



ANNA  
SUGDEN

A PERFECT  
FAVOUR

**Anna Sugden**

# **A Perfect Favour**



A New Jersey Ice Cats short story

A Perfect Favour Copyright  
© 2017 Anahita Sugden

## A Perfect Favour

“You want me to do what?”

Cooper Johansen frowned at the PR gal, Vonnie, not sure he'd heard her right.

“I need a replacement for Mr. November.” She sighed and lowered her voice. “I dropped the ball. When Derrick Lavarr was traded, I forgot that he was in the New Jersey Ice Cats’ charity calendar. We can’t feature a player who’s no longer in our organisation.”

That part made sense, even if the rest didn’t. “Why me? I’m the new kid in town.”

Not so much a ‘kid’, given he was pushing thirty. Even if he did feel like a rookie in the show all over again. He’d missed most of last season with a knee injury and then, over the summer, he was replaced by a younger, faster, less injury-prone guy and shipped to the Cats. He’d only ever played for one team -- Arizona -- until last month, so he’d had to learn a new system, in a new city, with a new set of team-mates. Somehow, it had seemed easier last time around.

“Well, you are Derrick’s replacement.” Vonnie smiled winningly. “And all the existing Cats are already on one of the other pages.”

Coop had a feeling there was more to it than that. Why else would she have made a special trip to the rink

## Anna Sugden

to catch him before practice? Especially when they were in the midst of massive preparations for Opening Night. “There are other new players this season.”

“Okay,” she admitted. “You’re the best-looking of the new guys.”

Looking around the locker-room, he realised she might have a point. Not that he was anything special, but he didn’t have a huge nose or a bushy unibrow. Plus, he had a thick head of hair. Still he sensed there might be a catch.

“It’s not one of those nude calendars, is it?” He didn’t care about stripping down for the camera, but he’d rather be forewarned if he was expected to strut his stuff bare-assed.

“No. Of course not.” She wrinkled her nose. “Well, not exactly.”

“Naked is naked. How can it be ‘not exactly’?”

“It’s topless.” She added quickly, “And it’s for a good cause. Shirtless hockey players will raise lots of money for those poor, homeless cats.”

“Uh huh.”

Vonnie’s eyes widened with concern. “You’re not allergic, are you?”

“Nope. Our family’s always had animals — cats and dogs — so I’m comfortable around pets.”

“Okay, good.” She couldn’t hide her relief. “So, you’ll do it? It’s a simple shoot. Won’t take more than a couple of hours. And I’ll owe you one in return.”

Coop couldn’t see the downside and it might do

## A Perfect Favour

him a favour at contract renewal time. “All right. Just remember to put in a good word with management.”

“You rock! And I’ll be sure to let my VP, Morgan, know how you stepped up.”

He’d fought through game seven of the Stanley Cup finals with a strapped and taped, broken bone in his foot. How hard could an hour of playing model be?

\* \* \*

“I’m a food photographer. I don’t do people.”

Becca Emory tilted her head to study the arrangement of props in her shot of a pair of bride and groom cakes. Something about the composition was off.

Vonnie tweaked a couple of cascading flower vines on the white, three-tiered confection, turning the blooms slightly to catch the light better. “So you’ll be shooting beefcake, not wedding cakes.”

“Funny.” Becca shot her best friend since high school a wry look. “Good eye, though.”

“Please, Becs. I’m in a major time crunch. The final art deadline’s in two days and the photographer’s on a tropical island, doing a swimwear shoot.”

“You know I’d help if I could, but I have a Thanksgiving spread due at the weekend for a major client. If I do a good job, they’ve said they’ll give me all their feature photography. The regular income will really help stabilise my business.”

“I promise this won’t interfere. You can even use the same set-up, since it’s for November. An hour or two of your time, tops. Coop’ll come in, take off his

## Anna Sugden

shirt, play with the kittens while you take a bunch of shots and you'll be done."

