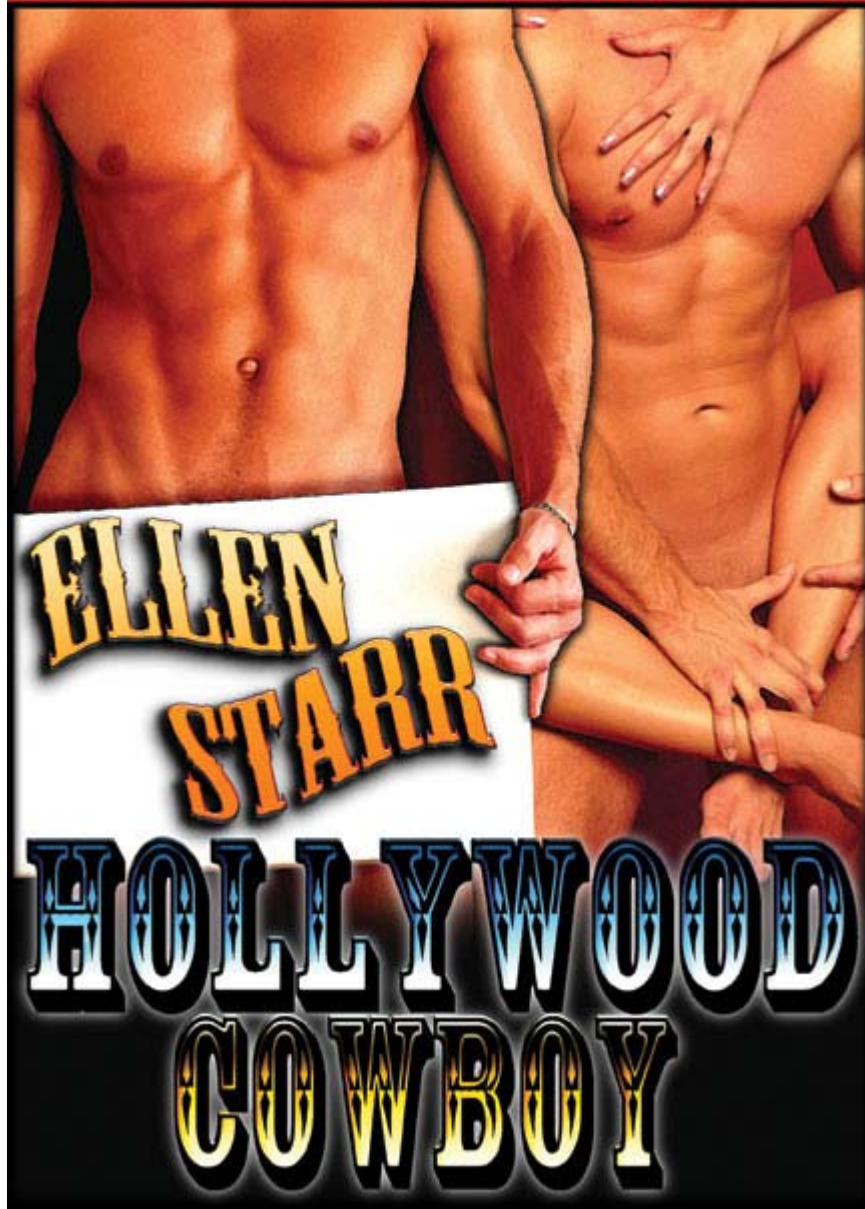


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# **HOLLYWOOD COWBOY**

**Ellen Starr**

**MENAGE AMOUR**



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With deep gratitude,  
Ellen Starr

# DEDICATION

To all those sexy cowboys out there.

# **HOLLYWOOD COWBOY**

**ELLEN STARR**

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## **Chapter One**

Molly Tyler swore to herself when she saw the shiny, black Hummer parked across the two handicapped spaces in front of the Cold Canyon, Texas courthouse. The mayor had parked his red Chevy pickup in her space yet again, but she'd let that slide today.

She scanned the license tag before glancing at the rearview mirror. As she suspected, the SUV had no permit to park where it was. An evil idea struck her. With a snicker she pulled into the empty area between the two vehicles. When she got out of the cruiser, Molly waved at Mrs. Weems, who kept an eye on everything that happened in the town square from her perch behind the register at Weems Hardware and Gifts. She smiled, going to the trunk of her car. The day had suddenly brightened considerably. It would be all over town in about three minutes how she had booted Alex Meadowvale's Hummer.

She glanced at the small crowd of girls that haunted the lobby hoping for a glimpse of Alex Meadowvale, walking past them to the elevator. Pressing the button for the second floor, she sighed. Whoever had come up with the idea to film a western in Cold Canyon had to be crazy, so that meant it was probably Meadowvale's doing.

The doors slid open to a deserted police department. Not one employee of the Cold Canyon police force was at their desk doing their jobs. She had the urge to fire her gun into the air. Instead, she

walked up behind the knot of people fawning all over Alex. "Is *anyone* working today?" She frowned at her day crew.

Everyone scattered as Molly walked into her office where Mayor Bubba Ryan had brought his Hollywood visitors. She slid into her seat behind her desk, gazing at the men who sat staring at her from the other side. Alex didn't look much different from the last time she'd seen him, a bit older, his hair a little longer, but much the same as when he'd worked on her father's ranch. If she wasn't mistaken, those were the same old boots he wore in high school when he had tried his hand at rodeo riding.

The mayor introduced the men with Alex, two studio execs who looked like they would rather be anywhere else. He didn't bother to introduce the tall Latino man, who wore his inky-black hair pulled back in a ponytail held by a silver clip set with turquoise. From the camera he carried, she figured he was there to photograph Alex in all his Hollywood bad-boy glory. Molly let her gaze sweep over the man, from his white western shirt with its rolled up sleeves to the long, muscular legs encased in faded Levi's. The scuffed, worn brown cowboy boots said to her this was a man who did nothing for show, everything about him would be one hundred percent real.

"Of course, Mr. Meadowvale is acquainted with our police chief Ms. Tyler," Mayor Ryan flashed his politician's smile at everyone. He used his unctuous vote-for-me voice.

Molly watched Alex's eyes widen in surprised recognition. She raised her eyebrows at him in warning. He closed his mouth on whatever he'd been about to say. *Good*. The photographer, looked at Alex before turning his gaze on her, speculation in his black eyes. She gave him a pleasant smile lifting one eyebrow when he returned her smile with a seductive blink. Her stomach clenched.

"Oh, yes, I remember Molly Tyler," Alex's voice was a slow, honeyed drawl. "We'll have to get together while I'm here. We could have dinner. Talk over old times."



*Get over it already*, Molly thought. She wanted to tell him to go fuck himself. Instead, she gave him a saccharine smile. "Sure, I have a *lot* of memories from old times." He had the grace to look embarrassed.

Mayor Ryan seemed to sense the tension in the silence that fell between them and leapt into the breach with details of the security required for the movie location. She turned her attention to her boss, taking the time to revise her duty roster. Since the town council had authorized the overtime required, she'd be fair about assigning her officers in a way everyone would benefit.

"We want someone with Mr. Meadowvale twenty-four hours a day." The taller of the execs tapped her desk to get her attention.

"John, I don't need it." Alex looked pained. Apparently, they'd argued over this before.

"Yes, you do. The letters," began the exec Alex called John. Molly's red flags went off.

"Letters?" She interrupted. "What sort of letters?"

"They're just fan letters. The usual 'can't live without you, please marry me' stuff." Alex glared at the exec.

"Fan letters don't get delivered to your house or left on your car." John was adamant.

She raised her eyebrows. "Do you have one with you?"

John motioned to the other exec. The man opened an expensive-looking briefcase, withdrawing a sheet of paper encased in plastic. He handed it to her when she held out her hand. Alex gave an angry-sounding sigh, leaning back in his chair.

Molly scanned the letter before glancing up at John. "How many others?"

"At least a dozen we know of, all like that one," he answered.

She nodded slowly. "I'll take care of it. I'll have some officers out at the set in about twenty minutes. Now, if that's all, I have a lot of work to do."

As soon as the Hollywood crew had gone, she called Aileen in. "Send Meyers and Garcia out to the movie location. Tell them I said to babysit the Hollywood folks for the rest of their shift. Tell Ben to come here, too." Molly got up with a deep sigh and walked to her office window. She gazed out at Alex, who was heading toward the parking area with his entourage. She shook her head, watching him wade through the crowd of townspeople, signing autographs and posing for pictures.

"You wanted me?" Ben stopped in the doorway waiting for orders.

She turned, smiling at her youngest officer. "Yeah, go down and take the boot off the movie star's Hummer. Give him a warning about parking in the handicapped space without a permit." She tossed him the key to the boot. He laughed, hurrying off to do her bidding.

With a deep sigh, she went back to her desk, picking up the letter and reading it through again. It seemed Alex Meadowvale had a stalker. From what she read, this would only get worse.

\* \* \* \*

Unsmiling, Alex eyed the young officer, tuning out the lecture on parking. He glanced at Dallas, who was sitting in the vehicle, frowning at his lover's amused expression. The officer, who told Alex his name was Ben, finished unlocking the tire boot then stood. The device would be the first of the innumerable ways Molly would find to make his stay here miserable. He sighed.

"Have a nice day." The young officer tipped his hat before he walked back toward the Court House.

*Yeah, I plan to. As soon as I can get back to the house and get Dallas into bed.* "Thank you." Alex turned, climbing into the SUV.

"Not one word," Alex warned as he started the engine before pulling out onto the town's main street. "Not one fucking word."

Dallas's smile widened. He raised his camera, snapping a few shots. "Where are we going next?" Dallas's voice sounded like dark, whiskey-soaked sin. Alex shivered with the jolt of lust that rushed through him every time Dallas spoke.

"Back to my bedroom." The breathless quality in his own voice didn't surprise Alex one bit.

"Ah, your bedroom. What then?" Dallas's tone deepened.

"What do you think?" Alex's cock pulsed.

\* \* \* \*

"Unh. Yeah." Alex choked back his groan, bracing himself against the wall, as he pushed his ass back to meet the thrusts of Dallas's hips. Alex's belly tightened under Dallas's hand, as it slid over his sweat-drenched skin. They were holed up in Alex's private adobe at the Longhorn Ranch. He shook back his hair, leaning his head back. "Ahh, Dallas," Alex's words came out in a moan. "Fuck me like you mean it." Dallas responded with a curse, grinding himself into Alex's ass harder.

Dallas kissed the side of his neck then slid his hot mouth up, nipping the lobe before licking the curves of Alex's ear. The heat of Dallas's breath sent a deep shiver through him. Alex's knees wobbled slightly, the cock inside him raking over all the right places. He let out another low moan. "Harder." He gasped. "I need it ha-harder."

Dallas twined his fingers in Alex's hair, slowing. "Why?" Dallas whispered catching hold of Alex's cock. "Is it the woman? You want the woman?"

"Please. Dal." Alex tried to rock back against his lover.

"You want her." Dallas kissed Alex's shoulder as he brushed his fingertips down Alex's back before moving them over his hip.

Alex shook his head in protest. "I love—," he managed to say, breathless.

"—her," Dallas finished for him. He traced over Alex's aching balls with gentle, feather-light touches.

"Mistake," Alex moaned. "Hurt." He couldn't continue as his thoughts whited out with the friction of Dallas's fingertip rubbing pre-come into the head of his cock.

"Tell me," Dallas whispered, withdrawing his touch. He nudged Alex toward the bed.

"Her," Alex forced the word out in a tight voice. "Hurt her. She. We. Fucked. I was. Stupid. Told," He stepped toward the bed, the sensation of walking with Dallas's cock still buried deep inside him almost more than he could bear. His knee connected with the mattress halting his progress. "Please, please. Lover."

Alex whimpered when Dallas pulled out, skimming his hands over Alex's legs. It had been like this from the first. Dallas had reduced him to a shivering mass of orgasmic pleasure, controlling every move he made. He swallowed hard, waiting, hoping Dallas wasn't going to leave him in a state of acute need.

Hands on his shoulders, he turned him, pushing him down to sit on the bed. Dallas knelt to kiss the inside of his thigh. Alex shut his eyes, sighing, leaning back as his lover rained kisses over his thighs, hips, and belly. His breath grew harsh once more.

The heat of Dallas's tongue and mouth on Alex's cock had him moaning again, drawing closer to relief. He fisted his hands in the bedcovers, unable to stop his hips from bucking. Dallas rose to stand above him. Alex held his breath. Then Dallas was moving over him, making him forget everything but the burn of Dallas's cock invading his body while his cock chaffed between their bellies until his balls drew up. Digging his fingers into Dallas's ass with a hoarse cry, he tumbled into the freefall of his orgasm.

## Chapter Two

The roar of a leaf blower woke Alex way too early for a day when he didn't have to be on the set until late that afternoon. He groaned, rolling over in the sweat-sodden, rumpled sheets. As soon as he turned his head, he wished he hadn't when the hammers in his head became jackhammers. Cautiously, he opened one eye, thinking he might see Dallas lying next to him. He didn't. Wondering where Dallas had gone, Alex winced at the stabbing light of day.

Hung over, he rolled out of bed to shuffle toward the bathroom, thinking dark thoughts about people who made loud noises early in the morning. His ass ached from the pounding Dallas had given him. The thought of his lover made his breath hitch, stirring the coals of desire to burn a little hotter. He pressed a hand to the top of his head, trying to hold it on, as he rummaged through the medicine cabinet. He found the aspirin, popping two into his mouth before getting into the shower.

He wrapped a towel around his waist. Still dripping water, he shuffled into the kitchen, and opened the refrigerator. The chilled air made him shiver as he reached in for the orange juice. He kicked the door shut while he unscrewed the lid. When his cell phone rang, he answered it, taking a swig of juice straight from the bottle.

"Yeah?" He pulled the curtains back, looking out the dining room window at the crew busily scurrying about the lawn.

"Hi, baby, are you missing me yet?" A caressing sweet female voice purred in his ear.

"Of course I am," he replied lightly. *Who the hell is this*, he thought. He had dated a couple of his co-stars before meeting Dallas

but this voice didn't sound familiar.

"I had a wonderful night, baby. I can hardly walk this morning. You were *so* good." The mystery lady's voice came through the phone in a seductive murmur.

"Uh." He craned his neck to see the clock on the oven. Dallas had fucked him, they'd gotten drunk, fucked some more until they finally fell asleep. There hadn't been any woman. She probably dialed the wrong number, he thought.

"When are we going to—" she began.

Alex jumped at the sound of a key in the front door. "Shit, I have to go, darlin'. I'm late for the set." He cut the woman off, disconnecting the call quickly. The phone call was forgotten with the arrival of Dallas accompanied by the only woman in town who wasn't the least bit impressed with him.

He eyed the bane-of-his-high-school-existence, Molly Tyler. She looked damn good in her uniform. Something about the handcuffs hanging from her utility belt along with the huge gun on her hip made his mouth go dry. She eyed him back without any expression on her face. She'd starred in some of his more memorable wet dreams all through school, even after their breakup. Hell, she still visited his dreams, despite the fact it had been twelve years. He had no doubt she'd visit his dreams that night, for sure. He hoped she brought her cuffs when she did.

Molly raised one eyebrow, giving him a critical glare. "We have a law against public nudity."

"What?" Alex felt his face grow hot. *How does she always manage to make me blush like this?*

"Put some clothes on. You'll scare the cows." She made a shooining motion with her hand. He twitched like he'd been shot.

"Oh, right." He hurried into the bedroom and searched for something to put on.

"I'll be your bodyguard this evening," her voice came from the other room.

*Fuck.* "Privileges of command?" He winced at the sarcastic tone in his voice, but he couldn't seem to help it.

"We drew straws to see who would do it. I lost." Alex winced again. Ouch, he thought, twelve years hadn't dulled her tongue any.

He pulled on his jeans before walking back into the living room. Molly had her back to him. She stood at the window, holding the lace curtain back, gazing out at the little yard and parking area. For a moment, he just stood there watching her. The sun gave her auburn hair highlights of fire. He'd always loved her hair. Alex wished she would forgive him for his stupidity before he left for Hollywood, but she still took his breath away. He sighed, pulling on the old white tee shirt he'd been holding.

