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Ménage Amour



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TABLE FOR THREE

Missy Martine

MENAGE AMOUR



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A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK

IMPRINT: Ménage Amour

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E-book ISBN: 1-60601-548-6

First E-book Publication: November 2009

Cover design by Jinger Heaston

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PUBLISHER

Siren Publishing, Inc.

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my loving husband.
He not only believes in me, he has taught me to believe in myself.

TABLE FOR THREE

MISSY MARTINE

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Chapter 1

Katylyn slowly backed away as Damon stalked toward her. His eyes burned with a passion that frightened her. Slowly, step-by-step, she retreated until she felt the cold wall against her back. Damon did not stop his advance until their bodies pressed together from chest to knees. Holding her shocked gaze, he anchored both her wrists above her head with one of his hands and slowly ground his full erection against her stomach.

“Please,” she cried, not really knowing if she begged for him to stop or to continue. Slowly, he lowered his head and buried his face in the bend of her neck, deeply inhaling her aroused feminine scent.

Katylyn gasped as he closed his teeth over her earlobe, nipping lightly and then soothing the area with a swipe of his hot tongue.

Damon became intoxicated from the little mewling sounds coming from this beautiful, sexy woman. Trailing his tongue up her neck, he nipped her chin lightly causing her to gasp. He quickly took advantage of her parted lips and drove his tongue firmly into her sweet depths. At the same time, his free hand traveled up the inside of her thigh, not stopping until his fingers touched bare, aroused flesh. She had not worn panties with her gown. Damon groaned deep in his chest when his fingers slid slickly into her dripping, bare pussy. His

searching fingers probed gently as he searched for the center of her pleasure.

Katylyn gasped again and tried to close her thighs tightly, but Damon pushed his thigh between her legs to keep her open for his exploration. Slowly, he closed his palm over her wet heat and squeezed lightly, forcing a moan from deep in her throat. Raising his lips from hers, he stared intensely into her glazed eyes as he slowly trailed a finger up her slit, spreading her cream, and then circled her clit with his thumb. Rapidly flicking back and forth over her swollen clit, Damon slipped a finger deep into her body and whispered, "Come for me, Katylyn, come for me now."

Cass opened her eyes and shut off the tape playing in the car stereo. She had pulled up and parked a few minutes ago, but couldn't stop listening to her newest erotic novel. Definitely a mistake to listen to the book while she drove, it had made her horny as hell, and it would be hours before she could make use of her favorite vibrator.

As her breathing gradually slowed, she looked around at the little town and the people walking around the sidewalks. Some looked at her with curiosity, though in a non-threatening way. They probably didn't see many tourists in this out-of-the-way corner of Oregon. She couldn't blame them for being curious about a stranger in town, especially one who pulled up and just sat in her car with her eyes closed. She sometimes got lost in her books, with the rest of the world just fading away.

Sometimes the dark memories of her own life threatened to overwhelm her. Listening to one of the books on tape and fantasizing that she could inspire such passion in a man helped her through the lonely nights. She didn't kid herself, though. She knew fantasy from reality. She would never be able to inspire that type of reaction in any man. She accepted the truth about herself long ago, and now she would concentrate all her energies on making a new home for herself in this small town, away from all the things that brought the dark memories to the light.

For the past two years, Cass felt like a virtual prisoner in her tiny apartment, afraid to go out for fear of running into someone from Eric's family. She earned a living doing data entry from home while everything she could possibly need was delivered directly to her door. Then, out of the blue, Mr. Oliver Barton III, Attorney at Law contacted her. His news would change her life completely.

Smiling slightly, she thought back to her first meeting with the friendly Mr. Barton. It hadn't been easy to arrange. He told her that he spent almost a year, with the help of a private detective, tracking her down. Cass had been very careful and, with the help of a close friend, had managed to hide her whereabouts quite well.

Initially, she hadn't believed anything he told her, convinced instead that Eric's family, or maybe Eric himself, had hired him to find her. She received several letters from Mr. Barton through her post office box before her neighbor and close friend, Becky Rivers, convinced her to give him a call. Actually, Becky made the original calls for her from another small town where her job took her, so they could not be traced back to Cass.

Cass and Becky discovered that Mr. Barton represented the late August Laughlin from Mountain Vista, Oregon. Becky convinced Cass to set up a meeting with the persistent attorney, even though Cass believed it to be a mistake. She never heard of Mr. August Laughlin or Mountain Vista, Oregon. He couldn't possibly be a relative of hers. She grew up in foster homes and had no relatives that she knew of. But Mr. Barton came prepared with plenty of documentation to back up his position, and both women left the meeting believing that Cass had an uncle she never got the chance to know.

Oliver Barton III had calmly explained to Cass and Becky that August Laughlin had been the only brother of Cass's mother. He passed away a little more than a year ago with no other surviving relatives, and he named Cass as the only beneficiary of his estate. It wasn't much of an estate. It consisted of a small, mortgage-free house

in Mountain Vista, Oregon and a modest bank account. Apparently, he also wanted to share some thoughts with Cass, so he also left her a letter that would be given to her upon her arrival in Mountain Vista.

The elderly man had been cunning in making sure she would have to come to Oregon to settle his affairs. The conditions of the will forbade the selling of the property unless she made a personal visit to inspect it. Mr. Barton said he thought that Gus, as his friends called him, believed she would never want to leave the area if she just came and saw it once.

At the time, Cass just couldn't take it all in. She'd just been notified by the State that her ex-husband's jail sentence would be ending in a little more than a week. He'd been arrested after losing his temper and beating Cass in their front yard. Cass would never have had the courage to have him arrested, but a neighbor witnessed the assault and phoned the police. She would forever be grateful for that neighbor as his actions ultimately set her free.

With everything else going on in her life, she couldn't give Mr. Barton an answer right away. She assured him that she would think it over carefully and get back to him within a couple of weeks. She remembered his sad smile of acceptance and his promise to wait for her call back in Oregon. Cass could tell by his voice that he believed she would turn down his offer but knew he couldn't do anything about it.

Now, six weeks later, she could hardly believe she made the long drive to Mountain View. When she called Mr. Barton to tell him her decision to come and at least look over the property, he seemed thrilled. He told her what a good friend her uncle Gus had been to him and how pleased Gus would have been to know she cared enough to come.

Feeling more relaxed, Cass once again looked around the small town of Mountain View. Right then, she made the decision to feel positive about this move instead of apprehensive. About as far from

her problems as a person could physically get, she determined not to live her life in fear or misery anymore.

With that comforting thought, she reached into her purse and pulled out the card Mr. Barton gave her. His office address was 222 Main Street. Cass decided to walk down the block to the attorney's office. She'd been constantly driving for a few days, and it would feel good to stretch her legs. She also wanted to take the opportunity to look around the town that would be her new home. Removing her sunglasses and grabbing her purse, Cass got out of the truck, carefully locked the doors, and started down the street.

Spaced about every three stores, there were black wrought iron benches where people sat and passed the time. Spaced intermittently, large, square, concrete flower boxes with beautiful, colorful, blooming Mums brightened the area. The streetlights showcased hanging baskets with all different kinds of flowering plants and vines. Everything here looked so clean and cared for. It looked like the kind of place where nothing bad could ever happen.

It didn't take Cass long to reach her destination. She started toward the attorney's office when suddenly a tingling feeling shot along the back of her neck, and she felt like she was being watched. Turning quickly to look around, Cass didn't see anything unusual. She continued to observe the town's activities for a few moments but didn't see anyone even looking at her.

Rubbing her hand along the back of her neck where her skin still tingled, Cass decided that it was just nerves and started moving toward the office door. As she turned around, she focused on the large glass window on one side of the door leading into Carlisle Hardware. There she caught sight of the penetrating gaze of the sexiest man she ever saw working on the display in the window.

Cass swallowed hard, and felt her face flush when she realized his heated look was aimed directly at her. He looked so handsome and sexy standing there. Cass couldn't remember the last time she considered anyone sexy. The part of her that could feel such things

died a long time ago, and she had no interest in resurrecting it. She knew all too well that she didn't have what it took to satisfy a man. She learned the hard way, and she had no wish to be hurt or humiliated any more in her life. This man definitely looked like a heartache just waiting to happen.

Although she could not tell his height, he looked huge standing in the window. He had short, neatly trimmed, brown hair and what appeared to be dark eyes. Cass thought he looked quite young standing there, gazing at her. He dressed in a pair of skin-tight jeans that molded every inch of his lower body making it easy to spot the bulge in the front of his pants, and a t-shirt stretched across his massive chest and broad shoulders. As Cass slowly drew her gaze down his body, she felt her nipples tighten and throb and a faint feeling of moisture beginning to gather between her legs.

Closing her eyes briefly, she considered her body's responses. In the past fifteen years, she only had feelings of desire when she read one of her erotic romance books. During that time, she never found herself responding to any man physically.

Opening her eyes, she took one more look at his tight jeans, then her eyes wandered back up to his face. He smiled openly at her and looked very amused. He seemed to know she had been checking him out. Her breath caught in her throat as he took one step down and turned toward the door, as if to come outside where Cass stood watching him. Feeling her face flush even more, she quickly walked over to the door marked 222, opened it, and rushed inside. Closing the door forcefully, Cass winced as she startled the attorney's receptionist.

"Can I help you?" The young woman visibly recovered her composure and spoke quietly to Cass

"Yes, I'm here to see Mr. Barton. He's expecting me."

"I don't have any appointments scheduled for Mr. Barton this morning."

"I couldn't give him an exact time of arrival. I drove in from out of state and didn't have any idea of how long it would take me to get here." Seeing the young woman frown, Cass hastened to add, "Oh, I'm sorry, my name is Cassandra Abernathy."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Barton is out right now, but I do expect him back soon. You can take a seat and wait if you like, or I can take a message for him." The young woman spoke all the right words, but she seemed very distracted and annoyed at the unexpected interruption.

"Thanks. I think I'll just sit and wait for him if it's all right. It's important that I speak with him today."

"Suit yourself. Can I get you anything? Coffee? Pop?" As she asked the question, the young woman went back to filing her nails, clearly showing her disinterest. "No thanks, I'm fine." Cass politely declined and sat down in one of the chairs to wait.

Taking a deep breath, trying to relax, she laughed to herself and decided she overreacted to the man in the window. He couldn't have been coming out to talk to her. With his obvious youth he would be more likely to be attracted to the beautiful, young blonde sitting behind the desk here in this office. She looked to be in her twenties, with shoulder-length blonde hair. She had a youthful complexion, even with all the heavy makeup. There were long, tapered, bright red nails at the ends of her hands, and she seemed obsessed with filing them right now. She dressed very chicly, perhaps showing more cleavage than appropriate in an office environment, but people had different ideas of proper and improper. All in all, she made quite an attractive picture.

Cass didn't consider herself ugly, but she didn't kid herself, either. She would never be called a beautiful woman. Her ex-husband never let her forget she had no sex appeal, not once in their twenty-three years of marriage. At the age of forty-three, Cass accepted herself and had no illusions about being attractive to the opposite sex. Her ex-husband pounded it into her head, mentally and physically. She would never be able to satisfy any man sexually.

She no longer cared about that part of her life, though. She felt content and didn't want a man in her life in any capacity. Cass worked hard to convince herself that she enjoyed being alone and that she felt safer that way.

While waiting for Mr. Barton, Cass compared herself to the attractive receptionist. At approximately five-and-a-half feet tall and one hundred forty pounds, Cass considered herself "chubby." Her size sixteen body supported her 36C breasts with a defined waist, wide hips, and a well-rounded ass. Never one to follow fashion or dress to call attention to herself, she wore a loose-fitting pair of jeans and a pink tank top covered by a pink print, button-up blouse. All her clothes were like this, loose fitting and never clingy. She always dressed to cover up what she considered to be a flawed body. Her dark brown hair, with just a few touches of gray, fell down past her shoulders. Having her hair long made her feel silly at times, like she tried to look younger than her years, but she couldn't bring herself to cut it because it helped to hide her secrets. Unconsciously, her hand went to the scar along the side of her neck.

Taking another deep breath, Cass forced herself to relax. Picking up a magazine from the table in front of her, she sat back and began to read about the scandals of rock stars while she waited to talk to her uncle's attorney.

* * * *

Matthew Carlisle slowly arranged sale merchandise in the main window display of Carlisle Hardware, the store he jointly owned with his twin brother, David. Just thinking about David brought a frown to his face. He knew David had gone through a rough time with his divorce, but it had been more than a year since it finalized. He needed to put it behind him now and get on with his life. Matt, as his friends called him, knew exactly how he felt. Not just because of their

special, close bond as brothers, but because he had gone through his own painful divorce just two years ago.

Sighing, he realized they had nobody to blame but themselves for the mess their lives were in. They both knew they never should have married. There had always been an unusual connection between the identical twin brothers. They seemed to share the same feelings for as long back as Matt had memories.

David often said that he thought they shared the same soul being so attuned to one another. He always believed he and Matt would someday fall in love together and share their woman, just like they had shared so many dates while still in school.

Matt had enjoyed those times, too, but thought he wanted something more conventional when it came to a wife and family. Besides, finding a woman willing to be shared by the two brothers became problematic. The women eagerly agreed to be part of that arrangement in order to fulfill their fantasy. Unfortunately, they weren't looking to make it a permanent lifestyle.

Wanting so desperately to have a family of his own, Matt had decided the brothers needed to pull in different directions and find separate wives. With that in mind, Matt had briefly dated and then married Clarice Walker.

He had been fond of Clarice, with a great deal of respect for her, but he could admit now that he never really loved her. During the short time they dated, Matt became aware that she acted very nervously around David. She would never say why she felt that way, but he always thought the rumors of their sharing lifestyle fueled her discomfort.

He believed she feared they would try to force her to be with both men. He decided to ignore her fears in hopes they would disappear after the wedding and she saw he only wanted her for himself.

To make her more comfortable, he had almost completely cut himself off from David, something he believed his brother had never

really forgiven him for. It had all been in vain, though. Nothing he did ever made her fears disappear.

Matt had known his marriage was hard on David since he could sense his emotions as well as his own, and he knew that David could sense his unhappiness as well. It had gotten so bad in the first few months of his marriage that David moved out of their family home and rented a tiny apartment for himself. The move made Clarice happy, but hurt Matt terribly. He felt like he ran his own brother out of their home. He and David had never lived apart, and he missed the closeness they shared.

Matt and Clarice had been married a year when David ran off and eloped with Esther Wright. Nothing had ever shocked Matt more than when he got the phone call telling him that they had eloped. He felt he drove David to do this, cutting him out of so much of his life. He could sense that David didn't love the younger woman, but desperately yearned for a sense of family himself. When he confronted David about his reasons for his marriage, David had become furious. He'd accused Matt of not wanting him to be happy. Matt pulled back immediately and tried to make Esther feel welcome in the family. He would have done anything to get closer to his brother again. David's divorce cost dearly because Esther believed he'd used her, and he felt guilty because he couldn't say she was wrong. He ended up giving her everything she wanted, and it cost him a pretty penny.

Now, with the holiday season approaching, Matt needed David's ass at the store helping out and shouldering some of the responsibility. He wanted David to realize he couldn't get along without their close relationship. Both of them needed to be truly happy in their lives again.

With an effort, Matt brought his thoughts back to the present. He knew David still believed there was a woman out there meant for the two of them. Someone who would love them equally. Maybe a woman did exist out there somewhere who would be the perfect

match for both of them, and maybe there wasn't. Either way, he would never turn his back on David again.

Glancing toward the cash register, Matt spotted Demon and Angel curled up together asleep on the blanket he kept on the floor behind the counter for them. Those two very large mutt dogs had become members of their family after he and David had rescued them when they fell down a well on their property about two years ago. Demon earned his name by always being the one causing trouble. Angel would just sit there looking all innocent while Demon led the way. The dogs grew to be huge, and at first glance, appeared to be quite ferocious and could be very intimidating.

In reality, they were pussycats, afraid of their own shadows. The only danger anybody needed to fear was being licked to death by the exuberant pups.

Smiling, Matt shook his head and turned back to his window display, determined to finish it before the end of the day. As he turned around, he glanced outside and froze. Right in front of the window stood a beautiful woman he had never seen before. In a really small town like Mountain Vista that was saying a lot since he knew every person in the area. They got next to no tourists coming through the small town, so he wondered what brought her to their town and who she might be visiting. God, her beauty took his breath away. He didn't remember the last time he had a physical reaction to a woman upon first sight, but this woman called out to him.

From where he stood in the window, she looked like she would be very short next to his six-foot, three-inch frame. She had long, wavy brown hair that fell past her shoulders. Smiling, he watched it lightly blowing in the wind as she stood there. His neglected libido had his overactive imagination envisioning that silky-looking hair fanned out over a pillow while he and David pleased her body. Envisioning the three of them together made his cock twitch, and he suddenly took notice of his too tight jeans.

He couldn't see the color of her eyes, but they looked dark from his observation point in the window. Her softly rounded face had rich, full, kissable lips that made his mouth water. He could just picture them sliding up and down his hard shaft. Slowly, he reached out his tongue and licked his own lips.

The clothing she wore was too loose for him to see the details of her body, but nothing could hide her large breasts. What he wouldn't give to know the color of her nipples. She had the kind of figure he longed for in a woman, not stick thin, but healthy, rounded curves that he wouldn't be afraid to squeeze.

He tended to be a very physical lover, and since he and David usually shared, they didn't want to worry about breaking some poor girl's ribs or worse. But this woman, she looked just about perfect to him, and he couldn't help wondering how David would react to her.

Matt watched the beautiful stranger look up and down the street. She looked puzzled for a moment and then shrugged her shoulders and started turning around. As she turned, he knew the moment she spotted him in the window. She stopped as he caught her gaze.

She stared right back at him with her mouth dropping open slightly. As he watched, her gaze traveled down over his body, from his head down to his feet, and then back. She took so much time looking him over that his jeans began to bulge in the front. He wasn't sure if she could see his erection or not, but he could see the flush that spread over her face and neck.

He briefly wondered if the blush traveled farther down her body, and that thought brought a wide smile to his face. No way would he let this opportunity escape him. He turned quickly and stepped down from the window to head outside to talk to the lovely lady.

By the time he rounded the corner to go outside, the sidewalk was empty. Incredulous, he looked up and down the street trying to spot her.

Where the hell could she have disappeared to so quickly? The closest place she might have gone would have been Oliver's office, but why would a stranger be visiting the local attorney?

He started to go check next door when he suddenly remembered Serena. Ugh! Oliver's receptionist represented trouble, trouble he and David did not need or want.

Being fairly young, in her early twenties to their early thirties, Serena's age wasn't the only thing that bothered them. She knew the rumors about their sharing women and made no bones about wanting to experience it for herself. She constantly threw herself at them, wearing skimpy clothes and rubbing her body against them whenever she had the chance. Painfully thin, they could count her ribs just by looking.

Matt knew that David felt the same way and had no desire to encourage her, either. Nope, as much as he wanted to meet the sexy woman from the sidewalk, he wouldn't set foot in that office while Serena worked.

Too bad, really, he hadn't had sex, or even the beginnings of an erection, in quite some time. Looking down at the bulge behind his zipper, he sighed. He hadn't had to jack off in quite a while, either, but it looked like he would have to get up close and personal with his hand in the very near future.

Well, one good thing, David would pick up on his emotions and maybe get his ass down here to check things out. Smiling, he went back in to make a discrete visit to the men's room before he finished dressing the window.

Chapter 2

Cass finished her third magazine when the door opened and in walked Oliver Barton III. She took a moment to look over the small man. He appeared terribly skinny and short for a man, only a couple of inches taller than Cass. He had a full head of gray hair and wore glasses that constantly slid down his nose. Dressed in an ill-fitting suit, he really didn't look very formidable for an attorney. His voice seemed to be a major contradiction to his appearance. Deep and somewhat mesmerizing, she could easily envision him breaking witnesses on the stand. Not even glancing toward the visitor's chairs, he stopped in front of the young receptionist. "Serena, don't you have anything better to do than file your nails?"

Serena looked momentarily angry and then pointed her file in Cass's direction. "You have a visitor." To Cass, the young woman's tone conveyed disrespect, but again, it wasn't any of her business.

Oliver Barton immediately spun around and spotted Cass sitting in the corner chair. A genuine smile came over his face.

"Ms. Abernathy, I'm so pleased to see you made it safely. Won't you come into my office? And by the way, welcome to Mountain Vista."

His cheerful, sincere greeting made it impossible to respond any other way, so Cass smiled back at him. "Thank you, but please, call me Cass."

"All right, Cass, and I'm Oliver." He gestured toward the young receptionist. "And this young lady is my secretary, Serena Dammler."

Cass nodded at the young woman who promptly went back to filing her nails.

“Would you like some refreshments, Cass? I can send Serena to fetch some coffee or tea with some pastries. I know you’ve driven a long way, so you must be hungry.”

Cass almost laughed when she noticed the horrified look on Serena’s face at the thought of “fetching refreshments,” and wickedly considered asking for something. But it was a fleeting thought. No sense in making enemies before she even unpacked a suitcase.

“No thanks, Oliver. I snacked so much in the car, I couldn’t possibly hold anything else right now.” Out of the corner of her eye, she spotted Serena eyeing her up and down with a look of disgust on her face that she easily interpreted. One look at Cass, and she had only seen a fat, ugly, old woman.

Oliver held his office door open and motioned for Cass to go in first. She jumped and moved quickly away when she felt his hand at the small of her back. He pointed her to the chair in front of his desk and shut the door. Smiling, he went around and sat down in his own chair. “I’m so glad that you made the decision to accept Gus’s estate, and I know that he’d have been equally delighted.”

“I get the impression that you knew my uncle quite well, Oliver.”

“Yes, I did. Along with being his attorney, I was his friend for the last twenty years of his life.”

“Can you, or maybe I should say, will you tell me about him?”

“Anything you want to know, I’ll happily tell you. He so wanted to be a part of your life, Cass.”

Cass’s eyebrows rose up into her bangs. She looked at Oliver, skeptical and unbelieving.

Seeing her expression, Oliver sighed. “I’m telling you the truth, Cass. He loved his sister, your mother, very much. It broke his heart when she gave you up to the state. He wanted to take and raise you himself, so you’d be with family that really loved and cared about you.” Oliver looked down at his hands folded on his desktop. “However, your mother adamantly refused his request for custody.

She harbored strong feelings about a gay man raising a child, especially her child.

Oliver raised his eyes back to meet Cass's gaze. "Gus thought that she wanted to love him, but he believed that her need to stay on her father's good side outweighed that love. Your grandfather hadn't been able to stand the supposed shame of having a gay son. He kicked him out and completely cut him out of his life. After that, your mother would occasionally sneak off to meet with him, but she was always afraid their father would find out about the visits. Gus told me she feared being cut off from the family and didn't want to share his fate.

"He was older than your mother by ten years and could have adopted you if she would have agreed. He thought she refused because she was afraid of what her father would do if he discovered that she'd disobeyed him."

Frustrated at everything she was hearing, Cass ran her fingers through her hair. "That's all well and good, and maybe even true, but what about later? After I grew up and left the foster care system. Why didn't he contact me then to get to know me?" Cass didn't realize how her voice revealed her hurt and anger when she spoke.

"Being a child in the foster system made it impossible for him to track you. Your mother never willingly terminated her parental rights, so you had to remain a foster child, not eligible for adoption. The records on foster children are sealed to the public and carefully guarded for the child's protection. Without a lot of money for legal help, he couldn't navigate the legal system.

"After Gus and I became friends, and he told me his family history, I searched for you for him. Even then it took my investigator over a year to find you the first time. I told Gus I'd found you and that you'd married."

With an apologetic look at Cass, Oliver continued, "I had only told my investigator to find you, not to get any in-depth details of your life. I encouraged Gus to contact you then, but he felt contact with him might cause you problems."

“What do you mean, cause me problems?”

Oliver sighed heavily. “Cass, your uncle Gus openly lived in a gay relationship with another man as a married couple during a period of this country’s history when it just wasn’t a smart thing to do. Actually, I’m not so sure this country has matured much in its thinking on such matters even now. I’d only given Gus the bare facts of your marriage. I told him that you married a conservative CPA. He thought introducing your gay uncle to your husband and his family might cause problems in your marriage that you weren’t equipped to deal with. I didn’t agree with his decision, but as his attorney, my legal obligations required me to follow his wishes.”

Tears built behind her eyes, and she blinked rapidly to try and prevent them from falling. “Too bad, Oliver. He might actually have been my savior from that marriage.”

For a moment, Oliver looked embarrassed, then angry, and finally sad. “Cass, Gus never knew the details of your marriage. I only found you for him. I didn’t snoop into your life, at least not the first time.” Oliver looked at her with something close to pity in his eyes. “You’ll never know how sorry I am that I didn’t have your marriage investigated further and brought your situation to Gus’s attention. I know he would’ve come for you as fast as he could.”

Now Cass looked embarrassed. She could feel the flush going over her face.

“After Gus died and I needed to find you for the will, I sent my investigator back because you seemed to have disappeared. I figured it would be easy to find you since we knew your married name, but boy, did I turn out to be wrong. When you seemed to disappear so completely, I had the investigator delve deeper into your life. There had to be a good reason for a young woman to hide her whereabouts.” Oliver looked at her with an unreadable expression.

“I was stunned when he reported back regarding the details of your divorce and everything you’d been through. It took him nearly a year to find you.”

Oliver smiled and handed her a box of Kleenex when he saw the tears slipping from the corner of one of her eyes. “You’re very good at disappearing, young lady, but hopefully, you won’t have to do that again if you stay here like Gus wanted you to. You know, in some ways, he’s finally getting the chance to protect you and make you feel loved like he always wanted.”

Now the tears did escape freely and rolled silently down Cass’s reddened cheeks. She hadn’t wanted anyone to know the true story of her marriage and divorce. She felt humiliated knowing that her story could become common knowledge to her new neighbors.

When the police arrested Eric, and the courts subsequently sentenced him to prison for the beating he gave her that fateful day, Cass thought she was done with the pain and grief in her life. She had been so very wrong.

After he was arrested and made bail, Eric went back to work, only to be promptly released from his employment. They gave him a song and dance about his being the low man on the totem pole and that decreased revenue forced a cut back on labor, but Eric knew it had been because of the arrest. Cass had been on friendly terms with the receptionist there, and she gave her the heads up when Eric stormed out of their office. She thought he might head straight for Cass and wanted her to be prepared.

He showed up at their house, but Cass knew enough to not let him in. The next day, she packed up her clothes, left Dallas, and rented a small apartment in Denton, Texas. Remote and small, she never thought he would look for her there. For a time, she felt safe.

The safe feeling only lasted until her attorney in Dallas contacted her about the court date for their divorce. She went back to Dallas for the hearing, where unfortunately, her soon-to-be ex-brother-in-law, Kevin, accosted her outside the courthouse. The main purpose of his intimidation had been to force her into recanting her claims of abuse.

Eric's brother worked in construction and could intimidate even the bravest of people. Cass started to get back in her car and skip the hearing when her attorney arrived and escorted her inside.

The hearing took a couple of hours with both of the attorneys presenting evidence and rebuttals. Cass never heard a word they said. The whole time in the courtroom, she fidgeted under the constant glare of Eric's brother and father. The looks they sent her way seemed to be so threatening she could only think about escaping and staying hidden.

Fortunately, all the depositions had already been taken, so nobody had to testify. Then, before she became aware of it, her attorney encouraged her to stand as the judge left the room.

He looked down at Cass and smiled. "Well, it's all over now, Cassandra. You can get on with your life and put this terrible episode behind you."

Cass looked at him uncomprehendingly and timidly asked, "Is it really over?"

"Yes, it's over. You'll receive the final decree in about four weeks, and my office can forward it to you when it arrives. You're a free woman now. You should be happy and not so sad anymore."

Cass was just about to respond when she saw Eric's family coming up the aisle out of the corner of her eye. She turned to look at them and quickly took an involuntary step backward at their open hostility. His father glared at her, but Kevin couldn't resist stopping to speak to her.

"You got your divorce, bitch, but you'll live to regret it. You're going to be alone for the rest of your life because nobody is ever going to want your fat ass." Kevin had leaned in close to her to whisper, causing her attorney to call for the court bailiff.

Kevin left without causing problems, but turned once more when he reached the door. He looked at her and laughed with an evil sound and then left. Cass knew then that she would have to make sure she stayed well out of his way from then on.

Bringing her thoughts back to the present, Cass looked back up at Oliver, took a deep breath, and blinked away her tears. She felt embarrassment at having shown her emotions to him. It was something she rarely let happen anymore.

Oliver seemed to understand that she needed him to move forward and not dwell on her failed marriage, so he pulled an envelope out of his desk drawer and reached out to hand it to her.

“What’s this?” Cass asked as she automatically held out her hand for it. The sealed envelope only had her first name written on the front.

“This is the letter that Gus left for you, Cass. His will stipulated that I give you this letter once you came to Mountain Vista and looked over the town and his house. The contents of his will forbade me to give it to you anywhere but inside the city limits of Mountain Vista.”

Cass raised her eyebrows and stared at the envelope in her hand. “Didn’t that seem a little crazy to you, Oliver?”

“No, he explained it to me. He said that the only way he could help you learn about your family was by having you come to his home so you could go through his pictures and papers. He told me that in his attic, there are many journals and photo albums that’ll tell you anything you ever wanted to know about your birth family. Even knowing you married, he felt sure that someday you’d find your way here.”

Cass allowed a small smile to form on her lips as she gazed at the long, white envelope. She looked up at Oliver. “I’m going to wait and read this when I’m alone if it’s okay.”

Oliver seemed to understand that she needed privacy for this, so he smiled and nodded. “That’s fine, Cass. I’m sure he would be happy to know you’re here and that you’ll be reading his words in the very house he spent most of his life in.”

Relaxing a little, Cass smiled at him. “Can you tell me a little about the house before I go and see it?”

“Absolutely,” Oliver replied. He seemed extremely happy to see her interest and even a little excited by the prospect of her living in her uncle’s home.

“First, I need to warn you that the house has been empty since Gus died a little over a year ago. It’s going to need some heavy cleaning, and possibly some maintenance work. The yard definitely needs care, the gardens cleared and made ready for spring. Gus had both flower and vegetable gardens and they’ve been neglected this year. I guess what I’m really saying is that you have a fine, tall crop of weeds to be disposed of.” Oliver’s sounded serious, but his eyes twinkled as if he could sense her excitement at the prospect of making the empty house into a home.

“Can we go see it now?” Cass couldn’t keep the note of excitement from creeping into her voice.

“Yes, we can go now. When I received the e-mail with your travel plans, I took the liberty of having the utilities turned on. As of yesterday you have lights, water and gas. Knowing your situation, I went ahead and had the phone turned on, too, but I had it listed in my name so nobody could trace you that way. The bill will still come to the house for you to pay. It just means you won’t be listed in the phonebook.”

Cass looked at him with gratitude. “Thank you so much. It’s a relief to know that I won’t have to worry about it. Plus, if the utilities are on, then I can stay there tonight and I won’t need to find a hotel.”

At this, Oliver looked momentarily shocked. “Cass, you can’t stay there. I didn’t lie when I called it a really big mess. There’s a year’s worth of dust on every surface. It wouldn’t be fit for anyone to live in without a thorough cleaning, and I didn’t have time to hire someone to do that yet.”

Shaking her head vigorously, Cass said, “I want to do the work myself. It’ll help me begin to feel as if it really is mine, that I belong here.”

Oliver frowned at her thoughtfully and then pulled a key from his desk drawer. He walked around the desk and came to stand behind Cass's chair. He stared down at her thoughtfully when he saw her scoot forward, away from any contact with his body. "You know Cass, I had my housekeeper get my guest room ready. I hoped you might be willing to stay with me while you're getting the house in shape. It would give me a chance to tell you all about your uncle and help you get acquainted with the folks in town." He frowned at the way she suddenly tensed. "Well, let's go take a look at it and not make any decisions about that until you take a look for yourself. Fair enough?"

"Perfect, let's go take a look." Smiling, Cass rose from her chair as Oliver did.

* * * *

Matt looked up from his inventory and spotted Oliver talking to the beautiful stranger on the sidewalk. He was ecstatic to see the woman he tried to meet earlier standing just outside his store. Determined not to lose track of her again, he rushed out the door and walked up to the conversing couple. Matt gazed at Oliver expectantly and waited impatiently for an introduction.

Oliver frowned slightly at the eager look on Matt's face and turned to Cass. "Cassandra Abernathy, this is Matthew Carlisle. He's the co-owner of Carlisle Hardware. With the work that needs to be done on your house, you'll probably need to talk with him a lot in the coming months."

Holding out his hand to shake hers, Matt spoke to her for the first time. "Please, my friends call me Matt, and I certainly hope you're going to be my friend." He grasped her hand tightly and squeezed gently.

* * * *

Cass felt so embarrassed. This was the man she had been ogling in the window earlier. She smiled slightly and spoke to him. “Nice to meet you, Matt. My friends call me Cass.”

As Cass tried to tug her hand back, she realized that he intentionally held onto her. She looked into his eyes and felt a flush running from her neck up her face. Mortified, she could feel her nipples hardening and her pussy tingling.

What the hell is wrong with me? This young man wouldn't be interested in me, an older, divorced, overweight woman. Gosh, his skin feels so warm. His hands are slightly calloused. What would they feel like running over my skin, touching my breasts? Oh, my God. I need to stop this right now.

Tugging once more on her hand, she raised her eyes to his to let him know she wanted to be released. What she saw in his gaze took her breath away. The heat flaring in his eyes, along with his gentle squeezing of her hand, told her that he knew the effect he had on her body. It made her angry for him to make fun at her expense.

With a broad smile, he released her hand and turned to listen to Oliver.

“Cass inherited Gus's house, and I'm going to take her up and give her the grand tour. She may decide to make her home here with us now.”

* * * *

Oliver had been watching Cass and Matt during their entire exchange, and he didn't like it one bit. He moved closer and smiled down at her. He couldn't help but notice the flush on her cheeks and the heat flaring in her eyes. Turning, he looked at Matt and witnessed the same flare in his eyes. Oh, boy, this could be a big problem.

Cass had no knowledge of the twins' reputation for sharing their women. She would be in over her head really quickly if she wasn't

warned. With the history of her abusive marriage, she wouldn't be comfortable having to fend off their interest. He needed to warn Matt and David to keep their distance. It wouldn't do to let them get too close to her.

* * * *

Matt liked hearing that she might be planning on staying in the area. He felt an actual electrical jolt when he took her hand. He couldn't wait to see if David felt the same reaction when they meet.

"Cass, why don't you let me buy you dinner tonight as a special welcome to our fair town." At her startled look, he continued trying to convince her to say yes. "Please don't say no. Let me show you how neighborly we can be. I can give you the rundown on everybody, tell you all the best places to shop for things you'll need, and give you all the juicy gossip that keeps us going. What do you say?" He gave her his best, sexy smile as he waited for her answer.

While Matt pleaded with Cass, the door to Oliver's office opened and Serena stepped out onto the sidewalk. She walked over to where Matt stood and slid her hand up on his bicep. She moved so quickly that Matt didn't even register it at first.

Serena smiled over to Cass and said, "Yes, you really have to let us take you to dinner. We're so happy you can move here, we just want to make you feel at home." The whole time she spoke, her hand cupped Matt's elbow very possessively, like they belonged together.

* * * *

Cass didn't see the look of shock on Matt's face or the look of satisfaction on Oliver's face. She only saw the young woman staking her claim. Well, that answered a lot of her questions. She knew that he could never be interested in someone like her. She would never be competition for the younger, more beautiful woman.

Seeing them as a couple should have made things easier, but for some reason it made Cass sad. With a smile that didn't quite reach her eyes, she spoke directly to Serena. "Thanks so much for the invitation, but I'll have to decline. I drove a long way this morning and I'm just dead on my feet. I wouldn't be good company for anyone tonight. I do appreciate the offer, though. Maybe we can do it some other time." She turned to Oliver and spoke again. "Can we head out now? I'm really anxious to see the house, and I want to have time to pick up some groceries tonight so that I can stay there."

* * * *

Forgetting for a moment his fury with Serena for her display, Matt locked onto what Cass had just said. "You can't possibly be thinking about staying in that house tonight." His voice sounded loud and harsh, and from the look on her face, Cass didn't like it one bit.

Matt recognized the anger in her eyes and softened his voice. "It has to be a real mess up there, Cass. It's been empty over a year and probably needs all kinds of work. It won't be fit to live in for a while, plus the furniture in it is probably not even salvageable."

He looked to Oliver for some help and was surprised to see a hostile look on the attorney's face. He quickly turned his attention back to Cass. "You need to think about renting a room for a while. There's a nice bed and breakfast down the road about twenty miles." He gave her his most convincing smile. "At least it would be clean. I'd be happy to show you the way."

Cass's eyes turned positively frosty. "Thank you for your concern, but I'm sure I'll be fine." After leveling an angry look at Matt, she turned again to Oliver. "Are you ready to go now, Oliver?"

Oliver made a sound somewhere between a laugh and a cough, then spoke up. "Absolutely, Cass. I'm parked over there." He gestured toward a group of cars parked just the other side of his office. "Just fall in behind me and I'll lead the way." He bade Matt a

good afternoon and gave Serena a stern look. “We’ll talk in the morning, Serena.” Then he left to get in his car. Cass had already left them to head down to her truck.

* * * *

Watching Cass walking down the sidewalk away from him, Matt yanked his arm none too gently away from Serena. “What the hell are you up to, Serena?”

Acting all innocent, Serena replied, “I don’t know what you’re talking about, Matt. I only tried to be friendly and welcoming to a new client. Isn’t that what you and Oliver were trying to do?”

“Don’t include me in your little fantasies, Serena. I won’t stand for it. There is not now, nor will there ever be, anything between us. Accept it and move on with your life.”

As Matt spoke angrily to Serena, he saw David pulled up in his truck and parked right in front of the store.

As he watched his brother get out of his truck, he heard Serena say, “I still don’t know what you’re talking about, Matt, I only wanted to be neighborly.” She tossed her hair over her shoulder and quickly walked away.

David laughed out loud when he looked at Matt’s face and went to stand next to him on the sidewalk. “Well, brother, I know Serena isn’t responsible for the happy, excited feelings I’ve sensed from you all afternoon. So what gives? I haven’t received feelings and emotions like this from you in a very, very long time.”

Matt looked down the street in time to see Cass’s truck pull out behind Oliver’s car and disappear down the road.

David glanced down the street and then spoke to his brother. “What are we looking for, bro?” Giving David an exasperated look, Matt turned toward the store. Together, they walked inside and headed back to their office in the back.

The brothers each took a seat behind their respective desks. Matt stared at David, gathering his thoughts before speaking.

“I just met the woman who inherited Gus’s house. Her name is Cass, and I’ve never gotten a feeling from a woman like I did from her.”

David just rolled his eyes like he couldn’t believe how gullible his brother could be.

“Don’t give me that look, David. I know what I felt.” Matt gave his brother a hard stare and continued. “She’s special, not to mention beautiful.” Matt sighed and got a dreamy look on his face. “When I touched her hand, pure electricity ran up my arm, David.” He ignored the snort he heard coming from his brother and continued. “And you know the really great part? She felt it the same as I did. You could see it in her eyes. She was torn between arousal and confusion. God, I wanted to just grab her up and run with her.” He stood up and looked out the window. For a moment, he was lost in his thoughts of the brief encounter.

