



A Daring Twist
Leigh Ellwood

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A Daring Twist
A Dareville story by

LEIGH ELLWOOD

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A Daring Twist is a special Cinco de Mayo story, released in celebration of the holiday, but will also serve as the prologue for the upcoming Phaze Books release, *Daring Red*. Enjoy!

Stay daring,

Leigh

"Some people claim that there's a *whoaaaaaa-mon* to blaaaame... and I know! Oh, yeah, I know, baby!"

Clearly drunk out of his gourd, the singer of this rollicking karaoke version of "Margaritaville"—the fifteenth such rendition delivered so far at Mick's Cinco de Mayo celebration—punctuated the song's bridge with an awkward shake of his skinny ass. So lost was he in the rhythm that he missed his cue for the final line.

"Shit!" The ad-libbed expletive shot piercing feedback through all speakers, causing a collective wince through the crowd. "It's my own *da-yum* fault!"

Mick Swanson, bar owner and quasi-celebrity host of the bar's annual "Parrothead Idol" contest, didn't wait for the song to finish before relieving the blue Hawaiian-shirted contestant of his microphone. "It most

certainly is, bud." To the crowd, "Let's give it up for Robbie 'Margaritaville' Mack. Rob-bie!"

A smattering of applause followed, low enough for Redding Marbury to hear the muttered aside to his right.

"Robbie sounds like *he* should give it up and go back to driving trucks or whatever."

Red snickered into his own margarita at that, careful not to suck any of the tart liquid down the wrong pipe. After a sip, he leaned to the side and replied, "I wouldn't worry, you heard the crowd reaction. I doubt the needle on the Applause-O-Meter moved an inch."

"If there is one. This whole thing is fixed, I'll bet. You know Mick's gonna give it to the girl with the huge tits."

"Yeah, and maybe he'll give her the prize money, too," Red cracked. This earned an equally riotous response, and when his barstool neighbor's drink moved into his line of vision Red realized the guy wanted to toast the lame joke.

That's when he turned and locked eyes with a beautiful, dark-haired man. Really, *beautiful* could be the only word to describe him—the way the jagged tips of his hair dusted his t-shirt collar, soft brown eyes that looked as though they could ripple like puddles if touched, and pouting full lips. Hispanic in origin he had to be, guessing by his features. Red took in his strong, bare arms and flawless latte-colored skin and hesitated before speaking. Whoever the young man was, he'd taken Red off his guard.

"Cheers," he mumbled, clinking his glass against the proffered long-neck Bud.

"*Vive* Dareville." The man took a long pull from his beer bottle and slammed it on a damp coaster. "Miguel Guererro," he said, his voice crisp as he extended his hand.

Red accepted his warm, strong grip. His pulse quickened a beat and he suddenly felt flush. "Red Marbury. You local? I haven't seen you around town." Indeed, as the owner of Dareville's only newspaper, he knew practically everybody.

Miguel shook his head. "Passing through," he said. "I heard about the karaoke contest and thought I'd take my chances." A mischievous smile curled those tempting lips. "You sing?"

"Hell, no." Red fidgeted in his stool. The rising heat of Miguel's appraisal sparked a self-consciousness he wanted to overcome. Every day since he and his wife Charlene had decided to open their marriage to accommodate new lovers—largely to satisfy Red's homosexual

yearnings—Red wondered if each look, each perceived blink equaled an innuendo.

Tonight, with their daughters spending the evening at Charlene's parents' house, his wife likely suffered similar jitters on her dinner date with a co-worker she liked. Charlene had encouraged Red to use this opportunity to explore the attractions he had repressed over the years, and he actually went to a gay bar at the beach. Fear, however, got the better of him, forcing him to take refuge in the familiar atmosphere of Mick's annual Cinco de Mayo bash.

What could he possibly say to another man in a gay bar, anyway? He had no experience in the meat market, gay or straight. He and Charlene had dated all through high school and married shortly afterward. How could a man unable to correctly discern a silent come-on from a blink to get rid of dust succeed in the dating game?

The shrieking coda of an off-key blonde in a bikini top and shorts—shining strands of red, white, and green beads hanging from her neck—interrupted Red's woes. The tanned, tilting beauty had just asked the audience, "Which way do I steer?" as the final strains of "Cheesburger in Paradise" faded. Mick took her mic and escorted her off-stage.

