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# **TWO WANTED MEN**

*Badlands 2*

**Elle Saint James**

**MENAGE AMOUR**



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# DEDICATION

To my sexy and amazing husband. I will love you far longer than forever.

Elle

# TWO WANTED MEN

*Badlands 2*

ELLE SAINT JAMES

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## Chapter One

*Perrysburg, New York - 1890*

Miranda Herrington startled awake and sat bolt upright in bed the moment she heard the back door of her home bang open. She threw off the bed sheets and quilt, grabbed her robe and quietly retrieved the pearl handled derringer from her unmentionables drawer. She checked to ensure it was loaded, exited her room and hastened down the familiar long hallway to the top of the staircase without the aid of a candle. Another clattering sound drifted to where she stood.

Was that from outside the house? She couldn't tell.

Gun clutched securely in her right hand, she hurried silently down the first several steps and paused on the staircase landing. The sound of a door closing drifted up.

Now she wasn't alone.

The inky darkness surrounded her vivid imagination now filled with dire possibilities. She listened closely to assure herself the ruckus she heard was only her father stumbling in as per the usual after drinking himself into delirium, also as per the usual. This wasn't the first time she'd grabbed her gun after hearing her father bumbling through the back door in the middle of the night.

Sadly, it wasn't even the first time this week.

"Damn it." The additional sound of a muffled male voice from downstairs made her heart pound just a little bit faster. Was it her father?

Silas Herrington, Perrysburg's only local physician, arrived through the back of the house as often as the front door depending on which saloon he was drinking at during the evening. The one on the north side of town was closer to the back door when he decided he'd had enough or the bartender sent him tottering on his way.

It wasn't often that the town drunk was also the town's doctor, but her once loving father had crumbled with the reality of losing her mother, and the love of his life, to a wagon accident.

Miranda had done the best she could to pick up the pieces of their life and also keep his meager medical practice afloat, but it hadn't been easy. She, too, had mourned her mother, but only briefly and very silently due to her father's overriding needs.

Prudence dictated she go back upstairs to her room regardless of whether her father stumbled in or not, but some sixth sense didn't allow her to heed the caution. Her heartbeat sped up a notch. Instead of retreating, she tiptoed silently down the stairs and rounded the corner on a route heading straight to the back of the house where her father's medical office resided.

"Hold tight. I'll be right back." The decidedly male voice emanating from the direction of her father's medical office froze her in mid-step. It was most assuredly *not* her father's voice.

Moonlight filtered through the curtains and Miranda realized she'd stepped into an illuminating shaft of light.

Before she could even think to get her feet moving, a tall shape moved out of the open doorway headed directly into her path. The gun in her hand was suddenly covered with a larger hand and wrenched from her fingers. The stranger pushed her against the wall covering her with his firm masculine warmth. The moment his body connected with hers, Miranda squealed in protest.

A wicked sensation rose inside at the realization that she was dressed only in her sheer nightdress and an open robe and pressed intimately to a strange man.

“Goddamn, you scared the shit outta me.”

Miranda mentally tamped down the heart-pounding sensation of being ensconced in strong muscular arms. “How odd since this is *my* house and you’ve broken in. I believe I’m the one who has the right to be alarmed here, not you.”

He ignored her attitude, and added, “And what the hell are you doing with a gun?” He pushed her a little harder against the wall. With his firm chest pressed so close, she could practically count the muscles on his torso. Not at all unpleasant, which was a shocking thought to have, given the perilous situation.

“A strange man broke into my house in the middle of the night. The gun seemed like the best idea to rid myself of the problem.”

His silence greeted her retort. She held her breath wondering what might happen next. The familiar tick tock of the grandfather clock from the adjacent wall was the only sound in the room. After a few moments, he eased back.

“Sorry, ma’am. Didn’t mean to alarm you, but this is an emergency.” Every part of her body was squeezed tighter in his steely grasp. Her instincts told her to resist, however her body’s reaction remained completely the opposite. Somewhere deep inside, she softened a little at the unexpected event of simply being this close to another person. A very masculine person.

While this man smelled very nice and his arms around her suggested a certain level of protected comfort, he was unfamiliar. A stranger.

The fingers resting along her spine branded the skin beneath her two thin layers of nightclothes. Correction, he was a sexy stranger.

“Please remove your hands from my person.” Part of her wasn’t quite as convinced that he should let go, but her practical side spoke up and did the talking before she could stop it. Proper decorum

dictated that she shouldn't be so aroused by having a strange man pressed to her body, but Miranda found she lacked the desire to end the embrace on her own.

"Sorry, ma'am," he muttered again. Ever so slowly, he relinquished his hold and she backed up a step out of his reach. Her vision finally adjusting to the dark, Miranda moved cautiously to a table nearby and lit a candle to illuminate the situation.

In the meager light, the man standing only an arm's length away looked like a desperado. He was tall, dark, and muscular, with hair as black as pitch and his sinfully handsome face sported a day's growth of beard. Miranda sucked in a spontaneous breath at the sheer beauty of him. The flame flickered as she studied his handsome face. Her gaze traveled downward past his wide muscular chest to his hips. Arms hanging by his sides, she noticed her small gun was dwarfed by his large hands.

"Want your gun back?" He offered it handle first.

She reached for it without answering, but he didn't relinquish it until her gaze shot to his eyes again.

Once he had her attention, he let go of the gun. He stuck a thumb over his shoulder. "I need the 'sawbones' for my friend. He got shot. Could you get him down here?"

Miranda cleared her throat once to keep from squeaking a response. "The doctor isn't here."

"Shit." He twisted his head to look behind over one beefy shoulder and then just as quickly turned to stare at her again. "When do you think he'll be back?"

"I have no idea." She lifted the candle and peeked around his shoulder. She saw the rough shape of another man in her father's office slumped in the chair near the back door.

"Is he out helping someone? I could go fetch him back here—"

"No. He's not out doctoring." Her sour tone of voice was unintentional, but for some reason, she was angrier than usual about her father being out drinking to excess tonight. Even if he'd been in

residence, he wouldn't be any good to a wounded patient needing care.

The man in the other room called out, "Reese? What's taking so damn long?"

*Reese.* Miranda tucked away the name of the gorgeous man before her.

Reese's gaze focused on her with an intensity she found intriguing. Something in the desperation of this man's eyes wanting to help his friend made her relax a notch.

Miranda pondered the radical idea of suggesting that "she" might be able to help his friend. However, more often than not, any offer of her medical services was met with a wide range of emotions, from derisive laughter to outright hostility, at the mere suggestion that a woman do any doctoring.

"Is there something you could do?" he asked quietly. "I'd be grateful for any help you could give."

Miranda was so surprised by the request, she paused and stared at him until a moan and a curse escaped the lips of the man in the adjoining room.

"Yes. Of course. I'll help." In order to put him at ease, she added, "Who do you think doctors the local folks when my father is gone?"

"I'm guessing the answer is you."

She allowed a smile to shape her mouth. "Let me take a look and I'll see what I can do to help."

Truthfully, no one in town had ever allowed her to so much as pull a splinter out unless her father was in the room. And sometimes not even then. That two strangers would ask for *her* help bolstered her flagging confidence and a rare feeling of self-worth swelled in her chest.

Ignoring the utterly masculine scent Reese trailed in his wake, Miranda followed him through her own house to where he'd deposited his friend near the back door's entrance. Seated on a chair, the other man's dark outline showed him slumped against the wall.

Reese bent down to his seated friend. “Doc’s gone, but I found someone to help.”

Miranda set the candleholder down on a table near the doorway. Her hand went unerringly to the box of kitchen matches grabbing a few. She proceeded to light the other four wall sconce candles surrounding the tidy room to add some light.

The examination table behind her waited clean and ready for the next patient. Cleaning up was typically her only responsibility regarding any medical procedure. But that was about to change.

Once she could see a little better, Miranda approached the wounded man and bent closer to assess his injury. She caught a good glance at his face, too. Blond hair, blue eyes and deep dimples framing his mouth greeted her. A feeling of lust socked her in the stomach so fast, she inhaled at the surprise. Her sudden visceral emotions were probably because she had a tender spot for those needing care. However, once she got near enough to see this man closely, she discovered him even more attractive than his friend. And Reese was very handsome.

Given the choice between them, she didn’t know which man she’d pursue. With such fanciful dreams gracing her mind, perhaps she’d chase both of them. Although pursuit of any man remained the last thing she should be thinking about.

Shaking her head internally at where her wanton thoughts strayed, Miranda straightened her spine and proceeded to bustle around the room gathering the needed supplies from her father’s medicine cabinets. The folly of her one-sided attraction should be ignored or better yet extinguished from her mind all together regarding a potential patient anyway.

“Help him up onto the table.” Miranda didn’t look at Reese when she gave the command.

“What’s your name, darlin’?” The injured man asked as Reese helped him onto the table centered in the room.

“I’m Miranda Herrington. The doctor’s daughter.” She added her

relationship as further proof that she was as competent to render aid as her father, but they didn't seem to need any testimony as to her skills. It was a refreshing change from the normal, "you're not a doctor, get away from me," response she usually received.

"Thank you for helping me, Miss Miranda. My name is Luke Quinton and I guess you already know my good friend Reese Martin."

Miranda glanced at Reese and smiled. These two were certainly attractive men.

Once Reese had helped his friend Luke onto his back on the waist high table centered in the room, Miranda brought her candle taper closer to take a look.

The bullet hole was in the belly region halfway between his hip bone and the lower end of his ribs, only two inches from missing him completely. The wound wasn't as serious as it could have been. And she didn't fail to notice how attractive his body was either.

Reese helped her lift his torso forward, so she could see if the bullet had exited. It hadn't left his body. Likely the bullet had missed anything vital, but regardless she needed to remove it or infection might set in.

Voicing her diagnosis was harder because no one ever allowed her to express an opinion. She straightened her spine. "I'll have to remove the bullet and put a few stitches in to close the wound."

"What do you need for me to do?" Reese asked. He seemed poised to help aid his friend with her intentions.

"Let me gather a few more supplies. You'll have to help me hold him down. I'm afraid it will hurt." She slipped an apron over her head to shield her nightgown, and for the added layer of dignity, then stepped back to her patient.

Luke lifted his head and his piercing blue-eyed gaze caught her attention. "I can stomach whatever you're about to do without being held down. Unfortunately, this isn't my first time being shot."

"I see." Miranda sent a glance to his wound again before turning back and encountered his vivid blue eyes watching her carefully. "I'm

sorry you have to go through this again. I'll do my best to be gentle.”

His earnest gaze roamed her face and chest. “I trust you.”

Those were the nicest words she'd ever heard with regard to helping someone with a medical need. Most of the townspeople would rather let her father operate drunk than to have Miranda perform the same procedure sober.

Carbolic acid, linen squares and over-sized tweezers to extract the bullet were assembled on the edge of the table where Luke waited. She also pulled a bottle of whiskey from the corner pantry.

Luke narrowed his gaze on the bottle before searching her eyes. “What's that for?”

“I thought you might want to take a swig or two before I get started. It'll ease your discomfort.”

“While I'd like a drink because it looks like a good brand, I don't want you to think that I *need* it for what you're about to do. I can take it like a man.”

“Drinking something to dull the pain doesn't make you less manly, it just distracts you from my poking and digging around inside of you.” His grin had a physical impact on all her soft liquid feminine parts. But she needed to concentrate, not be distracted by lust.

“All right, you talked me into it.” Reese helped him sit up and he took a deep swallow from the bottle. “Damn, that's great stuff.”

“Good. Take another drink and we'll begin.”

He downed another long swig and handed the bottle to Reese. “I'm ready.”

Working as quickly as she could, Miranda wiped away the blood seeping from the wound with several linen squares, inserted the extraction tool, grasped the bullet and pulled it out with a minimum of effort. Luke never made a sound of protest.

She dropped the bullet into the small tin basin at the ready with a clink, staunched the light bleeding and prepared to stitch him up.

“You have a very light touch, darlin'. I hardly felt a thing.”

“Thank you. But I'm not quite done yet.” Their gazes met and a

smile tugged the corner of her mouth from his praise. “I still need to stitch the wound.”

He nodded and took a deep breath as if bearing up to the inferred pain. Miranda worked quickly and had five stitches completed in no time. Luke never made a sound as she worked. Not even when she doused a linen square with carbolic acid and dabbed it over the wound to prevent infection.

“There. I’m finished.”

Luke exhaled a long, deep breath and smiled. “From now on if I ever need any doctorin’ done, I’m coming to you.”

The compliment, while likely the result of the two generous swigs of whiskey running through his veins, was still the nicest thing anyone had ever told her. “You should rest.” She carefully placed a small hand-stitched pillow beneath his head. “I’ll keep an eye on you while you sleep.”

“Thanks, darlin’.” Luke closed his eyes and fell asleep seconds later.

A clattering noise near the front door startled all three of them. Miranda put her hands on Luke’s shoulders and pressed him back to the surface with a quiet murmur. His eyes slipped shut again as she whirled around to answer the knock.

Reese quickly rounded the table and stuck an arm out when she tried to pass him to head to her home’s entrance.

“Don’t. There might be folks looking for us.” His sharp whisper made her pause.

“Who would be looking for you?”

His wide shoulders lifted slightly in a casual shrug. “Possibly the town’s sheriff.”

Miranda twisted to gaze into his eyes. “Why would the sheriff be looking for you?”

He returned the look with equal intensity. “There was a ruckus at the saloon during a poker game. That’s where Luke got shot. As I helped him out of the place, the drunken, rowdy cowboys promptly

broke into a fistfight. We managed to leave during the commotion, but if they're looking for us, it's not out of line to believe they'd check with the doctor in town first. It's what I'd do in the same situation. And if we aren't found, maybe they'll think we rode out of town."

The person on the front porch pounded on the door hard enough to rattle the glass in the adjacent window.

Miranda exhaled a long sigh. "It's probably just my father returning from his evening."

Reese shrugged. "Either way, I'll accompany you to the door."

"No. Wait here out of sight. If it isn't my father, I don't want a 'ruckus' here in my house. I'll get rid of whomever it is."

He didn't look happy about it, but glanced over his shoulder to check on Luke. He'd dozed off and his quiet countenance seemed to make Reese's decision. "Fine. But be very careful. We didn't start the fight, but a local patron's word often out guns a stranger's when it comes to bar room fights."

She nodded. He was likely correct in his thinking. "Of course."

Another loud pounding on the door came as she hastened across the living room area. She looked down and noticed Luke's blood staining her apron. She paused long enough to pull the discolored garment over her head and wad it into a bundle hiding the blood. She stuffed it behind a pillow on the settee before hurrying the last few steps to the front door.

Whether or not this was her father at the door, she'd have to pretend two of the most attractive and intriguing men she'd ever met weren't hiding inside the house.

## Chapter Two

Miranda took a deep calming breath and lifted the catch lock on the front door. She opened the door inward a couple of inches and peeked out to see an irate Sheriff Ben Colby with a fisted hand raised about to beat on her door again, just as Reese had predicted. She blew out a short breath and widened the door a little more, but not enough for Ben to see her nightgown. She clutched the lapels of her robe closer to her neck one-handed.

The moment he saw her, Ben pulled his Stetson from his head and finger-combed a lock of unruly hair back before clearing his throat. “Sorry to bother you so late, Miss Miranda, but is your father at home?”

She attempted to put a surprised look on her face. “No. He hasn’t come in yet tonight. Is something wrong?”

Ben glanced over her head and through the limited width of the door. “Sort of.” He took a step closer crowding the door. The thought that he might enter her domain uninvited galvanized her enough to press her body against the door as a brace, but he didn’t attempt to come in.

“There was a brawl at Rose’s Saloon a while back. Some shots were fired which may or may not have hit anyone. I’m just investigating.”

Miranda had no intention of divulging the whereabouts of the two strangers in the house. She’d lie if she had to. Putting a concerned expression on her face, she asked, “Was someone hurt? Is that why you need my father?”

“Maybe. I figured anyone that got hurt might have stopped by

looking to get patched up.” His gaze zeroed in on her face as if seeing her for the first time since the door opened.

Miranda had never been able to figure Ben Colby out. For all outward appearances, he seemed to like her and worry over her. At least while in her presence. However, she had once overheard Ben talking about her when he didn’t know she listened.

At first, she thought Ben might be sweet on her, but it became clear during the conversation with his best friend and fellow deputy Billy Atkins, that he’d only bother to occupy her bed if her father was no longer in the picture. And even then only if he could put a gag on her, so she couldn’t speak and wear a blindfold himself, so he wouldn’t have to look at her plain face when he *fucked* her, as he’d crudely put it. Billy had laughed and further unwelcome comments had spilled from the both of them ensuring Miranda wasn’t on anyone’s list of marriageable women.

She refused to admit that her feelings had been very hurt at the time. Why did she care? She wanted to be a doctor. Their attitude only made her choice easier. Since that enlightening conversation, Miranda had avoided speaking to the sheriff.

Ben exhaled a long breath and visibly softened. “Is anything troubling you tonight, Miss Miranda?”

“Beyond being awake at this late hour, I’m just fine.” Miranda felt confident Ben wouldn’t guess anyone was inside her house so late. Especially not two strangers.

In fact, no one in town would ever speculate that she currently harbored Luke and Reese within the relative safety of her home. She did have a reputation in Perrysburg. She wasn’t the kind of woman men sought out for any reason let alone to have doctoring done.

She was the kind of woman that men always overlooked. No romantic intent had ever been displayed from any local man or any passing strangers for that matter. Miranda understood her lack of appeal. Unlike the other single girls in town, she liked to talk about medicine too much. She read too much. She obviously wasn’t pretty

enough to catch anyone's attention in that regard given what Ben and his friend thought of her plain features.

"Sorry to bother you so late. Any idea where the doc might be?"

"If he wasn't at Rose's Saloon, then you might try The Dusty Swallow Saloon at the other end of town. He frequents both on a regular basis." *As you well know*, she wanted to add but didn't.

Ben's gaze dropped to his feet. Everyone in town knew about her father's proclivities when it came to the bottle. And Ben understood better than anyone since he'd steered her father to the empty jail cell to sleep off a long night of drinking more than once in the past decade. "Thank you kindly, Miss Miranda. Sorry to disturb your sleep."

She nodded and closed the door on his forced smile. The sound of Ben's boots clomping off the porch and into the night relaxed her. She put her forehead against the door and sighed with relief at the possible disaster that had been averted. She replaced the catch lock and paused a moment to gather her wits.

Miranda sensed Reese before she heard him. He'd padded noiselessly across the parlor and arrived directly behind her as she straightened. When she turned and put her back against the door, he placed his hands on either side of the frame next to her shoulders.

"Why didn't you tell the sheriff we were here?" His face leaned dangerously close to hers. Almost close enough for a kiss.

The masculine scent of him overwhelmed her good judgment. She wanted to touch him. Only the shock of him being so close stopped her. If he tried to touch her, she'd let him. She wanted to kiss him, which was far too bold of an action to contemplate seriously. However, she also wouldn't stop him if he tried to kiss her.

She inhaled deeply catching a lungful of his delicious scent. "I didn't want him to disturb my patient."

A slow grin spread across Reese's beautiful mouth. "Is that so?"

Not trusting herself to speak, she merely nodded. Her heartbeat raced with possibilities at his nearness. The compliments were easy

on her ears and his seductive presence resonated through her body like a crack of thunder during a spring storm.

