



**Sharks &  
Lovers  
Australia**

**Frankie Banks**

**Stacey**

**Melbourne**

Harry's legs intertwine with mine as I put out my hand to interlock our fingers. We are back at the hotel in London and I am sleepily drunk dreaming of that wonderful night we had shared. Then I wake, it is David's hand that I have taken hold of. He is rubbing my thigh with his smooth hands.

*Shit!*

He rolls on top of me, kissing me sleepily and I close my eyes trying to take myself back to London, but I'm here in Melbourne the other side of the world. Everything here is different, the air is dryer, the smell inside the house is heavy and woody, outside fresh and exotic. Everything is different apart from the things I want to be. Maybe I need to change. David rolls off and I go to the toilet, then slip back into bed falling asleep.

'Mummy, mummy! Wake up we're late for school' shouts Lilly in my ear.

I glance at the clock and realise she is right, it's eight thirty.

'Right lets get a move on then', I say jumping out of bed

I give the kids a banana each and we head out the door walking quickly to school.

'We're going to be late mum' says Ben

'Don't worry, it's not the end of the world, I must have forgotten to put the alarm on that's all.'

As we get to the large oval, we walk across as the cockatoos and galah's swooping down from the large gum tree's.

'Look mum they're my favourite' says Lilly pointing to a group of Galah's pecking at the ground.'

'They are beautiful, aren't they' I say as we hurry past.

I still don't really know many of the mums, so I leave the playground and wander down the road to the café. I could do with a kick-start.

As I walk in, I immediately notice him.

'Max' I say and I put my hand on his shoulder.

'Stacey, I was hoping I might bump into you, can I get you a coffee?'

'Yes please' I say plonking down into the chair opposite him. Its nice being looked after for a change. He wanders off to the counter and I watch as he laughs and jokes with the waitress.

'So how are you lovey? You are looking a bit harassed today' he says putting his warm hand on mine and it's such a comforting thing to do I don't slide mine away but instead turn my palm up and squeeze his large worn fingers.

'I over slept this morning, I was having a wonderful dream and then it was broken'

His eyes sparkle and he breaks our touch when the girl brings over my latte.

'It's a shame when we have to come back to reality isn't it?' he says in his thick Australian accent.

'It certainly is Max, what have you got planned for today?' I ask him

'I'm going to go down to the boat to have a play, if you would like to join me?' he asks

'I don't have any plans, yes that sounds nice Max' as our eyes meet an energy passes between us.

'Have you got plans for work yet?' he asks

'No I could do with something part-time, but I don't want to go into the city, I might get some cards done or something.' I say, 'just some admin/book keeping would be good'

'Let me ask around at the yacht club for you, I'm sure someone could do with a hand in that area'

'Thanks Max'

'We'll pop in for a coffee after I've shown you the boat and then you can get to know a few people, you'll find something in no time and if not, you can just hang around with me.'

'Perfect' I say smiling at him

'I'll meet you at the yacht club about 12, Stacey?'

We leave the café and we kiss lightly on the cheek.

'See you then' I reply and we walk our separate ways.

When I get back to the house Doughie is in the garden, this man never wears a shirt; I guess it must be hot work. His shoulders glisten in the sun and I can't help but smile.

'Stacey' he says in acknowledgment, he is fiddling around with his lawn mower, and I decide to leave him to it.

The cool air inside the house is welcoming and I decide I had better change into something more appropriate if I am going to be climbing around a boat. I go upstairs and change from my cotton dress into shorts and a tank top. I look in the mirror.

*Good choice, I don't look like I am going on a date*

There is something so warming about Max, it's lovely to have someone to look after me. I go down the

stairs, get the washing on and look into the garden to see Doughie reaching up to the lemon tree I open the fly screen to shout out.

'Are you pinching my fruit?' I say with a smile

'Yep, you don't seem to be getting through them' he says with a cheeky grin.

'Fair enough, do you want a drink?' I ask him

'Na you're alright love' he says

'Ok see you later' I say and shut the door admiring his large shoulders.

Standing in the yacht club staring out of the window the windsurfers dot the bay and the occasional swimmer pops their head up out of the water.

'You changed' says Max walking up towards me

'I thought I should get a bit more nautical' I say with a giggle.

'Fine by me' he says and we walk up the pier chatting about the weather.

'I swim a lot round here, Stacey are you a swimmer?'

'Not really I can only do breast-stroke, I'd love to learn front crawl but to be honest I have the pommie shark fear'

'Funny Girl' he says as we wander in through the gate

'if you act like prey Stacey you attract predators. They are probably out there but if you ignore them they generally ignore you. Did you know in 1933 Norman

Vincent Clark was taken by a shark from the end of the jetty in Brighton?’

‘No I didn’t! Thanks Max that really puts me at ease!’  
As we walk along the jetties, he says hello to everyone we pass and even I start to do the same, feeling like we have entered this other world as the wind whistles through the rigging of the boats.

‘I walked up here a few weeks ago with our Nanny from England, she was amazed at some of these boats’ I tell him

‘Some of them are bloody beautiful, worth a mint, not mine I’m afraid’ he says and we reach his wooden yacht.

‘I wouldn’t mind owning something like this!’ I say as I pull myself up on deck.

He opens up the cabin and goes downstairs, when he returns he is carrying a tray of cheese and crackers.

‘I’ll be back in a minute’ he says and then down he goes again into the cabin this time returning with a bottle of wine and two glasses.

‘Wow you know how to treat a lady don’t you’ I say  
‘I try’ he replies

The first glass of wine goes straight to my head and before I know it, my legs are stretched out towards him and he is massaging my feet.

'You are a beautiful creature Stacey' he drawls as I lay my head back enjoying this pampering.

'You're not so bad yourself, you better watch out, I'll want to sail off into the sunset with you!' I tell him, 'it's been along time since a man has massaged my feet'

'Is this where you keep all your stress, lovey?'

'Yep and my shoulders'

'Well, let's start at the bottom and work our way up', at least I think that is what he says. I close my eyes and drift off listening to the whistles of the wind, clanking of the ropes and the sloshing of the waves against the hull.

Walking back down the jetty we giggle and kiss each other on the cheek farewell.

'See you soon Stacey' he says

'Not if I see you first' I reply and as I turn and walk home, a slight spring in my step, I feel just as bouncy as all of these lycra clad women that walk up and down Beach Road, all I need is lycra.