Even an hour with an arrogant pro-athlete was fifty-nine minutes too long. The jerks ... sorry, jocks ... in high school and at college, who'd given her shy, geeky former self such a hard time, while also trying to get her into bed, were enough to put her off anyone whose career was sport.

Kittens on the other hand ...

"I suppose I could find time, as it's for a really good cause." She'd adopted her own two cats from the same shelter.

Vonnie rolled her eyes. "You're the only person I know who'd complain about a half-naked hunk, but go gooey at the thought of rambunctious kitties. Trust me, Coop has a body to die for."

"Don't be planning my funeral just yet."

"Ha ha. Seriously, I really appreciate you saving my bacon. I owe you a massive favour in return."

"For sure. Still, it'll be an interesting addition to my portfolio and who knows where it might lead."

"You're the best. I'll have the shelter send over some kittens. Just don't adopt them all."

"I'll try not to. Especially any cute black ones."

"Coop's irresistible too." Vonnie grinned.

"I don't think that'll be as much of a problem."

"Famous last words, Becca."

\* \* \*

Vonnie was not going to be happy. Coop's slashed

## A Perfect Favour

cheek, from the high stick last night, was rapidly turning into a black eye. Which would not look good on the calendar.

“Maybe you can mask the shiner with make-up.” Kenny Jelinek ducked Cooper’s cuff to the back of his head. “Good thing the focus will be on your chest and abs, not your face.”

“The ladies will love the image of a battered hockey player and the cute kittens,” Logan Halliday offered. “Beauty and the beast.”

“You’re just jealous because she didn’t ask either of you to do the shoot.” Coop shoved his gear into his bag and zipped it closed.

“I’m already in September.” Kenny ran a comb through his wet hair.

“With the rookies,” Logan retorted.

“A rose amongst a bunch of thorns. At least I’m not battling it out with the other pretty, Irish-looking boy in March.”

“Like anyone will notice Mullroney with me on the page.” Logan struck a caricatured body-builder’s pose, flexing his muscles.

“Trust me, they’ll notice.” Paddy tossed his jock at Logan, who swore and kicked it aside.

“This body, this face and kittens too ...bam.” Coop gestured a mic drop, then slung his bag over his shoulder and strolled out of the locker room.

Some of his cockiness had subsided by the time he arrived at the photographer’s house, to be replaced by

## Anna Sugden

unfamiliar nervousness. Never having done anything like this before, he hoped he didn't screw it up. That wouldn't be the best way to get into management's good books.

*Man up, Johansen. It's a photo shoot, not a freaking shoot out.*

If the other guys had done okay, he could too, Coop reassured himself, as he headed to the front door and rang the bell.

Rebecca Emory wasn't what he'd expected.

He'd imagined her to be older. More bohemian. Instead of long, grey hair, she had a short, dark brown bob that framed her pretty face. Her forest green top, with pumpkins around the cuffs and waist, brought out emerald highlights in her hazel eyes. A slim, black skirt, black hose and shiny, black penny loafers emphasised her trim figure. The whimsy in her otherwise smart outfit appealed to him. As did the mismatched ear-rings — a Puritan's hat dangled from one ear, while a sheaf of corn hung from the other. She was clearly getting into the seasonal spirit for the shoot.

"Good, you're on time. I have a busy afternoon, so let's get to it." She turned and walked down the hall. "My studio's this way," she tossed over her shoulder.

Oh-kay. So the pretty brunette wasn't any happier about this job than he was. She hadn't even seemed to notice his black eye.

Coop followed her into a large room, with shuttered, floor-to-ceiling windows, whitewashed walls



## A Perfect Favour

and polished wood floors. A variety of powerful, photographer's lamps, some with yellow, plastic filters, helped create cosy lighting for the Thanksgiving scene she'd staged.

Cutlery and china gleamed and glassware glistened at each of the eight place settings on a linen-covered table, while an arrangement of candles, foliage and vegetables in autumnal colours down the centre gave a seasonal feel. As did the full, sumptuous feast — from turkey and trimmings to pies and sides -- laid out on the mahogany sideboard against the wall.