David sat quietly, waiting for Matt to go on.

“I invited her to have dinner with us.” Matt didn’t have to look to know David cringed. “But she turned me down after Serena pulled her little stunt.”

“What did Serena do?” David asked quietly.

“She came out and put her arm through mine, making it seem like I belonged to her.” Matt dropped heavily back down into his chair. “Cass noticed right away and made the rest of her statements directly to Serena, kind of like she assumed her to be the little woman. How sick is that? Serena, as our little woman!” Matt shuddered at the very thought. “I would rather fuck a grizzly than take that viper on.”

Matt was startled when David laughed out loud after his statement. They had always been in agreement in their sentiments regarding Serena. She had always been a barracuda, and they both avoided her at all costs.

He could tell that David wasn't accepting his feelings about Cass. Matt knew David still hoped that someday they would find the perfect woman who would want to be with the both of them exclusively for the rest of their lives. Essentially, she would be a wife to both of them. Unfortunately, he seemed to have lost hope that they would ever find her.

Seeing the skeptical look on his brother's face, Matt spoke up. "Don't pre-judge Cass, David. Give it time. Wait till you meet her before you decide that I'm crazy. For once can you just do this my way? I just know if we spend some time with her, you'll have the same feelings that I did. Can you do that, David? Can you just put aside your doubt and just let nature take its course this time?" Frustrated, Matt stood and walked back to the window. "I'm not saying that she's definitely the 'one,' just that there's something there worth pursuing." He waited impatiently for his brother to respond.

* * * *

"All right, Matt. For you, I'll keep an open mind and meet the charming lady." David said all the right words to put the smile back on Matt's face, but in his heart he only felt sadness. He really didn't want to do this again. He didn't doubt the woman was beautiful. He'd always trusted Matt's taste in women. Unfortunately, he felt equally sure that, sooner or later, she would only want one of them, not both. But for now, he would go along with his brother. "So tell me, Matt, what does this paragon of virtue look like?" He smiled wickedly at his brother and waited for Matt to speak.

"Smart ass! She's beautiful. She's very short, only came up to just below my shoulders. She has long, wavy brown hair and brown eyes. Not a stick figure like so many women are now. She's rounded with full hips and large breasts that just made my mouth water." Matt walked back over and sat down at his desk. "She seems very shy. She

didn't easily look me in the eyes, like she was hiding something or was afraid."

"How did you get her to look you in the eye, then?" David asked curiously.

Laughing, Matt replied, "I refused to release her hand when she shook mine after Oliver introduced us. After a minute of trying to pull away, you could see her go from shock, to arousal, to downright anger. God, she made me hot."

David just shook his head and smiled. "Well, we can't do anything about it right now, so suppose we get to that inventory you've been bitching to me about?"

Matt sighed and moved to the door. "Just mark my words, David, you're going to be as taken with her as I am."

Chapter 3

Looking over at the little house Oliver had pulled up to, Cass smiled and began to get excited. The house might be small, but it was hers, and that feeling was wonderful. Here, she could live the way she wanted with no one to answer to and no one to cause her any pain or grief.

She pulled her small truck into the driveway behind Oliver's car. For just a moment, she sat still and looked around her. Oliver had been right, the yard and the flowerbeds cried out for attention. As for the house, it just screamed abandonment. It was definitely going to need a lot of work.

Getting out of the truck, Cass joined Oliver on the front porch. He smiled at her, took the key from his pocket, and opened the front door. Stepping back, he held the door open and allowed her to enter first.

Cass was nearly overwhelmed with the heavy, stagnant feeling in the air. Oliver propped the front screen door open and then hurried to open a few windows, as well as the back door. Not yet willing to go farther into the house, Cass stood in the living room and just looked around. A feeling of peace settled over her. She felt like she just came home.

Dark curtains and hardwood floors gave the room a tiny, enclosed feeling. There wasn't much furniture. A couple of armchairs and a small table took up most of the floor space. It was the bookcase along the far wall that drew Cass's attention. It was filled with dusty books and framed photographs. Eagerly, Cass walked over to have a closer look.

“That’s your uncle Gus on the middle shelf along with his partner, Jeremy.” Cass jumped, startled since she had not heard Oliver come back to the room. “And this,” he pointed to a picture of a young woman, “is your mother, at a very young age.”

Cass looked at the picture but didn’t take it down to examine it closer. She ran her fingers lightly over the books sitting on the lower shelves. “It looks like someone loved a good mystery book.” Looking up and down, she wrinkled her nose delicately. “Gosh, everything’s covered in about two inches of dust. It’s gonna really take some elbow grease to get this place into shape.” She ran her hand over one of the book bindings and flicked the dust out into the air.

“Well, Cass, I did warn you about the condition of this place.” Cass jumped when she felt his hand squeeze her shoulder. “Surely now you realize you’re not going to be able to stay here until we get someone in to clean it up.” Hard work didn’t intimidate her, and she thought that this was just the type of huge project she needed to immerse herself in to take her mind off the coming holiday season.

Cass chose not to respond to his remarks. She pulled away from Oliver’s grip and ventured farther into the small house.

Like the living room, the kitchen was in dire need of a good cleaning. The appliances were obviously old, but appeared to be in good condition. Walking over, Cass opened the door on the small refrigerator and quickly pinched her nose closed. It had been left unplugged, and water had just been sitting in the bottom. She quickly closed the door and glanced around the room. The only other furniture was a small table with two chairs. She glanced up and began to feel uncomfortable when she realized Oliver was standing in the doorway just staring at her.

Looking at Oliver, Cass spoke for the first time since entering the kitchen. “Well, not exactly a cook’s dream, but its more than enough for a single, old lady like me.”

Oliver frowned. “You’re hardly an old lady, Cass.”

She smiled as she started to walk toward him. “Let’s go see the rest of the place, Oliver. I’m sure you’re anxious to get back to your office, and I’ll need some time to figure out everything I’ll need to get this place in shape.” Cass walked past him and down the short hallway toward the bedroom.

Ignoring the pull string hanging from the ceiling in the hall for the moment, Cass walked into the only bedroom in the house. Stopping in the doorway, she looked around. A king size bed frame with no mattress or box springs, took up almost the entire room. A small dresser and a rocker took up the rest. Spotting the door on the other side of the dresser, Cass moved forward and opened it. She found herself staring into an empty, very small closet.

Puzzled, she turned to Oliver. “What happened to all his personal things, Oliver? I haven’t seen anything like that so far except for the books.”

“Gus left explicit instructions about what to do with his things. His clothes went to a local homeless shelter, and everything else was thrown out. He didn’t want you to have to deal with all his old, worn out things” Oliver walked over and stood so close to Cass she could feel the heat radiating from his body. She quickly took a step back. “He wanted you to have his books and the items stored in the attic, so I left them right where he kept them. I figured you would want to go through them yourself.” Oliver turned and looked at the bed frame. “He even had me get rid of the mattress and box springs. I guess he thought you wouldn’t want to sleep on the old ones.”

Nodding her understanding, Cass made her way back into the hall to take a look at the bathroom. Walking inside and turning on the light, Cass exclaimed in pleasure, “Oh, my, just look at that tub.”

Oliver came to stand in the doorway. He glanced briefly at the tub, and then returned his gaze to Cass. “What on earth would he need with a tub this big?” exclaimed Cass. She went over and peered into the tub. It was nearly seven feet long and almost wide enough to hold two people sitting side by side. She could easily imagine herself

laid back and soaking in hot water with bubbles up to her neck. She hadn't had the joy of soaking in a tub during her entire marriage. Eric had picked a place to live with only a shower because he didn't like to take baths. Only after she moved out on her own did she get to know the happiness of soaking in a full, hot tub for relaxation. She glanced up at Oliver. "At least this room won't need anything but a good cleaning." He smiled and stepped back out into the hall.

After a lingering, last look at the tub, Cass walked back out into the hall to join Oliver. He pointed up to the string hanging from the trap door in the ceiling. "That's the door to the attic. There's a lot of personal stuff stored up there. I haven't been through it, but it's supposed to be Gus's personal papers, photographs, letters, things like that. There's a couple of trunks full of old clothes and other mementos. His will instructed me to leave those for you, and he wanted them left in the attic. For some reason, he didn't want me to bring them down for you." He gestured toward the trap door. "As you can see, the attic door comes down easily." He pulled the string slowly to open the door, and the steps came down automatically. "Please be careful when you go up there, Cass. You don't want to fall and hurt yourself."

Cass looked up into the lighted attic and decided to search through Gus's things after she got the house in order. "Is the light on up there all the time?" she asked of Oliver.

"No, it's tied into the door opening and automatically comes on. You don't have to search for any light switches."

"Well, go ahead and close it for now. I'm not ready to go through his things just yet." Turning, she walked swiftly back to the kitchen. She wanted to see what the back property looked like.

Once in the kitchen, Cass swiftly crossed to the door, opened the screen, and stepped outside. She found herself on a screened-in porch that had a swing hanging from the rafters on one side. Two ceiling fans allowed the porch to have a nice breeze, and she could easily see

herself swinging back and forth, reading one of her favorite romance books.

A screen door opened to the backyard where she could see a roped-off vegetable garden in the upper left corner. Sadly, the garden now mainly consisted of huge weeds and wildflowers, just like the front yard. Being a city girl, Cass had never gardened. Smiling, she knew she would at least give it a try.

Turning to Oliver, Cass said, “Well, I guess that’s about it. I really appreciate your taking the time to show me around. Maybe after I’ve settled in, we can get together for lunch, and you can tell me all about my uncle Gus?” Cass realized her voice sounded somewhat desperate, but she couldn’t help it. She wanted him to leave so she could relax. The way he kept getting so close was making her nervous.

“I’d like that a lot, Cass. I’ll give you a call in a day or two, and we can make some definite plans.” He laid his hand on her shoulder. “Gus wanted me to look after you, and that’s a responsibility I’m gonna take very seriously. I’m very happy that you’re here now.” Oliver moved a little closer and gave her a hug, then pressed his cheek to hers. Recoiling from his touch, Cass stepped back quickly and walked back into the kitchen.

“I’ll go move my truck, so you can pull your car out, Oliver.”

“Cass, you can’t still be thinking of staying here now.” He eyes looked over into the living room. “Let me get someone in to clean it for you. It won’t be any trouble. If you don’t want to drive so far for a room you can stay with me. I have a perfectly good guest room with its own bath. You’d be very comfortable. We could get to know each other better, and we’d have plenty of time for me to tell you all about Gus.”

A very distinct shiver ran down Cass’s neck, and she had to stop herself from visibly cringing at the look in his eyes, as well as the thought of staying in his house with him. She had begun to feel like he wanted to be more than an attorney, or a friend, and she didn’t like the way it made her feel.

“No, Oliver, I thank you, but I’m very determined to stay here. It’s been such a long time since I felt like I had something of my own, and I’m very anxious to move in and make this place mine.” She smiled up at him to soften her words. “I’ll be very careful and only tackle one room at a time.” Glancing around the room, she sighed. “From what I’ve seen, it really just needs some heavy cleaning and a few new pieces of furniture.” Cass smiled back up at him. “I’ll be fine, but I will promise to call you if I have any problems. Maybe we could have lunch next week, and I can keep you updated on my progress.” Cass didn’t really want to spend more time with him, but she thought it would be better not to make enemies in her new home if possible. Besides, she didn’t want to alienate the one person she did know here.

Oliver frowned at first, but seemed to brighten at her suggestion of lunch. “Okay, Cass, I’ll call you Tuesday, and we can make definite plans.” Again, he reached out and hugged her, placing a chaste kiss on her cheek. “Welcome to Mountain Vista, Cass.”

He turned to leave when he suddenly said, “Cass, I almost forgot that you need to stop by my office on Monday. I have the bankbook for the account with the money Gus left you. I’m sorry I can’t do it tomorrow, but I’m leaving early in the morning on a business trip and I won’t be back until late Sunday. I’ll go with you to the bank and have the account changed legally to your name. It’s not a lot of money, but it should be enough to fix up the house the way you want.” Gus stepped out onto the porch with Cass following close behind him. “I know you worked doing data entry from home in Texas. Are you gonna be able to keep doing that work living here or will you need to look for a job?”

“It’s my plan to keep doing the data entry. I’ve always had trouble sleeping, so it’s a good job for me. I can do it any time of day or night.”

Oliver frowned when she said she had trouble sleeping. “If you ever need anyone to talk to when you can’t sleep, just call me. I’ll be

there for you.” He put a hand on her cheek. “I only want to make sure you’re taken care of the way your uncle Gus wanted.” Inside, Cass cringed. It didn’t take a genius to figure out how he wanted to take care of her.

“Thanks, Oliver, I appreciate your concern. I’ll stop by after lunch on Monday to get the bank records taken care of.” Cass hurried out to the driveway and moved her truck. Smiling, she waved at Oliver as he drove away and then breathed a sigh of relief. He had made her very uncomfortable, being alone in the house with him. She didn’t understand him at all now. He hadn’t shown the slightest bit of interest in her when he came to Texas, at least no more interest than a friend.

After parking the truck in the driveway, Cass returned to the house. As she walked up to the front door, she noticed that it had no peephole and no close window for her to look out and identify someone knocking at the door. That was something she would want to make a priority. *How hard could it be to put in a peephole?* For the next couple of hours, Cass went from room to room carefully making note of everything that needed to be done. Needing to get away from the dust for a while, she took her list to the back porch and relaxed in the swing.

The list just went on and on, making her realize just how much work she had to do. And the more she looked at her list, the more she realized that most of what she needed could be found at Carlisle Hardware.

Just thinking about seeing the young Matt Carlisle made her nipples harden and moisture gather between her legs.

For goodness sakes Cass, get a grip on yourself. I cannot be interested in anyone that young, and there is no way someone that gorgeous would be interested in me. Cass snorted. *I can’t believe I’m even thinking about being attracted to someone after finally getting my divorce. Where is it written that you have to have a man in your life to be happy?*

She leaned back in the swing and thought back on the years she spent married to Eric.

When they first married, Cass tried to be what he needed in bed, but it was always so painful that she couldn't relax. Being a virgin when she married him, she had no way to know right from wrong with her performance. Eric wasn't willing to teach her how to please him, and he certainly never went out of his way to please her, so sexual issues were never resolved. Unfortunately, over the years, it became apparent that the more pain she felt, the more pleasure he enjoyed. Cass's married life became a nightmare of pain and humiliation.

Looking back now, she really didn't know why she stayed with him so long. It wasn't because she loved him. Now she could honestly admit to herself that she had never really loved anybody. She had finally come to believe that she married him and stayed with him because she didn't want to be alone.

She met Eric in one of the group homes. He had been placed there for being incorrigible. He had such wonderful plans for the future, and he made her believe that they needed each other. So, when she turned eighteen, she ran away with Eric and got married by a justice of the peace.

Her wedding night gave her the first realization that she might have bitten off more than she could chew. Eric did nothing to arouse her. He merely pushed her down on the bed after telling her to strip and pushed his erect cock between her legs and forced it in. It hurt so badly, she thought he had ripped her in two. Eric ignored her tears and just merrily pumped away until he came, then pulled out and immediately went to wash off his cock. He stared down at her on the bed with her fresh, red, virgin's blood still on her thighs and told her she would have to get better. He said she needed to learn to give her man what he needed. If she didn't have anybody to ask, she should get a book. Then he walked out to go be with his friends, leaving her alone in their marriage bed.

Things didn't improve over the years. He soon realized that he couldn't get Cass aroused no matter what he did, and it infuriated him. He'd tried other forms of sex to see if she would come around, but always with the same results. He'd brutally thrust his erect shaft into her rectum causing enough tearing that she had to see a doctor. The times he made her use her mouth, he took great delight in pushing in so far, he choked her. Cass finally began to understand that he enjoyed giving her pain as much as some men enjoyed giving their wives multiple orgasms. That's when Cass began to put on weight.

Being heavy probably saved her from having permanent injuries. Eric still humiliated her around his friends by talking about her "fat ass," but he seldom wanted to fuck her anymore. Cass had gotten so used to his constant abuse she no longer dreamed of being free of him. She felt grateful that she had a nice home to live in and didn't have to be alone. Fortunately, they had never been able to have children.

Everything came to a head one afternoon when Eric's brother, Kevin, came to the house to ask for help with a job he had lined up. Kevin worked in construction and did outside jobs for extra money for his family. He had picked up Eric's habit of being verbally abusive to her. It seemed to amuse Eric to hear his brother talking about her weight or lack of sex appeal.

That day, she'd joined them in the yard to let Eric know that his boss had called and left a message that he wanted him to come in on the weekend. Cass had walked out to the street where Eric leaned against Kevin's truck, talking to him. She got there just in time to hear him tell Kevin that he would be at his house at eight the next morning. Cass said, "You can't do that, Eric."

Before she could explain about his boss, Kevin screamed. "Damn, Eric, are you going to let that cow tell you what you can or can't do on your own time?"

"Hell no, I'm not." Eric grabbed the front of her shirt to hold her steady and then backhanded her across the face. Screaming at Cass,

he continued to hit her, only now he punched with his fist. “You lousy, no good bitch. You don’t tell me what I can or can’t do. You won’t embarrass me in front of my family or friends.”

Cass could hear his brother yelling at Eric. “Teach that slut who’s the boss.” At that point, Cass only wanted to pass out so she could escape the pain. She felt sure he’d broken her jaw and maybe her nose. The blood seemed to be everywhere. It dripped down her chin and all over Eric’s arm. He just wouldn’t stop hitting her once he started. She felt like he didn’t have control of his own actions anymore. Up until then, the only pain he purposefully inflicted had been sexual.

Thanks to a neighbor calling the police, Eric was arrested and Cass had gotten the help she needed.

Cass didn’t have to testify against Eric. The neighbor, feeling so incensed that he had beaten someone as sweet as Cass, had been happy to testify about what he witnessed. Eric knew he’d be found guilty of assault and battery, so he agreed to plead out to a lesser charge of malicious mischief and accepted a six month jail sentence, followed by two years probation. Cass hoped he would be in jail a lot longer than six months, but the District Attorney convinced her that this was the best thing for her sake. She wouldn’t have to testify about all the years of abuse, and he’d still carry a criminal record.

Cass filed for a divorce and it was granted without any problems. It included a permanent order of protection, which stipulated that Eric stay away from her. Cass had a divorce decree and several scars on her neck and face to show for twenty-three years of her life. Those were the things that other people could see. They couldn’t see the damage done to her soul. For almost two years, she hid herself away, blaming herself for the things that had gone wrong with her marriage. When she decided to move to her uncle’s house, she decided on a new course for her life. She wasn’t going to blame herself for any of it any longer. She was starting her life over and planned to grab as much happiness as she could.

Cass thought this might finally be a place she could call home and be safe and happy in. She could go to the grocery, or out to eat and to a movie whenever she wanted, and wouldn't have to worry about someone seeing her and telling her former in-laws where to find her. It was getting late in the day so Cass went around and unloaded her truck. Feeling exhausted, she wanted to sleep, but realized that she was pretty wound up from all the travel and stress. She decided a long soak in the tub would be just the thing to relax her.

After checking that both doors were locked, Cass entered the bathroom and removed her clothing. She turned on the water and adjusted the temperature, then poured in a cap of her favorite scented bath salts. Holding tightly to the side of the tub, she stepped over and lowered herself into the scented, hot water. "Ohh." Cass couldn't stop the long, tortured groan that escaped as she relaxed in the water. Slowly, she leaned back till her head rested on the back of the tub and relaxed as the water climbed up her body. "Now this is the life." She sighed and smiled.

Lying back in the warm water, relaxed for the first time in better than a week, Cass examined the room and wondered what her Uncle Gus was like. She'd spent her whole life believing she had no family of her own. If she'd only discovered him sooner, maybe she wouldn't have felt such a desire to marry Eric in order to have a family of her own. She no longer lied to herself. She never loved Eric. He came into her life when she desperately wanted someone to belong to, someone to make a family with. He'd made her believe that he could give her the things she wanted, that he wanted the same things.

Despite the lack of a man in her life, Cass felt lucky now. She stayed realistic. Being more than forty years old, overweight, and totally ignorant of what a good relationship would consist of sort of stacked the odds against her ever finding love again. Heaven knows the only good sex she'd ever experienced had been with her trusty vibrator. She'd purchased it online because she was too embarrassed to buy one in person.

Smiling again, she thought about her romance books. She'd started reading them after her split with Eric. A friend had given her the first one, and she'd been hooked her for life. When she read them or listened to them in the truck, she could fantasize about being young again, just starting out and finding true love and passion.

Cass snorted out loud. "What the hell would I do if some man approached me like they do in those books?" Just thinking about some of the things she'd read caused a blush to slowly creep up her neck into her cheeks. One thing she'd learned, though, it helped to fantasize when the loneliness became too much to bear.

Cass slowly leaned her head all the way back again. The warm water completely covered her all the way to her chin in this position. She felt cocooned and protected.

Closing her eyes, she briefly thought about the book she'd been listening to that morning. She imagined herself in Katylyn's place, then suddenly her vision changed and she allowed herself to imagine being alone with Matt.

Cass went to the hardware store to purchase her supplies. Matt worked alone in the store when she arrived. She asked him to direct her to the paint, and then smiled when he pointed her toward the wall at the very back of the store. She started to walk down the aisle when out of the corner of her eye she saw him come from behind the counter and start to follow her. She looked up at him and said, "That's okay, I can get everything I need. You don't have to bother."

He never said a word, just kept walking toward her like a wild animal stalking its prey. Cass looked at his face for the first time and swallowed hard. He had a fire burning in his eyes she'd never seen before. His gaze burned a hole right through her. Slowly, she began to back up, never taking her eyes off of his.

"Really, Matt, I don't need your help and I don't want to bother you."

Ignoring everything she said, Matt just kept stalking toward her. Suddenly, Cass bumped into the shelves at the end of the aisle. She had nowhere else to go, and still Matt kept coming.

He kept walking slowly, not stopping until he was right in front of Cass. He allowed his body to just barely come into contact with hers. She could feel his touch from her chest to her knees, and Cass felt like she was on fire from the heat radiating from his body. Keeping her head down, she whispered, "What are you doing?"

Slowly, Matt brought both his hands up and braced them on the shelves on each side of her body, effectively trapping her in his arms. "Look at me, Cass," he pleaded with her, his voice low and husky.

Cass reluctantly raised her eyes up to his. It frightened her to see the way he looked at her, almost as if he could see right through her. His gaze traveled to her mouth and then lazily looked down the length of her body, lingering on her breasts, before returning to stare longingly at her lips.

Cass's body reacted to his intensity. She felt her nipples harden almost painfully, followed quickly by a gush of moisture between her legs. She could feel a flush coming up her neck and face and wondered if he could smell her arousal. Her breath caught in her throat when she saw his head begin to lower to hers.

Gently, almost as if he were afraid of frightening her, his lips came down and brushed softly against hers. He repeated this soft kiss several times, letting his tongue come out and lightly lick across the seam of her closed lips, begging for entry. Cass closed her eyes to keep from seeing the intensity of his gaze. She heard him whisper, "Open your mouth, Cass. Let me in." She gasped, and he took advantage and thrust his tongue deep into the depths of her mouth.

Immediately, Cass's hands came up and pressed against him, intent on pushing him away. She became lost as soon as she touched his hard, muscular chest. She could feel the heat coming from his body right through his shirt. She released a small groan from deep in her throat, a groan that Matt heard.

He lowered his right hand down to cup the back of her head and angled it to deepen the kiss. His left hand came down and swiftly cupped her right breast and squeezed. He let his thumb strum back and forth across her hardened nipple.

Matt took the hand from behind her head, lowered it to the waistband of her jeans, and began to slip the button fastening open.

“What the hell are you doing with my man?” came the shrill voice of Serena, who had walked up behind Matt.

Cass’s eyes popped open in the tub. “Oh, my God, I can’t even fantasize right!” She laughed. Looking down at her body, she realized she’d been massaging her own breast while she dreamed about Matt. Shocked at her actions, she sat up in the tub and quickly washed herself. Letting the water drain from the tub, she rose, and quickly dried herself.

After putting on her pajama bottoms and an oversized t-shirt to sleep in, she turned out the lights in the bathroom, and padded barefoot back out to the living room. She’d rolled out her sleeping bag earlier, and she was looking forward to curling up in its warmth. She felt embarrassed at herself for the longings she’d felt in the tub. She had no business fantasizing about Matt, especially considering his age. Besides, Serena made it pretty clear that she had a prior claim on him.

Yawning widely, Cass turned off the lights and stumbled over to her makeshift bed, sliding in and snuggling up in its warmth. It seemed strange to be in this house alone, sleeping on the floor. Determined to get a good night’s sleep, Cass consciously cleared her mind and relaxed, breathing deeply. After her stressful day, she quickly dropped off into a troublesome sleep.

* * * *

Cass opened her eyes and looked around in confusion. For a brief moment she couldn’t remember where she was, and then all the

memories from the day before came rushing back. Smiling, she stretched lazily, and then grimaced as her body protested waking on the hard floor. Relaxing back down into the warmth of her sleeping bag, she took a few minutes to go over her plans for the day in her mind.

Now that she was here, she couldn't think of any reason to rush. She had the rest of her life to get things organized, and she just wanted to concentrate on enjoying her new life. Remembering that she'd eaten very little the day before, she suddenly felt ravenous for breakfast. Wanting something more substantial than the quickie bars in her suitcase, Cass jumped up and quickly got dressed. She was going to splurge and have a real, cooked breakfast in town.

* * * *

Less than an hour later, Cass found herself sitting at a table next to the window at the family diner on Main Street. She was drinking a cup of coffee and waiting for her breakfast when she saw a truck pull up and park outside the hardware store. Her breath caught in her throat as she watched Matthew Carlisle get out and let himself into his store. *God, that man is so damn sexy. If I was just ten years younger!* Shaking her head at her outrageous thoughts, Cass pulled out the list of things she needed for the house and began to organize the rest of her day.

* * * *

Matt took a deep breath as he unlocked the door to store. He was usually thrilled when Friday rolled around. He and David usually took Saturday and Sunday off, leaving the running of the store to their one employee. They wouldn't get a reprieve this week. It was time to do the yearly inventory. Both of them would have to be in the store early

tomorrow and would probably be there all day. It would make for a very long weekend.

He looked up when he heard the bell on the front door and smiled at the young woman who worked for them. "Good morning, Martha. You're here even earlier than usual."

"Yeah, I wanted to talk to you about tomorrow, Matt."

"What's up?"

"Would it be okay for me to come in a little later tomorrow? I've got a family thing I've been trying to get out of, but my Mom says she's going to skin me alive if I don't show up. I can be here by noon, and I can even stay late if you want."

Matt chuckled. "Sure thing, it's no problem. Besides, I'd hate like hell to be responsible for your being skinned alive!"

He watched Martha roll her eyes before she gave him a grin. "Very funny, boss man."

"Since you're here so bright and early, I'm going to head over and get me some breakfast. Can I bring you something?"

"Yes, please, a nice cup of black coffee would be heaven."

"You got it. I'll be back in a bit." Matt called over his shoulder as he went out the door. Whistling, he headed across the street to the diner.

* * * *

Cass took her first bite of eggs and saw Matt walk into the crowded restaurant. When their gazes collided, she felt like her heart stopped beating for a moment. *God, that man is so handsome.* Her eyes widened, and she dropped her fork when he began walking toward her table.

"Good morning, Cass. Do you mind if I join you?" He looked around the room briefly. "It's kind of crowded in here this morning." Turning back, he smiled down at her.

Cass knew she should probably say yes, but wasn't surprised when her mouth had other ideas. "No, not at all." She gestured to the seat across from her. "Have a seat."

"Thanks."

Cass listened, incredulous, as he ordered pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage and coffee. When the waitress walked away, she bent her head to hide her smile. After a moment, she glanced back up to find Matt staring at her with an amused look on his face.

"Are you laughing at me?" His innocent question made her giggle.

"Sorry, I just wondered if you always eat that heartily."

He wagged his eyebrows at her. "I'm a growing boy. I need all the nourishment I can get. Besides," he winked at her, "I need to keep my strength up."

Cass felt her cheeks flush and knew without looking that her nipples had gotten hard. Her hopes that he wouldn't notice were dashed when she saw his gaze linger on her chest. Maybe she could distract him.

"Aren't you supposed to be working in your store, seeing as how this Friday?"

"Hey, even the boss gets to have some time off." He stopped his conversation when the waitress delivered his breakfast to the table. Once she left, he took the time to add sugar to his coffee before looking back over at Cass.

"Actually, I have a very efficient employee that handles things just fine when I'm not around. She came in early this morning, so I took advantage and decided to come over for some breakfast." He grinned at her and then chuckled. "Boy, am I glad I did. Usually, I have to stare at my brother's ugly mug with my morning eggs." Cass felt frozen by the look in his eyes. "This is a much nicer view."

Since she didn't know how to respond to his flirtatious behavior, Cass decided to change the subject. "Does owning your own store mean you have to work weekends, as well?"

“No, David and I usually take weekends off. We’re doing some remodeling at home, and it takes up most of our spare time.”

Cass pushed her plate away and picked up her coffee. “I can definitely relate to that. I’ve got a feeling my uncle’s house is going to keep me quite busy for a while.” Cass was surprised to see him frown at her.

“Don’t push yourself. I can only imagine how much work it’ll be to get that place in shape. Don’t be afraid to ask for help, okay?”

Cass smiled at him, but decided not to comment on his question. *There is no way I would ever ask you for help with the house, Matt. I wouldn’t be able to keep my mind on the work. My hormones would be out the roof with you around me.*

“So, what are your plans for today Cass? Oliver said you’d probably need supplies. Were you planning on visiting my store today?” Cass frowned. She could almost interpret the look on his face as hopeful. She cleared her throat before answering.

“Uh, no, actually. I brought plenty of cleaning supplies with me, and I think that’s what the place needs first.” She grinned up at him. “However, I do find that I need to eat occasionally. So I’m off to the grocery this morning to stock up on food.”

“Sounds reasonable. Now that you’re not so tired, how 'bout taking me up on my invitation to dinner tonight? I’d love a chance to sit and talk some more, get to know each other a little better.”

Cass surprised herself by actually considering saying yes. Just as she was about to speak, she looked up and saw Oliver’s secretary, Serena, coming through the door.

Oh, you are such an idiot. Don’t you remember Serena staking her claim on Matt? She all but warned you off. I must be getting old. I’m sitting here considering having dinner with someone who already has a partner. Or wait, was he inviting her to have dinner with him and Serena? Ooh, that’s even worse. I certainly don’t want to spend time with both of them. I’ve got to get out of here.

Cass quickly dug in her purse and dug out some money.

“Sorry, Matt, maybe some other time. I’ve got a list of chores you wouldn’t believe. Would you make sure the waitress gets this?” She laid her money on the table and stood to leave. She couldn’t bring herself to look Matt in the face.

“Wait, Cass, give me just a minute, and I’ll walk you out.” Matt pushed his chair back, and Cass put a hand on his shoulder to stop him.

“That’s okay, keep your seat. You’re about to have company.” Cass walked away as Matt turned around in his seat.

As she walked past the scowling younger woman, Cass gave her a friendly smile.

“Good morning, Serena. Matt was kind enough to share a table with me since the place was so crowded. I hope the two of you have a great day.” She didn’t wait for her to respond. Cass was out the door and sitting in the front seat of her car before she took another deep breath. Laughing softly at herself, she put the car in gear and headed off to do her morning errands.

Chapter 4

David had become uncomfortable with Matt's scrutiny. "Will you stop looking at me like you think I'm gonna grow a second head or worse?"

"Well, what the hell are you doing here this early, on a Saturday no less? I don't even remember the last time you came on the weekend."

Sighing deeply, he guessed Matt had the right to be a little skeptical of his being here. For the past year, he had left the running of the store pretty much completely to his brother. He knew that Matt wondered what finally gotten him in here to help. David attributed it to a healthy dose of guilt, but he didn't think Matt would like that answer.

Yesterday, he had taken a long, hard look at his brother and not been happy with what he saw. Matt looked exhausted with a kind of hopeless look in his eyes. He felt so guilty for heaping all of the everyday crap on him and not being around to help him. And worse, he didn't even have a good excuse. He spent the last year feeling sorry for himself first, and then he felt sorry for Matt, as well. He knew they were both just plain lonely.

He figured they would never have a woman to complete their lives, that it would always be just the two of them with maybe the occasional encounter with a woman who wanted to fulfill a fantasy with a ménage. After Matt had gone to bed, he thought long and hard about what he could do to make Matt's life easier. So here he stood, before the sun even came up this morning, doing the inventory and

ordering the holiday displays for this year. He hoped Matt didn't have a heart attack watching him.

He looked up when he heard his brother laugh.

"Don't get me wrong, David, I'm delighted you're here." Matt walked over and put his hand on David's shoulder. "I'm even happier to see you look like you really want to be here."

David laughed at his brother's words. When he thought for a moment, he realized that he really did feel happy to be here, and not just for Matt's sake. *I'm actually looking forward to spending some time with Matt, getting things back the way they used to be.* David smiled at his brother. Maybe they could put the past completely behind them and move forward in their lives.

"I know we need to finish up the inventory today. What do you say, when we finish, we head home and spend the afternoon with a couple of beers and some college football?"

Matt chuckled. "It's been a long time since we just crashed in front of the tube." He was quiet for a moment. "You're on, little brother, as long as we finish up here first. I don't want to have to come in again tomorrow for any reason."

"You got it. I'll even let you have first pick on which teams are going to win." David smirked, knowing that Matt had never been good at picking the winning teams during football season.

"Matt, I'm going down to the basement storeroom and see what we have left over from Halloween last year before I fill out this order. Is there anything you need brought up?"

"No, I don't think so. Don't try to bring that stuff up alone, okay?" David easily interpreted the sarcastic look on his brother's face. "It's steep up those stairs, and the displays are bulky. You'll need help, and I really don't want to have to pick your clumsy ass up off those stairs anytime soon." Matt spoiled his sarcastic look with a tiny smile that came over his face and the twinkle in his eyes.

“Yes, Mother. I will listen and obey.” David smirked. He fell coming up the steps one time—more than five years ago—and Matt was determined never to let him live it down.

“Right, I’ll believe that when I see it,” Matt muttered quietly.

“I heard that,” David yelled back, laughing.

* * * *

Matt started to shout back at David when he saw the little white truck pull up and park out front. He recognized it right away as Cass’s. He stared a moment longer, waiting to see her get out of the truck. God, he was so glad to see her here. It worried him when she ran out of the restaurant yesterday after seeing Serena. He dropped the inventory list and moved quickly behind the counter so she wouldn’t see he’d been staring at her. He was determined to get her to agree to go to dinner with him and David. He had a feeling that the three of them could be very good together.

* * * *

Cass grabbed her purse and her shopping list, and looked up at Carlisle Hardware. She was glad that Matt told her he didn’t work weekends. She would be perfectly happy dealing with a neutral employee. She didn’t really like the way Matt made her feel. She could only describe it as kind of empty, like something was missing from her life. *How can I have these feelings when I’m around him? How can I feel like I’m missing something I never had to start with?* Cass sighed at all the confusing thoughts going through her head. She chuckled, thinking the move to Oregon sure had turned her head around.

Today she would be firm, buy her supplies, and head back to her new house to work. That would definitely keep her occupied for

several days. She only wanted to make a new home for herself with as few complications as possible.

Glancing over at Oliver's office, she wondered if he would be in his office today. Then she remembered that he said he was going out of town. She still had to sign the rest of the papers and deal with the bank with his help, but she really didn't want to run into him today. She'd be glad to be finished with all the formalities. He'd made her a little nervous the last time she saw him, and she could only guess at the reason. She knew he wasn't married, but surely he didn't think she'd be interested in seeing him as more than a friend.

Frowning, Cass realized that could make her living here very awkward. She didn't want a relationship with any man, and he would just have to accept that. She had no intention of socializing with anyone in this small town. She only wanted to live peacefully, minding her own business, and not be afraid. She didn't think that asked too much. Sighing, Cass stopped her daydreaming and went to take care of her shopping.

Just inside the door of the store, Cass found a row of shopping carts. Happily, she snagged one and headed over to a display of household items. She picked out a few items, being careful not to get more than she needed. She had no plans on entertaining and could get by with very few items for just herself.

Taking a moment to mark things off her list, she glanced around the store and spotted Matt behind the cash register. He stared at her and smiled. Cass could feel the heat of a flush coming up her neck and settling in her cheeks. "Ohh nooo," she groaned to herself. "I can't deal with him on no sleep."

Determined to avoid him as much as possible, she gave him a small smile and nod, and continued on down the aisle out of his direct sight. Hopefully, he'd get the message.

* * * *

Matt watched Cass putting household items in her cart and smiled broadly. It looked like she'd definitely decided to stay in Mountain Vista. Just then, she glanced around and spotted him. He smiled just a little broader, hoping she would smile back at him, and then he noticed her pink cheeks. He hadn't seen a woman blush in a very long time. It delighted him to think that this woman seemed to be blushing because he stared at her. She was such a contradiction to him. She appeared to be two different people. He saw the hot, sexy woman that made his blood boil, and another woman filled with innocence that he desperately wanted to protect. He couldn't help but wonder which was the real her. If he had his way, he and David were both going to find out firsthand.

He thought of his brother working in the basement and realized he could introduce them today. He couldn't wait to get David's reaction to Cass.

Angrily, he thought back to their first meeting and Serena interrupting his invitation to dinner. She went out of her way to give the impression of them being a couple. And he had a pretty good idea that she had done it again at breakfast yesterday. He hoped Cass didn't pick up on it, but if she did, he would set her straight right away. Right now, he wanted to see if he could help her find anything and maybe spend some time getting to know her better. Smiling with confidence, he headed to the back where Cass looked up and down the shelves.

* * * *

After ducking out of Matt's direct vision, Cass made her way to the back of the store. She'd been carefully looking at paint swatches when the hairs on the back of her neck stood up. Straightening, she put a hand to the back of her neck and started to turn around. That's when she heard his voice.

“Hi, Cass, it’s good to see you again. I hope you had a nice day yesterday. I didn’t get a chance to tell you how much I enjoyed having breakfast with you.” He was silent for a moment, almost like he was waiting for her to say something. “Can I help you find anything?”

Cass turned around and took an involuntary step backward. She hadn’t heard Matt walk up, and he stood much closer than she wanted. Swallowing nervously, she looked up at him. *God, good looking doesn’t begin to cover him, he is literally sex on a stick.* She had to bite her lip to keep from giggling out loud. That phrase popped up in almost all of the romance novels she read. She might be old, but she wasn’t dead, and unfortunately not immune to his looks. She had to be very careful here. He already had a girlfriend, and she didn’t want to anger anyone in Oliver’s office.

“Good morning, Matt.” She glanced back down at the paint swatches. “I thought you told me you didn’t work weekends.”

“I don’t usually, but we’re here today to do our yearly inventory.”

She glanced up at him and noticed that he’d moved even closer. It felt like she could feel the heat radiating from his body. Again, she backed up a couple of steps and looked over her shopping list. She became determined to treat this meeting as all business. “Actually, you can help me. I need to order a mattress and box spring for the bed at the house, and Oliver said you could do that for me.”

