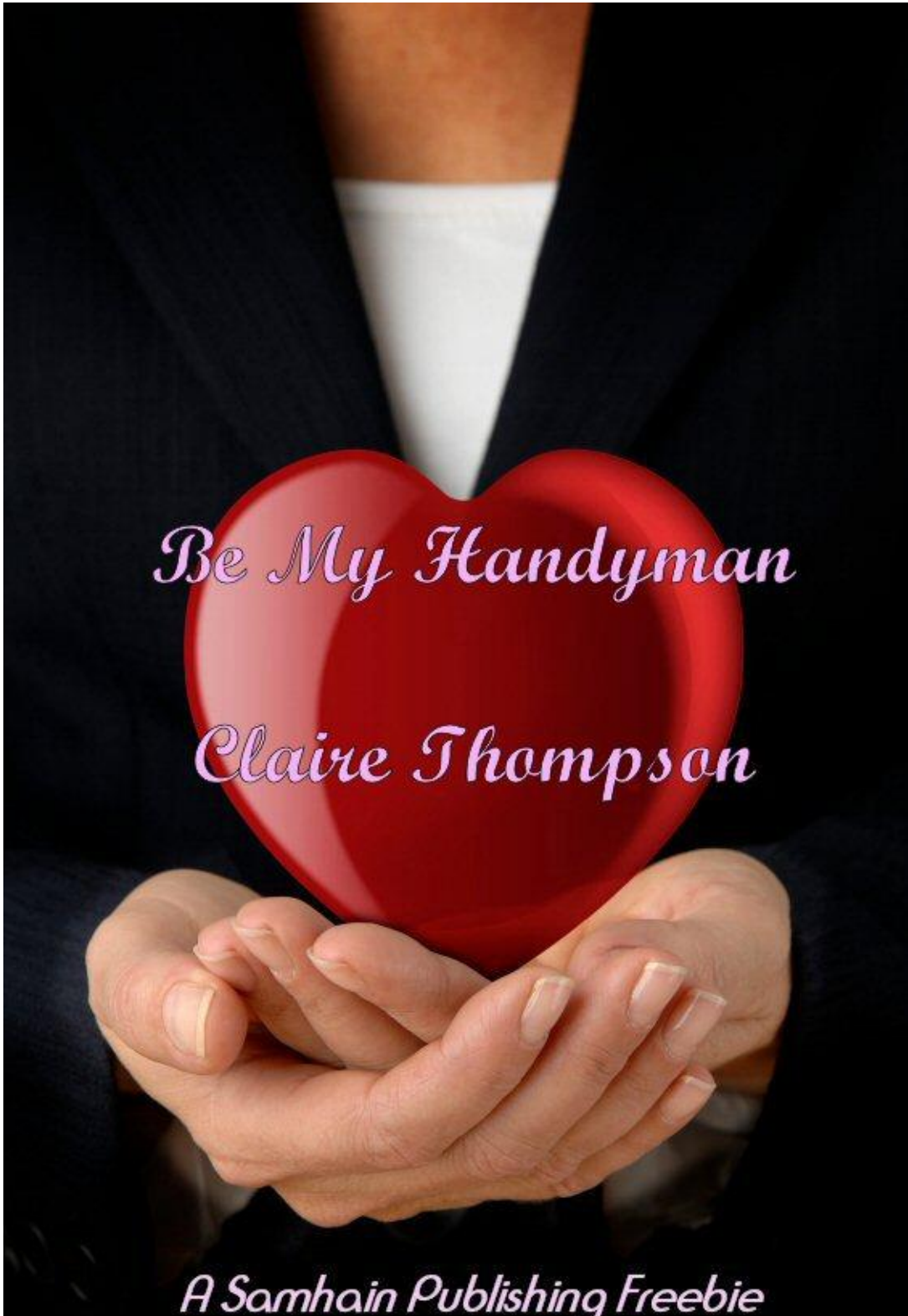


Be My Handyman



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Claire Thompson

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“Versace?”

Will turned toward the sound of the low, sensual voice. The man who was sitting beside him at the hotel bar was magazine-model good looking, with streaked blond hair cut close except for long bangs falling over vivid blue eyes. He was maybe twenty-eight and dressed in a very fine cashmere sweater of pale oyster gray over dark slacks.

Will looked down at his suit jacket. “Prada, actually.”

The man nodded, a knowing smile appearing on his lips. “You wear it well.” He touched Will’s sleeve, stroking the fabric with well-manicured fingers. “*Very* well.”