“Luke is very lucky to have such a compassionate doctor.” He crowded closer until his lips were only a wisp of breath away. If she bent forward only a little, she’d receive the kiss she so desperately wanted. Did he want to kiss her, too? What if he didn’t?

Not wanting to voice her first question or receive an undesirable answer to the second, Miranda decided to do something bold after all. What if she kissed *him*?

Miranda pushed her mouth into his to ensure her wish came true. His hands lifted from the door and cupped her face gently. He pushed himself closer against her body as if to hold her in place to keep their mouths engaged for a long while. His warm lips twisted across her mouth rubbing sensuously until she parted them.

Mouth open slightly, Miranda was a little bit stunned when his tongue caressed her lower lip before slipping inside. She’d never had a decadent kiss like this before. Truthfully, she’d never wanted one until now. Seconds later, she stroked her tongue against his as if she’d been doing this sort of thing for all of her life. Hoping she didn’t seem like the novice she was, Miranda pressed her body tighter into his commanding warmth.

Reese tasted like mint surprisingly enough and she never wanted this sultry embrace to end. She slid her arms around his neck to pull him closer. One of his hands trailed down to cinch around her waist. She was hauled tightly against his hard body as the kiss deepened and became more frenzied.

Miranda’s skin tingled from the top of her head to the soles of her still bare feet. Never in her life had she experienced such an intimate kiss. Never in her past had a man ever been so bold. Never in her wildest dreams would she have expected such a wanton activity to arouse her to a fever pitch. The slim memory that he was a stranger didn’t dim her desire. She wanted him. The idea of being naked and in the same position drifted into her mind.

A gush erupted from between her legs in the same rhythm as Reese's firm tongue stroking against her tentative one. She wanted to wrap herself around him and never let go. His hips pushed forward and she felt the hard length of his cock against her belly. Instead of startling her or alarming her, his immediate intentions only made her desire him more.

He broke the kiss. "You're the sweetest girl I've ever held in my arms and kissing you makes my head swim." His hand slid from her waist to cup one cheek of her behind and lifted her leg. She didn't stop him. He pushed his cock against the now open space between her legs and the unexpected, yet powerful stir of lust in that simple movement nearly brought her to her knees.

Should she ask him to come up to her room?

\* \* \* \*

With his cock pushed up against Miranda's warm center, Reese forced calm reason to invade his lusty brain. He removed his hand from her thigh and her leg slid back down until her toes rested on the floor.

Realizing his hips still pressed intimately against her, Reese retreated a few inches to further subdue any further carnal intent. If he allowed this engaging kiss to further develop, he'd be hard pressed to stop until she was writhing beneath him skewered on his dick and screaming his name in orgasmic bliss.

Not the way he'd ever treated a doctor before.

Reese stilled his hips and murmured, "Thank you for helping Luke."

Her eyes narrowed slightly as if stunned. Whether it was because he'd thanked her, ceased pushing his cock against her or because of the kiss, he couldn't tell.

Miranda tasted as sweet as summer berries and although he would welcome an opportunity to kiss her again, he figured he should cool

things down a bit. “If you hadn’t been here, he would have had to let me work on him.”

“You have training?”

“No. I’ve just seen my share of bullet holes.”

Her eyes widened. “Are you a shootist?” The alarm in her tone came through loud and clear. Maybe he made her nervous. He smiled inside at the notion.

“Not exactly.” His coy answer wasn’t well received.

Her spine straightened. “What exactly?”

“Nothing to be scared about. Luke and I used to be lawmen in neighboring towns.”

“Used to be?”

“We’ve given it up.”

“Why?”

“Because we’ve both tended to too many bullet holes over the years. Plus, there’s always some young pup wanting to make a name for himself by getting into gun battles with lawmen.”

Her eyes widened again, this time in understanding. “Good reason.”

The tenseness seeped from her body and Reese leaned closer. He couldn’t help the second kiss.

She seemed to expect it this time. Without hesitation, she opened her lips and he took the opportunity to get a deeper taste. The fabric of her robe was practically no barrier at all and the curves of her breasts pressed into his chest with warm invitation. He wanted her.

Reese suspected given the looks of lust Luke shot her before she stitched him up that he wanted to fuck his doctor, too. It was however unlikely she’d want to fuck them both.

She moaned and Reese’s hips pressed forward once again as if pulled by a rope. He hated to stop, but didn’t want any conflict later. They weren’t staying in this town for long and he didn’t, as a rule, fuck women and then promptly leave them behind.

\* \* \* \*

“Does the doctor’s daughter have to fight off all the men in this town every day?”

She shook her head. “The doctor’s daughter is practically invisible in this town.”

He lowered his lips closer to hers again. “As I suspected, this town is full of fools and idiots.” Reese connected his mouth to hers again with a more aggressive intent, picking up where they’d left off only moments before.

A low moan came from the other room. Miranda stilled and disengaged her lips from his to listen. Reese inhaled deeply, turned his head toward the room where Luke rested and took a half step away.

Lips tingling from the ardent kiss, Miranda managed to whisper, “I’d better go check on my patient.”

Reese cleared his throat. “Good idea.”

Miranda quickly crossed the room with Reese on her heels. Luke hadn’t moved, but it occurred to her that he might be uncomfortable on the unpadded table.

“I wish he were awake, I’d move him upstairs, but I don’t want to disturb him.”

“Why?”

“I have an extra bedroom. It might be more comfortable to put him in a bed, but he needs the rest more than the strenuous move upstairs.”

“I’m sure he’s fine where he is, but I’d love to get a couple of hours of shut eye. Do you mind if I bed down for a spell?”

Miranda decided she wouldn’t mind at all. The very thought of him resting on the quilt in the room directly next to hers brought heat to her cheeks. If another bold streak of lust accompanied by courage rose up, she’d ask if he wanted company. But first things first. She had a patient to take care of and her lust could wait.

“Of course. At the top of the stairs, go to your right. It’s the second door on the left.”

“Not your room, is it?”

“What are you suggesting?” Miranda drew the collar of her robe to her chin and prepared to act shocked, even though her first instinct was to ask him to join her in either her bedroom or the spare room. But then she glanced at Luke and her heart melted a little for him, too. She hated to choose one man over the other because, given the choice, she wanted both of these men. Each lit a fire in her body as no other man ever had.

“I wanted to make sure I wasn’t kicking you out of your bed. I didn’t want to cause you any further grief.”

“No. There are three rooms above stairs. Each one has a bed.”

He nodded and a half smile shaped his lips. “Let me close my eyes for an hour and I’ll come back and take a turn watching Luke.”

“Fine.”

“We’ll leave before daybreak.”

“You shouldn’t. He needs to rest for a couple days at least.”

“Eventually, someone will come looking for us or your father will come home. Either way, we don’t want to cause any further trouble.”

“My father won’t remember anything or even rouse until the noon hour if he ever does show up. And if, as you say, the sheriff thinks you two already rode out of town, we have until about the noon hour to allow you to rest up. Perhaps longer if my father doesn’t bother to go upstairs. Often, he merely straightens his clothing and heads back out once he awakens.”

“Thanks for your hospitality.” Reese glanced in the direction of upstairs and then zeroed his seductive gaze back on her face. “It’s much appreciated, ma’am.”

She nodded without speaking, not trusting her voice. If she uttered a single word, it would come out trembling in unexpected desire for this man and his injured friend.

Reese hadn’t mentioned the kiss again and she was grateful. She

didn't plan to bring it up.

With a quick grin and a sexy wink, Reese disappeared up the stairs silently. Miranda stifled a sigh, turned and sent her attention back to the care of her patient. She strolled quietly inside the makeshift doctor's office, which used to be the back porch, and closed the door to the rest of the house. She occupied herself by cleaning up the room taking care not to disturb his rest.

The room was small and with just the two of them here alone, she felt cocooned with Luke as he slept peacefully. Once the room was tidy again, she approached his side and studied his marvelous physique unwatched. From the tips of his boots to the top of his handsome head, Luke Quinton was all rangy muscles and masculine beauty.

The lack of whiskers on his face suggested he'd shaved for his evening. Perhaps there was a lonely woman out there still waiting for him to show up on her doorstep for intimacies Miranda had only dreamed about.

She allowed her gaze to drift to the space below his belt buckle. As she watched and wondered what a man's cock might feel like thrusting into her virginal body for the first time, an odd thing happened. A bulge grew beneath the fabric of his pants as she studied his crotch. Was he dreaming about sex?

The urge to touch him and discover what an erect cock felt like itched at her inquisitive fingers. She took a step closer, never allowing her gaze to stray from the very impressive erection forming quickly before her eyes as she stared in rapt fascination. What would it feel like to be consumed in carnal activities with a man?

What would it feel like to spread her legs and allow a man such as this entrance into her private, intimate world?

Miranda reached out to brush her fingers ever so lightly across the well-defined cock shaped bulge now resting beneath his trousers. She glanced at his face and got startled as the lust in his vivid blue eyes stared back. She was caught with her errant hand hovering two inches

above his tented pants, about to appease her curiosity over what an erect penis felt like.

## Chapter Three

Heat flew into Miranda's cheeks at her audacious behavior. She made to take a step away, but Luke reached out and grabbed her forearm in a steely grip. "Touch me if you want. I won't mind. In fact, I'd enjoy it very much."

"I'm sorry. I never meant to touch..." Miranda trailed off because it was a bald-faced lie. She did too mean to touch him and would have if he'd remained asleep. "You need to rest."

"Won't be able to sleep with my cock ready to burst out of my britches."

She swallowed hard. "I can't help you with that."

"Sure you can." His low steady voice entranced her as much as his dimpled grin. "It's your job as a doctor to see to the comfort of your patients. I'm your patient and I need to relieve the built up tension in my cock from your siren scent. Think of it as a medical procedure."

Miranda admitted only to herself that she wanted to lift her night dress over her thighs, climb up on the table and relieve his tension as well as her curiosity more than anything else in the world. "Nice try, but I'm not interested." The lie blistered her lips. She was *very* interested if the moisture now gushing from between her nether lips was any indication. As the daughter of a doctor, she understood the basics of what went on between men and women. She just hadn't ever had the opportunity or the inclination to experience it before now.

"I don't believe you." The hand still gripping her arm pulled her a step closer. Her hips bumped the table. "I watched you, darlin'. You want me. And you can have me right here and now. Please."

"You're hurt. I don't wish to ruin the stitches I worked so hard to

put in.”

He smiled and glanced down at the place where he’d been shot. “Okay, I guess you could have a point. What about kissing?”

“Kissing?”

“Yeah. Maybe you could just give me a kiss and that would make us both feel better. Plus, your impressive stitches won’t be ruined.”

“I don’t know.” But she wanted to kiss him so desperately, she could almost taste the whiskey flavoring his mouth. Her focus narrowed on his smiling lips and a pulse started pounding in her veins. Was it wrong to want to kiss Luke so soon after the sexy kiss from Reese?

The first “real” kiss she’d ever had was a few minutes ago in Reese’s arms. Before that, she’d only experienced a very few pecks on the cheek from various men at dances when she’d been much younger. Lately, she’d spent all of her time trying to keep her father out of trouble. Not that any local men were interested in her. Quite the opposite in fact.

Luke’s blue-eyed gaze bored through her. Without much effort, she threw any caution to the wind and leaned closer. She put her free hand on his shoulder and bent over until her lips were mere inches from his mouth.

“That’s it. Now, come closer, darlin’.”

Miranda placed her lips gently on his. The barest connection registered pure joy through her whole body and almost took her breath away.

She withdrew as her heart pounded in her chest from the chaste kiss. How could it feel so marvelous to kiss each man?

“Oh, I’m gonna need more than that.” Luke cupped the back of her head and drew her down for a second kiss. This time, he fastened his lips hard against her mouth. Bliss was hers.

He slid his lips across hers slowly a few times before she felt his warm tongue caress her lower lip. She inhaled deeply, still not used to the seemingly sinful gesture, but couldn’t pull away. She wanted

more. As if of their own volition, her lips parted to encourage his tongue to further engage. A groan sounded between them and Miranda wasn't sure which of them made the noise. Seconds later, his tongue slipped between her parted lips and licked inside her mouth.

His hand slid between the two of them to cup her nearly bare breast. His thumb grazed the pert peak of her nipple and a shock of sensation raced immediately to the space between her legs.

She pulled away. "Wait."

"What?" He was breathing hard and his hand still rested firmly on her breast.

"We shouldn't do this." Miranda struggled to catch her breath.

A grin shaped his mouth. "Why in hell not?"

"I don't want to hurt you."

"We'll be careful. Besides, you can't hurt me."

Miranda glanced down at his erection tenting his trousers. She'd never touched a man's cock before. She'd seen a few of them by accident, but never on purpose and she'd never seen one erect, or one so big.

"You can touch me if you want."

Cheeks heating at the very notion, Miranda's heartbeat sped as she contemplated his statement. She did want to. She not only wanted to touch it, she wanted to know what it would feel like inside of her body.

"No need to be shy. I won't let a little bullet injury stop me."

She wanted to experience the excitement of sex with this man more than she wanted anything else in her life.

"I don't know if that's a good idea."

"Sex will make us both feel better. You want me. You're curious and so am I. Climb up on me and ride. You won't be sorry."

Miranda licked her lips and the space between her legs gushed forth another spasm of juice to aid in what he suggested. She took stock of her lonely, loveless life in a split second and decided that if she didn't take him up on his offer, she'd regret it for the rest of her

sure-to-be boring life. Time to find out what sex was all about.

She tugged her arm out of his grasp. He frowned until she reached for his belt buckle and unfastened it along with his pants. He helped her slide the fabric off of his hips revealing the largest cock she'd ever seen. Being a doctor's daughter had fed her curiosity more than once, but the sheer size of his jutting cock gave her second thoughts.

"I don't think you'll fit inside of me."

"Sure I will, darlin'. I promise to slide in just fine. Besides, you're so wet, I can smell you from here and that'll help things, too. You're all hot and unsatisfied, but I can cure that. I promise." His eyes glittered with the salacious pledge of the sort of endless gratification she'd only dreamed about.

Perhaps it was because the hour was so late. Perhaps it was because she had never met two more attractive men. Perhaps it was because she had finally convinced herself that the loneliness she lived with might kill her one day if she didn't take a chance on a pleasurable experience with a stranger. His blue-eyed gaze drilled a hole through her.

Pleasure won out.

Throwing caution and her good sense to the wind, Miranda lifted the nightdress to her hips and climbed gingerly on the table straddling her hot, needy pussy over his straining, pulsing cock. The thought of what she was doing sent a spiral of arousal pounding down her body to rest expectantly in the pit of her belly.

"That's it. Come forward a little more."

"Are you sure this will be all right. I don't want to hurt your wound."

"You won't. Just inch forward, so my hand can reach you."

The inside of her sensitive thighs slid further along his trouser covered legs. She slid up his body and the warm hard length of him branded her when she moved. A gasp escaped her lips in utter desire. Her pussy contracted in a need so strong, she wondered if she would stay conscious during this act of intimacy.

“That’s it.” Luke smiled at her and she felt his hand cup her breast through the thin material of her nightdress. He ran his thumb across the stiff peak and the sensation forced a moan out of her.

She stared at his mouth as his hand squeezed and tested the weight of first one breast and then the other. Something else she desired very much occurred to her.

“May I kiss you?” After experiencing two of the most passionate kisses tonight, Miranda hadn’t ever thought she’d crave the act. Beneath her, his cock pulsed against her wet flesh as she spoke. Did the sound of her voice intrigue him?

“I’d be delighted.”

She lowered her face and pressed her lips to his mimicking their earlier one. The instant their mouths touched an explosion of sensation traveled from lips to breasts to core. He licked inside of her mouth and the warm surprise invasion sent her arousal to a whole new level. She boldly touched her tongue to his and melted into the kiss as it became wilder, hotter and out of control.

During the kiss, Luke’s hand slipped off of her breast to travel lower down her body. She wasn’t sure what he was doing until she felt his fingers part her lower lips. The surprise invasion of her most intimate area sent her heartbeat into her throat and broke the seductive kiss.

Lips swollen and moist from the decadent kiss, she pulled away to stare into his eyes. And then his finger found a place on her body she didn’t know existed. He flicked his finger over it again and again. Heat flared and heady arousal encompassed her. Waves of expectant pleasure rode over her tingling skin inside and out. Her womb tightened in the most pleasurable feeling she’d ever known. Luke pushed his hips up and his cock grazed the wet opening to her pussy.

His other hand found her breast and squeezed as he continued the intimate caress of her lower lips. The pleasure of his touch was an agony of want and need. She searched for a crescendo, an end, a climax to the exquisite bliss he brought about.

A sudden burst of ecstasy came in a rush of glorious release the likes of which she never would have expected in her wildest imaginings. A shriek resonated from her throat and out of her mouth with unexpected liberation.

Miranda panted and tried to come to grips with the gratifying touch of Luke's fingers stroking her body so intimately. The only thing missing was his cock embedded deeply. How amazing would it feel to have him buried inside of her pussy during that marvelous release?

"I need to feel you inside of me."

He grinned. "Well, then lift up, cover my cock with your slick pussy and impale yourself to your heart's content, darlin'. I'm ready any time you are."

She shot a glance between their bodies. She moved her hips and shifted his cock into the opening of her pussy. Once the first inch of him disappeared inside, the carnal sight of it made her almost swoon in delight. But not as much as the delicious foreign feel of his wide cock stretching her untried flesh.

"Jesus, you're tight. But you feel so damn good."

Miranda smiled. She lifted her torso away from his and adjusted her hips to give herself better leverage. She took a deep breath and plunged her pussy over his cock in one hard thrust. The momentum of her determination allowed his cock to break through her virginal flesh easily until he was completely impaled in her body.

"Christ almighty, you're a virgin?" Luke's head fell back onto the table with an audible thud.

Miranda sighed in contentment as the thickness of his cock stretched her inner walls to their fullest. "Not anymore."

\* \* \* \*

"I'm so sorry, darlin' I never expected a gift like that. I wished you'd told me first." Luke slid his eyes shut and tried to calm his

raging need to fuck. A difficult endeavor, since he was buried to the hilt in the tightest pussy he'd ever had the pleasure of piercing. Miranda was an angel in more ways than one. He lifted his hand to rub his eyelids as his brain tried to take in the information that she'd been pure before impaling herself on his cock.

Her soft fingers slid across his cheek. "I'm not sorry. Please, let's don't stop."

Luke removed his hand and gazed deeply into her eyes. "Why me? Why now?"

"I don't know. I guess I wanted to know what intimacy between a man and woman was like. Besides, you're very handsome. You came to me injured and allowed me to tend to your wound. Best of all, you said such nice things about my skills as a doctor. All things considered, I couldn't seem to stop myself."

He grabbed the hand stroking his face, stilling her fingers. "Tell me the truth. Did that first thrust hurt you? We don't have to finish." *Liar*. He couldn't imagine stopping now. Luke's cock was so hard and ready to fuck, he'd probably have to stroke himself while Miranda watched to relieve the ache if she said yes, but he wasn't the kind of man who continued if the woman he was with wasn't *enjoying* his company.

Miranda's face softened before his eyes. "No. It didn't cause any pain. You're so big, all I can feel is *you* very deep inside of me." She pulled her hand from his grasp and trailed her fingers across his face again. "I'd like to continue. Please?"

