

No good could come of loving the right man at the wrong time. This here hurt something fierce, but she'd go on living. Better. Without self-sacrifice. She'd take delight when and where she could. Soon as her feet touched Chicagoland.

Stubbornly set on possibilities, Taffy approached a tree-lined bend where the road narrowed drastically. Rounding the curve, she froze.

Car perpendicular across the narrow outlet, Roam stood propped against automobile, muscled arms folded across a wide chest, Taffy's path unquestionably obstructed.

Taffy made ready to fuss him out only to reconsider. *That steel-headed man won't move.* She would. Taffy eyed the fence, knowing she'd earlier hopped it with ease. But she couldn't hike her dress up before present company.

"Go ahead," Roam goaded, popping peppermints in his mouth, ready to enjoy the spectacle. "I'd like to see you try."

Options were few with the opposite side of the road lined by a ditch and a frighteningly out-of-control briar patch. Taffy could reverse her path. *I'm not!* Taffy had long ago learned how to do what she had to.

"You 'bout to break something," Roam warned, shaking his head as Taffy prepared to climb. "Gal, quit acting up and walk this way."

Ignoring Roam, Taffy hoisted herself onto the bottom rail. Fumbling, she tried climbing with shoes in hand, finally dropping them over the fence, onto the other side.

Roam moved quickly before Taffy, too, was beyond reach.

Taffy felt an arm snake about her waist, effortlessly hauling her backward as if it didn't cost Roam a thing. *"What're you doing?!"*

"Whatever I want," Roam responded, setting Taffy on her feet, anchoring an arm about her waist when Taffy spun, spitting heat.

"Move, Roam." Taffy strained against Roam's iron hold. "Get off me before I hurt you!"

"Already did."

Her fire fizzled. Voice softened, tongue tasted regret. "Roam, what do you want?"

"You." Taffy stilled. Roam reinforced his hold. "Two things I won't do with you: mince words or waste time." Lifting her chin, claiming her mouth, Roam proved his point.

His lips were hot, soft, sweet. Taffy got lost savoring them and him, and the bombarding emotions of mere moments before became nonexistent. *Oh my blessedness,* Taffy inwardly purred, feeling a slow, unsanctioned melting. They'd shared quick, quaint kisses in adolescent sweetheart days. *Never* this. Never with man-to-woman *savoir faire*. Resuscitated passions exploded and multiplied. Taffy could barely breathe let alone think, so she followed love's lead and held on for the ride.

The ride was provocative, evocative, and disconcerting with Taffy melting and meshing against Roam like where she was was where she wanted to be...

Roam broke his hold, easing Taffy back a bit. He was too willing, she too ready, flowing into him without vacillation, with a whole lot simmering underneath.