"Which way to steer? How about toward rehab, or voice lessons?" Mick joked, though Red figured there was some degree of stern sincerity in the remark. But the crowd laughed anyway and light applause signaled a dismal effort for the contestant.

Clearly the host tired of the event. Mick's voice reflected his weariness. "Okay, last but not least..." he consulted an index card, "here to sing—oh, thank God it's something we haven't done yet."

"That's what she said!" roared a detached voice from the crowd.

Mick quickly rejoined with, "Thank you, sweetheart. You better head back to the balcony now. I hear Statler's getting worried."

Nobody laughed at that, not even Miguel. Feeling it his duty, Red crooked his neck toward the stage. "*The Muppet Show*," he said. "You know, those two old guys who heckled everybody..."

"Oh, right. Right." Miguel nodded and smiled, and Red realized that show must have aired when the young man was but a babe, or long before that. God, he was too old to start over. He should be home with his wife and kids.

Then again, that wouldn't be fair to Charlene. He couldn't give her what she really wanted out of their marriage.

Mick continued to ramble on with the final introduction. "Okay, kids. Three more minutes and it's all over. Let's bring out Miguel Guerro. Miguel!"

Miguel slid his nearly empty bottle next to Red's drink and pushed loudly from his stool. "Watch that, please?" he asked with a gentle brush to Red's hand. The touch sparked an electric sensation that shocked Red's senses. The short hairs on the nape of his neck stood to attention—his cock was certain to follow.

"Miguel?" But the young man couldn't hear him. Red watched him sashay around bodies about to topple. That firm, delicious ass, encased in faded jeans, moved with the grace of a cat, and Red saw his shoulders flex and pull his t-shirt tighter across his back. He had a hard body—would it melt in a man's embrace?

Knock it off. Red knew nothing of "gaydar" or signals. For all he knew, Miguel was a horny college student who banged a different pussy every night.

What couldn't be denied, though, was Miguel's incredible singing voice. Deep tones overpowered the twangy melody of a Jimmy Buffett song Red didn't immediately place. Many of the karaoke contestants kept to the obvious hits about margaritas and cheeseburgers. Miguel's choice began slowly and teased the audience with its down-home raunchy exuberance. The words came naturally—when Miguel sang for a barmaid to bring another round, Red half expected one of Mick's shorts-clad ladies to join him on stage bearing a heavy tray.

It seemed as though Miguel scanned the crowd for a glimpse of him. Red detected laser heat aimed directly at him as their gazes locked from across the bar. His hearing numbed at the suggestion sung directly at him.

Honey, why don't we get drunk and screw?

Riotous whooping and cheers erupted in the pit near the stage. Shaking hands held aloft beer mugs and margarita glasses, sloshing alcohol everywhere. The tang of salt and yeast assaulted Red's senses and he grasped the brass rail lining the bar for balance. Miguel maintained control of his attentions, clearly knowing what Red himself had yet to admit out loud.

The boy knew about Red, knew he was interested. A subtle wink provided Red's answer of his own desires. Red's palm sweat against the railing and he slid a few inches before catching himself. Feet tucked around the posts of the stool, he turned back to the bar, breaking eye contact so he could finish his drink and plan his next move.

Out the door? Bodies thickened the easiest pathway there. Miguel would surely catch him, but Red knew he wanted that to happen.

Before he realized it, the song ended to a high-decibel reception, more cacophonous than any other contestant had received. "That's it, I'm calling it. The rest of you didn't come close," Mick bellowed. "This year's winner of Buffett Idol is Miguel Guerro!"

The crowd didn't seem to mind. The cheers continued long after the stage lights dimmed and canned music rose to fill the air. Red did his best to keep it all behind him but a forceful slap to his back brought the party crashing into his consciousness.

"Check it out," Miguel drawled, flipping open his prize envelope to reveal a check and a thick packet of gift certificates.

"Congratulations, you earned it," Red told him. "You were better than anybody else, that's for damn sure."

"You got that right." Miguel signaled the bartender over and tossed a bill on the counter. "I got his," his tapped Red's shoulder, "and gimme a bottle of Cuervo Gold for the road."