"Well, we might as well go out to the set." He tossed the SUV keys to Molly.

Dallas snatched up his camera bag, giving Alex a swat on the ass as they followed Molly out to the Hummer.

\* \* \* \*

Dallas sat in the back seat behind Molly, turning so he had a clear view of Alex Meadowvale. He couldn't remember another man who set his blood on fire the way the actor did. Alex rested his arm on the door, the window down, letting the wind blow through his chocolate-brown hair. Reaching up with his other hand, Alex settled the ragged straw cowboy hat more firmly on his head. He gazed out at the passing scenery through black-lens sunglasses, his face expressionless. Dallas sighed. He snapped a few pictures of Alex's beautiful Cupid's-bow mouth and cheekbones most would kill for. 'Pure genetics,' Alex had informed him, 'a legacy from an Apache ancestor.'

He wondered if Molly would consent to pose for him if she would let him make love to her. Molly slowed to a stop at the new traffic light gracing downtown. Dallas shifted to sit behind Alex. He would

be filming that evening, in every scene. Dallas smiled to himself. The trailer would be theirs for quite awhile. She was the first woman to tempt him in a long time.

\* \* \* \*

She opened the trailer door. Dallas followed her inside. Alex would be hours filming. She turned to look into his black eyes. Without a word, he pulled her into his arms capturing her lips with his, gently parting them with his tongue, slipping it inside. Her knees grew weak, and Molly clutched at his shoulders for support as he plundered her mouth with a kiss that seemed to suck the air out of her lungs. What did he think he was doing? Part of her mind shrieked that she had to be insane. She'd just met this guy. The other part moaned, urging her to let go and to kiss him back.

It took everything she had to step away from Dallas. "I'm on duty."

"There are security guards to keep unwanted visitors away from the set." He reached for her again.

Molly had to admit, her vigilance wasn't strictly necessary. She allowed herself to be kissed again. It surprised her to find she wanted him the way she wanted Alex. A thought flitted across her mind, making her push him back a little. "You and Alex are..." she trailed off.

"Lovers, yes. Does this bother you?" He brushed a strand of hair from her cheek.

"It's a surprise. The Alex I knew, or thought I knew, never let on." She stopped speaking, looking at her fingernails to avoid his clear gaze, a little embarrassed.

"Come. Sit." He guided her over to the couch.

"Tell me about yourself." She sat, pulling him down beside her.

He sat beside her, his leg touching hers from hip to ankle, in a line of heat that made it hard for her to think. "There is not much to tell. I



grew up in a small town in Mexico. At nineteen, I met a man, James, a photographer for a fashion magazine. I posed for him. When we became lovers he took me to Europe where, among other things, he taught me to take pictures. In Paris, I left him to live with an older woman who owned a gallery. People began to notice my work. I have never looked back."

"What about your family?" Her own family had been small. Now she was the only one left.

"Ah." He smiled, "Dozens of them. I see them whenever I go back to Mexico. They are proud of me, though my mother wishes I would present her with grandchildren."

"She doesn't know?" Molly couldn't help being a little nosey.

"She knows. Her younger brother is the man who introduced me to James." He leaned in to kiss her once more. "And now, you are wondering how I can be attracted to women."

Molly nodded.

"Simple. I am attracted to beauty, whether it is physical or a beauty of the soul. That is what turns me on."

Dallas pulled her closer until she straddled his thighs, sliding his hands over her back, molding her to his body, his arousal evident in the erection straining the zipper of his jeans and pressing into her belly. All thought of the world outside melted away as he unbuttoned her shirt. The sight of the lacy push-up bra startled a soft chuckle of pleased surprise from him. She took a deep breath and moved her hands down over his chest, feeling his heartbeat. She gave in to the *fuck him* voice, telling her other half to shut up. Molly had her share of lovers in the past but always controlled, always carefully emotionless. Dallas awoke long-suppressed feelings, darker things she tried to ignore, giving her a freedom she hadn't realized she missed. She discovered now she needed this too much to care about consequences right then.

"You are so beautiful," Dallas whispered and kissed her throat, following his questing fingertips over her shoulder to the strap of her

lacy bra. He caught the strap in his teeth, slowly pulling it off her shoulder, as he unfastened the back hooks. He kissed his way across the tops of her breasts, removing the other strap. He took the garment from her arms, freeing her aching, tingling breasts, and dropping it with the shirt.

Molly's nipples hardened with their release from the tight garment. She longed for his mouth on her, and his hot, wet tongue exploring her. She wrapped her arms around his shoulders as he pushed her back onto the trailer's built-in couch. He slipped his hands over her softly, cupping her breasts for a moment before finally lowering his head to trace over one nipple with his tongue.

She moaned, threading her fingers in his hair, urging him closer. He took her nipple into his mouth in a sucking, kneading kiss, sending bolts of pure pleasure straight to her clit. Molly bent her head, pressing her lips into his hair and kissing the top of his head, then moving to his ear to explore its curves.

Dallas groaned, raising his head, moving to the other nipple. She tugged at his shirt, letting him pull away long enough to remove it. He threw it to the floor. Her belt, along with the gun, joined his shirt. Dallas grazed her nipple with his teeth, then soothed it with his tongue, as he slid his hands down to her waist. He searched out her zipper, pulling it down, then pushing her pants over her hips.

Molly gasped, kicking the pants off as he moved down her body to kiss her navel, pushing his tongue in, swirling it around. He hooked his fingers into the elastic of her lace panties, roughly pulled them down. Then he stood, quickly stepping out of his jeans.

She caressed him, teasing his growing erection until a drop of pre-come glistened at the tip. She nudged him back onto the couch, straddling his thighs. Dallas pulled her closer. She lowered herself onto his cock, welcoming him into her body. He groaned as he slid into her. Moving slowly at first, then with more urgency, she felt like she turned inside out one cell at a time.

“Oh, Molly,” he moaned as she kissed his throat, her hips moving

slowly against his.

She ground herself against him as he arched his hips. He gasped, groaning, his hips jerking against her hard, once, then twice, and cried out, coming. Molly moaned as she tightened around him, her orgasm crashing over her.

Dallas rubbed his hands over her back as she rode out her release. She rested her forehead against his, trying to catch her breath. "We shouldn't have done this."

"Why not? You wanted me. I wanted you. We have hurt no one." He slid his hands up her sides to her breasts, brushing his thumbs over her nipples, drawing a gasp from her.

"Alex—"

"—can join us or not as he chooses. I think he waits only to be invited." Dallas grew hard again inside her, filling her.

The thought of Alex making love with them sent a jolt of lust through her, making her tighten around Dallas again, rocking against him as another orgasm shook her. He groaned, pulling her down hard as he came a second time.

This time, Molly eased off Dallas, gathered up her clothes, carrying them with her into the trailer's tiny bathroom to clean up. Her sense had come back. She thanked heaven nothing had happened while she and Dallas had made love. She resolved not to be such an idiot again.

When she came out, Dallas sat at the table with Alex like nothing had happened. Both men looked at her. Her face heated in a blush. Alex gave her a knowing smile, winking at her.

"If you're finished for tonight, we'd better get back to the Longhorn." She walked past them toward the door.

## Chapter Three

Alex sighed, following Molly out of the trailer. Dallas had fucked her. He had seen the used condom in the trashcan beside the door. He examined his feelings, deciding jealousy didn't fit the emotion inside him. Dallas had been an unexpected benefit to the magazine project. Alex remembered his manager saying, "We'll do a photo spread in *Trails* magazine." He allowed himself to be talked into it, in spite of his reservations. Ten minutes after Dallas knocked on his door, they were fucking on the dining room table like there was no tomorrow.

Now he had Molly to consider. He'd never admit it to the execs, but it pleased him that they'd insisted on making this western in his hometown, grateful he had this chance to right old wrongs with her. Dallas rested his hand on the small of his back. Alex smiled, his stomach clenching at the touch.

"I want to take some pictures." Dallas waved his hand at Molly. "You. Her. Together."

Alex's cock throbbed at the suggestion. "She'll never agree to it."

"Ah, but I think she will." Dallas put his hand on Alex's, stopping him from opening the car door. Alex glanced at Molly who stood watching them as Dallas slipped his hand into Alex's hair, pulling him into a deep kiss.

Alex's knees went weak with the wave of desire rushing through him. When Dallas broke the kiss, Alex could do little more than fumble with the passenger's side door of the Hummer until it opened and stumble in. He glanced at Molly as he pulled the seatbelt across himself to fasten it. She watched him with a heat in her gaze that turned his world upside down. Unsure quite what to say, he turned,

raising his eyebrows at Dallas in question. Dallas winked at him.

Without a word, Molly started the SUV, putting it in gear. The drive back to the Longhorn Ranch was quiet. Alex stared out at the town where he'd grown up, lost in his thoughts about the woman he'd only thought he'd known.

Molly stopped the Hummer in front of the adobe house. She held the keys out to Alex. He started when she shook them to get his attention. "I'll check the house before you go in. Garcia will be here any minute for his shift."

"You're not staying?" Disappointment curdled in Alex's stomach.

"I'm on night duty. Stay here." He watched her leave.

"Well, looks like you made a mistake. It's you she wants, not me." Alex didn't bother looking at Dallas. The sway of Molly's ass as she walked to the door sent strong 'come fuck me' signals to his cock.

"Give her time to realize she still wants you." Dallas sat back, reaching up to play with a strand of Alex's soft, dark-brown hair.

"This is ridiculous. I'm going in." Alex unfastened his seatbelt, reaching for the door handle, pulling it, popping the door open.

"Wait." The urgency in Dallas's voice combined with the sudden grip on his shirt made Alex hesitate.

"What?" Alex looked over his shoulder at Dallas .

"If you had been watching something besides her ass, you would see something is wrong," Dallas answered.

\* \* \* \*

Molly scanned the tiny walled garden as she went up to the door. Everything looked like it had when they left. The thought crossed her mind that she should see about hiring the guys who did the yard work at the Longhorn to come out to do her yard, too. The grass looked like thick green velvet, while the flowerbeds were in full bloom with roses and lavender. The scent of the night-blooming orchid cactus perfumed the air around her.

*Maybe I ought to call in, tell them I'm staying here,* she mused. *But what excuse could I give.* Moonlight reflected off something pale. She slowed. The object lying on the southwestern-themed welcome mat registered in her brain at last. An envelope, oversized snowy white, lay in front of the door. She sighed, now she had her excuse.

She stepped close enough to see that the envelope appeared to be the same one that Alex's studio boss had shown her. *Shit.* She examined the area, seeing that the door into the adobe bungalow had not been closed all the way. With great care, Molly backed up a few steps. It took everything she had to turn her back on that ajar door and walk back to the Hummer. Someone watched from somewhere close by. She could feel it.

When she saw that Alex had opened the SUV door, anger flared up in her. *Did the man never listen or take anything seriously?* She reached out, pulling the door wide enough so she could lean in. "You get up here and get ready to drive if you need to." She jabbed a finger at Dallas. "You do what you're told and stay here." She pointed at Alex.

"But," Alex began.

"But nothing. You dare set one foot out of this Hummer and I will arrest you and throw you in jail until I decide to let you out." She hoped he'd do what she told him. Dallas had gotten in the driver's seat without a word. She snatched the keys from Alex, handing them to Dallas. He took them, giving her a faint nod. "I'll be right back. Lock the doors. If anyone but me comes up to this vehicle, you get the hell out of here." She turned, heading for her police cruiser.

With a deep sigh, she reached in for the radio. "Dispatch, this is Chief Tyler out at the Longhorn Ranch. Come in."

"Dispatch. What's up, Chief?" Garcia's voice came over the radio.

"Garcia? Where's Aileen?" Molly couldn't imagine anal Aileen being late for anything.

"Not back from dinner break yet." Garcia sounded unconcerned.

"Send Jones and..." she trailed off in disbelief. Alex came toward

her, walking with his usual swagger.

"Chief?" Garcia's concerned voice came over the radio jolting her out of her trance.

"Never mind. You stay there. We won't need anyone to babysit tonight. Mr. Meadowvale is going to jail." She put the radio back in its cradle before she went to meet Alex.

"Told you to stay put."

"Molly," Alex rolled his eyes, exasperated.

"Told you what I'd do if you didn't, too."

"Oh, please, you wouldn't." He smirked at her, totally sure of himself.

Molly looked at the ground for a half a second, smiling. Then she looked back up at him. "Wouldn't I?" She caught his wrist in a swift move, snapping a cuff on it, twisting his arm behind his back, and then shoving him up against the side of her cruiser. "*You* are under arrest, Mr. Alexander William Meadowvale." She kicked his feet apart pulling his other arm back, snapping the cuffs closed. "You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law."

Seeing him bent over the trunk of her cruiser woke something inside her that she wasn't sure she wanted to deal with. Not then, for sure, maybe not ever. She swallowed hard, continuing reading him his rights while she patted him down. "You have the right to an attorney present during questioning." She slid her hands up the inside of his legs a little slower than necessary. From the low sound he made, he didn't mind at all.

"Moll," his breathless voice made her shiver.

"If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you. Do you understand these rights?"

"Yeah," he relaxed with a deep sigh.

Molly guided him to the backseat of the cruiser, opening the door. She helped him sit then shut the door. She looked up at the sound of the Hummer door shutting. Dallas came walking toward her, a little

half smile on his face. She winked at him before she went to radio for a crime scene team.

\* \* \* \*

Alex shifted until he was as comfortable as he could manage with his hands cuffed. His cock had hardened when Molly searched him. The front passenger's door opened. He looked up at Dallas lowering himself into the cruiser. He turned, gazing at Alex with a twinkle in his dark eyes.

"I told you." Dallas flashed him a bright smile.

"You told me," Alex agreed. "She's different," he continued.

"Of course she is. Did you not tell me it has been twelve years?" Dallas reached up and touched the screen separating the front seat from the back.

"Yeah." Alex watched Molly directing the officers who worked for her, thinking about that night so long ago. He sighed. He'd give anything to be able to go back to that night, to make everything right. "She's a very private person. Always has been." Alex sighed, laying his head back on the seat. "We made love the first time in the back of my old truck, under the stars. A few days later, a bunch of us were in the locker room bragging. Of course, I was an idiot. I couldn't let the guys think I was still a virgin."

Dallas stayed silent, sympathy in his expression. Alex wondered where he'd learned so much about human nature. "I had a job delivering hay. One of the hands at the old Williams ranch on the other side of town. A storm came up, and we had to wait it out. He started asking me about Molly. That's how I found out it was all over town."

The door opened. Molly leaned in, peering at him around Dallas. "Reliving the past?" Alex's face heated. She chuckled. "Let it go already."

"What was the problem tonight?" Dallas turned his head and gave



Molly a quick kiss on the cheek.

"I found a letter in front of the door that was open. I'll need you to go through the house. See if anything is missing, then we're moving you."

"Where? I'd be swamped with fans inside five minutes if I went to a hotel." Alex shook his head. "Besides, it's probably some harmless nut"

"Alex, you have a stalker. That is not a *harmless* situation." She helped him out of the car, turning him to unlock the cuffs.

## Chapter Four

Alex and Dallas followed Molly into the controlled chaos of the police investigation. One of the officers, Garcia, knelt by the door, swirling a huge, soft brush over the edge of the doorknob, leaving black powder all over it. He glanced up at Molly. "It's clean. So is the rest of the place. Perp probably wiped everything."

"Figures." She turned to Alex and Dallas. "Have a look around, pack up your things. Let me know if anything is missing." Both men nodded. She watched them walk away while she spoke to the officer dusting for prints.

"Looks clean." *Aileen must have made it back from dinner. Not like her to be late but then the whole movie thing has thrown the town off its normal routine.*

"Fucking CSI. Too clean. We find this *pendejo*, I'll hire them to clean my house." Garcia shot her a disgusted glance. "I didn't even find any hairs in the dude's hairbrush."

Molly chuckled. "Lupe tells me you watch that show every time it's on."