He inhaled a deep breath and pushed his hips and more importantly his cock a little further inside her body. "Go ahead and ride me then, darlin', my cock is so hot and hard inside of you, I'm afraid it will split in two if I don't finish pretty soon."

A grin lit her beautiful face. She lifted her body halfway off of him and plunged down again. Luke put his hand between them and stroked her slippery clit as she found an easy rhythm in her thrusting movement. It was an incredible sight to see. Strands of her beautiful

dark hair spilled out of the braid she wore and framed her lovely face. The robe she had on was open and he saw her taut nipples clearly defined against her sheer white nightgown. Sexy as hell.

She was very careful to avoid his injury, which truthfully didn't hurt at all. He hadn't been lying when he told her she had a light touch. Miranda shifted slightly placing her slim hands on his chest as she pumped up and down on his grateful cock.

Luke thought she was likely the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen. She had big blue eyes and when she focused her gaze on him, she likely missed nothing in her appraisal. It was like she could see to his very soul.

Her intense gaze shifted from his face to the place where their bodies joined in what seemed to Luke as equal parts of fascination and wonder.

As his finger rubbed the hot spot between her legs and his cock drove deep inside her body, the build up of pleasure seemed to come to a sudden pinnacle. Her fingers curled against his chest and her pussy tightened around his cock. Her sultry moan of pleasure added to the titan grip of her pussy pulsing on his dick. The rhythmic tightening just about undid him. He wanted to climax and hear the sweet scream from her lips when she came again. He was rewarded as another loud moan escaped her beautiful lips and the accompanying squeeze on his cock had an expected effect. He hoped another release swarmed her senses as he prepared to let loose.

Luke suddenly growled and pushed his hips up as she came down for the deepest penetration thus far. His dick exploded with pleasure as her pussy continued to squeeze the exquisite orgasm out of him. He shot his cum deeply into her body and the sensation had to be the most intense experience of his life. After a few more strokes, her hips slowed their movement and she slumped over him putting her cheek on his chest. Her panting breath combined with his was the only sound in the room.

“Goddamn, you two are fun to watch.”

The voice from the doorway obviously startled her. Both he and Miranda turned to see the lust-filled expression etched in Reese's face and a huge erection tenting the front of his pants.

## **Chapter Four**

Reese decided quickly that trying to fall asleep with his cock as hard as a railway stake was useless. He tried to think of something besides the delectable scent of Miranda Herrington clinging to his shirt, and failed. Mashing his eyes shut only brought visions of her naked into his mind only served to make his dick throb harder. He imagined the dusky, rose color of her nipples beneath the soft fabric of her nightgown and his mouth watered, aching for a taste. Having her body pressed so intimately to his chest earlier, gave his thoughts substance regarding the sensuous curves beneath her nightclothes and served as a tortuous sultry memory.

After half an hour or so of tossing and turning, he suddenly heard a low moan drift up from downstairs and assumed it was Luke. He hoped his friend wasn't in too much pain.

The bullet wound hadn't been bad, but still a needless complication to what should have been an entertaining evening. They would have been better off staying in their hotel rooms. Then again, meeting the lovely Dr. Miranda was a better reward than winning a few hands of poker.

He lifted his torso off the quilt covered bed in the room Miranda had directed him to, he figured he wasn't going to sleep a wink anyway. His cock still sported a raging hard-on from fighting the desire to seduce the lovely doctor's daughter. The fight had gone on since meeting her for the first time in the darkness of her parlor.

The sound of another indistinct murmur drifted upstairs. It sounded more like moans of pleasure and had a predictable effect on his throbbing, unsatisfied shaft.

If Luke were having some sort of erotic dream, Reese wanted one, too. He flattened himself on the bed again, squeezed his eyes shut and visualized Dr. Miranda naked. His cock pulsed in agony of the unlikelihood of that event. Hand to his crotch, he stroked himself through the layer of his jeans wishing the sweet Miranda would come up to his room. Would he be able to lure her into his embrace? Would she consent to be a lover to both he and Luke? Likely not. Besides, on that issue they'd already had a bad experience. It was harder to attempt the second time, but Miranda was perhaps worth the effort to at least ask.

When Dr. Miranda's sweet, seductive voice in the form of another carnal moan carried all the way upstairs, Reese lifted his head. The next sound was her decidedly blissful shriek of pleasure.

*Goddamn. Luke is fucking her.* A smile shaped his mouth and he sat up in the bed remembering the kiss they shared against her front door. The sultry, sweet taste of her registered in his brain. Reese wondered if she'd agree to a threesome. The visual had the power to lift his bone-weary body out of bed to silently pad downstairs.

In the dim light of the room where he'd left Luke, Reese gazed upon the lovely doctor straddling Luke's body on the table. She threw her head back and sank her hips downward. Luke growled and pushed his hips upward.

Reese's cock pulsed and ached with desire as they both climaxed before his eyes.

"Goddamn, you two are fun to watch." The words slipped from his lips before he registered he'd spoken.

They both turned to stare at him. Luke with unfettered satisfaction and Miranda with a look of equal parts of guilt and arousal. He'd have to assure her that he was perfectly fine with her sexual interest in Luke. A superb inkling of hope that she'd be willing to love them both registered in his gut.

"Reese." Luke panted. "I figured you'd be sleeping."

"I was until I heard you two down here making noises."

“Excellent doctor that she is, Miranda was relieving some of my more vigorous pent up stress.”

He laughed. “Is that what you call it?”

Miranda looked a little shocked. She turned her head and sent her unfocused gaze his way. The rosy blush on her cheeks either from the orgasm or from the embarrassment of getting caught making love on a table was perfectly understandable.

“I...I...don’t know what to say.”

“Don’t worry, honey. If you’d allow it, there’s room enough for both of us to love you.”

Her lovely brows furrowed slightly. “Both of you?”

“You’ve never heard of men sharing a woman before?”

The flash of pink in her cheeks said more than the slight shake of her head.

“Well, it’s more common than you think.”

Luke put a hand on her leg and stroked from knee to hip. “He’s right. If you’d be willing, we’d both appreciate the opportunity to share you. Just the two of us, of course.”

“I can’t very well say I’m not attracted to the both of you. I’ve just never considered the possibility of even one man let alone two.”

“Which means you’ll think about it?” Reese lifted his shoulder from the doorframe and approached the table. The sight of them still deeply connected made the spit dry up in his mouth. He wanted to kiss her and touch her and make love to her all at once. This next time Luke could watch and enjoy the view.

“Will you let me kiss you?”

Miranda’s glassy-eyed seductive gaze nearly undid him. The gaze wavered only a moment before she nodded once. If he hadn’t been studying her so closely, he might have missed her affirmative response.

Reese took three slow steps to the table, rested one hip against the edge, took her face between his palms and kissed her before she changed her mind. Lips swollen from kissing Luke, Miranda’s

tentative reaction heated the blood in his veins like whiskey igniting a fire. He thrust his tongue inside her mouth searching, tasting, sucking until she whimpered. He broke the kiss reluctantly and looked deeply into her eyes for the reaction to both the kiss and their suggestion of a threesome.

“I think it’s time we take this upstairs,” Luke murmured.

“I agree. What do you say, Doc? Will you allow your patient to move upstairs, so we can both show you in more detail what we mean?”

\* \* \* \*

Miranda tried to comprehend the unusual situation around her. She had one man’s cock imbedded deeply inside of her recently and supremely satisfied body. Meanwhile, another man who held her face in his hands, had just kissed her passionately and they both wanted to take her upstairs and love her. Both of them.

“Well, I can’t pretend I’m not attracted to each of you. Choosing one over the other would be impossible for me.”

“No need to choose. We both want to please you.”

She turned her attention to Luke. “Are you feeling up to it?”

He laughed. “Of course. I believe sex to be one of the best and certainly most enjoyable healing tools ever discovered. You, however, are the first doctor ever to supply me with this curative benefit.”

“All right. As long as you promise to take it easy and watch that your stitches don’t tear.” She was so anxious to see what they had in mind.

“Yes, ma’am.” A hint of a smile curved Luke’s lips making him even more attractive.

Miranda lifted herself off of Luke’s still semi-stiff cock and into the arms of Reese. Her nightgown drifted down covering her thighs as he hugged her tight. His stiff cock pressed against her lower stomach and the new kiss he pressed to her lips was just as insistent.

Luke rolled easily off the table, hitched his pants up over his cock and buckled his belt without a single wince to indicate any pain. The three of them left the doctor's office and ascended to the second story of her home. She directed them to her room because her bed was larger than the one in the spare bedroom.

Once inside and alone with the two of them, Miranda had a short, panicked moment at the idea that two men were in her room. No man but her father had ever even seen this space, and he'd only seen it from the doorway.

Reese, as if sensing her concern, approached her, took her face in his hands again and kissed her momentary anxiety away. She snaked her arms around his waist to hold him closer. His warm tongue slipped between her lips to taste her as he'd done earlier. She touched her tongue to his and he moaned. By the end of the seductive kiss Miranda was completely relaxed. She couldn't wait to find out what they had in mind.

Luke seated himself on the foot of her bed as Reese led her across the room to join him. He motioned with his hand. "Let me undress you. I want to see your body."

Her instinct was to grasp the open edges of her robe completely closed and hide herself from view, but she forced her silly fears away and stepped closer to Luke. Once she stood between his legs, he leaned forward and kissed her chest and settled his hands at her waist.

Behind her, Reese fingered her braid. "Mind if I loosen your hair?"

She turned her face away from Luke. "Go ahead."

Luke slid his hands from her waist to her breasts and cupped them momentarily before pushing her robe off her shoulders to pool at her feet. The tug of Reese's fingers at her hair distracted her a moment until Luke's fingers found her breasts again. This time, he gently squeezed her and slid his thumbs across her sensitive nipples. The moan escaped before she could stop it.

"Her nipples are sensitive, Reese. I can't wait to taste them."

“Me either,” he said as he combed his fingers through her now loosened locks.

“Help me get this nightgown over her head.”

Reese let go of her hair and before she knew it, they’d pulled her nightgown over her head revealing her nude body. The cool air hit her nipples and they hardened. Luke grinned, leaned forward and put his mouth over one breast before Miranda realized his intent. The tip of his tongue slid across her sensitized, hard nipple and she couldn’t suppress the moan that escaped. His mouth felt so incredibly good sucking on her nipple.

“That looks good.” Reese bent at the waist, leaned his head around her body and fastened his mouth to her other breast.

Miranda looked down and watched as they each sucked on her nipples. The low curl of arousal in her belly intensified to the point she wasn’t sure she could stay on her feet. She placed a hand on each man’s head to pull them tighter against her breasts.

They each sucked harder and a gush of fluid soaked her lower lips. She wanted to have sex again. Her pussy tightened with desire. She wanted to experience the arousing feel of another cock deeply embedded and pounding in her body. Reese would have her this time. She couldn’t wait.

“Reese,” her whispered plea broke his hold on her nipple. “I want you.”

He stood and kissed her mouth as Luke continued sucking on her breast. Reese put his hand on her breast for only a moment as he kissed her. He slid it down between her legs and stroked the hot button of exquisite pleasure that Luke had rubbed earlier.

“I want you, too.”

Luke released her breast. “Why don’t you put her on the bed? I’d love to watch you on top of her, Reese.”

“Yes. Perfect.”

Luke pulled her sheets down all the way and stretched out on the far side of her bed. Miranda climbed in bed next to him and onto her

back. Reese started taking his clothes off slowly as she watched. Luke trailed his fingers lazily up and down her body stopping to pluck her nipples as Reese pushed the last of his garments to the floor.

She'd seen a naked man before, of course, but never one put together so well. From what she saw of Luke when she stitched him up, he was very well muscled. Reese was just as perfectly well built. Where Luke had sandy hair and light eyes, Reese was the opposite. Dark hair sprinkled across his chest and torso including an intriguing line that ended in a patch surrounding his long, thick cock.

“Like what you see?”

Miranda smiled and nodded.

Reese climbed onto the bed and over her body. He carefully positioned himself directly above her on hands and knees. His head dipped down to clasp a nipple between his lips as Luke slid his hand between her legs to stroke her clit. Having two men touch her and arouse her was thrilling. She wondered a moment at whether she'd dreamed this whole episode, but her dreams weren't this vivid.

The lazy pull of suction from Reese's mouth sent another gush of moisture spiraling out of her pussy. The wiry hair from one of his legs brushed against the inside of one thigh sending a tingle of sensation all the way to her belly. The spicy masculine scent of the both of them vied for attention. She turned her head to stare at Luke. He smiled and lowered his mouth to kiss her as he continued to stroke her clitoris.

A heart-pounding sensation rose in the center of her body. The same feeling she'd had with Luke when he rubbed her clit as she impaled herself repeatedly on his cock. That same feeling of rapturous bliss was building again with each stroke of his finger across her clit. It felt so very good to be touched and loved.

The very idea that she was in bed with two men sent her arousal through the roof. With only two more strokes of his calloused finger, Miranda broke the tender kiss with Luke to arch her back and squeal in delighted climax. The pulsing sensation traveled from the top of her head to the tips of her toes and back again. Reese remained above

her, head bent and sucking her nipple as she got hold of herself. She flattened her body back onto the bed and waited to see what would happen next.

Reese broke the connection with her breast and murmured, “Sounds like you’re ready for me to slide my cock inside your hot, wet pussy.”

The words were coarse, but that also aroused her. “Yes. I’m very ready. Take me. I want to feel you inside me.”

The tip of his cock grazed her sensitive clitoris before he pushed deeply inside.

He lowered his head and a rush of breath washed over her chest. “Damn, you’re tight.”

“Go easy,” Luke whispered. “She’s new at this.”

Reese stilled his hips and looked into her eyes. “How new?”

Miranda felt it only right to answer the question herself. “Downstairs with Luke was my first time. This is my second.”

Reese’s expression tightened. He twisted an unforgiving gaze to Luke and opened his mouth as if to respond, but Miranda put a palm up to his cheek and turned his focus back on her. “He didn’t know until it was too late. I didn’t say anything. I was afraid he wouldn’t go through with it and I wanted to try it so very much. Don’t be angry with him.”

Reese’s stern expression softened. “Are you too sore for me to continue?” His concern was endearing. She’d never met two more charming men in her life.

“No. Not at all. You feel...glorious.” She grinned. “Please don’t stop.”

His eyes slid shut and a groan escaped as he pushed his cock all the way inside. “You feel so goddamned good.”

Miranda widened her thighs to give him easier access. He pulled his wide cock out and thrust inside harder than before wrenching a pleasurable moan from her lips.

“Kiss me,” Miranda pushed her lips against Reese’s mouth and he

stabbed his tongue inside to the same rhythm as he pierced her with his impressive cock. The friction of the connection was especially satisfying. He stroked inside as deeply as Luke had done earlier. She also liked this position.

Reese covered her from ankles to chest, but rested his weight on bended elbows. The near embrace cocooned her in masculine warmth. He kissed her aggressively for several long moments as he pumped his cock in and out of her slick pussy. Another passionate release built low in her body. And through it all, she was very aware of Luke watching them close by on the same bed.

Her heart pounded with seemingly the same force as thunder. With each deep penetration of Reese's cock, Miranda felt wickedly possessed, giddy with joy over the idea that a man was slaking his lust and delighted to be experiencing an act she'd only dreamed about before.

A streak of warmth radiated inside from belly to heart each time his cock struck the end of her pussy. She lifted her hips off the bed matching his thrusts for a deeper connection.

A few strokes later and a rush of pleasure enveloped the inside of her body as she climaxed hard once again. Her body stiffened momentarily as a moan escaped her throat in bliss. Reese's mouth slid off her lips to kiss and nibble on her shoulder. Miranda turned her head and gazed lovingly into Luke's intense eyes.

Reese's thrusts sped up and after a few moments, he pushed deeply inside and groaned against her shoulder. Luke leaned down to kiss her gently. Reese pumped inside only a few more strokes before slumping onto her limp body.

"That was amazing," she managed to say as she panted trying to catch her breath.

Luke grinned. "And very arousing to watch. You're so beautiful when you come."

Reese turned his head, kissed the base of her throat and added, "Astonishing is what it was. Nothing less than astonishing. And by

the way, she's beautiful before and after she comes, too."

"You're right. She's just beautiful all the time."

"I don't know where you two are from, but I never want you to leave." Miranda sighed and her eyes drifted shut. The loving gaze of two men was her last vision before nodding off.

\* \* \* \*

Luke and Reese exchanged surprised glances as their lovely bedmate promptly closed her eyes and fell into a deep sleep. She was so exquisite. Tall and willowy with dark hair and wide blue eyes, she was perfect.

"We should ask her to come with us." Luke knew it was a blatantly shocking thing to say given their particular past with sharing a woman, but he meant it from the depths of his soul. Miranda Herrington, the doctor's daughter, was ideal for them.

"I agree. We should definitely ask, but don't get your hopes up. She may not want to leave her home. She may not want to move into the 'uncivilized west', either."

Luke pushed out a long sigh. Reese was right. They'd already gone through this once before when they'd left their hometowns back east. Serving as lawmen in two small towns close by for the past twelve years had forged their friendship. Leaving behind the woman they'd shared for the better part of last year had been difficult.

Eileen hadn't wanted to travel to the Badlands of South Dakota in the first place, however she'd promised to try living with them out there for a year. She had already served as secret lover to each of them for six months prior to them finding out about each other by accident. It had been a surprise to learn he wasn't the only man in her affections, but she told them she wouldn't choose.

Luke had so much respect for Reese, he planned to bow out and let Reese continue his relationship with her. However, Reese suggested they simply continue to share her as the best solution. Two

months later, and after showing up on the same night at her request, they'd spent another several months sharing Eileen at the same time.

Not surprisingly, Luke and Reese hadn't been jealous once they'd found out. It had been a relief to Luke since he and Reese had been talking about going out west for years once they got tired of being shot at. Luke wanted to ask her to go, but didn't want it to be awkward for Reese to be without a woman.

Once they were both sharing her bed, it seemed perfect that she'd go with them and forge a life on the land they'd already purchased. Two hundred acres of partially wooded land waited for them to farm or ranch, or whatever they decided to do.

A month before they'd packed up to leave, Eileen had sent a note to each of them declining to go and favoring a different lifestyle altogether. Instead of settling down with them, she moved into a local whorehouse to share many more men than just the two of them and get paid to boot.

Luke and Reese had gone to visit her before they left to make sure the note hadn't been a joke. With an arm around the necks of two drunken townsmen, who spent the whole time pawing at her breasts, Eileen informed them heartlessly that she didn't want to move out to the "uncivilized west" for only two men.

While they stood centered in the parlor's garish red décor of her new address, Luke and Reese learned that Eileen hadn't been exclusive to just the two of them after all. A hard lesson ultimately, but better to find out before they left with her than afterwards.

"Maybe it would be different with Miranda. Maybe the two of us would be enough to keep her happy." Luke brushed a dark lock of her hair away from her hairline to reveal the hidden side of her beautiful face.

Reese stared down at her with a rare soft expression. "Undoubtedly. But like I said before, don't get your hopes up."

"She's not Eileen."

"No. She's better. And she doesn't deserve undue pressure."

Luke nodded. Reese was right. “We’ll ask, but if she says no, then I won’t bring it up again.”