“Absolutely, I’ll be happy to. Come with me. I’ll show you the catalog and let you pick what you want.” Without waiting for her to agree, he turned and walked back to the front counter. After just a slight hesitation, Cass followed him.

“Okay, let’s see what we have here.” Matt pulled out a small book from under the counter, opened it to a specific section, and motioned for Cass to come and stand beside him.

Taking a deep breath, Cass walked around to stand beside Matt. When she tugged at the catalog lightly to take it from him, she met

slight, but definite resistance. He kept a firm grip, which forced her to stand next to him to look at the pages.

“What size are you looking for, Cass?”

Frustrated, she hesitated before she answered. “The bed frame is a king. I want a very firm mattress, box springs, and a couple of sets of sheets and pillowcases.” Cass frowned up at him, and then looked away. “Oh, I guess I’d better order some pillows and blankets while I’m at it. Nothing with feathers, please. I prefer foam pillows.”

Looking back up at Matt, Cass was surprised to see a teasing look on his face.

“You have a king size bed all for yourself?”

Embarrassed, Cass looked away as she answered. “Yes, my uncle Gus and his partner had a king size bed.” Thinking about the bedroom suite, she smiled and looked up at him. “You should see it, Matt. It’s so beautiful. The headboard has all these intricate carvings on the spokes. I’ve never seen anything like it. It reminds me of Indian totems. I love the dark wood. It gives the room such a warm and comfortable feeling.” Cass sighed as she described the furniture to him, not realizing how her smile had changed to a look of happy satisfaction. She had first thought the furniture dismal, but on closer examination, had discovered the carvings.

“Wow, I’d love to see it, Cass. It sounds beautiful.” He smiled down at her.

Cass suddenly realized what she said and felt mortified. She had all but invited this man to see her bedroom furniture. *Arrggghh*, she groaned to herself. When would she ever learn to control her mouth? He’s going to think she is coming on to him. Not really surprised, once again Cass could feel the flush of embarrassment running up her cheeks. If she spent much more time around this man, she’d be in serious danger of bursting into flames.

“I didn’t get a chance to ask you yesterday, but did you find the house in as bad a shape as I imagined it would be?”

Relieved that he changed the subject, Cass told him about the house.

“Well, let’s see. There’s a year’s worth of dust on absolutely everything.” She grimaced before continuing. “The fridge, something else I am going to have to order from you, is totally shot. Someone unplugged it, probably to defrost, and then just left it.” She looked up at Matt and chuckled. “And let me tell you, a puddle of water that’s been sitting for a year inside a closed refrigerator is not a pleasant thing. And that’s putting it mildly.” Cass laughed out loud and shook her head.

“Of course, all the walls need painting. The hardwood floors could use a good sanding and refinishing, and the outside needs either paint or siding put up.” She took a deep breath and walked a couple of steps away. “The kitchen’s in fair shape. It’s a horrible color, and I’ll definitely want it painted or wallpapered.” Grinning wickedly, Cass looked Matt directly in the eyes. “I’m guessing it’ll be painted because I can do that myself. I don’t have any experience hanging wallpaper. I can just imagine me trying to do that. I would be like the fourth stooge!” Just as she hoped, Cass’s comments caused Matt to laugh along with her.

“The bathroom, thankfully, only needs the walls painted. The tub and everything else are in perfect condition.” Cass’s voice rose with her excitement. “Oh, you should see the tub...ugh...maybe I should just stop at that.” Once again, an embarrassed flush began to rise in Cass’s face.

Matt threw back his head and laughed. “What can I do to help you, Cass? Maybe you could use another pair of hands holding a paintbrush. Or, if you really want wallpaper, I know two sets of hands that are quite experienced and would love helping a new neighbor settle in. You wouldn’t have to pay us. For a little food, drink, and good company, we’d give you hours and hours of *help*.”

Cass couldn’t help but notice how he stressed the last word, making her wonder just what all his *help* would consist of.

Flustered, she responded, “That’s really sweet, Matt, and I’ll certainly...” Cass’s voice dropped off to a whisper and she turned as white as a sheet. She seemed frozen in place, with her eyes staring straight ahead.

* * * *

Matt was enjoying the flirtatious conversation with Cass when she suddenly turned white and seemed to stare intently at something behind him. Alarmed, he turned his head to see what she stared at and saw Demon and Angel walking slowly down the aisle toward the counter. Both of them had their mouths open, clearly displaying their wicked-looking teeth, with their tongues hanging out. Both of their tails were up and wagging in a friendly greeting. He turned back to Cass, slightly shocked at the fear he saw in her eyes and the pallor of her face. He watched her take a step back slowly.

Matt lowered his voice and spoke softly to her. “Cass, honey, they won’t hurt you. They’re very gentle. See, their tails are up and wagging. That means they’re friendly.”

Matt couldn’t tell if his voice was penetrating her fear or not. As he watched her take another step back, he realized that she probably hadn’t heard a word he said. He caught movement out of the corner of his eye and looked up to see David coming toward the front of the store. He was walking up behind Cass.

Matt knew exactly when the dogs noticed David. Both of their tails began to wag even faster, and they quickened their steps toward David was walking. He watched Cass take a couple more steps backward, right into his brother.

* * * *

Cass was horrified to see the two monstrous dogs advancing toward her. She didn’t want to set them off, so she began to back

away slowly. As she slowly backed away, keeping her eyes on the terrifying beasts, she collided with a solid mass. Terribly embarrassed, she turned quickly to apologize and froze in shock. Her face lost even more color, and she blurted out, “Holy crap! There are two of you!”

Cass had taken her eyes off of the dogs when she ran into Matt’s twin, so she didn’t see them approaching. All of a sudden, they jumped up and put their front legs on her. She felt them lick her chin and right ear, nearly knocking her to the floor in the process.

“Ahhh,” Cass screamed out and grabbed at David for protection.

* * * *

David had finished up his work in the basement and was headed upstairs to find Matt and ask about getting some lunch. He rounded the corner and saw his brother talking to a beautiful woman. Smiling, he decided to let his brother introduce him to the lovely lady.

As he walked up the main aisle, he noticed Demon and Angel walking toward the counter. *They’re headed for their bed behind the counter.* He frowned when he saw the panicked look on his brother’s face. It was then he realized that the woman was slowly backing down the aisle, away from the approaching dogs.

David walked up behind the woman. Before he could ask Matt what was going on, she backed into him. Looking down at her, he watched as she turned around and looked up at him. Alarmed at the pallor of her face, he was shocked when she cried out, “Holy crap, there are two of you.”

Before he could say anything, Demon and Angel decided to say hello to her, jumping up and giving her a kiss on the face. Unfortunately, their combined weight nearly knocked her to the floor, and, apparently, she wasn’t in a loving mood. She screeched and grabbed at David like he was a lifeline.

David automatically clutched her in his arms and felt an electric jolt at the touch of her skin against his. He instinctively pulled her even closer to his body. She felt so good, like she belonged there. David couldn't stop the thoughts racing through his head. Taking a deep breath, he took in her scent. She smelled like strawberries.

She had both of her hands clutched around his left arm in a death grip. Her eyes were focused completely on the dogs. He used her grip as leverage and pulled her around so that her back pressed flush against his front. Probably not the best move on his part since he could feel his cock hardening. He knew that the chances were pretty good that she could feel it, as well.

He let his right arm swing around, and gripped her around the waist, anchoring her to his body. With her firmly in his arms, he bent over and rested his chin on her heavenly smelling, silky hair. Man, he could really get used to this.

While David held Cass tightly in his arms, Matt grabbed the leashes they kept under the cash register, hooked the dogs, and led them to the back break room, shutting them in. While he waited for Matt to come back, David talked softly to Cass like he did when he gentled one of their horses, but she still looked a little shocked and didn't appear to hear anything he said.

He looked up when he heard Matt clear his throat.

"Uh, Cass, let me introduce my brother, David. I guess by now you've noticed that we're twins. He gave a little before he continued. "Listen, baby, our dogs are really little pussycats." He decided to ignore the little snort that came from Cass. "They wouldn't hurt a flea. If you like, I can introduce you to them so you can make friends." David bent over so he could see her better. He knew Matt's voice usually had a calming effect, but he could see from the look on her face there would be no such introductions today.

* * * *

Cass was wishing the floor would open her up and swallow her whole. She looked back over her shoulder at the man whose arms held her so tightly and suddenly realized she was still standing in his embrace. Oh, Lord, she could feel his erection against her back. How the hell could she extricate herself without embarrassing both of them?

As she glanced up at him, David smiled warmly down at her. “Hello, Cass, I’m very happy to meet you.” Without saying anything, Cass pulled out of his arms, wondering how someone could get into so much mischief on a simple shopping trip. Glancing up again, she couldn’t help but notice what sexy eyes he had. She could feel her nipples rubbing against the lace of her bra. When he glanced down at her breasts, she knew he could see the hardened tips pushing at her t-shirt. As her face flushed again, the one thing she did know for sure was she’d had enough shopping for one day. It was time for her to go home.

“Pleased to meet you, David. I’m sorry about my little meltdown. I had a, umm, bad experience with a large dog once, and I never really got over my fear of them. I’m sure you can understand.” She turned her back to him and looked back at Matt.

“Could you please go ahead and tally up what I owe you now so I can pay, and I’ll come back later for anything else I might need. As far as the mattress, just order the firmest one they have, and a matching box spring.” She started to turn around and then remembered something else. “Oh, and please order a refrigerator for me. It can’t be more than two and a half feet wide, or four and a half feet tall. That’s the size of the space in the kitchen where it’ll sit. I want it to be white to match the stove that’s already there. Other than that, I have no real preferences. Do you know when it will be in, and do you deliver?” Cass said all of this really fast. She just wanted to get things settled and be on her way.

“Yeah, we’ll be happy to deliver it to you. If I order it this morning, it should be here by Thursday at the latest, probably

sooner.” Looking over the items in her cart, Matt said, “You have quite a bit here, especially with all the paint you picked out. We’d be happy to bring it by the house for you, save you from having to haul it in. You know, David and I can wield a mean cleaning rag, as well. We’d be happy to help you get the rest of the house cleaned up. Isn’t that right, David?”

Cass turned around when she heard his brother speak. “Absolutely, I’d be happy to volunteer my services as a cleaning boy,” he replied with a wicked smile.

Cass knew these two hunks definitely needed to be avoided. “No thanks, ummm, I appreciate the offer, I really do, but I can manage just fine. The hauling will be good for me, just like the cleaning. It’s good exercise.”

“Well, you’re going to be awfully tired with all that cleaning and hauling. How ’bout letting us buy you dinner tonight as a break from your work?” Matt offered.

With a panicky look on her face, Cass glanced at both brothers. “Oh, I don’t think so. If I’m as tired tonight as last night, I’ll be too exhausted to go out to eat. By the time I get cleaned up, I’ll just want to go to bed.”

Matt frowned at her words. “Speaking of which, what are you sleeping on if you don’t have a mattress and box springs? If I remember correctly, there’s no couch.”

David looked puzzled as Matt questioned Cass about her sleeping arrangements.

“Oh, well I’ve got a sleeping bag,” Cass admitted rather reluctantly.

This time David spoke up. “A sleeping bag! You’re sleeping on the floor in that old house in a sleeping bag?” He sounded appalled.

“Yes, it’s not as bad as you make it sound.” Cass laughed at the horrified looks on their faces. “I’m quite comfortable and plenty warm. Besides, according to Matt, my bed should be here before the end of the week. I can certainly rough it for that long.”

Matt spoke up quickly. “We have a guest room that you’re welcome to use. It has its own bathroom.” Both men looked at her expectantly.

Unwilling to meet their gaze, Cass replied, “Thanks, but I’ll have to decline. I, umm, have trouble sleeping sometimes, and it’s good to be able to work on the house whenever the mood strikes me. I really do appreciate the offer, though, Matt. It’s very generous for you to offer to take a stranger into your home. Do you have a total for me now?”

“Sure, here you go.” Matt handed her the bill, and Cass quickly wrote him out a check. Suddenly, she remembered that her check came from out of state and he might not be willing to take it. Of course, she could always use her credit card if she had to. She had avoided them as much as possible, so Eric didn’t have a paper trail to track her with.

Matt glanced at her face and then down at the check. “The check is fine, Cass.” Smiling at her, he added, “Besides, we know where you live if the check’s no good.” He smiled, then winked at her.

Cass tried to hide her smile, tore off the check, and handed it to him. “I promise the check’s good and you won’t have to send out a search party for me.”

“Too bad,” David responded. “That’s one search party I’d gladly volunteer for.” The look he gave her took her breath away.

Cass turned to grab the cart to leave. Both men insisted on taking her purchases and putting them in her truck. Awkwardly following them outside, she watched them load the bags in the back and thanked them once more. She quickly started the engine and backed away to head down the street. Looking in her rearview mirror, she saw the two brothers standing on the sidewalk, still watching her as she drove away.

Hmmm, Cass couldn’t help thinking. Since Matt and Serena are involved, then maybe David is free.

She couldn't deny it felt really good when he held her. David had pressed his erection against her. He had to be interested in her, didn't he?

"What am I thinking?" Cass said aloud. "Matt and David are twins, so it stands to reason if Matt's too young for me, then so is David. I've got to get a grip on my hormones. I'm not used to being subjected to all this testosterone." Cass snorted out loud. "Boy, I'll be glad when all my shopping's done and I can hibernate in my new house for the winter." Smiling, thinking ahead to actually having the house finished, Cass headed toward home.

* * * *

David stood with his brother and watched the feisty woman drive away. For the first time in a very long time, he couldn't tell what Matt was thinking or feeling. Matt broke the silence. "Well, did you, or did you not, feel the same pull to her as I do?"

David looked at his brother carefully before replying to the question. "Yes, I felt an attraction. I'd have to be dead not to feel something, especially after she plastered herself to me." He shook his head and walked a couple of steps away. "Talk about strange. I've never seen anyone respond to Demon and Angel like that. They positively terrified her."

"Yeah, that was pretty intense. You could practically feel her fear. Wonder what happened to her to make her respond like that."

"Do you know anything at all about her, more than the fact you want her in your bed?" David asked his brother dryly.

"Not really. Oliver's been very secretive about her. I only know that she's the only living relative of Gus Laughlin. Apparently, he left her his house when he died last year."

"Why's she just coming here to live if he died over a year ago?"

"Oliver hasn't volunteered any information. However, Serena's not so discrete. She told me that a family member now owned the

house, but that Oliver had trouble tracking her down. Serena said he had to hire a private investigator to find her. Apparently, it took a year to turn her up.”

“Even stranger. So, you really want to pursue a relationship with this elusive female without knowing anything else about her?”

“I know that I get a special feeling inside when I look at her. I know my cock gets hard enough to pound nails when I’m close to her, and I’m afraid it’s going to explode. I know I feel light headed when I get close enough to get a whiff of that strawberry scent she has.”

Frowning, Matt turned around and sat down on the bench outside their store. “Don’t you remember all the good times we had when we shared women in the past? I felt so close to you then, David, and I want to have that closeness again.” Matt sighed as he looked up at his brother. “I’m still convinced that we’ll find the perfect woman to make our life complete. She’ll love us both, equally, together and as individuals. My heart’s telling me that Cass could be the one. I know she desires us. You can see it in her eyes and on her body if you’re looking in the right place.” Matt laughed.

“Well, I don’t know about all this forever talk, but I do know that it wouldn’t be any imposition at all to make love to her. Past that, I’m not committing myself. I’d like to believe that there’s one perfect woman out there that would want to love and build a life with both of us. Especially since we did so badly out on our own.

“I’m a lot more realistic than you, Matt. I don’t want to walk around in a fool’s dream state. I’m happy to see where a relationship with Cass could take us, but I’m not going to shoot for forever along with you.”

David looked at the frown on Matt’s face and knew he upset his brother. Not wanting anything to come between them he continued, “So, what’s the plan, brother? What’s our next step in the conquest and seduction of the fair Cass?”

David watched Matt look over at him, but couldn’t read the expression on his face. “Well, I say we take matters into our own

hands. If Mohammed won't come to the mountains, then the mountains will just have to go to Mohammed. Little Miss Cass says she'll be too tired to eat out tonight, but she still has to eat. I propose we pick up enough food for three and just knock on her door around dinnertime. She's bound to let us in if we just show up with food."

Reluctantly, David agreed. "Okay, we'll try it your way. There's just something about her that I can't put my finger on. Did you notice how sad her eyes are? It's like she's living with a lot of secrets with no one to share them with. She's beautiful, but there's an underlying sadness there. It makes you want to catch her up in your arms and protect her from the world." If he kept ranting like this, Matt would think he'd lost his mind. Glancing back at Matt, David only saw an answering desire in his brother's eyes. Grimacing, he realized this woman would run them ragged and there didn't seem to be anything he could do about it.

Matt spoke up first. "Well, what do you suggest? Should we take pizza, Chinese, or maybe burgers? What makes a good delivery dinner?"

"Pizza. We can pick up a bottle of wine at home and take it with us. Just a little something to break the ice and to make sure Miss Cass is able to sleep after her long day."

Matt smiled. "Cass is not going to know what hit her!"

Chapter 5

Cass arrived back home, anxious to get started on the house. She needed something to help her work off all the sexual tension she'd built up during her brief encounter with the Carlisle twins. She smiled thinking about all the material they were unknowingly supplying that would feed her nighttime fantasies for a very long time. Working quickly, she brought in her purchases from the back of the truck. Bringing in the last bag, Cass sighed deeply. "Ahhh, home sweet home." She couldn't stop the tears from forming in the corners of her eyes. She'd never thought to have a home of her own after her divorce. Looking around the small room she whispered, "Thank you so much, Uncle Gus. I'd begun to believe my life was over, that I didn't have anything to look forward to. I didn't think anyone had ever cared about me. But now I know you cared. I wish I could have found you sooner. You don't know it, but you saved my life by giving me another chance at life. I wish you could be here to share it with me."

Cass dried the tears from her face and thought about all the changes in her life since she had arrived in Oregon. They were all changes for the better, but she still wished she had somebody to talk to about it all. She missed her best friend, Becky. "Oh my God, Becky! I totally forgot to call you when I got here."

Grimacing, Cass picked up the phone and dialed the number of her friend and former neighbor in Texas. It was answered on the second ring.

"Hello."

"Becky, it's good to hear your voice."

“Cass? Girl, are you all right? I’ve been so worried about you. You promised to let me know that you got there safely. What have you been doing?”

Laughing, Cass tried to answer her questions. “Wait, one question at a time please. First, I’m sorry I didn’t call you sooner. I don’t have any excuse except that I have been so overwhelmed with everything that I just plain forgot.” She heard Becky laughing at her words.

“Overwhelmed in a good way, I’m guessing. You sound more cheerful than I’ve ever heard you. What’s going on?”

“Oh, I’m definitely cheerful. In fact, I’m borderline happy.” Cass snickered when she heard her friend growl in response.

“Okay, I get the picture, now tell me what’s made you so cheerful”

“Well, for starters, I’ve got a home again. Not a dinky little apartment, but a real, honest to goodness, house.”

“Honey, that’s great.”

“Yeah, it’s not very big, but it’s plenty big enough for me. It’s got one bedroom and one bath, and not much else.”

“What about the town? Are the people friendly? Has Mr. Barton been able to give you any help?”

“The town is pretty small, and I haven’t met many of the people yet. I guess you could say Oliver’s been nice.”

“What’s that suppose to mean?”

“Well, he’s been sort of friendly since I got here.”

“Friendly how?”

“He asked me to come and stay at his house with him.” Cass was not prepared for the screech coming from the phone receiver.

“*He what?*”

“The house is kind of in a mess, needs a lot of cleaning and some other work. Oliver didn’t think I should be staying here until he had someone in to do the cleaning. He offered me the use of his guest room while the work was being done.”

“That doesn’t sound so bad.”

“I know, it all seems innocent enough, but the way he looks at me, and the way he touches me from time to time, makes me very nervous. He told me that my Uncle Gus had wanted him to take care of me.” Cass sighed. “Becky, I can’t explain it, but he gives me the willies.”

“Geez, I don’t know what to say, Cass. I didn’t get that impression of him at all when he was here. What are you going to do about it?”

“I’m figuring on just ignoring him for the most part. I still have some paperwork to get settled about the estate, and then it should be fairly easy to avoid him for a while. I figure he’ll get the message sooner or later that I’m not interested in a closer friendship, at least not with him.”

“Ohhh, and is there somebody that you are interested in a closer relationship? Hmmm?”

Cass hesitated before answering her friend. Apparently, the silence went on for too long because she heard Becky’s voice again.

“Come on, Cass, give. What’s been happening?”

“Well, I did get a chance to meet some of the town’s people.”

“Arrggghh, this is like pulling teeth. Who, specifically, have you met?”

Cass laughed at her friend’s obvious frustration. “Well, I did meet the owners of the local hardware store. They seemed quite nice.”

“Okay, nice can be good. Are these store owners the old, pot-belly, gray-haired, tobacco chewing type of small town store owners?”

“Not exactly, they’re more the ten years younger than me, drop dead gorgeous, identical twin brother type small town store owners.” This time Cass was prepared for the loud squeal.

“Arrggghh, you devil. What have you been up to, you sly fox. Twins? Identical twins? Boy, when you get back in the game, you don’t mess around, do you? So what’s the story? Are you interested in them?”

“Them? Are you crazy? I was nervous thinking about being interested in one of them. I never even considered the two of them together.”

“Calm down, Miss Prim and Proper. It was just a slip of the tongue. The big question is, have either of them shown any interest in you?”

“Sort of. Matt has asked me to have dinner with him several times, but I only met his brother today.”

“Dinner sounds great. What did you say?”

“I had to say no. I met Matt my first day here. I was really tempted to say yes, but then Oliver’s secretary joined us, and it became very clear that they were a couple. There was no way I wanted to get into a situation like that. Besides, there wasn’t any way I could compete with her. She’s young and very beautiful.”

“Don’t put yourself down, Cass. I’ve told you before that you’re a very beautiful woman yourself. You just have to make yourself believe it, honey.”

“I know, and I really am trying.”

“What about the brother? Is he involved with anyone?”

“I’m not sure. I haven’t seen him with anyone, and Matt didn’t mention a wife or girlfriend when we had breakfast yesterday.”

“Wait a minute, you had breakfast yesterday with the one who has a girlfriend? I’m confused.”

“It was only a chance meeting. I went into town to get some supplies and decided to have breakfast at the local diner. It was pretty crowded, so when Matt came in he asked if he could share my table. It was pretty harmless.”

“Sure it was, harmless for you, maybe. Sounds to me like he is interested in getting to know you better.”

“I don’t really think so. As I was leaving, Serena was coming through the door to join him. It was just a fluke that we ended up there at the same time.”

“Okay, well there’s still the brother. Is he cute?”

"I already told you they are gorgeous. But, like I said, they're much younger than me, and I sincerely doubt they're interested in an old, divorced woman."

"Sweetie, don't sell yourself short. He could easily be interested in you."

"Maybe."

"What will you do if he asks you out?"

"I don't really think that's an issue. I can't see it happening."

"Never say never. I want you to promise me something."

"What's that?"

"If he does ask you out I want you to say yes."

"I don't know about that, Becky."

"Please, Cass, just say yes and give it a chance. It might not lead to anything, and then again it might lead to something romantic. If nothing else, at least you will have made another friend. Plus, it would be a way to keep Oliver at a distance."

"I hadn't thought of that. Still, it's redundant. He's not going to ask me out. It is a really nice fantasy though."

"Does that mean you're promising to say yes if he does ask you?"

"Yes, Mother! I promise to say yes if he actually asks me out. Does that make you feel better?" She laughed as she teased her friend.

"Yes, my child, Mother is feeling much better about your move now."

"Becky, you are even crazier than I am."

"That may be true, but I still know what's best for you, and don't you forget it. Cass, I'm sorry but I've got to go. I promised my mother that I would be there for Sunday dinner, and I'm already about thirty minutes late. If I don't leave soon, she'll skin me alive."

"Okay, I'll let you go then. It's been really good talking to you. I was feeling kind of lonely and needed to hear a friendly voice."

"Anytime. And you better keep me informed about the twin saga. I want to know details, lots and lots of details."

“I will, I will...I’ll talk to you soon. Take care and tell your mom I said hello.”

“Sure thing, you take care of yourself and call me soon. Bye.”

Cass heard the phone click as her best friend hung up. Sighing, she smiled and got to her feet. She couldn’t deny that she felt one hundred percent better after talking to Becky. It was good to know that she could still reach out to her friend if she needed to. Groaning, she looked around the kitchen. It was time to get started on all the cleaning needed.

Several hours later, Cass was finishing up in the last room when a loud clap of thunder startled her. Frowning, she glanced over at the window, surprised to see how dark it had gotten. She walked over to take a look outside. Almost immediately, the rain started coming down so hard she could barely see the garage door. She flinched when a jagged streak of lightning raced across the blackened sky, followed closely by the huge, crashing sound of thunder. Backing away from the window quickly, she headed toward the kitchen. She was halfway down the hall when she heard a pounding on the front door. Cass slowly walked into the living room where she jumped at another round of hard pounding on her door. Now she really regretted having no peephole. She had no way of knowing who was on the porch. Quietly, she walked over to the window and peeked out. She couldn’t see the porch from this angle, but she did see a blue truck parked in the driveway. Once again, someone pounded hard on the front door.

Quietly, Cass tip toed to the door to see if she could hear anyone. She was just about to yell, “Who’s there?” when the door shook from the hard pounding on the other side, and a thunderous voice called out to her.

“Cass, open up, it’s Matt and David. We’re drowning out here.”

Swearing under her breath, Cass debated on opening the door to the stars of her most recent fantasies. She glanced down at herself and groaned out loud. She figured she would have trouble impressing

them on one of her best days. Did they have to show up when she looked her worst? Looking down at herself critically, she saw her old jeans that had holes in the knees and at least one near her butt, plus a shirt that had faded with age and had a missing button that she replaced with a safety pin. Her sweaty hair was pulled up in a ponytail and several strands had been pulled out as she labored on the house. She knew she had to be covered in dust and probably smelled like cleaning fluid instead of her strawberry bath salts.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

“Cass, open the door and let us in. We know you’re there. We’re getting pounded out here by the rain, woman.” Matt’s voice sounded like he had lost patience with her.

Reluctantly, Cass reached over, twisted the lock on the door, and began to open it. Before she pulled the heavy door very far, it flew out of her hands. She barely had time to step aside before the two brothers came barreling in. Shocked at how wet they were, Cass could only look on in amazement as the two of them simultaneously shook their heads to dislodge the excess water, pretty much how she would have expected their dogs to do.

“Arrggghh,” Cass yelled out as the two men standing in her front hall showered her. Both of the brothers turned their sexy brown eyes toward her and gave her a smile that stole her breath away. She felt her nipples harden almost painfully, and moisture began to pool low in her body in that sweet place between her legs.

Oh, God, what is wrong with me? This can’t be good. What are they doing here and how fast can I get them out? Maybe they’d be willing to come back after I get cleaned up. What am I thinking?

Suddenly, Cass noticed that David carried two boxes that looked suspiciously like they came from a pizza place, and Matt carried two bottles of what appeared to be wine. Before Cass could figure out what this meant, the brothers turned to look directly at each other, and then brought their gazes back to her. Together, smiling at her, they spoke for the first time. “We brought dinner.”

Cass felt a little jolt at their announcement.

“That’s very sweet, but it wasn’t necessary.” Then, to her utter embarrassment, her stomach chose that precise moment to growl loudly, protesting the fact that she hadn’t stopped her cleaning long enough to eat something for lunch. Embarrassed, Cass dropped her head down to her chest to try to avoid their reaction.

Matt and David broke out in a hearty laugh. Each one took their free hand and grabbed hold of one of Cass’s arms. Together, they pulled her toward the kitchen. She allowed them to tug her along, the smell of the pizza making her almost dizzy.

Once in the kitchen, Cass watched them glance around and then set the pizza and wine down on the small table. She saw them glance at her two chairs and then back at her. She had this sudden vision of her sitting on Matt’s lap while David fed her bites of pizza. *Oh, get a grip on yourself, girl, you’re about to allow fantasy to leak over into real life.*

Once again, they each took one of her arms and led her back to the living room where there were two lean-back chairs. Gently, they pushed her down into one of them. Staring at her intently with laughter and a twinkle in their eyes, they told her to “stay.”

Unable to resist letting out her bizarre sense of humor, Cass raised both her hands in front of her like a dog’s paws and barked twice. She bit her lip as both men looked momentarily stunned and then felt relief when they broke out in laughter.

“Cass, I like your sense of humor.” Matt chuckled.

David leaned down closer to her. “You are going to join us for dinner aren’t you?”

Remember the promise she made to Becky, Cass smiled up at both men. “Well, since you went to all this trouble, I’d be happy to have dinner with you.” She was startled by Matt’s response.

“That’s my girl. We’ll be right back.”

Cass watched as they disappeared into the kitchen and then returned carrying her small kitchen table between them. Before she could say

anything, they disappeared back into the kitchen. After a few moments, they came back out carrying the pizzas, wine and everything else they might need for a small, intimate dinner for three.

Intimate dinner for three, where's your mind wandering, Cass. They're just being friendly, bringing dinner to a friend. Just keep telling yourself that.

After laying out napkins, Matt dished out pizza to everyone while David poured three glasses of the wine. Both men held up their glasses, and David gave a toast. "Here's to forming new friendships." Hesitantly, Cass picked up her glass and touched it to theirs, joining in their wish for friendship.

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Matt hid a smile when Cass touched her glass to his in answer to David's toast. If he was honest with himself, he expected her to show them the door when they showed up unexpectedly. It was important that this little impromptu dinner was a success, otherwise they might never get her agree to come out with them.

When Matt scooted his chair up closer to the table, he felt his knee touch Cass's and wasn't surprised to see her stiffen up and freeze. Knowing he had to get her mind on something else, he casually asked her a question.

"So, how do you like our little town so far, Cass?" He was relieved to see her shoulders relax and the smile that came upon her face.

"I like it great so far. Everybody's been so friendly. It's beginning to feel like home to me."

"Where are you from, Cass?" David asked, while he topped off her glass of wine.

"I'm a native Texan. What about you guys, have you always lived here?"

“Yeah, except for the time we spent in college. Matt and I were born here. The hardware store has been in our family for over forty years.”

“That is a long time. Are your folks still living?”

“No, they've both been gone for quite some time. It's only Matt and I now.”

“Well, suppose you two tell me a little bit about the people here.”

“What do you want to know? Matt asked.

“Anything you think I might be interested in. Tell me the best places to shop, the places to avoid, that kind of stuff.”

“Okay, well let's see...”

* * * *

For the next hour, Cass laughed at the stories Matt and David told. In typical small town fashion, they seemed to know the gossip and juicy stories of everyone that lived there. Cass couldn't remember the last time she was this relaxed or had this much fun.

“Okay, guys, what about the two of you? All your stories have been about other people. Tell me a little bit about yourselves.”

Matt and David glanced at each other before either of them answered her question. Then David spoke up.

“Well, we're both single, although we have both been married before. Our life pretty much consists of the store. It takes a lot time and effort to run it. Neither of us likes to travel. We have a big house out in the country. Right now, our hobby is remodeling the attic. We're trying to turn it into a game room.”

“What about you, Cass?” Matt asked. “You've said you're from Texas. Tell us more about yourself. Have you ever been married?”

Cass hesitated for just a moment, not sure of how much about herself she wanted to reveal. “Yes, I was married. I've been divorced for almost two years now.” She sighed deeply. “I grew up in Texas. I

have to admit that I didn't know I had any relatives until Oliver contacted me about my Uncle Gus."

"Why is that, Cass?" asked Matt.

"Well, I grew up in foster homes, and we weren't really told anything about our original families. I guess I always just assumed that my mother gave me up because she didn't have anyone of her own. It was quite a shock when Oliver contacted me a few months ago."

"I seem to remember hearing that it took Oliver over a year to find you." David remarked.

Cass looked away, refusing to meet their eyes when she replied, "Well, maybe he needed to get a better investigator because I shouldn't have been that hard to find." Determined to change the subject, Cass continued talking. "Matt, you said you've been divorced, too. What about your relationship with Serena? Are there wedding bells in your near future?"

Amazed, Cass watched both Matt and David gasp, spitting wine at each other after her question. Unable to stop herself, Cass giggled. "At least it's white wine and won't stain." Laughing, she handed them a stack of napkins.

"Where the hell did you get the idea that Matt and Serena were a couple?" David demanded.

Before Cass could respond, Matt spoke up. "I think I can guess where she came by that idea." He looked briefly at Cass and smiled then back at his brother. "Serena pulled one of her tricks when Cass and I first met. I'd just invited her to dinner when Serena came up and draped herself over my arm. Then she went so far as to agree with me that *we* should take her to dinner to welcome her."

Now, Matt stared intently at Cass. "You got the impression that she belonged with me and that we were inviting you to dinner together, didn't you?"

Embarrassed, Cass tried to respond. "Well, I, umm, well."

Matt interrupted. "It's okay, baby. She did it on purpose. You got the exact impression she wanted you to get. But I swear to you, right here and now, there is nothing now, nor has there ever been, anything in the past, nor will there be anything in the future between Serena and either of us."

Cass wasn't sure whether she was more shocked at his reaction to her question, or the fact that he called her "baby". She glanced at David to get his reaction.

He merely smiled at her and raised his glass in a toast. "Truer words have never been spoken."

"That doesn't mean that we don't have interest in one certain someone right now, a certain *new* someone." Matt looked at her with such heat in his eyes that she couldn't mistake his meaning. She glanced again at David, and although he smiled at her, she didn't get the same sense of heat that she did from Matt.

Despite her promise to be open to any signs of interest from the men, Cass was more than a little uncomfortable with the direction of their conversation. "Uh, guys, that's really sweet, but maybe you should take into consideration that I'm over forty years old. Now I realize that's not really old, but it does make me more the old family friend who you might join for dinner occasionally. I'm sure there must be lots of young girls in this area that are dying to have your undivided attention." Cass tried to soften her words with a friendly smile. From the looks on their faces, she didn't think they were taking her words very seriously.

* * * *

Matt looked over at David and frowned. He couldn't tell what David was thinking, but he couldn't believe how easily she put herself down, not accepting the possibility that they found her desirable. Hell, couldn't she see her own sex appeal? Hadn't she seen that the two of

them had been sporting erections since they crashed through her front door?

Maybe it's time David and I let little Miss Cass see how she affects us.

Just as Matt reached for Cass's hand, the storm outside came back in full force. The walls shook as a huge crash of thunder, followed by the lights going off. Matt watched as Cass jumped, then shrank back in her chair. The storm obviously terrified her. The sound of the pounding rain suddenly became much louder, followed by several loud crashes of thunder that continued to shake the walls of the house. Cass paled and gripped the arms of the chair so hard, her knuckles whitened.

* * * *

Cass gritted her teeth and gripping the arms of her chair so hard that her fingers were going numb. For just a brief moment, she closed her eyes wishing the storm would pass quickly before she made a fool of herself. *What else can go wrong today?* She slowly opened her eyes to find Matt watching her closely.

I wonder if he knows any other grown women this afraid of storms. Oh God, please just let me get through this storm without making a fool of myself.

As soon as she made that wish, there was a bright flash of light outside the window, followed quickly by a thunderous boom. It sounded as if lightning struck something in the back yard. Cass yelped and jumped up from her chair not really knowing where to go or where to hide to escape the storm.

Both men jumped up when Cass did. They each took one of her arms in a gentle hold, and David leaned over to talk softly to her. "It's okay, honey. It's just thunder and lightning. It won't hurt you. It's just a loud noise that we have to deal with occasionally. It really isn't so

bad. Surely they had storms where you came from. I bet you saw some doozy twisters while you lived there.”

Finally, his words and calm tone got through to Cass’s conscious mind. “*Doozy* twisters.” Cass laughed. “What the hell is a *doozy* twister?”

David looked hurt, but then she saw a warm twinkle in his eyes. “You know, a really, really bad twister.”

Cass laughed and pushed softly against his chest to move him back. “You guys are crazy!”

She was about to say how much she appreciated them trying to calm her fears when she heard a strange sound. Stopping, she stared toward the back of the house to see if she could identify the noise. It made her feel slightly better when she realized that both men strained to hear it, as well. At least she knew she wasn’t imagining it.

Not able to identify the noise herself, Cass jumped in surprise when Matt took off down the hall toward the back of the house. She saw him stop in front of the bedroom door, and both she and David went to see what he’d found.

Before they could even get down the hall, Cass felt water drip on her head. Glancing up, she spotted several places in the ceiling that looked damp.

“Oh no, the roof is leaking?” Cass couldn’t keep the horror out of her voice. “But how can that be? This house has a full attic, so how is the rain getting through?” Matt turned around, then motioned her forward. “Come take a look.”

Cass walked over to stand beside him in the doorway and felt sick. Several leaks had penetrated the ceiling and now she had puddles in the floor and on the bed frame.

“Oh, no!” Cass wailed. She ran to the bed where she’d left her sleeping bag while she cleaned the living room. She grabbed the bag up and felt totally dismayed when she felt the soggy wetness in her hands. “Now what am I gonna do?” she complained, more to herself than to the brothers.

“You’re coming home to stay with us. That’s what you’re going to do,” Matt immediately said in a voice that brooked no argument.

“I can’t,” Cass began only to be cut off in mid sentence.

“No, Cass, Matt’s right. You can’t stay here with the roof leaking like this. The power’s still off, and it might be off for a day or two. You never know in these parts. And now you don’t even have your sleeping bag. We can’t just leave you here to sleep on the cold, hard floor.” David looked at her sternly.

“Please, Cass,” Matt added. Let us do this for you. Baby, I promise you’ll be perfectly safe. You’ll have your own room with a lock on the door and your own private bathroom. You can get some really good, uninterrupted sleep, and feel like a whole new woman tomorrow. Come on, baby, you know you want a chance to really relax.” Matt glanced at his brother before continuing.

“You know, we have a Jacuzzi tub in that bathroom. You can lie back and let the water swirl your aches and troubles away.” Matt’s voice had grown husky.

Cass groaned out loud, ignoring the smiles on their faces. She couldn’t decide if it was his voice calling her baby, or the idea of being alone in their house with them that had her so excited. She knew in her heart that it would be a mistake to go home with them. It’d be so easy to let go and let herself be seduced by one of them. But she was so tired and so cold. She had no idea what she’d do with a soggy sleeping bag. Everything happening at once really wore her down. She needed somewhere to rest and regroup.

“Okay, I accept your offer for refuge from the storm. I don’t want you to think I’m not appreciative. And, Matt, I’m not afraid to come to your house, so you don’t have to keep assuring me that I’ll have locks and privacy. We’re friends, guys, and friends respect each other’s privacy.” Ignoring the frowns on their faces, she continued, “Also, I could really use a good night’s sleep with a chance to get my act together and make plans for the rest of the work I need to do on

this place.” Glancing up she grimaced. “Apparently, I need to add a new roof to my to-do list.”

