes of turning knobs and pushing buttons, she huffed in frustration, her hands on her hips.

There has to be a manual for this beast.

She pulled open the nearest drawer, smiled at the stack of thumbled manuals and papers inside, and started hunting through them.

“Never had a woman go through my drawers without asking first.”

Georgia jumped. Her cheeks heated, and she turned to find a sexy, sleep-tousled Callum in jeans and bare feet, pulling a white Henley over his head.

She ogled his flat stomach, muscled with what had to be a twelve-pack, before the shirt was pulled down. Busy studying his feet because they were attractive and feet were never appealing to her, she registered that the atmosphere in the room had shifted. She looked up to find his gaze traveling the length of her body.

Lordy.

Her summery robe had parted, revealing a T-shirt with a picture of Spock and the words “Live Long and Prosper” underneath. The T-shirt landed midthigh, and her thick black socks were pulled up to her knees. She quickly tied the robe, her face on fire.

“Sorry. I was looking for the manual for The Beast.” She waved in the direction of the coffee machine. “Is this from a *Survivor* challenge? Because if it is, I’m going to Tribal Council.”

Callum shook his head. “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

She opened her mouth to delve into the amazingness that was *Survivor* but Callum walked past her, his hand brushing hers.

He froze and an unexpected but lovely rush of tingles danced in her hand. Nice, delicious tingles that she hadn't felt in a long time.

Jet lag. Definitely jet lag.

Callum hesitated a moment longer, then moved toward the machine, leaving her stuck in a pre-caffeine, warm tingle phase. The machine began grinding beans and Callum was frothing the milk like a barista, all before she'd moved. Before she knew it, a steaming cup of coffee was pressed into her hands.

"Thank you." The post-caffeine haze broke when she sipped the best cup of coffee she'd had in ages. Way better than Starbucks and Coffee Bean combined.

She moaned inwardly.

She opened her eyes to find Callum staring at her mouth. She stilled. "Did I moan out loud?" she whispered, praying for a time machine. She'd even go back to the Jurassic era and take on a T-rex rather than moan in front of her new business partner.

His gaze stayed locked on her mouth. "Aye."

What was with the tingles now buzzing around her body in a spread of warmth?

Snap out of it, Georgia. You have work to do. A lot of work to do, judging by last night's reaction to your impromptu proposal.

"Can you, um, teach me to use The Beast sometime?"

She moved to the table and sat, the back of her neck uncomfortably warm.

"No problem." He turned his back and the machine went back to grinding and whirring, and soon he was sitting across from her, yawning.

It occurred to her that a pub owner would finish in the early hours of the morning.

"How come you're up so early?" She checked her phone. Six forty-five a.m. This was a late start for her, but for the sake of starting the morning on a positive, friendly note, she'd do the idle chitchat before they launched into negotiations.

"I thought Tchaikovsky had risen from the dead and was outside my door."

"Oh, that was my alarm. Sorry. I sleep like a zombie, so I set it loud." Flustered, she picked up the empty cup then put it back down. "I'll put it under my pillow."

His calm gaze and a hint of a smile that curled his lips took away the fluster. "Why the 1812 Overture?"

"I change it up. Last time was 'Good Vibrations.' Before that 'Enter Sandman,' a few vintage Zeppelin songs... The list is long. I heard 1812 when I was in an Uber in Santa Monica and thought it would do the trick, so today I woke up to a man who died one hundred and twenty-seven years ago or thereabouts." At his amused smile, she pressed her lips together. "Saying that out loud makes it sound kind of creepy."

Another of Callum's yawns entered the conversation.

"What time do you get up?" she asked. Looking around the kitchen she spied a toaster. As she wondered how to broach the subject of breakfast, he caught where she was

looking.

“Help yourself. There’s a wooden box out by the back door. If the flag’s up, Joe the baker has done his rounds. If it isn’t, it will be soon.”

The lure of fresh baked bread was too much, so she went to the back door. She braced herself against the biting air, breathed in spicy herbs and rain, and lifted the lid on the box with a red metal flag standing to attention. She collected the loaf wrapped in glossy white paper, and delivered it like the triumph it was into the kitchen.

“Still warm.” She wanted to press her face against it and inhale the yeasty aroma, but figured her host wouldn’t appreciate the imprint of her face on his breakfast. He’d arranged a bread knife, board, butter, and a variety of what she hoped were homemade jams judging by the handwritten labels.

“To answer your question, I get up around ten or eleven.” He eyed the ticking clock above the door and rubbed sleep from his eyes.

She fought to keep her jaw from dropping. The day was half over by that time. She busied herself cutting bread and popping it in the toaster. She knew her face had registered shock, probably dismay. This was going to be one tough negotiation. Her boss’s usual refrain echoed in her head.

If anyone can convince someone to change their mind, it’s Georgia.

“I don’t get in until two or three, sometimes later.” He rolled his shoulders. “Guest check-in here is from midday onwards, so I’ve got plenty of time.”

She ducked her head. “Sorry about my alarm.”

The toast popped. She spread liberal amounts of butter on the bread, added jam, and bit into heaven.

Sweetly tart strawberries and decadent, creamy butter, the likes of which she’d never tasted before, mingled with the fluffy toast.

“You’re going to have to watch that moaning. You’ll give a man ideas.”

Her eyes popped open. When had they closed? Callum was beside her, his eyes hooded, but a smile on his face. She stilled when he scooped a dribble of butter from her chin, his finger leaving a warm exclamation point.

“Oh, God, I’m sorry. This is not how this morning was supposed to go.” Heat powered up her chest and landed on her face in a touchdown. “I’m usually efficient, but between that coffee and this bread, I’m going to leave here two hundred pounds heavier, and I don’t care.”

He chuckled, and his gaze slipped down her body then back up. He blinked as if he’d been caught checking out the hot new math teacher, and rubbed the back of his neck.

“Why don’t we meet back down here in an hour and we’ll talk.” He shook his head then walked out the door.

Great, Georgia. Make a dribbling, moaning fool of yourself.

She walked up the stairs after having two more pieces of toast, justifying that she'd attempt a star jump and a sit-up this afternoon, wondering what on earth she was going to do for an hour. Getting ready took fifteen minutes, tops. Her keratin-straightened hair was coming toward the end of its straightening abilities, but it should last the ten days she was here. She discovered after going through all her stuff she'd left her flat iron back in L.A.

Showered, dressed, and wearing flat boots this time, she made the bed, and after exploring downstairs, decided to have a peek around the outdoors.

What one of her many P.E. teachers would have called "invigorating" air slapped her face when she stepped outside.

A shed without a door lay to the left, and there was a lot of hay on the ground. Chickens pecked in the grass. A long line of woolly Highland cows meandered in the distance, being driven by an invisible compass. Hello Kitty ignored the chickens and jumped through her window, even though Georgia had left the door open.

Something wet jutted her hand, then her ass. Hard.

Before she could turn around, teeth nipped her hand.

Georgia shrieked and whirled around. "Oh. My. *God.*"