Reese nodded and sent his gaze to the beautiful woman beneath him.

She sighed in her sleep and Luke’s heart melted a little bit more. It was the first time in a long time that he seriously considered the extreme pleasure of them sharing a woman again. And this time would be so much better.

## Chapter Five

Miranda stirred awake from a deep slumber unable to move her arms and legs. Panicked a little at being trapped, she woke enough to realize that she was sandwiched between two large men.

She sucked in a deep breath ready to let loose an ear-piercing scream, until her memory seeped in and the surprising evening with Luke and Reese filled her mind and quieted her need to shriek. Luke's chest on her right and Reese's back on her left, Miranda was cocooned between warm, masculine flesh. A sigh of appreciation escaped her lips as the sensual memories flooded her brain.

Luke's head popped up. "Are you all right, darlin'?"

"Yes. I'm just not used to anyone else sleeping with me. It's a little startling to wake up to someone else in your bed let alone two of you."

His grin widened. "And it's a little crowded with the three of us in your bed, too, right?"

Heat sizzled her cheeks, which she hoped he couldn't see in the dark. "A little bit perhaps, but I don't want you to leave."

"Good. I'd much rather stay." His hand gripped one naked thigh before he trailed his fingertips up her body to cup a breast and rub his thumb across her nipple. "What else is on your mind?"

*There are two naked men in my bed!*

Miranda was surprised at the rush of arousal skimming through her veins at the idea of what she'd already done tonight. Wicked, wonderful things. A warm tingle centered low in her stomach as Luke caressed her nipple. She was further shocked to realize she wanted more.

Luke propped his head up on the palm of his unoccupied hand. “Can I interest you in further carnal activities or do you want to go back to sleep?”

She smiled. “I should probably go back to being your doctor and check your wound. Does it hurt?”

“Nope. I feel no pain, darlin’.”

“Well, then I wouldn’t be opposed to further carnal activities.”

Luke released his hold on her breast and quickly slid his hand down her belly to the warm, wet space between her legs. He leaned close and kissed her mouth tenderly. His finger grazed her clitoris and she moaned into his mouth.

“You make the sexiest sounds when I touch you.”

“And you know the exact right spot to touch, too.”

He captured her mouth in a deeper kiss. His tongue slid between her lips to tangle with hers as he stroked her clit. Another moan escaped and beside her, Reese stirred, rustling the sheets.

Luke lifted his mouth from hers at the noise. “Miranda wanted more carnal activity tonight and I’ve decided to oblige her. Want to join us?”

“Yep.” Reese rolled inward and onto his stomach and then twisted to his side facing her. His dark sultry smile sent a pulse of desire racing to her heart.

Reese lowered his head and took a nipple in his mouth as Luke continued to kiss her aggressively and rub her clit. Each stroke of his finger on her most sensitive, intimate place sent a spiral of pleasure up her spine. A fevered rush of bliss wrapped around her core. She pushed her hips into his hand wanting more. His cock throbbed against her outer thigh. She wanted him inside of her but couldn’t find the words to ask.

Luke pulled his mouth from hers. “I want to come inside of you,” he whispered against her lips.

“Okay.”

He shifted to his knees and crawled on top of her. His wide jutting

cock brushed across her leg before he settled it between her thighs. She opened her legs wider to receive him and put her hand on one of his muscular shoulders.

He still stroked her clit as he thrust his cock into her pussy. Inch by perfect inch, Luke filled her body all the while rubbing her clitoris. Meanwhile, Reese sucked and pinched her hard nipples. The sensation was sublime as she watched them touching her, sucking her, fucking her. The vulgar word crossing her mind made the act seem more forbidden and more pleasurable. She glanced up to see Luke's intense gaze fixed on her face.

"You feel like hot, wet silk on my cock, darlin'. I could make love to you all night long." The rhythm of his thrusts never wavered as he spoke in a sexy, low tone. Each push of his cock deep inside her body sent a surge of pleasure up her spine.

Miranda smiled and gripped his shoulder a little tighter. "I believe you have made love to me all night."

The next climax came suddenly as Luke thrust over and over inside her dripping wet pussy. A rush of pleasure overwhelmed her senses and she moaned as the release hit.

Luke pushed harder and deeper until a growl issued from his throat. He pumped his cock into her pussy a few more times before slowing down. After one final push inside, he flattened and slumped to one side half covering her.

"I could sure get used to doing that on a regular basis." Luke's deep breaths caressed her shoulder.

"I'd let you."

Luke lifted up and balanced on one elbow. His intense gaze once again penetrated all the way to her soul. "Would you, now? Because we'd like to talk to you about that very thing."

"You would?" Miranda looked over at Reese.

He nodded and held her gaze. "We've recently retired and we're headed out west to a piece of property. Some land we purchased a while back." Reese's tone sounded like he didn't expect her to want to

go with them. “We’d love it if you’d consider coming with us.”

“Where is your property located?”

“South Dakota. Northwest of the Badlands.”

Miranda hadn’t ever been farther than twenty miles from Perrysburg, New York since she moved here as a child of five. The South Dakota Badlands sounded like a thrilling destination. She’d read some interesting accounts of life there during and after the Black Hills gold rush in Deadwood.

“That sounds like a very exciting journey.” A part of her wished with all her heart that she could up and go off to live her life out west. The idea of staying in Perrysburg until she died a withered, old spinster was a depressing thought. Especially now that she’d discovered the bliss of what happened between men and women. She’d never held out much hope for any kind of happy future here in Perrysburg.

“Would you consider it?” Luke’s voice now held a hint of hope.

“Consider what?” Miranda asked the question, but her mind raced with the possibilities and problems of that fervent wish.

“Going with us to South Dakota.”

“What?” Equal parts of desire and dread filled her brain. *Do I really want to go across the country with men I’ve known only a few hours?* Shockingly, given the choice between staying where she was or going, she *did* want to go. “You barely know me. Do you truly want me to go with you?”

“Yes,” they both said in unison.

Miranda sucked her bottom lip between her front teeth and considered very carefully their request. Perhaps there would be a better opportunity for her to practice medicine.

“Would you be opposed to me doctoring on people?”

Luke and Reese looked at each other before turning their gazes to her. Luke spoke first. “We wouldn’t be opposed to it, but...” He stopped talking and looked at Reese.

“But most folks won’t allow a woman doctor to tend to them,”

Reese finished slowly.

“You both did.”

Reese smiled. “We’re a little more progressive about such things.”

“And we’d let you doctor on us to your heart’s content.” Luke kissed her mouth.

“Well, if I stay here, the townspeople won’t let me do any doctoring, either. If I went with you, I’d have at least two patients.” Miranda frowned as another more sordid complication came to mind.

“What’s wrong, darlin’?”

“I know I willingly slipped into bed with you both very quickly tonight, but I’m not sure I’m comfortable heading out to the Wild West as your mistress.”

Luke shifted and sat up on the bed. He took her hands in his and squeezed. “If you decide to go with us, one of us will marry you.”

“As long as you understand that both of us want to share you from now on.”

Miranda’s head swirled with the audaciousness of this idea. “When are you leaving?”

“We’re taking the first train leaving the Perrysburg rail station headed to a final destination of Rapid City, South Dakota the day after tomorrow.”

*Am I really considering this mad move out west with two sexy strangers?*

Her indecision must have shown on her face because Reese ran a finger down one cheek to get her attention. “What other questions do you need answered before you’ll say yes?”

She laughed. “I have so many, I don’t know where to start.”

“Ask anything.”

“Where are you from? What is your profession? Why are you going out west? Where will we live once we get to South Dakota? Will you really marry me? How can I possibly pick up and leave the only home I’ve ever had?”

Reese slid a finger to her chin and turned her to face him. “We

used to be marshals in neighboring towns in Virginia. We got tired of being lawmen, so we decided to pursue a quieter life on a piece of property out west. It's a long ways from the lawlessness that we've lived with for so long. Yes, one of us will marry you and it doesn't matter which of us. As for why you should leave your home, well, maybe you need some new scenery like we do."

Miranda didn't speak for a long time. She pondered all of what he'd said. "Perhaps you're right." She relaxed against the sheets. "I'd love a new beginning in a new place."

"You don't have to decide this second, but if you want to come with us, then we'll bring you along or send for you when you *are* ready."

"I'm tempted to say yes."

Luke laughed. "Temptation is one of my favorite things, darlin'. How can I persuade you to say yes?"

She was just about to ask what he had in mind for her temptation and persuasion, but a loud clatter came from downstairs. It sounded like someone was about to bust the front door down. For the second time in the same evening, Miranda sat bolt upright in bed and prepared to investigate the noise below.

\* \* \* \*

Reese made it out of bed before Miranda did. "Where do you think you're going?"

She grabbed her robe from the mixed pile of clothing strewn at the foot of her bed. "Downstairs."

He caught her eye and shook his head slowly. "You're staying up here. I'll check it out this time."

"It's probably my father. Even though I'm the ripe old age of twenty seven, I don't really want him to discover two naked men in my room let alone have one greet him at the door." She waved her arms between them pointing out the decadence of the three of them

having just come from bed and a very satisfying romp therein.

Luke slipped out of bed, bent over and reached for his pants, but the thin line of blood trailing down his hip from the bullet wound distracted Miranda.

“Oh, no. You’re bleeding!” She rushed a few steps over to his side.

Pounding fists thundered on the front door outside accompanied with the distant sound of her father’s irritated voice.

“I’ll be fine, darlin’. It isn’t much blood and it doesn’t even hurt.”

Indecision tugged a frown from her lush lips. “Let me take care of the commotion downstairs and I’ll be right back to tend to this.”

“I don’t want you to go down there alone.”

“It’s just my father. The longer I leave him down there, the angrier he’ll get.”

Reese pulled his pants on quickly and slung his shirt on, but left it unbuttoned. “Will he check your room?”

She sighed. “No. He probably won’t even make it upstairs.”

“I’ll be at the top of the landing out of sight. However, if I hear anything I don’t like, I’ll be making an appearance.”

“You don’t have to do that.”

“I want to make sure you’re safe. What if it’s the sheriff again?”

A string of vulgar shouts erupted from downstairs loud enough to be heard in the next county. “It’s not. I know you can hear him cursing down there just as easily as I can.” Miranda quickly put her nightgown and robe back on. This time, she secured the buttons on the front before slipping out into the hall.

Reese followed her to the top of the stairs and stopped. She turned toward him uncertainty slowing her actions He pulled her into his arms and kissed her once before allowing her to leave.

\* \* \* \*

Slumped against the doorframe directly outside the house, as

she'd suspected, was her drunken father. Miranda stepped quickly out of his way as he barreled past her headed straight to the sofa in the parlor.

"What took you so long to answer?" he slurred.

"What do you *think* took me so long? It's several hours after midnight. Most people sleep at this time of night."

Her father stumbled inside the door and headed straight for the settee. "Should've left it unlocked anyway," he murmured.

"Why don't you go up to bed?" Miranda didn't relish the idea of her father snoring on the sofa as she attempted to sneak Reese and Luke past him later on. It would be better if he were tucked into his bed.

"No. Don't want to climb the stairs. Too treacherous. I'll just rest here on the settee." He parked himself in the center and fell sideways headed toward the pillow where she'd hid her bloody apron earlier. He was snoring before his head graced the fabric.

Reese walked slowly from upstairs and stood quietly at the landing just out of the parlor. "Want me to help you take him up to bed?" Reese whispered loud enough for her to hear.

"No. He's down for the night. Unfortunately, this isn't his first time coming home drunk to recover in the parlor."

"All right." He grabbed her hand and led her back upstairs to her room.

As they reached the top step, another loud knock sounded at the front door. She was tempted to ignore it, but likely *that* wouldn't work. The town's folk were used to banging on the door at all hours of the day or night to receive medical help from her father. It hadn't bothered her until just now.

Reese grabbed her hand when she moved to go back downstairs. "Your father's already home. Why do you need to answer the door?"

"It's probably someone looking for treatment."

"At this hour?"

She pushed out a breath. "You came at a late hour. Why wouldn't

anyone else? It's expected that the town's doctor will be available day or night." Miranda shrugged. "That's what happens."

"Let me guess. You also help out with the doctoring when your father is shit-faced and snoring."

Miranda privately cursed like a miner regarding her father's drinking, but having someone else do it bothered her. "That's none of your business."

He sighed and nodded. "You're right. I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do to help?"

"No. Please just stay out of sight. Check on Luke. Make sure he isn't bleeding worse. I'll be up in a few minutes. My father's in no condition to treat anyone."

He nodded, but she could tell by the look in his eyes that he didn't like it. He climbed the stairs quietly two at a time until hidden out of sight.

Miranda paused for a moment as an alien feeling slid into her chest. No one had ever worried about her. No one. Not her feelings. Not how she felt about her life. And especially not if she were inconvenienced by rude people pounding on the door at all hours of the night. It was nice to have someone concerned about her for a change. Miranda glanced over her shoulder to ensure Reese wasn't visible and edged her way slowly to the door.

Another loud knock sounded accompanied by a shout. It was the sheriff again. She took a deep breath and walked swiftly to the front door and pulled it open a few inches.

Through the narrow slit, Ben's stern face greeted her. "Get the doc. The mayor's grandson is hurt."

From behind him on the porch, Miranda heard a voice cry out in pain. Before she could step back, Ben pushed the door open nearly knocking her to the ground and entered the parlor. She was about to raise her voice in anger at his high handed entrance into her home, but didn't want Reese to come barreling downstairs in rescue.

Ben crossed to the sofa where her father still snored and tried in

vain to wake him.

“It won’t work.” Miranda was about to close the door, but when she looked back, Mayor Harris stood on the threshold and asked urgently, “Where’s the doctor?” He looked past her and into the parlor where Ben stood over the settee watching her father sleep.

She responded quietly, “He’s indisposed.” Dead drunk and passed out snoring on the settee seemed too vulgar of a truth to say out loud, but the mayor wasn’t paying attention to her, anyway. His focus shifted and went over one shoulder behind him.

Miranda sent her gaze in the same direction in time to see two men half carrying the mayor’s nephew Justin between them. The anguish on the boy’s face turned her heart over. She hated to see anyone, especially children, suffering. Although, Justin wasn’t really a child being twelve years old, since he was small for his age, it made him seem childlike tonight. She closed the door behind the two men carrying the boy gingerly through the entrance and followed them into the parlor, too.

“What happened?” she asked.

“He fell,” Mayor Harris answered absently.

Justin moaned again, but she could see he was trying to be brave.

A protracted snore came from the parlor settee in response.

“My father just arrived home moments ago. I’m not sure he’s in any condition to treat—”

“Just wake him up!” Ben motioned her toward the settee having failed to wake her father.

“I’ll try.” Miranda turned toward the settee and got closer to Ben than she’d normally allow to try and rouse her father.

“I’ll have my men put Justin in the back room. Hurry and get him awake.”

Miranda bent over the sofa and shook her father’s shoulders. “Father! Wake up. The mayor needs a doctor for Justin. He’s hurt.”

Her father’s eyelids didn’t budge. He snorted once, a space of quiet ensued for a few moments and then he resumed his snoring.

“Let me try again.” Ben waved her out of the way and tried lifting her father up to a sitting position. It didn’t last. Her father soon slumped back to his original position.

“Damn it.” Ben twisted to stare at her. “Why do you let him get like this?”

Miranda’s eyes opened wide. “Let him?” Anger guided her feet as she took a step closer. “I don’t ‘let’ him get intoxicated. He does it all on his own.”

“What are we going to do now? Justin’s shoulder is hurt.”

“What happened to his shoulder?”

“How the hell should I know? He fell off his horse and he’s been screaming ever since.”

Miranda stilled the expression on her face to one of serenity, even though she felt anything but calm. “It’s likely that he’d dislocated it. Maybe I can help since my father is sleeping.”

Ben rolled his eyes. “Women aren’t meant to be doctors. When are you ever going to learn that?”

A low miserable sounding moan came from the back room.

“Is he awake, yet?” Mayor Harris entered the parlor, an anxious expression on his strained face.

“No. I’m sorry. He’s down for the night. He likely won’t wake until noon tomorrow.”

The mayor’s eyes closed and his shoulders slumped in utter despair.

Miranda took a step toward Mayor Harris, bolstered her courage and said carefully, “If Justin’s shoulder is dislocated, I can help put it back with your help.”

Ben huffed. “I told you already women aren’t meant to be doctors.”

“Can you really help Justin, Miss Miranda?” The mayor’s strained tone of voice was unexpected. Without looking directly, she walked around Ben, who still wore a disapproving expression that she could see out of the corner of her eye.

“Yes. If it’s dislocated, I can definitely help.”

“Then let’s do it. I can’t stand to hear the boy suffer any longer. Ben come and help us.”

“Mayor Harris. I don’t think this is a good idea at all.” He sent her a scorching glare of disapproval over her suggestion.

“What else is there to be done? The doctor is useless. If she can help Justin, then I want her to. Unless you can do something to help him.”

“I’m not a doctor, either.” Ben rolled his eyes to the ceiling once more before he followed them all into the back room. Miranda was glad she’d taken the extra time to clean up down here after taking care of Luke’s wound.

“Well, she’s been around him for all this time. Surely, she’s learned something.” The mayor turned to her. “Haven’t you?”

“Yes.” She nodded to add validity to her claim. “I can help him. I promise.”

The mayor motioned the both of them to the back room. Ben went first, followed by Mayor Harris. Miranda turned to look over one shoulder at the stairs in time to see Reese duck his head back into the darkness of the stairwell. She didn’t miss the grin on his face, either.

At least two of the men in the house tonight thought she could be a doctor. Now if she could just prove it to the other two in the back room.

## Chapter Six

Reese kept himself hidden as the parade of townspeople came into Miranda's home to find aid from the worthless doctor. They were lucky Miranda could help. Having dislocated his left shoulder a few years back, he commiserated with the injured boy, and hoped they'd let Miranda fix him up.

The sheriff was bucking for a fist to his mouth if he insulted her again. It had been agony staying in the shadows on the stairwell as he'd condemned a woman's right to be a doctor to her face. Reese had slipped down the first flight of stairs silently to peek into the room from the landing to listen. He'd seen the back of the sheriff's head and Miranda's downcast expression when he told her women weren't supposed to be doctors. *Bastard.*

"Hold him tight." Miranda's voice drifted to the staircase from the back room. "This will hurt at first, Justin, but once it's back in place, you'll feel much better."

Reese flinched inwardly remembering his own injury when he heard the sound of the boy's shoulder going back into the socket. To his credit, the boy had been fairly quiet during the process until she fixed it. The final snap back into place to fix a shoulder injury hurt like a son of a bitch and the boy screamed. He'd seen more than one full grown man faint dead away before the procedure was completed.

Miranda's seductive voice asked, "Is that better?" Reese pictured her lovely face.

"Yes. Much better." The boy's adolescent voice cracked twice saying those three words. "Thanks, Miss Miranda."

Reese abandoned his perch on the landing midway between the

two sets of stairs when Luke opened the door to Miranda's bedroom and padded over close to the railing.

"What in the hell is going on down there?" he whispered.

"Some kid dislocated his shoulder. Miranda just snapped it back into place," Reese murmured. The pride in his tone surprised him. He certainly understood prejudice having been a lawman for the better length of his adult life. He'd certainly seen it on more than one occasion.