Smiling at both them, Cass took a deep breath and said, “Well, what are we waiting for. Your house is bound to be more comfortable than this rain forest we’re standing in. Luckily for me, I never unpacked my overnight bag, so I only have to pick it up. Just let me get my small bag and I can follow you home.”

Frowning, Matt spoke up. “I’m really glad you’re coming to stay with us, Cass, but I don’t think you should try to follow us.”

“Why not?” Cass started to complain when he cut her off before she could continue.

“Cass, the rain is positively torrential. It’s going to be really difficult seeing to drive, and you’re not familiar with the roads here. Our house is off the main road. Quite a bit off actually, and there’s a real possibility of your getting stuck if you don’t know the terrain as well as we do.” He reached out and took her hand. “Please, just let us take you in our truck, and I promise we’ll bring you back as soon as the storm passes. We’ll all be comfortable once we get out to our place. We have a huge wood burning fireplace, plus we have emergency generators that keep us supplied with electricity when the power is out.” Smiling down at her his voice lowered to almost a whisper. “You won’t be sorry you came with us.”

Fatigue washed over Cass, and she couldn’t think clearly. She just knew she wanted to be somewhere dry, warm, and comfortable, even if only for one night. She also liked the company of these two special men, and she’d be lying if she said the thought of spending the evening with them didn’t make her happy. Just thinking of being alone with them in their home made her breathing speed up and the secret place between her legs throb. What could it hurt to go with them and spend the night having wonderful fantasies in their guest bed? It didn’t really matter who drove. Personally, she thought it might just be what the doctor ordered.

“Okay, guys, I’m all yours till the rain stops, metaphorically speaking, of course. I’ll let you drive me, but only because I’m so tired. I don’t think I’d have problems with the roads, but it’s never a good idea to drive when you’re tired and frustrated.”

“Baby, you’re frustrated?” Matt was quick to ask.

Cass looked up and saw both men had positively lecherous looks on their faces.

Laughing, she replied, “Down, boys. I’m frustrated at not being able to finish the work here tonight.” She chuckled. “Jeez, you guys need to think about something else for a while. Believe me when I tell you that there’s more to life than the direction your thoughts are heading.”

“Cass, baby, if you truly believe that, then you haven’t learned how to live life yet. Now, let’s hit the road.” Matt shot her a look she couldn’t interpret and then glanced up at David and nodded. Before she knew what was happening, Cass was being propelled back out to the living room.

Matt and David went to stand by the front door while Cass went and grabbed her overnight bag. Slowly, she walked up to them, watching them break out in identical smiles when she calmly handed over her bag when they reached out for it.

David looked down at Cass and smiled. He took her arm in a gentle grasp and spoke. “Cass, the doors to the truck are unlocked. We’re all going to go really fast. I’ll grab the handle and open the door for you. Your only objective is to jump in the truck as fast as you possibly can. No matter what you do, you’re going to get soaked, so don’t worry about it. It won’t be bad when we get to our place because we can pull up in the garage and avoid the rain altogether. Are you ready?”

“Yep, I’m as ready as I’ll ever be.”

Both men laughed.

“Okay, here we go.” David said.

Before she could even collect her thoughts, Cass found herself sitting in the back seat of their truck.

“Ughh, I feel like a drowned rat!” Cass complained.

Matt turned around from the passenger’s seat in the front. “Don’t worry about it, baby, we’ll be home in about fifteen minutes, and you’ll be out of those wet clothes in about twenty.”

When he smiled at her with that the look on his face made Cass shiver. His reassurance didn’t alleviate her worries at all. For her own peace of mind, she decided to ignore his last statement and just lean back and relax. She found herself actually looking forward to seeing their home. She could always tell a lot about people when she saw how they lived.

Ignoring the brothers, Cass leaned her head back on the seat and closed her eyes, concentrating on relaxing. This should be a very interesting evening.

Chapter 6

David looked on in relief as the garage door slowly began to slide upward. They still had power at their house. As he waited for the door to finish climbing, he glanced over at Matt. “Is she still asleep?”

Matt glanced at Cass in the back seat. “Yeah, she’s out like a light. She hasn’t so much as twitched since you pulled out of her driveway. She must really be exhausted.

David stared over at his brother. “You saw the roads on the way home. How do you think she’s going to react when we tell her that we can’t take her back until at least Monday, and maybe not even then?”

“She’s gonna be spitting mad considering I told her that we’d bring her home whenever she wanted.”

Both brothers turned to stare at Cass when they heard little snuffling noises coming from the back seat. David quickly realized that she was snoring and turned to smile broadly at his brother.

Matt lowered his voice. “Once we show her the weather radar on the television, she’s bound to see that I didn’t lie to her. How could I have known about the flooding in the area or that the storm might last several days?”

“Well, not to be the rain that pisses on your personal parade, but how 'bout the fact that every time it rains here those roads flood.

“Well, she won’t know that unless you tell her, and you wouldn’t do that to your only brother, now would you?” Matt’s voice held a combination of humor and warning.

Laughing quietly, David eased his door open at the same time Matt silently opened his. David walked to the door leading into the house and turned around to watch Matt carefully ease open the back

door of the truck. Deciding to give him a moment alone with Cass, he went inside the house to get a fire started in the family room.

Right about now, he began to feel the chill of the rain and he imagined everyone would appreciate a nice, warm fire to curl up in front of. He had to admit, even if only to himself, he really looked forward to having Cass here for the next few days. Despite his desire to remain aloof, he found her beginning to get to him, too. He could easily imagine the three of them cuddling together in one of the large beds in their house.

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Matt watched his brother go into the house, then carefully eased the back door of the truck open. He quietly climbed into the seat next to Cass. She looked so beautiful lying there with her head back on the seat, her eyes closed, and her mouth parted just a tiny bit. She made the cutest little snuffling noises, almost but not quite a snore. For just a brief moment, he thought about just running his arm beneath her knees and around her back, picking her up, and carrying her into the house while she still slept. Something told him that might frighten her, so he quickly abandoned the idea.

Leaning over so he could stare right into her eyes as she woke, he placed his hand on her shoulder and shook her gently. “Cass, baby, come on, wake up. We’re home.” As she started to stir, he changed his gentle shake for long caressing strokes up and down her arm. “Cass, wake up now. We have to get you inside where it’s warm and dry.”

Matt watched as Cass’s eyes slowly opened. She seemed confused at first, then focused her gaze on him. He smiled down at her, content to just run his hand up and down her arm. As he watched, Cass seemed to focus her eyes on his lips. When she parted her slightly, he knew that he had to kiss her. Slowly, he ran his hand up her arm to grip the back of her neck and slowly began to lower his lips to hers.

* * * *

Cass was in the middle of a delicious dream. She was curled up on a soft bed with Matt and David's arms wrapped around her. She had never felt so safe and warm. Slowly, she became aware of someone calling her name. She could feel the heat of a hand as it traveled up and down her arm, even through the thickness of her jacket. Slowly, she opened her eyes and found herself drowning in the heat of Matt's dark brown eyes. Being so close, he filled her entire field of vision. She could tell that the truck had stopped moving, but all she could see or feel was Matt. Helplessly, she stared at his eyes and then lowered her gaze to his full, parted lips.

Oh, God, I want to taste those lips so badly.

Some of her desire must have shown on her face because suddenly Matt's hand traveled up to tangle in her hair at the nape of her neck. He gradually moved closer to her, giving her plenty of time to move away if that's what she wanted. But instead of moving away, Cass slowly closed her eyes and waited for the touch of his lips.

She felt his lips touch hers softly a couple of times. It wasn't enough for her. She gradually leaned her body toward his, trying to encourage him to deepen the kiss. Call parted her lips when she felt the tip of his tongue lick across her lip. She gripped his shoulders tightly when she felt his tongue slip into her mouth.

For several moments, she enjoyed the feel of his tongue tracing the interior of her mouth, learning his taste, and the feel of his body next to hers. Shyly, she pressed her tongue into his mouth wanting to explore as much as she could. She was so caught up in his kiss she didn't notice his other hand moving up her side. When she felt him gently squeeze her breast, she froze and withdrew from the kiss.

What am I doing? This isn't right. I'm sitting in a parked car making out with a man way too young for me. But it feels so right.

Cass put both hands on his chest and gently pushed him away. Breathing heavily, she stared warily into his lust filled eyes.

* * * *

Slowly, so very slowly, Matt pressed his lips to Cass's. Gently, caressing her lips with his, he touched them together once, twice, and then settled his mouth completely over hers. Encouraged by the fact she seemed to be leaning into him and not away from him, he traced the seam of her lips with his tongue. His heart rate doubled when he felt her open her lips just enough as an invitation for his tongue to explore further. He quickly took advantage.

Slowly, he thrust his tongue past her lips and teeth to trace the inside contours of her mouth. When he felt her tongue shyly push forward to tangle with his, the control he had over his own desire slipped. He tightened the grip he had on the back of her head, tilted her just a little, and deepened the kiss. Groaning deep in his throat, he coaxed her tongue back to his own mouth for her to taste a part of him.

As she accepted his deeper kiss, Matt let his hand slide slowly from her waist, up her stomach, to close lightly over her full breast, squeezing gently. He was disappointed when he felt her body stiffen, and her hands on his chest pushing him away. Matt raised his head and stared directly into her shocked, brown eyes. He loosened his grip on her neck, but didn't remove his hand from her breast. She looked frightened, and he desperately wanted to know what he'd done to cause that look.

"Shhh, baby, it's okay. I'd never hurt you. You're so beautiful. Cass, you're beginning to mean so much to us." When he saw her skeptical look, he rushed to continue. "I know we haven't known each other but a few days, but sometimes it happens that fast. Baby, I look at you and I can't think straight. I want to carry you off somewhere to love and protect you." Matt lowered his head and gently touched his

lips to hers, then leaned his forehead against hers. "I can see the fear in your eyes, baby. What are you afraid of? I want to help, but you have to tell me how." Matt kept his voice low, his forehead touching hers while his hand continued to gently squeeze her breast. He knew his touch affected her because her nipple had hardened. He could feel it pushing into his palm.

Cass continued to push against his chest. "Matt, please, we can't do this. It's not right." Desperately searching for the right words that would make him release her, she continued, "I'm not right for you. You're so young. You need to find yourself a nice, younger girl that can give you a lifetime of love and happiness, even children. I can't be that person, Matt, for a lot of reasons."

Not wanting to let her reason away from their relationship, Matt cut her off by placing his mouth back over hers, plunging his tongue back inside. For just a few moments, Cass responded to his kiss, returning it with everything she had. Then she froze up again and pushed him forcefully away. She caught him unprepared for the push, so this time she succeeded in freeing herself from his tight hold.

Realizing that he'd pushed too far, too fast, Matt tried to soothe her.

"I'm sorry, Cass. I know I got carried away. I can go slower, baby, and not push you so fast." Matt reached over and put a finger under her chin. He lifted her head until he could look into her eyes. "But what I can't do is give up and go away. Baby, you're wrong. You're just what we need. We aren't looking for a young girl or a future with children. We're looking for a lifetime filled with love and companionship. We want laughter and good loving and to experience life together. You're not too old, and we're not too young. Baby, you can get past all that if you give us a chance. Do you think you could do that? Could you at least try and keep an open mind while we get to know each other better?" Staring deeply into her startled eyes, he waited for her to respond.

He knew that he was pushing her much too fast, but he just couldn't seem to help himself. Some inner sense was telling him that if they didn't move forward with her quickly, they'd lose her. He was convinced that she was the one they were looking for. He knew she was afraid of something, and he felt this incredible need to protect her. He couldn't do that if she pushed them away. He never had feelings like this before. He looked at this woman and saw his and David's future, and he wasn't going to let her get away without a fight.

* * * *

Cass was drowning in sensation, and Matt's arguments were beginning to make a lot of sense to her. She was puzzled, though. "Matt, you keep saying 'we'. You said 'you're just what we need'. What do you mean by 'we'?"

"I'm talking about David and me. We've always known that we would someday fall in love with the same woman and share her. Baby, we both have feelings for you, and I can tell you have feelings for both of us. I just want you to give us a chance to get to know each other and see if we're right for each other."

Cass was shocked. They wanted to share her!

My God, I had trouble in a relationship with one man! How on earth would I ever manage to hang onto two young, sexy guys like Matt and David?

"Matt, you don't know what you're asking. There are things about me that you don't know. I know you don't understand, and I'm sorry because I don't think I can talk to you about it. I guess the best way to explain it would be to say that I'm damaged."

At Matt's shocked look, she quickly tried to explain. "Not damaged physically, but emotionally. I haven't had much, well, umm, luck in relationships in my past, and I'm pretty reluctant to put myself in the middle of any romantic partnership, much less a threesome."

Boy, even to Cass her words sounded stiff and formal. How did she get herself into this mess? More importantly, how could she get herself out?

Do I want to get myself out? That question in her mind sent shockwaves through her. What if she didn't pull away? What if she let herself have a brief relationship with two men? Could she feel different with a new, caring lover?

Could I satisfy them? God, she didn't even know what mechanics were involved except for what she'd read in her books. And what happens if she can't satisfy them and they go their separate ways? How awkward would it be? Would their disappointment in her result in violence like it had with Eric?

No, they are not like Eric. I don't think they'd ever be violent with me.

Looking into his eyes, she saw the same longing that she felt in her heart. Taking a deep breath, she made the decision to move her life forward and not backward. Taking her hand, she slowly raised it to lay against the side of his face. Using her thumb, she gently rubbed his full bottom lip, then leaned forward and placed a gentle kiss on his lips. Looking up into his hopeful expression, she gave him the answer he hoped for. "Okay, Matt, I'll give us a chance."

Matt placed his arms around her and hugged her close while she laid her head on his shoulder.

"Thank you, Cass. You won't be sorry, baby. I promise we won't rush you. We can take things nice and slow while we get to know one another better. We just want the chance to be with you." He pulled back and smiled down at her. "We'll keep you safe and happy, Cass, I promise you."

Cass smiled tenderly at him.

"Baby, I'm thinking we should head inside now before David sends out a search party. We've been out here a long time."

Cass giggled, and they quickly got out of the truck. Together, they went into the house to look for David.

They found him adding wood to the fireplace in the large family room off of the kitchen. He looked relaxed and happy to see that they'd decided to join him. Smiling up at Cass, he extended his arm, indicating the loveseat just beside the fireplace. "Well, fair lady, won't you join me here in front of the fire and soak up some warmth? I don't know about you, but I was chilled to the bone when I first came in out of the rain."

Cass slipped her damp shoes off in the kitchen and padded over to the loveseat. She dropped down onto the sofa and immediately felt the warmth from the blaze winding around her cold, aching body. Glancing around, she studied the large room with its cathedral ceilings and wide picture windows.

This place must be so beautiful at Christmas.

She could just envision a tall, decorated tree, with a roaring fire and stockings on the mantle.

Oh boy, am I losing it or what? I'm picturing their den decorated for Christmas. How weird is that?

She looked up when Matt spoke. "Would you like a tour of the place, Cass? Then maybe we could open another bottle of wine and the three of us could sit by the fire and get to know each other a little better." Both David and Matt looked at her hopefully at his last statement.

"Well, umm, I, umm, I'm really tired tonight, guys. The house looks beautiful, but for me to really appreciate it, I need to see it after a good night's sleep. Can I have a rain check? I've already had enough wine tonight to make me sleepy, so I wouldn't be very good company, anyway. There's always tomorrow." Cass could tell she rambled now, but she didn't care. The idea of sitting here in this romantic setting, in front of the fire, and drinking wine with these two sexy men scared her spitless. Matt said he would take things slowly, but the look in his eyes said slowly didn't register in his mind presently. Cass knew she didn't have the willpower to hold him off

tonight. So she would take the coward's way out and escape while she could.

* * * *

David looked at their reluctant guest and noticed her hands were trembling. Remembering how fast she fell asleep in the car, he realized that she really was exhausted.

David stood up and looked down at her. "We're sorry, Cass. We should have thought about how tired you would be after working all day. Come on with me, I'll show you to the guest room. There'll be other times we can sit and talk." He held out his hand to her and waited breathlessly to see if she would take it. After just a moment's hesitation, Cass laid her small hand in his and stood up. Smiling at her, he led her down the hall toward several closed doors.

"Good night, Cass. Feel free to sleep as late as you want in the morning. The store is closed tomorrow, anyway, so we don't have anywhere we have to be. I hope you sleep good, baby." Matt smiled to her as she walked past with David.

"Good night, Matt. Thanks for the pizza and the dry bed." Cass stopped briefly to place a kiss on Matt's cheek, then continued to follow David.

Opening the last door at the end of the hall, David stepped aside and let her enter the room first. He followed in behind her, but left the door open. Walking over to the dresser, he pulled open a drawer and turned to her.

"In here, we have a collection of items that guests sometimes take advantage of. There are gowns, socks, extra blankets, well, you get the idea." Walking over to another door, he turned the knob and pushed it open. "Here's your bathroom, and I wanted to show you how to work the Jacuzzi."

Cass walked over and followed him into the large room. David heard her gasp, and watched as she looked around. Her face radiated happiness. The Jacuzzi tub was big enough for at least four people. Plus, there was a separate walk-in shower that would easily hold another four people. The marble counter housed twin sinks, with cabinets and drawers in the vanity below.

Opening some of the cabinet doors and a few of the drawers, David pointed out some more things to her. “Here are extra towels and washcloths. There’s a collection of bath salts, bubble baths, shampoos, and conditioners. Just about anything you could possibly want to use should be in one of these cabinets. Reaching up, he turned off the bathroom light and heard Cass catch her breath at the darkness. Wanting to reassure her, he put his arm across her shoulders before he spoke. “Relax, it’s okay. I just wanted to show you the automatic night. It will stay on so you won’t wake to a completely dark room and forget where you are.”

He watched Cass look down at the light, then she turned and looked up into his eyes. David hadn’t ever wanted to kiss anyone as badly as he wanted to kiss this woman. He didn’t know what it was about her drew him or what had him practically salivating. She wasn’t beauty pageant pretty, but she was striking, and as far as he could tell, all woman. He knew he couldn’t let this chance slip by him. As Cass raised her head to look him in the eye, he lowered his head and firmly placed his lips over hers. With satisfaction, he felt her lips part, inviting him inside. Immediately, he slid his tongue into her silky depths and became overwhelmed by the flavor of her kiss.

As Cass melted into his kiss, David brought his other arm around her waist and pulled her body in close to his, melding them from shoulder to knee. As he lost himself in the warmth and taste of her mouth, he heard a tiny groan coming from Cass. He automatically tightened his hold on her body.

David pressed the hard evidence of his desire against her abdomen and immediately felt Cass stiffen and attempt to pull away from his

body. Not wanting to make her uncomfortable, he relaxed his hold, allowing her to pull back just a bit. He continued to kiss her until he felt her body relaxing again. Gradually, he pulled back from her lips without loosening his hold on her body and gazed deeply into her eyes.

“You’re so very beautiful, Cass, and you’re becoming very special to us. I hope you know how happy we are that you’re here with us. You bring a light to our life that wasn’t there before. I know all this is happening a little fast for you, but I hope you’ll give us a chance to see where this relationship could take us all.” Not wanting to overwhelm her too much, David pressed another brief kiss on her lips, released her from his arms, and quickly left her alone in the room, closing the door softly behind him.

* * * *

Cass was still having trouble catching her breath when David shut the door behind him. She stood in the bathroom doorway with a dreamy, confused expression on her face, wondering when she would wake up. This had to be the best dream she ever had.

Glancing at the Jacuzzi briefly, she decided it would be too much trouble tonight. She turned on the shower, quickly stripping out of her clothes as it heated. Stepping under the relaxing spray, Cass took a deep breath and forced her mind to go blank. She just wanted to be able to relax and get through this night so she could go back to her own house. These men made her nervous, made her want things that she’d never wanted before.

Sighing, Cass quickly washed up and turned off the shower. No amount of relaxing would make her forget the two men who kissed her tonight. Grabbing a thick towel from the closest rack, Cass dried off quickly and headed back out to the bedroom. After dressing in an oversized t-shirt she found in the drawer, she crawled into the bed and turned off the light. Curled up in the blankets, she gave herself

permission to think about the future, a future that might just include the two men sleeping somewhere in this big house.

* * * *

Out in the family room, David was sprawled across one of the sofas nursing a beer. He silently watched Matt in a similar pose on the other side of the fireplace.

“Okay, you’ve had a little more time to get to know her, what do you think?” Matt asked David.

Looking over at his brother, David took a long drink from his beer before he spoke. “I kissed her.”

Matt looked shocked, then absolutely delighted. “Well, that makes two of us. She must be going nuts right about now, trying to figure us out.”

David smiled back at his brother. “More like she’s trying to figure out if we’re competing with each other.”

“I hadn’t even thought of that,” Matt replied frowning, “I explained to her about how we wanted to share her, but she was kind of in shock over the kiss, and I’m not sure it really sunk in. If she didn’t understand, we’ll have to get her off that notion as soon as possible so she doesn’t start to develop any guilty feelings.”

“Even knowing how many things can go wrong with a three-way relationship like this, are you sure you still want to go forward?” David asked.

“Hell, yes, I’m sure. I get such strong feelings when I’m near her, I can hardly explain it. I’m torn between wanting to protect her, making her laugh, and fucking the shit out of her. Just thinking about how soft her skin is, and the scent she always has, is driving me crazy.”

David smirked. “Well, that isn’t saying much since driving you crazy would only be a short trip to the corner.” Ducking to avoid the pillow that Matt threw at him, David laughed and stood up to stretch.

There was no way he would admit to Matt that he was beginning to feel like she might be the right one, too. “I’m going to bed, bro. We have all day tomorrow and tomorrow night to try and make an unforgettable impression on the little lady. I, for one, want to be at my best, so I’m off to get my beauty sleep.

“All right, I’ll see you in the morning.” Matt turned back to the fire as David walked away.

* * * *

“Do you really think this is a good idea?” David whispered.

“Well, it will definitely let her know that we’re not in competition with each other. Isn’t that what we wanted?” As he answered his brother, Matt made his way quietly across the darkened bedroom and slowly opened the drapes letting in the morning light. With the brightening of the room, both men turned to look at the woman sleeping in their guest room. With a look of determination on his face, Matt slowly stalked toward the unsuspecting beauty. He advanced up the left side of the bed while David approached from the right.

Cass lay on her stomach, both arms up under the pillow. Her silky, shiny hair fanned out over her shoulders and down her back. The covers had slipped down just far enough to reveal a shoulder laid bare where her t-shirt had slipped.

Carefully, so not to shake the bed, they both sat down beside the sleeping woman. Matt picked up a strand of her hair and began to tickle her nose while David stretched out on his side, propped up on his elbow and stared down at her.

* * * *

Cass frowned and tried to pull away from something tickling her nose. She didn’t want to wake up yet. For the first time in a very long time, she’d slept soundly. Caught up in the most delicious dream

about the men from the hardware store, she didn't want to wake and lose it. Turning her face into the pillow to escape the distraction, she tried to concentrate on the image of the two men holding her close between them. *They both ran their lips along the side of her neck, and then traveled down her body to each take a hardened nipple into their warm mouths.*

Cass groaned deep in her throat as she felt the annoying tickle again, this time in her ear. She slowly turned her head toward the distraction and opened one eye to see what ruined her morning.

Wait. Am I still in the dream? Matt's looking at me like he wants to eat me alive. Cass glanced down at the covers and realized she still lay in the bed. Looking back up at his smiling face, she thought her dream was getting better. Slowly, she pulled her hand out from under the pillow and reached up to touch the side of his face. Before she could make contact, he reached out, grabbed her hand, and brought it to his lips.

"Good morning, baby. Did you sleep well?"

Suddenly, the realization that this wasn't a dream hit Cass. She watched as Matt started to lower his head to hers, and she panicked, pushing herself backward to avoid his descending lips. She had not put more than a couple of inches between herself and Matt when she came up against a warm, solid wall. Turning quickly to look behind her, she felt stunned to see David cuddled up next to her with his head on her pillow.

"Eeeek!" Cass screeched and bolted into a sitting position. "What's going on, guys? What are you doing here?"

Matt and David started to laugh, then stopped and groaned loudly. As they continued to stare somewhere below her eyes, Cass glanced down to see what had gotten their attention. She cringed when she realized that in her haste to get away from them, she'd jumped up and left the blankets behind. She could easily see her hardened nipples through her t-shirt's threadbare fabric as well as her dark areolas. Quickly, she reached for the blanket and pulled it up to her chin.

“Whoa, baby, we only came to wake you for breakfast and maybe get a good morning kiss.” Matt spoke to her softly. She was surprised that she began to relax at the sound of his voice. Cass took a deep breath and ran her fingers through her hair. Matt began to slowly move toward her. She watched him warily, but didn’t try to pull away. She watched a smile come over his face.

Very gently, he touched his lips to hers, swiping his tongue over the seam of her lips just once. “What about me?” David called out, dragging her attention away from Matt.

Turning her head to look at him, Cass had to laugh out loud. David had put on a fake pouty face, like a spoiled child who didn’t get what he wanted for Christmas. “We certainly can’t forget you,” Cass said as she started to lean down to touch her lips to his.

Suddenly, Demon and Angel came bounding into the room and jumped up on the foot of the bed, barking once to announce their arrival. “Eeeeeeeek!” Cass saw the large animals out of the corner of her eye and screamed. Her only thought was to escape. She blindly pushed off with her legs and arms, making a dash to the side of the bed nearest the door. Unfortunately, she had to go over David to reach it. As she scrambled away, her feet came in contact with Matt’s legs, and she used him to propel herself forward, nearly knocking him off the bed in the process. Her arms wildly pushed down to give herself leverage, pummeling David in the head and shoulders.

* * * *

David watched as Cass slowly lowered her lips to his. He fought the urge to shift positions in order to ease the tightness in his jeans. It was fast becoming a permanent condition as long as he was around this woman. Just as their lips were about to meet, Cass let out a scream that had him nearly jumping off the bed.

“What the hell?” He felt the mattress give and heard Demon and Angel bark at the same time Cass’s body came crashing onto his prone form.

To protect himself, as well as take advantage of his chance to hold Cass’s body firmly against his own, David threw both arms around her and drew her tightly down against his chest. He quickly trapped her flailing arms under his. Watching his brother lead the dogs from the room, David attempted to calm the hysterical woman.

“Shhh, honey. It’s okay, you’re safe. Matt’s taking them out. They won’t hurt you, Cass. They wouldn’t hurt anybody.” While he used his voice to soothe her, David’s hands ran up and down her back. He could feel her entire body tremble and wondered what made her so afraid of dogs. He looked up as Matt returned to the bed and lay down beside them.

He watched Matt stretch out on the bed beside them, then take Cass’s hand and link their fingers together. She didn’t seem to know he was there.

Matt raised his hand and pushed back her hair from her face. “Cass, baby, you can relax now. They’re gone. I put them in the family room and shut the door. They can’t get back in here now.” Matt shifted a little closer. “I’m so sorry, baby. I should have never left the bedroom door open. It won’t happen again, I promise. Do you forgive me?”

* * * *

Cass could feel her heart pounding, and there was a roaring in her head. She felt as if she’d been running for her life and could barely catch her breath. Dimly she was aware that someone was talking to her. She didn’t feel like she had the strength to answer. Gradually, she became aware that Matt was beside her.

Cass turned her head slowly and looked into his eyes. The heat in them made her catch her breath. Then, as she realized the position of

her body, she felt a flush slowly spread up her neck and into her cheeks.

Oh my God, how am I supposed to get out of this with any dignity? I promised Matt that I would give a relationship between us a chance. I wanted to be this secure, sexy older woman. I wanted to prove that I could be what they want, and what do I do? I act like some silly little twit over their damn dogs. Okay, there has to be a way to extricate myself without causing too much more embarrassment. I'll just ask him to let me go. Then I can calmly get dressed and get them to drive me back to my house before I make an even bigger fool of myself.

Cass turned back to look at David and froze at the look of desire in his eyes. She felt self conscious at the way her rounded, soft body laid against his hard, muscular one. He had on a western-styled shirt that left crisp, black hair showing above the top fastened snap. She suddenly had this heady urge to grab both sides of his shirt and pull, popping the snaps open, to allow her hand to roam freely over his masculine, hairy chest. The belt in his jeans just barely stabbed her in the stomach, and his legs were slightly spread, cradling her between them. Her breath caught as she realized that she lay against his very prominent and hard erection.

Oh, my God, did I do that to him?

Realizing that she needed to get out of this position quickly, Cass lowered her hands to David's shoulders and pushed firmly to put space between them. It would have worked if David had been willing to let her go. Instead, he tightened his hold on her at the same time Matt reached for her hand again.

Slowly, David raised his head toward Cass. "I haven't gotten my good morning kiss yet." He laid his mouth over hers and licked the seam of her lips like he was trying to taste her. Cass's senses were getting bombarded all at once, and she had no defense against his invasion. She opened her lips to let him inside.

His tongue swept past her lips and teeth to swipe over every inch of her mouth. He traced the roof and sides before engaging her tongue in teasing play. As she felt herself begin to respond to his kiss, David loosened his hold on her body. His hands began to caress her from her shoulders to the bottom of her ass. Gently, he squeezed the cheeks through her silky panties, and then cupped his hands around them and pulled her up higher on his body. His fingers rested just at the edge of the elastic. Cass's panties dampened when she realized that it would only take a small movement and he could slip underneath them and search for the source of her heat.

Cass felt her hard nipples stabbing into his chest and had to force herself not to rub them back and forth. She could feel his erection getting harder and longer beneath her. He brought his hands up to the bottom of her t-shirt and slipped them just under the hem. She could feel his fingers on her naked skin. Cass was drowning in sensation and didn't know which way to turn. She'd just decided she had to get away when she felt a pair of lips on the back of her neck.

What the hell! Oh, God, it's Matt. He must be feeling left out and he's trying to get my attention. I've got to stop them before we go too far. I'm not ready for this yet.

"Uh, guys...we um...can you um..." With their lips on her face and neck, Cass found it hard to make a coherent sentence. Again, she used her hands to push against David's chest. This time, he released her.

"Sorry, Cass, guess we just got carried away saying good morning." David dropped his hands down and allowed Cass to crawl off of his body. His face looked pained, and she heard a low groan as she slipped away. "You don't have to be afraid. We'd never hurt you. You do realize that, don't you?"

Smiling, Cass nodded her head yes. "Didn't you say something about breakfast when you first woke me up, or did I dream it?"

Matt grinned and jumped off the bed. He bowed ridiculously low. "Your wish is our command." She watched silently as David got up

and they both headed toward the door. “When you’re dressed, please come out and join us in the kitchen. We’re going to go work on breakfast.” After giving her a long look, Matt pulled David from the room and shut the door.

Cass took a deep breath and wondered how fast she could eat and get the guys to take her home. Her nerves wouldn’t take much more of their attention. Pushing her hair away from her face, she went to get some clean clothes for the day.

Matt was sitting with David at the kitchen bar when Cass came through the doorway. Both men glanced up and smiled. Matt took a moment to look her over from head to toe. *It’d be so great to start every day like this.* He looked over at David and knew he was thinking along the same line by the wistful look on his face.

“Well, beautiful, are you ready for some breakfast?” David asked.

“Sure, what’s on the menu this morning?”

Matt stood up and walked over to the stove. “We have bacon and sausage with biscuits and fruit. And we’re about to have eggs if you tell me how you like them. Although, I warn you that anything other than scrambled, you order at some risk.” He punctuated his statement with grimace.

Cass laughed. “Scrambled it is, then.”

Matt watched her go over to the window and peer outside. Her body stiffened, and then she frowned. The rain was still falling heavily and he knew she’d be disappointed when they couldn’t take her home like they promised. He turned to get the eggs from the fridge when he heard her speak.

“Guys, after breakfast, I’d really appreciate a ride home. I know it’s...”

“No, Cass, absolutely not.” Matt smiled at her to try and soften the blow. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to sound so gruff. The rain never let up last night, and they’re predicting it’ll continue all through today and maybe even tonight.” He signed heavily. “When it rains like this, the road between here and downtown can totally wash out and

sometimes even flood. It wouldn't be safe for us to drive you anywhere today. Not only that, but your house has to be leaking like a sieve by now. We can't do anything about the leaks until the weather clears."

Matt took in the disappointed look she couldn't hide and felt a rush of compassion for her. "You don't really mind having to spend the day with us, do you, Cass? I know it's not what you planned, but I promise we can keep you entertained."

He almost laughed at the shocked look on her face when she raised her eyes to his.

"Maybe I better rephrase that," he said, giving in to laughing. "We have a project of our own here that we're going to work on today, and we'd be honored to have you come and either help us or just keep us company. What do you say?"

"What kind of project?"

"We have an attic," David interjected, "and we're in the process of redesigning it to make a game room of sorts. We've been stripping old paint and pulling wallpaper, and now we're just about ready to start painting. Plus, we've had a lot of stuff that needs to be gone through to determine whether it's garbage or salvageable. We're getting a lot of stuff ready to go to charity."

"What kind of stuff is there to go through?" Cass asked.

"The attic is full of trunks, boxes, plastic bins, you name it. We've found old clothing, books, toys, and even some jewelry so far. We've cleared about half of it out. In some ways, it's like finding buried treasure. You never know what you'll find when you open a new trunk."

Matt could see that she was interested now. "So, are you in?" He waited anxiously for her reply.

She turned to smile at him. "You bet I'm in." Her face changed to a frown, and she put her hand on her hip. "So, egg-man, where are those scrambled eggs you promised? Huh?"

Laughing, he saluted her. “Coming right up, Cass.” He glanced at David and saw that his brother looked very happy now that she agreed to stay with them a while longer. Sighing with pleasure, he turned to finish up breakfast.

Chapter 7

Cass glanced nervously between the two brothers as they led her up the narrow stairs to the attic. Both men carefully held onto Cass's arms as they navigated the narrow steps. She held her breath as their bodies brushed sensually up and down her sides during their slow climb to the top. She could feel her nipples pucker inside her bra, and they hadn't even really touched her.

"You're planning on making this play room of yours more easily accessible, aren't you?" Cass couldn't help but remark. She wanted to get them into a conversation to take her mind off their hard, muscular bodies brushing against her soft curves.

"Absolutely, we already have the plans drawn. We wanted to get all the wallpaper stripped and the renovations done before we brought in the equipment to knock a hole in the ceiling. Remind me when we go back down, and I'll show you the drawings of what it'll look like when it's finished." David looked down at her and ran his hand up and down her back as he spoke.

Maybe conversation isn't such a good thing, especially if they talk with their hands!

Reaching the top, they stepped over a threshold into the largest attic Cass had ever seen. The ceilings rose maybe twenty feet high with exposed beams. It had two large windows, one at each end of the attic and beautiful hardwood floors. On one side, she could see where they had stripped wallpaper and paint and removed any loose items. The other half of the room was littered with boxes, bins, and some old-fashioned trunks. Cass wondered what kind of treasures could be found hidden away in someone's attic.

Curious, she turned to the brothers. “Has this house always been in your family?”

“Yep, all this stuff you see here has been handed down in our family by one relative or another.” Matt said. “We’re trying to be careful to distinguish between family heirlooms and just plain junk, but sometimes it’s hard to tell the difference between the two.” Matt glanced at David, and David nodded in response. Sometimes it seemed like the two of them communicated telepathically. Cass quickly returned her attention to Matt’s words. “Cass, I’m thinking that maybe you could go through the boxes and trunks checking for any clothing that could be salvaged and for any personal type of items you think we might be interested in saving.” She was about to protest when he continued. “Don’t worry about mixing anything up. We plan on going through the trash items one more time before actually taking them to the dump. Is that okay with you?”

“I’d love to be the one who goes through the stuff, and believe me, I’m not just being nice. My fingers are practically itching to get my hands on those trunks.”

Both men laughed.

“Oh, my God.” Cass paled and jumped behind David, holding onto his arms and peeking around his body.

Angel and Demon had come up the stairs and headed over to where she could see a blanket spread out on the floor. The dogs walked over to the blanket and collapsed down on the floor cuddling up next to each other. Both animals let out a long, drawn-out sigh and wagged their tails. They looked like they were down for an afternoon siesta.

Matt took Cass’s hand and pulled her from behind David. She never took her eyes off the resting dogs. “Cass, baby, you don’t have to be afraid of them. They’re so very gentle to everyone.” He looked over at David before he spoke again. “Baby, do you trust us?”

Glancing warily at him, Cass nodded. “Yes, I suppose I trust you. I mean I haven’t known you long, but I feel safe with you.” Even as

she said this, she cut her eyes to the side to make sure she kept tabs on the large beasts.

“Good, then I want to introduce you to our dogs.”

Cass looked at him, wondering if he’d lost his mind.

“It’ll be okay, I promise.” He took one of her hands and motioned for David to take the other one. Together, they started to pull her toward the corner where the dogs rested. They both turned and looked at her in surprise when she dug in her heels and resisted their efforts.

“Cass, relax. We’re only going to that chair in the corner and have you sit down. Then one of us will go and bring the dogs one at a time over to you and let you officially meet them.”

She looked at David skeptically, as if he had lost his mind, then allowed herself to be led to the chair he’d indicated.

Nervously, Cass watched as David went over and picked up a leash, snapping it on one of the dogs. Matt stood behind her chair, massaging her neck probably trying to relax her. She watched David and the dog approach slowly.

David spoke to Cass in a soft, soothing voice. “Cass, this is Angel. Angel this is Cass.” He led the dog right up to her knees and then tried to pull her hand over to the dog’s head. She knew he wanted the dog to sniff her hand, but she didn’t like the look in the dog’s eyes.

After a couple of minutes of David trying to tug her hands free, she finally released the edge of the chair with one hand and timidly held it out. Cass bit her lip when she saw her hand tremble. Angel reached up and sniffed her fingers, then licked her hand thoroughly.

“Yuck.” Cass grimaced. Her hand felt gross. She could so do without this kind of greeting. It made her somewhat angry when both brothers laughed at her.

She continued to bite her lip while David returned Angel to the blanket and repeated the introductions with Demon. Cass sighed with relief when he returned the other dog back for his nap. She took a deep breath and relaxed her shoulders.

“What happened to you that made you so afraid of dogs, Cass?”

Although Cass had expected the question, she still cringed when the words came out of Matt's mouth. "Just an unfortunate encounter in my past with an unfriendly dog. Nothing I'd really care to talk about." Cass made her voice flat and stern, hoping they would get the hint and let it drop.

"Okay, baby. We'll do it your way this time, but have fair warning. I'll be bringing the subject back up at another time, and I'll expect an answer." Matt's voice communicated to her that this would not be negotiable. "So, let's get you set up over by the trunks, and you can start going through them. David and I are going to tackle this wall and hopefully remove the rest of this wallpaper."

Cass nodded her consent and followed them to the other side of the attic. She couldn't wait to find out what treasures lay hidden in all those trunks. It excited her to think that she would get to do this at her house. Oliver had said the attic stored trunks, boxes, and family items of her uncle. Suddenly a horrified thought came to her.

"If my roof's leaking, then could it be damaging and ruining things that are stored in the attic?"

"It's possible, Cass. But remember, if it's stored in trunks like these, then there's every reason to hope that nothing will be ruined. I swear, these trunks are made to take quite a beating and to stand up to any weather." Matt walked over and put his hands on her shoulders. "But know this, baby, once the rains have stopped, David and I'll help you get things organized in your attic, and we'll bring down anything you want, so you can put it in a safer place. That's a promise, baby." Cass looked up at him gratefully and smiled. He leaned over and gave her a light kiss. "Feel better now?"

