

Tails of Love: Excerpts

Kate Angell, *“Norah’s Arc”*

“Get your pygmy goat off the hood of my Corvette.” Mike Kraft’s voice carried into Norah Archer’s office on a gust of wind. Anger tight in his voice.

Norah pushed to her feet, faced off with the six-foot contractor. “Don’t blame Houdini for escaping,” she shot back. “Your bulldozer operator keeps clipping my fence posts and loosening the chain link around my petting zoo.”

She cornered her desk, met him sneaker to steel-booted toe. She angled her head just as he dipped his chin, and their lips nearly brushed. He had a masculine mouth and a morning’s worth of stubble. She’d never seen him smile.

Ann Christopher, *“Atticus Saves Lisa”*

“I’m in love with you, Lisa,” said Cruz Shaw.

Oh, my God.

Stunned paralysis set in, rooting Lisa Evans’s butt to the sofa and her jaw to the floor. Her fingers tightened reflexively around her glass of zinfandel, threatening to snap the stem, and she worked hard to loosen them, to breathe and gather her thoughts.

She’d been staring with deliberate focus across the living room at her brother Keenan and his therapy pet, a capuchin monkey (she always thought of them as organ grinder monkeys) named Atticus, trying to pretend she was only peripherally aware of Cruz sitting next to her, but so much for that.

The possibility of Cruz loving her had all sorts of unwanted emotions jamming her throat, clogging it. Surprise and dismay were there and, hidden deeper but no less powerful, tiny flickers of ... joy?

Marcia James, *“Rescue Me”*

Inside the carton, the pathetic stray shivered. Thanks to the dog’s hairless state, Adam could see its ribs. What if the little thing was too sick to save?

“We’ll fix you up,” he reassured it. Adam opened the shelter’s door and stepped inside.

“C’mon back,” a woman called from a nearby examining room.

Adam peered through the room’s open door. A woman wearing kitten-themed doctor scrubs was reading a chart. Her chin-length, light brown hair concealed her face.

Then she straightened, offering her hand. “Welcome to Rescue Me.”

Recognition struck Adam with the force of the defensive tackle who’d ended his football career. He resisted rubbing his chest where his heart had taken a direct hit. Claire. It was Claire. Her beautiful brown eyes met his, and it seemed like seconds instead of years had passed since he’d made the biggest mistake of his life.