"Nice," he said. "Traditional, but not old-fashioned. Elegant, yet homey. Like it's waiting for the family to complete the picture."

Her head snapped up, surprise widening her hazel eyes. "That's exactly the feel I was going for."

Her warm smile turned her from pretty to beautiful, and drew attention to her mouth. Which, with a hint of gloss, looked as delicious as the festive spread.

His mouth watered.

She moistened her lips with her tongue.

He swallowed the temptation to let his own follow the same path. Yet, he couldn't shift his gaze from her face. He stepped closer. She didn't move away.

Strident mewls filled the air.

Rebecca turned, headed to her workstation on the other side of the room and started fiddling with the catch on a large, plastic carrier which sat on the floor.

Coop blinked. Lusting over the photographer, no

## Anna Sugden

matter how appealing, was not a smart move.

He cleared his throat. "My fellow models?"

"Yes. A trio. Around eight weeks old, they think. They're not sure because they were found in a cardboard box, next to a dumpster." Her expression became fierce. "People are cruel and heartless. I'd like to ..." she cut herself off. "Anyway, the lady from the shelter dropped them off just before you arrived."

"I know what I'd like to do to the bast... jackass who treated them like garbage."

"With the business end of a hockey stick, I hope."

"Definitely." He grinned.

Her answering smile hit him dead centre in the chest, with the force of a sniper's puck.

What was it with this woman? He'd known her for less time than a shift in a game, but she affected him more than any woman he'd dated in a long while. A shame that -- except for the brief moment before -- she didn't seem to feel the same way about him. Perhaps she had a thing about keeping business and pleasure separate. Then again, he didn't want to screw up this gig or sour his position with the suits. Maybe he'd see how the afternoon went and if she warmed up to him, he'd ask her out.

Decision made, he broadened his smile and asked, "How do you want me?"

\* \* \*

The x-rated response that flashed through Becca's mind was definitely not appropriate -- let alone for her

## A Perfect Favour

model at a photo shoot.

But Cooper's killer smile had sent tingles throughout her body. She could feel them in her toes, for crying out loud. Jeez, you'd think she'd never seen a good-looking man before.

To call Cooper good-looking was like calling a rattlesnake worrisome.

He could give any of the current, hot movie stars a run for their money. The combination of his warm, brown eyes, with to-die-for lashes, short, dark hair and chiselled jaw was killer. As for his body ... even fully clothed, she could tell he was tastier than the Thanksgiving spread she'd prepared. She didn't dare think about what he'd be like with his shirt off.

Becca looked down at the cat carrier and used her battle with the fiddly, spring-loaded catch to force her mind back to the job. And to come up with a suitable reply to his question. "Goodness, that's stiff."

Yeah, that worked ... not. Cheeks warming, she hoped he hadn't picked up on the unintentional double entendre. She didn't dare sneak a peek to see.

Relief filled her as the catch finally worked free and the kittens came scampering out.

The tabby bounded towards Cooper and began to climb his jeans with what she knew had to be needle-like claws. Yet the man didn't even wince. The tuxedo kitten, not to be outdone, raced towards Cooper's other leg and clambered upwards. The third kitten, a ginger and white, chased after his siblings. He skidded to a

## Anna Sugden

stop at Cooper's feet when he realised there wasn't another spare leg and spat his disapproval.

"Don't tell me -- you're Toulouse. Did Berlioz and Marie beat you to the punch?" Cooper picked up the little, hissing, bundle of fur, who soon realised he didn't need to complain anymore and curled up against his chest.

She was so not jealous of a kitten.

"The Aristocats?" That was the last reference she'd have expected from a hockey player.

"Yeah. I've watched that movie about a million times with my niece and nephew." In a surprisingly good baritone, he began singing, "everybody wants to be a cat."

Becca laughed. "I'd have expected O'Malley, The Alley Cat."