"Ouch."

"Yeah."

Below, they heard further murmured voices growing louder as Miranda, the obnoxious sheriff and the mayor walked into the parlor. Over the sounds of her snoring father, the mayor quietly thanked Miranda.

"I truly appreciate your help with Justin's shoulder."

"I'm happy I could help, Mayor Harris," Miranda graciously answered.

"Don't know what we would have done if you hadn't been here."

"Well, I'm always here. If you ever need any more doctoring done, I'm happy to help."

The mayor walked to the foot of the stairs prompting Reese and Luke to edge away, but they remained within listening distance.

"I'd like to talk to you about taking on some responsibilities from your father."

"What?" The sheriff's strident voice intruded. "She can't be the town's doctor, Mayor Harris. You know as well as I do that the townsfolk won't allow it."

"And what are we supposed to do when someone else gets hurt? Hope the doctor will wake from his drunken stupor long enough to make it worse?"

Miranda's shocked intake of breath made Reese step forward. Luke grabbed his arm and he stopped.

"I'm sorry to be so blunt, Miss Miranda, but last week your father

attempted to lance a boil on the blacksmith's face, but his hand was shaking so badly, he about took out old Oscar's eye. I seriously worry he might kill someone one of these days."

"I don't know what to say. I didn't realize he'd gotten so bad."

"If you could just keep your father out of his office, I'll do my best to spread the word that you're capable of helping folks—"

"How long is that going to work?" the sheriff interrupted. "I'm telling you, no one will let her near them to get any help."

"Then they can treat themselves. I won't allow Dr. Herrington to touch any of the townsfolk unless he stops drinking." The mayor's brusque response made Reese silently applaud him. It wasn't likely her father would stop drinking. Most drunks stayed that way until they died from it.

"I'm sorry about my father. I'll keep him out of the office. And thank you very much for the opportunity, Mayor Harris. I won't let you down."

"I appreciate it, Miss Miranda. And don't worry, we won't embarrass your father. Once he's gone on to his final rewards, why then we'll discuss you being the town's doctor in more detail."

After a few more platitudes and goodbyes, Miranda finally shooed everyone out of her home leaving only her father downstairs still snoring loudly.

She secured the door and fairly ran up the stairs. Once on the landing, she caught sight of them both and stopped. "Did you hear all of that?"

"Yep." The pride Reese saw radiating on her face quelled his fear of losing her. If her choice was coming along with two strangers to a far away place or staying behind to do the one thing she'd likely always wanted to do, even he'd choose being a doctor.

"I can't believe they let me help him."

Luke edged away from him and walked to the head of the stairs. He put his hand out toward her. She climbed the remaining steps and threaded her fingers in his. "If they'd asked me, I would have given a

testimonial.”

“Thanks. How are your stitches?”

Luke pulled her close for a kiss. “It wasn’t bad. I dabbed at it with my handkerchief, but perhaps you could come back to your room, strip me naked and check again.” Her low laugh sent a streak of lust down Reese’s spine. He smiled and moved closer to the entwined couple. Putting his arm around her back, Reese led them further down the hall. The three of them shuffled back into her room.

Reese wanted to make love to her but didn’t know if she’d agree since her father was still downstairs. Luke cupped his hands along either side of Miranda’s lovely face and kissed her passionately. He approached and dropped a kiss on the back of her neck before sliding his hands around to cup her breasts.

“You are the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.” He’d like nothing better than to bundle her up and move her with them to South Dakota.

She moaned as he scraped his thumbs across her nipples. Nuzzling the back of her neck, Reese inhaled the delicate fragrance of her hair in an effort to memorize it. Whatever else happened tonight, he wouldn’t make her choose between her life’s dream and the two of them.

“Oh, my,” she murmured as Luke trailed kisses from her lips to her jaw. Reese nibbled the lobe of one ear and she turned with a hiss of what sounded like pleasure. Luke pulled back enough to snag the hem of her nightdress and robe to pull it over her head.

“So, Dr. Miranda, are you too tired to let us pleasure you?” Luke asked.

The low laughter from her sweet lips wrapped a coil of desire around his heart. If she ever wanted to come to South Dakota, he’d be willing to wait for her. No other woman had ever touched him so deeply before.

“No. I’m perfectly able to allow pleasure.”

“Good,” Luke murmured, discarded her nightclothes on the floor

and took the tip of one nipple into his mouth. Miranda arched against his chest. He shifted his body to one side, so he could kiss her mouth.

She moaned in his mouth and broke the kiss. He saw that Luke had inserted his hand between her legs to stroke her pussy and clit. His cock stiffened and he pushed it against her backside. If she'd been a virgin before tonight, he was fairly certain she'd never taken a man up her backside. But the salacious idea of both of them making love to her at the same time caused him to pause. Would she consider it? Should he even ask?

The visual of his cock entering her tight hole as Luke fucked her pussy sent a pulse of need to his cock so virulent, he couldn't stop from asking, "What would you think about letting both of us take you at the same time?"

She stilled between them. Luke released her nipple and straightened. Reese saw the desire flare in his eyes at the mere suggestion, but knew he'd only pursue it if she were willing.

"I don't understand."

"Luke would thrust his cock deeply inside your pussy, meanwhile, I'd push mine into your backside...at the same time."

She didn't move or say anything for several long seconds. "Would that really work?"

"Yes." He sent his hand down her back and slid one finger along the crease of her butt until he located her tight little back hole. He eased his finger inside to the first knuckle. "It takes a little getting used to, I'm told, but the pleasure of it is also supposed to be unfathomable."

"It does feel different, but not bad."

Luke smiled. "Let me stroke your clitoris. That will make it very good." She cried out in pleasure so Reese assumed Luke had hit the right spot. Her breathing increased as they both stroked her. Reese in the back and Luke in the front.

"Can you imagine it? Luke's cock buried to the hilt in your pussy as he fingers your clit. Meanwhile, I'll grease up your rear hole with a

container of ointment I have. Then I'll work my big cock inside your firm derriere channel repeatedly until you scream in delight." She moaned again and his cock nearly burst from his britches ready to take her.

"All right," she murmured on a sigh. "Sounds very exciting."

Reese kissed her face. "Are you sure? I don't want you to do this if you aren't ready." He thrust his finger in and out of her insanely tight hole twice more.

She moaned again and pushed her butt into his hand. "I'm ready. I'd like very much to have you both at the same time."

Luke pulled back to shuck his pants off. Reese discarded his pants as well, but not until he'd retrieved the small container of lubricant. Luke led her to the bed kissing her all the way.

Reese took the time to secure the door with a ladder-back chair next to her wardrobe. Probably no one would come barging in, but it made him feel better to know they wouldn't be disturbed at any pinnacle moments.

"Come here, darlin'," Luke was on his knees in the center of her bed. He shifted backwards and pulled Miranda against his chest. He kissed her lips passionately and put his hand between her legs to stroke her clit. Reese loved to watch them kiss, but he had to get her ready.

Reese climbed onto the end of the bed behind her and rubbed a generous amount of the slippery ointment across the puckered hole of her rear channel. He pushed some of it inside as deep as he could with one finger and smoothed some along the crack on either side of her hole before closing the container and tossing it onto his discarded pants at the foot of the bed.

He caught Luke's eye and nodded. Luke kissed her harder and likely stepped up his strokes to her clit to ensure she was enjoying herself as Reese worked his cock inside of her virgin territory for the very first time.

With the tip of his cock pulsing ready to enter, he leaned forward

and whispered, "I'll be as gentle as I can, but for any reason you want me to stop, just say so. I want you to enjoy it."

Panting slightly, she turned her head toward him. "I'll be fine. Do it. I'm ready." She twisted away and kissed Luke again as Reese pushed the head of his cock into her intensely tight backside.

"Relax as much as you can as I push deeper," Reese could barely talk. Her rear hole was so unbelievably tight, he had to concentrate on not losing control before getting all the way inside.

She bent at the waist and pushed her hips against his as he pierced her virgin hole with his big wide cock.

Inch by agonizingly pleasurable inch, Reese finally got his cock inside of Miranda's body. He slid one arm around her waist and straightened her so that her spine rested against his chest.

"Do you feel all right?"

"It feels big. Burns a little, but I like it. It's naughty." The weight of her body shifted to him as Luke prepared to push his dick inside of her pussy.

Reese laughed at her comment. "Naughty is a good description." Luke moved close and Reese felt his cock enter her pussy slowly. The sensation was indescribable. Better than it ever had been before with the few women they'd shared. Miranda was amazing, beautiful, and Reese wondered how they'd ever be able to leave her behind.

"My cock is all the way inside, darlin', how do you feel with both of us in you?"

\* \* \* \*

"Glorious." Miranda could barely speak over the pleasure pulsing through her body. Luke hadn't stopped stroking her clitoris and now that they were both embedded inside, she wanted to fall over the edge of oblivion.

The wickedness of what she participated in took her breath away. She couldn't believe she'd agreed to this decadent act. But it felt so

very good to have both of them connected to her. Reese being buried in her rear hole had burned at first, but it hadn't taken long for the dark pleasure of his intrusion to send spirals of bliss up her spine.

Luke kissed her mouth as he eased his cock halfway out of her body. He continued the seductive kiss as he pushed back inside again. Behind her, Reese pulled his huge cock part of the way out. She knew he'd enter her again and the anticipation of pain aroused her to a fever pitch. Luke rubbed her clit in a slow circle as each of them took turns piercing her front and back.

"Goddamn, you feel so good, I never want this to end," Reese whispered in her ear. The hot feel of his breath against her neck sent a tingle of pleasure throughout her body. She didn't want it to end, either.

Reese pushed inside her butt again and then slid his hands from her hips to her breasts. He cupped them and pinched the sensitive nipples. Luke pushed inside of her a little faster. He bent and took one nipple in his mouth as Reese stroked the other. The ecstasy of so much gratification circling within made her a little lightheaded.

As if she was drunk on pleasure.

Doubly pierced with two wide cocks moving inside and out made her tremble with an intense arousal she hoped to survive. Miranda closed her eyes and let all the sensations combine within her currently idyllic existence. They touched her, kissed her, pleased her, rubbed her, sucked on her, fucked her again and again until an indescribably strong joy rose up inside threatening to spill over.

The rush of pleasure took her by surprise. She stifled a scream as the hard, long climax rippled through her. Luke and Reese continued to stroke one after the other over and over until Luke slammed deeply and groaned against her throat. She slid her arms around his shoulders and hugged him close. His mouth trailed from her neck to her cheek until he found her lips. With one last deep thrust, he pushed his cock all the way inside her pussy and shoved his tongue just as hard inside her mouth.

Unable to help it, she clenched her pussy muscles tight on his cock and climaxed once more.

Reese, still holding her waist tight, shook suddenly. He dropped his head against hers, growled and pushed his cock inside her rear hole deeply. The burning dark pleasure of it almost took her breath away. She trembled from the powerful releases she'd experienced tonight. Unable to breathe all of a sudden, she pulled her lips from Luke and buried her face against his throat. Seconds later, Reese came hard and deep in her very over-stretched and darkly invaded rear hole.

For several minutes, they held each other suspended in the sublime reckoning of their satisfaction.

Miranda wanted to memorize every moment, every stroke, every sensation until it was time for them to go. If she had her wish, they would stay. She could finally fulfill her life long goal as a doctor and the only two men to ever bring utter passion and gratification to her life would be close at hand.

But she knew this was an unrealistic dream. First of all, they traveled west on their way to retire. Undoubtedly, they didn't want to remain in the back water small town of Perrysburg any longer than necessary. Until tonight she hadn't, either.

The satisfaction of mending Justin's shoulder earlier tonight had given her a heady feeling of joy very close to what she'd experienced in the darkly passionate arms of two men.

To have the opportunity to be the town's doctor after years of dreaming about it was almost too much to believe.

Luke pushed out a long breath and pulled himself a few inches away. He bracketed her face with his hands, stared deeply into her eyes and whispered, "I love you, darlin' and whatever else happens between us, I want you to know I always will." He leaned in and kissed her mouth tenderly.

Reese kissed her bare shoulder. "I've never been much for expressing my feelings, but I'd have to say that I also love you. I can't imagine not doing so for the rest of my days."

A rush of emotion filled her chest. She wanted to go with them as much as she wanted to stay here.

“I love you both very much. I truly do.” She trailed off wanting to say more, but the right words eluded her.

Luke smiled and gazed deeply into her eyes. “We would never ask you to give up your dream, darlin’ not ever.”

“If I hadn’t wanted to be a doctor for so long, I wouldn’t even consider staying here.”

“You should be allowed to follow your dream profession.” Reese stroked her hair from the crown of her head to the lower part of her back.

A tiny voice deep inside of Miranda wondered at the interesting timing of these superb men entering her life. If they’d arrived a couple of weeks ago, she knew she would have joined them on an adventure out west without question. What did the heavens above have in store for her? Why did her dream of some day meeting the perfect men only happen at the exact time as her chosen occupation was finally and unexpectedly offered?

“Thank you for understanding.” The tiny voice still unsatisfied, Miranda hoped she was making the right choice by remaining in Perrysburg.

## Chapter Seven

Luke got about three more hours of sleep before Reese woke him with a poke to his chest. Still curled up next to Miranda, Luke kissed her shoulder in the dim light cast from the single lamp they'd left burning across the room. Outside, the sun hadn't risen quite yet.

Reese nudged him once more, gave him a stern look, and put a finger to his lips, likely a silent admonishment for the kiss. Luke sent him a "screw you" face, but rose carefully to keep from waking his love. And Miranda was very lovely. The light scent of her clung to his skin and put his mind in dangerous territory.

They needed to go. Earlier, they'd decided and made a plan.

While Miranda had been tending to the injured boy, he and Reese had resolved to ensure they were gone from her house before dawn.

No one in town needed to see the two of them sneaking out, especially now that she had the chance to live her dream as a doctor here. They owed it to her for many reasons partly because they both admitted to having fallen for her. She'd helped them in a pinch and Luke didn't want to be the cause of her losing her opportunity.

Part of him wished the mayor had remained small-minded about her skills. With nothing holding her in here, he had no doubt Miranda could have been persuaded to join them in their new life out west.

Luke carefully extracted himself from her bed and stood over her as she slept. Hand curled near her face, she slept on her stomach with the innocence of an angel. Luke would never get over her. He glanced down at the stitches on his belly. Neat and tight and perfect. Not only was she the sexiest woman he'd ever known, she really "was" the best doctor he'd ever had. Reese likely wouldn't admit it, but Luke knew

he must be smitten with her as well or he never would have suggested having both of them take her at the same time. And he also never would have admitted his feelings out loud.

The memory of their most previous liaison fired his blood and roused his cock to life. Best get those thoughts out of his head right now. They didn't have time and she was too tired anyway as they'd kept her up half the night. But what a night it had been.

Luke knew he'd never forget getting shot in Perrysburg, or the sweet woman doctor who first healed him then loved him.

He dressed quickly and quietly, as did Reese. Once they were ready to walk out, they woke her to say good-bye.

"Dr. Miranda," he whispered. She slept on. He sat on the edge of the bed, leaned closer and kissed her cheek. "Wake up, Doctor."

With a startled gasp, she jerked awake and half sat up. Gaze searching first his face, then the room, and finally Reese standing close, she exhaled a short breath and smiled. "What are you two doing up so early?" She scanned each of them from head to toes quickly. "And why are you dressed?"

"We're headed back to the hotel. Better we leave under the cover of darkness instead of during the day. Didn't want to make things difficult for you now that you have a new job."

Her slender hand shot to her cheek. She grinned and a small giggle escaped. "I don't think I quite believe it yet." Her sultry gaze found his and then went to his soul. "Thank you so much for understanding my dream."

Luke snorted. "The truth is, darlin', we'd much rather you were coming with us, but everyone deserves a chance to live their dream. We would never deprive you of it. Just don't forget us."

She slid her hand up the outer fabric of his sleeve, squeezed his shoulder once and allowed it to travel to his face. She caressed his stubbly cheek with her soft fingers. "I promise that I won't ever forget you. Honestly, I must be crazy to let you two go without me."

Reese walked over and seated himself on the other side of her. He

took her hand and kissed the back of her fingers. “Promise us that if you ever change your mind, or get tired of being a doctor, you’ll come and find us. We’ll be waiting for you.”

Her eyes widened. “But what if I stay here forever?”

“You could always take a vacation and visit us.”

“A vacation is unlikely.”

“I guess we’ll have to write letters to each other then. Perhaps you’ll travel to South Dakota for a visit, so we can convince you to stay.”

Her sudden grin lit a fire of need in Luke’s belly that went straight to his cock.

“I’ll keep that option in mind.”

“Also, keep in mind that if anything unexpected were to result from tonight, we’d want you to contact us.”

She tilted her head to one side as if bewildered, then a look of clarity crossed her face and she smiled.

Luke squinted and sent a puzzled gaze to Reese until the understanding hit him. If she were with child, which was certainly possible, they’d want her to come to South Dakota. If she wanted to. He added, “We don’t ever want you to feel abandoned, darlin’. Whatever the consequences, we’ll figure out a way to make it work.”

“Thank you. I’m sure I’ll be fine.”

“There’s no doubt about that, but if you ever need us, we will do whatever is necessary to see you’re happy. Whatever that turns out to be.”

Reese leaned in and kissed her lips gently. “Plus, we’ll still send letters, on a regular basis, to persuade you to move to South Dakota.”

“I’ll look forward to them.”

Luke slid his hand along her shoulder to cup her face. He kissed her tenderly at first, but once her tongue slid against his lips, the length and intensity grew until Reese cleared his throat.

With her lips only an inch away, he whispered, “I could kiss you all day today and for the rest of your life, but it’s time for us to go.”

Reese kissed her briefly once more. “We’ll be over at the hotel for another day. The train leaves first thing tomorrow morning. You will always be welcome to join us before or after we leave. Send us word and we’ll arrange a ticket for you.”

“That’s very sweet. Staying here is the most difficult thing I’ve ever done. Part of me thinks I should just run away with you, but the siren lure of being able to doctor people in town where I’ve spent my entire life is just too strong. I hope you know it isn’t because I don’t love you. I do love you both.”

“We understand. In case you decide to follow us, here is where we’ll be.” He handed her a piece of paper with the city of their destination and directions to their property written on it along with the name of Reese’s sister Sarah. She and her family already lived in South Dakota on a neighboring piece of property and had readied the place waiting for them to come out upon retirement. A long time coming.

Walking away from Miranda today, however, was the hardest thing Luke had ever done in his life. More difficult than anything he’d ever faced as a lawman. Heartbreak.

They slipped out of her room, down the stairs and past her still snoring father. He wanted to punch the man once for being so stupid. Miranda deserved a lot more. She’d had to endure lots of grief because of his excesses. Luckily, it had worked out for her in spite of his foolish weakness.

As agreed upon earlier, Reese slipped out first and went one direction from the house while Luke waited several minutes and departed in a different way out of the back door they’d come in last night.

He’d lived a lifetime of pleasure in this house. Closing the door behind him, he knew he’d live another lifetime of regret if he never saw her again.

The sun was just breaking over the horizon as he made his way into the rear entrance of the hotel. He hadn’t seen a single soul on his

circuitous journey through town, including Reese. Once tucked inside and seated on his lonely bed, there was a quiet knock at the door separating him from the adjoining room.