"Wait, I want some of this lip action for myself." David spoke up with a devilish glint in his eyes. He walked over to Cass and bent her dramatically over his arm and laid a real kiss, tongue and all, on her. Cass struggled to catch her breath when he let her go.

“Don’t make me kick your ass, bro. We need to save the heavy stuff for later tonight.” Cass saw both men look at her with heated looks and felt a heated flush moving up her neck into her face.

Heavy stuff! What are they thinking? If it gets much heavier, I’m going to explode. Smiling and deciding to ignore what Matt said, Cass replied, “Okay, let’s get to work.” She turned her back and headed over to the first trunk, determined to put the brothers—and kissing—out of her mind for a while.

She glanced up and saw both of them staring at her with a look in their eyes she had never seen before. That look made her panties suddenly become damp and her breathing quicken. She couldn’t look away. Just when she thought the men might come for her, Matt grabbed David’s arm and pulled him over to the wall that needed stripping. Breathing a sigh of relief, Cass realized it was going to be a very long day.

Several hours later, Cass had lost herself so thoroughly in her discoveries that she didn’t hear the men approaching. She jumped when a pair of arms suddenly surrounded her, pulling her up from the floor where she made herself comfortable to go through the old trunks.

“Woman, you’re killing us. We kept thinking you’d plead hunger, or exhaustion, or even boredom. We figured when you did, we’d stop for lunch and a break. Who knew you’re more of a workaholic than we are?” Although his words sounded stern, David’s face had a mischievous smile gracing it.

“We’re starving, Cass. Can we tear you away to come and help us raid the kitchen?” Matt put his plea in as well.

Laughing, Cass put up her hands in surrender and allowed them to pull her toward the attic door.

“Careful, Cass, going down is much worse than coming up. David’s gonna go first, and then you and I’ll bring up the rear. That way, I can hold you and he can catch you if you slip through my fingers.”

Cass couldn't help but think his words could have a different meaning. *Oh boy, I need to get my mind out of the gutter.* She'd thought more about sex since she met these two men than she did her entire twenty-three years of marriage. Maybe it'd help to start showing some of her independence and not keep relying so much on them.

"Guys, I'm fine. I'm perfectly capable of going down the stairs alone without getting hurt. I'm an adult, you know. I'm older than you. I've probably been negotiating stairs longer than either of you."

After her little speech, Cass started toward the stairs, only to be brought to a standstill by both men grabbing her arms. Looking up at them, she swallowed hard at the look on their faces.

David responded to her first. "Cass, you need to stop trying to make us see you as the *older woman*. It's not working, and it's never going to work. If you haven't figured it out by now, then let us clear the air and let you know exactly how we think of you."

Matt used his free hand to caress her cheek and then picked up the thread of the conversation. "Baby, we aren't thinking of you as an older woman. We're thinking of you as our woman." Cass was sure her face showed the shock she had felt at his words. "Both of us have developed feelings for you, and I don't mean brotherly feelings. Every time I get near you and smell your scent, my cock gets so hard, I'm afraid it's going to bust through my zipper. I want to take you downstairs and lay you out in my bed and kiss and lick every inch of your glorious body, inside and out. We want to make love to you together, all three of us."

"We're trying to give you time to get comfortable with us, honey, but our patience will only go so far." David added. "We want you, Cass. We want you in every way a man can want his woman, and we've every intention of making you want us. How do you feel about that, honey?"

Cass couldn't speak. *They both want me! Do they mean like one at a time, or do they mean together? They've been talking about both of*

them wanting to have a relationship with me, but that was talk, and this feels so real. Could I really do this? Would they be disappointed when they find out how inexperienced I am? I couldn't satisfy the husband I had for so long, how could I ever hope to be able to satisfy these two hunks! I'm so happy when I'm with them. I don't want to lose that.

Cass knew they waited for her to say something. Carefully, she cleared her throat. "When you say you both want me, what does that mean exactly?" She cringed, knowing how naïve she sounded.

"Baby, it means just what it says. We want to take you and make love to you until you don't know your own name." Matt looked at her with passion in his eyes.

"You mean like one at a time, taking turns?" Cass hoped she understood them correctly.

"No, Cass, we mean together. Matt and I've always known that we're happier in a relationship where we share a woman. Believe me when I say that we can give you more pleasure than you could ever imagine. So much more than you could have with just one lover."

Cass felt so confused and so out of her depth, she didn't know what to say. She looked up into Matt's eyes when he walked over and took her hand. "Let's all go downstairs and get a quick shower. We can raid the fridge and sit down and talk. Maybe if we explain our past mistakes in marriage, you'll see where we're hoping to go with this relationship. Can you do that, baby? Give us a chance to make our case to you? Listen to us with an open mind?"

"All right, Matt, I'll agree to listen to you. But that's all I'm agreeing to right now. This is all very new to me, and I need some time to think. I'd really like to get cleaned up. Do you think I could have enough time to soak in the tub before we eat? I promise not to stay too long."

She breathed a sigh of relief when both men immediately nodded. David spoke. "Sure thing, Cass. You take as much time as you need. Matt and I'll get showered and then put together something that we

can take in and eat in front of the fireplace. Does that sound okay to you?"

"That'd be great. Thanks, guys. I really need to relax and soak up what you're telling me. I do my best reasoning while I'm soaking in the tub. It's always where I go when I have to work something out." Matt pulled her close and hugged her briefly, then turned her into David's arm where he repeated the close embrace. She was somewhat amazed to feel erections on both men.

Laughing, Matt pushed her slowly toward the door. "We'll definitely remember that, baby. And next time we have something big to talk to you about, we'll just invade your bath." He gave her a grin, patted her on the butt, and they all went back downstairs.

* * * *

Since she forgot to bring a clock with her into the bathroom, Cass had no idea how much time had passed since she sank into the warm, scented bath water. Her favorite activity usually brought total relaxation to her body and senses. This bath hadn't even come close.

What are those guys thinking? They can't be serious. They can't make love to me at the same time. Maybe they're just playing with me, kind of joking with me to make me feel better. That doesn't make sense, though, because I definitely felt erections on both of them. Can men even do that if they aren't attracted to a woman?

What am I going to do? If I try to fake my way through it, it's going to backfire on me. They're going to realize pretty quick that I don't know what I'm doing. I feel desire for them, and I want to make love to them. Maybe I won't freeze up with them the way I always did with Eric.

But what if I do? Will they be angry with me? I don't think they would ever hurt me physically, but if they turned away from me it would hurt me just as bad. Oh my God, am I falling in love with them? Both of them? What'll people think? This is so not funny. I've

gone from frigid to the town slut in less than a week! Eric and his friends would die if they could see me now.

I wish Becky was here so I could ask her advice. Humph, I know what she would say. She'd tell me to go for it, take them both and never look back. She wouldn't be surprised to hear me say that I'd fallen in love with two men so fast. She'd be happy for me.

Deciding she had dallied long enough, Cass quickly rinsed off and stepped out of the tub. She grabbed a huge towel off the rack and quickly dried herself.

What if I didn't freeze up with them? I won't ever know if I can be normal with someone else if I don't try at some point. Don't I deserve some happiness? Oh, what about that girl Serena? She sure acts like she has a prior claim on Matt. I don't want to step on anyone's toes. But Matt couldn't be serious about her and still come on so strongly to me, could he? They both vowed that Serena meant nothing to them and never would.

Groaning, Cass stared at her reflection in the mirror. She knew she was over thinking, analyzing everything to death. It was time she just followed her heart to see where it would take her. Cass stared at her reflection and made her decision.

If they want to make love to me, I'm going to go for it! No matter what happens, at least I will have tried.

BAM! BAM! BAM!

The pounding on the bathroom door startled her.

"Cass, honey, did you drown in there?" David's voice came through the closed bathroom door sounding amused.

"No, I didn't drown, but I did lose track of time. I'm out now and just about ready to get dressed."

"Okay, honey, dinner's ready, and we're waiting for you in the family room. Matt and I just put on sweat pants so don't get all dressed up. Now chop, chop, time's a wasting. If you don't get your beautiful ass out here soon, we'll just have to come in and get you."

Cass swallowed hard before she replied. "That won't be necessary. I'm coming out now, so you need to leave so I can get dressed."

"Sure you don't need help with a zipper or something?" David's voice sounded amused. "I'll be happy to stick around to offer my services."

"No thanks, David. I believe I have everything covered. Run along now like a good boy."

"Woof." David laughed. "I'm leaving now, honey." A few seconds later, she heard the door to the hall close. Quickly, Cass went into the bedroom, got her clothes from the dresser, and put them on as fast as she could. She'd already decided on a pair of sweat pants and t-shirt before David said anything. She debated briefly on not wearing a bra, but couldn't bring herself to do it. She did put on her most sexy one though, and the matching thong that went with it. She bought a few sexy lingerie items when she had treated herself this past year trying to build her self-esteem. She'd found that just knowing she wore them under her clothes made her feel feminine and more confident.

Cass gazed at her reflection in the mirror above the dresser.

So now you're bathed, dressed, perfumed, and you're ready to see what the guys have in mind.

She strode quickly toward the door. Reaching for the doorknob, she noticed her hands shake slightly. Gripping them together tightly, she took a deep breath and went to look for her guys.

Matt and David looked up when Cass walked through the door. Jumping to their feet, they gave her a look that made her think they wanted to eat her alive.

"There's our beautiful houseguest. Baby, you look great! Did you find everything you needed for your bath?" Matt spoke in a sexy, low voice.

"Yes, thanks. The bath was great. It was just what I needed." Cass's voice trailed off when she noticed that both men had very

noticeable erections tenting out their sweat pants. Feeling her cheeks get hot, she quickly looked away.

Cass saw that they made three stacks of pillows on top of a huge quilt they spread out on the carpet in front of the fireplace. A roaring fire heated the picnic area while candles on the mantle and several other tables provided the only light. The stereo played soft music. The room fairly screamed seduction.

“Come on over, then, baby. Take a seat here and let us feed you some dinner.” Grinning, Matt patted the pile of pillows between him and David.

Cass smiled when she realized that if she sat where he pointed, she’d be sandwiched between the two brothers. Taking a deep breath for courage, she walked over to the pillows he patted and gracefully sat down. Immediately, the two men moved closer to her, touching their knees to hers.

“Here, honey.” David handed her a wine goblet as he spoke. “Have a glass of wine. I guarantee it’ll relax anything on you that your bath didn’t.”

“Thanks, David.” Cass took a deep breath to calm her nerves. “So what do we have to eat, guys?” Nervously, she took a drink of her wine. Cass had never been much of a drinker, but this tasted good and seemed to warm her all over. “This is really good, kind of fruity.”

David looked pleased. “I’m glad you like it.”

Matt leaned over to whisper in her ear. “We’ve got all sorts of good things to eat here, Cass. Why don’t you just sit back and relax and let us take care of everything?” Cass could feel his lips moving against her skin as he talked. Chills ran over her when she felt his tongue lick the outer edge of her ear. Frantically, she raised her glass and took another large drink of her wine.

“Whoa, honey, let’s take this wine just a little slower. We don’t want you passing out on the good times tonight.” David took the wine glass out of her hands and then winked at her.

He raised a plump strawberry to her lips and rubbed it back and forth, tempting her to take a bite. Cass swallowed hard and then bit into the juicy fruit. She laughed a little self-consciously when the juice dribbled down her chin, then gasped when David leaned over and licked it off.

"You always smell so good, just like strawberries. I've been dying to make you taste the same way." David whispered the words against her lips, then sealed their mouths together, sliding in his tongue giving her his taste to blend with the strawberry.

Cass felt Matt press into her side while his arms slid around her waist. When David pulled back from their kiss, she turned her head to look at his brother. She giggled when she saw what he was doing. He had a bright red strawberry clutched between his teeth, and he was slowly advancing toward her. Her breath caught in her throat when he got close. She knew he wanted her to take the berry from his mouth, and she wasn't about to disappoint him.

She leaned forward to meet him halfway, and gently closed her teeth around the berry. When she bit down and pulled her half away, she only had time to chew once before Matt pulled her close for a passionate kiss. He teased her lips with his tongue, barely giving her time to swallow before he plunged inside. He ravaged her mouth, his heat and the taste of the fruit inflaming her senses. She lost the ability to think rationally. Her whole being seemed to be centered around these two men.

Matt pulled away, then ran his hand softly down the side of her face. "You're so beautiful."

"Here, honey." David held her wine glass up to her mouth and tipped it forward so she would have to take a drink. "He's right, you're so beautiful. I'm so glad you're here."

Matt's hand moved to her cheek and turned her face toward him. He had another strawberry ready to feed her. Cass lost track of time as the men alternated feeding her the juicy fruit and giving her sips of

wine. Each kiss became more passionate, and their hands started to caress her through her clothing.

All the attention the men lavished on her and the potency of the wine had Cass practically shaking with arousal. The things they were doing came right out of one of her romance books. She began to fear if they didn't make a move on her soon, she'd embarrass herself by making one on them.

Matt and David each kissed her cheek and whispered to her that they would be right back. They stood and walked into the kitchen together. It was only a brief moment later when they returned with David carrying a covered bowl. They sat back down next to Cass, one on each side, this time facing her. They were so close she could feel their breath on her skin. With the stormy weather, the skies had darkened early, leaving the glow from the candles and the blaze in the fireplace the only light in the room.

David uncovered the bowl and Cass gasped. It was a bowl of whipped cream, and it caused all sorts of erotic images to pass through her mind.

He dipped a strawberry into the whipped cream and brought it to Cass's mouth. Instead of letting her take a bite, he dabbed the whipped cream on her lips and quickly reached over to lick it off. He did this several times, not kissing her, just running his tongue around the edges of her lips, teasing. At the same time, Matt leaned in and placed little sucking kisses along her neck and in the sensitive hollow behind her ear.

Cass couldn't stop the groan escaping from her lips. It embarrassed her to feel the moisture flood between her thighs. Self-consciously, she tried to move her legs closer together. As if they sensed what she was trying to do, both brothers put their hands on a thigh and held it in place, keeping her from closing up on them.

After licking her lips several times, David finally held up the strawberry for Cass to take a bite. Looking deeply in his eyes, Cass bit down into the succulent fruit.

Immediately, Matt covered her mouth with his. Gently, he took her bottom lip between his teeth and sucked lightly. Then he ran his tongue along the seam of her lips asking for her permission to enter. When she gasped, he drove his tongue making her senses soar.

While Matt feasted from her lips, David began to kiss and bite gently on the side of her neck closest to him. He caught her earlobe between his teeth and bit hard, bringing another gasp from Cass, then soothed the area with a flick of his tongue. Cass shuddered from the feelings he created.

Pushing away the bowl of strawberries, Matt continued thrusting his tongue inside Cass's mouth, gliding over every inch of every surface. He laid his hand gently on her stomach, rubbing lightly, and then let it glide up to cup her breast. He gently squeezed, causing the nipple to harden even more under his palm.

David pushed her hair out of the way and continued his biting kisses along the back of her neck and down her spine under the neckline of her t-shirt. One of his hands still squeezed lightly against her thigh while the other reached behind and cupped her ass.

When Cass moaned deep in her throat, both brothers dropped their hands to her waist and slid them up under her shirt. David's hand slid up her back and flicked open the fasteners of her bra. Matt's hand glided up her stomach and pushed up under the lace cup, closing his hand on her naked breast.

Matt groaned and gently squeezed her bare breasts, slowly rubbing his thumb back and forth across the turgid nipples. When Cass groaned again, Matt broke off from their kiss. She saw him look over to his brother, and then David nodded like he was agreeing. Both of them reached for the bottom of Cass's t-shirt and pulled it up and over her head. Matt threw the shirt aside and quickly pulled the straps of her blue lace bra down her arms.

Cass watched her bra go flying over Matt's shoulder and suddenly felt embarrassed to be sitting there half naked. She hurriedly tried to cross her arms over her breasts to hide what she believed to be some

of her imperfections. Both Matt and David stopped her by each taking one of her arms and drawing it behind her.

“No, baby. Don’t cover yourself. We think you’re beautiful. We want to look at you.” Matt spoke first.

“Honey, you’ve no idea what the sight of your beautiful breasts does to us, do you?” David said.

Shyly, Cass shook her head, unable to speak at the moment. When she nodded, David took her hand and placed it on his hardened cock.

Oh, my God, he’s huge! Did I do that to him?

Her hand gently closed over his erection. Amazed, she watched his eyes drift closed and heard his groan as she gently squeezed his hardened shaft. She couldn’t believe that she’d caused that sound to come out of this handsome, sexy man.

Cass whirled her head back around when she felt a delicious sensation at her breast. Matt had taken her nipple into his mouth and was sucking gently. He pulled back and ran his tongue around her dusky areola and then licked the hardened tip. He sat back up and together, he and David gently lowered Cass down until she lay on the pillows. Both men stretched out beside her.

Both men latched onto a nipple, and sucked hard. The feeling grew so intense, Cass arched her body up off the floor trying to push more of her breasts into their hot, moist mouths. Matt pulled away, and David leaned in and thrust his tongue into her mouth, easily coaxing hers to come out and play. While his tongue played with hers, his hands moved to fondle her breasts, pinching and rolling the nipples back and forth between his thumb and forefinger. Gently, he tugged on them, causing Cass to bite her lip to keep from screaming out in pleasure.

So caught up in David’s erotic kiss and the attention he paid to her breasts, she didn’t feel Matt as he slowly slid her sweat pants down her thighs and off the bottom of her feet. Now she lay displayed in just her blue thong.

“Oh, my God. You’re wearing a thong.” Matt’s voice sounded almost reverent.

David pulled back from their kiss and looked down at her sexy underwear. She smiled when she heard his breath catch.

He looked deep into her eyes. “Honey, do you have any idea how much seeing you in a thong turns us on? It’s one of our favorite pieces of women’s clothing. You’re so sexy, and you are so *ours*.” Then he covered her lips and plundered her mouth with his tongue, taking her breath away.

While Cass enjoyed David’s kisses, Matt pushed her legs apart and settled himself between her thighs. He leaned forward and he pressed his nose to the crotch of her thong and inhaled deeply. “Oh, baby, you smell so good,” he whispered to her. “The scent of your arousal is making my cock so hard I’m afraid it’s gonna burst.”

When Cass felt Matt press his face to her thong, she jerked her hips in shock. She’d never had anyone put his face down there. She was beginning to fear that she might not survive all the pleasure these men were capable of giving her.

When Cass nearly jumped out of his arms, Matt laid an arm over her abdomen, holding her down firmly. “Shh, baby. It’s okay. I’m not gonna hurt you. I just want to make you feel really good. If anything we do feels bad or makes you uncomfortable, just say stop and we will. I promise.”

Matt nuzzled the area above her thong all while he talked, making it almost impossible for Cass to concentrate on his words. She was so lost in the feeling of his tongue tracing around the elastic that she almost missed hearing what was being whispered in her ear.

David ran his tongue around the rim of Cass’s ear and then bit softly into the lobe. “Relax, Cass, we’d never hurt you.” He whispered, “Honey, we want to share our bodies with you and have you share yours.” Slowly, he ran his tongue down the side of her face and bit gently into the nape of her neck. “There isn’t a right or a wrong way to do that. It’s just whatever feels good to all of us. If you

don't like what we're doing, then just say so, and it all stops. We want you so much, Cass." He trailed his moist kisses across her cheek and settled his mouth over hers. Gently, he ran his tongue around her lips and then spoke softly against them. "Let me in sweet, Cass." He smiled when the tip of Cass's tongue came through her lips and touched lightly to the tip of his. David quickly sucked her tongue into his mouth, deepening the kiss, causing Cass to sink her nails into the top of his shoulders to try and hold him close. She was shocked at the need she felt to become one with this man.

Chapter 8

Matt couldn't wait a moment longer. He had to taste her. Hooking his fingers into the side strings of her thong, he slowly pulled them down. Lifting his body slightly, he continued to pull until her last remaining piece of clothing slipped past her feet. He settled his body back between her legs and felt her tremble as he ran his fingers through the dark curls protecting her sex.

I wonder if she'd let us shave her, Matt thought as he played with her damp curls.

Carefully, he ran his finger down the length of her slit feeling the moisture that gathered there. Using both his thumbs, he gently spread open her labia. Using his tongue, he traced her weeping slit, stopping to softly flick at her clit. This brought another surge of cream pouring from her. Matt began to lap it up like a man dying of thirst. He smiled when Cass pressed her hips upward, toward his invading tongue.

* * * *

David gently plucked and rolled Cass's nipple while he watched his brother slide her thong down her smooth, silky thighs. He didn't think it possible, but he felt his cock harden even more when he got his first glimpse of that little bit of heaven between her legs. The dampness seeping through the curly hair glistened in the light from the fire. He wanted desperately to be able to taste her essence, and for just a moment he envied his brother's position between her thighs.

As he watched, Matt's head lowered and his tongue swiped up and down her moist slit. A gasp, followed quickly by a moan had

David's gaze moving to Cass's face. She looked so beautiful in her passion. Her eyes were shut tightly, and her bottom lip was caught between her dainty white teeth. As he watched, she pushed her hips toward David's mouth and gripped her hands tightly in the quilt they were laying on.

He looked down to where his hand fondled her breast and knew he had to taste her creamy skin. Leaning over, David vigorously sucked one pink-tipped breast while massaging the other with his fingers. Carefully, he brought his teeth down and captured one erect nipple, gently tugging it away from Cass's body. When she pushed her breasts toward the suction of his mouth, he repeated the bite on her other nipple. He felt Cass's hands grip his shoulders tightly and he raised his head. He found himself staring into her passion glazed eyes. David took her hand and placed it between his legs, over his erection. He felt her small hand close around the throbbing hardness. It took all his control to keep from thrusting into her grip.

"Cass, I want so much to feel your warm mouth on me, darlin'. I want to see those sweet lips locked around the head of my cock. Is that something you can do for me, honey?"

He watched as she lowered her gaze before she answered. "I want to feel you and taste you, David. I want to give you what you want, but you should know something first." Cass took a deep breath before she continued and looked into his eyes. "I'm not very good at it, so you might not enjoy it as much as you'd hoped."

Trailing his hand across the top of her head and down to her cheek, David gently kissed Cass's lips. "Honey, who told you that you're no good at this?" He took her bottom lip between his teeth and bit gently, then ran his tongue over the area to soothe it. "He lied to you. Darlin', you're so sexy, I'm about to burst here. Surely, you can feel how hard I am, how much I want you. You couldn't disappoint me if you tried."

Matt raised his head from between her thighs. "He's right baby, you've made me so damn hot. I want you so much. I can barely wait

to sink my cock into this wet, tight pussy. It's gonna feel so good I may never want to leave."

David barked out a short laugh. "Too bad bro, cause I'm damn sure getting my turn to learn the taste of this beautiful woman." He turned back to look down into Cass's eyes and was amazed at the depth of emotion he found there. He watched as she raised a hand to his face and caressed his jaw.

"I want to try this, David, because I really want to make you feel as good. Oh..." Cass closed her eyes and groaned.

David glanced down and saw that Matt had buried his head between her legs once again. Chuckling, he quickly shed his sweat pants. He settled himself above Cass's shoulder and slowly turned her head to face him. Smiling down, he smoothed the hair away from her face, and couldn't stop himself from teasing her.

"Okay, honey, just remember one thing. Don't get so carried away with what Matt's doing that you forget you've got me in your mouth. I'd hate to see you bite down on anything important!" He threw back his head and laughed at the horrified look on Cass's face. "Just kidding darlin', just kidding." His laughter abruptly stopped, and he held his breath as she lowered her face to his straining erection.

* * * *

Cass was drowning in a sea of pleasure. She'd never felt like this in her life, and she wasn't sure she was going to survive it. She could barely concentrate on David while Matt was doing such delicious things between her legs. She felt like she was going to die. Every time she got close to coming, he would pull back a little or change rhythm, and she would lose it. She had been about ready to smack him on the head when David asked her to take him in her mouth. Now she was so scared, she wasn't sure anything Matt could do would make her come. And if that wasn't bad enough, David reminded her not to bite him. Even if he was joking, the possibility terrified her.

Cass gave him a mean look and then reached over and took his cock in her hand. Gently, she ran her hand up and down his length just to get the feel of him. Right away, a drop of pre-cum formed on the tip. She slowly reached up and licked the swollen head, tasting his essence. The fact that she liked his taste surprised her. She watched David carefully as he drew in a breath, then closed his eyes and let his head drop back. Emboldened by his response, she firmly closed her hand around the base of his cock and slipped the mushroom-shaped, swollen head past her lips and into her mouth. Slowly, she swirled her tongue around the head and then traced the vein that ran along the bottom. Cass licked up and down his length like he was her favorite popsicle.

“Don’t tease me, Cass. I need you to suck me!”

Hearing the raw need in his voice, Cass began to suck his cock in earnest. She experimented for a few minutes as she learned her limits and finally adjusted her grip around the base of his pulsating cock, limiting how much of him she took down her throat at one time. She hollowed out her cheeks and began to suck strongly, bobbing her head up and down slowly while David gripped his fingers in her hair.

* * * *

Matt had listened to his brother trying to convince Cass that she was sexy as hell and telling her how much he wanted her. He was definitely in agreement with him, he had never wanted a woman as much as he wanted this one. From the moment he’d tasted the cream dripping down her thighs he was lost. He wanted to lose himself in this beautiful, sensual woman.

He had been teasing her relentlessly, always drawing back when he felt her getting close to her release. He wasn’t trying to torture her, he just wanted to draw out their pleasure for as long as possible. He knew that her release would be even stronger if she had to wait. But

now, he couldn't wait any longer. He wanted to see what she looked like when she came. He was willing to bet it would be spectacular.

Matt teased the little bundle of nerves at the top of her slit, then slid his tongue down to rim around her entrance. "David, she tastes so damn good." Continuing his exploration, he ran his tongue down past her opening, all the way to her back hole. He felt Cass tense a little when his tongue swiped over the puckered, forbidden entrance. Moving back up, he gently inserted a finger into her sopping opening. At the same time he flicked her clit with his stiffened tongue. Immediately, Cass arched her hips up, pushing his finger deeper into her core.

Slowly, he pushed a second finger into Cass's tight pussy, and began moving them back and forth. At the same time, he gently teased her swollen clit with his tongue before taking it between his lips and sucking gently. When Cass's legs and abdomen began to quiver, he knew she was close. He sped up the motion of his embedded fingers while continuing to suck on her clit. When he felt her cunt began to spasm against his fingers, he carefully took her clit between his teeth and bit gently, pushing Cass over the top. David held her hips steady as she bucked with her release.

* * * *

Cass continued enthusiastically sucking on David's erection, not really confident of her ability, but delighted to hear the pleasure sounds coming from his mouth. She tried her best to concentrate on lavishing attention to his cock while Matt's head teased between her thighs. She was amazed to again feel the tightness in her groin that always preceded an orgasm when she allowed herself to masturbate.

Could this be it? Will he take it all the way this time, or pull back again? I don't know if I can stand much more of his teasing. I've never come except by my own hand. I want this so much, oh please Matt, make me come.

Cass couldn't stop the thoughts going through her head. She never thought she'd be able to enjoy sex with a man after so many years of disappointing Eric.

Suddenly, David held his hand to her jaw and gently pulled himself out of her mouth. "Honey, you're making me feel so good, but you've got to stop now. You're gonna make me come, and I don't want to do that until I'm buried deep inside that sweet pussy." He smiled at down at her, and traced his finger along the side of her face. "You're very good at this honey. You made me come damn close to losing control, and that's never happened before." Cass listened to David's words and was thrilled to think she'd pleased him that much. She released him from her suctioning mouth with a loud pop, caressing his length a few times with her hand before letting him go.

Throwing her head back and closing her eyes, she totally concentrated on the feelings coming from between her legs. She could feel herself being pushed higher and higher toward something just out of her reach. Suddenly, Cass arched her hips up toward his pleasuring mouth and let out a loud cry as she came crashing down in a whirlwind of feeling. She was lost in a frenzy of pure pleasure and she never wanted to come down.

As Cass began to come down from her orgasm, she could feel Matt licking lightly between her legs. The longer he licked, the longer she felt the tiny spasms of pleasure shooting through her pussy. She was beginning to believe it would go on forever when she felt him raise up slightly and give her pussy an open mouth kiss. Then he began moving up her body.

Cass took a deep breath when she felt Matt's tongue trace around her belly button and then held it when he raised up and took her rigid nipple into the warmth of his mouth. She couldn't stop the groan from escaping when he began a steady suction of the sensitive tip.

Feeling like she floated weightless on a cloud, Cass didn't know if she wanted to come back to earth.

My first orgasm with a man! What would they say if I told them that? Probably think I was some kind of weirdo, so I'm not telling. I'm just gonna lay here and hope they aren't done with me.

Slowly, Cass opened her eyes, startled to see both brothers up close, both staring deeply into her eyes. Embarrassed at the close scrutiny, Cass shyly said, "Hi, guys," and smiled.

"Cass, darlin', you're so beautiful when you come. I've never seen anything like it. It's like you put your whole body and soul into it." Leaning closer, David whispered to her, "I can't wait to see it again, honey. I'm gonna make you scream my name when you fly." Matt smiled down at her, then leaned down to cover her mouth with his. She could taste her own juices in the kiss. It was the most erotic thing she'd ever experienced. Pulling away from the kiss, Matt whispered to her, "Oh, baby, you're something else. I could lose myself in your tight pussy and never wanna find my way back. Are you ready to go again, 'cause we're more than ready. I can't wait to feel your tight pussy milking my cock."

"First, I want a little taste," David demanded. "Then I'm gonna sink my cock so far into you, you won't be able to tell where you end and I begin." David's words brought a shiver to her body.

These guys are gonna kill me! I'll never survive a night with them. Maybe I should remind them that I'm the older woman and they might have to go a little easier on me.

Snickering to herself, Cass could just imagine how they'd react to that statement. Then, she couldn't think at all because David crawled down her side and came up between her legs.

* * * *

David watched the play of emotions on Cass's face as he moved up between her thighs. He'd give almost anything to know what was going through her thoughts. He lowered his face to her dripping slip and inhaled her scent deeply. Not one to waste time, he lowered his

head and drove his tongue deep into her pussy. Reaching up to separate her labia, he zeroed in on her clit and began flicking it with his tongue. He carefully inserted one finger into her tight pussy, coating it with her cream, and then dragged it back to her dark, puckered hole. Gently, he pressed his finger against her anus, feeling Cass's body tighten up as she tried to close her legs against him. Keeping his finger tight against her opening, he raised his head. "Cass, have you ever had anybody back here? Anybody ever played back here or fucked you back here?" David had to bite his lip to keep from laughing at the look of shock on her face. Glancing at Matt, he knew that his brother was having difficulty holding in his humor as well.

"That's okay, baby," Matt comforted her. "We won't rush you into it, but we'd like you to think about it. If you let us, we can both fuck you at the same time. One of us would be in your pussy and one in your ass." Matt ran his hand across her forehead, smoothing back the hair from her face. "Don't let the sound of it scare you, baby. We'd take steps to prepare you, and we'd make sure you enjoyed it just as much as we did. We'd never do anything to you that caused you any unnecessary pain. Please believe me, Cass, we never want to hurt you."

Cass let her body relax at the soothing tone of Matt's promises. She wasn't altogether sure she'd let them fuck her ass, but for now she'd think about it. She smiled up at him. "I believe you, Matt. I know neither of you would ever hurt me. She closed her eyes and went back to concentrating on the feelings David produced between her thighs.

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Being so worked up, David didn't want to waste any time or give Cass time to cool down, so he went back to work on her clit. Over and

over, he flicked and licked the rigid, swollen nub, knowing she lingered right on the edge from her first orgasm.

“Oh, God, David. Please don’t stop,” Cass cried.

David then drew her clit between his lips and began a sucking rhythm while thrusting two fingers deep into her cunt. The double assault took her over the edge. Cass’s body began to convulse as she cried out with her second release.

“Yes, oh, yes, David, Matt. Oh, my God, yes,” Cass screamed. As Cass slowly wound down from her second orgasm, David got up on his knees and accepted a condom from Matt. Moving quickly, he rolled the condom over his rigid sex and pushed Cass’s thighs even farther apart. Having felt her pussy slick with cream from her orgasm, he wasted no time in plunging into her body, moving forward all the way till his balls slapped against her ass.

“Oh, God, Matt. You won’t believe how tight she is. Her pussy clamped down on me like it’s never going to let me go.” David spoke softly as he began to slowly pull out from her depths, only to push back in even harder. “Cass, honey, I’m sorry, I’m gonna try and make this last, but I’ve been waiting too long, and I don’t have any patience left. I promise I’ll make it up to you later.”

David began to pump in and out of her, trying his best to control his rhythm. He glanced up at his brother. “Help her out, bro. I want her to come again with my cock in her, and I’m not gonna last long enough to help her myself.”

Matt quickly leaned down and captured her nipple in his mouth while pinching the other one between his thumb and forefinger. Using his free hand, he slid it down her abdomen, past her nest of curls, and let his finger zero in on her clit. While David plunged in and out of her body, he began rubbing circles on her clit at an increasing tempo. After a few moments, he took her clit between his thumb and forefinger and squeezed. Cass exploded in pleasure beneath them, calling out their names.

David thrust his hips two more times and then cried out as his whole body convulsed while he pumped his seed into the condom deep inside her body. He felt like his orgasm would last forever as his body trembled between her thighs.

Finally, the spasms stopped, and David slumped down over her body. Catching his breath, he lifted himself so as not to crush her. Smiling, David lowered his head and kissed her hard and long, thrusting his tongue deep, mimicking what he'd just done to her pussy. Slowly, he pulled out of her body and rolled aside to let Matt take his place.

* * * *

Matt, who'd already donned his condom, slid between Cass's legs and smiled up at her.

"Are you ready for me, baby?" he asked her.

Cass looked at him with a confused, helpless look on her face. "Matt, I don't think I can take anymore. The two of you have worn me out."

Matt ran one finger up her slit and watched fresh cream pour from her body and run down her thigh. Laughing, he said, "Oh, yeah, baby, you can take more. You can take as much as we can dish out. Your body just told me so. Trust me, Cass, I won't hurt you, I promise." He waited for her smile and then drove his sheathed cock as far in as he could in one stroke. Groaning, he looked down at her. "Baby, you're so damn tight and perfect. Oh, baby, you fit us so well." He began pumping his cock in and out of her body. After only a few strokes, he pulled all the way out and slapped Cass lightly on her thigh.

"Get up on your hands and knees for me, baby." The look he gave her told her that he meant *now*.

Cass acted somewhat reluctant but did as he asked. When she placed herself in the position he wanted, he grabbed her hips to bring her backward some and used his hands to spread her legs as wide as

they would go. He placed a pillow down in front of her and gently pushed her down so her abdomen rested on the pillow with her head down on the quilt. He felt just a tiny pang of guilt when he felt the tenseness in her body. “Oh, yeah, baby. This is perfect.” Matt praised her while he ran his hands over her ass cheeks, gently squeezing and caressing. Holding his sheathed cock, he slowly guided it between her legs into her dripping opening, pushing forward until his body fully pressed up against her ass.

“Baby, are you all right?” he asked, when he heard her moaning deeply. He could feel her body beginning to relax.

“Yes, yes, I’m fine. Don’t stop, please,” she begged.

Hearing the desire in her voice, Matt began to slowly pump in and out of her pussy. Reaching under her hips, he slid his finger into her wetness, scooping up her cream and then bringing it around to her rosette. He felt her tense just a little for a moment, then her body relaxed back down. Pleased, he began to massage the little puckered opening, stopping every once in a while to gather more of her cream to slick the way. Nodding to David, he watched as his brother lay down and scooted under Cass’s body so he could play with her breasts.

Matt leaned over and watched his brother pinching and rolling her nipples between his two fingers. Cass’s head dropped forward, her silky hair forming a curtain around her face, and she groaned deep in her chest. David reached over and pressed his thumb against her clit causing her to buck her hips back against Matt’s groin.

Matt sensed Cass getting closer and closer to coming. He knew he wouldn’t be able to hold himself off much longer, either. Reaching down, he used his fingers to scoop up her cream one more time and then motioned to David. When he saw his brother reach up and pinch her clit hard, he felt Cass begin to convulse around his cock. He sped up his thrusts and pushed his slick finger through the muscled ring on her anus.

Cass screamed their names as she came just as Matt shot his load into the condom. He felt like he'd died and gone to heaven as Cass's pussy milked his cock, and her ass contracted around his finger. He knew then, without a doubt, he had to fuck her ass sooner or later.

When the last tremors in his body passed, Matt gently pulled his finger from Cass's ass and his cock from her pussy, then fell down beside her on the quilt. He stretched out an arm to pull her close as David curled up on her other side.

Matt ran his gaze over the exhausted woman lying between them. "Oh, baby, you're unbelievable. You're the best thing that ever happened to us, and we're not letting you get away." He gently pulled her face up so she would look him in the eye. "Baby, you were meant for us. Don't you feel it, too?" Matt questioned her, his voice almost a whisper.

"He's right, Cass." David agreed. "This has been the best loving we've ever had, together or apart. This kind of passion doesn't come along every day, honey. You have to feel it, too." His voice was almost pleading. "We want you, Cass, not just for tonight, but forever." He glanced over at his brother. "I know that's probably a shock to you, but we always knew we'd recognize our soul mate as soon as we found her. It seems to me that if we know we're soul mates, then it'd be foolish to waste time apart. What do you say, Cass?" Matt watched his brother bury his face in Cass's hair.

* * * *

Cass could hardly believe her ears. She blinked rapidly, trying to keep the tears she could feel forming in the corners of her eyes from falling.

What can I say to them? They're talking about forever, and they don't know anything about me. Okay, so things worked okay with me during sex tonight. Actually, better than okay. It was fantastic. But it won't last, I know it won't. They'll get tired of me eventually. They'll

want someone younger or more beautiful. Oh God, I love them. It'll kill me if I lose them! Would it be better to just walk away now. Cass snorted to herself. Ha, but am I strong enough to walk away from them after this?

“Guys, you’re scaring the crap out of me talking about forever.” Seeing the frowns followed by the disappointed looks on their faces, Cass continued. “I’m not saying I don’t want forever at some point. What I’m saying is I’m cautious. You don’t know anything about me, about my past. We need to sit and have a long talk where I can tell you about my marriage and divorce. And I need some time to think on this. I can’t make this kind of decision right after the greatest sex I’ve ever had.” At this statement, both men smiled broadly and their chests seemed to puff out.

“Okay, honey, we’re sorry we rushed you. We definitely don’t want to scare you away. It’s late and I know we’re all tired, so why don’t we head off to bed to get a good night’s sleep and we can talk tomorrow?” David pleaded.

Cass breathed a sigh of relief. “Thanks for being willing to listen to me.”

Matt spoke up. “We’ll always listen to you, Cass, always. You can count on that, baby.”

Cass squealed as both men jumped up, then reached down and pulled her swiftly to her feet. Laughing, Cass said, “Thanks, guys, I’ll look forward to us having a good talk tomorrow.” She reached up and kissed first Matt on the cheek and then David before she turned and headed toward her room.