"I can sing that one too." But before he could launch into the words, he scrunched up his face. The other two kittens had decided to explore above his jeans and were climbing his white shirt. "Ouch. You little monkeys. Your claws are like lethal weapons."

He picked them off, one by one, and put them on the floor.

Side by side, she and Cooper watched the three tumble and chase each other for a few minutes.

Too aware of his presence and with the fresh scent of recently showered male teasing her nose, she said briskly, "We should get to work."

Becca walked over to her tilted, drafting desk and

## A Perfect Favour

showed him the photos originally planned for the calendar. They showed a shirtless Derrick in various casual poses, seated at a Thanksgiving table. A couple of kittens scrambled and played amongst the dishes.

“They want something like these. Luckily, I already had this set-up for another shoot, so we can use it. Obviously we have the kittens. So I guess all that’s left is for you to remove your top.”

Her attempt at sounding nonchalant came out huskier than she’d intended. Especially as Cooper had already figured out her instruction, so unbuttoned his shirt and pulled it off.

He might have done the slow, seductive reveal of a stripper from the effect it had on her. The sight of all that smooth skin and those nicely honed muscles made her heart pound slow and heavy. Funny how the shots of the previous Mr. November hadn’t caused the merest flicker in her pulse.

“All right?” he asked, jabbing his hands into the front pockets of his jeans, which tightened them further.

*Oh my, yes.* To prevent herself from actually saying those words out loud, she nodded.

“Even with this?” He indicated his black eye.

Strangely, she thought that added to his attractiveness, rather than detracting. He didn’t need to know that though. Cooper wasn’t as full of himself as she’d expected, but there was still time for him to revert to type.

“You’re a hockey player.” Becca shrugged. “Plus

## Anna Sugden

it'll be a nice contrast with the cute kittens. And I can always edit the photo to make it more subtle."

"Okay. So where do you want me?"

Unable to formulate a sensible, suitable answer, she pointed towards the head of the table.

"Like this?" Cooper lounged carelessly in the chair, resting his elbows on the wooden arms and looking more like the enticing hero of a historical romance novel than a hockey player.

"Perfect. Try to stay relaxed and act naturally with the kittens." Becca grabbed her DSLR and started shooting. "Pretend I'm not here."

"Not possible, but I'll do my best." Now, his voice was the husky one.

Thankfully, the kittens provided a distraction, so she didn't have to respond. Toulouse and his siblings made a beeline for Cooper's legs again and used them to access the table.

Even after only a few shots, she knew the pictures would be amazing. He and the kittens photographed well. It was a shame she couldn't use some of the shots for the Thanksgiving spread she had to produce.

Cooper also followed her instructions easily — one of the best sitters she'd had. The attitude she'd been dreading was nowhere in sight. Watching him interact with the tiny furballs tugged at her heart. His indulgent smile, as the three frolicked amongst the dishes and batted the decorations warmed her.

When she told him to turn towards her, so she

## A Perfect Favour

could get some 'to camera' shots, the impact was immediate. Through her lens, it looked like he was focusing on her as if she was the only person in the world that mattered.

Her disappointment that his intensity wasn't real took her aback. What was it with this guy, that he affected her so much?

"Damn it, Toulouse!" Cooper yelled, distracting her. "Marie!"

The tabby and the ginger had grown bored of the table and decided to explore Cooper's naked chest. She couldn't blame the kittens, but oh how that must sting. Being a tough guy, Cooper withstood it for a few more seconds, while she snapped off a few more shots, then he placed the little mischief-makers on the floor. The pair instantly began to climb up the tablecloth to join their tuxedo sibling.

All too soon, the shoot was over.

Trying to keep the reluctance from her voice, she said, "That'll do it. I think I have everything."

"That wasn't too bad -- needle-claws aside." He grabbed his shirt and put it on. As he buttoned it up, he asked, "Can I take a look?"

"Sure." She loaded the pictures to her computer. "Remember they're raw and will need cleaning up."

