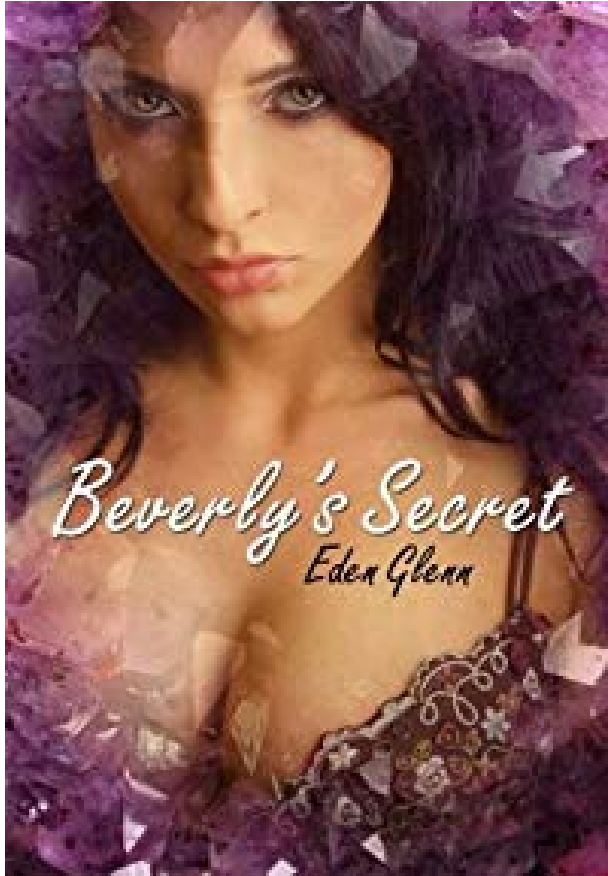


Beverly's Secret



Pages:	24
Published:	April 15th 2013 by Rebel Ink Press, LLC
ASIN	B00CDBVKDA
Genre:	Adult Fiction
Author:	Eden Glenn
Goodreads Rating:	3.73
Language	English

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There, same routine different day except the sloppiness of her clothes in the middle of the floor. She could leave them there all night, an inelegant rug to cover the hideous cream colored linoleum floor. Bev knew she couldn't do it, even with the little voice in her head daring her to. With a huff and a groan at bending down for the billionth time of the day, she snatched them up and tossed them into the hamper in the corner. Wait! An odd thud pulled her after the clothes. She dug through until she came to her work apron. The weight seemed off. Had she left something in her pocket? She fished around in the black cloth and her fingers connected with cold stone. "Damn it!" A tingle shook the back of her knees at the discovery of the quartz necklace hidden in the folds of fabric. If she believed rumors the stone had magical properties. Amethyst, historically the gem of love. Beverly didn't go for jewelry much. Yet, the necklace was a lovely piece. The brass chain was delicate yet substantial enough to support the polished oval slab of amethyst. The center pattern of flame captured her interest. She turned it in the light watching how the pattern changed as the light reflected off the mirror and hit the bauble. A bauble that was supposed to be in a display case at the store, not her pocket.