Red's heart thumped at the additional contact. He turned slightly to see Miguel's hand still palmed him. "You didn't have to do that, but thanks."

"You deserve something, too, friend." Miguel leaned over the bar and snatched a whole lime from the drink well. Grabbing a nearby salt shaker, he nudged Red to stand. "C'mon."

"Where are we going?" Red would have followed him over a cliff at this point, he realized. The boy was just too damn beautiful for his own good.

Miguel grinned two rows of perfect white teeth. "It's Independence Day for my people, *amigo*. What's a holiday without some fireworks?"

* * * *

As the owner of the town paper, Red knew damn well Dareville had planned no such display for Cinco de Mayo. Townsfolk considered themselves lucky to see a show on the Fourth, given the council's reluctance to explode things within town limits. Red liked to believe, too, he possessed enough smarts to know he could expect a different type of "bang" in Miguel's room at the Dareville Inn.

The drive, following Miguel's pickup truck, proved mercifully short and devoid of many side streets to allow a timid escape. Red kept his breath held as they silently made their way to a second floor room. Blood

pounded in Red's ears as numerous questions jarred his mind. What if Miguel turned out to be some kind of hustler, and mugged Red? Should he have called somebody to let them know where he was? Who to call, Charlene? Certainly not his father or brother. Maybe he should have let Mick in on his plans.

No, not Mick. Nobody was to know about this.

Besides, people talk, and Red didn't need the publicity.

Miguel casually tossed a ring of keys on the nearest table by the door and strolled to the desk on the opposite wall. He unloaded his booty on the paper blotter and reached for the mini-fridge. "Have a seat," he said. "Get comfy."

Seeing as Miguel had obviously rented the inn's economy suite, Red had no choice but to get "comfy" on the edge of the queen-sized bed. The mattress yielded easily to his weight, forcing Red to jostle for balance as he sank into the softness.

Miguel chuckled. "You are funny, Red. You know that?"

"Unintentionally," Red countered. "That's not always a good thing."

"It's cute. I like you." Miguel poured two shots of tequila, then sliced the lime into wedges with a jackknife from his pocket. "You could use something strong, too, I can tell."

Like an elephant tranquilizer? Red kept silent. He didn't want to come across as a comedian. True, humor often proved a strong shield during times of anxiety, but one false wrong might send the night into a disappointing tailspin.

And what did he expect to happen anyway? Sex? Teenaged style necking at the most? The amorous electric charge filled the room. Red could feel the affect of Miguel's musk on his own skin. His cock stirred slowly to life, his nipples ached under his shirt... but he held fast to the bed comforter. Whatever was destined to happen tonight, he decided Miguel would take the lead. The young man exuded confidence, a casual nonchalance that Red envied. He needed to learn that.

Miguel grabbed the salt shaker and turned. "Hold out your hand," he ordered in a gentle voice. "No, like this." Miguel demonstrated a loose fist, thumb curled upward. Red obeyed.

Miguel sprinkled some salt along the rim of Red's fist. "You have to have done this some time in your life."

As opposed to what? Red had to admit, though, Miguel could read him well. Truly he must look the part of the shy virgin unsure if he was being seduced. Of course, Red was no virgin in the traditional sense—he and Charlene had enjoyed a strong sex life until these old desires

resurfaced—yet he had never acted on the alternatives now apparently open to him.

With Red's knuckles now properly seasoned, Miguel took one of the hotel glasses, a fourth of the way filled with Cuervo. "Lick it." He bent down to tongue away the salt. Red thought his heart might burst.

Finishing with an exaggerated smack, Miguel said, "Slam it," and downed the shot.

Red understood what came next. No mistaking Miguel's grin, either.

"Suck it."

And Miguel drew Red closer for a searing kiss. Red loosened his jaw on a gasp and Miguel easily plundered the open cavern, probing deep and moving his lips over Red's. Red could only melt into this kiss, thinking how similar the sensation felt to kissing a woman... yet the hint of facial abrasion and scent of raw masculinity clearly defined this experience.

Red hoped it would last. But, just as his arms rose to bring Miguel closer the young man broke away with a satisfied smirk. The taste of tequila and salt lingered on Red's lips and he pursed tight to preserve the memory. He watched Miguel's gaze drop to Red's left hand, shocked when Miguel lifted it higher. Another grin.