In a loud falsetto voice, he called, “Who is it?”

Reese opened the door, a grim expression on his face. “Bad news. Tomorrow’s train is broken down a couple of stops back. Either we leave on today’s train in two hours or we’re stuck here for an extra week.”

Luke sighed. “We should leave today then. Spending the week and not being able to see Miranda will kill me.”

“I’m going to have a message sent over to her.”

Luke nodded. “For a plug nickel, I’d hustle over there, throw her over my shoulder and haul her along with us.”

“You’d split open your stitches and then she’d yell at you.”

“But then I’d have my favorite doctor to tend to me.”

Reese’s understanding smile reassured him that leaving her behind was the logical decision even if his heart disagreed vehemently. “Get an hour of shut eye. I’ll take care of our bags and the train tickets for today.”

Luke nodded, but something in his expression must have prompted Reese to add, “It’s not over between her and us. If nothing else, we’ll come back for a visit in a few months to check up on her, okay?”

The notion of a plan to see her again lifted his spirits perfectly. “By then my stitches will have healed, so I’ll be able to throw her over my shoulder without risking injury.”

Reese laughed, closed the door, and Luke spent this rest time plotting the return trip and how long he’d be able to wait before the urge to fetch her became unbearable.

\* \* \* \*

Ben Colby had been sheriff of Perrysburg for almost ten years.

He'd taken over from a former US Marshal who wanted to retire to Arizona because his lungs were bad. Zebulon Jones had taught him lots of things about being a lawman. Including invaluable tips on tracking and chasing felons on the run. Tonight, he'd used those skills to learn that Miranda Herrington had hidden two men in her home for most of the night and into the wee hours of the morning. Worse than that, she'd lied about it when he'd inquired. He didn't like liars.

The two men in question, from the earlier scuffle at Rose's Saloon, weren't in trouble or wanted by anyone save him for curiosity sake. Beyond a few bruises and a black eye or two, the patrons there had been uninjured. No one else in the bar had been shot. Neither of the two men had brandished a weapon or threatened anyone at the bar. They'd just exited quietly during the brawl. Ben merely hunted for general information about the particulars over the shooting at the bar, but their actions made him wonder what the hell they were up to.

From the bartender and a few regulars at Rose's Saloon, he got pretty good descriptions of them and learned that the two were former lawmen from the south headed out west to retire. Closer questioning muddled everything up and no one would admit that anyone had even been shot when Ben first asked questions about any shooting.

He had to press the witnesses a little harder before he got better answers. Likely, they'd gone to find the doctor as it was later admitted that one of them *might* have taken a bullet over a poker game gone bad. All of the witnesses had cleared the two of any wrong doing, but Ben didn't like strangers causing trouble in his town. He wanted to ensure they'd be on their way very soon.

So he tracked them.

His first inclination had been correct regarding their heading to find a doctor, but he hadn't counted on Miranda lending them aid. She was merely a woman regardless of what she told everyone within earshot about her skills as a doctor.

*Shit fire.*

What could she do except wait for her father to come home? After

Ben left her house the first time, he found Doc Herrington at the Dusty Swallow Saloon at the other end of town. He sent him home soon after in hopes that the men might show up if the old man was in residence.

Watching the house carefully, he hadn't seen anyone leave or enter once the doc went in. Then he intercepted the mayor and his two aides carrying Justin and made sure to be the one first in the door.

His suspicions were on high alert when she answered her door the second time, however, Mayor Harris had been hot on his heels with his injured nephew. Her face had been flushed. Her hair had been out of the usual neat braid she wore. And most telling of all, she smelled differently than only a couple hours before.

Ben couldn't believe the mayor had agreed to let Miranda take up doctoring after her old man proved to be such a fuck up sawbones. In his opinion, no doctor at all was better than a bad one, but Mayor Harris had at least agreed to let him plead his case. If he had anything to say about it, Miranda Herrington would get married off and forget about any notion of a career following in her drunk ass father's footsteps.

Ben couldn't quite put his finger on her sudden appeal. He'd never thought of her as attractive. Just another plain, unremarkable girl in a small town like any other girl. But her general outspokenness on subjects best left to men angered him. She should have been subdued and quiet like a lady. She quoted books when she should just shut up and served her man. But, of course, she didn't have a man.

Ben told his deputy and best friend that he'd fuck Miranda as long as he could put a gag in her mouth to shut her up and a bag over her head so he wouldn't have to look at her ordinary face.

Tonight, he'd been unusually drawn to her. She smelled like the sort of sweaty sex men experienced in the arms of a whorehouse woman. It was unlikely she'd been fucking the men she'd hidden, but the fact that she'd lied to him made him want to teach her a lesson. The woman needed to know her place. After he spoke to the mayor to

keep her from taking over after her father, Ben intended to take further steps to ensure Miranda understood the way the world worked.

Ultimately, he was angry that she'd fooled him earlier in the evening. She must be under some sort of sexual spell by these strangers. Ben didn't know what sort of hold the two men had on her but intended to find out.

In his long stretch as sheriff, he'd never thought much about settling down with a wife or having a family. Perhaps he'd change his mind in order to put right something he felt was adamantly wrong. A certain plain female needed to be taught her standing in town. And if he had anything to say about it, she'd never inherit her father's practice.

Ben vowed that if Miranda became the doctor in this town, Mayor Harris would have to start looking for a new sheriff. He intended to make sure the mayor understood his loyalties and conditions for his continued residence in this town. Just before dawn, Ben was about to quit his stakeout of Miranda's home when he saw movement from the back door.

One of the lawmen stealthily exited and headed to the east. He was about to go follow when the second man exited and ducked around the next door neighbor's back door headed west.

Watching the two cowboys from the earlier brawl at Rose's Saloon depart from Miranda's home sent acid burning straight to his belly in fury. His resolve to set things right in this town was strengthened. She'd lied to him and managed to fool him twice tonight. Behavior like that was not tolerated in Ben Colby's way of the world.

Miranda Herrington would learn her place or he'd break his hand teaching her until she did.

## Chapter Eight

“You’re pussy is so tight.” Luke’s voice sent raging desire through her veins as his cock tunneled in and out of her body. On her knees in front of him on the center of her bed, Miranda grasped his shoulders to hang on as he fucked her.

The tender stroke of his fingertips on her breasts left her breathless and wanting more. The orgasm she sought lingered just out of reach.

Suddenly, Reese joined them on the bed and pressed his chest against her back. “Are you ready for me?” She felt his hard cock against her butt cheek. She wanted him inside of her, too. Without speaking, he still read her thoughts and knew what she wanted. He stroked a finger across her sensitive, puckered rear entry and soon the dark, burning pleasure of his cock, stretching her tight as he inserted his huge dick slowly inside, forced a seductive groan from her lips.

On the very edge of pain and pleasure, Miranda longed for the ecstasy of release to overwhelm her senses. She was so close. She wanted to come. Together, the three of them found a rhythm of movement that accentuated the pleasure of the intimate act.

Reese thrust his cock in her ass deeply, she pushed back to ensure he went all the way in. Luke pushed his dick forward into her pussy with a deep thrust so she tilted her hips to receive him. She glanced down and saw his fingers on her breasts cupping, stroking, pinching. Her eyes drifted shut as the cacophony of sensations rained within her body and sent her desire to new heights.

Moments later, Miranda woke with her own hands touching her body intimately. One hand cupped a breast as fingers squeezed the

nipple. The other was sunk between her thighs with her fingers buried as far as they would go in her pussy. Her hips writhed against the sheets searching for release from her sexy, vivid dream. She focused on the hand between her legs and shifted her fingers to her clit as the vestiges of the dream clung in her mind. She concentrated on the fading memory of Luke and Reese pressing against her during the most intimate and arousing of acts and rubbed her clitoris until a huge orgasm gripped her body in vibrant release.

She screamed as pleasure rippled through her body like a lake having a stone thrown in the center. Shaken from the powerful orgasm, Miranda rolled onto her back. She panted trying to catch her breath.

Luke and Reese had left on the train for the Wild West and retirement six long weeks ago and this was not the first time she'd woken with her hands on her body searching for fulfillment.

She missed them dreadfully, but her new duties as town doctor kept her very busy during the day. Miranda rose from the bed, poured some water out of the pitcher into a bowl to wash and freshen up. Limbs still shaking slightly from her scandalous dream, she dressed in a serviceable gown, added an apron for protection of her garment and went downstairs to set up and ready the room for the day's patients.

Her father was asleep and snoring loudly on the settee in the parlor as usual. Out the front window, she saw Mayor Harris walking along the street with Ben Colby. They had passed her home and headed toward town, so she knew they weren't on the way over. It meant she could take a few moments to center herself this morning.

She busied her hands washing the already clean room. Once her supplies were in place, she waited for business. The timing of patients coming to her door was always irregular.

The mayor came over every day, but Ben had been particularly absent the past month and a half since Luke and Reese left. Obviously, he didn't approve of her new duties, but the mayor was very accommodating.

As a matter of fact, Mayor Harris still had to escort most of the patients needing care right into the back room of her house. Then he'd have to stay as she worked on them as if his presence was the only reason the townsfolk would believe that she knew doctoring skills enough to help.

During her first several weeks as "Dr. Miranda", she had set a broken arm, wrapped a sprained ankle and lanced several ugly boils on one unfortunate gentleman. Additionally, she handed out salve for a nasty rash, brought down the fever in a child suffering from the sniffles, delivered three babies and stitched up at least a half a dozen folks on various body parts without a single complaint or compliment. Even after all she'd done, the townsfolk didn't trust her. The road to her house for any medical care started at the mayor's doorstep.

Miranda wished that anyone needing care would just show up and let her help them without dragging the mayor along as a chaperone. She hoped that eventually, they would trust her enough to show up alone. Until then, Mayor Harris had visited her house more times in the last few weeks than he had since she'd lived in Perrysburg.

The highlight of the scorn she received came from her father. He stumbled in one night a couple of weeks ago and announced, "You won't take over my medical practice, Miranda. The folks in town will never choose you over me." His words might have held more weight if he hadn't promptly collapsed on the settee and fallen into drunken unconsciousness in the next minute.

A sudden loud knock at the front door startled her. She raced to the entrance, past her father still sawing logs very loudly, hoping a patient sought care without the mayor as an escort.

Miranda straightened her apron and opened the door with a smile glued on her mouth, ready for business. On her porch was a stranger with wire-rimmed glasses dressed in an ill-fitting brown suit and sporting a bowler on his head.

"Are you Miranda Herrington?" As he asked his question, he removed his hat one handed, revealing his balding scalp and only a

strip of closely trimmed hair from one sideburn to the other wrapping around his head in a ring shape. His hair, what was left of it, looked like a dull shade of cinnamon. It was as faded as if the intensity of color had drained out over time spent in the unguarded path of the blistering summer sun.

“Yes. I am Miranda. What can I do to help you?” Miranda didn’t wish illness on anyone, but wondered if any challenging cases would ever be presented beyond the ordinary cuts, sprains and breaks.

“My name is Clarence Sanders.” Clarence’s gray eyes searched the room behind her as if calculating the value.”

“Are you ill?” She searched his person from head to foot for any injuries or something to signal his ailment.

“No. Not at all. You see, I’ve been hired to be the town’s new doctor and I wanted to get a sense of the space available in this house for my practice. The mayor promised to build me a new clinic if this isn’t suitable.” He poked his head inside and swiveled his neck around searching and obviously not impressed with what he saw. “It’s rather modest. Certainly much smaller than the house in my last township.”

Miranda heard the words he spoke, but they didn’t make any sense. Why would a new doctor have been hired? The town wasn’t big enough to need two physicians. She put a hand to her forehead and rubbed a throbbing pain that had just erupted. “I’m sorry. I don’t quite understand. Why are you here again?” It was then that she noticed Mayor Harris and Ben in the street waiting behind Clarence.

Together, they stepped up onto her porch and joined Clarence at the door. The mayor had a sheepish look on his face, but Ben had scorn stamped in his nasty smile.

Miranda summed up the situation in the time it took to snap one’s fingers. The mayor had lied about allowing her to be the town’s doctor. She took a step back intending to slam the door in their horrible, deceitful faces, however Clarence apparently thought she was inviting him inside. He quickly stepped over the threshold and

into the parlor with Ben hot on his heels and the mayor following along looking everywhere but directly into her eyes.

“What is the meaning of this Mayor Harris?”

He finally looked at her. His apologetic gaze did not sway her to forgive. “I’m sorry, Miss Miranda, but the townsfolk didn’t take to you as the new doctor like I’d hoped they would.”

“I knew they’d never accept a woman as the doctor.” Ben sneered. “I told you so, Mayor Harris.”

Miranda wanted to slap the smirk off of Ben’s smug face, but turned to the mayor and tried to keep from tearing up. Crying would not help. She allowed the anger seething within her to keep her tears at bay. How dare they treat her this way?

The mayor nodded absently at Ben’s remark and faced Miranda with a regretful expression and a steady gaze. “It’s more than just the townsfolk not being accepting of you.”

“What else is wrong?” Her voice had trembled a little and she took a deep breath to keep hold of her volatile emotions as her dream world crumbled around her.

“Another problem is that your father hasn’t been performing his duties as contracted by the township for quite a number of years now.” The mayor had stopped looking her in the eyes.

“So? What does that mean?” Frustration saturated her mind.

“And he’s been running up quite a substantial tab at both Rose’s Saloon and The Dusty Swallow.”

“Are you saying my father is in debt?” Miranda shook her head. “But I’ve been working for the past six weeks. Surely that has helped.”

“Well, it might have if I hadn’t had to accompany all your patients over here to guarantee you wouldn’t kill them.”

“What?” Miranda’s cheeks heated in anger. “That is unfair. I’ve only given the very best care to each and every person who has come here for treatment.”

Mayor Harris’ hands came up in supplication. “Now you and I

know that, but the general population is never going to allow you to be the permanent doctor here in town. I've had more than one citizen come to tell me they would quit and leave town rather than have a woman doctor. I'm sorry, but I just can't allow you to stay on as the town's doctor."

Miranda sent a glare over to Ben. His smirk was permanently placed. She had no doubt that he was one who'd threatened to quit. Probably the only one who had threatened, the bastard.

"So you've pretended to let me practice all the while you waited for your new doctor to show up and replace me. I think that's despicable."

"Now I hope you'll extend a courtesy to the new doctor and show him where he'll be working once you move."

"Move?" Miranda put a hand to her mouth to stop a vulgar word from escaping. "I don't understand. This is my home. The only one I've had since I was five."

Mayor Harris sighed. "Your father came here and agreed to work for a little salary paid by the town as long as he had a place to practice and a home for his family. The house has always belonged to the town."

"Tell her the rest of it, Mayor. She needs to know." Ben crossed his arms and the smile he sported didn't bode well for her future.

The mayor harrumphed a couple of times. "I'm sorry to inform you, Miss Miranda, but the house and all its contents belong to the township. You may remove your personal items and clothing, but as of the arrival of our new doctor, you'll have to find another place to live."

Miranda fairly swooned on her feet. She gripped the doorframe, still having failed to close the door after the three had trooped in. "Where do you expect me to go?"

Ben's crossed arms dropped and he took an aggressive step closer to her. "Your father is going to jail unless he can pay what he owes to the two saloons in town. Since you took over for him as doctor, I

figure you can share in the debt, too.”

“Now, Ben, there is no need to be mean. The bar owners should have known better than to let old Silas run a tab in the first place.”

“Don’t matter. The law is the law. Doc Herrington owes upwards of four hundred dollars between the two saloons.”

“Four hundred dollars! That’s half a year’s wages. How could he have spent so much?”

“He’s been putting it on his tab for almost two years.”

“That’s crazy.”

“Crazy or not, you don’t have too many options here, Miranda.” Ben’s low calculating voice spelled trouble for her. He obviously had a plan in mind and she didn’t think she’d like it one single bit.

“I’ve spoken to the mayor and the two saloon owners and we’ve come to an arrangement. I’ve agreed to pay your debt.”

“My debt?” In her mind that was still up for interpretation. “You’ll pay in exchange for what?”

“Your hand in marriage.”

If he’d announced to the assembled few that he wanted to dance naked around the civil war cannon residing in the town square, she wouldn’t have been as surprised as she was at hearing his proposal of marriage.

## Chapter Nine

Miranda curled in a ball in the center of the strange, uncomfortable bed and tried to think of a reason to get up. After being kicked out of her home with barely more than the clothes on her back, her life had changed irrevocably only a week ago when her father died.

Her father, having been summarily cut off completely from his steady supply of liquor, hadn't lasted. The "new doctor" said it was likely his heart. Miranda mourned him and the man he used to be for the better part of a week and still her tears came.

The funeral had been quick, small, tasteful and poorly attended considering all the people in town who'd known him. Worst of all, the services, memorial, and marker commission had been paid for by her new "intended" Ben. Her eyes closed at the dire possibility that she'd actually have to marry him.

She'd waited endlessly for a message from Luke or Reese, but thus far none had come. She wasn't sure how long it would take for them to reach their property let alone contact her, but hopefully it would be soon. She couldn't hold off the hated nuptials much longer.

Worse, doubt regularly crept into her mind about whether they truly wanted her to be with them in South Dakota but didn't last long. Was that why she hadn't heard from them in all this time? Shaking her head at the horrible idea, Miranda refused to give into melancholy thoughts about their love for her.

They did love her. She knew it.

After being kicked out of her home with two changes of clothing and a few pieces of jewelry from her mother, Miranda had been given

the choice of jail or staying with Ben's married brother on the north end of town. Because it was further away from Ben, she'd chosen his brother's house. The room she used was tiny, and likely a former storage area, but this arrangement suited her better than being under Ben's watchful eye at all times.

The plan she formulated still depended on receiving a message from her two lovers. If she'd found herself with child, the circumstances of her life would have been better, but two weeks after Luke and Reese had gone, she knew she didn't carry their child. At the time, she'd been both relieved and saddened. But she'd still been under the false assumption that the mayor wanted her to be the doctor in town.

A sound coming from the front of the house signaled that the house was waking up. Ben's brother John and his wife, Hanna, had graciously allowed her to stay until the wedding.

Miranda hated to disillusion them, but she'd sooner die than marry Ben Colby.

She heard louder voices and rose to help out. Tip toeing down the short hallway, she paused when she heard her name whispered.

"I just don't like it, that's all," Hannah said. "What if them letters are from her kinfolk? Her father died. She should get to see them."

"Ben said they weren't from kin, but some men she used to know."

"Where did she meet men? She's lived here always."

"They was strangers passing through a couple of months ago. Ben said the letters didn't say where they were at or he woulda gone after them."

"Strangers or not, he shouldn't pry into her mail or hide them from her."

"It don't matter, anyway. He's going to be her husband and he can look at her letters if he wants to."

"But he didn't let her even see them. And besides Ben was gettin' them letters before they was ever engaged to be married. How many

does he have now, three? It ain't right not to let her see them."

"Don't raise your voice. You'll wake her up. She don't need to know about some letters from other men no matter when they came. She's marryin' Ben. Now stop talkin' about it."

Miranda realized her mouth hung open and closed it. She retraced her steps back to her small room and hid inside.

Ben was holding her letters. Bastard. The only other person in her family who might write was an elderly aunt in Philadelphia. More likely than not, Ben held letters from an address in South Dakota.

