



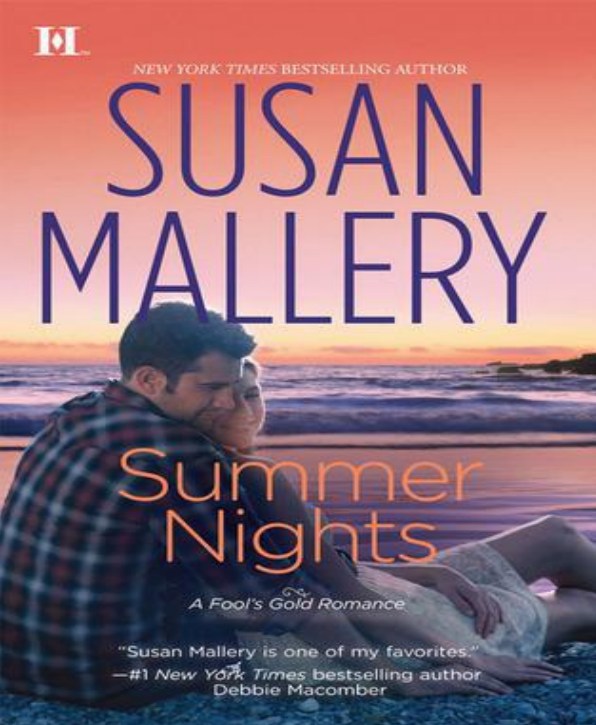
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# SUSAN MALLERY

## Summer Nights

*A Fool's Gold Romance*

"Susan Mallery is one of my favorites."  
—#1 *New York Times* bestselling author  
Debbie Macomber



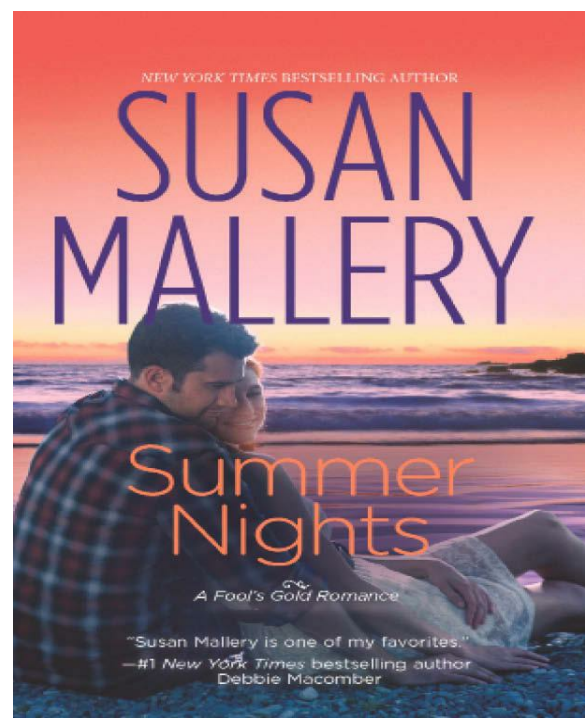
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New York Times

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*bestselling author  
Susan Mallery's  
newest Fool's Gold  
story proves that wild  
hearts cannot be  
tamed...*

Horse whisperer Shane Stryker is done with passion. This time around, he's determined to meet someone who will be content with

the quiet life of a rancher's wife.

And the fiery, pint-size redhead who dazzles him at the local bar definitely does not fit the bill.

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Small-town librarian Annabelle Weiss has always seen herself as more of a sweetheart than a siren, so she can't understand why Shane keeps pushing her away. Shane has formed the totally wrong impression of her but only he can help her with a special event for the next Fool's Gold festival. And maybe while

he's at it, she can convince him to  
teach her a few things about kissing  
on hot summer nights, too—some  
lessons, a girl shouldn't learn from  
reading a book!

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*Praise for* New York

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Times *bestselling author*

*Susan Mallery*

“If you want a story that will both  
tug on your heartstrings and tickle  
your funny bone, Mallery is the  
author for you!”

—*RT Book Reviews on Only His*

“When it comes to heartfelt  
contemporary romance, Mallery is  
in a class by herself.”

“An adorable, outspoken heroine and an intense hero...set the sparks flying in Mallery’s latest lively, comic and touching family-centered story.”

—*Library Journal on Only Yours*

“Mallery...excels at creating varied, well-developed characters and an emotion-packed story gently infused with her trademark wit and humor.” One of the Top 10 Romances of 2011!