It wasn’t long ago that Will would have taken his cue from the guy’s obvious come-on, ratcheting up the charm as they moved closer, thighs touching, shoulders bumping, pheromones flying. This guy was right up the alley Will used to hang in—young, rich, unattached. A quick, easy fuck who would be even easier to forget the next morning.

Now, however, Will’s heart belonged to another. For the first time in his thirty-one years, he’d found someone to love—really love. They’d been together for eight months and Will had never been happier. Sure, he could go up to Mr. GQ Blond’s hotel room and Jack would be none the wiser. But that wasn’t the way Will wanted to live—not anymore.

If Will’s life had been a high school year book, Jack Crawford, a forty-four-year-old widower who renovated houses for a living, would have been voted least likely candidate to steal Will’s once impervious heart.

Jack was attractive in a rugged, world-weary way and his body was rock solid, made strong by the labor of his back rather than the machines at some fancy exercise club. But it wasn’t his looks that had attracted Will.

No one had been more surprised than Will to find himself falling head over feet for his handyman. Jack had opened up his world in so many ways—teaching him to trust and to experience life without the jaded cynicism he’d adopted early on and which had masqueraded as maturity. Jack approached the world with wonder and awe, never taking for granted how precious and fleeting life was.

This last month had taken a toll on their relationship though and Will knew it was his fault. While on a sabbatical that he was seriously considering making permanent from a high-powered, high-stress finance job, he’d been offered a chance he simply couldn’t refuse. Because of contacts he had in the business world, he was tapped to put together a venture capital deal for a cutting edge solar thermal power project based out of Australia.

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As he'd explained to Jack, the money he stood to earn in fees and stock options if he made good would pretty much guarantee he wouldn't need to work a day job ever again, if he played his investment cards right.

What had started as a one month commitment that was only supposed to take him to New York City a few days a week had snowballed into something bigger, sucking time from his relationship with Jack and keeping him sometimes overnight in the city, too tired after hours of intense negotiation and meetings to face the drive home.

Tonight was such a night. He'd called Jack, apologetic that he was going to be stuck again in the city, promising to make it up to him as soon as he could. He missed Jack with a palpable ache. While they didn't spend every single night together, they were heading that way, and it suited Will just fine. He couldn't get enough of Jack's hard cock and soft kisses.

While Jack was the older of the two by a fair margin, sexually he was the teenager, insatiable in his newfound lust. Will, who had always considered himself highly sexed, could barely keep up with Jack's dynamo of passion. He would wake in the middle of the night, swimming up out of a wet dream to find Jack's hot mouth locked on his cock, his thick, calloused fingers probing Will's ass.

Will closed his eyes a moment, almost feeling Jack's tongue licking along the underside of his shaft, sliding down to his balls and past them to tongue the puckered entrance he would claim once he had Will begging for it.

"Have you got a room?" The blond was staring pointedly at the tent in Will's pants his daydream had caused. By the wolfish expression on his face, he clearly thought he was the cause of Will's hard on.

Flustered and embarrassed, Will stood abruptly, dropping some bills on the bar. "You'll have to excuse me. My wife is waiting for me upstairs. Take care." He left the man gaping, hiding his grin as he walked away.

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"Jack, I am so sorry. I really thought I'd be able to make it out of here today but it's just not happening. Some of these negotiations are getting tricky and if I pull out too soon it could break the deal. I swear, just a few more days and I'll have it in the bag."

"Hey, it's no big deal. Don't give it another thought. Do what you've got to do and I'll see you...whenever." Jack tried to keep his voice light or at least neutral. He was pretty sure he failed.

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If Will heard the bitterness beneath Jack's attempt to let him off the hook, he gave no sign. "You're the best, Jack. Gotta go. Bye."

Jack stared at the table set for two. It wasn't so much this second missed dinner in a row—Jack was a grown man, not some kid who couldn't deal with his lover's change of plans. No, it was more than that. Jack was afraid to think how much more.

After having spent a lifetime doing the right thing and playing it safe, he'd found true happiness in the arms and bed of a thirty-one-year-old man. Caught in the powerful grip of their bright, new passion and his own self-discovery, Jack had pushed down his initial misgivings. His careful, quiet, plodding life had exploded into a fairytale of passion. Dreams he hadn't even known he'd had came true and for the first time in his adult life he felt truly alive.

