

The white rose

All my attempts to stay in control flew out the window the minute our eyes met. I ducked, hoping to stop the feverish blush that rose in my cheeks, but the moment I looked down, his fingers traced my chin and nudged my face up to his. He kissed me softly on the lips, never taking his eyes off mine. His eyes smiled as he brushed his lips against mine a second time.

“Hi,” he said, raising his hand as he spoke; he was holding something. I backed away slightly and he held a perfectly shaped white rose to my nose. I took a lingering, deep breath and sighed as I exhaled. The rose had a shockingly potent fragrance that took me by surprise.

“Wow! That smells amazing.”

“I know.” He grinned, and my stomach fluttered.

“Where in the world did you find such a beautiful rose in the middle of December?”

“You’ll never believe it. I spotted it blooming in the garden at the ranch. The rose bushes are nothing more than bare sticks right now, and yet, there in the middle of them all, stood this one lone rose. It looked so regal, like a pearl among twigs. When I got close enough to inspect it, I couldn’t find any flaws—it’s perfect, and its fragrance is even stronger than the roses that bloom mid spring.”

“That’s a rare find,” I agreed.

Jonathan stroked my cheek and lips lightly with the velvet petals of the rose, then kissed the spot on my cheek where the rose petals had brushed against my skin. He caressed my cheekbone with his lips resting at the base of my ear.

“It reminded me of you,” he whispered.