"Have to keep up with the competition." Garcia grinned, unrepentant.

"When the team is finished, lock up. I'm taking our movie star and his friend out to my place. That doesn't go outside the department. Get Ben or someone to help you ferry that Hummer of his out to the house. I want everyone keeping an eye out for strangers in town who don't belong to the movie crew." She saw Alex coming with his bags, Dallas not far behind. Molly stopped to wait for them. Alex wore an angry, hurt expression.

"My red plaid shirt is missing. Along with some jewelry," he told her, without waiting for her to ask.

"What sort of jewelry?" Molly fell into step with them.

"A silver ring and my turquoise belt buckle," he snapped.

"Anything else? Dallas?" She glanced at the photographer.

"A small turquoise ring. The stalker may have believed it belonged to Alex," Dallas answered. Molly met his clear gaze with a nod. He had told her at the trailer that he and Alex were lovers. The thought made her stomach clench in a rush of desire.

"Come on, we'll discuss it on the way." She led the way to the car.

\* \* \* \*

Alex crossed his arms over his chest, glaring out at the night with a frown, refusing to speak. Dallas reached up, rubbing the back of Alex's neck until he began to relax.

"I loved that shirt." She barely heard Alex's soft voice.

"I can't promise anything, but we'll get it back if we can." Molly touched Alex's shoulder.

"Where are we going?" Dallas slid his hand over Alex's shoulder, covering Molly's hand.

"Does it matter?" Alex covered his face with his hands, and then pushed his hair back from his eyes.

"My house," Molly answered. Alex turned his head toward her, his expression astonished.

She chuckled. "You act like you've never been there before."

"Dammit, Molly," Alex whispered.

"You can sleep in the guest room," she smiled. "You're not as irresistible as you think you are." He was, she thought with a pang, but she wasn't about to tell him that.

\* \* \* \*

When they arrived at the house she'd inherited from her aunt, she showed them to the bedroom she kept ready for guests. She tried not to think of two of the most beautiful men she'd ever seen fucking on the bed she'd grown up sleeping in. She sighed, leaving them to get settled in.

The quiet murmur of male voices carried in the silent house. This had to be one of her worst ideas ever. If they did have sex, she'd hear them. *That* thought took her right back to a vivid memory of fucking Dallas. Suddenly her panties were damp. She wanted to smack herself. With all her brain cells focused on sex, it would be forever before she fell asleep.

She took a deep breath, reminding herself she hadn't gotten to where she was now by being a wuss. She went to do her usual check of the doors and windows. On her way back to her bedroom, she saw the door of the guest room shutting. The light shining under the door winked out as she watched.

She pulled on a pair of old cotton shorts with a tank top before crawled into bed. Sleep came, almost right away, in spite of the tingling of the low-level arousal that made her nerves hum. She couldn't remember a longer or more exhausting day.

\* \* \* \*

Something woke Molly. She lay still, listening for a moment. The sound of running water, combined with a soft groan, came from the bath. She got up, going to see if her guests needed anything. At least that was what she told herself. The bathroom door wasn't locked, so she silently turned the knob, pushing the door open to step inside. The scent of hot water, her sandalwood-scented soap with the aroma of vanilla, sent a surge of lust through her.

She leaned against the wall just inside the door watching them. Her house guests had found her candles, and had lit a few. In the dim, flickering light, she saw Dallas leaning against the wall of the shower,

his legs spread wide, his hands holding him steady. His head was down, resting against the tile, water dripping from his midnight black hair, the drops glistening on his skin in the candlelight.

Alex was fucking him. Hard. Alex's thrusts lifted Dallas onto his toes.

Her clit throbbed in sympathy, while her stomach clenched. Suddenly, Alex groaned, stiffening. Dallas moaned, spilling his seed onto the shower floor. They stood that way for several seconds, then Alex withdrew, rubbing Dallas's back. "Better?"

Dallas nodded, straightening up. He glanced over at Molly with a seductive smile. "Your bodyguard is awake."

"So she is." Alex held out his hand toward her, a challenge in his dark eyes.

Molly didn't understand the strange desire she felt. The lust inside her that Dallas had stirred pushed her to accept Alex's challenge.

She knew nothing would be the same, she crossed an unnamed line going to them without questioning why, taking Alex's hand.

Dallas wrapped his arms around them both. "Let me watch you," he whispered. "Let me see you together the way you were meant to be."

Alex tilted his head to one side, waiting, gazing at her with passionate, black eyes.

Molly glanced at Alex's cock. He was hard again. She raised her gaze to his once more before pulling him into a kiss.

Alex ran his hands over Molly's ass, gripping her hips. He bent his knees, entering her with a slow, steady thrust, and sliding into her, thick, hot, lifting her leg over his hip. "Put your other leg around me," he whispered. Molly did as she was told. He felt so good deep inside her, barely moving, the head of his cock nestled against her inner opening.

"Ohh, Moll." Alex sighed. He braced her against the wall, beginning to move.

Molly looked over Alex's shoulder into Dallas's eyes. She didn't

think about it. She held out her hand. He took it, stepping closer, kissing her palm, and then brushing his fingers down Alex's back, drawing a deep moan from him.

"Ohh, yeah," he gasped, tightening his hold on her. Molly moaned. She tried to shift, holding tight to Alex.

Alex began to move, as Dallas leaned into them. "Oh, fuck, that's good," he groaned.

Alex chuckled, saying something Molly couldn't understand. Dallas laughed. Alex kissed her shoulder, while Dallas moved his hands up over her breasts, driving out all thoughts of anything else.

Then, before she realized what he intended, Dallas moved around, slipping between her and the wall. "Be still, relax, just let it happen." Dallas's voice became rough and tight with lust as he slid his hands over her wet skin. Dallas, slick with lube, thrust into her, slow and gentle, allowing her to get used to his size, until he was inside her with Alex.

They stayed still for a long moment, then found a slow rhythm, their cocks sliding together inside Molly, filling her, until she thought she'd split in half. She'd never imagined anything as good as having them together, fucking her.

Their thrusts began to get harder, less controlled. Molly moaned when Alex pressed closer to kiss Dallas over her shoulder. Dallas groaned. She gasped as his cock swelled inside her. He arched his hips into her. "Fuck!" he groaned, as his orgasm crashed over him.

Molly felt herself tighten around them unable to stop her moan, her body milking every drop of come from her two lovers. "Yes." Alex's hiss turned into a moan as he came.

The world came back slowly as Dallas eased away, his touch gentle, holding Molly while Alex disengaged himself. When his friend drew free, Dallas turned her, covering her mouth in a soft, plundering kiss.

"We should get out. Water's getting cold." Dallas broke the kiss.

"The bed would be nice." Alex smiled.

"It would." Dallas rested an arm around Molly's waist as they made their way to Molly's bed.

## Chapter Five

Molly stepped out of the elevator. The breathy, little-girl voice of Aileen smacked her in the face. "I heard there's been death threats." Molly's glow from the night before disappeared, along with her good mood, in an instant. *Dammit, I find out who leaked that and they're fired.* She walked around the corner to the dispatch station to stand next to Aileen's desk.

The dispatcher, who doubled as their receptionist, looked up, going pale when she saw Molly. Molly waited until Aileen hung up the phone. "I'm going to hope that was not anyone who likes to gossip around town. I'm going to assume that wasn't a media person."

Aileen opened and closed her mouth a few times, as her eyes welled up with tears. She made a little sobbing sound. "You're attacking me." She sounded like a hurt child.

"I am not attacking anyone. I want to know where you got that information." Molly used her most patient tone of voice.

"Ev-everyone knows it," Aileen hiccupped like she'd been sobbing for hours.

"Wonderful." She wished Aileen would stop the false waterworks. "Don't talk about it with anyone from now on. If it gets out to the wrong ears, it would be bad. I know you don't want to cause one of the guys, or anyone else, to get hurt. Or worse."

Aileen looked shocked, shaking her head. Molly thought about it for about a half second, consulting her conscience. She decided a little bit of manipulation didn't bother her in the least. Aileen wasn't the only one who could twist things around.



Molly allowed herself an action she rarely indulged in, heading for the briefing room. The morning shift was getting ready to leave for their assignments. Surprised at her arrival, the men stopped what they had been doing and turned to look at her, waiting for what she had to say. "Somehow, some of the confidential information in the Meadowvale stalker case has gotten out. I'd like to think we're more professional than that. I'll give whoever leaked it a chance to come to me and talk about it. If I have to track them down, I'll fire them."

Molly went into her office, intending to look over the current cases, but her mind kept wandering back to the latest letter. She hadn't told Alex what the letter contained. If he heard about the contents now, through some tabloid, it would be bad. With a deep sigh, she reached for her phone and quickly dialed his cell number.

It rang once before the commotion in the main office area caught her attention. Suddenly, one of her officers, Jackson, leaned in her door. "We got an officer down with multiple casualties out at the Farmer's Market." Cold fear knotted up in her guts, and she forgot about everything else.

"I'm on my way." Molly snapped her phone closed, grabbing her hat off the coat rack beside her desk. She ran alongside Jackson toward the back staircase exit. "What have we got? Who's down?"

"Sniper out at the Farmer's Market. Garcia says at least three down in the parking lot. He's pinned behind his cruiser with a leg wound." Jackson followed Molly through the door out into the parking lot where the cruisers waited.

"You drive." She tossed Jackson her keys. In the car, she got on the radio and started issuing orders.

\* \* \* \*

"Cut! Lunch!" yelled the director. Alex sighed, waiting impatiently, while an assistant marked his position. *About time.* His

stomach growled. He thanked the assistant then headed over to the catering tent. The director caught up with him.

"Great work. After lunch, I want to go over the love scene." The director waved the script at Alex.

Alex grimaced. This wasn't one of his favorite scenes in the movie. "I have some thoughts about that scene." Dallas walked up to them. After a polite nod at the director he caught Alex's arm pulling him aside.

"Alex, I thought you should know. Molly is in the hospital," Dallas leaned close, keeping his voice low.

His knees went weak as a wave of dizziness washed over him. "What happened?"

"I do not know all the details, only that they had a sniper out at the Farmer's Market." Dallas steadied Alex.

Dallas's grip on his arm was the only thing keeping him on his feet. "I have to go. I need to be there," Alex trailed off in panic. He looked into Dallas's eyes, grateful for the calm support he saw there.

"Of course," Dallas guided Alex over to where the officer assigned to bodyguard duty waited beside the Hummer.

\* \* \* \*

Molly finished signing her release papers, and handed them back to the nurse. Her head hurt, her calf was throbbing where the bullet had grazed it, and all she wanted was to go home and have quiet hysterics for a few minutes. None of the injuries her officers or the victims had were life-threatening, thanks to the fact Wylie Johnson couldn't shoot worth crap sober, much less drunk. He occupied a room down the hall. He would be making an extended visit to prison soon.

She waved at the officer guarding Wylie's door then turned toward the elevators. Yeah, she thought. Home. Something to drink, a couple of painkillers, followed by a nice long nap. The paperwork could wait

until tomorrow. The elevator doors slid open. A pale Alex looked out at her. He shut his eyes, pressing his lips together. Mostly to keep them from trembling, she thought.

Dallas stood a little behind Alex. She gave him a faint smile. Officer Bryant held the door for her while she stepped into the elevator car. "I'll take them now. You go on, get caught up, and then finish out your shift."

"Yes, ma'am." Bryant hurried off toward the other officers.

The door closed on the nurses watching them. Molly sighed. "You shouldn't be here."

"Fuck, Molly." Alex jammed his hands into the pockets of his brown pants. He must have come straight from filming, Molly mused. Alex hadn't taken the time to change out of his costume. She found that oddly touching. It made her feel better.

"Maybe when we get home." She swatted his butt.

He looked shocked for a moment, and then shook his head. "You're certifiable."

Dallas grinned laughing. "Sex is an excellent pain reliever. But alas, I need to go over to San Antonio and pick up a lens they're holding for me."

"You know you don't have to ask, Dal." He sounded calm, even as he frowned at Molly.

\* \* \* \*

She shut the front door locking it as Dallas drove down the road in a cloud of dust. When she turned back to Alex, he appeared to be fighting tears again.

"Dammit Molly, I was scared. Real scared. You could have been killed," he said.

"Alex, I'm a police officer. We go out there, get shot at, and whatever else is required, because it's what we do. I like my job. If you have trouble with it, then we're over before we even start because

I'm not going to change." Best to tell him right now what he could expect.

He glared at her for several seconds, and then he caught the collar of her shirt pulling her into a rough kiss.

"I need you Moll, right now, right here." Alex broke the kiss to whisper.

Molly slipped her hand over the front of Alex's jeans, tracing the shape of his thick, hard erection, drawing a deep groan from him. "Yes."

"It's more than sex." He insisted.

She nodded, tugging his shirt free of his jeans. "Fuck me, Alex. Fuck me hard." She nipped his earlobe.

"Molly," Alex breathed in her warm musky scent. "Anything you want."

They tore at each other's clothes then, sinking to the floor in mutual desire.

Molly shivered under him, the heat from his body against hers, his urgency making her burn with lust. She let herself go, lost in the sensation of his teeth grazing her skin, and the heat of his kisses.

"I want to climb inside you and never leave." His harsh whisper sounded in her ear. She moaned, threading her fingers through his silky, dark-brown hair as he licked a trail of fire down her throat. He moved down between her breasts until his fever-hot mouth covered an aching nipple. She gasped as he sucked, kneading it, his hand finding her other nipple, palming it with rough insistence.

"Alex," she breathed, the scent his shampoo, combined with his arousal, intoxicating her.

He reached back raising her leg higher. Arching toward him, she groaned as he slid all the way in and covered her mouth in a deep kiss. Molly wrapped her legs around his hips.

He buried his cock with one hard thrust, grinding into her, pinning her hands over her head.

Alex swore, pulling back, and then plunged into her with another hard thrust. She gasped, moaning as he repeated his movement. He moved his hips harder, faster, moving his mouth over her throat, and then her neck, and back to her shoulder again. She held him tighter, digging her fingers into his hips, moaning his name, urging him deeper, answering his movements with her own.

“Mine,” he growled in her ear. The desperation in his voice thrilled her.

“Yes,” she gasped.

“Mine.” His breath caught and he held it for a moment.

“Yours,” she answered, arching her hips off the floor toward him. He whimpered, grinding himself into her. The whimper turned into a moan. He cried out her name, his hips jerking; his body rigid and trembling.

She tightened around him, moaning his name, the heat of his orgasm flooding her as she came, holding him inside until they both stopped shaking.

## Chapter Six

Dallas yawned, adjusting his cock. The new camera lens lay on the passenger's seat, along with the beautiful, moss-green, embroidered-silk shawl he'd bought for Molly. When he saw it in the resale shop window, it had cried out to be wrapped around Molly's fair, ivory skin and dark, auburn hair. His artist's mind had already begun composing a series of photographs. For Alex, a red, beaded hatband for Alex's beloved, battered straw cowboy hat would do nicely. He envisioned it wrapped around Alex's wrists, securing him to Molly's brass bed. He had to adjust himself once more.

He turned off the main highway, onto the gravel road that led to Molly's house. The shopping trip he'd thought up on the spot, as a ruse, of course, to give Alex and Molly a little time to themselves. Alex didn't think clearly when it came to Molly. Dallas smiled to himself. Alex had to be the most responsive lover Dallas had been with. When they made love together with Molly, it was magic.

The Hummer's headlights glinted off something red in the distance ahead. Dallas squinted as he drew closer, and he made out the shape of a small car. He cursed the darkness out here in the country where Molly lived making the model of the car impossible to recognize. The license plate couldn't be seen through the dirt obscuring it. He'd have to tell Molly. It might be one of her officers, keeping an eye on things. But then again, it might not.

He parked in front of the darkened house, and went inside. Clothes lay strewn over the floor of the small foyer. He bent down, picking up a scrap of black lace that passed for a bra with a low

chuckle. Smiling, he slipped the bra into his pocket before going down the hall to find his friends.