But over the past month as he saw less and less of his young lover, the old fears were rearing their ugly heads and making war on Jack's peace of mind. Perhaps the flame that had burned so brightly between them was sputtering out at last.

Hell, he was lucky to have had what he had. At least now he was connected with himself. He'd learned he was capable of passion, something he'd never shared with his wife of twenty-four years.

Will had been nothing but wonderful, but he was young and had freely admitted his relationship with Jack was his first committed one. Maybe he was feeling confined—hemmed in by seeing only one man when he'd been used to a different guy every night of the week.

He believed Will was working on an important, time consuming business deal, but a man couldn't work 24/7. Was he playing as hard as he worked? He was back among his high rolling, fast living friends, in his element. He was probably being hit on night and day and loving it.

Jack thought about making one of the steaks he'd bought for their dinner but found he wasn't hungry. Instead he went into the bedroom and lay down, taking the photograph from his nightstand into his hands. He stared into the eyes of his handsome lover, his heart catching as it always did when he looked at the dimpled smile and the curve of his masculine jaw.

The first time they'd made love, Jack's heart had nearly burst from his chest, he was so nervous and excited. He was like a skittery colt but Will had calmed and then claimed him. He'd helped him to understand and embrace his repressed homoerotic feelings. But beyond that, he'd broken down the walls Jack hadn't even known he'd built around his own true, passionate nature.

Until Will had entered Jack's life, sex had been a dull, repetitive act, a scratching of a barely acknowledged itch. He'd never understood what all the fuss was about. Now he knew—he knew with a knowing that surpasses conscious thought and the words to describe it.

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He loved the taste of Will's salty semen erupting on his tongue and shooting down his throat. He lusted for the feel of Will's tight ass clenched around his cock, and the way Will used his muscles to milk Jack to a frenzy. Sometimes he would try to stay still, to see how long he could last in that fevered grip. Invariably he lost control, grabbing Will's narrow hips and thrusting hard, shuddering in long, deep thrusts of pleasure as he spent himself deep inside his lover.

He loved the press of Will's hard shaft against his own ass. Though they'd experimented in lots of hot, delicious ways, his favorite position was still the first Will used to claim his virginity—he on his back with his feet flat on the mattress, knees bent, with Will on top facing him. Will had explained Jack would be less likely to tense his anal muscles in that position, and while that may have been true, what he'd really liked about it was he could see Will's face while Will fucked him.

Will would keep his eyes open as long as he could, staring into Jack's eyes with fierce intensity while he made love to him. He loved watching the moment when Will's focus loosened and he lost control. He would try to keep his gaze steady on Jack's face but as he neared his own climax, invariably his eyes would slide shut, his mouth opening in an O of orgasmic ecstasy. Jack thrilled to his own power at that moment, to his ability to bring such staggering pleasure to the man he loved.

Could he bear it if Will slipped away? With a deep sigh, he pressed the photograph to his chest. It had been an amazing eight months. For whatever reason, Will had showered affection and attention on the older man, proving his love not only with his sexual fire and passion, but in everyday things like being there when Jack's younger son Eric flipped out over discovering his father's newfound sexual identity, and in encouraging Jack in his fledgling custom furniture design business.

They'd become more than lovers. They'd become best friends. For the first time in his life, Jack let down his guard. He'd left himself wide open, he realized, for this full frontal assault on his emotions.

Had he been fooling himself all this time in thinking such passion and fire could really last? Had he ever really stood a chance in the long run? No doubt love had blinded him to reality. Jack sat up and put the photo back on the nightstand.

"I need a drink," he said aloud.

He could picture the bottle of brandy his older son had given him for Christmas, beckoning from the liquor cabinet like a bad angel. When Emma had died, he'd used liquor as a crutch to get through, especially right after her death. He'd tied on a big one when Eric had caught him

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early in his relationship with Will, on his knees with Will's cock in his mouth. He'd left Will to fend for himself that night and handled the situation by drinking himself into a coma.

Not this time.

The words landed in his head as if someone else were speaking. He found himself listening. What was he doing? Why was he wallowing in self-pity like some passive, helpless fool? He was Jack Crawford. He had made a good life for himself by the sweat of his brow and perseverance. He reminded himself now that the harder he worked, the luckier he got.

He remembered the words a wise friend of his had told him once when he and Emma were having relationship problems. "When things aren't going well with your partner, don't look to them. Ask yourself, 'What can *I* do to make this relationship better?'"