* * * *

Matt couldn’t believe David told Cass they wanted her to stay with them forever. Not that he didn’t agree, because he did. He just didn’t think his brother would be easy to convince, and he couldn’t believe he would risk scaring her away like that. Couldn’t he see how

skittish she was? At least she agreed to sit and talk to them some more about it tomorrow. It was a start.

He was startled from his thoughts when Cass stood on tiptoe and kissed him on the cheek. He was even more incredulous when he saw her repeat the caress to his brother. After everything they just shared did she really think he would let her get away with a mere peck on the cheek? And now he couldn't believe she was just walking away!

Matt noticed her direction first and quickly spoke up. "Where do you think you're going, missy?" Cass stopped in her tracks and turned to look at the two men. Matt saw her swallow hard when she met his gaze.

"I'm just going to bed." Cass looked puzzled for a moment. "Oh, I'm sorry. Did you want me to help with the cleanup? I'll be happy to help."

"Nope, no clean up tonight," David said. "But listen up, woman. We agreed to give you time to think, but we didn't agree to let you slide backward in this relationship." David glanced at Matt and nodded. Slowly, they stalked toward Cass where she stood in the doorway.

"I don't understand what you're talking about...Eeeek!" Cass let out a screech. When the brothers reached her, Matt calmly bent down and pressed his shoulder against her stomach and then stood up, lifting her in a fireman's carry. He watched David give her ass one forceful smack, then turned and headed down the hall in the opposite direction of the guest bedroom.

"Where are you taking me?" Cass demanded.

"Whose room, bro?" Matt asked, ignoring her question.

"Mine's cleaner. I put fresh sheets on this morning," replied David.

"Yours it is, then." Matt turned into the first room he came to.

Cass raised her head and looked around when he carried her into David's room. Her eyes stopped and the king size bed and seemed to just stay focused on it.

Matt waited long enough for David to turn down the quilt and then dropped Cass near the middle of the bed. Both men immediately crawled up on each side of her with David grabbing her arm and pulling her farther toward the center. Matt leaned down and pulled up the quilt, covering them all.

“You see, Ms. Cass, we’ve always dreamed of being able to cuddle our woman through the night,” David informed her as he snuggled up next to her body.

“So you see, you can’t run from us now. For all intents and purposes, we mated with you tonight, baby,” Matt explained. “You may need time to get behind it, but while you’re thinking it through, you have to let us love you the only way we know how. We want to cherish you and take care of you. We want to be everything to you, Cass. And we’re starting by protecting you while you sleep.”

David raised his hand and brushed back her hair from her face. “Are you okay with this, love?”

Cass stretched her arms over her head and then brought them down around the shoulders of each of the men. She smiled at them and then spoke. “Yes, I’m definitely okay with cuddling and snuggling together. I hate sleeping alone.” She gave them a sly look. “You know, you only had to ask.”

She turned and kissed David on the lips, then repeated the caress to Matt. With a small sigh, she snuggled down into the warm, soft bed and turned on her side, snuggling her front to David and her back to Matt.

Matt looked at his brother other over her prone figure and smiled broadly, receiving the same look back from David. He reached to turn off the light beside the bed and then scooted down to get as close to Cass as he could, curling around her back and bottom. He watched as David moved close and put Cass's head on his chest. Things had definitely begun to look up.

Chapter 9

Slowly, Cass began to wake, stretching silently, and luxuriating in the warmth of the two bodies wrapped around her. Afraid to open her eyes for fear that it had all been a wonderful dream, she thought back on everything she'd experienced the night before. Although somewhat shocked at her own actions, she knew she wouldn't change a minute of it, no matter what happened today.

Opening her eyes, she found her face pressed against a warm, muscular chest. With the even breathing, she could tell that Matt still slept.

Maybe it would be less embarrassing for everyone if I go ahead and get up and dressed before the guys wake. It's possible they may regret things this morning.

Overcome with her doubts, she began to extricate herself from the brothers' embrace. Slowly, she slid down toward the foot of the bed, easing herself out of their arms. For just a brief moment, they both moved around when they lost contact with her and then settled back into the covers, slowly sliding back into sleep. Once they quieted again, she slid off the foot of the bed and headed toward the door. She only took a couple of steps before a voice coming from the bed startled her.

"Where do you think you're going?" David's deep voice boomed out. "Matt, wake up. She's trying to escape this morning."

As she tried to think of a viable excuse for leaving, Matt jumped up from the bed and grabbed her around the waist, pausing to frown down at her.

“Oh, no, you don’t, baby, we’re nowhere near through with you yet.” He swung her up into his arms and quickly crossed to the bed, where he dropped her onto the mattress. Immediately, David grabbed her arm and pulled her close to his nude, warm body. Before she could even think about moving, Matt closed in on her other side, effectively trapping her between them.

“Guys, come on now, be reasonable. It’s morning and we have to go back to the real world some time,” Cass halfheartedly pleaded with them. She could feel them breaking down her defenses as a warm feeling of desire filled her.

“Honey, there’s always time for the real world, but you gotta take love when and where you can get it. It isn’t always easy to come across. We’re not ready to let you go yet,” David explained patiently. As he spoke, each man began running their hands over her body and then bent forward to each take a nipple in his mouth.

Gasping, Cass lost the ability to think clearly as the sensations flowed over her body. Matt continued to suck and nibble on her nipples while David slid down her body and planted himself between her legs. Carefully separating her labia, he leaned forward and ran his tongue from the top of her slit all the way down to her anus, causing her to buck her hips up from the bed.

Groaning, David looked up at her. “Oh, man, this is the breakfast I want every morning.”

David continued lapping at her moist folds as Matt suckled and bit on one nipple while pinching and twisting the other. When David pulled back the hood covering her clit and took it between his teeth, Cass groaned from deep in her chest, thrashing her head back and forth on the pillow. As David continued to suck on her clit, he inserted two fingers into her opening and thrust deeply. Then he took her clit between his teeth and bit gently. Cass’s orgasm hit fast and hard, catching her unprepared for the intensity of the feelings.

Before her tremors started to fade, David quickly donned a condom, slid up her body, and thrust his engorged cock balls-deep

into her quivering pussy. As he began a steady rhythm in and out, Cass felt Matt pressing his erection against her cheek. She opened her eyes to gaze at his huge cock, which had a drop of pre-cum already formed on the head. Eagerly, she leaned over to taste him and then allowed him to slide fully into her mouth. As she started sucking on the head of his cock, Matt tangled his fingers in her hair, gripping her head, and slowly began thrusting his hips back and forth, fucking her mouth.

“Matt, I’m not going to last long. I want her to come with us. Can you help her out?” David’s voice sounded strained and desperate.

In response, Matt reached over and slid his finger down past her pubic hair to rub gently on her clit. As he made tiny, hardening circles, Cass reached up a hand and fondled his balls. He could feel his eruption coming as his balls tightened and drew up closer to his body.

“Get ready, David, ’cause I’m about to come.”

Suddenly, David groaned, pumping his seed deep into Cass’s body. At the same time, Matt pinched Cass’s clit hard, sending her flying off the edge of her invisible cliff while screaming out her release. Two more pumps into her mouth and Matt pulled out quickly, allowing his seed to pump out onto his abdomen.

Hearing David groan her name, Cass looked down in time to see him pull from her body. He crawled up beside her, reached over and drew her close for a kiss, then collapsed down against the pillows breathing heavily.

She looked back over at Matt and watched as he cleaned his stomach with a tissue. She was surprised that he’d pulled out. He raised his hand and caressed down the side of her cheek. “I didn’t wanna come in your mouth without asking first, and there wasn’t time.” He bent to kiss her. “There’s no hurry baby, we’ll get there.

Cass took a deep breath. She wasn’t sure how she felt about them coming in her mouth, but she was grateful that she had some time to think about it.

Matt collapsed down onto the bed next to Cass's exhausted body. Comforted by the warmth of the two men cuddling her, Cass drifted off to sleep in their arms.

* * * *

Awakening for the second time, Cass found herself alone in the big bed. She noticed the sun shining brightly through the window and that the rain had stopped. Seeing her overnight bag on the chair by the dresser, she hopped out of bed and headed into the bathroom for a quick shower. Standing under the hot spray, she groaned at the stiffness of her body. Giggling to herself, she couldn't believe how wanton her behavior had become.

Frowning, she thought back over everything that happened the night before and realized she didn't know where they would go from here. They'd made it pretty clear that they wanted her, but they hadn't really talked about anything specific. Would they want her to live with them? Would she keep her own house and they'd just get together once in a while? She wished she felt a little more confident.

Nobody said anything about what other people might think about their relationship. They were living in a very small town. It'd be almost impossible to keep it a secret for very long. So many problems to consider, but she knew in her heart she didn't want to lose them. She'd been happier in the last twenty-four hours than she'd been in the last ten years. That's just not something she could easily walk away from.

Dressing quickly, she went in search of the brothers and found them in the kitchen working on breakfast.

"Good morning, baby," Matt said as he smiled at her and bent to give her a quick kiss.

"Did you have a good sleep, love?" David asked as he came to give her a light kiss on the lips.

“Good morning to both of you, and yes, I slept great.” She smiled hopefully at them. “I see the sun’s shining, so you’ll be taking me back to my uncle’s house when you finish eating, right?”

David and Matt looked worriedly at each other and then back at Cass.

“Honey, I’ve got good news and bad news for you this morning,” David said.

Cass looked wary. “What’s the good news?”

“The rain stopped, and there’s nothing on radar, so it should be pretty for a while.”

Cass looked puzzled by his statement. “And the bad news?”

“I drove down to check conditions this morning after we got up, and the road to town has been flooded and washed out.”

David winced. “Honey, I hate that look on your face. I don’t wanna be the one to disappoint you. It floods almost every time we have a hard rainfall. It’s not serious, but it’ll take a day or two for the waters to go down where we can drive back into town.” He pulled her close and kissed the top of her head. “So I’m afraid you’re stuck with our company for at least another day, maybe two. I’m really sorry, honey.”

He didn’t look sorry, though. Neither of them did. They looked quite happy, actually.

Determined to keep the disappointment off her own face, Cass turned around and looked out the window. “Okay, well I certainly understand that a flood changes our plans.” She turned around and smiled at them. “I guess we’ll just have to make the best of it. Thanks for checking on the roads. It means a lot that you’d go to that much trouble.”

“You know, Cass,” Matt spoke up, “we could use this time to really make some plans for the future, kind of figure out where we go from here.” He gave her a heated look. “Maybe use the time to get to know each other a lot better.”

Cass felt a cold fear run through her at the thought of these two wonderful men learning more about her. Would they still want her after they heard the details of her marriage and divorce?

“What is it, Cass? What’s wrong?” David asked.

Cass sat down at the bar so she could carefully think about what she wanted to say. It’d probably be best to get things out in the open now rather than later. So she would just bite the bullet and have the talk with them now.

“Being here with the two of you and sharing what we did made a dream come true for me. You’ll probably never know or understand what you gave me last night and this morning. It was something I’ve never had before, and those memories I’ll treasure for the rest of my life. But as special as all that is to me, it can’t continue without your knowing a little more about me. We can’t have a future together other than friendship without you knowing about my past.”

Both men stared at her with hurt in their eyes, hurt and anger combined. It nearly broke her heart. She didn’t want to bring hurt or pain to either of them. “Will both of you please sit down? I want to tell you some things, and it’s going to be difficult if you’re standing over me.”

“Why are you trying to throw us away, Cass?” Matt looked at her incredulously. “Don’t you realize how rare it is to find what we’ve shared in the past twenty-four hours?” He paced up and down in front of the sink and raked his hand through his hair.

“We understand that it might be a little scary, but we’re not about to let you just walk away, no matter what’s in your past. We’ve got deep feelings for you, baby, and I think you’ve got them for us, too. Didn’t you promise yesterday that you’d give us a chance? What changed since last night that’s making you so scared of what you feel?”

Cass realized that this was going to be harder than she thought. Taking a deep breath, she walked over to the window to look outside.

She didn't think she'd be able to look them in the eye as she told them what a failure she'd been in her life up until now.

"You don't understand. I'm not afraid for myself, I'm afraid for you. I'm damaged goods, and nothing is ever going to change that."

"Don't be ridiculous." David tried to interrupt.

"Please, just let me finish before you say anything else."

"You already know that I grew up in foster homes. It wasn't a bad upbringing. I wasn't beaten or abused, but I didn't have love, either. When I turned seventeen, I met a handsome young man named Eric. I thought I was in love with him, and he convinced me that he loved me, too. Back then, my greatest desire was to have a family and home of my own. I saw him as a way to make those dreams come true. Being so young, I didn't realize that getting what you want might not be such a good thing."

"I didn't know it at the time, but Eric came from a very abusive family. I guess he never really had a chance to turn out normal. Anyway, he convinced me to run off with him and get married. A justice of the peace married us right after my eighteenth birthday. I thought all my dreams were coming true." Sighing, Cass walked over and sat down at the table to continue her story, still not willing to look at the brothers.

"When I married, I was still a virgin," she snorted, "and a really ignorant one at that. I didn't know anything about sex but the basic mechanics." Cass sighed deeply and looked up at Matt and David. "After I married Eric, I only knew that it hurt, and it continued to hurt no matter what I did." She had to look away at the pain that showed on their faces. She didn't want their pity.

"He never tried to make it better for me. He would get so angry when he couldn't arouse me, and I couldn't satisfy him in bed."

Blinking rapidly to hold back her tears, she thought back on her past with Eric. For a few moments, she just sat quietly and gathered her thoughts.

“In the beginning, he only meted out mental and verbal abuse. He would berate me for my lack of desire. He continued wanting to have sex, but it always seemed to me that he looked for ways to bring me pain. After a while, I think he began to enjoy inflicting the pain. Maybe because it was the only thing he could make me feel. I believed it was my fault, I’d driven him to it.” Both brothers looked horrified.

“No, Cass, it most certainly wasn’t your fault,” David exclaimed.

Cass smiled at him through her watery eyes. “I know that now.”

Picking up a napkin, she dried her tears from her eyes and continued her story. “Anyway, the verbal abuse started to trickle out to other people. He’d talk about me to his friends and then our family about my lack of sex appeal. He called me names when I gained some weight, and it got to where it embarrassed me to go anywhere with him because I knew I’d end up being the evening’s entertainment. It became even worse when he started allowing his brother to verbally berate me, as well. He amused himself by calling me a fat cow, a hippo, and of course, my favorite, the sexless bitch.”

“Damn it!” Cass was startled by David’s outburst. He walked over and took her in his arms pulling her tight against his chest. “I’m so sorry, honey. You should never have had to go through that. God, I wish I could have been there to protect you, to take you away from all that abuse.”

She felt Matt come up behind her, felt him lay his head against hers. “Baby, nobody will ever treat you like that again. I wish the bastard was here right now so I could beat the livin’ shit out of him.”

Cass looked up at him and laughed. “I’d like to have seen that myself.” She pushed out of their embrace and walked back to her chair.

“It all came to a head about two years ago. His verbal abuse finally turned physical.” She looked up at the brothers and smiled. “It was only the one time. My neighbor called the police and Eric was arrested. Since there was a witness, Eric agreed to plead to a lesser

charge. He did a little bit of time in prison, and now he's out on parole. He has to do community service for several years, and I have a permanent protection order against him. He doesn't know where I am, and I plan to keep it that way." Remembering the beating, Cass put her hand up to her cheek and ran her fingers over the scar running down the side of her neck. She hadn't sensed Matt come up behind her and jumped when he pushed back her hair and looked closely at the scar.

"Did Eric do this to you, Cass?"

"Yes," Cass whispered.

When Matt tried to bend and kiss her on the neck, she pushed him back and walked away. David and Matt joined her by the window. They crowded in until she was sandwiched between them, their arms around her.

"Cass, we'll never hurt you. You have to believe that, baby," Matt assured her.

"He's right, Cass. It would kill either of us to cause you pain." He put his finger under her chin to lift her gaze to his. "You believe that, don't you, honey?" David asked.

With tears falling freely down her cheeks, Cass pulled away so she could look up at both of them.

"Yes, I believe you'd never hurt me. But I'm not so sure about my hurting you. What about my age? I'm a lot older than you. I'm damaged emotionally. You're both so handsome and so young. You still have time to find the perfect woman to give you children and build a life with. I don't want you to start to resent me because of the things I can't give you. Last night couldn't have been more wonderful. You made me feel things I never felt before." Cass sighed and looked down at her clasped hands. "Eric's mother once told me that the problem in my marriage was that I didn't inspire love. It might have been a cruel thing to say, but the truth often hurts. I can't inflict that on you. I won't. I take full responsibility for the failure of

my marriage because I never loved him. And because I never loved him, I could never be what he needed.”

Slowly, Matt and David looked at each other and then grinned broadly. Seeing this, Cass realized they weren’t taking her seriously. She flinched as Matt took her by both arms and turned her to face him fully.

“You more than satisfied us last night and this morning, Cass. You turned out to be more than we’d ever hoped for. Did we satisfy you?”

Frustrated that they hadn’t listened to her, she responded harshly. “Yes, you satisfied me. You gave me the best night of my life, and I’ll never forget it, or you.”

This time, David turned her to face him. “Maybe we could satisfy you because you have feelings for us. Did you ever stop to think about that?”

Shocked, Cass could only stare at the two of them, her heart pounding so loudly they must have been able to hear it. Did they know that she had fallen in love with them?

“All we ask is that you keep an open mind, Cass. Give us a chance. Don’t write us off just from your past experiences. We know what we want and don’t want,” David said.

“Neither of us wants children. We just want a life filled with laughter and love. Baby, can you do that? Can you open your heart up just a little bit and see what happens?” Matt pleaded.

Wanting so much to believe in a future with them, Cass whispered, “I can try.” With that admission, both men closed in on her and hugged her as tightly as they could.

After a couple of moments, Matt pulled away and smiled down at her.

“Okay, then, it’s off to the attic for some more exploring of boxes and painting. That okay with you, baby?”

Wiping her arm across her face to get rid of the tears, Cass smiled and nodded her agreement.

David jumped into the conversation then. “Of course, all that work is after my brother, the chef, fixes us a gourmet breakfast.”

Laughing, Matt tossed the dishtowel at David and turned back to the stove.

“Who’s up for an omelet?” he cheerfully called out over his shoulder.

* * * *

After spending all afternoon in the attic going through old trunks, Cass felt as if she had several layers of dust on her poor body. Hot and sweaty, she was in desperate need of a shower. Looking across the attic, she sat back to just stare at the two handsome men who were becoming so important in her life.

Could they be right? I know I’m feeling love for them. Is it possible that the feelings they have for me to grow to be love? Would it be possible to make a life with them? How would other people view that relationship? Would this small town look down on us? We’ve never even talked about that. I’d never want to cause them any embarrassment.

Just then, Matt turned his head and smiled at her.

“About ready to give it up for the day, baby?”

“Yep, I’m plum tuckered out.”

Laughing, David said, “Well, we can’t have that. Let’s call it a day, go down and take a quick shower, and then relax in the hot tub to get all those nasty kinks out. Does that sound good?”

“It sounds better than good. It sounds great,” replied Cass. “I’ve got dibs on the first shower.”

“We’ll see about that,” Matt replied with a lecherous look.

“Yeah, Cass, we’re a poor household. We can’t afford huge water bills, so we’ve got to conserve water. We’ll have to just bite the bullet and share that shower,” David said with a very straight face. Laughing, the three of them went downstairs to David’s room.

Undressing quickly, they headed into the bathroom. David turned on the spray and adjusted the water temperature. Making her squeal, he lifted Cass and set her dead center of the spray, then climbed in behind her, followed closely by Matt.

“Oooh, this feels heavenly,” Cass moaned.

David turned her around, wetting her hair thoroughly, and then grabbed some shampoo and proceeded to wash her hair. Cass couldn’t stop her groan of pleasure.

While David massaged Cass’s scalp, Matt stepped in front of her and grabbed the soap. Getting his hands soapy, he proceeded to wash Cass’s body, paying particular attention to her breasts and hardened nipples. Cass’s groans got louder, and her knees seemed in danger of buckling.

“Whoa, baby,” crooned Matt. “Don’t collapse on us now. We want this to be quick, so we can all sit and relax in the hot tub.” As he spoke, David tipped her head back and began to rinse the shampoo from her hair.

Cass reached for the soap to lather up the men, but they held it out of her reach.

“Baby, if you start rubbing your hands on us, we won’t make it out of the bedroom. As good as that sounds, we’ve got plans that involve you and the hot tub that just won’t wait.” Matt wiggled his eyebrows as he tossed the bar of soap to David.

Arching her brow, Cass reluctantly pulled back her hand and let the guys finish rinsing her off. Both men quickly washed themselves and then turned off the water. Grabbing a large, oversized bath towel, they proceeded to dry Cass from top to bottom.

After running a towel quickly over their own bodies, they pushed her out the door and into the bedroom. When she would have reached for a robe, Matt grabbed one hand and David the other, and they led her through the house toward the patio door. Cass dug in her heels when they pulled open the door.

“We can’t go out there. We’re naked!” She practically screeched at them.

Laughing, the guys pulled her, protesting, through the doors and over to the hot tub. She quickly climbed in and sunk down to her chin, then looked around warily to see if there was any way they could be seen.

Matt shook his head and laughed. “Baby, don’t worry. We live so far out in the boonies that there isn’t anyone around for miles. The road’s washed out, so we can’t even have visitors. There’s no one around to see you but us.”

Matt looked at her with heat in his eyes. “Baby you need to relax and sit up some more.” He walked over and slipped his hands under the water cupped her breasts. “We want you sitting up high enough so we can see these beautiful breasts you’ve hidden under the water.” Using his hands, he pulled her body up and licked across the hardened tip. Reluctantly, she sat up a little straighter, causing her nipples to bob on the surface of the water. The sight seemed to mesmerize both men. Matt climbed into the tub, and they both moved closer on the bench next to her. Tangling their feet together, they relaxed back for a few minutes. Cass was just enjoying the swirling water and the silence.

“What plans have you made for yourself since coming here, Cass?” David asked.

“I didn’t really make any long-term plans. I guess I never really thought this would pan out. I kind of thought that I’d get here and find out Oliver had been wrong and I wasn’t really the person he was supposed to find.” She sighed and looked up at him. “I guess now my plan is to get the house livable as soon as possible, so I can get back to work.”

“What kind of work do you do, baby?” Matt asked.

“I do data entry from home. It’s been a good job for me ‘cause I never have to leave the house to do it. I download the work from a central site, then re-enter the data in the correct format. They deposit

my pay directly into my checking account, and everyone's happy." Cass pushed away from the bench and moved out into the tub and faced the men. "I've been away from it for a few weeks now, and I can't afford to take too much more time off."

Matt spoke up quickly. "Baby, you know you don't have to worry about anything. We've got plenty of money. We can take care of you, so you don't have to work." Cass scowled at him. "From the look on your face, I'm guessing I've just put my foot in my mouth."

David laughed and then made his own statement. "Actually, I probably wouldn't advise throwing a lot of money into that old house. I mean, we're hoping you're gonna want to stay here with us, and you won't need it. We could even help you get it ready to sell."

The guys had their eyes closed, leaning back against the side of the tub, totally oblivious to how Cass was positively fuming with their suggestions. Smiling wickedly, she grasped one of each of their ankles where they were floating on the surface, and pulled hard. Unprepared, both men slid off the bench and down under the water. They both came up sputtering and gave her a look of amazement.

Deciding that she felt too good to argue with them, Cass relaxed on the bench across from them and closed her eyes before she spoke. "Well, we don't have to decide anything right now. Let's just enjoy ourselves and let tomorrow take care of itself."

Cass felt them sit down on each side of her. She tensed, waiting to see if they were going to retaliate for their dunking. After a few moments, David sighed heavily. He stood and looked down at Cass.

"Well, I'm planning a special dinner tonight to give Matt a break from cooking, so I'm off to the kitchen." He gave her a grin. "Please do me a favor and keep him occupied so he won't try to supervise me. It really aggravates me when he tries to tell me how to cook."

Surprised, she looked up at him. "You're leaving?"

"Only long enough to get dinner. Then I'll be back with you."

"Do you want me to help with dinner? I can help without directing." Cass said this with a smirk, glancing at Matt.

Laughing, David leaned over and gave her a kiss, then climbed out of the tub.

“Just keep him out of my hair, honey. I promise you a dinner you won’t ever forget.”

“That’s what we’re afraid of!” Matt yelled after him as he walked off. Cass laughed when David flipped him the finger over his shoulder.

Worried, Cass turned her gaze to Matt. “Is he okay?”

Smiling, Matt moved over and put his arm around Cass’s shoulders. “Baby, he’s fine. He just thought that maybe we’d like to spend some time alone together. I plan on returning the favor tonight and make myself scarce while you spend some time with him.” He put his hand under her chin and raised her head to look in her eyes. “Is that okay with you, baby?”

Relieved, Cass nodded. “Of course, I’d like to spend some personal time with each of you.” She grinned up at him. “What’d you have in mind?”

With his arm behind her back, Matt brought Cass’s body around in front of him and helped her straddle his lap. He brought both hands up to cup her breasts, then rubbed his thumbs back and forth across the hardening buds.

“I’m sure we can think of something to fill the time.”

Cass giggled and then moaned when he lowered his head and latched onto one of her hardened nipples. She ran her hands through his silky hair and held his head to her breast while he suckled. She never wanted the feeling to end.

Matt captured the hardened nipple between his teeth and tugged gently. At the same time, he began pinching and rolling her other nipple between his thumb and forefinger. The only sounds were the little groans and gasps coming from Cass. Releasing her breasts, he lowered his hands to her hips and pulled her forward so his erection pressed firmly against her pussy. Looking deeply into her eyes, he closed his mouth over hers and forced his tongue deep between her

lips. Gradually, his tongue explored every inch of her mouth while his hands went back to her breasts to torment her nipples. Her breathing became very erratic.

Cass ran her hands across Matt's shoulders and down his back while she pushed her gushing pussy against his hard, throbbing erection. She smiled when she heard a groan coming from deep in Matt's chest.

Grabbing her around the waist, Matt lifted her and turned so he could set her on the side of the hot tub. Pushing her thighs apart, he ran a finger along her moist slit. Raising his head, he traced her lips with the tip of his tongue, gently biting her bottom lip. When Cass gasped, he thrust his tongue inside. Wanting so much to be one with him, Cass didn't even care that she was up out of the water, exposed, where anyone could see her. She only wanted to feel him thrusting his hardness inside her body. Nothing else mattered.

Slanting his head to deepen the kiss, Matt raised his finger to the bundle of nerves at the top of her slit and gently stroked across her clit. Cass bucked her hips and gripped her nails into his shoulders.

Releasing her from his kiss, he slowly lowered his head down her body, sucking on each nipple as he journeyed south. Using his hands to push her thighs even farther apart, he lowered his head to run his tongue along her dripping slit. Cass closed her eyes and leaned back on her arms, giving herself up to the feel of his tongue and lips.

As Matt moved his tongue to lick her clit, he used his fingers to pull back the protective hood. Her cream flowed with each new lick. As he alternated between licking and sucking, Matt thrust two fingers into her vagina, twisting his fingers around to rub against her G-Spot.

Cass's legs began to tremble and she tried to close them. Matt's body kept her legs splayed open as she continued to writhe against his tongue.

Feeling her vaginal muscles begin to quiver against his fingers, Matt added another finger and took her clit between his teeth and bit

down gently. That sent Cass flying over the edge. Arching upward, she let out a cry as she came, clutching his arms tightly.

Matt continued to lick her during the aftershocks of her orgasm, and when the spasms stopped, he raised his head and smiled at her.

“You are positively delicious, baby. I could spend an eternity between your thighs.”

Matt picked her up and sat back down in the warm water with Cass back straddling his lap. She could feel his erection pressing against her exposed clit. She ran her hand under the water and folded her fingers around his hardened shaft. Looking him in the eye, she leaned forward and pressed her mouth to his.

Matt remained perfectly still and let Cass control their kiss. She licked softly across his lips, then plunged her tongue inside to tangle playfully with his. It gave her such a rush to be the aggressor in their love play. As she continued memorizing his taste, she ran her hand slowly up and down his erect cock.

Pulling away from the kiss, Cass leaned back slightly and whispered. “I need you inside me, Matt.”

Without saying a word, Matt reached for a condom they left beside the tub and quickly rolled it on, put his hands on her hips, and slowly lowered her onto his erection. He leaned forward a little and encouraged her to put her legs around his waist. They both groaned as he plunged balls deep into her moist heat.

“God, baby, you feel so good to me. You don’t know what you do to me, woman. I’m never gonna let you go, Cass.”

Slowly, Matt began to raise and lower Cass on his erection, setting a gentle pace for their pleasure.

“Matt, please,” Cass cried.

“Please what, baby? What do you need?”

“I, uh, I need, um, I need it hard, and faster, please, Matt.”

In answer, Matt increased the pace and started to really pound into her body. “Touch yourself, baby, please. I want us to come together

and I'm not gonna last long. Put your finger down and rub your little clit."

Shocked, Cass shyly lowered her finger and began to rub along the side of her clit. Being so close to her last release, it didn't take long to carry her right to the edge.

"I'm coming, Matt."

"Me, too, baby. Me, too."

Cass threw back her head and screamed out her release only a few seconds before Matt groaned with his own.

Gradually, they came back to their senses. Matt pulled her close to his chest and laid her head down against his heartbeat. Content, Cass lay there and listened to his racing heart.

"Cass, I don't want to scare you, baby, but I'm falling in love with you."

Matt whispered his words only for her ears.

She raised her head and looked into his heat-filled eyes. She cupped his face with both of her hands and leaned in to kiss his mouth gently. "I think I'm already in love with you and David."

"Oh, God." Matt pulled her close and hugged her so tight she could barely breathe. Together they sat for a while with their bodies still connected and just enjoyed the gentle breeze and the swirls of the water. Cass couldn't believe he was falling in love with her.

Oh God, thank you. I can't believe he loves me. Now if only David will feel the same way, we can be together, like a family.

"Okay, guys, dinner's almost done."

They both looked toward the house at the sound of David's voice. Turning to look at each other they both smiled, and Matt pulled out of her body. Gently, he set her on her feet and then helped her from the tub. He wrapped her in a large towel before pointing her toward the house.

"Let's go see what the Master Chef has prepared."

Chapter 10

“Wake up, sleeping beauty.” David gave Cass a gentle shake. Cass groaned and buried her head farther under her pillow. *It can't be time to get up. We just went to bed!* Her rebellious thoughts prevented her from acknowledging David's request.

“Come on, honey, time's a wasting. The road's clear this morning, and we've decided to take you out to breakfast. But you've gotta get moving now.” David changed his tactics, and instead of gently shaking her again, he swatted her firmly on her naked ass.

“Hey, stop that.” Cass sat straight up in the bed, laughing. Gingerly, she rubbed a hand over her stinging cheek. “That wasn't very nice.” She pouted at David.

“I'm always nice,” David insisted. “Matt and I've already showered, so get moving, woman. We're gonna stop at the diner and get some breakfast, and then one of us will drive you to get your truck. Is that okay with you, honey?”

“Sure, sounds great. Give me twenty minutes and I'll be ready to go.”

Cass jumped from the bed and raced into the bathroom. She quickly turned on the shower, adjusted the temperature, and then stepped under the relaxing, warm water. As she began to shampoo her hair, she thought back to the night before.

After dinner, the three of them cleaned the kitchen together. Then Matt excused himself saying he had some paperwork for the store to catch up on before he could make payroll. David then took Cass by the hand and led her to his bedroom. This time, instead of having frantic, overwhelming sex, they'd made love, slow and tender.

He'd slowly stripped her clothes away, kissing and licking every inch of her body. He left her feeling more beautiful and desirable, than she ever thought possible.

David had lowered her to the bed slowly and spread her legs. He'd started at her mouth with a passionate kiss and then glided his tongue down the length of her body. He stopped briefly to lick and suck on her nipples, then again to twirl his tongue inside her navel. Finally, he'd parted her curls and proceeded to lick and suck her clit until she climaxed all over his tongue. Even that hadn't satisfied him. He continued to lick and tease her through two more orgasms before he rose up on his knees and plunged his sheathed, raging erection deeply inside her body. Using his finger on her clit, he'd made her come one more time, just before he shouted with his own release.

Cass shuddered as she finished her shower, wishing she had time to lure the men back into the beckoning bed. Sighing, she turned off the water and quickly dried herself. It only took a couple of minutes to blow dry her hair and then slip into a pair of jeans and a t-shirt. She suddenly realized that she had no reason to come back tonight with the road open. The idea of not being here with them upset her far more than she thought it should.

Maybe it could be a good thing. It might be good for all of us to take a step back and get a handle on our emotions. Besides, maybe they won't get sick of me if I not around all the time.

She picked up her bag, took one last look around the room, and went in search of her men.

Cass found them in the kitchen with the newspaper spread out all over the table. Both of them looked up as she came through the door.

"Wow, a woman who's on time. Man, David, we're gonna have to hang on to this one."

"Ha ha, very funny," Cass complained. "I'm ready if you guys are."

"What's with the bag, Cass?" David asked.

"It's my stuff, you know, clothes and things. I figure the road's open now, so I packed up my things so you can take me back to my uncle's house."

"Oh, no, no, no, little girl," David argued as he stood and took the bag from Cass's hands. "We're hoping that you're gonna go home and pack another bag, maybe even all your bags, and then come back here tonight." He cupped his hand to her cheek. "We're just beginning to realize what we mean to each other, honey, it's a time we should be together, not living in separate houses. Besides, have you forgotten the leaky roof? There are still a lot of reasons that you shouldn't be trying to stay in your house right now." He took a step back and ran his hands through his hair, then glanced briefly at his brother. "Hell, your bed won't even be delivered for a few more days. Don't you want to be with us, honey?" Cass took a step back, a little nervous of the intensity of David's emotions.

"Yes, I do like being here with the two of you, and no, I haven't forgotten the roof." She shrugged her shoulders. "I don't want to impose on you and Matt. I know it's messing with your normal schedules to have me here, and I...uh... never mind. I think it would be best all around if I go back to the house and let things get back to normal."

"You're missing the point, honey. We want normal to be with you here, not somewhere else. What's wrong, Cass? What did you start to say and then stopped?" David asked.

"Nothing." Cass turned her head, not meeting either man's gaze.

"Cass, answer the question. We aren't gonna go anywhere until you do," Matt said. "Come on, talk to us. We can be very stubborn, you know, and I can tell something's weighing on your mind."

Cass took a deep breath, wondering if she should be honest with them. She'd never been a good liar. Taking another deep breath, she decided to just lay her cards on the table.

"I'm afraid if I continue to stay here, you'll get tired of me sooner. I know it sounds silly, but I wanna hang onto our relationship as long

I possibly can. I don't want you to get tired of me and then have to figure out a polite way to tell me to get lost."

Cass watched as Matt and David looked at each other, but couldn't read the expression on their faces.

"Baby, we're never gonna get tired of you. We want you with us all the time, and if you don't get those negative thoughts out of your head, we're gonna have to punish you," Matt promised.

"Punish me?" Cass's words came out with a squeak.

"Yep," David came up to press against her back, "we'll lay you across one of our laps and turn that milky-white ass of yours bright red. Do you understand?"

Biting her lip to keep from laughing, Cass replied, "Yes, sir."

"Now that's more like it. Let's go get some breakfast." David grabbed her hand and led the way out to the garage.

* * * *

Driving into town, she saw flooding close to the main road, but nothing that would impede their way. Pulling up to the diner, Matt stopped the car. "David, you and Cass go ahead. I'll park the truck and meet you inside."

David opened the door and helped Cass out. With his arm wrapped tightly around her, they walked into the diner. There were already a lot of people there enjoying their early morning breakfast. It took a few moments for the hostess to notice them.

Cass shivered from the cold, and David put both arms around her. She looked up at him, and he smiled and lowered his head to place a gentle kiss on her lips. Just as he started to deepen the kiss, the hostess walked up to them.

"Good morning, will that be a table for two?"

"No, table for three please" David answered.

Just as David answered, Matt walked up to Cass's other side and put his own arm around her. When she glanced up at him, he lowered

his mouth and placed a firm, passionate kiss on her lips. When he released her mouth, Cass glanced at the hostess and stiffened.

“What’s wrong?” Matt whispered.

Cass just shook her head. She could tell that the woman seemed a little shocked to have seen both men kissing her. It was one of the things Cass was afraid of, what the people in town would think of their relationship. Reluctantly, she allowed Matt to propel her along behind the young woman to a table in the middle of the room. Sliding low in her seat, Cass was certain that every eye in the place was on them.

But does it really matter if they stare at us? I’m not ashamed of being with them, and they’ve made it pretty clear they’re very happy to be with me.

Taking a deep breath, Cass sat up straight in her seat.

Matt reached over and laid his hand on hers. “You okay, baby?”

She grinned up at him. “I’m just perfect, Matt.”

“Honey, we got a pretty early start, so we’re gonna drop you off to pick up your truck and then come back to open the store. I know you’ve got that appointment this morning with Oliver. Come on over to the store after your appointment and we’ll make some definite plans about dinner. How does that sound?” David looked down at her, waiting for her answer.

“Sure, sounds perfect. It’ll give me time to see what kind of damage I’ve got from the roof leaking before I have to talk to Oliver.”

“Okay then guys, let’s order us some food!” Matt exclaimed.

* * * *

Cass waved goodbye to the guys and let herself into her uncle’s house. Prepared for almost anything, she was surprised that there was actually very little damage. There were a few puddles standing on the floor in the living room, but it really didn’t matter because she already had plans to sand the floors and refinish them.

Walking on into the bedroom, she found pretty much the same. No visible damage to the furniture, and the walls were going to be repainted anyway. Smiling, Cass realized she'd been lucky. Now, she just needed to get the roof repaired before they had another storm.

As she went back toward the living room, she glanced up at the string that opened the attic door. She reached up and gripped the opener.

No, I won't go up there yet. I've got that meeting with Oliver this morning. If there's a bunch of trunks or boxes with pictures and stuff it'll take me forever to go through them. I don't wanna have to rush through it. I'll just wait and go up there this afternoon.

Seeing it was still a little early to go to Oliver's office, Cass proceeded to pack up the rest of her clothing so she could take it with her back to the guys' house that night.

She'd never unpacked many of her things, so it didn't take her long to finish. Realizing that there wasn't anything more she could do at the house, she grabbed her truck keys and decided to head to town. She needed to find a roof repairman today, and maybe the guys could give her a name or two. Smiling happily, she jumped in the truck and drove back to town.

As she pulled up and parked outside the hardware store, Cass noticed that Oliver's car was parked in front of his office.

That's great. I can get this out of the way early and have the whole day to work on the house.

Opening his office door, Cass saw Selena behind her desk. As she was about to say good morning, Oliver's voice bellowed out from his office.

"Cass, where the devil have you been?" Oliver rushed out to her and put his arms around her shoulders. It didn't seem to matter to him that Cass stiffened up and tried to pull away.

"I've been so worried about you. I tried to call you over and over again and finally drove over to Gus's house and checked inside to see

if you were sick or if you'd been hurt. I even called out to the bed and breakfast down the highway to see if you were there."