The light still burned in the bathroom. He opened the door to peek inside. The room smelled of hot water and soap. He turned off the light, shutting the door before going to Molly's bedroom. She lay on her stomach. Alex lay against her, an arm and a leg thrown across her. Dallas studied them until he had the scene memorized, and then went to the dresser to put the things he'd bought on it.

Alex woke when Dallas dropped his boot on the floor. Dallas shimmied out of his jeans, making the movements as seductive as possible. He sat on the bed beside Molly, looking at his two lovers for a moment. Alex shifted, rising up on his elbow, keeping the other hand on the small of Molly's back.

"Hey," Alex yawned sleepily.

"Too tired?" Dallas brushed a wayward lock of hair from Alex's face.

"To fuck you? 'Course not. Anytime, anywhere, any way. You don't have to ask," Alex answered.

Dallas leaned forward brushing a kiss across Alex's parted lips. "Come here, boy. I have something for you." He pulled away.

"Yes, sir." Alex slipped out of bed, padding obediently around to where Dallas sat.

"The small package on the dresser. Get it," Dallas pointed out the box that held the beaded hat band. Alex obeyed, all but running to snatch up the box. He brought it to Dallas, and held it out to him.

"Open it," Dallas didn't miss the slight tremor in Alex's hands as he lifted the lid.

Alex took the strip of supple, beaded leather out of the box, looking at it for a second before he held it up. Dallas stood, taking the band from Alex. He wrapped it once around Alex's wrist, then around the post of the footboard, securing his hand to the footboard. One more time around Alex's wrist then Dallas tied the ends in a neat, half-bow. He ran his fingertips up Alex's arm, and down his side.

"Hold on," Dallas whispered in his ear.

"Yes, sir." Alex gripped the finial knob, closing his eyes and bowing his head.

Dallas took the time to commit the scene to memory. Already, Alex's breath came in slow gasps, as though he'd been running. With a smile, Dallas retrieved his jeans from the floor, taking a condom out of the back pocket.

"Do you think Molly will wake?" Dallas slicked himself down with lube.

"I don't know. The pain med they gave her knocked her out," Alex answered.

"Let's let her sleep, shall we? Quiet is the rule," Dallas whispered.

"Yes, sir," Alex nodded. He hissed as Dallas traced a fingertip around his opening.

Dallas didn't give Alex any warning or fuss with an elaborate preparation. This wasn't about being gentle. He nudged the slick head of his cock in, keeping up the slow, steady pressure, until he was completely inside. Alex had stiffened his breath, which was coming faster, harsher.

"Hurts?" Dallas murmured next to his ear.

Alex shook his head. "Burns," he gasped. "Do I need a safety word?"

"Only if you want one." Dallas withdrew almost all the way before he thrust again. "Do you?"

Alex shook his head.

"Good." Dallas began a slow pumping of his hips. Alex breathed in time with his thrusts, resting his head on his hands. Dallas leaned forward, kissing Alex's shoulder. Placing his hands on Alex's hips, he adjusted his angle. Alex rewarded him with a muffled groan.

He moved faster. Alex responded, rocking his ass back. Dallas reached around, and slipped his fingers over Alex's balls, then cupped them, giving them a gentle squeeze. Alex's breath hitched. With a smile, Dallas wrapped his hand around Alex's cock and pumped hard.



"Uhhh fuck, Dal!" Alex groaned through his clenched teeth.

Dallas moved his other hand over Alex's sweat-slippery back, thrusting harder. His breath, sounded harsh in his ears. The heaviness of his balls, swinging with each movement, had him close, but he needed something more. He pumped his hand on Alex's cock again, pulling on it, sliding his fingers over the tip. Alex dripped pre-come. He rubbed it in, making Alex shudder with the onset of his orgasm.

"That's it, Alex. Come for me, baby," he whispered.

"Dal," Alex moaned. He threw his head back with a wordless cry, coming in a hot rush all over Dallas's hands.

With Alex's cry, Dallas groaned, letting himself come. He rested against Alex, sliding an arm around his lover's waist, holding him until the aftershocks slowed and settled.

He softened, reaching down to hold the condom on until he withdrew. With a deep sigh, he kissed Alex's shoulder once more. "Let's go get cleaned up."

Alex nodded, untying the hatband with his free hand. Dallas wrapped an arm around Alex's waist, guiding him into the bathroom without a word.

\* \* \* \*

Alex stretched, yawning after his second shower of the night. He watched Dallas drape a towel over his head, and rub dry his coal-black hair. For a brief second, he thought about licking his way down the line of matching hair that ran down Dallas's chest to his belly and cock.

He smiled, thinking about what had happened earlier that evening. *Molly on the floor, Molly in the shower, Molly in bed, then Dallas.* No. Sex, five times, the night before he had to film action scenes, would be too much. He sighed. "I like the hatband."

Dallas tossed the towel into the hamper. "For that ratty cowboy hat of yours. To dress it up."

"Useful the way it ties on." Alex kept his expression innocent.

"I thought it would be handy," Dallas admitted with a shrug.

Alex's chuckle turned into another yawn, in spite of his efforts to stifle it. "I was going to suggest a drink, but I'd probably pass out after two sips." He stepped over to open the door.

Dallas laughed. "Bed then. To sleep. I have plans for tomorrow, and for the present I bought Molly."

Alex stopped in the doorway, turning a thoughtful gaze on Dallas. "Do you love her?" He wasn't sure where his question would lead, but suddenly it seemed important. He didn't think jealousy motivated him, but how could he be sure? He loved Molly, had loved her since the day they met in grade school.

"Love?" Dallas frowned. "I like her. I care about her, yes. But is what I feel more than friendship and strong lust?"

"But," Alex began.

"I know you love her. I would have known it, even if you had not told me," Dallas cut him off. "Are you asking in some roundabout way if *I* love *you*?"

"No, I don't. I mean, yeah, I'm attracted to you, I know you're attracted to me, but..." Alex had no idea what he could say that wouldn't sound stupid, slutty, or cold.

"I'm attracted to you, yes. 'Friends with benefits,' as they say. I feel the same about Molly. Friendship, yes. Lust, absolutely. But love? No, Alex, your way is clear there."

Alex sighed. "So you're saying we're—" He trailed off, searching for the right word.

"Fuckbuddies?" Dallas supplied.

"Fuckbuddies, yeah, that works for me," Alex agreed.

Dallas rested a hand on Alex's shoulder, following him back to bed, where an exhausted Molly still slept.

## Chapter Seven

Molly's leg hurt. Taking the weight off her leg sounded like a great idea, so when she saw a cart that had been abandoned, she sat down. She would be limping for awhile. With a grimace, she tried to find a comfortable position, stretching her injured leg out in front of her. She'd abandoned her uniform with its boots in favor of an old pair of jeans she could wear sneakers with. Department rules required injured officers to take some time off, so she would be unofficial for a few days. Not that she ever considered herself off duty.

She watched Alex fight with the bad guy in the scene they filmed. He had the fluid movements of a dancer. In the scruffy costume of a trail hand, she had to admit he looked good. *Who are you kidding?* She chided herself. *You want to go over there and jump his bones right now.* Hell, her panties had gotten damp again. This was getting ridiculous.

The sound of footsteps scuffing through the dirt made her look up. Dallas gazed down at her, a smile making the corners of his dark eyes crinkle. He'd left his shoulder-length hair loose, choosing to wear a black cowboy hat with a silver concha hatband. Molly fought the urge to lick her lips as she shifted so he could join her on the little metal equipment cart.

He sat down, his leg against hers, sending the level of her arousal up a couple of notches. Then he laid his hand on her knee, causing a lightning bolt of lust to shoot straight to her clit. She forgot to breathe for a few seconds.

"He is good." Dallas nodded toward Alex.

"He is," she agreed.

"The camera loves him. I don't think he can take a bad picture." Dallas slid his hand up her thigh. The heat from his hand soaked into her like liquid pleasure.

"You haven't seen his seventh grade school picture." She smiled at Dallas's chuckle.

"Ah, I would like to see that."

"I'll show it to you when we get back to the house tonight." Molly caught herself leaning against Dallas and started to pull away. He moved his hand from her thigh, putting his arm around her waist. In the distance, Alex climbed into the chair next to the director, and turned to wave at them. They waved back.

"He loves you." Dallas made the words a statement of fact.

"He's with you. I'm just a temporary distraction." Molly surprised herself with the wistful tone she heard in her voice.

"He loves you and you love him." The certainty in his voice made her look at him.

"But?" She thought she heard a *but* in his statement.

"He is not *with* me, *querida*. We are, to use a popular term, friends with benefits. Fuck buddies. He *loves* you." Dallas leaned closer kissing her forehead.

She kept silent, thinking through what she said next before opening her mouth to say, "And we are?"

"Lovers, but not in love," he gave her a half smile.

"So we are also fuck buddies." It seemed like a good word for what they were. She sighed. "A few days is not long enough to be sure you love someone." He nodded. "I do care for you, but you're right. I love him. He will always come first. Just so you know."

"I know." He looked away, watching Alex in silence for awhile. "On the other hand, I think the camera will love you as much as it loves Alex."

"Oh, you do, do you?" She raised an eyebrow at him. "And how do you propose we find this out?"

"I want to photograph you in this glorious desert light. A series of you, with Alex, making love."

"Ah," She didn't know quite what to say. A thrill ran through her at the idea, along with a jolt of sheer terror, at the same time. What if she agreed to do the pictures, and they ended up on the internet? If anyone in town saw them, she'd be fired before she knew what hit her.

Dallas seemed to sense her concerns. "I show my work in galleries. In museums, New York, Los Angeles, Mexico City, and Paris."

She took a deep breath letting it out slowly. Alex came toward them, followed by a gaggle of assistant wardrobe people. "All right, I'm done for today. When do you want to do this?"

"Now." Dallas's smile lit up like the sun. "I have everything in the Hummer. All we need is a setting somewhere private."

Before she could say anything, Alex strode up. "Did you ask her?" He unbuttoned his shirt, and then shrugged it off, tossing it to the girl who held the rest of his costume.

"I did." Dallas gave Alex an exasperated look.

"And?" Alex reached for the buttons on his pants, popping the first one loose.

"*And* you take those off out here, I'll arrest you for indecent exposure," Molly interrupted him. Alex glared at her for a second then huffed. The wardrobe assistant looked at Molly like she'd sprouted another head.

Alex unbuttoned the second button. Molly sighed, standing up. "You're pushing your luck, Mr. Meadowvale. You want a repeat of last time I arrested you?"

"Fine." Alex stalked off, muttering something about *prudish women who need to get laid*. The clearly overawed assistant scurried along behind him.

"Excitable isn't he," Molly commented in a bland tone. Dallas burst out laughing.

\* \* \* \*

When they arrived at the rocks on Molly's ranch, Dallas had all but leapt out of the Hummer, then stood turning, looking around at the horizon. He and Alex paced out the area, stopping to confer every few steps. Molly took off her clothes, wrapping the shawl around her. She sat on a rock, a few feet from the SUV, watching them.

Dallas turned his attention to her at last. He froze for a second. "Don't move. Stay exactly as you are. Alex, my camera." He waved in the general direction of the Hummer.

Alex looked from Molly to Dallas then back at the woman he thought he knew. "Right." He went to get the camera. He put it in Dallas's waiting hand before stepping back out of the way.

"Undress. Go to her." Dallas began focusing, snapping pictures as fast as he could manage.

\* \* \* \*

Alex didn't need to be told twice. He stripped off everything but the battered cowboy hat with its red beaded hatband. The clicking of the camera reminded him that Dallas was watching. He made a quick mental note to ask Dallas to make him copies. He walked toward Molly thinking all the heaven he'd ever need waited in her. He hoped he didn't screw this up.

The soft breeze fluttered through Molly's hair, stirring it with the fringe on the shawl. She had to be the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen. For a moment, all Alex wanted to do was stand there and look at her. The desire for her overwhelmed him, forcing him into action. He climbed onto the rock with her, reaching out to brush the hair from her eyes.

Molly caught his hand, and kissed the palm. He moaned. The breeze shifted, bringing her musky scent to him. Breathless with need

for her, he heard his voice catch. "Did you know that you smell like chocolate?"

He leaned in, touching his tongue to her lips, tracing over them before parting them and covering her mouth with his. She gasped, and then moaned, as he moved down over her breasts, grazing the skin with his teeth and nails, tracing spiral patterns over her skin with his tongue. With great care, he took the shawl from her, laying it aside.

Alex lost himself in the salty-sweet taste of her skin, the velvet softness of her body. When he slipped his hand between her legs, she was wet, ready for him. He took a deep, shuddering as he pushed into her. She gasped, arching herself against him, as he started to move slowly.

She ran her fingers up his sweat-damp sides, over his shoulders. Then she pressed her fingertips into his back, running them down his spine and over his ass. Alex groaned, lifting his upper body off of her. He didn't want this moment to end too soon. He slowed his movements to a stop.

"I love you, Molly Emmaline Tyler," he whispered, kissing her again. Lowering his head until their foreheads touched, he sighed, and tried to time his breathing to hers. He wanted to stay like this forever, resting on her, and inside her, just laying there enthralled with what he felt.

Then she said, "I love you, Alex William Meadowvale," and those six words changed everything in his universe.

She moaned when he started moving again, slowly at first, then harder, faster. He gasped as he bent to kiss a nipple, changing the angle of his thrusts. She cried out with her release. He shattered into billions of shards.

When he became aware of his surroundings again, he moved off her, pulling her up into his arms. He looked up at Dallas with smile. Whatever else happened after this day, whether they went their separate ways or stayed together, he would deal with as it came.

Nothing would ever erase that one perfect moment, when she told him she loved him.



## Chapter Eight

Being the only one of them in any shape to drive, Dallas took the keys. Molly sat between them, content to listen to the CD Alex had put in the player. His choice of music surprised her. Growing up in Cold Canyon, Texas, people were expected to listen to country music, not the classical Alex appeared to prefer.

Habit ingrained in her from childhood let her see the white square of paper on her front door before she noticed anything else. Her father's voice came back to her. *Pay attention, sugar bun. Everything matters all the time. Woolgathering can kill you.* He had been so proud of her when she joined the police department, carrying on the family tradition. Well, he'd sure be proud now, she scolded herself. Woolgathering indeed.

Dallas stopped the SUV. She caught his hand before he could turn off the engine. "Leave it running."

"What's wrong?" Alex shot her a concerned look.

"We had a visitor while we were gone. Let me borrow your phone, Dallas. I'll get a team out here." She reached for the glove compartment. She'd seen him put the phone there when they'd arrived at the rocks. Beside her, Alex sat rigid. She snapped the compartment closed. Alex reacted. He unfastened his seatbelt, shoving the door open, almost falling as he jumped out of the Hummer.

"Alex!" she and Dallas both yelled. She didn't wait to see if Dallas followed, sliding across the seat, jumping out and running after Alex.

"Alex, wait!" she shouted. He skidded to a stop, spinning around to face her.

"I'm sick of this, Molly. I'm tired of jumping at shadows, sick of everyone around me giving me funny looks!" He pointed at her front door. "This has to stop!"

"And it will stop. But you have to let us do our job. Let us catch this person our way, so we can put them in prison." She caught his arm pulling him close, holding him.

He wrapped his arms around her. "This is nuts, Molly. Just crazy."

"I know. I think it's time to take some steps." She stepped back looking into his eyes for several seconds.

"What sort of steps?" He took a step back, eyeing her warily.

"Well for a start, your movie people are going to have to film around you for awhile," she answered.

"John will *love* that. What else?"

"I have an old bulletproof vest." She looked him over. The vest would fit, with a little adjustment.

"You've got to be kidding me." He looked to Dallas for support.

"I think it's a good idea. Especially after the car I saw parked on Molly's road," Dallas shrugged.

Molly's blood turned to ice in her veins. "What car? When?"

"Last night. When I came back from San Antonio. I could not tell what kind of car in the darkness, but it was a small one. I thought it might be someone you sent to watch the house, but now I'm not sure." Dallas looked apologetic.

"I didn't assign anyone. The ranch is too large to cover with that sort of surveillance." Molly felt like she'd been sucker punched. Whoever this stalker was, he knew the area. A cold chill ran down her spine. The stalker could be out there right now, watching them, for all they knew.