He came to stand beside her, looking over her shoulder at the screen. Close enough that she could feel the heat from his body and that enticing scent surrounded her again.

## Anna Sugden

*Get a grip! Focus!*

She clicked through the shots, lingering on the ones she thought might be the best. After a few minutes, they settled into an easy discussion about the pictures and her body settled down.

If she could get through the next few minutes without embarrassing herself, he'd be gone and she could get back to her other job. She'd probably never see him again.

Why didn't that thought make her happier?

\* \* \*

"These are fantastic."

Coop couldn't believe how great the supposedly rough photos were.

Rebecca was clearly really talented. Not that he'd thought she'd be just a pretty -- more than pretty, stunning -- face; Vonnie wouldn't have given her the job otherwise. But, he was impressed.

And he liked the lovely photographer. They'd definitely connected during the shoot. She also intrigued him. Not to mention how his body had continued to react to her. She was a fascinating package and he wanted to get to know her better. Much better.

Only, she seemed to have cooled towards him once the camera was off. He had to find a way to warm her up to him again, before asking her out. Perhaps start with the photos.

"Could I have copies of the pictures? Once you've finished with them, of course. My folks would get a real



## A Perfect Favour

kick out of them.” He gave her his best, winning smile.

“I don’t see why not. Give me your email and I’ll send them to you.” Becca tapped a pad of paper on her desk, sounding pleased.

He scrawled his details on the top page, then spotting a stack of business cards, plucked a few from the top. “Can I take some of these?”

“Uh sure.” She sounded a little uncertain.

To put her at ease, he said, “I’ll recommend you to anyone needing an amazing photographer.”

Her cheeks coloured. “I appreciate the plug, but my specialty is really food.”

“Yeah, but one thing could lead to another and help you get another big contract.” She’d told him about the importance of the Thanksgiving spread during the shoot.

“That’s true. Thanks.”

Her grateful smile gave him the confidence to ask, “Would you like to go out sometime?”

Her smile faded. “Oh, I don’t do that.”

He tried to cover his disappointment by saying lightly, “Don’t do what -- have a drink, eat dinner, catch a movie?”

“Well, of course I do those things, but not with a client.” As if to emphasise her point, she turned back to her computer and closed the files.

“Technically, I’m not your client -- the Ice Cats are. I’m only the not-so-pretty face you had to photograph for them.”

## Anna Sugden

“True.” She stretched out the word to have at least two syllables. “But you do play for them.”

Although she didn’t sound one hundred percent against going out with him, she was clearly throwing up barriers. Was it his job? Or was she just not that into him? Not to be arrogant, but she’d been giving off the ‘into him’ vibes all afternoon.

While he was figuring out his next move, there was a clatter and a splat.

In unison, their heads whipped round.

‘Toulouse’ was bounding about in the bowl of mashed potato, like a kid bouncing on a bed. ‘Berlioz’ was lapping up spilled red wine from a toppled wine glass. The wine had pooled and spilled down the pristine white tablecloth. And the little tabby, ‘Marie’ was padding down on the top of the turkey, ripping the crisp skin to shreds.

“Oh no!” Becca hurried over to the table, picked up the tabby and put her in the carrier, before reaching for the tuxedo. “I still had some shots to do for my Thanksgiving spread.”

“Do we need to get him to a vet? Red wine can’t be good for a kitten.” Coop lifted ‘Toulouse’ out of the mashed potato. The kitten hissed and spat in annoyance, then began washing himself.

“Don’t worry. It’s not red wine. It’s grape juice,” Rebecca reassured him.

Nonetheless, she held ‘Berlioz’ up to give him a quick check to see if he was suffering any ill-effects.

## A Perfect Favour

The little monkey licked her nose. "He's fine."

With the kittens firmly enclosed in the latched carrier, she turned to survey the mess. "I can fix most of this, but where will I get a cooked turkey in time?"

Coop didn't know the answer, but he thought he had a way to find out. And someone who owed him a favour. "Give me a couple of hours and I'll be back."