"So, you're funny and naughty," Miguel teased. "What secrets are you hiding?" The charge confused Red, then he realized Miguel had noticed the obvious band of white at the base of his ring finger. Charlene had advised him to leave his wedding ring at home tonight, in the event. He supposed now it didn't make a damn bit of difference. To Miguel he typified the repressed husband on the prowl, taking whatever the little lady at home refused to give. Red's protective feelings for Charlene compelled him to speak, even though he had no idea he'd see this guy again.

"There are no secrets to reveal, to the people who matter most to me," he said, his voice a strong whisper. "She knows, and understands."

Miguel's expression softened. "I don't mean to make you uncomfortable, Red..."

"You're not, I'm just naturally so." Red smiled, relieved to see Miguel respond in kind. "And as you can tell, my inexperience in all manners of seduction is plainly obvious."

"I think you just need to relax." Miguel handed him the other shot, but before Red could down the tequila Miguel tsked. "No, gotta do it the right way."

He sprinkled some salt on his own curled thumb, then held it up to Red's mouth. "You remember what to do?"

Yep.

Lick it. Miguel's skin felt slick and cool under his thickening tongue.

Slam it. The Cuervo ignited a line of fire down this throat, but Red did his best not to cough away the flames.

Suck it. The alcohol amplified Miguel's delicious taste. The kiss lasted longer this time, with Red surprising himself by taking the lead. He pinned a hand to the back of Miguel's head to prolong their bond, breathing deeply in time to his partner's growing interest.

Their bodies melded easily into each other's. Arms snaked around waists. Legs and thigh twined, and jockeyed slightly for balance. Not that Red minded—if they ended up a bruised heap on the hotel rug he wouldn't stop his exploration of Miguel's form. The longer they kissed, the more natural his reactions appeared. His fingers fanned over the back of Miguel's jeans, noting the curves and softness of his ass.

He touched a man's backside, and enjoyed it. He touched as though he had been meant to do for so long.

Miguel broke the kiss and nibbled down Red's neck. "I'm ready for another shot," he whispered, his breath hot in Red's ear. Red's cock stirred in answer. "How about you?"

He would have preferred to remain in place, but Miguel gave him no opportunity to protest. Miguel slipped free of his hold and poured two more shots of Cuervo.

But when Red held out his fist for the salt, the other man shook his head. "No, let's try something else." Rather than reach for the glasses, Miguel turned toward him and deftly unbuckled Red's belt.

Red swallowed. He knew to expect this eventuality, and the thought of seeing Miguel in similar stages of undress caused him to harden underneath his partner's gentle touch. By the time Miguel had the pants and boxers off, Red sported a full erection, the tip tender and aching.

Miguel took the shaker in hand and tapped a few granules into his cupped palm. With a wink, he sank to his knees and slid the salted hand over Red's cock. Red sucked in air, his legs quaking at first contact—a man rubbing his cock, a distant fantasy come to life—yet Miguel eased his anxiety with a whispered rebuke.

"Relax, Red." Slowly he bent his head and kissed the purpling head. Red thought he might come right there, and thanked what restraint he possessed when Miguel came up without a coated face.

Miguel grinned. "Lick it." The flat of his tongue pressed against the base of Red's cock, then drew oh so painfully upward to collect the tiny salt crystals stuck to his skin.

"God," Red cried, and cuffed the edge of the mattress for support.

"Slam it." Still kneeling, Miguel reached behind them for a glass. He downed the golden liquid in one swallow without so much a grimace for the sharp, fiery agave.

"Suck it."

No pretense necessary. Miguel grasped the base of Red's cock firmly, letting one finger trail down his scrotum to tease a sensitive spot near his thigh. Red shifted his legs apart for better balance, and to allow Miguel more room as he guided the cock into his mouth. Red hissed at the gentle, wet suction trapping him, and twitched with every rogue movement of Miguel's tongue across his shaft. He arched his head back and closed his eyes to let the sensation enhance, but after a few seconds he had to look down and see, indeed, that a man had him in this incredible hold.

His wife Charlene enjoyed oral sex, giving and receiving, and as much as Red loved that special intimacy, it was nothing like this. Miguel possessed a talent that now served as the standard by which others would be judged.