"I think it would be a really good idea for both of you to get in the Hummer right now." She tried to urge Alex toward the SUV. He refused to move.

"Why don't we just go in the house? It's closer."

"Because there's a good chance whoever put that note on the door is still here, maybe watching us, maybe even in the house. Alex, this person wants to kill you. I'm not willing to take that chance." The expression on his face broke her heart. She hadn't wanted him to know that bit of news.

"Why? What did I ever do?" He sounded like a confused child.

"I don't know, sweetheart. Now please, go get in the Hummer and lock the doors. Dallas?" Something in the way Dallas moved told her he would be someone to reckon with if someone attacked. She trusted her gut feeling that *fuck buddies* meant more to him that he would admit to.

Dallas handed Molly his cell phone then put an arm around Alex's shoulder. She watched them until they climbed into the SUV before flipping the phone open to dial the station.

\* \* \* \*

The last set of tail lights belonging to the forensics team faded away. Molly shut the door, snapping the lock closed. When she turned, she found Alex standing behind her, with his arms crossed over his chest. He huffed, striding down the hall toward the bedroom. She sighed, glancing at Dallas, who shrugged, before he went back to sorting his rolls of film.

"He will see you're right. He needs time to deal with the shock."

"I'll go get that vest." Molly headed for the closet where they were stored.

\* \* \* \*

Dallas watched Molly go down the hall to the bedroom where they'd stayed the first night. *That* hadn't lasted long, he thought with some amusement. Alex had moved into Molly's bedroom, as if he belonged there, after their first encounter. He did belong there. Dallas

was sure of that. He knew it the same way he knew these two would be in his life one way or another forever.

He stood, and put the film canister he held on the coffee table. Alex making love to Molly in the desert sun had set his blood on fire. Dallas came to the realization he needed them both, but he could wait for the right time to tell them. Tonight Dallas wanted the closeness found only in the seductive arms of lovers.

Dallas arrived at the bedroom door as Molly came out carrying the bulletproof vest. "I'd appreciate your support on this."

"Of course. It is only common sense." He put his arm around her shoulders, walking with her to confront their recalcitrant lover.

\* \* \* \*

Alex looked up at them from the window seat. The room was hot, still, the breeze from outside barely managed to stir the air leaving the lace curtains hanging limp at the open window. The sound of a lone cricket, singing loudly outside the window, added to the oppressive feeling. An occasional coyote could be heard in the distance, howling a complaint at the dry heat. *Any quieter and I could hear myself sweat.* He had left Cold Canyon to get away from nights like this.

He knew Molly was right. The vest *would* be a good idea. He sighed holding out his hand for it before she could say a word. "You're right. Show me how to put it on." He stood, shucking his shirt. Dallas smiled at him, approval in his black eyes, making Alex's stomach clenched.

"It goes on like this." She turned him, opening the Velcro straps and helped him shrug into it. "Wear it over a tee shirt or you'll be chaffed raw." He let her help him put his tan plaid shirt back on over it. "Under your shirt, no one will know it's there."

He nodded. "You wore this?" Something about the thought of her perfect breasts flattened against the vest made his voice crack and his breath hitch. He didn't want to examine his reaction too closely, but

the idea had him imagining his way down her body with its hourglass curves.

"I did." She laid her hand on the vest, where his heart would be.

The sexual tension in the air was thick enough to cut with a knife. He couldn't stand it any longer. He held his hand out toward Dallas taking his hand before he turned, stepping in front of Molly, tilting his head to kiss her. Pain, like a sledgehammer to his back, drove the breath from him. His head snapped back, as he fell forward into Molly's arms.

\* \* \* \*

"Moll—" Alex's voice cut off with a whoosh of breath followed by a loud pop. Then he tumbled forward, taking Molly down with him. Dallas stood there, stunned, as Molly moved Alex off her and reached for him. She caught the waistband of his jeans, jerking him down to the floor, snapping him out of his shock. Another bullet hit the wall where he'd been standing.

"Get behind the bed. Stay down!" Molly rose up, long enough to slap the light switch, plunging them into darkness.

Dallas tugged Alex's limp body into his arms. He managed to get them around to the far side of the bed out of sheer terror. He heard Molly speaking to someone, and suppressed the hysterical urge to laugh. She sounded like a cop show. A few seconds later, she joined them behind the bed and reached out to touch Alex's neck.

"He's going to hurt like hell, but he's alive." She slid her hand over Alex's back and he coughed. He gasped, trying to get his breath back, giving Molly a weak pat on her hip.

Relief washed over Dallas like an ice water bath. "What now, *querida*?"

"It's not a stalker case anymore, where our hands are pretty much tied. Now it's attempted murder. Whoever is doing this better hope I don't catch them without witnesses because I'm not sure I'd bring

them in alive." Her voice shook with anger. *Fear also*, he thought. He pulled her into a one-armed embrace.

Alex shifted. "Kill them. I don't care. This fucking hurts." He coughed again.

The sound of sirens in the distance grew louder with each second. Dallas looked into Molly's hazel green eyes, reading the message there: she also realized the bullets had been meant for them, not Alex. He shivered, tightening his hold on his two lovers.

## Chapter Nine

"Take it easy. You've had a shock." Dallas helped Alex sit on Molly's overstuffed couch. Alex let the deep voice soak through him, calm, reassuring, soothing. He tried to sit up, but Dallas pushed him back down against the pillows on the couch.

"Where's Molly?" He didn't look up, but felt the couch cushions give when Dallas sat down next to him. "Have they caught the asshole yet?" He watched with a grimace as the paramedics came in. He refused to go to a hospital. He didn't care *what* they said.

"No. Whoever shot at us must have left as soon as you fell. Now relax. This won't hurt a bit." Dallas gave Alex's knee a squeeze before moving out of the emergency workers' way.

Alex sighed, letting the emergency workers help him out of his ruined shirt and the vest. He kept quiet, wincing a few times as the medics probed the spot on his back with gentle care.

"They'll do x-rays at the hospital." One of the medics tried to get him to lie down on the stretcher.

"No, I'm not going to any hospital." He shook his head.

The paramedic sighed. "Your call, man, but you need to get checked out. That's a hell of a painful bruise."

"You should feel it from my side. I'll have it checked by my own doctor."

The guy shrugged. His partner collected their equipment, while he filled out some forms, and then handed them to Alex. He signed the release then watched them leave.

Alex gave a heavy sigh, when Dallas's hands rested on his shoulders kneading the tension away. Alex leaned back against his

friend, shutting his eyes.

He sat there, while Dallas moved hot hands over his skin, and silently willed Dallas not to stop. Dallas moved from his neck to his shoulders, down to his chest. He massaged Alex's arms, his sides, even his hands. He'd had no idea how arousing a simple massage could be, even when used on hands and fingers.

Suddenly, a knock sounded at the door. He heard Molly go to answer it. He cursed mentally for the interruption. "Thank you, Ben. We're not going to be staying. You go on home now. And don't tell anyone about this." He heard her say as she took something from the police officer then shut the door again.

Molly came back. He waited for her to speak. She'd been right about the vest. He'd do anything she told him to do. "Think you're up to a drive?" Molly's voice came from behind him.

"Ah, sure. If I have something to lean on. I'm feeling quite, uh, faint, at the moment." He was enjoying the breathless sensation.

Molly just smiled. "I know. Getting shot has that effect." Dallas brushed his fingertips across Alex's nipples making Alex gasp. He frowned when Dallas stopped walking away.

"Where are you going? Aren't you going to finish?" He called after Dallas in a disappointed tone.

"To get our things. I'll be right back." Dallas disappeared into the bedroom.

"Where are we going?" *And please, can we fuck when we get there*, he added silently. He couldn't remember ever being this aroused.

"We don't have much choice," she answered. "We're going out to the lake to camp out on my houseboat. We should get going. It's a long drive."

"You have a houseboat?" He held his hand out and she took it, pulling him to his feet as Dallas came back with the bags they hadn't gotten around to unpacking.

"Yeah, out on Lake Amistad." He let her help him into the shirt



Dallas handed her.

\* \* \* \*

Molly stopped, leaning out to punch her pass code into the security gate. She finished with a sigh, sitting back as the gate slid open, and glancing over at Alex. No one knew about her houseboat at the remote lake. Alex would be safe. The gate finished opening allowing her to pull through.

She smiled when Alex shifted in his sleep and winced, reaching down to adjust his cock. He bit his bottom lip, as he gave it a couple of quick rubs. A brush with death did that to everyone. By the time she got the Hummer parked, her passengers were awake. "This is it, not big but comfortable and most importantly, safe."

"Fascinating. I don't remember ever having stayed on a houseboat before." Dallas looked around with an expression of interest.

She led the way down the dock, ushering them in, turning on the light in the living area, before pointing out the bathroom, along with the single bedroom. "I screened in part of the top deck for sleeping outside when it's nice."

\* \* \* \*

Without a word, Alex caught Dallas's hand, pulling him along as he pushed Molly up the little spiral staircase she pointed to. He needed them now. He refused to wait any longer. She snatched a quilt off a chair on the way to the stairs so she could toss it on the floor when they reached the deck.

Alex sank to his knees in front of Molly, slipping one hand down over her cotton shirt to her old faded jeans, unfastening the brass button, and pulling the zipper down. She threaded her fingers through his silky hair, as he covered her navel with his mouth, swirling his tongue inside as he worked her jeans down her legs. Dallas reached

out to them and she caught Dallas's hand as Alex pulled him closer. Dallas circled her waist with his free arm, moaning when Alex rubbed his hand over the front of Dallas's jeans, tracing the shape of his fast-hardening cock.

"Take them off." Alex tugged at the waistband, his voice rough with lust.

Dallas tangled his fingers in Alex's hair, meeting then twining with Molly's fingers as Alex let himself be pulled back to his feet. In seconds, they had discarded their clothes, touching everywhere, kissing bare skin as it was exposed. Alex took a deep breath, and let it out slowly, turning her in his arms, pulling her back against him. He swore—then moaned—as Dallas brushed his fingers over her belly to the elastic of her lace panties.

They both gasped as Dallas pulled them down, his fingers barely touching her skin. Dallas slipped his hands back up her legs. She felt Alex shiver as he touched his lips to her shoulder, his hands cupping her breasts. Her knees went weak. Alex sank to the floor with her while Dallas steadied her, bending forward, kissing her, flicking his tongue over her clit, then plunging it into her. She moaned, digging her fingers into Alex's arm, and letting her head fall back on Alex's shoulder as she came. "You are so beautiful when you come," Alex whispered.

She turned her head toward Alex, who touched his lips to hers, and traced over them with the tip of his tongue, parted her lips further, and slipped it deep into her mouth as he kissed her. Dallas kissed his way up her belly to her breasts, in a trail of fire, until he reached Alex, moving to touch his lips to Alex's, kissing him.

Molly ran her nails up Dallas's sides and brushed her fingers over his hard nipples, watching Alex plunder his mouth.

"Ohh fuck, Dal. I can taste her on you," Alex groaned when he broke the kiss.

"Taste her for yourself." He shifted, helping Alex turn her until she lay in Dallas's arms. Then Alex began exploring her with fingers

and tongue. Molly cried out as her second orgasm shook her.

Alex sat up, breathing like he'd run a marathon. "I need to be inside you, Molly," he could barely speak, breathless. "I need Dallas inside me."

Molly held her arms out gathering him close. Dallas moved from behind her, as she lay back on the quilt, pulling Alex down with her. He slid into her, lying still, waiting. Dallas raised her knees then knelt behind Alex. She watched Alex's face as Dallas entered him, pushing Alex deeper into her. Then the world shrank to the space only they inhabited as they moved together. She saw the moment Alex's orgasm hit him and heard Dallas groan his own orgasm seconds later. Molly let her release wash over her.

When it was over, they lay on the quilt in a tangle of arms and legs, the warm breeze from the lake drying the sweat on their bodies.

"Molly." He stopped, tracing slow circles around her navel laying his hand flat on her belly.

"Hmm?" She turned her head to look at him.

"Fuck us again," he whispered, kissing her.

Dallas knelt over her, and then with a slow, smooth movement, slid into her. He wrapped one arm around her waist, thrusting slowly. Alex kissed her again, moving closer. Helping Dallas pull her up onto her knees, he got into position behind her, pinning her against Dallas. She moaned softly as he pushed into her. Alex tangled his hands in her hair, growling softly in her ear. He slipped his tongue over it, exploring its curves and hollows, while Dallas's hands explored her body. They thrust into her together, in time with each other. She gasped rocking her body back against Alex. He cried out. Dallas groaned making a final hard thrust coming, bringing her with him. When it was over, Alex moved back, his touch gentle, as he eased her back down onto the quilt while Dallas withdrew. Dallas knelt next to her, leaning down to kiss her, before he lay down beside her. They went to sleep in each others' arms.

## Chapter Ten

The sun stabbed bright rays of light under the canopy and straight into Molly's eyes. She sat up, squinting at the sunrise which was beginning to brighten the eastern sky. If she started back early, in the next few minutes, she might be able to make the stalker think Alex was still staying at her house. The idea was worth a try, anyway.

Molly glanced at Alex, who lay on his stomach. The bruise had turned a dark plum, covering an area the size of a softball. She brushed her hand over the small of his back. He made a sleepy sound then opened one eye to look back at her.

"Five more minutes, Moll," he mumbled.

She smiled, getting to her feet. Some coffee, a quick shower, and she'd head back to Cold Canyon. "Come on, time to get up. There's things to do." She went to get started.

Behind her, she heard grumbling, followed by the sound of someone's butt being slapped.

\* \* \* \*

When she came out of the bathroom, the aroma of fresh coffee perfumed the air. Dallas had managed to drag on jeans and a shirt that he hadn't buttoned. He sat at the breakfast bar, hunched over a steaming cup, his eyes almost closed. Alex stood in front of the open refrigerator, clad only in faded, ripped jeans, eyeing the lack of contents. He turned an accusing glare on her.

"There's no food, and you're dressed."

"Good morning to you too, Captain Obvious." She rolled her eyes at him.

"I'm hungry." He closed the door, and then began opening cabinet doors.

"There's food. You have to cook it. How do you feel about staying here without a car today?" She ignored the concerned look Dallas shot her.

"I'd be fine with some food and something to do. I haven't had a real vacation from paparazzi in a long time."

"Good. There are some movies in the cabinet under the TV, a couple hundred channels on the satellite, and books all over the place. I'll be back tonight." Molly reached around Dallas, snagging a cup off a hook beside the pot.

Dallas picked up the pot, pouring coffee into her cup. "Will you be safe, *querida*?"

"I'll be fine. And with both of you here, I will have less to worry about." Molly leaned close, kissing him.

"Wait a minute. Why do you have to go back?" Alex came around the end of the bar, catching her arm.

"Because I have a job to do: catching your stalker." Molly touched his cheek.

"I don't want you to go. It's too dangerous." The look in his eyes made her heart hurt.

"Alex, this person tried to kill you. I can't ignore that."

"Molly, I'm not stupid. I wasn't the target last night. If I hadn't stepped in front of you, you'd be dead now. So would Dallas." He pulled her into his arms holding her tightly.

She stayed in his arms for a few moments. "I'm not stupid either, Alex, but this is what I do. I am trained for it. I'll be back tonight."

\* \* \* \*

Alex stood on the main deck, watching her drive off. Dallas came to stand beside him, draping his arm over Alex's shoulders. "Get your hat. I want to take some pictures." Dallas gave Alex a nudge before he followed Alex inside.

"Sexy pictures?" Alex brightened, giving Dallas a hopeful look.

"Do you take any other kind?" Dallas chuckled.

"That reminds me. I want copies of these pictures. Especially the ones with Molly." Alex settled his old hat on his head, and then sat down to put on his boots.

"Of course." Dallas waved Alex over to the chair their boots sat beside.

Alex tugged the legs of his jeans down over his boot tops, and then stood, looking pleased with himself. "All right, let's go take some pictures."