He didn't need booze to prop him up when he was down. The brandy would remain where it was. He would stake his claim on the man he loved in no uncertain terms. Tomorrow was Valentine's Day. Why not make it one Will would never forget?

~*~

"Jack, I know I said I'd make it home tonight, but one of the main investors is leaving the country and there are still crucial details to hammer out."

"That's okay, Will. You've nearly got the deal sewn up, right?"

"Yeah. This is the last day, I swear."

"Hey, it's okay. I'm a big boy. What hotel are you at again?" Will told him. There were voices rumbling in the background and Jack could hear them calling for Will to rejoin them. "You go on. We'll connect tomorrow."

~*~

The next afternoon Jack felt giddy with excitement and nerves as the passenger train sped along its track toward the city. He hoped his plans to surprise Will didn't backfire. He forced away any feelings of misgiving. He was going to do what *he* could to make the relationship better.

Though it wasn't far from his New Rochelle home, Manhattan was like another world, and not one Jack was used to frequenting. He felt like a country boy, out of his element as he pushed his way through the crowds moving like a tide along the wide sidewalks, his collar turned up against the frigid February air.

Ducking into the doorway of a shop, Jack reached into his pocket and took out the small gift he'd made for Will in his workshop. He'd carved a small, fat heart from a block of black walnut, shaping and sanding it until it was smooth and round, even its tip blunted so it would feel good in

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the hand. He'd made it with the idea Will could keep it in his pocket—a small reminder of Jack's love for him even when they couldn't be together. In tiny letters, he'd carved J+W. He traced the letters now with his finger, hoping the gift wasn't too corny and homespun for Will's sophisticated city taste.

Realizing he'd been stalling on putting his plan in action, Jack made his way to the hotel where Will was staying. Will had said after the meetings he sometimes came down to the bar to unwind. Hopefully Will would be glad to see him.

Jack entered the lobby of the fancy building, his renovator's eye automatically noting the marble floors, the heavy damask silk curtains at the tall windows, the Art Deco motifs and the crystal chandeliers hung from the vaulted ceilings. He quickly found the bar, a large room with dim lights and plenty of tables and couches for lounging.

He got a beer and settled in a corner, scanning the room for signs of his handsome young lover. As he sat, he began to doubt himself. The plan of action had seemed like a good one from the safety of his house, but now he wondered what he'd been thinking.

What if his fears were founded and Will entered the bar with some hot young stud? Or worse, never came to the bar at all, instead taking his new, secret lover directly to his room for a night of wild sex, Jack all but forgotten. Anxiously he fingered the smooth wooden heart in his pocket, trying to decide if he should go or stay.

~*~

Will entered the hotel bar, wondering if he should catch the last train back to Scarsdale or just spend one more night in the city. The deal was finally closed. He was exhausted but exhilarated. He flipped open his cell phone, wondering if it was too late to call Jack.

Someone slipped onto the barstool beside him. He didn't look, in case Mr. GQ had returned. He just wasn't in the mood.

“What can I get you?” The bartender hovered nearby.

“Whatever you have on draft is fine.”

Will's body stiffened, his heart missing a beat. He knew that sexy, gravelly voice. It was his favorite voice in the whole world. But how could it be...?

He turned slowly, sure his ears had deceived him. There sat Jack, those deep set blue-gray eyes smiling at him. Beneath his battered old brown leather jacket he wore the white silk shirt Will had given him the first night they'd spent together.

“Jack! What're you doing here?”

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“Oh,” Jack grinned, hoping his nervousness didn’t show. “I was just in the neighborhood. Got thirsty, thought I’d stop in.”

“Come on. What’re you doing here?”

Jack started to say something flip about seeing how the other half lived but one look in Will’s open, happy face and he decided on the truth. “I missed you and I was feeling lonely and a little insecure about us. I didn’t want to barge in on your business dealings so I was waiting to see if you’d come into the bar like you said you sometimes do after negotiations.”

Will’s face softened. “Hey. I’m sorry.” His voice was sad. “If you’re feeling insecure, that’s my fault. I’ve been neglecting you. This deal has consumed me but it’s finally done. Signed, sealed and delivered.” He brightened. “Now I’ll have time to devote exclusively to you. We’ll have to get right to work on making you feel secure. *Very* secure.” He dropped his hand to Jack’s thigh and squeezed. His touch sent electric sparks hurtling directly to Jack’s cock. Will lifted his brows and smiled a suggestive smile. “In fact, we can start right now. I have the room until the morning.”