This thought cast a shadow on the pleasure of the moment, and Red looked around the room. Hotels offered temporary housing, and this time with Miguel signaled just that. Red would come, perhaps they'd kiss and do other things, then he would go home. What next? Assuming Miguel went on his merry way, and Charlene ended up in a serious relationship with her dinner date, what was left for him?

When a hand snaked around his hip to cup his bare buttocks, any misgivings about this moment dissolved. Red directed all concentration on the gorgeous man before him, sucking him to imminent orgasm.

A finger burrowed deeper into his ass, tracing the puckered hole before breaching. "Yes," Red said on a sigh. The buildup in his scrotum proved too much to bear. The tingling in his groin increased—he couldn't hold on. "Gonna come."

Miguel released Red's cock long enough to encourage him to do so, then resumed a gentle suction, guiding Red over the edge. He exploded in short bursts, moaning with the added sensual pressure applied when Miguel closed tightly around him to swallow every last drop. Here, too, Red noticed the difference between Miguel and Charlene. Where his wife usually dodged his climax, preferring to stroke his orgasm into a tissue, Miguel devoured his essence with relish.

As the high faded, Red collapsed back on the bed, panting and pressing his heart to control its wild beat. "Holy shit," he said, more from

disbelief with the situation than the actual act. He'd come to a strange man's hotel room for sex, not something he'd ordinarily do. He wasn't drunk, yet never felt so intoxicated in his life. Were he not feeling so weak in the afterglow, he'd muster the courage to drag Miguel up next to him.

Yet, for all the euphoria he savored now, his thoughts still wandered to his wife. Though she knew to expect Red to have experienced something tonight, he realized they could not stay together and lead separate love lives. She needed companionship full-time, and he needed... this? Well, something similar to it. The occasional dinner out or clandestine blowjob would not satisfy either of them.

He watched Miguel down another shot, then creep beside him on the bed. Miguel draped an arm across Red's chest. Red blinked in the sting of alcohol-tinged breath.

"That was awesome," he said.

"Yes," Red agreed, then, "What's next for you?"

Miguel smiled and rolled onto his back. "Another town, another contest. This check will only get me so far."

"You ought to audition for a steadier job with that voice. You could do very well."

Miguel chuckled. "Nah, I don't like to be pinned down. I'm having too much fun. And when I'm too old to do this I'll at least have the memories."

"I hear you." Red counted pockmarks on the ceiling. "I envy your freedom."

The mattress sagged and shifted. Miguel had eased farther away to grab a pillow. "I have to admit, too, I see people happy in their hometowns, surrounded by friends, and I get a longing. But I know if I'll stay I'll itch to leave again."

"Yes." Red had ties to Dareville, and the beach. Family, friends, a career. Would he be able to sustain it all in a new life? He worried about Charlene, but she was strong and capable, and beautiful. She would have no trouble finding a new man to share her life.

Would he?

A nudge to his shoulder broke his thoughts, and he turned to see Miguel smiling broadly at him. The young man leaned in for a kiss, and Red obliged. Slowly lips moved over skin, and tongues danced a lazy waltz until Miguel pursed his mouth and broke free.

Red sighed. "I can't stay."

"I know," Miguel said. "Neither can I." After a pause, he added, "If I came back, would you be here?"

Red nodded. He certainly didn't expect an invite to run away with Miguel, and in the slim chance it came he'd have to say no. "I just realized I didn't return the favor." Red trailed a cautious hand down Miguel's chest, ghosting over belt buckle to the crotch of his jeans, where a once pronounced erection had softened.

Miguel grasped the hand, lifted it to his lips and kissed the fingers. "Don't worry about it. Now I have reason to come back to town."

Red smiled. "I'll be here."

Watch for more of Red's story in *Daring Red*.
Coming 2010 from Phaze Books!

About the Author

Leigh Ellwood writes spicy romances and sassy mysteries. She is the creator of the award-winning Dareville series for Phaze Books, as well as numerous shorts for Phaze and other small publishers. Readers are invited to visit LeighEllwood.com for more information on Leigh's books, and to follow Leigh's writing adventures via her blog at leighwants-food.blogspot.com or through her Twitter at Twitter.com/LeighEllwood.



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