\* \* \* \*

Molly pulled into her parking spot in front of City Hall. She got out, waving at old Mrs. Weems as usual; then walked toward the doors, exaggerating her limp a bit for the old gossip. It wouldn't hurt for word to go around that Molly wasn't back to her usual, efficient, capable self. The stalker had to be someone local. Someone who knew the area, as well as the people involved.

Inside, she stepped into the elevator with a startled Aileen. The dispatcher's eyes looked puffy; red, like she'd been crying for quite some time. "Morning," Molly nodded. Being polite never hurt.

"Good morning," Aileen sniffed, her eyes welling up with tears. The elevator doors opened. Aileen hurried out with a muffled sob. The woman was a regular watering pot, Molly thought with disgust.

The chaos in the office surprised her. Ben and Jackson, plus most of the day crew, stood watching a small TV, along with most of the clerks from other offices. She caught Ben's attention, and gave him a slight nod, indicating she wanted them in her office.

She shut her door behind her, sitting down with a sigh of relief. Ben and Jackson came in as she rested her leg on the little file cabinet beside her desk.

"What the hell is going on?" She waved a hand to indicate the crowd in the station.

"It's all over the news. Someone shot Alex Meadowvale. Most of the networks are hinting he's dead. The phones have been ringing off the hook with reporters trying to get statements," Jackson gave an overworked-sounding sigh.

"Damn." Molly reached for the remote and turned on the TV she kept in her office. She flipped through several of the cable news channels. All were showing film of the emergency vehicles speeding up the road to her house with all their lights flashing and sirens blaring, followed by the ambulance driving away from her house in silence.

Cold swept over Molly. The stalker hadn't run after the shots. They'd stayed to watch the aftermath. To film it. Then they'd sold it to the media. She resisted the urge to throw the remote through the TV screen. "All right. I want every paparazzi out there rounded up. Bring them in for questioning."

"You think one of them did it?" Jackson frowned.

"It's possible. Or maybe one of them saw something." She paused for a few seconds. "Oh yeah, bring in anyone who has moved to town in the last year from California. Let's stir the pot a little and see what floats to the top."

"You want us to send Aileen in so you can talk to her, too?" Ben rubbed his nose.

"What for?" Molly's mental red flags went up.

"She told me she used to live in California." Molly went still inside at Ben's words.

"Really?" Interesting, she thought. She hadn't known Aileen had ever left town.

"Yeah, said she went to school out there," Ben answered.

"No, I'll have a word with her a little later. Meanwhile, go round up all those photographers. Be polite, we only want to question them. They aren't suspects. Yet." She shooed them out, reaching for her phone, then had second thoughts. Instead, she pulled her purse out, hoping her cell phone had enough charge left.

\* \* \* \*

Dallas started when his cell phone rang. He reached across Alex to look at the screen. "It's Molly," he handed it to Alex.

Alex brightened as he answered the call. "Hi. No, I turned it off. What?" He looked at Dallas, horrified, motioning for him to turn on the TV. Dallas raised his eyebrows, but punched the button to turn the set on, while Alex scrambled up from the couch, going over to the bags they hadn't gotten around to putting up.

Dallas froze at the news commentator's words then looked back at Alex, aghast. Alex snapped the phone closed. "They think I'm dead," Alex whispered in a stunned voice. Dallas went to him, putting his arms around Alex.

"What did Molly say?" Dallas nuzzled Alex's neck.

"I've got to call John." Alex sounded dazed. "Molly thinks the video the news is running came from the stalker."

Dallas shivered. "Then the stalker knows—" He trailed off when Alex shook his head.

"No, she thinks the stalker believes I'm dead, too." Alex shook his head, "This is crazy."

"What does she want us to do?" Dallas rubbed his lover's back.

Alex smiled a little. "She wants me call my people, sit tight, and not eat all the ice cream."

"Then you'd better do what she says, or she might arrest you again." Dallas relaxed. If Molly was making jokes, she couldn't be too worried.



Dallas watched Alex pace the houseboat's tiny living area while he spoke to his manager, instructing him to call the studio. The sun dusted Alex's dark brown hair with red-gold sparks, making his tanned skin glow. Alex closed the phone, going outside to look out at the water. Dallas took a deep breath then let it out slowly. He'd go see if he couldn't do something about that wistful expression on Alex's face while he cured the tingling in his own cock at the same time.

## Chapter Eleven

Molly did not want let on that she had an interest in Aileen, surreptitiously watching her take her purse out of her desk and head for the elevator. She glanced at the clock. *Noon*. She had an hour or a less before Aileen came back. She waited until the elevator doors closed with the indicator light for the lobby lit up before she walked over to the dispatcher's desk. Ben sat in Aileen's chair, already bored. *Well, that won't last long. This should spice up his day.*

She had barely left her office when old Mrs. Anderson almost ran Molly down with her janitor's cart. "Such a sad day," said the old lady caught Molly's arm. "You should give that poor child the rest of the day off, what with her losing her boyfriend and all."

"What?" Molly gently pried the woman's hand from her arm. Mrs. Anderson didn't always make a lot of sense.

"You should be ashamed of yourself, making that sweet little girl work when some crazy person done shot her boyfriend. Them all set to get married in a couple days too," the old woman fussed. "She told me you was always jealous."

"I'll see what I can do, Mrs. Anderson. Meanwhile, why don't you take a break and tell Officer Jackson here all the details." Molly waved Jackson over giving him a significant look. "Mrs. Anderson has a lot to tell you about Aileen and Alex getting married. Why don't you take her into my office. Make sure you get all the details."

Jackson nodded. "Yes, ma'am." He ushered the cleaning lady into Molly's office and shut the door.

Ben looked up at her when she stopped at Aileen's desk. "Ben, in all the time you've been relieving Aileen for lunch, have you ever gotten curious about what's in her desk?"

"Uh. Well," he began.

"Be honest now." She fixed him with her best *I know what you did* glare. It worked on guilty teenagers. It should work on their youngest officer.

"Yeah, but I never looked. Honest." The words tumbled out in a rush.

"You know what? Me too. So let's look." He looked startled for a second. Then the light of understanding began to shine in his eyes.

\* \* \* \*

Molly stared at the thin box of familiar stationery in the top drawer of Aileen's desk, a chill running up her spine. "Ben, stop what you're doing. I want you to go over to Judge Baker's office right away. Tell him we want a search warrant for Aileen Culp's desk, locker, work area, her car, her home, hell everything you can think of. Get the address out of the personnel files."

"Yes, ma'am." Ben sounded excited. She didn't blame him.

"We need the one for the desk ten minutes ago along with a warrant for Aileen Culp's arrest. Tell him the charge is attempted murder of a police officer for starters."

Ben headed for the door. When he got to the hall, Molly heard him break into a run. She smiled. She remembered when she'd been that young and in love with her job.

With the warrants on the way, she got a roll of crime scene tape out of the supply room and taped off Aileen's desk. It wouldn't be long before Aileen found out they were onto her. Molly glanced at the clock. *In about five minutes, in fact.* Molly watched the floor numbers light up over the elevator. The car passed their floor, continuing on to the top floor.

\* \* \* \*

"You want this, don't you?" Dallas's voice was honeyed velvet. Alex turned his head toward the sound. Blindfolded, he couldn't see Dallas. He wondered what Dallas looked like at that moment. If his warm dusky skin was flushed. If his black eyes burned with the desire Alex heard in his voice. Licking his lips, Alex nodded once.

The sound of Dallas moving closer sent a surge of anticipation through Alex. "Dal." The desperation in his voice startled him. "Please."

The mattress gave under Dallas's weight as he settled onto the bed. Alex shivered. "I don't like to hurt you, Alex, but you haven't given me any choice." The tip of Dallas's finger traced along the bottom edge of the soft black knit fabric tied across Alex's eyes. One of Molly's socks.

"I'm sorry," Alex choked out, his mouth dry.

"I know you are. I'm doing this for you, because I know you need it, because I want you to be happy." Alex nodded. Dallas's voice sounded husky already. Alex wanted to say the word that would release him almost more than he wanted the things Dallas was about to do to him.

Dallas brushed his fingers over Alex's ass, making his body jerk. Slowly, Dallas pushed something wet and cool into Alex, allowing his body time to stretch, to become used to the intrusion. The unfamiliar object surprised Alex, exciting him. He made a disappointed noise when Dallas stopped, wanting whatever it was deeper inside.

"What?" he gave a deep sigh.

"Molly has some wonderful candles," Dallas whispered in Alex's ear, wiggling it, sending a jolt of pleasure to Alex's erect cock.

"Fuck," Alex groaned.

"Oh, absolutely," Dallas chuckled and licked the back of Alex's neck.

Dallas's hand on his cock made him jump. Dallas ran his finger over the tiny opening at the tip, drawing a low moan from Alex. The heat inside him flared, growing quickly. It took every ounce of his control to lie still. Something hot hit the tip of Alex's cock, leaving a trail of fire as it ran a little way down the shaft. Alex gasped his body going rigid. Wax, hot wax, Alex thought as another spatter of fire hit his cock.

The heat continued to grow until his entire groin was on fire, his cock encased in the cooling wax. Alex strained at the bindings, rolling his hips, unable to keep still any longer. A deep groan escaped him as he arched his hips off the bed. His harsh breathing echoed in his ears, along with the pounding of his pulse. Dallas moved the candle. Alex moaned, shaking his head from side to side, sweat pouring from him to soak into the cotton sheets.

Alex bit back a scream at the shock of Dallas's cool hand on his fever-hot belly. Gasping for breath, he had a vague realization of the candle Dallas had pushed into him being removed and laid aside. As it raked across his sweet spot he cried out. An almost-painful spasm made his cock twitch. Pre-come, Alex thought, but the wax over his cock wouldn't let it out. He felt tight, full, achy. It was wonderful. Swallowing hard, he opened his mouth. "Dal."

"Do you need to say the word?" Dallas murmured, his lips against Alex's belly.

Alex shook his head, "Inside me, please."

"Not yet," Dallas whispered. He kissed Alex's belly working his tongue into Alex's navel, then began peeling the wax from Alex's cock. Alex clenched his fists. He needed something to hold onto, but there was nothing.

Then Dallas moved over him, pushing into Alex's ass with short, hard thrusts, his hands holding Alex's hips still until he had forged all the way in, before lying against Alex. Dallas moved at last, hard, fast, pounding Alex into the mattress until Alex groaned, finally saying the word that would release him.

Almost instantly, Dallas freed Alex from his restraints, whisking the makeshift blindfold away as Dallas pulled him up to straddle his thighs. Dallas's arms were around Alex close, his cock still buried deep inside him. Alex ground himself against his lover.

Dallas held Alex, stroking his sweat-matted hair, rubbing his back, moaning in Alex's ear. Alex clenched his fists in Dallas's soft, cotton shirt fighting to catch his breath. Dallas swelled then pulsed inside Alex as he came. Another wave of white hot pleasure broke over Alex. He shuddered. "Ohh, Dal. Can't stop. Going to come." Alex whimpered, his voice rising into a hoarse moan, as he spasmed, covering them both with his come.

Dallas kissed Alex's neck, then his shoulder, as he eased him back onto the damp bed, and lay beside him. "Tell me what you will do after the movie is filmed and you must go back to Los Angeles."

"I'm contracted to another film. I have a few days, and then I'm expected in London to start preproduction and rehearsals. Then there's promotion for the last film." Alex sighed. "What about you?"

"I will turn in my assigned shots along with the narrative to go with them. Then I'll be given another assignment, likely in China." Dallas rubbed Alex's belly.

Alex stared in silence at the ceiling for a long time before he dozed off. He didn't want this to end, but he couldn't find a way to keep them together.

## Chapter Twelve

Molly frowned, looking at the clock again. Fifteen minutes had passed. Aileen still hadn't shown. Something must have tipped her off, and Molly had a pretty good idea what. She went to her office where she found Mrs. Anderson hurriedly hanging up the phone. Officer Jackson was nowhere to be seen. "Mrs. Anderson, did you just call Aileen to tell her not to come back from lunch?"

"That little girl has had a tragedy happen and here you are picking on her." Mrs. Anderson gave her chin a belligerent lift.

"Shit!" Molly swore. She went to her desk snatching up the phone, punching in the redial code. She got a busy signal.

Jackson walked in as she hung up. "Where were you?"

"Men's room. What?" Jackson looked from the phone to Mrs. Anderson then back at Molly. "Oh, hell."

"Put her in one of the interrogation rooms. Lock the door. Explain to her what she's just done." Molly didn't wait to see her orders carried out. She had to get the search for Aileen underway.

Ben came running in with a handful of papers, skidding to a stop in front of her, out of breath. "Got 'em." He gasped out.

Molly took the papers and glanced through them. "Good job. Let's get started. Jones put out an all points for Aileen Culp. Put the word out she's armed and dangerous. She's probably not rational either. Then go through that desk with a fine-toothed comb. Call me if you find anything. Ben, you're with me. Let's go see what we can find at Aileen's house." She followed Ben down to the parking area.

Molly repressed the urge to drive straight back to Amistad Lake and make sure her lovers were safe. Aileen thought Alex had died like

the rest of the world. The last thing she needed was to lead Aileen to him.

She listened to the radio on the way to the little house Aileen rented. Aileen's car, a dark blue Honda Civic, had apparently disappeared. Jones had found a whole host of weird stuff in her desk, from the stationery Molly had seen, to a packet of pictures of Alex at the Longhorn Ranch adobe, along with what Jones called a used condom. She and Ben glanced at each other and grimaced.

Ben pulled up in front of the house. No car sat in the driveway. From the looks of it, Aileen hadn't bothered to cut the grass in at least a month, either. Molly took the lead, walking up to the front door. She knocked, waited a few seconds, listening for any sound before nodding at Ben. He tried the door, giving it a push. It swung open.

"Damn," Ben whispered. "This is freaky."

Molly had to agree. Aileen had papered every available surface with pictures of Alex. "Let's get a team in here. I want photos of everything in place before we start going through it all." She picked up a sheet of paper lying on the coffee table near a movie magazine with Alex smiling up from the cover.

Molly looked at the note with a deep sigh. It began with '*He's dead I can't go on*' then rambled through a strange list of events that mixed things from Alex's life in Cold Canyon with scenes from his movies, ending at last with Aileen's farewell to her cat and her plan to kill herself. They'd found the cat in the kitchen, dead, wrapped in Alex's stolen red plaid shirt, but no jewelry.

With it looking like Aileen had killed herself, Molly radioed in telling Jackson to send Mrs. Anderson home. They still searched for Aileen's car. Molly expected they'd find her when they found the car. Molly didn't try to rationalize Aileen's behavior. She'd learned long ago not to try to second-guess an unhinged mind. Instead, Molly went back to the station to pick up the Hummer. The drive back to the houseboat would give her time to think.



\* \* \* \*

Alex sat in near total darkness on the sun deck, staring out at the reflection of the moon on the water. The silence was broken only by the faint sounds of water lapping against the hull and the movie Dallas had put on. Watching the twinkling of the moonlight on the water, he let his thoughts wander. She was out there somewhere, tracking down a lunatic who had already tried once to kill them all. He suddenly realized it would kill him to lose the two most important people in his life.

Dallas, who sat in the living area, watching one of Molly's movies, an old black and white singing cowboy western, claimed they were nothing more than fuck buddies. Alex smiled. It wasn't what Dallas's actions showed. They'd given up on the news. Alex found it much too creepy hearing himself eulogized while Dallas had gotten upset enough to yell at the newscasters in Spanish. Not the reaction of someone who was only a friend who liked to fuck once in awhile.

He watched a satellite cross the sky. Molly had always loved sitting in the back of his old pickup, looking at the stars for hours. She'd watched the sky while he'd watched her. Alex thought then that he wanted to watch her, hold her, while Dallas fucked her. In his imagination, he heard her breathing, the soft swish of the sheets sliding, Dallas's groans. Alex could almost feel her fingernails digging into his back and taste her salty-sweet skin, the hot wet velvet of being inside her, Dallas's strong hands sliding over his body. He couldn't help the soft moan that escaped him as he imagined the sensations. He wanted to experience this wonderful feeling over and over for the rest of his life, with both lovers.