They were barely in the door of Will’s suite when Will pushed Jack against the wall and melted his bones with a kiss that left no doubt as to Will’s desire. He stepped back to pull off his jacket and loosen his tie. Jack tossed his own jacket on a chair and his shirt soon followed. Shoes were kicked aside, with socks tossed not far behind as they headed toward the bedroom.

Jack pulled greedily at Will’s shirt, nearly tearing the buttons from the fabric in his haste to undress the sexy man. He wanted him with an urgency that would have frightened him if his mind had been functioning. But as it was, he was lust, pure lust, and his entire focus was on Will’s hard, perfect body.

Using the flat of his tongue, he licked his way down Will’s smooth chest and washboard abs. He dropped to his knees, pulling at Will’s belt and opening the zipper of his slacks. He yanked at the open pants, dragging Will’s underwear down along with them. Will’s cock popped out, fully erect and beckoning.

Nearly shaking with lust, Jack lowered his mouth over the fat head and sucked like a starving man. He took Will’s cock deep in his throat as Will had taught him, using the muscles at the back of his throat to milk his lover’s bone hard shaft.

It wasn’t long before Will was crying his name, his fingers twisting in Jack’s thick hair, his hips thrusting forward. Jack held him tight as he came, eagerly taking his lover’s seed.

Will sagged against him. Jack stood and helped Will to the huge bed. Will fell back with a contented sigh. “Man, Jack, who taught you to do that?”

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“Only the best.” Lying down beside Will, Jack reached into his jeans to massage his throbbing cock.

“Hey, let me do that.” Will lifted himself on his elbow, his eyes fixed greedily on Jack’s fly. Jack lay back, letting Will take off his pants and boxers. He closed his eyes and moaned his appreciation as Will’s hot, wet mouth closed over his shaft.

Will worked his magic, using his lips, tongue and hands to drive Jack nearly out of his mind with pleasure. He found himself trying to hold on, to resist orgasm as long as possible so he could savor the incredible sensations Will was wresting from him.

But all too soon he lost the fight. “Oh God,” he cried. “Oh, Will. It’s too good. Too...fucking...good...” He came hard, his entire body contorting and jerking with spasmodic pleasure. Will held on, not letting go until he’d milked him dry.

They lay together in contented silence for some minutes. “Hey,” Will said, sitting up suddenly. “I have something for you. And it’s not quite midnight. So technically it’s still Valentine’s Day.”

He jumped from the bed and left the room. A moment later he returned with a small white box wrapped with pale blue ribbon. “I hope you like it.”

Jack took the gift, deeply moved. He untied the bow and opened the box. Inside was a small gold heart with the words *Will loves Jack* inscribed in tiny curlicue letters. It was heavy in Jack’s hand and he realized it was solid gold.

The coincidence was too much. He couldn’t help but laugh.

“What? What’s funny?”

“I have something for you, too. You won’t believe what.”

Will beamed. “Really? You have something for me?”

“Yeah. Though nothing like this.” Again he admired the gold heart in his hand.

Jack had mixed feelings as he retrieved the homemade heart. It was a nice piece of work as far as it went, but it could never compare to solid gold. *Trust Will*, his gut told him. Will wasn’t some shallow jerk who would care about monetary value. He would see the love that went into the wooden heart.

“Open your hand,” he said to Will.

Will did and Jack dropped the little heart onto his palm.

“Jack,” Will breathed, staring down at it. “How did you know what I got you?”

“I didn’t. I just wanted to give you my heart. I guess you had the same idea.”

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Will looked up at him, the love on his face so stark Jack knew he never need doubt it again.

A smile curled over Will's lips. "I just have one question."

Jack felt so light with happiness he imagined if he lifted his arms he would fly right to the ceiling. "Yeah?"

"Will you be my Valentine?"

About the Author

Claire Thompson has published erotic fiction since 1996. Claire's work includes the sensual exploration of BDSM as well as sizzling m/m erotica, both vanilla and D/s. And don't miss her ménages, both m/m/f and m/m/m, where she explores the complexities and passions when two become three. Claire has published over forty novels and short stories, both in print and ebook format. Claire lives and writes in upstate New York. Her website address is www.Clairethompson.net, where you can sign up for her newsletter. Her yahoo chat group is <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/clairethompson/>. Claire's Samhain Publishing Author Link is: <http://samhainpublishing.com/authors/claire-thompson>

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