"You? How?" She didn't sound convinced, but there was a touch of hope in her voice.

"Don't worry about that. Clear up what you can and let me see what I can do."

He dashed out to his car. As he drove towards the Cats' office, he called Vonnie. When she answered, he put her on speaker and explained the problem.

"Call Ryan Grey." She reeled off a phone number, then realising he was in the car, said, "Hang tight. I'll get hold of him and see what he can do. In the meantime, get over to Grey's restaurant."

Coop pulled over, plugged the information into his GPS, then headed for the former Ice Cat's famous steakhouse on the banks of the Hudson, in Weehawken. Along the way, he cursed the crazy Jersey drivers; people didn't drive like this in the desert.

Thankfully, traffic was light and the journey didn't take long. The smartly dressed blonde on the reception desk was expecting him, because she led him straight through the restaurant to a door marked 'private'. Opening it, she instructed him to go to the big office at the end of the hall.

## Anna Sugden

Grey was waiting for him and greeted him warmly. Although they'd never played against each other -- Ryan's concussion issues had forced him to retire from the ice too early -- hockey was a small world and they'd met several times before.

"I've been meaning to check this place out since I joined the Cats," Coop said. "I hear great things about your steaks. Best in the tri-state area."

"We do our best." Grey inclined his head modestly. "Be glad to see you here any time."

"I'll make time soon, I promise." Hopefully, with Rebecca. "Did you have any luck?"

"I did. I made a few calls and one of my suppliers has a freshly roasted bird available." Grey handed him a yellow sticky note with an address on it. "He has it waiting for you."

"Thanks, man. I owe you one."

Grey waved off Coop's gratitude. "I know how tough running your own business can be. Especially when things suddenly go belly-up. Let me know how things work out. Maybe you can bring her with you. I could always use a good food photographer."

Even if she didn't want to go on a date, Rebecca would hardly turn down the opportunity to work with Grey. "I'll try to do that."

Coop kept reminding himself of the potential end-game, as he battled rush-hour traffic and wound his way through some of Newark's grimmer neighbourhoods to get to Grey's supplier. He hoped like hell the turkey

## A Perfect Favour

would be good enough for what Rebecca needed.

It wasn't. He couldn't believe he was worrying about how photogenic a roasted bird was, but the damn thing looked scrawny. More like a chicken on steroids than a plump, juicy turkey.

Using all his charm, Coop convinced the gruff poultry man to let him choose another bird. Offering to pay double the going rate helped grease the wheels. Finally, after wandering through the man's warehouse, and exploring his massive ovens and cooling racks, Coop had a suitable, if ridiculously expensive, turkey. The guy did throw in a Styrofoam carry-box.

On the upside, the traffic had eased a little for the journey back to Rebecca's house.

The even bigger upside was the delight in her face when she saw what he'd managed to get.

"That's perfect." She threw her arms around him. "However did you manage to find it?"

Savouring the feel of her against him, he demurred, "Vonnie helped with some useful contacts."

"Well, you both rock. I can't thank you enough."

The fact that she didn't seem in a hurry to end the hug, gave him the push to ask, "How about going out for dinner with me?"

Coop held his breath, waiting for her answer.

She tilted her head. "I'd like that."

Grinning like a loon, he said, "Remind me to thank Vonnie. She did us both the perfect favour."

# Anna Sugden

Welcome to the world of the New Jersey Ice Cats!

Books in the series:

[A Perfect Distraction](#)

[A Perfect Trade](#)

[A Perfect Catch](#)

[A Perfect Compromise](#)

[A Perfect Strategy](#)

[A Perfect Selection](#) (Anthology of short stories)

Short Stories:

[A Perfect Party](#)

A Perfect Lucky Charm

A Perfect Disguise

A Perfect Reunion

A Perfect Storm

A Perfect Bouquet

A Perfect Plan

A Perfect Picnic

A Perfect Contest

A Perfect Pumpkin

For more information, visit: [www.annasugden.com](http://www.annasugden.com)

## A Perfect Favour

### A Perfect Selection

Can you read just one?