"You checked inside? You have a key to the house?" Cass cringed to think this man had a key to her home where he could come in any time he pleased.

"Where have you been?" he demanded, ignoring her question. Puzzled by his reactions, Cass decided to tell him what he wanted to know. "Matt and David brought dinner over to me Saturday before the storms began. Then the electricity went out, and the roof started leaking everywhere. They drove me back to their house so I'd have a dry, clean place to sleep. Unfortunately, the rain washed out the road between here and there and left us stuck at their house until this morning."

Cass heard Serena gasp. She turned to look at the young woman and started to take a step back at the pure rage she saw on her face. Before she could move, Oliver grabbed her by the arm firmly and pulled her into his office, slamming the door behind them.

"Let me go, Oliver. You're hurting me."

Oliver loosened his grip but didn't let go. Pulling her in front of him, he took her other arm in a firm grip as well.

"Cass, you've got to understand you're in a small town now. You can't spend time alone with both of those men and not alienate yourself from the people here. It's going to ruin your reputation and give everyone the impression that you're some kind of cheap slut. Is that what you want people thinking about you?"

The entire time he lectured her, Cass pulled her arms constantly, trying to escape his grip.

"I don't care what people think about me. I know I'm not that kind of person, and as far as I'm concerned, that's all that matters. I don't care whether people like me or not. Now, please let go, Oliver."

"What about what the town thinks about Matt and David?"

Cass stopped struggling to get away. "What are you talking about?"

“They’ll think badly of the boys if it gets out that they’re both dating you, sharing you, whatever you want to call it. They could be really hurt by the relationship. They could lose business for their store from the church-going, law-abiding citizens of our fair city. They could lose friends and business associates who don’t want to associate with anyone they consider deviant.”

Cass listened to his arguments and worried that there might be some truth to what he was saying.

But David and Matt don’t seem worried. If they’re not worried about what anyone else thinks then why should I?

“What about their future, Cass? They need to find young women who can build a life with them, give them children to carry on their family name. Do you think they’ll look for someone special if they’re spending all their time with you? Do you really want to deprive them of the life they could have?”

“They told me they didn’t want children.” Cass’s voice had become a mere whisper.

“So what happens down the road when they change their minds? They will, you know. It’s human nature to want to leave something of yourself behind when you leave this world. What will happen when they suddenly decide they do want a wife and children, and because of their carrying on with you, no decent woman will give them the time of day? I’ll tell you what happens, Cass. They’ll begin to resent you and blame you for their lives not being fulfilled.”

Cass frowned as she considered Oliver’s words carefully. She’d never want to do anything that would hurt David and Matt.

None of this makes any sense. Why’s Oliver so determined to make me turn away from them? For crying out loud, the guys are certainly old enough to know whether they want children or not. I love them. I don’t want to give them up.

When Oliver moved closer and touched his body to hers, Cass became alarmed and tried to step away from him. When he spoke again, his voice had softened.

“Cass, I promised your uncle Gus that I’d take care of you when you came to live here. I spent all that time working with the private detective learning all about your life, and I came to care for you a great deal.” Cass looked up at him in shock, not really knowing what to say. “I want the chance to get to know you better and to have you get to know me. I could be very good for you, Cass. Someone the town wouldn’t object to you being with. We’re both lonely. We could help each other be not so lonely.”

Oliver leaned down toward Cass, and she panicked. It looked like he was going to kiss her. Catching him slightly off guard, she pushed against his chest hard and managed to step away from his hold.

“I appreciate your concern, Oliver. I really do. I’ll certainly give everything you’ve told me some serious thought, but right now, I’m not ready for a relationship with anyone. I’m just friends with Matt and David, and I’d never stand in the way of their happiness.” Not waiting for him to respond, she continued. “Now if memory serves me, we’re supposed to go to the bank this morning to finalize the paperwork on Uncle Gus’s estate.”

Oliver looked at her sharply and then narrowed his eyes.

“I’m sorry, Cass, but there’s going to be a delay in settling the estate. I would have told you sooner, but I couldn’t find you for the past few days.”

Cass frowned at him. “What sort of delay?”

Oliver sighed and turned away from her. “Although I’m completely satisfied in your identity from the reports I received from the private investigator, the bank needs more physical proof to release the account. I’ve sent off for the legal copies of birth certificates, marriage licenses, and death certificates they need for their files, but they haven’t arrived yet.” He turned back around to stare at her. “I don’t expect the delay to be long, maybe only a few days. Of course, technically, and legally, I can’t really turn over anything of his without the documents I’ve requested. I’m sure you understand.”

Cass understood only too well. “Are you telling me that there’s still a possibility that the house doesn’t belong to me?” Cass felt tears burning in her eyes and blinked rapidly to prevent them from falling.

“As I said before, I’m very comfortable in the information provided by the investigator. I’m sure you’re the correct party, but I’m bound by law to have the physical evidence to back it up. You might want to hold off on any major repairs to the property since, legally, you aren’t entitled to it yet.”

“I’ve already bought supplies and ordered some furniture and appliances.”

“Well now, don’t worry. I’m sure everything will work out for both of us.”

“The roof is leaking badly. There are puddles all over the house. And I don’t even know how much damage there is in the attic. ”

“Well, don’t you worry your pretty little head. As executor of the estate, I can arrange for any repairs to be made and paid for from existing funds. I’ll get someone on that roof today to ease your mind.” Oliver stepped a little closer. “Of course, with the roof leaking, you won’t be able to stay at the house. The offer to use my guest room is still open. Why don’t you come home with me to stay until the estate’s settled? It would give us a chance to get to really know each other better.”

Trying not to look horrified, Cass answered him. “That’s a very generous offer, Oliver, but I’d prefer to stay at Uncle Gus’s house. There aren’t but a couple of leaks in the living room, and I can use my sleeping bag there. It’s important for me to be there. It’s like I’m forging some kind of bond with my uncle. I hope you understand.” Cass was worried because Oliver looked positively hostile.

“All right, Cass, we’ll do it your way for now. I give you my official permission to stay in Gus’s house, but I’ll continue to check on you from time to time, at least until the estate can be settled. In fact, I’ll drop by tonight after my last appointment and check out the damage from the water.”

Cass reluctantly thanked him and then froze when he pulled her into an embrace. Leaning close, he whispered to her. “Don’t worry, Cass, I’ll always be around to take care of you.”

He placed a gentle kiss on her forehead and released her. Quickly, Cass stepped away and left his office. Nodding to Serena as she passed through, Cass stepped outside onto the sidewalk.

Now she couldn’t be sure she’d even be staying in Mountain Vista. Without the inheritance, she didn’t have a home, and she was quickly running through her savings

I know the guys said they wanted me to move in, but I don’t want to be a financial burden. I’m not even a hundred percent sure I can get my data entry job back. I wouldn’t have anything to contribute.

She didn’t want to hurt the brothers, but she needed to be able to stand on her own two feet.

She glanced back at the attorney’s office. The last thing in the world she wanted was to have to fend off advances from Oliver. She should never have come here until everything was settled. She’d been foolish to think that she could have a brand new life so easily. Her old life wasn’t so bad. She’d had her job, a small apartment, and a few friends.

She could go home. She knew she could stay with Becky until she found a new apartment.

Great, you don’t want to sponge off the guys, but you don’t mind taking advantage of your best friend.

Cass thought about all the things she had Matt order for her through the store. She might not have the money to pay for it now. Deciding what she needed to do, Cass walked over to the hardware store.

* * * *

Serena had been staring at Cass from behind the closed blinds when she heard the door open on the private office of her boss, Oliver

Barton III. When he came out of his office, Serena returned to her desk and looked up at him expectantly.

“Serena, I’m going to be out the rest of the day. Please stay until lunchtime to take any messages and then you can have the rest of the day off. But remember, be here early tomorrow. I have a stack of letters that need to go out.” Without bothering to wait for a response, Oliver turned and left the office.

Serena watched him from the window. When she saw him drive away, she hurried into his private office. Crossing to the filing cabinet, she opened the appropriate drawer and pulled the file marked August Laughlin. She carried the file back to her own desk, thinking about what she was about to do. Blinking back the tears forming in her eyes, Serena thought back to the look on Matt’s face when he’d first met Cass out front on the sidewalk. Just once, she wanted him and David to look at her like that.

She looked down at the folder in her hand, and wondered briefly if this could really work. If Cass weren’t in the picture, the brothers would have to notice her.

She carefully went through the file looking for the reports from the private investigator. After several minutes of flipping through pages, she found the report she needed. She quickly scanned the document, amazed at the amount of information they had regarding Cass’s life.

“Okay, here we go. Contact numbers for her ex-husband, his family, and some neighbor of Cass’s. I’ll just bet that ex-hubby would just love to know where he could find his charming wife now.”

With a smile on her face, Serena took out her cell phone and started dialing.

* * * *

Cass entered the hardware store and felt grateful when she didn't see either of the brothers around. She'd rather not have to explain any of this to them just yet.

The young woman behind the cash register took her time helping another customer. Cass stood patiently and waited for her turn.

"Hi, I'm Cass Abernathy. A few days ago, I had Matt order some things for me. I'm sorry, but I need to know if it's too late to cancel the orders."

"I can check to see if it's been called in. Just a moment." The young woman smiled at her and went to check their order book. Returning with a book in her hand, the young woman spoke again. "Okay, looks like it hasn't been called in yet. I can cancel them for you if you like, but did you have some kind of problem? Did you need something different?"

"No, it's not really a problem. I'm just not sure I'll be staying here now. I don't wanna spend a lot of money on the place until I am sure. I'm sure you understand."

"Of course, I'll take care of this now." As Cass watched, she put a large X across the order page and wrote cancelled with today's date.

"Thank so much. I hope you have a pleasant day." With that, Cass turned and left the store, going straight to her truck, and then drove away.

On the way back to Gus's house, Cass thought long and hard about whether she should stay a few more days to see if things could work out about the house, or if she should just cut her losses and head for Texas. If she didn't get an inheritance, then she couldn't afford to stay here. She'd need money for an apartment, deposits, utilities and furniture. She'd nearly depleted all of her savings. What a mess! She needed to call and see if she still had a job. Even if she went back to Texas, she knew she couldn't leave without telling Matt and David goodbye and trying to make them understand why she couldn't stay. She dreaded that more than anything. She wasn't sure she could say goodbye to them without a lot of tears, and she'd need to make them

believe she really wanted to go or they wouldn't let her get away. Tears would definitely give the wrong impression.

* * * *

Serena closed her cell phone and smiled. Eric had been positively rude until she'd let him know she had an address where he could get in touch with his ex-wife. She'd even given him the phone number at the house, warning him that it had been listed under someone else's name.

He'd asked a lot of questions about Cass, but Serena evaded all of them, convincing him it'd be better for him to come and see for himself. She smiled, positive that Cass wouldn't be competition for her much longer. She would just have to go out of her way to help console the brothers.

* * * *

Matt and David returned from their trip to the bank and looked around for Cass's truck. Not seeing it or Oliver's car, the men entered their store. David quickly walked back to their office to tackle paperwork while Matt went to the front counter to relieve the young lady holding down the fort.

"Okay, Martha, you can go ahead and go to lunch now. Everything pretty quiet this morning?"

"Very quiet, you might even say dead," she replied dryly, with a twinkle in her eyes. She picked up her purse from behind the counter and went out the front door.

Matt sat on the stool behind the counter and started to go through the mountain of mail they'd received over the past few days. Glancing over to the register, he spotted the order book. Chuckling, he remembered that he hadn't put in the order for Cass's bed yet.

“Maybe I’ll just postpone ordering it a little longer. I can always tell her that it’s backordered, so she won’t worry.” He wanted to make it hard for her to return to Gus’s house. She’d said she would stay with them, but he knew she was having a lot of doubts.

They wanted Cass to move in with them permanently, and the first step toward that would be getting her back there, along with all her personal belongings. He picked up the ordering book, stared at it for a minute, and then laid it back down on the counter. Smiling, he decided to wait a while before he called them. He knew he should feel guilty about deceiving her, but all is fair in love and war. And he definitely knew he was dealing with love.

Martha returned to the store from her lunch break about an hour later. As she placed her purse under the counter, she noticed the order book.

“I guess you saw where I cancelled the order for Ms. Abernathy.”

Matt looked up at her puzzled, not really following her conversation.

Martha opened the book to the order page and showed him where she had placed the X across the page and written cancelled.

Confused, Matt asked, “Why did you do that?”

“The lady ordering it came in this morning and asked if we could cancel. She said that she might not be staying in the area and didn’t want to spend any more money on a house she might not be staying in. She told me to just cancel everything.”

For just a moment, he wondered if Cass decided to let the house go so she could move in with them. A feeling of unease ran through his body. No, he already knew she wouldn’t be that easy to convince that she belonged with them permanently. He called out to his brother.

“David, get up here. We may have a problem.”

David came out of the office and walked toward the front. “What’s the problem, bro?”

“We’ve got to go and find Cass right now. I think we’ve got trouble.”

“What kind of trouble?” David asked as he followed Matt toward the door.

“I’ll fill you in on the way. Martha,” he yelled at the young woman straightening the shelves, “please stick around and lock up if we don’t get back before closing.” Not waiting for her to agree, the brothers raced out the door and jumped in their truck.

* * * *

Cass arrived back at Gus’s house and slowly walked inside. For a while, she just wandered from room to room, looking at everything carefully, trying to imagine how she’d have fixed it up if she had the chance. She thought about the personal items that were supposed to be in the attic and briefly thought of going up to take a look. She quickly quashed the idea. If she wasn’t part of Gus’s family, she had no business going through his personal mementos. She’d made her decision. She was going home to Texas.

She’d called Becky with her cell phone as she’d driven back to the house. She’d received a stern lecture about not jumping the gun and giving the guys a chance, but in the end she said that she would always welcome Cass with open arms.

Being too upset to drive safely today, Cass decided it would be better for everyone concerned if she just packed up her things today and got plenty of rest for the long drive tomorrow. It might be cowardly, but she was going to leave a note for the brothers and Oliver. She just couldn’t stand the thought of seeing the hurt on Matt and David’s faces.

Feeling utterly defeated, she sat down in one of Gus’s chairs in the living room and let the tears flow freely.

* * * *

Matt pulled up out front of Gus's house and was relieved to see Cass's truck parked in the driveway. He looked over at David. "At least she's still here."

They walked to the front door and tried the doorknob, then walked through the unlocked door.

They immediately spotted Cass asleep in the chair, her cheeks tear stained, and her face puffy.

"What do you suppose happened?" whispered David.

Matt didn't have an answer to give, but knew he'd be happy to deal with whoever had hurt their woman.

They crossed the room quietly and stood beside her chair. David ran his hand over her hair gently while Matt took one of her hands in his.

* * * *

Cass was dreaming about running into Eric back in Texas when she felt someone grab her hand. She jumped, startled awake from her nap. Looking up, she saw Matt and David standing over her. She wasn't surprised to see them. Deep in her heart, she knew they'd come. Now she'd have to convince them that leaving would be the best thing for everyone.

Matt knelt down and gazed into her eyes. "What's the matter, baby? Why have you been crying?"

Cass sighed deeply and ran her hand through her hair. It would be best if she just told them the truth. "I had my meeting with Oliver this morning. He said that although he firmly believes I am Gus's niece, he still lacks legal proof to substantiate it. Without the proof, the bank won't release the money that goes with the house, and I don't have any legal right to do anything to the house. He wasn't sure how long it would take to get all the paperwork done to make everything legal."

She glanced around the room. "Without that money, I can't afford to do anything to the house, anyway. I didn't have much savings

when I came here, and I haven't worked in several weeks, so there's no money coming in. Hell, I don't even know if I still have a job since I've been gone so long."

Matt looked at her with a puzzled look on his face. "Oliver has been bragging for months that he finally found Gus's niece. He even told people that he'd felt a real connection to you after he visited you in Texas."

"He sure never said you might not be the right one" David added. Matt took both her hands in his. "Come on, Cass, keep the faith, baby. Everything's gonna work out, I promise." He looked over at David and then back at Cass. "In the meantime, we want you to come home with us. You can stay in our house, in total comfort I might add, while Oliver gets his paperwork straightened out,"

"Yeah, honey, please come home with us. We don't want you to leave us," David pleaded.

Remembering everything Oliver said about the town, Cass turned them down.

"I can't come home with you." Seeing them about to argue with her, Cass stood up and continued.

"My time with you has been wonderful. You've made me feel things I never thought I could, and I will remember that my entire life. But you're both still young. You've got your whole lives ahead of you. You each still have time to find someone to love and have children with. I can't give you that or anything close to that. Even if you wanted to adopt children, my age might be a hindrance. I want both of you to be happy and get everything you want from life."

"We already told you that having children isn't what we want. We explained to you that we've always known that we'd share a woman someday. We want you, Cass, and we want a life filled with love and laughter. Now you promised us that you'd give our relationship a chance, and we're holding you to that, baby," Matt argued.

Cass became tearful as she answered him. "Can't you see I don't wanna cause you problems? I don't want the town looking down on

you for having some alternative lifestyle. Think about what problems it could cause you, please. If you shock the town, you could hurt your business, your personal reputations. I don't want to be the cause of that."

David looked furious. "Where did you come up with all this, Cass?"

Not wanting to tell them of her talk with Oliver, Cass just shrugged her shoulders in an attempt to avoid the question. From the look on his face, Cass didn't think she was fooling David.

"Oliver warned you about the town, didn't he?"

Cass looked guilty and turned her head away as tears filled her eyes again.

Both men pressed close to her, sandwiching her between them. Matt pleaded with her now. "Please, Cass, tell us what Oliver said. We can't fix about it if you don't tell us." Both men leaned down and gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"Yes, Oliver opened my eyes to what kind of problems you could have if I stayed with you. He seemed genuinely concerned for your wellbeing and for your reputations" Cass ignored their twin snorts of laughter and stared off into space for a moment, lost in her own thoughts. "I could've stayed around, anyway, but with his interest in me, I thought it best for me to just go back to Texas."

Not realizing what she'd just said, Cass was shocked when both men shouted. "What!"

Matt grabbed her arms and forced her to look him directly in the eyes. "What do you mean, 'his interest in you'?"

Cass cringed. He was practically yelling now. "Umm, well, he sort of suggested that he and I might have a future together if I got to know him better. He invited me to stay at his house until the paperwork is done on this house."

Cass thought the brothers were furious just from looking at their faces, so she was surprised when they took turns giving her a romantic kiss. Matt said, "Cass, you're the best thing that ever

happened to us. We want you in our lives permanently, baby. We know for a fact the town will be happy for us to find our one and only true love. It's been well-known around these parts that we used to share our dates, and everyone here felt bad for us when our marriages didn't work out."

"Please come home with us, Cass. Let's see where this relationship can take us. You can move back to your private room if it'd make you more comfortable. Just don't be willing to throw away something that's so good." The pleading sound of David's voice made her want to cry. Cass, more than anything, wanted to accept their offer and their love, but she still had a major concern. "What about Oliver?"

"I'll take care of that," Matt replied with a hard edge in his voice.

"No, I don't wanna cause trouble or come between friends."

David suddenly grabbed her hand. "Honey, maybe it'd be better if you got your own impartial attorney. After all, Oliver really represents your uncle Gus. He's supposed to only represent his best interests. You need someone who'll look out for you. We have our own attorney in Portland. I can give him a call and you can explain your situation. You could just let him check into your options. Would that be okay with you, honey?"

Cass smiled at them, her relief very evident in her face.

"Oh yes, I'd be so grateful, David. It sounds good to let someone impartial look into everything." Cass looked around the room. "I only need to pack up my personal stuff and load it in the truck. Then I can follow you home." She grinned as huge smiles came over both men's faces.

Feeling a bit cowardly, Cass left a note on the door for Oliver telling him where she'd gone and asking him to contact her when the paperwork was ready.

"I've got to leave this note on the door for Oliver. Before I left his office, he said he'd be coming by tonight to check on me and to see the water damage from the roof.

“He can just wait to check on the water damage, 'cause you're not going to be anywhere near him if we can help it” David declared. Seeing the scowl on his face, Cass thought it best not to mention that Oliver had his own key to the house.

“Okay, guys, let's get my stuff packed up.”

Chapter 11

Matt arrived back at their house with Cass. He led her straight through the house, back to his own bedroom, and closed the door behind them.

He turned to Cass and cupped her chin in both his hands.

“You’re so beautiful.”

He lowered his head to press his lips softly to hers. When Cass raised her arms up to his shoulders, Matt deepened the kiss, pulling her body tightly against his. Raising his head, he looked deeply into her eyes and lowered his hands to the bottom of her t-shirt, gradually pulling it up and over her head. Seeing nothing but desire in her eyes, he reached around and unfastened her bra, allowing it to fall to the floor.

Matt raised his hands and cupped both of her breasts, taking their weight in his palms. “So beautiful,” he whispered as he flicked his thumbs back and forth across the hardening tips.

Cass reached for the bottom of Matt’s t-shirt and shoved it up. He caught his breath when she ran her hands across his chest. He immediately stepped back and yanked his shirt off, dropping it to the floor. Pulling Cass back against his body, he moved her side to side so he could feel her hardened nipples rubbing against his chest. He lowered his mouth to the junction between her neck and shoulder, sucking gently, and began walking her backward toward the bed.

When her knees touched the mattress, Matt allowed the two of them to fall onto the unmade bed. Careful to keep his weight to the side, he lowered his hand and unfastened the button on her jeans, then

slowly pulled down the zipper. The rasping noise sounded loud in the quiet room.

Getting up on his knees, Matt encouraged Cass to raise her hips while he pulled her jeans and panties completely off and threw them to the floor. Taking just another moment, he quickly shed his own jeans, allowing his cock to spring free. Reaching over to his bedside table, he grabbed a condom and rolled it carefully over his erection.

Crawling onto Cass's body, he relaxed in the valley between her spread thighs. He rose up and licked around the rim of her ear, giving the lobe a little nip, then soothed it with a flick of his tongue. Pressing his face into her neck, he inhaled deeply. "You smell so good baby."

Continuing his sensual journey, he kissed his way down her neck taking little love bites and laving her with his tongue. Down her neck, then across the middle of her chest, he trailed his tongue to where he could latch onto one nipple and begin sucking. Cass arched her back, and a loud groan came from deep in her throat.

"You like that, baby? You like me sucking your tits?"

Matt lightly bit the rosy tip of her breast and then sucked it into the warmth of his mouth before moving on to the neglected side. While he continued to suck on her nipples, his warm palm made contact with her bare thigh. Gradually, he brought his hand up until he could lightly play with her damp, tight curls. He smiled when he saw her thrusting her hips. He knew she wanted his fingers on her clit, but she was going to have to wait until he was ready. Matt raised his head and took her lips in a carnal kiss, thrusting his tongue deep into the sweetness of her mouth. At the same time, he ran his hand down into her slick warmth and rubbed lightly over her clit, causing her hips to buck up toward his hand. Continuing to ravage her mouth, he rubbed the tiny bundle of nerves lightly with his thumb while thrusting two of his fingers in and out of her pussy.

When he felt her legs begin to tremble, he pulled his hand free and released her from his kiss.

"No," she groaned.

“Shh, baby, I know what you need. I’d never leave you hanging. Be patient, I’ll give you what you want,” he whispered to her. He kissed her one time, gently on the lips, then slid down her body till his shoulders held her thighs apart. He blew softly across her feminine heat. Taking his fingers, he spread open her labia and swiped his tongue from her clit, all the way to her anus, and then back up where he flicked gently at the hood covering her swollen nub. He was rewarded with a gushing of her liquid heat. He began to explore her slick folds as he licked up her plentiful cream.

“I can’t get enough of you, baby, you taste so good. Just like candy.”

Gently, he pulled back the hood covering her clit and flicked the end of it with his tongue. Cass started to thrash around on the bed, so he threw his arm across her abdomen to hold her steady.

Matt began a combination of licking and sucking her clit while thrusting his fingers in and out of her tight pussy. Carefully scooping up her heated cream, he carried it to lubricate the tight, puckered opening of her anus. At his first touch, Cass stiffened her body.

“Shh, it’s okay, Cass. I won’t hurt you or do anything you don’t want me to. Just give it a chance, please baby. David and I hope to eventually take you together, one of us in your pussy, and the other in your beautiful ass.”

Matt felt Cass’s body start to relax, so he continued to torment her clit with his tongue and lubricating her dark opening. After a couple of minutes, he took his forefinger and pressed down hard on the tiny, puckered rosette.

Cass stiffened for just a moment and then relaxed back down.

“Good girl,” he crooned. Matt kept up the pressure until he broke through the first ring of muscle, and his finger plunged into her depths up to the first joint. “Oh, baby, you’re so tight. When I get my cock in here, you’re going to squeeze the life right out of me.” Matt continued to lick and suck at her clit and begin to move his finger in and out of her ass.

“Oh, Matt, that feels so good!”

Matt decided he couldn't wait any longer, so he stepped up his assault on her clit and added another finger to her ass. He took her clit between his teeth and gently bit down while thrusting hard with the two fingers buried in her dark hole.

Cass trembled. “I'm coming, don't stop, please don't stop.” She screamed out her release, bathing Matt's tongue in a river of her moist heat.

“Oh, yeah, baby, that's it. Give me all you've got. ”

Matt quickly pulled his fingers out of her ass, rose to his knees, and plunged his throbbing cock into her hot, tight pussy. Cass immediately wrapped her legs around his thighs and her arms around his shoulders. A deep, harsh groan escaped from deep within his chest. “Oh, baby, you're so tight and hot.”

He began to slowly draw out from her body, leaving only the head, only to plunge back in as far as he could. He noticed Cass's glazed look and accelerated breathing and knew she'd come again. Gradually, he increased the speed of his thrusts and gently inserted his hand between their bodies to grab her clit and squeeze.

Cass called out his name with her release, and he exploded inside her just moments later. He could feel her pussy milking his cock. He wanted to keep her here in this bed, safe from the entire world, for as long as he could. “Baby, you're the best. I could spend my life between your beautiful legs.” Reaching down to kiss her gently, he slowly separated his body from hers. Keeping his weight on his arms, he lowered himself to the bed beside his woman and then pulled the covers up over her body. “I'll be right back,” he whispered.

Matt went to his bathroom, disposed of his condom and then wet a washcloth in warm water to take back to the bed. There, he proceeded to clean her up so she'd be more comfortable. Dropping the washcloth to the floor, he got back in the bed, pulled her close in his arms and kissed her gently on the lips. “Go to sleep now, baby. We both need the rest.”

Cass smiled at him, took a deep breath, and closed her eyes.

* * * *

Cass awakened to slow, romantic kisses. She opened her eyes and found herself staring into David's lust-filled eyes.

"Hey, honey, you feeling better now?" David asked her.

"Yes, much better. I'd feel even better if I could take a shower." She smiled at him.

"Oh, I think that could be arranged, providing you let me wash your back...among other things." He grinned.

"I'd love your assistance with my back and other things." She grinned back. "Where's Matt?"

"He's off running some errands to give us some private time. Is that okay with you, honey?"

"Absolutely." Cass laid her hand on David's cheek and gently kissed him on the mouth. He immediately took over the kiss, thrusting his tongue deep as if he were trying to meld with her.

"Oh, Cass, I want you so much, honey."

"I'm right here, David. Right in front of you. There's nowhere else I want to be."

David smiled, then stood and pulled the covers down on the bed. Bending, he scooped Cass up in his arms and carried her to the bathroom. Standing her on her feet beside the shower stall, he reached in to turn on the water. While the shower heated up, he quickly stripped out of his own clothing. He took Cass's arm and led her inside. Quickly, he adjusted the spray to be gentle and turned her so she stood directly in the spray.

David tilted Cass's head back and let the water soak her hair. When she straightened, he turned her around and began to shampoo her hair, taking the time to really massage her scalp.

Cass groaned. "David, that feels so good."

Smiling, David continued to massage the scented shampoo into her hair while he gently rubbed his erection up and down the crack of her ass. After a few minutes, he turned Cass around so he could rinse the shampoo from her hair. When her hair was free from soap, he grabbed her scented, liquid soap and filled his hands. Gently, he smoothed the strawberry scent over her shoulders and down across her breasts, avoiding her hardening nipples, for now.

Taking his time, he spread the soap over her stomach and then down each leg, careful to stay away from her pussy.

“David, please,” Cass begged. But David only smiled and turned her around to wash her back.

Filling his hands again, he started at her shoulders and massaged the gel into her back and buttocks, kneading the muscles as he cleansed her, earning him a loud groan from deep in Cass’s chest. Gently, he let his hand soap the area inside the crack of her ass, passing several times over her puckered opening. Matt already told him that he’d begun preparing her for both of them today.

Gently, he turned her back around and raised his soapy hands to her breasts. He traced their fullness with his fingers before gently squeezing them both in his hands. Using his thumbs, he massaged the hardened tips, smiling as Cass arched her back.

Keeping one hand on her breasts, he lowered his other one to the damp curls between her legs. Slowly, he spread the soap into her curls. He let one of his fingers trace her moist slit, briefly flicking the bundle of nerves at the top, causing Cass to jump.

Abandoning her breast, David used that hand to grasp her buttocks and pull her closer to him while he pushed two of his soapy fingers into her pussy. Cass quickly moved her hands onto his shoulders. David reached out and traced her lips with the tip of his tongue, then gently slid inside to taste her sweet mouth.

Reaching for the hand-held sprayer, David changed the spray to gentle, then proceeded to rinse the soap from her body, carefully holding her labia apart. For just a few seconds, he allowed the shower

spray to fall directly on her clit and then removed it when her legs started to tremble. He dropped to his knees and thrust his tongue into her pussy, causing her to gasp out loud.

Quickly, Cass jumped back, causing David to give her a puzzled look. She smiled and took his arm and pulled, letting him know she wanted him to stand.

“What’s wrong, honey?”

“Nothing’s wrong lover. You and Matt are always giving me pleasure, taking my breath away and making my knees weak. I wanna see if I can make you feel as good. Is that okay?” David held his arms out wide and grinned. “Honey, it’s more than okay.” He winked at her. “Pleasure away!”

* * * *

Cass looked up at her lover, excited at the prospect of being able to bring him pleasure, but unsure where to start. She’d never wanted to explore a man’s body before.

She filled her hands with the liquid soap and began to massage it into his broad shoulders. David frowned down at her, but had a definite twinkle in his eyes.

He looked down at her. “You do realize that now I’m gonna smell like strawberries. Not exactly the masculine image I like to project.”

“Do you have to go back to work today?” Cass asked him, continuing to lather him with the sweet strawberry scented gel.

“No, I’m home for the night.”

“Then strawberries it is.”

Cass continued to spread the sweet-smelling lather all over his body. Wanting to get through in a hurry so she could get to the good stuff, she washed his back, abdomen, and legs quickly. Then she concentrated on the huge appendage that pointed straight at her. Gently, she circled it with her hand, carefully spreading the soap around it and the balls underneath. She felt rewarded when she heard

the growl coming from his chest. She grabbed the hand sprayer and rinsed all the soap from his body, then hung it back on the wall.

She lowered herself to her knees and took his shaft in her hands. It felt as hard as steel to her. Gently, she reached out and flicked her tongue across the purple, mushroom shaped head. Liking the texture and the flavor, she ran her tongue along the length of his erect shaft, stopping to inhale deeply with her nose buried in his crotch.

She discovered that David had his own, unique smell, nothing like his twin's. Grasping his length with both hands, she ran her tongue back up the underside and all the way up until she could lick the head. Moving closer, she took as much of him as she could into her mouth, sucking gently the whole time. She felt his hands twine in her hair, and his hips started to gently thrust back and forth. Looking up at his face, she saw that his eyes were closed and his head was thrown back. It thrilled her to know she could affect him this way.

Keeping her hands on his shaft, she alternated sucking and licking until David removed his hands from her hair and lifted her by her shoulders.

"Enough," he growled. "I need you now, Cass."

* * * *

David couldn't take any more of her pleasuring without exploding. Pushing her back against the shower wall, he used his leg to push her thighs far apart. He reached over to the shower shelf and grabbed a condom and then rolled it firmly down his wet shaft.

He lifted her in the air. "Put your legs around my waist, Cass."

When her legs locked around him, he plunged his shaft into her slick wetness. Lowering his arms down her body, he placed both his hands on her ample hips, squeezed gently, and then raised her up and down on his erection.

“Touch yourself for me, honey. I wanna feel you come against my cock. Put your finger in that sweet pussy of yours and rub on your little clit. Come on, honey, I want you to come for me.”

Cass hesitated for just a moment, then lowered her hand to rub on her clit, faster and faster until she was breathing heavy and her vaginal muscles started to quiver. David had been trying to hold off till she came and was happy to know it wouldn't be long.

Cass cried out, and he felt the walls of her pussy convulsing around his cock. Three more thrusts and David joined her in that sweet release.

For a few moments, David just held her in his arms as the tremors in both of their bodies faded. Pulling back his head, he looked deeply into her sated eyes. Finally, after several minutes, he spoke to her.

“I love you, Cass. I never thought it possible, but I'm one hundred percent sure that I'm in love with you.”

Cass reached up and held his face between her hands. “I'm in love with you, too, David. With both of you.”

A feeling of happiness and deep satisfaction came over David. He leaned forward and took her lips in a heated kiss, then gently pulled himself from her body and lowered her to her feet. Pulling her close, he wrapped his arms around her and squeezed tightly.

“You realize what this means, don't you?” He pulled back slightly so he could gaze into her eyes. “You're ours now, and we're not letting you go. There will be no more talk of packing up and going back to Texas. You're here to stay, and if I hear one more word about leaving us, I'm gonna team up with Matt to turn that ass of yours rosy red.”

“Well, that threat alone should keep me here.”

* * * *

Cass smiled as she joked back with him. At least she hoped he was joking. This was the second time they'd talked about turning her

butt red. She couldn't imagine letting anyone, loved one or not, paddle her backside.

Cass jumped when David suddenly released her and reached for the spray attachment. Quickly, he rinsed them off and then turned off the water. He grabbed her hand and pulled her from the shower stall. He quickly dried off her body, then ran the towel over himself before pulling her into the bedroom. He left her standing by the bed while he went into the large closet.

"Hold on, what's the hurry, big man?" It was all Cass could do to keep up with him.

"I can't wait to tell Matt that everything's settled, that you love us as much as we love you, and you're here to stay forever. Woman, we've got plans to make." David came out of the closet, already dressed in a pair of jeans and pullover shirt.

Uh oh.

Cass had a scary feeling pass over her body. What had she done? She just knew that now they'd walk all over her, making all her decisions, taking over her life. She giggled.

She didn't know if she should be happy or sad. Laughing, she decided she'd just go with the flow and see where it took her. One thing was for certain—she wouldn't have to worry about amorous Oliver anymore. He wouldn't dare try to take on her guys.

"What's so funny, Cass?"

"Nothing, I'm just so damn happy."

David walked over to her, picked her clear up off the floor, and laid a loud, smacking kiss on her lips. "You couldn't be any happier than you've made me, honey."

As they finished dressing for dinner, David told Cass about his conversation with their lawyer.

"I called our attorney this afternoon and explained the situation to him. I gave him Gus's name, along with yours and Oliver's. He said since the will has already been filed he could get a copy of it from the county courthouse and read it. He also said to give him a couple of

days and he'd give you a call to let you know what he finds out. His name is Robert Castille." He looked up from putting his shoes on and smiled at her. "You can trust him, Cass, both Matt and I do."

"Thanks, David. I feel better already just knowing someone else is checking into it for me."

"You do know you can just let it go now, don't you? Matt and I make a good living, Cass, and we've got more than enough money in the bank to take care of all of us for the rest of our lives."

He walked over and took her hands. "Honey, you don't need to inherit his money or his house. In fact, if you do inherit the house, you'll just have to turn around and sell it. You won't be living in it 'cause you're definitely staying in this house with us from now on."

Cass almost laughed at the stubborn look that had come over his face.

"I know, David, and I'm happy to be here with you. But you don't understand. It isn't the house I want. If I'm his niece, then I it acknowledged. I want his personal papers, diaries, and pictures that are supposed to be stored in the attic. That's the only tie I have to my family. I want to feel like I have a past. I guess I'm not explaining it very well, but I need to know he was truly my family."

"I'm sorry, honey, I wasn't thinking along those lines. When he proves that Gus was your uncle, we'll help you get anything you want out of his house, and we'll help you get the house in shape to sell it."

Cass looked over at him with a shine of tears in her eyes. "Thank you so much, David, for everything, but mostly for trying to understand."

"Don't thank me, honey. It's self preservation."

When she looked puzzled at his comment, he elaborated. "If you sell the house, you won't be tempted to use it if you get mad at one or both of us."

Laughing, Cass told him, "Not likely, big man. Even angry, I'd rather be with you than anywhere else I can think of."

Kissing her quickly, David led her off toward the kitchen. “Come on, honey, let’s decide what we want for dinner, and I’ll call Matt and tell him to get his butt home.

* * * *

Oliver pulled the note off the door that Cass left for him. He wadded it into a ball and flung it to the ground, then let himself into the house. He was furious. He needed to find a way to get her away from those two assholes.

Taking a quick look around, he didn’t see anything personal belonging to Cass anywhere. She’d taken everything with her to their house.

Angrily, he kicked the bucket over that she’d put down to catch the dripping water in the hall. Oliver jumped back as the water flowed across his feet. “Damn it,” he cried out.

This should have been so easy. Romance an unwanted, abused woman and make her think you’re interested in her. Make her think you desire her, and make her desire you, and then she’d be putty in your hands. She’d be happy for me to continue to handle all the legal matters for her. I’ve worked too hard to give up now. I’ve earned the right to have access to all that money. I’m not giving up without a fight.

Angrily, Oliver went back outside and got in his car.

I’m going to let her stew for a couple of days. Let her wonder if she’s ever going to be able to inherit that old fool’s estate. Then I’ll drive out to see her when the guys are at the store and give her the proof of her identity. I’ll give her a letter from dear old Uncle Gus telling her that it’s his dying wish that she and Oliver, his best friend, give each other comfort and take care of each other.

Smiling at the details of his new plan, he backed out of the driveway and drove home.

* * * *

Cass and the brothers were having fun making dinner together—making more of a mess than an appetizing meal—when the phone rang. David answered it and told Cass that Robert Castille wanted to speak with her.

Both Cass and Matt joined him at the desk.

“Put it on speaker, David, that way I won’t have to repeat everything later.”

“You sure, honey?” he asked.

“I’m sure. I’ve got nothing to hide from you two. I’d end up telling you everything, anyway, so might as well hear it firsthand.”

Matt hugged her close while David put the call on speaker.

“Okay, Robert, Cass had me put you on speaker,” David said.

“Ms. Abernathy, Robert Castille here. It’s a pleasure to speak with you. David spoke very highly of you.”

“Nice to speak to you, too, Mr. Castille. Please call me Cass. I think rather highly of David and Matt, as well,” Cass said with laughter in her voice.

“Cass it is, then, and please call me Robert. I’ve pulled the copy of the will from the probate court and everything looks in order. It’s a relatively easy thing to prove your identity. This should have been closed out months ago, but I know there are some lawyers that drag this kind of thing out just so they can get the executor’s fees for as long as possible. It would be a simple matter for me to drop him a letter advising him that you’ve retained my services and include the proof of identity with my letter. It will force his hand. He’ll have to turn over everything to you then. Of course, you live in a small town, so you need be prepared to receive some hostility from him. He isn’t going to walk away from those fees graciously.”