“Mallery’s prose is luscious and provocative.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Susan Mallery’s gift for writing humor and tenderness make all her books true gems.”

—*RT Book Reviews*

“Romance novels don’t get much better than Mallery’s expert blend of emotional nuance, humor and superb storytelling.”





**Also available from Susan  
Mallery and Harlequin HQN**

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*Summer Days*

*Only His*

*Only Yours*

*Only Mine*

*Finding Perfect*

*Almost Perfect*

*Chasing Perfect*

*Hot on Her Heels*

*Straight from the Hip*

*Lip Service*

*Under Her Skin*

*Sweet Trouble*

*Sweet Spot*

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*Sweet Talk*

*Accidentally Yours*

*Tempting*

*Sizzling*

*Irresistible*

*Delicious*

*Falling for Gracie*

*Someone Like You*

**Watch for the next Fool's Gold  
book, coming soon!**

*All Summer Long*

**Susan Mallery**

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*Summer Nights*



My thanks to all the librarians  
who have supported me, loved my  
books and talked about them  
endlessly. So many of you have  
shared that just once you'd like to  
read about a librarian who is fun,  
smart and sexy—without the  
buttoned-up cardigan and  
unflattering hair. Annabelle is my  
gift to you.  
I hope you adore her as much as I  
do.

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# *CHAPTER ONE*

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SHANE STRYKER WAS DETERMINED enough to never walk away from a fight and smart enough to know when he'd been beat. The beautiful redhead dancing on the bar might be everything he wanted, but pursuing her would be the worst decision he could make.

Her eyes were closed, her long, wavy hair swayed in rhythm with

her body. The sensual beat of the music hit Shane square in the gut. He shook his head. Okay, it hit him lower than that, but he ignored it and the draw he felt. Women who danced on bars were trouble. Exciting, tempting, but not for him. Not anymore.

He might not know her, but he knew the type. Attention-seeking. Deadly—at least for a guy who assumed marriage meant commitment and monogamy. Women like the one on the bar

needed to be wanted by every man  
in the room.

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Slowly, regretfully, he turned away from the woman and headed for the exit. He'd come into town for a beer and a burger. He'd thought he could catch the game, maybe hang with the guys. What he'd found instead was a barefoot goddess who made a man want to forget all his hopes and dreams in exchange for a single smile. His dreams were worth more, he reminded himself, glancing over his

shoulder one last time before  
stepping out into the warm summer  
night.

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\* \* \*

ANNABELLE WEISS OPENED her eyes.

“It’s easy.”

“Uh-huh.” Her friend Charlie  
Dixon put down her beer and shook  
her head. “No.”

Annabelle climbed off the bar  
and put her hands on her hips. It  
was her attempt to look  
intimidating. Kind of a feeble

gesture when she considered the fact that Charlie was a good eight or ten inches taller and had muscles Annabelle didn't want to know existed.

---

She was about to make her case, maybe even throw in a line that it was for the children, when the mostly female crowd broke into spontaneous applause.

“Great dance,” someone called.

Annabelle spun in a circle. “Thank you,” she called. “I’ll be here all week.” She looked back at

her friend. "You have to."

"I'm pretty sure I don't."

---

Annabelle turned to Heidi Simpson. "You talk to her."

Heidi, a pretty blonde who had recently gotten engaged, glanced up from studying her diamond ring.

"What? Oh, sorry. I was busy."

"Thinking about Rafe," Charlie grumbled. "We know. He's wonderful, you're happy. It's getting annoying."

Heidi laughed. "Now who's cynical?"

“It’s not news. I’ve always been cynical.” Charlie grabbed her beer and led the way back to their table. The one they’d abandoned when Annabelle had offered to show them both the dance of the happy virgin.

When they were seated, Annabelle turned to Charlie. “Look, I need to raise money for my bookmobile. Being in the town festival is the best way for that to happen. It’s a ride on a horse. You know how to ride. You even own a horse.”

Charlie's blue eyes narrowed.

"I'm not dancing on a horse."

---

"You don't have to. The horse dances. That's why it's called the Dance of the Horse."

"Mason is not a horse who dances."

Heidi leaned forward.

"Annabelle, this is your bookmobile project. You're the one who has the passion. Why don't you do the dance?"

"I don't know how to ride."

"You could learn. Shane could



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