A mouthwatering selection of six holiday-themed, bite-sized romances featuring players from the New Jersey Ice Cats.

Contains:

[A Perfect Party](#)

A Perfect Lucky Charm

A Perfect Disguise

A Perfect Reunion

A Perfect Storm

A Perfect Bouquet

### A Perfect Distraction

**A face-off—head vs. heart**

For Jake Badoletti, this year is all about his career. He has a rare second chance to make the most of being a pro hockey player, so no parties, no scandals. Too bad he's met a woman who could sideline those plans. Maggie Goodman is not his usual type—right down to being a single mom. Still, the sizzling connection with this gorgeous brunette can't be ignored.

With a little juggling and a lot of focus, Jake manages to have the game *and* Maggie. Then his performance on the ice suffers and a scandal erupts. Now he can't afford the distraction of Maggie...even if she is perfect for him.

# **Anna Sugden**

## **A Perfect Trade** **A win-win negotiation?**

Truman "Tru" Jelinek's life is pretty much off the rails. With his professional hockey career on thin ice, and his personal life falling apart, he's ready to implement some serious changes. Helping Jenny Martin—the only girl he's ever loved—make her dreams a reality is a good place to start.

There's just one problem: Jenny doesn't want his help. She barely wants to speak to him. But Tru is prepared to negotiate a deal that even Jenny can't refuse. As trading favors turns into sharing passion, he has to face the truth that when it comes to Jenny, the game is far from over.

## **A Perfect Catch** **He's the perfect catch...for now!**

When it comes to romance, Tracy Hayden is *not* looking for a rematch. She's had epic passion—and problems!—with professional hockey player Ike Jelinek. Brilliant on skates and magic in bed, his too-traditional-for-her views were like a bucket of ice water on their affair.

Then an injury takes Ike out of the game, and everything changes. Suddenly he needs her services-providing business—even though he once claimed it was their biggest problem. Tracy's determined to be professional, despite the sizzling attraction between them that won't go away. Maybe they need a second fling to fix that!



## **A Perfect Favour**

### **A Perfect Compromise Theirs is a game of give-and-take...**

Schoolteacher Issy Brandine has a plan to build a stable, secure future for herself. No settling for second-best. Anything more than a sultry Caribbean fling with hotshot hockey star Jean Baptiste Larocque isn't part of the plan. A New Jersey Ice Cat with the ultimate hockey trophy in his sights won't fit into her low-key lifestyle. Except a surprise pregnancy changes everything.

Issy knows her child deserves more than a part-time dad. With JB's eyes on the championship that will redeem his career, compromise is out of the question. But love—and the baby between them—might prove that nothing is impossible.

### **A Perfect Strategy Is there really life after hockey?**

If there's one thing Scotty Matthews knows, it's hockey. Unfortunately, the former New Jersey Ice Cats captain isn't proving successful at life after hockey. His wife's left him and he's lost his post-ice job as a media commentator. All he's got now is a big empty show house.

If there's one thing Sapphire Houlihan knows, it's that she never wants to be tied down to anyone or anything ever again. Unfortunately for her, a wonderful one-weekend distraction with Scotty turns into something much more complicated... Because he's a guy who wants way more than one weekend.



# A PERFECT FAVOUR

*Lights, Camera ... Turkey!*

Cooper 'Coop' Johansen doesn't expect his fresh start with his new team to entail being Mr. November for the Ice Cats' charity calendar. Food photographer Becca Emory's Thanksgiving shoot could win her a contract that will stabilise her business. But her best friend's in a jam and needs her to produce a calendar page for the Ice Cats asap. Combining the jobs should be a piece of cake. After all, how much trouble can a shirtless hockey player and three kittens be?

[www.AnnaSugden.com](http://www.AnnaSugden.com)

Romances that win your heart!



@annasugden



AnnaSugden.RomanceAuthor