The sound of a vehicle broke the stillness of the night. Alex stood. He went to the railing, peering into the blackness. He made out the headlights and watched them draw closer until they stopped and went out. The dome light went on when the driver's door opened. He got a

glimpse of Molly before she shut the door. Need zinged through him as he ran down the stairs to the main deck.

He met Dallas at the doorway to the living room. "She's back." He didn't bother to hide his relief or his excitement. Dallas would know anyway.

They waited by the little gang plank that connected them to the pier. Alex wanted to go get her, to pick her up, to carry her to her little bedroom and fuck her until she screamed. Dallas rubbed his back. "Give her time to relax some," Dallas whispered.

When she stepped onto the deck, he heard her sigh. She sounded tired. They pulled her into an embrace just standing there holding onto each other in silence for a long moment. Dallas recovered first, kissing Molly. Alex realized in that moment Dallas would always be the one in their relationship who steadied them, while Molly, despite being the strongest, would always be their flight of fantasy.

"Tell us about your day." Dallas guided them all into the living room.

Molly kicked her shoes off before sitting down with a heavy sigh and putting her feet up. "I noticed some odd things." She proceeded to tell them how they'd discovered the identity of Alex's stalker.

"Aileen? Which one was she?" Alex couldn't remember knowing anyone named Aileen.

"Our dispatcher, who doubled as a receptionist. I'm sure you saw her: pale blond hair, dressed in lots of ruffly lace, very girly, kind of on the skinny side. She was a few years behind us in school."

"I still don't remember anyone like that." Alex looked thoughtful.

"I do. She brought everyone coffee. Then Molly arrived and I forgot to notice any other women." Dallas trailed his fingers up Molly's thigh.

Molly laughed. "You are so full of it. Was he like this when you first met him?" she nudged Alex.

"All I remember is he walked in, blinked those beautiful black eyes at me, and the next thing I knew, he kissed me. Then we were on

my dining room table fucking like the world was going to end," Alex answered with a smile.

They all laughed. "You wouldn't believe her house. She had pictures of you everywhere. We found your red plaid shirt. But I don't think you'll want it back," Molly shivered.

"Why not?" Alex gave her a puzzled look.

Molly told him about the cat. "Don't try to rationalize it. All you'll do is end up on a psychiatrist's couch. She was crazy."

"Damn," Alex shivered. "So she's gone now? For good?"

"We haven't found a body yet, but yes, I think so." Molly yawned.

"I think we've talked about this enough." Dallas stood, holding his hands out to them. "Why don't we all go to bed? We can decide what to do tomorrow."

## Chapter Thirteen

Molly woke with someone kissing her ear, while someone else kissed her lips. A hand cupped her breast; Alex's, from the slender fingers, combined with the way the thumb teased her nipple. Another hand moved in slow circles over her hip. That would be Dallas, she thought. He had wonderful large hands.

"Are you awake yet?" Alex whispered in her ear.

"Mmm, no, I'm dreaming," she smiled, reaching for Dallas.

"I have something better than a dream," he whispered. "I have a fantasy."

Dallas's hand worked her nightgown up then slipped between her legs. He stroked her with enough pressure to tease. She moaned. Alex chuckled. Every nerve ending she had burned. She couldn't remember ever being this aroused. How long had they been working on her?

"What fantasy?" she sighed, breathless.

"I want to hold you while Dallas fucks you," he pulled her damp panties down her legs tossing them onto the floor.

"And what does Dallas want?" Molly shifted to face Dallas.

"Dallas wants you on top of him, so he can watch Alex holding you," Dallas caught her leg behind the knee rolling onto his back, pulling her into the position he wanted.

Molly gasped. Dallas's cock lay between them, pressed into her belly. She could feel his pulse with the rise and fall of his chest as he breathed. Alex's hands were on her hips, clenched in the fabric of her nightgown, rubbing the cotton over her skin. She covered Dallas's mouth with hers, slipping her tongue past his lips to twine with his before she sat up.

Alex wrapped one arm around her waist, as he gathered her gown out of the way. His erection lay hard against her back. "Hold on," he whispered. He tightened his hold on her, slowly lowering her onto Dallas's cock. Dallas groaned, fisting his hands in the sheet under him.

Dallas slid into her, filling her, hitting every sweet spot she had. Alex tugged her gown up over her head, dropping it on the floor. She bent, resting her hands on Dallas's flat, hard belly with a soft moan.

"*Querida, mi amor*," Dallas moaned.

"I think it's time to move." Alex's voice had gotten rougher.

Molly nodded. She began to move with Alex's help. Dallas let his hands glide over her thighs moaning again. She rocked her hips, grinding herself against him, drawing more moans from him.

Molly heard Alex's breathing change. He kissed her shoulder then pushed her forward. She slid her hands up Dallas's body, leaning forward until her belly was against his, and her nipples rubbed his chest.

Alex kissed the small of her back. "Dal." Alex's voice had turned husky, lust-filled. Molly moaned when Dallas lifted his hips off the bed.

Dallas squeezed his eyes shut. "Oh, fuck," he moaned. Molly felt his belly tense. An electric jolt of pleasure shot through her when she realized Alex had begun fucking Dallas. She kissed Dallas as she reached back, moving Alex's hand from her hip to Dallas's.

Alex thrust harder. Molly felt the pressure of Dallas's cock swelling inside her, then he jerked his hips as he spasmed as he came with a hoarse cry. She gasped, moaning along with Alex as Dallas's orgasm sent them both over the edge.

Molly moved, letting Dallas reach for Alex. Alex still trembled from his release. She pulled him into her arms, as Dallas thrust into him. Alex cried out, holding onto her like a drowning man, moaning every time Dallas slid home.

"M-Moll, he's like fire." Alex gasped.

"I know, baby." She rubbed his back. He pressed his face against her neck, groaning.

"Love you," he gasped. "Love him."

"Yes," she whispered, kissing his shoulder.

"Feels good, ohh fuck, yes," he moaned louder. Dallas kissed Alex's shoulder then Molly's.

She brushed her fingers over his belly, down to his erection. He whimpered when she took the condom off him. She lowered herself, placing a gentle, wet kiss over the head of his cock, swirling her tongue over the tip, working it into the opening. He swore, bucking back against Dallas.

She cupped Dallas's balls, drawing a deep moan from him. He jerked his hips hard. Alex gasped, swearing again. Molly moved her hand forward, pressing her fingertips into the spot just behind Alex's balls. He cried out as he came. Dallas groaned, letting go, coming with his lover. Molly's stomach clenched in sympathy.

Dallas eased Alex down to the bed and followed, wrapping his arms around Alex and Molly.

"Ride 'em, cowboy," Molly chuckled when she'd caught her breath. Alex and Dallas both broke into breathless laughter. They all lay there, unable to do anything but giggle for several minutes. It felt almost as good as their love-making.

\* \* \* \*

They lay there in comfortable quiet for awhile, each enjoying the closeness and the glow from making love. Molly thought she'd have to call in soon, but she didn't want to ruin this mood. She sighed, tracing over the sweat-damp skin around Alex's navel with her fingernail. Alex's cock stiffened.

The phone began ringing in the living area. She kissed him then got up to go answer it, grabbing her nightgown off the floor, pulling it on. Behind her, she heard them head for the shower.

\* \* \* \*

Molly sat, staring out the window by the breakfast bar for a long time. They'd found Aileen's car on I-10 near Ozona, burned out. The state police said it appeared as though the body in the car was Aileen's. They would go through the ashes but wouldn't have any results right away. She figured it would be Aileen, from the half melted jewelry. Alex and Dallas wouldn't be getting their rings back, either.

Alex came down the short hall, naked, walking across the room to her, and stopping for a quick kiss before he headed for the refrigerator. "Who was that?" He poked his head into the fridge, rummaging for something to eat.

Molly shook her head with a sighed. "That was Ben." She told him what the state police had found. "Looks like you won't be getting your jewelry back, either."

"Damn. But they're really sure she's gone?" He frowned at her.

"Looks that way," Molly acknowledged.

"I can go back to work?" He turned to look at her.

"Don't see why not." She'd miss him when he went back to the set. No need for a bodyguard twenty-four hours a day with the threat gone. She could get back to work arresting Bobby Ray Sams for petty theft and writing speeding tickets. Life would get quiet again.

"John will be happy. So will the director. The studio loses a lot of money every day production is stalled." He shut the fridge door, coming over to sit down next to her. "I'll call them and let them know."

"They can let the world know you aren't dead. Your fans will be happy." She heard the sadness in her own voice.

"Molly?" he gave her an odd look. "You'll be there." He trailed off when she shook her head.

"You won't need a full-time bodyguard. I have a job to get back to, Alex." She brushed her fingertips over his cheek. "Call your people and get ready to head back to Cold Canyon. I'm going to go get cleaned up, if you guys left any hot water."

\* \* \* \*

Troubled, Alex watched her go. Dallas came out of the bedroom dressed in black jeans that molded to his body. Even the knowledge that Dallas never wore underwear didn't pull Alex out of the low mood his conversation with Molly had put him in.

"What's wrong?" The concern in Dallas's black eyes made Alex's stomach flutter.

Alex told him about Aileen and what Molly had said about going back to work. "She's talking like she won't be with us anymore. Dammit, I can't lose her again. I can't lose you, too."

"Go get dressed. We can talk about this later." Dallas gave his shoulder a squeeze.

Alex did as he was told. He'd probably always do anything Dallas told him to do, he mused. He'd do anything Molly told him, too. All she had to do was say it. Why couldn't she see that?



## Chapter Fourteen

Molly watched the replay of the press conference, wishing she could be transported instantly to Outer Mongolia, except they had probably heard of Alex Meadowvale there, too. It reminded her of high school all over again. She hated press conferences. The statement from the studio had made her sound like some sort of super cop when all she'd done was her job. The whole thing was stupid.

Alex had acted all bashful, just a good ol' down home cowboy playing to the crowd like he had all their lives. He'd even said, "Shucks, ma'am" when the reporter from London had commented on his bravery. Then Alex had popped off with his *announcement*. "Couldn't let my future wife take a bullet for me. Wouldn't be right."

She'd seen Dallas smack his forehead and then cover his mouth, wide-eyed with shock. The press ate it up. Her officers had all looked dumbstruck. She didn't blame them. She felt a little pole axed herself.

Ben poked his head in her office. "Call from Tokyo. They want to talk to Mrs. Meadowvale. You want to take it?"

"Tell them Mrs. Meadowvale had to go beat up Mr. Meadowvale." She stood, taking her gun belt off the coat hook behind her desk.

"Right, he's still refusing to retract the statement, huh?" Ben grinned at her.

"I ought to go through with it and devote myself to making his life hell." She finished buckling her belt. "I'm going out on patrol. Call me if anything interesting happens."

\* \* \* \*

Alex looked out the window at Dallas parking the Hummer. He went to the door of the tiny adobe house, opening it to let his lover inside. They'd moved back to the Longhorn Ranch after the debacle at the press conference. After Molly tossed them out of her place. He opened the door, waiting for Dallas to join him.

Dallas had gone to Mama Rose's Cantina to get them take-out for lunch. Alex's next scenes weren't due for shooting until after dark, so he'd spent all morning memorizing lines, until Dallas suggested a break. He wanted some domestic shots. Since they had been taking pictures all day already, Alex was pretty sure that meant his lover wanted to fuck. But after screwing the pooch with Molly, Alex didn't want to assume anything and risk losing another lover.

"Hope you like tamales." Dallas stepped inside, putting the bags on the coffee table, while Alex closed the door.

"Sounds good." Alex tried, but he couldn't keep the listless note out of his voice.

"She still does not answer?" Dallas's tone was gentle.

"No. All I get at the station is she's out on patrol. Damn, I hate that. She could get killed out there." Alex sat down next to Dallas, picking up a tortilla chip, and dipping it into the salsa Dallas opened and set on the table.

"Give her time to cool off. She is not a woman who likes public surprises. If all else fails, I can always go talk to her for you." Dallas smiled, handing Alex a Styrofoam container of tamales.

They ate in silence. Alex had to admit, lunch from the Cantina had been a good idea. He collected up the trash, taking it into the kitchen while Dallas leaned back with a sigh, shutting his eyes. When he came back into the living room, a bottle of tequila sat on the coffee table, and Dallas had taken off his blue chambray work shirt. Alex's mouth went dry.

"Have you ever done body shots?" Dallas picked up the bottle.

"Not," Alex's voice cracked, "not for a long time."

Dallas gave Alex a faint smile. "Good, then it will be easy to teach you the way I do them. Come here, *mijo*. Take off your shirt."

Alex swallowed hard, unbuttoning his shirt as he walked toward Dallas. When he reached the last button, he shrugged out of it, dropping it on the floor beside the coffee table.

"On your knees." Dallas pointed to the floor.

Alex dropped to his knees waiting for Dallas's next instruction. Dallas walked around to the end of the coffee table to stand behind him. Alex licked his lips, shutting his eyes for a second. Dallas's hand between his shoulder blades was like a hot brand. He pushed. Alex had no choice. He leaned forward until his belly and chest touched the cool, rustic wood.

"Get comfortable. This might take awhile." Alex heard the sound of Dallas kneeling behind him.

"What?" Alex began.

"Shh." Dallas cut him off. "I need to talk to you. This is how I choose to do it."

Alex nodded, folding his arms under his head.

\* \* \* \*

Dallas took a large swig of tequila, gazing at the man lying before him. He had never said to any other lover what he needed to say to Alex. Except to Molly, and he wasn't sure she'd understood. She'd been distracted at the time. He drank from the bottle again. The liquor was helping. He could do this.

Dallas carefully poured the tequila, letting it trickle down Alex's spine to form a tiny pool of warm liquid at the small of his back. Leaning down, Dallas lapped at the liquor, licking every drop from Alex's warm skin, following the trail of tiny droplets up to his neck. Alex gave a soft moan. Dallas smiled, brushing his fingers over Alex's shoulders, and then down over his sides to his waist. Alex

shivered. Dallas bent, kissing his way back down Alex's spine to the waistband of his jeans.

Dallas rested his cheek against Alex's back then reached around to unbuckle his belt and unfasten Alex's jeans. He heard Alex's breathing change. He smiled, putting the bottle of tequila on the floor and moving back enough to push Alex's jeans down his thighs. His cock strained against his own jeans. Dallas took a moment to free his erection and slip on a condom.

Alex had shifted his arms, grasping the edge of the coffee table. Dallas picked up the tequila, taking another drink. An idea came to him. He poured some into his hand then slid his tequila-drenched hand between Alex's legs to rub the liquor into Alex's balls and cock. Alex hissed, rocking his body toward him. Dallas poured a little more tequila, letting it run down Alex's ass. One more swig and Dallas felt he might be drunk enough.

"I have never said this to anyone before." Dallas positioned himself, and then pushed into Alex.

"I'm listening, Dal," Alex gasped.

"Shit." Dallas pulled back then thrust again. "This is harder than I thought it would be."

"Uhn, fuck, just tell me." Alex bucked his hips back.

Dallas began a steady slide in and out of Alex's ass. Alex met each thrust with his own push back. Dallas leaned forward with a low groan, to lie against Alex. "I need you."

"You have me." Alex's breath hitched.

"I love you," Dallas whispered.

Alex reached back, catching Dallas's hand and bringing it up to press it against his lips, kissing Dallas's fingers. Dallas sat back, pulling Alex with him, kissing his shoulders, touching Alex everywhere he could, rubbing his hands over Alex's belly and chest, teasing Alex's nipples until Alex let his head fall back against Dallas's shoulder digging his fingers into Dallas's thighs.

"I. Love," Alex gasped, "You."

Dallas kissed Alex's neck.

"H-have since first. Ohh, fuck," Alex groaned.

Dallas grabbed the shirt Alex had dropped, covering his lover's cock as Alex came. Dallas moaned, joining Alex in his release.

\* \* \* \*

When he'd caught his breath, if not his heart, Alex eased himself off Dallas. He stood, hitching up his jeans, and then reached down to help Dallas stand up. "Come on, lover. It's my turn and I want to fuck you face-to-face in a bed."