Seething anger dictated her actions, Miranda packed her single bag with both changes of clothes and all her worldly possessions that consisted of a gold necklace and bracelet from her mother, a battered compass in a small box given to her father once as payment for saving the man's life and the scrap of paper Reese had given her. She sat on the tiny bed and waited until John left the house. Sneaking past Hanna posed a more difficult challenge, but Miranda was determined.

The knock on her door startled her. She took a deep breath and released it. Calling out loudly, she responded, "Yes."

Hanna's voice came through the door clearly. "Do you want some breakfast?"

Miranda's stomach took the occasion to roll with stress. "No."

There was a long pause. "Are you coming out?"

Miranda closed her eyes and wished she could run far away. "No."

"Well, I wanted to tell you that I'm going over to visit my friend, Mary, as she just had a baby, and I'll be back by lunchtime."

Miranda's head spun to stare at the door. A warm feeling of growing delight encompassed her limbs. The new mother Hanna planned to visit was a former patient. Her newborn had been one of the three babies Miranda delivered back when she was still allowed to be a doctor. Had that only been a week ago? Miranda opened the door to see the expression on Hanna's face was quietly conspiratorial. "Be careful here while I'm gone."

Miranda smiled. "Thank you. I will."

She shook her head. "Nothing to thank me for. Just so you know, John went to help Ben with some sheriff work north of town bringing a criminal man from one town to another. Ben will be coming over this evenin', so you can see him, but they won't be back until dinnertime. That should give you time enough to get ready."

Miranda grabbed Hanna in a quick, tight hug. She didn't resist, but didn't return it, either. "I'm grateful, Hanna."

"Don't be. We didn't have this conversation. When I left for my friend's, you were still in bed." She turned and walked away without another word.

Miranda heard her leave the house five minutes later and ten minutes after that, Miranda also exited and headed into town. The three-mile walk to the north part of town invigorated her. Each step took her closer to possible freedom and salvation. Housed in the train station for convenience, the telegraph office was Miranda's first order of business. She planned to send an immediate message, in the form of a plea for help, to South Dakota.

The sun had just cleared the horizon when Miranda entered the rail station office next to the telegraph window, which also housed the post office. She peeked in to see who manned the desk. She'd heard a new man had been hired last week. She wanted *him* to wait on her, so there wouldn't be any questions as to why she was leaving town.

In the first stroke of luck since being escorted out of her home, the new man was indeed running the telegraph and train station. He had shocking wavy red hair and spectacles perched on his beak-like nose.

She headed inside and straight to the desk. "I'd like to send a telegraph to Luke Quinton or Reese Martin in Campbell's Valley, South Dakota."

The man handed her a piece of blank paper and pointed to the inkwell and fountain pen on the counter. "That will be two cents a word payable up front. Keep that in mind when you create your message."

“I don’t have any money, but I do have a gold necklace—”

“Sorry, ma’am. I can’t barter for telegraphs. Cash up front or no message.” He reached out and grabbed back the paper and turned his back on her.

Miranda sighed and left the desk. She strolled over to the US Post Office. “Excuse me. Do you have any letters for me?” Perhaps Luke and Reese had miraculously sent her a letter with a train ticket inside. Her fanciful mind kept the awful reality of her situation just this side of endurable.

“Who are you, miss?”

“Miranda Herrington.”

The old gentleman’s eyes lit up as if with recognition. “Nothing’s come this week. But I’ll be sure and give anything over to the sheriff like the last three times.” He grinned and walked away.

She didn’t even have the few pennies it would take to send a letter to them. Besides the fact that it wouldn’t do any good anyway because by the time a letter arrived, she’d be dead or married to Ben and wishing she were dead.

She walked over to the third window and inquired as to the price of a ticket to South Dakota. “Thirty-six dollars, miss.”

“Thirty-six dollars? That’s a lot of money.” she hadn’t meant to raise her voice. The price might as well have been three hundred.

“Well, it’s a long journey and two modest meals each day are included in the first class price.”

“I don’t quite have that much. Are there any cheaper ways to get to South Dakota? Any cheaper tickets?”

“Nope. The lesser cost tickets are sold out. Stage coaches are slightly cheaper, but you have to provide your own meals and in my opinion, travel by train is much more comfortable.”

“I have no doubt you’re correct. I guess I’ll just have to find another way to get there. Thanks, anyway.” Miranda edged away completely dejected.

She walked outside and down the stairs to the east side of the

building that hid her from the township with her modest bag clutched in one hand. She parked herself on a bench trying to figure out a way to get the money to head for South Dakota. Ben wouldn't give her any. She couldn't get a job to earn any money. A tear slipped over her lower eyelid as panic over her life threatened to overwhelm her.

"Excuse me, miss. Did I hear you mention wanting to go to South Dakota?" a voice to her left asked.

She saw a slender, gray-haired man standing next to her on the steps from the train platform. He was dressed in a very nice dark suit. "Yes. Why?"

"Are you married?"

"No." *And I'd like to stay that way.* "Why do you ask?"

"If you still desire a trip to South Dakota, I might be able to arrange a trip with a particular stipulation if you truly want an adventure out west."

*Adventure?* "What sort of stipulation?" Truthfully, Miranda was ready to try anything to escape Ben and the unwanted marriage he had planned.

He looked from side to side as if ensuring no one else listened. "My name is Jasper Coggon. I'm a lawyer and I've been hired by two gentlemen seeking a mail order bride. Not to shock you, but they wish to...well...share a bride between them, if you understand my meaning. Is this something you'd be interested in?"

The memory of Luke and Reese "sharing" her slid into her mind with seductive desire. She completely understood bride sharing, but her intent was to share with Luke and Reese, not two other strange men. However, if she got all the way out to South Dakota and near her two men, it would certainly be better than waiting here.

Mind racing at the idea that she might actually be able to get away from Perrysburg and Ben's distasteful marriage campaign, Miranda stood up and stepped closer to the lawyer. "And if I agree to this, how would I get there?"

His eyes widened as if surprised she was willing to go along

without further persuasion. “Oh...well I’ve got the funds to get you to Omaha for now. I’ll pay for your train ticket all the way to South Dakota and a generous stipend of ten dollars is included with the signed mail order bride contract for your trip. Once in Nebraska, we’ll meet up with at least one other woman I’ve contracted with, then I’ll travel ahead and arrange the meeting between the parties for when you arrive on the next train.

“Once we’re all in Campbell’s Valley, final preparations for the wedding and such will be discussed. You’ll have to sign some papers so that you understand what’s expected of you. If for any reason you don’t suit, you’d have to pay back all the money for your ticket and find a way home.”

*Perfect.* Once she got there, she’d tell them it wouldn’t work and do whatever it took, even wash laundry if necessary, until she’d paid them back. Most importantly, she’d be very close in proximity to the men she loved.

“I’ll sign whatever you need me to. When does the train leave?”

He squinted and pulled a gold watch on a chain out of his vest pocket. “In about an hour. If you’d rather, I can buy a ticket for you tomorrow so that you can pack.”

“No. I want to leave now.” She held up her bag. “This is all I have, anyway.”

From the case he carried, he extracted a rolled document with several paragraphs in essence saying she agreed to be a mail order bride and if she didn’t get on with the gentlemen selected, she’d be responsible for paying back the stipend and train fare to South Dakota. A thick line along the bottom edge was provided for her signature. Again from his bag, Mr. Coggon pulled out a corked ink jar and pen. She signed her name using the wooden bench as a flat surface and handed the freshly inked page back to him.

“Well, then if you’ll follow me, I’ll purchase your ticket and we’ll be on our way in no time.” He waved the paper she’d signed in the air a few times as if to hurry the drying of the ink and turned to go back

inside the train station.

“Wait, Mr. Coggon,” she called out. When he turned back, she added, “I need to be able to leave on the train without anyone from town seeing me.”

His brows furrowed. “Are you wanted by the law, Miss Herrington?”

“No. But there is a man who has been pestering me to marry him. I don’t want to, but I don’t have any money. I just don’t want him to know where I went.”

Jasper nodded with a concerned look. “Not to worry.” He pointed to the back of the building. “If you wait on the other side of the platform, very few people if anyone will see you enter when the train arrives. I’ll get on the train with your ticket and meet you in the passenger car.”

“Thank you, Mr. Coggon. I appreciate what you’ve done for me.”

He nodded and smiled. “By the way, in case you wanted to know, the names of the two men you’ll be engaged to are Derek Brand and Logan Granger.”

“I’ll look forward to meeting them. My father passed away recently and I need a change of scenery.” *And I need to escape a marriage I refuse to participate in.*

“I’m sorry to hear it.”

“Thank you. I’ll meet you on the train.”

Miranda wished she could see the expression on Ben’s face once he realized she was gone. She’d be a half a state away before he came home for dinner. He’d never find her.

\* \* \* \*

“You let her get away!” Ben was furious over Miranda’s absence from his brother’s house. After spending the entire day carting a low life horse thief around to another jurisdiction, he’d come back to his brother’s home expecting to have a nice dinner with family. He’d

planned to get them to help push Miranda for a wedding date.

“I didn’t let her do anything. I went to my friend’s house for a spell and when I returned to make dinner, she wasn’t here.”

Ben’s gaze shifted to John. “I told you she needed to be watched.”

John’s eyes narrowed. “Don’t blame us, Ben. I was with you up in the northern county all day. Hanna was over helping the mayor’s daughter. Why didn’t you lock her up in the jail if you knew she was prone to running?”

“She isn’t prone to running. She’s in a fragile state since her father passed on and she can’t be in her right mind.”

Both his brother and sister-in-law were seated at the table. Ben wanted to round up some help and search for his errant fiancée.

John grabbed a fork and knife and cut into the beef on his plate. “After dinner, go into town and look for her then. She can’t have gotten far. She don’t have a dime and no one in town will help her.”

Ben steadied his breathing. John was right. She was probably at the cemetery crying over her dead father. Good riddance.

He finished the adequate meal Hanna served, saddled his horse and headed for town as the sun dropped beneath the western horizon. Damn that woman, she’d pay for all the trouble she caused. He had half a mind to drag her to the preacher tonight and get hitched. He’d have her buck-naked and impaled on his cock before the ink dried on the marriage papers.

Ben tucked that particular dream away as he approached the telegraph office. Once inside, he learned that she had been there but hadn’t had any money to send a message or buy a train ticket.

Satisfied he’d find her somewhere in town, Ben spent the next several hours searching every building, business and private home as his fury grew with each minute he didn’t find her.

He went back to the train station to verify their stories.

“Are you sure she didn’t have the money to get a ticket?” Ben asked the operator once more.

“No, Ben, I told ya before. She didn’t have the money for a

telegraph let alone a ticket. She tried to give me some gold necklace, but I told her no bartering. Cash only.”

“Did she talk to anyone?”

“No. She walked out the door with a sad expression on her face and I didn’t see her again.”

From across the small room, the postmaster called out, “I saw her. She asked for any letters she might’ve received, but I told her I’d given all her letters to you.”

Ben sighed. She was probably in a snit because he’d kept and hidden the cryptic letters from those two strangers she’d received. They only signed with initials L and R. He wouldn’t have known their names except for the pressure he put on the hotel owner where they’d stayed. “Luke” and “Reese” sent three letters telling Miranda they were proud she was a doctor. Bastards.

They didn’t seem to know a woman’s place any better than she did. They said they missed her but didn’t let on as to where they were or where they were going. Frustration poured through him like a pitcher of water emptied into a hot desert sand dune.

“When are you two getting hitched?” the old man behind the post office counter asked.

“As soon as I find her.” And suddenly a brilliant idea occurred to him. “Did anyone buy a ticket leaving this station?”

“Some lawyer fella bought a ticket for Omaha. Said he was arranging a mail order bride or somethin’.” The telegraph operator turned away signaled by a bell that a telegraph message was arriving. He sat down at his desk to transcribe the clicks and noises coming through. Ben waited impatiently for him to finish so that he could ask more questions about the mail order bride lawyer.

“Hey, this is a coincidence.” He held up a folded message slip.

“What?” Ben didn’t give a shit, but figured it was the best way to move on to his goal.

“It’s a message for Miranda Herrington.”

“What does it say?” Ben stepped forward and made to reach for it.

The telegraph operator frowned. "I can't tell you that, sheriff. It's private."

Ben ground his teeth together. "She is going to be my wife. Surely I can take her messages."

He shook his head. "I can only give it to her."

"Can you at least tell me where it came from?"

His eyebrows furrowed and then he shrugged. "I guess that wouldn't break any rules." He opened the folded paper and read, "Campbell's Valley, South Dakota."

Ben allowed a smile to register. He vowed to drag her kicking and screaming back to Perrysburg by her hair if he needed to.

He wouldn't be made a fool of by Miranda Herrington. He knew exactly how to get her back now that he knew where she was going.

"I'd like to send a message."

"Okay, Sheriff. Two cents a word payable up front."

He took the request slip and formed his message carefully. "*Arrest warrant details for escaped prisoner. Stop. Female, slender, waist length dark hair. Stop. Name, Miranda Herrington. Stop. Wanted for fraud and embezzlement. Stop. Detain and send message for immediate retrieval. Stop. Two hundred dollar reward for her return to Perrysburg. Stop.*"

The telegraph operator wrote the message and calculated the fee. "That'll be seventy-two cents."

"Fine. Now I want you to send this message to every major train stop along the journey to Omaha from the minute she left Perrysburg. As a matter of fact, I want a message at every stop all the way to South Dakota."

He consulted a map of telegraph offices. "But there are five major stops on the way there."

"Then you better get busy."

Ben couldn't wait to tote her ass back under an arrest warrant. She'd learn the meaning of obedience if he had to brand it into her forehead.

## Chapter Ten

*A Month Later*

*Badlands of South Dakota – 1890*

Miranda had traveled seemingly to the end of the world by the time they announced the train had crossed into Dakota Territory. South Dakota had only been a state for a short time and Miranda found she looked forward to the adventure of living out west.

The door from the passenger car opened.

“I’ve been looking for you,” said a familiar voice. Clarissa Barnes was the other mail order bride contracted by Jasper Coggon. She planned to meet, and probably marry, some man named Clyde but didn’t seem to want to talk about her life. That was fine with Miranda who held her former life details close, as well.

“I woke up when the train started moving out of the train station again. I just wanted some quiet time. Where are we?”

Currently, outdoors in the semi-fresh air between the dining car and the passenger car, Miranda had missed disembarking on the last stop when they’d first come into South Dakota because of utter fatigue. She looked over her shoulder for Ben until they got to Omaha. The train trip had been arduous and she hadn’t slept well before she left Perrysburg, either. Eventually, her fatigue caught up forcing her to sleep hard in order to recuperate. Clarissa promised to wake her once they got to South Dakota.

“We just left our first stop in South Dakota territory.”

“You promised to wake me up.” Miranda immediately searched

the terrain for the landmark she had to find.

“I had a good reason.”

Miranda turned to face her and realized she had a very worried expression on her face. “What’s wrong?”

“This is what’s wrong.” Clarissa handed her a piece of paper with the words Arrest Warrant at the top of the page. She read further down the page. They were looking for a woman. Unusual. And then she read the line that contained her name.

“It’s my name.” She looked up at Clarissa with alarm. “Why is there an arrest warrant with my name on it?”

“Read it. Apparently, the sheriff in Perrysburg is looking for you. I took this from a bulletin board in the train station, but there was a sheriff walking along the train platform with one in his hands looking closely at all the passengers, too.”

Miranda read the worst part. Two hundred dollar reward for her return to Perrysburg.

Ben Colby was an unmitigated bastard.

\* \* \* \*

“Are you sure you want to jump off of a moving train?” Clarissa asked.

Miranda had changed her mind regarding the bride contract she’d signed back in New York, several weeks ago. Actually, *that* was a lie. She never planned to honor that agreement. Not unless forced to do so. Not unless she couldn’t find the *Devin’s Horn*. And thereby the clue to finding Luke and Reese’s property.

With the warrant for her arrest circulating, jumping off the train before it reached the next station seemed like the best of her limited alternatives.

The worn scrap of paper Reese had handed her before they’d left was securely tucked into a deep pocket in her dress. She’d memorized the few words and directions to locating the two men she’d fallen in

love with so long ago. Her worst fear now was whether they even wanted her back. Penniless and humiliated wasn't how she preferred to show up, but her choices hadn't been kind. And now she was on the run from the law.

"Yes. I'm sure." Miranda wasn't about to chicken out now. A sudden gust of wind from beneath the train whipped the hem of her skirt nearly to her thighs. "It's not moving that fast, anyway." She turned her head and eyed the most recent train station where they'd just departed from on this long journey. With increasing speed, the train rounded a curve in the tracks and the station disappeared altogether.

She just needed to keep anyone from seeing her jump, especially the sheriff at the last stop who'd been standing on the platform searching the departing passengers. Miranda recognized him as a fellow lawman that Ben knew. She'd nearly fallen in her attempt to keep from exiting the train and being seen back at the station. Jumping was a risk, but she didn't want Ben Colby to know she'd gotten off the train here.

Miranda took a step and lowered her body down to the last train stair as the terrain moved faster and faster past her eyes. Wind whipped her skirt steadily around her knees as she contemplated her leap. She hoped she didn't break a bone when she launched off of this conveyance and into her uncertain future. That wouldn't do at all.

Searching for a couple of wanted men in this desolate land was her immediate objective. Well, truthfully they weren't really wanted by anyone but her. However, she needed to locate them quickly and before anyone else discovered that she'd been on this train and headed for Campbell's Valley. Luckily, she had a head start to where Luke and Reese lived and a crude map in her possession to guide her there.

Just past the stand of trees after the last stop, she'd seen the unusual rock formation. *Devil's Horn*. Until she'd found it, Miranda hadn't been sure she'd have the needed courage to jump. But she had to know if they meant what they said before they left Perrysburg. She

had to find out for herself if they loved her as much as she loved them. They were her best hope for any kind of happy life. She couldn't go back to New York.

She wouldn't.

The separation had been agony these last several weeks. She only hoped they hadn't moved on in her absence. The letters they'd sent that Ben intercepted reassured her, but without knowing exactly what they wrote, she hoped they still wanted her. Seeing each of these perfect men in person would relieve her worry.

Miranda twisted back to Clarissa. "Do you promise to tell Jasper that I'm dead?"

"I guess so. It just seems a little rash." Clarissa's over loud voice was barely heard above the rushing wind and sounds of the train swaying back and forth.

"Rash or not, I'm doing it." Miranda didn't even consider the possible consequences of jumping off of the moving train. She just did it. She wasn't foolish enough to jump from a conveyance moving at full steaming speed. Not at all. She leapt from it after it gathered only a little bit of speed.

With every lawman from here back to New York searching for her with a reward for her capture, she felt she had little choice in the matter.

Miranda hit the ground in a soft patch of tall, dry grass and after rolling over a couple of times, she got up, dusted herself off and headed north with her compass leading her way.

She also checked to ensure the caboose driver wasn't looking in her direction as she made her getaway. The trees lining the track made up a forest she planned to take shelter in.

Hopefully, she'd reach her goal before noon. The thought of being in Luke and Reese's arms again soon made the unpleasant aspect of the journey bearable.

