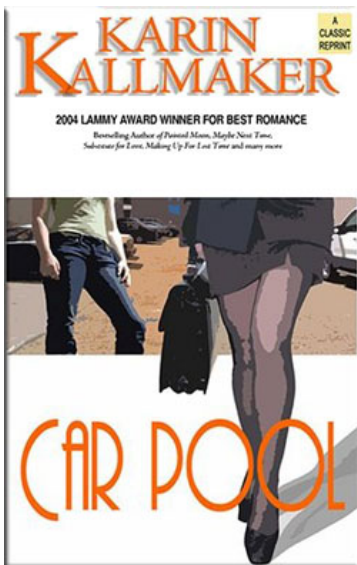


---

## Excerpt from CAR POOL



CAR POOL IS A LESBIAN ROMANCE BY KARIN KALLMAKER.

PRINT AND EXCLUSIVE EBOOK FROM:



KARIN'S BOOKS AT BELLA:  
[PAPERBACK](#)  
[EBOOK](#)

*COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL*  
*Uncorrected proof*

---

## FROM CHAPTER 7

Shay dropped limply into her chair, praying that no one had noticed her slipping in a few minutes late. "I barely made my shuttle," she gasped to Harold, who was already bent over his keyboard.

"Scott was just here. He left that mess on your desk."

"Damn."

"I told him you were in the bathroom."

"Thank you, sweet prince."

"Think nothing of it. Thanks to you, I'm in love." Harold leaned back in his chair and smiled at her.

Shay couldn't help herself. "So am I," she said, with chagrin.

"He's mine," Harold said in a conspiratorial whisper.

"Don't be disgusting. I wasn't talking about him."

"I see. Well, I did wonder."

"You don't think she could tell, do you?" That Anthea knew how strongly Shay felt was Shay's worst fear.

"You were not being very clear," Harold said. "You just hung on her every word."

"Oh."

"You could try being a little more direct, you know."

"I don't think so. I don't think I'm her type."

"Type? Like S/M? Leather?"

"Not everything is about what you do in bed," Shay said haughtily while parts below her waist called her a liar.

"Why not?" Harold shook his head. "If it doesn't work there, it's not going to work anywhere else."

"If it won't work anywhere else, what's the point of it working in bed?"

Harold stared at her. "You women are so strange." He lowered his voice. "What on earth is wrong with good sex?"

"Nothing, except if the sex is good then it seems like getting married is a logical next step and then you hate each other and break up."

Harold whispered, with a half smile, "Do you know what the majority of the Sentinel's women's ads are for? Therapy. Now I know why."

"Chauvinist," she hissed.

Harold smiled angelically. "Why do you think she thinks you're not her type?"

"She's rich. She's white. She's in the closet. She believes in personal emancipation, obviously, but hasn't thought about the rest of the world."

"So teach her."

"I don't think a relationship should be based on someone having to change for it to work. And she's ... not someone to play with. I think she's been hurt a lot."

"Well, the lady struck me as a survivor. Maybe she has got money and no idea how easy her skin has made life. But you like her so what else matters in the end?"

"Nothing, I guess. We're having dinner on Friday."

"She invited you?" Shay nodded. "Well then, there you are." Harold broke off to answer his phone.

Shay gave herself another moment to savor the fact that she was actually having dinner with Anthea. An official date at Anthea's dream of a house. Barbecuing on that wonderful deck. Then she opened her eyes and looked at what Scott had left. With a sigh, she picked up the thick stack of papers.

Harold hung up the phone and leaned across the cubicle to whisper in Shay's ear, "I hope she fucks

your brains out."

Shay gasped and dropped the stack of papers. "Crude, crude and cruder!" Harold just laughed and went back to work.

The papers were a mess, and it had nothing to do with dropping them on the floor. They had been her first draft of the report about the last series of well tests, including the lab data that showed well B-B-146 was approaching the hazardous range for xylene. Her report pointed this out and proposed a schedule of more frequent testing to prepare for remediation, if necessary.

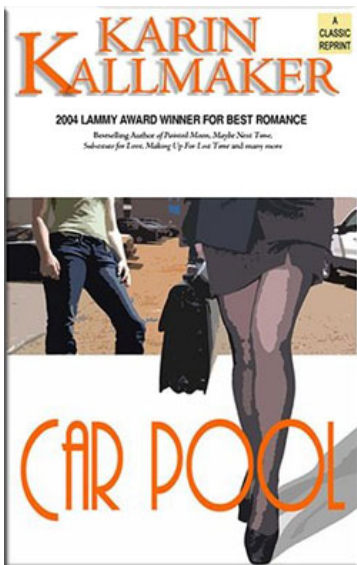
Scott had butchered it. The pages were covered with edits. It would take her all day to transcribe them for the word processors. She sighed, wanting to throw it in the wastebasket. But she was more sure than ever that the lab data was right, so she wasn't going to let it go and assume that the data had been a mistake just because the report would be easier to write.

She worked through lunch again, munching her peanut butter and jelly sandwich in near despair. The edits were blatantly attempting to confuse the issues, converting the succinct style she had learned from her father to an obtuse bureaucratic mess that employed double negatives and lots of unclear antecedents. Whole paragraphs were constructed of a single sentence with clause after clause of obfuscation. And then, to top it off, he'd eliminated the entire section

she'd written on remediating the xylene area and removed all mention of the latest well sample. It still showed up in the summary table in Appendix F, but that was it. The longer she worked on it, the angrier she became.

She was not going to let the matter drop. She was not going to give it up. And if they fired her she'd take her copy and the results to the Regional Water Quality Board herself. And she'd go to the media and borrow money from Anthea to live. And then she'd sue.

She took a break, and when she caught a glimpse of herself in the bathroom mirror she smiled at the mulish expression on her face and the way her jaw was jutting forward. Then she realized she looked exactly like her father did when he was preparing for a run-in with management. No, she was not going to let it go.



CAR POOL IS A LESBIAN ROMANCE BY KARIN KALLMAKER.

PRINT AND EXCLUSIVE EBOOK FROM:



KARIN'S BOOKS AT BELLA:  
[PAPERBACK](#)  
[EBOOK](#)

*COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL*  
*Uncorrected proof*

---