“I don’t understand. How can he be making enough from my uncle’s estate to warrant being this much of a problem? I mean, come

on. There's only around thirty thousand dollars at the most, and that's just going to be enough to fix up that old house to sell it."

Cass's statement brought smiles to both men's faces.

"We like hearing you talk about selling you house, baby. Lets us know you here to stay," Matt whispered.

"Hey, Robert, you've gone awfully quiet. What's wrong?" David asked.

Instead of answering David, Robert addressed his comments to Cass.

"Cass, who told you the amount of the estate of August Laughlin?"

Cass was puzzled by his question, and she glanced up at the guys and shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, Oliver told me the amount when he visited me in Texas. Did I misunderstand him or remember it wrong? I know it can't be much. I've seen their house, the way they lived. I know they didn't have much money."

"What 'they' are you referring to, Cass?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, I meant my uncle Gus and his life partner."

"Well, that explains a lot about your situation. You have a problem, young lady. One you're definitely going to need help with." For a few moments there was silence. "I don't want to upset you, Cass, but the bank account of August Laughlin has approximately, as of yesterday afternoon, one and a half million dollars in it. Oliver's fees alone would be about ten percent of that yearly. He'd want to drag that on forever. He'll probably need a court judgment to make him relinquish executor's rights."

David and Matt looked at each other in shock, and then David turned toward the phone. "Robert, what would happen to the money if Oliver managed to insinuate himself into Cass's life in a romantic way?"

Both brothers stared at Cass.

For a moment, there was a long silence on the other end of the phone.

“Well, if he were romancing her, and she developed feelings for him, he could get her to sign a power of attorney giving him control of the money completely. He could then legally withdraw it and put it in a personal account.” After another brief silence, the attorney asked, “Are you saying he’s romancing her?”

Cass spoke up quickly, seeing the frowns settling on her lovers’ faces.

“He tried to. At least he told me that he thinks he has feelings for me and that he promised my uncle Gus that he’d take care of me. He said that we could help each other be no so lonely. Then he tried to get me to come and stay at his house while all the legal issues got settled.”

“Are you sure he meant romantically when he said he had feelings for you?” asked the perplexed attorney.

Feeling reluctant to answer, Cass glanced nervously at her men. She’d not told them everything, and she dreaded the reaction she knew they were going to have.

“What is it, Cass? You’re looking awfully uncomfortable. What haven’t you told us?” Matt wanted to know.

Cass looked down at the phone and sighed heavily. She wouldn’t look at the brothers while she explained what happened in Oliver’s office.

“Okay, when I went to see him the day I moved in here with you, he grabbed me and took me into his office.”

“What do you mean he grabbed you?” Matt yelled.

Cass put her hand on his cheek. “Please, Matt, let me finish.” When he nodded, she continued.

“First, he lectured me about my relationship with you, and then he told me he had feelings for me, and he thought I should move in with him so we could get to know each other better.” Cass paused in her

story and looked nervously up at Matt and David. “Then he tried to kiss me.”

“What?” Both brothers yelled at once. Cass cringed and tried to soothe them.

“He didn’t kiss me, though. I pushed him away and got out of his office before anything happened.”

All three of them jumped when the attorney’s voice came over the intercom.

“Of course, this is a whole other ballgame. If he’s trying to romance you with no encouragement from you...”

“Hell no, she didn’t encourage him,” Matt yelled.

“Calm down, Matt. I’m not saying she did. If he’s trying this, then he’s expecting a big payoff and may be very angry to get a letter from me saying he’s not getting one. For that much money, some men could even be dangerous.”

“Don’t you worry about that, Robert. Matt and I will see that she’s plenty protected.”

“That’s good, David. Now, Cass, what do you want my next step to be? I can file papers for you to claim your inheritance. Those papers would then be served on him as the executor. By law, he must comply, and the whole matter could be settled in as little as thirty days, although he could drag it out to as much as ninety days.”

Cass studied the brothers, both with loving, caring expressions on their faces. She knew that they’d abide by whatever her decision was. If she went ahead with this, she’d most certainly make an enemy out of Oliver. That might even affect the way the town’s people treated her. Did she care what they thought? Despite what Robert said, she didn’t think Oliver would really be dangerous. Of course, she hadn’t been the best judge of character regarding violence considering her former husband.

The bottom line was she wanted her inheritance. She yearned to know about her uncle Gus, and she dreamed of feeling as if she were part of a family. As much as she loved the brothers, they couldn’t give

her that feeling. Getting her hands on Gus's letters and pictures would. Confident with her decision, she turned back to the phone.

"File the papers, Robert. My uncle Gus wanted me to have his pictures, diaries, and letters, and, apparently, his money, as well. I'm not going to back down from this, and I'm certainly not going to romance Oliver for any reason."

"All right, Cass, I'll file the necessary papers tomorrow at the courthouse. I'll call and let you know when they're to be served to Oliver. I recommend that you avoid contact with him after this conversation. It would be better to do all your communications through me. That's what I'm here for. And don't worry, Cass. We'll get you through this, your guys and I."

"Thanks again, Robert, we'll talk to you soon." David hung up the phone and stared briefly at Matt.

Both men walked over to Cass and placed their arms around her in a bear hug. Matt broke the silence first.

"Baby, I'm so proud of you. Does this mean you're really staying here for good, here with us, building a life?"

"I love you guys, both of you. I'm not going to fight that anymore. I'm going to stay with you till you tire of me and throw me out." Cass looked up at them and smiled coyly. "Besides, I can't leave you."

Matt and David exchanged puzzled looks.

"Why not, baby?" Matt asked.

Slowly Cass lowered her eyes to the floor to keep them from seeing the laughter in her gaze. "I can't leave because I don't want anybody trying to turn my butt red!"

The brothers laughed, then Matt grabbed her hand and started dragging her down the hall, motioning for David to follow.

"We need to celebrate this right," he called over his shoulder, and proceeded to lead them all to his bedroom.

* * * *

When they reached the bedroom, Cass became overwhelmed. They stripped her clothes off, tearing her underwear in the process. Once she was naked, Matt picked her up and dropped her down in the middle of the bed. Then both of the brothers stepped back and stripped out of their own clothes. Rushing back to the bed, each man lay down along Cass's side, immediately took a nipple into their mouths, and began sucking hard.

Overwhelmed, Cass emitted a deep groan.

"Baby, this night is all about you. Tell us what you want. What is your desire for tonight?" Matt whispered in her ear.

Cass put one hand on each of their faces and waited till they both looked up at her. "I want the two of you to make love to me. Together."

* * * *

David couldn't believe his ears. Her words caused his cock to harden painfully. Looking over at Matt, he saw that he had the same problem.

"Cass, honey, are you sure?" David wanted to know, but secretly hoped she knew what she asked for.

"I'm sure. Just promise you'll be gentle and not go too fast."

"Baby, we'd never want to do anything that would hurt you. If you decide at any time you don't like it, then just say the word and we'll stop and not be upset at all."

After Matt's reassurance, Cass relaxed back down onto the pillows on the bed. Mimicking their caresses on each side of her body, the brothers started with circling the rim of her ear with their tongues. Gradually, they licked their way down her body. They each took a nipple into their mouth, and then started alternating between sucking and nibbling. Cass thrashed her head back and forth, pleading with them. "Please, don't make me wait."

“Not this time, baby. You’re not rushing us. We’re taking our time this go around,” Matt said.

With a nod to each other, Matt continued tormenting her nipples while David slid down her body and settled between her thighs. Inhaling deeply, his cock hardened even more with the sweet smell of her arousal. Leaning forward, he quickly ran his tongue down her moist slit from the bundle of nerves at the top all the way to her puckered back opening. Groaning, he looked up at Matt. “She tastes so fucking good, Matt.”

Using his thumbs, he gently spread her labia open and exposed her clit, partially hidden behind its protective covering. Quickly, he flicked his tongue back and forth across the hood, then took his finger and pulled it back, releasing her engorged clit. Using his tongue, David traced circles around and around the little bud, causing Cass to buck her hips toward his teasing mouth. Placing one arm along her abdomen to hold her steady, he thrust his tongue deep into her pussy and began a rhythm of in and out while keeping his thumb pressing on her pleasure center.

David leaned back down and replaced his thumb with his tongue and began to alternate between licking and sucking Cass’s clit and thrusting in and out of her pussy with two fingers. While he had her distracted with worshipping her clit, he pulled his fingers, covered in her cream, down to her puckered opening and began to lubricate it. Several times, he brought her cream to the dark opening, lubricating the way for his fingers.

Finally, when she became slick enough, he pushed one finger past the outer ring. He felt Cass’s body tense up for just a moment, and a shocked cry escaped her lips. Almost immediately, she relaxed back down, which allowed him to add a second finger.

David could feel that Cass was close to coming. He felt the vibrations beginning through his tongue while he continued licking her clit. While he kept up with the in and out motion of his fingers in her ass, he pulled her swollen clit into his lips and sucked hard.

Cass screamed out her release. To prolong her pleasure, David continued to suck and lick gently against her clit. As her spasms began to slow, David pulled his fingers from her ass. He gave Matt a nod, then crawled up her body.

“Honey, I want you to ride me. I’m going to take your pussy while Matt fucks your pretty little ass,” he whispered directly into her ear, delighted to see the fire of passion in her glazed eyes.

“What do you want me to do?” Cass timidly asked, her voice nearly a whisper.

“Let me get on my back in the middle of the bed and then just climb on board. Mat will take care of the rest.”

Cass rolled to her side, allowing David to turn on his back. Matt handed David a condom, then assisted her in straddling his body and sinking down on his covered, erect cock. Gently, he pulled her head down to his, and proceeded to give her a devastating, open-mouth kiss.

* * * *

Nobody was more surprised than Matt when Cass said she wanted the two of them to fuck her at the same time. He’d dreamed of this so many times, he could hardly believe they were in this bed, about to join all together.

He watched his brother move down Cass’s body to bury himself between her legs, and for just a moment felt jealousy. It didn’t last long, though. He knew that Cass loved him just as much as David, and he would definitely get his turn.

He raised himself up and leaned over Cass’s body so he could play with her breasts. He cupped them in his hands and then carefully licked all around the rosy tips. Cass was moaning and grinding her nails into his shoulders. She started thrusting her breasts toward his face, probably in an effort to get him to take her nipple into his mouth. He was enjoying giving her a little sensual torture. He wasn’t

sure who the torture was worse on, though. He wanted her nipple just as much as she wanted him to have it. He decided to give in to both their desires and took her nipple into his mouth.

Matt had one hardened nipple clamped between his lips while he sucked, and the other was being pulled and rolled between two of his fingers. Carefully, he took the swollen tip of her breast between his teeth and tugged gently. Cass arched her back and moaned loudly. Matt released her nipple with a loud pop and turned his attention to the neglected nub. Taking his time, he again licked all around her sensitive breasts, ignoring the swollen tips. Cass grabbed him by the hair and pulled his head toward her nipples. Laughing quietly, Matt took the nipple into his mouth and bit gently, getting his reward with Cass's loud groan.

Her breathing quickened, and her fingernails drove even farther into his skin. He could feel her abdomen quivering and knew she was getting ready to come. He leaned over and took one of her nipples into his mouth, sucked hard, and plucked at the other with his finger. Cass threw back her head and screamed out her release.

He looked down at David and saw him nod. He released her nipple and pulled away from her body. Matt listened as David explained to Cass what they were going to do to her. He handed his brother a condom, and then helped Cass climb up on top of David and straddle his body. He watched with envy as she sank down onto his brother's erect cock.

Chapter 12

Matt watched the love of his life stretch out over the body of his brother. He quickly rolled a condom over his painful erection and then reached for the tube of lubricant they kept in the bedside table drawer. After crawling up between David's spread legs, he leaned over, kissed the back of Cass's neck, and ran his tongue down her spine, all the way to the crack between the cheeks of her ass. He thoroughly coated his sheathed cock with lubricant and then squirted a large amount on two of his fingers.

Matt looked over Cass's shoulder at David and nodded, then watched as David reached forward and parted the cheeks of her ass to give him access to her dark passage. Cass jumped, as if startled, and he could hear his brother soothing her.

"It's okay, honey, I'm just helping Matt out a little bit. He's gonna slick you up so that he doesn't hurt you." Slowly, Cass relaxed back down onto David's chest, her luscious ass sticking up in the air for his enjoyment.

Taking his lubricated fingers, Matt began to massage the puckered opening. Quickly, he added more lubricant to his fingers, and then inserted one into Cass's body. Finding little resistance, he added a second finger, making sure he liberally spread the lubrication inside, hoping to make this as painless as possible for Cass.

When he was able to insert three fingers into her ass, he nodded to David again, and pulled his fingers out.

"Okay, honey, he's got you all prepared, and now he's gonna press his cock into that beautiful, tight ass. When you feel the pressure, you need to bear down and take a deep breath. That'll relax

your muscles back there and let him in easier. Can you do that for us?" David kept his voice low and encouraging.

"I'll try, but I'll admit that I'm a little scared." Cass looked over her shoulder and gave Matt a little smile. "I trust you, Matt. I love you."

Her faith in him brought a lump to this throat. "I love you, too, baby, and I'm gonna make this so good for you."

She turned back around and looked at David. He gave her a gentle kiss and then motioned for Matt to proceed.

Using both his hands to hold her butt cheeks apart, Matt pressed his lubricated cock against her tight, puckered opening. When Cass took a deep breath, he pushed his way through the first ring of muscle. Right away, her muscles clamped down around his shaft.

"You can't imagine how tight she is, so good, so good." Matt's words were just rambles. He continued to push forward, barely an inch at a time. He could feel the sweat breaking out all over his body.

"Are you all right, honey? David asked.

Matt stopped his pushing, while he waited for her to answer.

"I'm great. It doesn't hurt nearly as much as I thought it would. It's like a great pressure, but it's hard to say whether it's pain or pleasure. Does that make sense?" Relieved, Matt began to slowly thrust forward again while he answered her question.

"It makes perfect sense, baby. There's a very fine line between pain and pleasure. We're gonna make sure you only feel the pleasure."

As he pushed one last time, Matt could feel his balls come into contact with Cass's ass. Nodding to David, they began thrusting in and out, alternating so that when one was pushing in, the other was pulling out.

Cass gripped David's shoulders. "What am I supposed to do?" she managed to gasp out.

"Just stay still, honey. Let us do the work, and you just feel," Matt told her.

Matt knew he wouldn't last long as tight as her ass was. He looked down at his brother. "David, it's not gonna be much longer till I can't hold back anymore."

David didn't say anything, but Matt watched him trail his hand down Cass's abdomen and thrust his fingers between her legs. Figuring his brother was going to help Cass along, Matt put his arms around Cass, fondling her breasts and squeezing her nipples. He wished there was some way to make them all come together.

"Oh, God, I feel so full," Cass screamed.

"I'm fixin' to come, David. Her ass is so tight, her muscles are milking me like you wouldn't believe."

"Okay, then, let's go for it," responded David.

Matt took Cass's nipples between two fingers and pinched and tugged. He guessed his brother must have been fingering her clit because her hips started bucking and then she froze for a moment.

"Arrhhh!" she screamed out as she climaxed. After just a few moments, she collapsed against David's chest.

Her ass contracted with her release against the Matt's erect shaft pulsating inside her. This was enough to send him into his own release, pumping the latex full of his seed. Just a couple of seconds later, his brother called out.

"Holy shit, her pussy's so tight, it's practically squeezing the juices out of me."

David closed his arms around Cass while Matt pulled himself out of her ass and then collapsed on the bed beside them. After taking a moment to catch his breath, Matt leaned over and pressed a kiss on Cass's shoulder.

"Don't move, baby. I'll be right back."

Matt got up and went to the bathroom to wet a couple of washcloths in warm water. He disposed of his condom and then cleaned himself up. Taking the wet cloths back to the bed, he handed one to David and then gently used the other one to take care of Cass.

When he finished, he threw the washcloth to the floor and climbed into the bed to snuggle up to his love.

David quickly got up to dispose of his condom and then returned to the bed to do some cuddling of his own.

Pushing the hair out of her face, Matt was amused to find Cass already asleep, exhausted from their love play. “God, David, we fucked her unconscious.”

David laughed and then both brothers kissed her gently on each cheek. Matt pulled the covers up so they could cuddle up next to the woman who made their lives complete. It didn’t take long for them to join her in slumber.

* * * *

The phone rang as the three of them dressed to go in to work. Helping out her men at the store kept Cass busy and out of trouble with all her free time. It had been a real challenge for her to avoid running into Oliver, but so far, she’d managed. Cass went to answer the phone.

“Hello.”

“Good morning, Cass, this is Robert Carlisle. Is this a good time to talk?”

“Sure thing, Robert. Hold on just a sec.” She turned and called out to Matt and David. “Guys, Robert’s on the phone. Do you wanna come listen in?”

Cass smiled when both men came running. She turned back to the phone and pressed the speaker button.

“Good morning, Robert, the gang’s all here and you’re on speaker. What has you calling so early in the day?”

“And a good morning to you, too, gentlemen. I’m calling to let you know that Oliver Barton will be served with your motions this morning. I’d advise you to make yourself unavailable to him at this point if you haven’t already done so. We still don’t know for sure

how he'll react to the court's demands. I've found it's always better to be safe than sorry."

"Believe me, I've already been making myself scarce."

"Good, I'm pleased to hear it, although if he does give you any type of trouble or confronts you in a hostile manner, you should get in touch with me right away. There are laws to protect you from such behavior. Now he has thirty days to comply with the court order. We won't be able to do anything else legally until those thirty days have passed. Do you understand everything?"

"Yes, I understand perfectly."

"Do you have any questions about the process?"

"No, I think you've explained it pretty well. I'll just be glad when it's all over."

"Keep thinking positive, Cass. The end is now in sight. Just a few more weeks and this will all be a bad memory, and you'll have what your uncle Gus wanted you to have. I have to go now, but I'll let you know as soon as I hear anything from his office."

"Okay, sounds good, Robert. Thanks." Cass hung up the phone and looked over to where the brothers waited expectantly.

Both men had relieved looks on their faces, and then Matt spoke up with a concern.

"Baby, I think it'd be better if you didn't come with us today."

"What, you don't want my expertise working in your store today?" Cass replied with a fake hurt voice. Just to make sure he knew she was kidding, she batted her eyes at him flirtatiously.

"Baby, I always want you around, expertise or no expertise, but I also want you safe."

"I agree, honey. It'd be safer and easier to avoid confrontation if you weren't around the store. I really don't think we have to worry about him coming here, and even if he did, we have a damn good security system on the house. No one's getting in unless you let them in," David said.

"I'm just teasing, guys. I'll be happy to stay here today if it'll make you feel better. Although, I'd love to be a fly on the wall when he gets those papers. I'm smart enough to know it wouldn't be a good idea for him to see my face right after he discovers he's losing his meal ticket. I'll be fine here. I've got several books I haven't read, plus I'm thinking of getting in touch with my former boss to see if I still have a job."

Matt snorted. "I'd tell you I don't want you working, but I know you well enough by now to know you'd probably kick my ass for even saying it."

Cass and David both laughed out loud.

"I'm not kidding, baby. I don't want you tied down to some stupid job. I want you to be able to spend all your time with us. Hell, I like you working with us at the store." He glanced over at David. "My silent brother would agree with me if he wasn't afraid of getting his ass kicked, too."

"Okay, guys, I'll let it go for now. I guess with all that money coming I don't really want to take a job away from someone who needs it." She gave both men a stern look. "Just remember, you get what you ask for. Don't come crying to me when I start getting on your nerves wanting to organize everything at the store."

David smirked, "You organize all you want, honey. I love things to be all neat and tidy. Matt's the one that will go bananas when you organize his desk."

Matt looked at her quickly. "Woman, some things are sacred and off limits. My desk at work is a major red zone. Proceed with caution." She would have been worried except for the wink she saw him give David. She picked up a pillow off the couch and threw it at him.

"You big ass." Her words had David chuckling.

"Like I said, today I'll stay here like a good little girl and stay out of trouble and harm's way."

“That’s great, baby, and just to be safer, I’m leaving Demon and Angel here today to help guard you,” Matt told her.

He laughed when Cass flashed him a defiant look “You don’t have to leave those dogs here. I’m perfectly safe here by myself. You know they’d miss you if you leave them here. They like sleeping at the store every day.” Cass frantically tried to come up with a reason they had to take the dogs with them.

“No deal, baby. They’re staying, so you might as well just accept it. You know they won’t hurt you, and they’ll definitely take action against anyone coming in this house we haven’t invited.” Realizing from his look that she wasn’t going to win this argument, Cass gave in gracefully. “Okay, big man, I’ll let the dogs protect me if it’ll make you feel better.

She gave them a big grin. “I’m going to make you guys a treat today. I’m going to cook dinner.”

“Honey, you don’t have to do that,” David said, with a surprised voice.

“I want to do it. It’ll give me something to plan and look forward to today.”

Both men kissed her and then headed out the door to the garage. Just a few minutes later, Cass saw the truck head down the driveway from the kitchen window. Turning around, she spotted the dogs sitting in the doorway looking at her.

“Well, guys, looks like it is just you and me.” Both dogs cocked their heads sideways. “Just do me a favor and don’t scare me any today. You stay on your side of the room, and I’ll stay on mine.” To her surprise, the dogs trotted off to their beds in the living room.

Having the dogs taking care of me might not be such a bad thing after all.

Cass spent a little time cleaning up the house, then took one of her books and headed out to the deck so she could sit in the swing and read. She was kind of surprised when Demon and Angel got up to go

with her. They'd pretty much stayed in their beds all day, so she thought it would be good for them to get outside.

She curled up on the swing and let her mind wander back to the conversation she had with the guys before they left for work. She could admit to herself that she really didn't want her data entry job back, but she still feared they'd get tired of her if she was around all the time.

Once she inherited the money from her uncle, she'd insist they let her put the money into this household to cover the expense of having her here. "Umph," she snorted out loud, startling the dogs. She could just hear their reactions to that suggestion.

She looked around at the wind blowing the leaves around the back yard. It surprised her that she felt happy with nothing to think about but cleaning and making dinner. She could get use to this pretty easily. She sighed. Well, it'd be at least thirty days before she had to make any decisions about what she wanted to do. It'd be best to discuss it with David and Matt and not try to make any decisions without their input. Sighing again, she picked her book up and tried to concentrate on the story.

* * * *

Oliver arrived at his office at the usual time and frowned at Serena's empty chair. "Late again, Serena? I'm really going to have to think about replacing you." Smiling, he thought about the fact that soon he'd be able to hire more office staff, and he wouldn't have to put up with Serena any more.

He'd made up his mind last night that he'd given Cass enough time to worry about her inheritance. Today, he planned to go out to David and Matt's house and present her with the evidence of her identity, plus the well-written letter from dear old Uncle Gus encouraging her to let Oliver take care of her. He smirked. He could call it well written, since he'd written it himself last night.

Whistling cheerfully, Oliver proceeded to make coffee to get him through the morning. As he added the water to the coffee maker, he heard the door open. He looked around the corner and saw Serena laying her purse on the desk. Catching her gaze, he glared at her.

“Serena, you need to start making more of an effort to be here on time every day. I’m not going to continue to tolerate your total disregard for my rules. Do we understand each other?”

“Sure, Oliver. I’m sorry. My alarm clock didn’t go off this morning. I’ll go buy a new one on my lunch break.”

“Since you’re thirty minutes late this morning, kindly take thirty minutes less for a lunch break.” He closed his office door too fast to see the nasty look Serena shot at him.

Oliver heard the outside door open. He walked into the front office just in time to see the postman hand her a large brown envelope. He watched as Serena signed for the delivery. He snatched the envelope out of her hand and looked at the return label. He frowned when he read “Probate Court” and the Portland address. He turned around and went back to his office, slamming the door behind him.

Without another word, he went back to his office and shut the door.

Sitting down at his large oak desk, Oliver tore open the envelope and pulled out the stack of papers. After several minutes of reading, he stopped, then went back to the beginning and read again. He’d read it three times before the enormity of what Cass had done registered in his brain. When he realized that she’d out-smarted him, he was furious.

“Son of a bitch!” he bellowed, throwing his coffee cup against the wall. He couldn’t believe this, after all his careful planning. “That bitch is not going to get away with this,” he screamed.

Unable to think clearly at this point, Oliver stood and looked out the window trying to figure out what he could do.

It's not over yet. I can still have everything I want. I just have to talk to Cass alone without her watchdogs. She'll be easy to convince, after all, she's lonely. I'd make a good husband for her. She's had a lonely life. It should be easy to make her believe I've fallen in love with her. All I really have to do is get her away from the brothers. I can show her the letter from Gus, and she'll be eating out of my hands. He glanced at his watch. *She should be alone now. I can just drive out to Matt and David's house and have a private talk with her.*

Oliver grabbed the papers and shoved them into his briefcase. He was so angry his hands were shaking.

"That damn bitch will do what I say, or I'll bury that money so deep, she won't ever find it." Oliver grabbed his coat and threw open his office door so hard it left a mark in the drywall.

Ignoring Serena's gasp, he threw open the outside door with the same anger and headed over to his car.

* * * *

Matt had been nervous all morning knowing that Oliver would discover what steps Cass had taken to get her hands on her inheritance. Waiting for his reaction felt like waiting for the other shoe to drop. Nobody could predict what he'd do, and Matt didn't like it. In hindsight, it might have been better to have Cass here at the store today so they could have kept an eye on her.

He'd never admit it to Cass, but he was worried that she might be right and that tangling with the town's only attorney might tend to alienate a lot of the people. He wasn't worried about their business, but he did worry about how people might look down on Cass for stirring things up.

David had been working in the office on inventory all morning while Matt kept watch on Oliver's car parked outside. He figured that as long as he could see that car, Oliver wasn't out looking for Cass.

Two hours after they had arrived he glanced out the window and saw that Oliver's car was gone.

Damn, how long has it been since I checked on it last?

"Shit, David, we've got trouble," he called out to his brother. Quickly, he walked back to the office. As he grabbed his coat, he looked over at his brother. "I lost track of time and now the damn car's gone. I've no idea when it left or which way it drove. We need to do some damage control fast. Let's go."

He turned and headed back toward the front of the store, not taking time to see if David followed him. He knew his brother would be right behind him. Walking swiftly over to the law office, Matt threw open the door, startling Serena, and both brothers rushed in.

"Serena, where's Oliver?" Matt gave her a look to let her know he meant business and wouldn't put up with any of her foolishness right now.

Serena looked puzzled by his attitude, but she answered his question anyway.

"I don't know where he went, but I can tell you that he sure seemed angry when he left here."

"What the hell does that mean?" David asked.

"He got a registered package this morning and then took it in his office. I guess he must have read it, and it must have made him angry. I heard him scream some vulgarities, and then a huge crash, and then more cursing."

"Do you remember exactly what he said before he came out of his office?" Matt asked. "And how long has he been gone?"

"Yeah, he left here about forty-five minutes ago, and he screamed that the bitch would do what he said, or he'd bury the money so deep, she'd never find it. I don't know who he meant. Do you?"

The brothers ignored her question and turned and left the office. Matt understood Oliver's words perfectly, and now they needed to get home and protect Cass. He didn't like that Oliver had such a long head start.

* * * *

Relaxing on the deck with her book, Cass glanced up when she heard a car pull up in the driveway. She wasn't overly concerned. She just assumed the guys had come home to check on her, maybe have some lunch, or they might even be making a bootie call.

Smiling at that thought, she got up and went back into the house. Moving swiftly, she closed the door before the dogs could come inside. Smiling, she bent down and looked at them through the screen.

"Sorry, guys, but doggies must stay outside for noon-time booty calls."

Before she could walk away, both dogs growled low in their throats. She quickly backed away from the door. She didn't know what upset them, but she felt very glad they were on the other side of the door.

She heard the kitchen door open. "Hey, guys, I'm glad you're home early," she called out. When she didn't get an answer, she turned to go to the kitchen and stopped cold. A feeling of dread swept over her body.

Oliver stood in the doorway. He carried a large envelope in his hand, his face flushed. He looked furious.

Oh, my God! He came through the kitchen door! I forgot to lock the door when the guys left, and I didn't remember to turn on the alarm. Oh, guys. I'm so sorry. This is all my fault.

"Hello, Oliver, what are you doing here?" Cass tried to keep her voice calm as she edged slowly toward the hallway. If she could run and lock herself in a bedroom she'd be able to call Matt and David.

Oliver began slowly stalking toward Cass, never saying a word. He moved around her, effectively cutting her off from the hall. As he neared the screen door, both dogs began barking and growling frantically. Oliver jumped and glanced toward the commotion. He

looked at the dogs confined on the other side of the screen and yelled at them. “Quiet!”

Surprisingly, the dogs quieted down, changing their barking to growling low in their throats. Their eyes followed Oliver as he continued to walk toward Cass.

Cass tried to move toward the hall again, and Oliver cut her off completely. He looked directly into her eyes. His face was full of rage, and he was shaking. “Why did you do this, Cass?” He waved the envelope in the air at her. “I took care of Gus for so long, and I promised him I’d take care of you. I’d have treated you like a queen. The people in town would have respected you and not thought of you as some fuck toy for the wonder brothers.”

“Why did you lie to me, Oliver? Why did you tell me you couldn’t prove my identity to the bank? You knew how much I wanted to be Gus’s niece, to be able to have proof that I belonged to a family. You knew about my history, and you knew how hard it was for me to trust anyone.” Cass wiped a tear off her cheek and turned her face away. “I trusted you, Oliver, and you betrayed that trust just like everyone else in my life.”

Cass straightened her spine and turned and looked directly into Oliver’s eyes. “I think you’d better leave. My attorney advised me that I shouldn’t have any contact with you at all. You should just call him and tell him anything you want to say to me.” Cass tried her best to look calm and in control. She didn’t want to show fear. She was afraid of antagonizing him further.

“I do care!” Oliver yelled. “I wanted the amount of the bank account to be a surprise, a wedding surprise.”

Shocked, Cass responded, “Wedding? What wedding?”

“Our wedding, you stupid bitch. I wanted to marry you. I could have made you happy.” Oliver’s eyes suddenly turned cruel, causing fear to clutch at Cass’s heart.

She made a split decision to try and get away from him. The patio door seemed her only chance.

Darting around Oliver, Cass ran for the screen door. He reached out and grabbed her by the arm, quickly taking hold of her other arm as well. Holding her in front of him with a painful grip, he shook her as hard as he could. Cass screamed loudly as she struggled, but she couldn't break the grip he had on her arms.

"Shut up," he bellowed and then slapped her across the face to prove he meant what he said. "You're not fucking up my plans now. You will come with me now, and you'll marry me. I earned that money taking care of that old queer, plus his damn sick lover. He should have left the money to me, but no, he had to go and leave it all to you. I will have what's due me, Cass, and nothing you can do will stop me."

The dogs began barking and growling furiously when Oliver struck Cass. Oliver turned and screamed at them again.

"Shut up, damn it."

Cass screamed again. With the dogs barking and Cass screaming, no one heard a car pull up into the driveway.

Oliver turned back to Cass and punched her on the side of her face with his fist. "I said shut up," he growled, knocking Cass to the ground with the force of his blow.

As she fell, Demon and Angel burst through the screen door barking and growling. They rushed to tackle Oliver, knocking him to the floor and holding him at bay with growls and nips of their teeth.

* * * *

Matt was practically shaking as he and David rushed home to check on Cass. David tried to call from his cell phone and didn't get an answer. They pulled up to the house and Matt froze. Oliver's car was parked in the driveway.

He slammed his foot on the brake, and both men jumped from the car. Running toward the house, Matt heard Cass screaming. It seemed an eternity before they ran through the kitchen door. Matt and David

came bursting into the room. Matt could hardly believe the scene that greeted them. Oliver lay on the floor screaming while the dogs barked viciously in his face. Then he spotted Cass on the floor behind a chair, rolled up in a fetal position and crying.

“Heel!” David yelled, calling the dogs off Oliver.

Matt rushed over to Cass and turned her over to check her condition. A feeling of rage came over him when he saw the bruise beginning on her cheek where she had been struck. “David, he hit her,” he called out to his brother.

David yanked Oliver to his feet and pushed him down on the couch. Glancing at the dogs, he told them to guard. Both dogs took up a position in front of the crying man, growling and baring their teeth.

David hurried over to Cass and Matt. “Hold her, David. I’m going to call the police.” Matt got up and pulled out his cell phone.

“Please don’t call the police, please don’t. I’ll get the paperwork run through as quickly as possible, and I’ll leave her alone from now on. If you call the police, I could be disbarred. I didn’t mean to hurt her. It just threw me in such a shock to find out about the other attorney.” Oliver’s voice had a pleading, whiny quality to it.

Matt looked down at Cass. David had helped her up to sit in the oversized chair. “It’s your decision, baby. We’ll do whatever you want about this.”

Cass shakily got to her feet. She looked first at Oliver, then at Matt and David. “I’m through letting anyone abuse me. Never again will I be a punching bag for anyone. Call them.” She turned and walked back into David’s embrace.

David hugged her tightly to his chest. “I’m so proud of you, honey, so very proud.”

“Ditto, baby,” Matt called from across the room

* * * *

After the police came and took their statements and pictures of Cass's bruised face, the trio headed back to Matt's bedroom to cuddle together. With Cass in the middle, both brothers snuggled as close as they could. Cass lay slightly on her side with her back up tight against David's front and her front snuggled against Matt's chest. Both men's arms were around her, holding her tightly, making her feel protected. The biggest surprises to her were the two large dogs lying across her legs at the foot of the bed. After the police had taken Oliver away, the dogs had come up to Cass and laid their heads in her lap. Overcome with the fact they acted to rescue her, Cass had bent over and hugged them both around the neck. They happily licked her face and settled at her feet. They'd been close to her ever since.

Matt and David had been just lying with her, holding her close and not asking her any questions. They seemed surprised when she finally spoke up. "I love you both so very much. I never thought I could feel love like this. I want to stay with you and be a part of your life. But I don't want to have to hide our relationship. Do you think the town will accept the three of us being together?"

Both men moved closer to her, their arms and legs cocooning her in warmth.

David spoke up. "We love you, too, Cass. We're never letting you go, girl. No matter what the town thinks about us. We love you and we want you to be our wife."

Cass looked up at him and then over to Matt, shocked by the request. She stayed silent as David continued, "Actually, we want you to marry Matt."

Cass started to speak, but David cut her off. "The marriage makes it legal so if anything ever happened to us, you'd be taken care of. So will you marry us, Cass? Will you live with us, and love with us, laugh with us, and cry with us?"

"Yes, Cass. Will you marry us and make us whole? Will you fill our lives with love and laughter?" Matt joined his brother's plea.

Cass had tears in her eyes that she couldn't stop from trailing down her bruised cheeks. "Can I think about it first?"

She immediately sensed the guys were unhappy with her answer, so she rushed to explain. "I'm not going anywhere, my loves. I just need to think this through carefully. I made a terrible wife the first time around. I made a lot of mistakes and couldn't give my husband what he needed to be happy. I don't want to make the same mistakes again. Please don't rush me. Grant me this time, so I can make a decision that we'll all be happy with."

The guys clearly didn't like her evasive answer.

"Okay, Cass, we'll give you a couple of days to think it over." David promised. Finally relaxed, secure in the love of the two men in her bed, Cass fell asleep.

* * * *

Two days later, Cass drove to the hardware store to meet the brothers for lunch. They'd a hard time convincing her to get out of the house while she still carried her bruises, but they finally made her understand the town didn't blame her for Oliver's problems.

Cass heard the bell over the door when she walked into the hardware store. She immediately saw Matt behind the cash register.

"Hey, baby, you're looking beautiful today." Matt smiled at her.

She rolled her eyes. "Oh yeah, I hear bruises are in this year."

He frowned and growled at her.

"Oh, stop your growling. I'm only kidding. Where's David?"

"I'm right here, beautiful."

Cass jumped. She hadn't heard him come up behind her. "Are you trying to give me a heart attack?" She squealed when he walked up to her and grabbed her up into his arms.

"Absolutely not. You wouldn't be nearly as much fun then," he said dryly.

Cass smacked him on the head.

“So what do you say we blow this joint and get us some lunch?” David dropped her to the floor and started to push them toward the door before she even finished her question. Taking a moment to lock up the store, Matt followed them to the truck and they headed toward the local diner. David ushered Cass inside, a little worried because she’d been lost in thought since they left the store. She surprised him when she put her arm around his waist and hugged him close, then pulled his head down for a deep kiss.

The hostess walked up smiling, and said, “Table for two today?” Before the hostess finished her question Matt walked up beside Cass. Immediately, she put her other arm around his waist and pulled him close, then took her arm from David, reached up and pulled Matt’s head down for a sexy kiss.

Cass turned and smiled at the hostess. “Nope, table for three, if you please.”

The young hostess looked from one man to the other, then smiled and said, “Lucky girl,” then turned to lead them to a table along the front window. Cass sat down on the side with Matt and smiled at both of her men. She leaned forward and waited to speak until both men were looking at her.

“All right, guys, we have some things to discuss.”

David looked puzzled, and a little wary. “Okay, Cass, what do we have to discuss?”

She beamed at them. “We have a wedding to plan.”

“Finally,” both brothers said together.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was born and raised in the great southern state of Tennessee. In my youth, I studied nursing, and spent several happy years working in the hospitals there until I branched out into medical management in 1980.

In 1998 I was managing a medical supply house in Chattanooga when I met the love of my life. The only problem facing me then, he lived way out in Oklahoma. You see, we had met in a chat room!

He romanced me daily with love letters, flowers and phone calls. It wasn't long before I uprooted myself, and moved west to join him. We married in 1999, and then continued our fantasy romance all over the world. Together we have traveled in almost all of the Continental United States, and taken trips to Canada and China.

We moved to Minnesota in 2003, where my life was changed forever by a series of small strokes. For someone who had owned her own business and worked twelve hours a day, being incapacitated was pure torture. The strokes damaged a part of my brain that helps control speech, and for a long time I couldn't communicate what was in my mind, to my lips. I could read however, and I became an avid reader of romance novels.

Strange as it sounds, the strokes did not keep me from voicing my opinions. I discovered that I could type my thoughts, almost as fast as I once spoke them. It was then that I started writing long, lengthy newsletters to my family and friends. I got all kinds of compliments on my amusing tales of our everyday life.

It wasn't long before my husband was encouraging me to find some kind of outlet to occupy my time, something that was challenging, and rewarding. I was already obsessed with reading about romance, and I began to think I could probably write a good romantic story. My husband heartily agreed with me. With that encouragement, I began writing my first book. I wasn't really convinced that anyone else would find it interesting, but he pressed me to take a chance and send it in to a publisher. To my surprise, it was accepted, and now I'm able to share it with readers everywhere who like a "happily ever after" story.

Now, I'm living in California with my, still romantic, husband of twelve years, and our boys. Our boys consist of Beau, Midnight, and Bubba, three male cats that allow us to live with them and serve them at their leisure. I continue to write almost daily, hoping that someone, somewhere will get the same enjoyment from reading my stories, that I get from writing them.



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