"Bed." Dallas swallowed, breathless, "Yeah, bed is good." Alex pushed his half-hard cock into his jeans, then zipped them part way while Dallas hitched his own up. Together, they headed for the bedroom in the back of the adobe.

Alex stopped Dallas beside the bed, making him sit. He worked Dallas's jeans off, and then kicked his own off into the corner. He paused for a few heartbeats to look at Dallas before he climbed onto the bed with him and pushed his legs apart. Dallas raised his hips off the bed in invitation. Alex took a deep breath, entering him.

## Chapter Fifteen

Dallas pulled Alex down, wrapping arms and legs around him, rolling them over as he sat back. Alex moaned, bucking his hips, driving deeper into Dallas. He loved it when Dallas took control, loved being dominated.

"Baby, I'm home!" A breathy little-girl voice suddenly rang out in the living room as the door slammed. Dallas and Alex both froze, looking at each other in shock.

"What the fuck?" Dallas mouthed at him.

Alex shook his head. "I know that voice!" Alex whispered. Dallas looked at him with his eyebrows raised. "That's the woman from the wrong number." He trailed off realizing this had to be his stalker. "Oh fuck, the stalker. This is bad, isn't it?"

Dallas nodded climbing off him. "You need to get out of here," he whispered.

Alex nodded as he made a grab for his jeans. He jerked them on while Dallas went to the bedroom door. "What the hell are you doing?" he whispered.

"Buying you some time. Now go." Dallas motioned to the window.

"Shit!" Alex hissed. He watched Dallas walk out into the short hallway. Swearing again, he pushed the window open and popped the screen out. Dallas's voice came from the living room, but Alex couldn't make out what he said. With another curse, he climbed out the window. It had begun to get dark. With luck, maybe he could stay out of sight long enough to get to the Hummer. He didn't hold out much hope. He'd always been lousy at hide-and-seek.

Alex peeked around the corner of the house. He patted his pockets, locating his keys. The Hummer sat parked about fifteen feet away. Not far, but he didn't have his boots on. A good two thirds of the distance was cactus garden and gravel. He took a deep breath then started across, trying to move fast, while still watching where he put his feet. At the same time, he tried to keep a lookout for a crazy lady.

The front door stood open when Alex passed it. He made it to the SUV, opening the door as quietly as possible, then climbing in. Afraid it would make too much noise, he didn't try to close it. He could do that later, after he had the vehicle moving. With a heavy sigh of relief, he put the key in the ignition and turned it.

\* \* \* \*

Molly sat in her cruiser, hidden by the old welcome to Cold Canyon sign. Her thoughts on Alex and Dallas, she'd let three speeders go by in the last seven hours. She missed them and the way they made her feel, but dammit, Alex could have said something to her before he surprised her in front of the whole world.

"Chief, you there?" Her radio crackled to life with Ben's voice. She picked it up.

"Yeah, what's up?" she pushed her hair back from her face.

"Just checking in, changing shifts," Ben's voice sounded cheerful, as always.

"Right. I'm heading home. Anyone needs me, I'll be there in about thirty minutes," she signed off, as she started the cruiser. The best thing, Molly thought, would be to go home, put her feet up, read for awhile, and then go to bed. Alone. She sighed, pulling out onto the highway.

Downtown was quiet, which was normal for a weekday. She passed the park where the houses began thinning out until she reached open ranch land. Something up ahead glowed white in her headlights.

She recognized the sign which marked the turnoff for the Longhorn Ranch Bed and Breakfast.

Her stomach clenched. She slowed, flicking on her turn signal. A glance in her rearview mirror let her know no one was behind her. In five minutes, she could be in the arms of the two men she cared for. *No, be honest, she chided herself. You love them.*

She turned, suddenly remembering something she'd heard when she passed the break room on her way out that afternoon. Alex wouldn't be at the ranch. He'd be at the set filming all night. She sighed, making a u-turn in the driveway and pulling back on the highway that would take her home.

\* \* \* \*

Nothing happened. Alex turned the key again, but the result was the same. An awful urge to cry with frustration swept over him.

"Why are you running from me, baby?" The saccharine-sweet voice sent a chill through him. A cold metal object touched the bare skin of his side, above the waistband of his jeans. He glanced down expecting to see a gun. She had a knife. It looked like there was blood on the blade.

Alex glanced toward the house where he'd left Dallas. The door stood open. If Dallas had been able to, he'd have come out that door. Alex fought the urge to throw up. Calling for help would be useless. The studio had rented the entire ranch so he could have privacy as the only guest.

"I got so angry when you made me shoot you instead of that bitch. It made me miss that evil man who corrupted you. But I fixed that. You're safe now. He won't ever touch you again," she squeezed his arm in a parody of reassurance.

"No," Alex whispered. His stomach knotted up with the realization she'd killed Dallas. She caught hold of his arm with



surprising strength, pulling him out of the Hummer. Anger and grief flared up. "I loved him!" he shouted, shoving her away.

She fell. Alex took the chance to get away, stumbling over her, scrambling to get as far from her as possible before she followed. Her hand closed around his ankle, jerking him to the ground. He swore as he fell.

\* \* \* \*

Molly jerked awake, disoriented for a few seconds before she remembered falling asleep on the couch in her living room. The phone rang again and she picked it up. "Yeah?" She rubbed her eyes then looked at the clock. Nine p.m., so she'd been asleep for about two hours.

"We got a call from the movie set. Mr. Meadowvale didn't show for work and no one is answering out at the ranch. Thought you'd want to know," Ben's voice came across the line.

Molly sat up, fear turning her blood to ice. "Send someone out to the movie set then meet me at the ranch. Something is wrong."

She hung up the phone, and then couldn't help but run for her cruiser, glad she hadn't changed out of her uniform when she got home.

\* \* \* \*

Dallas opened his eyes with a wince. His head pounded worse than any hangover he'd ever had. He reached out in the darkness to discover the locked closet door. There wasn't much room to stand—a good thing, since a wave of dizziness had almost knocked him to his knees. A couple of deep breaths made the dizzy spell pass.

The closet door was solid, heavy and old fashioned. When Dallas tried the knob, it didn't budge. Even sheer desperation didn't give him the strength he needed to break the door open. Frustrated, he slammed

his fist against the door before he sat down. He hoped someone would realize something was wrong when Alex didn't show up for work, and would call Molly. He had little doubt that Aileen had Alex. She had managed to get the drop on him, knocking him out when he went to stall her. Her insanity made her strong enough to wrestle his unconscious body into the closet. Alex wasn't quite as heavy, or as tall, as Dallas, but Aileen had the strength of the insane on her side.

## Chapter Sixteen

Molly's heart sank when she saw the Hummer door standing open, along with the door to the adobe bungalow. She got out of her police car, taking her service weapon out of its holster. The sound of the safety being clicked off seemed to echo in her ears. Molly could count the times she'd had to pull her gun in the past ten years on one hand with fingers left over.

No lights came on when she flipped the light switch beside the door. She pulled her flashlight out of her belt loop, and switched it on, holding it level with her gun. Ben stopped a few steps behind her, his flashlight and gun out. They made their way into the house, checking for anyone who might be there. The living room showed signs of a struggle, and overturned furniture lay around, along with broken lamps.

She motioned to Ben to check the tiny kitchen area then went into the short hallway, scanning the bathroom before stopping at the door to the bedroom. Cautious, she flattened herself against the wall then nudged the door open with her foot. All she saw was a rumpled bed and two pairs of cowboy boots lying on the floor.

With a sigh, she holstered her gun. "All clear," she called to Ben. She turned, walking back into the trashed living room, shining her flashlight over the mess.

"Someone put up a good fight in here." Ben holstered his gun as he joined her.

"Yeah. Go call in. We want a whole team out here for this." She looked around the room again.

"Right." Ben turned to go outside to the cars.

The sound of thumping stopped Ben, they looked at each other for a second before shining their flashlights toward the noise. A piece of what looked like a chair leg had been wedged under the closet door, securing it shut. The banging started again. Molly went to the door and banged back.

"Dallas?" she called, hoping against hope this was him in the closet, and kicked at the piece of wood.

"Molly?" Dallas's muffled voice came through the door.

"I know. Are you all right?" She kicked again. *How had Aileen managed to wedge the door so tight?* Molly wondered. She kicked a third time.

The wood moved at last, allowing Molly to open the door. Dallas fell into her arms, clad only in his jeans. "It was the girl." He held onto her. "She came in while we, I tried to distract her. I made Alex go out the window. The Hummer."

"Still there. Ben go get the black boots out of the bedroom." She rubbed Dallas's back. "We'll find him, Dallas. We'll get him back."

"She's insane, Molly." Dallas shook his head. "I tried to grab her, to stop her from going into the bedroom. She hit me with—I don't know—something, and the next thing I knew, I woke up in the closet."

"Yeah, I know." She took the boots from Ben. "Get an ambulance out here."

She watched Ben hurry out then helped Dallas put his boots on. He didn't protest when she led him outside to her car, making him sit. She let Dallas lean against her, stroking his silky black hair as she watched the flashing lights of the emergency vehicles getting closer. *I know where she's taking you, Alex. I'm on my way.*

\* \* \* \*

Alex looked around at himself. He stared back from every wall. Aileen talked to the pictures on the walls, carrying on a one-sided

conversation with them while she tied him to the wooden chair that sat in the middle of the room. She moved around, dancing to music only she heard.

He watched her walk toward the back of the house. As soon as she was out of sight, he strained at the bindings around his wrists and ankles. One gave a tiny bit, filling him with renewed hope. When he got loose, he would bash her in the head with the chair for Dallas. His breath caught as he forced back the tears. Crying wouldn't help him get away. It sounded like she was coming back. He struggled harder, but the piece of fabric around his wrists didn't budge again. He looked up to see Aileen walking toward him again.

\* \* \* \*

Molly watched the ambulance drive off without Dallas inside. She wanted him to go get checked out, to reassure herself he would be all right, but he refused to go. She didn't blame him. She'd do the same in his place. Alex was somewhere out there with an insane woman. Alex was the force that bound them together. Without him, what they had meant nothing. She sighed, walking toward her cruiser.

"Where will she take him?" Dallas followed a few steps behind her.

"Her house. It's a fucking shrine."

She stopped when Jones waved at her. She waited for him to catch up. "Dispatch just got a really strange call complaining about the noise at that house Aileen rented. Said it sounded like wailing and laughing."

Molly's stomach knotted up. "How long ago?"

"About five minutes. Dispatch radioed right after the call came in. You think that's where she is?" Jones frowned.

"Count on it. That's where the Alex Meadowvale she's invented is." Molly headed for her car again before she realized she'd moved. "You and Ben come with me. We want to go in quiet. We don't let

Aileen know we're there until we know Alex is safe. Then we can take her down."

Dallas got in on the passenger's side. She took a second to glare at him. "I love him too, Molly."

"Yeah, I had figured that out. You do what I tell you. Keep your head down, all right? Don't make my life harder than it already is. It was bad enough in there." She pointed back at the adobe house. "I do not want to see you get hurt."

"My word on it, *mi amor*." Understanding shone in his eyes.

"Right. Now let's go kick some crazy ass." Molly pulled out onto the highway, hitting the switch that turned on the roof lights.

\* \* \* \*

Aileen wore a white dress, covered in ruffled lace, accented with what appeared to be dozens of pink bows. *With her pale blond curls, she looks like a live Barbie doll*, Molly thought. Until you looked at her eyes and saw the insanity. The whites showed all around Aileen's china-blue irises, alerting the world of her madness. Alex sat in the middle of the room, tied to an old ladder back chair, his head hanging. His hair obscured his face. From her position by the front window Molly couldn't tell if he still breathed or not.

Molly glanced at her watch. Her officers should be in position. She'd give them another minute, just to be sure. She began to ease away from the window, and then froze. Alex lifted his head looking right at her. She held her breath. Suddenly, Aileen stepped between Alex and the window. Molly used the chance to duck into the shadows by the front door.

A faint whistle reached her. She stepped back then took a deep breath, raising her foot and kicking in the door. The back door crashed open. Ben came in, followed by Jones. They all yelled at Aileen to get on the floor, to put her hands behind her back. Aileen raised the knife she held, baring her teeth, running toward Alex.

\* \* \* \*

Molly knelt in front of Alex rubbing his hands. "You're really here," he whispered. "I thought I was hallucinating."

"I'm really here. It's over now. You're safe," Molly pulled him into her arms, holding him close.

"She came in while we—" She touched a finger to his lips stopping him.

"I know."

"Dallas?"

"Is fine. He's waiting in the car." She pulled him to his feet putting her arm around him. "You don't need to stay in here. Let's go out and let Dallas know you're all right."

Alex walked with her toward the door, stopping beside Aileen's body. He looked down at her for a long moment. "I finally remembered her. She was in the drama class. She sat two seats behind me."

"Come on. Dallas is waiting." Molly guided him out to the car.

\* \* \* \*

He opened the door to their bedroom. Molly sat at her dressing table in a warm beam of sunlight. Her hazel green eyes met his gaze in the mirror. She smiled. Walking in, he set the velvet box he carried next to her hairbrush. Resting his hands on her shoulders, he bent to lick the nape of her neck, and then kissed it. The way her nipples showed told him she had nothing on under the backless black velvet dress. He took her hands, lifting her to her feet slipping his hands over the curve of her hips.

When she turned to face him, her lips were slightly parted. She laid her hands on his chest. He looked down at her fine-boned hands with their pink, polished nails, lifting one to his lips. He kissed the

palm, then the wrist, raising it to his shoulder as he pulled her against him.

Their lips met, and he traced over hers with his tongue, before sliding it inside to explore. Her fingers threaded through his hair as he twined her tongue with his.

"Not that I mind, but we're going to be late if you don't stop that." Alex leaned in the doorway.

"What happens if we are late?" Dallas held a hand out to Alex.

"They give our table to someone else and we have to find some other way to celebrate our anniversary." Alex walked toward them, taking off his new black suede cowboy hat, tossing it onto the dressing table beside the velvet box.

"That would be a shame." Dallas kissed Molly again.

"It's supposed to be the best restaurant in New York," Alex added, as he loosened his tie then pulled it off.

"I have been there. It's not that great." He brushed his fingers over Molly's velvet covered nipples.

No one spoke for awhile. They were too busy employing their mouths in other pursuits.

Molly pulled them into a three-way embrace. They rested their foreheads against each other. "I love you." She turned her head toward Dallas, brushing his lips with hers. "And I love you." She turned to Alex, kissing him.

Dallas let go of them, reaching over to Molly's dressing table. He picked up the midnight-blue velvet box then turned to gaze at Molly and Alex. He took a deep breath, opening the box to reveal three identical diamond set eternity rings. "A symbol of my love for you." He took the smallest ring out, placing it on the third finger of Molly's left hand. Dallas looked at Alex for a heartbeat, and then placed the second ring on Alex's hand. He took their hands and gave them a slight smile. "I will love you both forever."

Alex didn't trust his voice enough to speak. Instead he took the third ring and looked at Molly for help. She took Dallas's hand and



held it, while Alex slid the ring onto his finger. "You're ours, and we are yours, always." His voice shook with emotion.

Molly pulled Alex and Dallas into a three way kiss. "Can we still make our reservation time?"

"What reservation?" Alex moved from Molly to Dallas and back trying to kiss them both at the same time.

"Never mind," Dallas unfastened the button on Alex's black jeans.

Clothing fell to the floor, discarded as they moved toward the bed unable to keep their hands off each other, unable to stop kissing. They managed to get to the bed, and Molly turned out the light.

## THE END

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ellen Starr was born in west Texas and except for the years she spent in the Islands of the Mediterranean she's lived in the desert southwest. She currently lives with her family and one very spoiled elderly dog in a small east Texas town that has a history of gunfights and a cowboy that haunts downtown. Midnight excursions to look for the ghost of the cowboy are frequent but unfruitful as yet. Ellen enjoys traveling around the western US and watching the Western channel when she's not writing stories about sexy cowboys. She loves to hear from her readers and can be reached at [ellenstarr65@yahoo.com](mailto:ellenstarr65@yahoo.com).

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