

INTO THE WHIRLWIND by Kat Martin

Excerpt

Megan O'Brien parked at the end of the gravel driveway and quietly got out of her compact SUV. Through the trees, she could hear the roar of a chainsaw, hear see two-by-fours going up to form the sides of the house under construction.

The garage was already finished, undoubtedly full of Dirk's toys, including a Harley and a custom Dodge Viper. In the summer, he kept a boat docked on the lake below the house.

Though two other men were hard at work, her gaze went straight to Dirk. Hammer in hand, carpenter's belt dangling low on his waist, he was shirtless, though the January air was chill.

Hard muscle flexed across his back and shoulders as he pounded in a nail with an ease that said how many times he had done it. Long, sinewy muscles outlined by the soft fabric of his jeans stretched and moved as he worked on his house.

Meg's gaze went over the familiar dragon tattoo that wound over one shoulder and inched up the side of his neck. The colored ink seemed right with the sexy, short-cropped, horseshoe mustache that framed his mouth and curved down to his jaw, making him look like the hard, tough man he was.

Even her terrible fear for her son couldn't block the memories of how it had felt to lie with him. Couldn't lessen the yearning that burned through her body just at the sight of him.

On the fashion show tour, Dirk had been her bodyguard, and though every instinct had warned her not to get involved with him, the fierce attraction between them was impossible to resist.

Once the tour returned home, Meg had ended the affair. Dirk Reynolds was wild and fierce while she was a single mother with a son to raise. She had duties, responsibilities.

She couldn't have Dirk Reynolds.

But she had never gotten over Dirk.

Meg steeled herself and headed along the gravel driveway toward the house he was rebuilding after the fire that had nearly killed him five months ago. One thing she knew, Dirk Reynolds was a hard man to kill.

Which was the reason she had swallowed her pride and her heartache and come to him. She needed him, trusted him as she never had another man. Her little boy's life depended on gaining this man's help. This man she had loved and rejected.

She stepped out of the foliage and started toward him. With Dirk's usual keen senses, he turned, alert that someone was there, though the buzz of the saw hid the sound of her footsteps.

For several long moments, he just stared, watching as she approached. He was six-two, his body lean and sculpted. Wavy dark brown hair curled at the nape of his neck. She forced herself to keep walking, even as his jaw locked and a fierce scowl darkened his face.

Dirk grabbed a faded blue work shirt and shrugged it on, covering most of his amazing chest. He didn't bother fastening the buttons, just strode toward her, blocking her view of the house.

He stopped right in front of her. "What are doing here, Meg?"

"I need to talk to you. It's...it's urgent."

"You're trespassing. What do you want?"

She swallowed, fought to stay strong. He didn't want her there. She had known he wouldn't. Known he thought of her only with contempt. She wished he would hold her the way he used to when she was afraid. "I...I want to hire you."

The corner of his mouth edged into a ruthless half smile. "What for? Stud service?"

She wanted to cry. She wanted to beg his forgiveness. Tell him she had never forgotten him. That she never would. She knew it wouldn't matter to Dirk. Not anymore.

It didn't matter. Nothing mattered, but saving the life of her son.