Miranda sent up a fervent prayer that she was doing the right thing. On the bright side, her plan had worked out famously up to

now, on the not so bright side, she was about to leave two strangers in the lurch after they'd generously paid for her journey. One day she'd do her best to pay them back, but for now she didn't have a choice.

Logan Granger and Derek Brand sounded like decent enough men and their mail order bride offer, while intriguing, wasn't quite exactly what she wanted. And not because of the added condition that she'd be sharing herself with two men.

The problem was that they weren't the *right* two men.

\* \* \* \*

Once the train was out of sight and headed to the next stop at Campbell's Valley, Miranda straightened her dusty clothes, grabbed up her bag and headed toward the woods beside the track. The train hadn't stopped suddenly to retrieve her and Clarissa promised to convince Jasper she was dead. Now all she needed to do was find her men.

The sun was just breaking over the eastern sky and according to the cryptic, well worn message Reese had given her before leaving, she had to go four miles northwest of the railway station stop after seeing the Devil's Horn. Fearful she'd miss it at every turn, Miranda had barely slept the entire trip. Last night in the fading sky the formation had been clearly defined and it matched the sketch on the paper they'd given her. Once she made it to their property, she'd likely fall into an endless sleep upon seeing the first bed.

Once the light in the sky was bright enough, she pulled the battered compass out of its box and started walking northwest.

After three miles, she found a marker with the letters RM and LQ on the post.

Surely that stood for Reese and Luke. With a renewed skip in her step she followed a partial trail staying on her northwest trajectory until she came though a thicket of woods and into a clearing.

The log house, centered in the wide space, had smoke coming

from the stone chimney on the roof.

Even though it was early summer, the cooler temperature of South Dakota was a surprise.

The inviting structure beckoned her with the promise of something warm to drink and a place to rest her weary head. Finally, seeing her two wanted men after so long was a joy she could barely contain in her grin.

Miranda knocked at the door and after a few minutes, it was opened by a beautiful girl with long black hair.

“Yes,” she said in a strange accent. Her coloring suggested she was Indian.

“I’m looking for Luke and Reese. Is this their house?”

The girl paused, squinted and then said, “Yes.”

Dressed in a colorful yet simple blouse and long skirt, Miranda wondered why they would have a woman in their home. She certainly wasn’t Reese’s sister.

She was however very beautiful. And a sudden horrible thought occurred.

Miranda asked, “Do you live here in this house with Luke and Reese?”

The girl smiled shyly and nodded. “Yes.”

Oh, God. They hadn’t waited for her. They figured out she wouldn’t leave her job to come all this way and they’d found someone else to share their bed.

She swooned a little at the futility of her journey, the endless miles she’d crossed and for the crushing hurt she felt at the thought of them with another woman.

Miranda backed away from the door and the beautiful girl. This was worse than the nightmare she’d left in Perrysburg. She’d come all this way only to have no place to go. Again. The letters Ben had held probably explained their choice. Of course they wouldn’t wait for her. They thought she was living her dream as a doctor.

The sound of approaching horses finally invaded her brain. In the

distance coming from the south according to her compass, were two riders traveling hell bent for leather and straight for this house.

Was it the sheriff from town with her arrest warrant and an open hand ready to receive two hundred dollars for her return?

If she couldn't have Luke and Reese, she didn't know what she would do. She surely didn't relish another trip and Ben would only punish her for leaving.

The urge to run was a useless endeavor. She'd never make it off the porch before they caught her.

A lightheaded feeling came quickly as she turned away from the open door. Miranda sat down on the top porch step of the lovely cabin, despair overwhelmed her and fatigue took over.

Black splotches crowded her view and a strange summer cricket noise rose to such a cacophony, she shook her head to clear it, but it was no use and the one thing she'd never allowed herself to do happened.

She fainted.

\* \* \* \*

"Miranda darlin', please wake up." Luke's voice sounded rife with concern.

Without opening her eyes, she determined that she rested in a very comfortable bed. A cold compress had been placed against her forehead. When she opened her eyes, Luke's weary expression greeted her.

"What happened?"

"You came all the way out here to faint on my porch and scare me half to death. Why would you do that?"

The memory of her journey, the jump from the train and all the complications came rushing into her brain and made tears well up.

"Don't cry, darlin'."

"But everything is such a dreadful mess. You don't even know the

half of it.”

“Well, given that you have an arrest warrant out for you from the sheriff in Perrysburg, I can guess quite a bit.”

“How did you know about that already?”

Another figure stepped into view. He was a lawman unmistakably since he had a star pinned to his vest. “I told him. Name’s Vanguard. I’m the sheriff in Campbell’s Valley about ten miles away.” In his hands was the hated paper outlining her crime of debt for her immediate detention. “I’d like to talk to you about this in more detail.”

Miranda sat up and hung her head. Luke put a finger to her chin until she gazed into his eyes. Tears welled up before she could stop them. “I should have left with you when I had the chance. I’m so sorry I didn’t.”

“It’s all right, darlin’, we’ll figure something out. And Vanguard will help us.”

“But there’s a reward for my capture.”

Sheriff Vanguard stepped closer. “We have to establish that the warrant is even talking about you.”

Miranda squinted. “It has my name and description on it. Of course it’s me.”

Vanguard frowned and tilted his head to one side. After studying her for a few long moments, he pulled a knife out of his boot and handed it to Luke.

Her eyes widened. “He wants me alive, you know.”

“Your hair doesn’t go down to your waist, does it?” There was an odd smile shaping his lips.

She started to answer yes, but Luke pulled the pins out of her hair. He took the bottom strands altogether in his hand and cut off eight inches using the knife. Once he was done, he handed her the discarded clump and returned the knife to Sheriff Vanguard.

“There.” Luke studied her new hair length. “Now she doesn’t fit the description anymore.”

“Excellent. I never did think it was her, anyway. I’ll head back to town and send a return telegraph message informing the Perrysburg sheriff that no one fitting that description has shown up in town.”

“Thanks.”

“My pleasure. I owe you tons of favors.” He caught her eye and smiled. “More than two hundred dollars worth.”

“Thank you for helping me, but I won’t stay and bother you any further.”

Luke gave her the oddest look. “You’ll have to explain that to me, darlin’. Did you get too much sun when you walked here?”

“No. I just don’t want you to think I’ll give you any trouble. I know you found another woman.” Tears slipped down her cheeks. “I should have come with you from the start. I don’t blame you for finding someone else.”

“There is absolutely no one else but you. What are you talking about?”

“I’m talking about the girl who answered your door.”

“Kaispa? She just helps out around our house with the cleaning and cooking. Her husband helps with the property.”

“But I asked her if she lived with you and she said yes.”

Luke’s easy smile softened her. “The only English word she knows is yes. Maybe you can teach her more now that you’re here.”

“Perhaps I can. Where is Reese?”

“He left with a few men to check the northern section fences on our property. He won’t be back until late tonight or tomorrow morning.”

Miranda slipped her arms around his neck. “I love you.”

“I love you, too. I can’t believe you’re here. We worried a little when you didn’t respond to any of the letters.”

“They were intercepted. I never got them.”

“Doesn’t matter. I’ll write you some more.” He pulled her into his firm strong arms. “What do you want to do right now?”

“Truthfully, I want a bath.”

“Done. I’ll have Kaispa help get some heated water.”

“Do you think we’ve heard the last of Ben?”

“I know *you* don’t have to worry about it anymore. Take a bath. Get some rest and when Reese gets back, we’ll discuss everything.”

\* \* \* \*

Miranda took a long hot bath and after dressing in the only other shift she owned, she promptly fell into a deep sleep tucked securely in his bed. Luke paced in the great room for several minutes pondering today’s events. Obviously, they’d do everything in their power to keep her here.

After Reese had left this morning, Luke had gone into town for supplies. He happened to run into Vanguard, who was holding the warrant for Miranda’s arrest in his hands.

From that moment forward, Luke had been in a panic to get back home. He suspected she was headed to their place. He hadn’t expected her to already be at his house, but was so grateful to see her alive. At least, until she collapsed on his front porch. It was a wonder his heart hadn’t seized in his chest when she fainted.

Reese came in sooner than expected to find Luke still pacing the floor.

“What are you pacing for?”

“Miranda arrived today and she’s in a little bit of trouble.”

“What? Where is she?”

“Sleeping in my bed.” He glanced at his pocket watch. “For the last twelve hours now.”

Reese grinned. “I think we should wake her and show her why she needs to reside here with us.”

“I must admit I’ve been thinking wicked carnal thoughts since she arrived.” He grinned then sobered. “But she was exhausted when she got here. She jumped off a train for Christ’s sake.”

“All the more reason to reward her.”

\* \* \* \*

Miranda dreamed about Luke and Reese again. It wasn't the first time, but this dream was much more vivid.

*The quilt and top sheet were pulled back to reveal her. She was dressed only in a thin shift. The fabric was pushed to her neck as unseen hands stroked her nakedness. She sighed at the pleasure of being touched again after so long. Two hands cupped her breasts and teased her nipples. The sensation sent spirals of pleasure down to the space between her legs. Meanwhile, two more hands pulled her thighs apart. Miranda waited to feel the penetration of either Luke or Reese's cock filling her to the brink of pleasure. Instead, something unusual happened. She felt a rush of air brush across her pussy as if someone breathed against the sensitive flesh. She tried to close her legs, but something barred her.*

She roused more fully awake as the vestiges of sleep fell away.

"Miranda," called Reese's familiar masculine voice. "Let me lick you." The unseen hands spread her legs apart again, but this time she didn't resist.

Her eyes drifted open to see Luke's handsome face smiling down at her. He leaned down to kiss her mouth as a dizzyingly arousing sensation crossed her clitoris with blissful results.

She sucked in a deep breath breaking Luke's ardent kiss. "What's happening?"

Luke twisted his head to look at her legs. She followed his gaze to see Reese with his face buried between her thighs. The visual was so stimulating, she cried out, "Oh."

Reese lifted his head and grinned at her. He then lowered his face and licked her clitoris. Miranda had never conceived of such a pleasurable feeling and her hips pushed her pussy closer to his mouth.

"I told you she'd like it," Luke murmured.

He looked into her eyes again. "Reese is going to lick your clit

until you scream and then we'll see what else we can think up to do to welcome you home."

Miranda sent her gaze to Reese's tongue and watched as he pleased her. It was the single most erotic thing she'd ever seen and it didn't take long for her climax to rush up and send her blissfully into oblivion.

Her hips bucked as Reese licked her clit to the most amazing orgasm she'd ever experienced.

Luke kissed her mouth again and as she trembled in the aftermath.

"I've missed the two of you so much."

"We've missed you, too, darlin'." Luke settled in on one side of her as Reese crawled up her body to rest on the other side.

Sandwiched between her long missed lovers, Miranda remained content only until she remembered her problems.

"What am I going to do? Your sheriff will have to detain me due to the warrant Ben telegraphed everywhere."

"What on earth happened after we left?" Reese asked as he stroked his hand along her belly.

She told them everything that had happened from her first blissful weeks as the town's doctor to the horror of discovering not only was she out of a job, but her home, too. And finally she explained the sadness of losing her father and Ben's plans for her because of the accumulated debt at the local saloons.

"He's full of shit. He can't make a person pay for someone else's debts after they're dead."

"He told me that because I'd taken over as the town's doctor that I was responsible."

"So then the new fella that showed up, now he takes on your debt?" Luke scoffed. "Your sheriff Ben is twisting the law to suit himself."

"Well, when you put it that way, I guess it's silly to pay a dead man's debt, but I know for a fact I was escorted out of my home with only the clothes on my back and a few personal items."

“Don’t worry about him. I think his warrant is bogus. We’ll ensure you don’t have to go back.”

“How?”

“First off, you could marry me and then you wouldn’t have to worry about Ben.”

She grinned. “I’d love to marry you.” She turned to Reese. “Or you. Doesn’t matter which.”

“We’ll both participate in the ceremony and both of us will spend the rest of our lives making you happy and ensuring you forget about the bad memories of your former home town.”

“Do you truly think it will work?”

“Darlin’, we used to be lawmen. We know how the law works. Trust us.”

“I do trust you.” She closed her eyes and allowed the awful memories of the past few weeks to slide away. “And I believe I should reciprocate how good I feel.” She reached out to grip both of their wide, hard cocks in her hands. She squeezed and stroked them as their groans of appreciation drifted to her ears.

“Perhaps I should put my mouth on each of you. Would you like that?”

“Yes,” they growled in unison.

Miranda sat up and twisted until she was on her knees between each man. They remained on their backs with their substantial erections reaching for the ceiling. She leaned over and put her mouth around the tip of Reese’s large cock licking the drop of salty fluid accumulated there. He groaned and his cock throbbed in her hand. She pulled her mouth off him, turned and did the same thing to Luke.

Reese sat up. “That was amazing, but I need to fuck you. Why don’t you suck on Luke and I’ll thrust my cock inside your pussy until you come screaming again.”

Miranda gulped. “Perfect.”

Luke scooted to the center of the bed and leaned his back against the headboard. Miranda crawled between his legs, bent over with her

fanny in the air and put his cock back in her mouth. She sucked his shaft as deeply as it would go and squeezed the base with her hand. He put his hands gently on her head to guide her and made the most delicious sounds of appreciation as she sucked on him. On his knees behind her, Reese had already gripped her ass with both hands and rubbed his cock along her wet pussy lips.

In one quick thrust, Reese entered her pussy and pushed his cock as deeply as it would go. He reached around one hip and fingered her clit. With the other hand, he pushed a finger deeply into her dark rear hole and the sensation nearly made her climax.

She bobbed her head up and down on Luke's cock sucking in rhythm to Reese fucking her from behind. The sensation was amazing. Luke moaned and his hands clamped her head a little tighter. "I'm about to come."

Reese kept up a steady thrust as a powerful orgasm rose within her body. She squeezed Luke's cock, sucked him deeply into her mouth and suddenly he jerked as more salty fluid shot down her throat. It was a little shocking, but she swallowed every drop and pulled her mouth off of him. His sedate grin greeted her. "That was incredible."

"Her pussy feels incredible, too." Reese panted and continued thrusting his cock inside.

Luke pushed her shoulders until she straightened. He then wrapped his mouth around the tip of one breast and sucked the nipple between his warm lips. A thread of arousal swept from her nipple straight to her clit. With both of them stroking her and loving her, she went to a pinnacle of arousal in no time. She wrapped her arms around Luke's shoulders and screamed as her release engulfed her. Waves of pleasure saturated her body as Reese's continued cock strokes added to the sensation of bliss she experienced.

"Jesus, you're so fucking tight. Now your pussy is squeezing me."

He thrust deeply and a growl issued from his throat and she figured he'd climaxed as hard as she did.

Reese leaned forward against her back and pushed her into Luke. After a few moments, they slid to the sheets all tangled up with each other. Miranda grinned like a fool. Nothing would ever stop her from loving these two until the day she died.

Nothing.

## Epilogue

The preacher in the Campbell's Valley's prettiest church lowered his Bible and asked the assembled few, "If there is anyone present who believes these two should not be joined, let them speak now or forever hold their peace." He paused and did an obligatory search of the nearly empty room.

He opened his mouth to pronounce Miranda and Luke husband and wife, but the back doors to the church burst inward. Bouquet clutched in her fingers, she twirled around to discover the identity of the interrupter. She saw the star pinned to a man's chest first and lifted her gaze higher expecting to see Ben ready to carry her back to New York before she could marry Luke.

Sheriff Vanguard stood at the door instead. "Sorry, folks. I almost missed the wedding. Have you kissed her yet?"

"Nope. I was just about to." Luke turned back to the minister. "Please proceed."

Reese stood next to Luke as his best man, even though Miranda knew she belonged to both of them.

The preacher cleared his throat. "I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride."

"About time." Luke kissed her quickly and then Reese also kissed her. Assembled at the back of the church a few moments later, Vanguard even leaned in and kissed her cheek.

They thanked the preacher and walked out of the church with Vanguard headed to the hotel for a quiet dinner celebration.

"I have some information for you," Vanguard said in a low tone.

"About my arrest warrant?" Miranda voiced her biggest concern.

“Yes. The warrant has been rescinded.”

“Why?”

“It turns out that Miranda Herrington jumped from a train to her death before ever reaching Campbell’s Valley. There was a witness that saw her fling herself off. Also a local lawyer, Jasper Coggon, who had contracted with this Miranda, to be a mail order bride, reported her tragic end at my office once the train came in. I personally telegraphed the information from the lawyer to Perrysburg and soon after the warrant was cancelled. You’re in the clear. And now your name is Miranda Quinton, so you’re even safer.”

Miranda breathed a sigh of relief for the first time since leaving Perrysburg. “Thank you. If there is ever anything I can do to repay you, let me know.”

“Well, there is one thing. Is it true you’re a doctor?”

“Yes.”

“I have this old gunshot injury. The doc at the time never removed the bullet and it bothers me on occasion. I heard tell you have a light touch and maybe you’d consider taking it out.”

“Not now, Vanguard. She’s on her honeymoon.”

“Come see me next week. I’ll take a look.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

Miranda’s heart did a dance of joy. Her life was completely perfect with the exception of one thing. She made a note to talk to Luke and Reese about resolving the issue that still troubled her and hoped they’d help her set things right. But not yet.

After dinner. After they stayed at the hotel for their honeymoon. After they’d returned to the log cabin to begin their lives together.

\* \* \* \*

Clarissa Barnes tended her colorful garden outside just below the large front porch attached to her home but didn’t hear the trio of horses riding up until they were almost into the yard.

Three riders, one very familiar although it had been a few months.

She stood and brushed dirt from her apron as the three stopped and one of them dismounted. A sudden pounding in her chest made her remember Miranda's original arrangement with the men Clarissa had eventually married.

"Hi, Miranda. What brings you all the way out here?" Given the two men on horseback waiting for her, she hoped Miranda had found the two men she sought after jumping off the train.

"A guilty conscience."

"I see." Clarissa had a whole host of questions she wanted to blurt out, but the polite thing to do was to wait.

"Plus, I wanted to thank you for verifying my jump off the train. It worked perfectly save one troubling thing."

Clarissa knew exactly what troubled her. "Logan and Derek?"

"Yes. I owe them the money for a train ticket that brought me to South Dakota."

"Honestly, I don't think they missed it."

"Still. That ticket likely saved my life and my honor won't allow me to forget the debt." She reached into the fold of her dress and pulled out a leather pouch. "Would you give this to them for me?"

Clarissa took the money and nodded. "Of course." She glanced at the other two men who'd remained mounted on their horses once again. "Did you find those two wanted men you were looking for?"

"Yes. And I'm grateful that you filled the role I abandoned. Although, I'm a little surprised."

She smiled as memories of her wicked predawn morning sexual activities traipsed across her mind from earlier. "Being a mail order bride for two men wasn't quite what I'd planned, but now I can't imagine my life any other way. I guess I owe you a thanks for jumping off the train, too."

"I'm just glad we found our place in the world and worthy men to share the space with us."

Miranda nodded and got back up on her horse. "Good bye.

Perhaps we'll see each other in the future."

"That would be nice."

Logan and Derek strolled out of the barn as the three rode away.

"Who was that, honey?" Logan asked.

"An old friend. She wanted me to give you this." Clarissa handed him the bag.

He opened the pouch and counted the coins inside. "It's forty six dollars."

"The price of a train ticket plus a ten dollar stipend from New York to the Badlands."

Derek squinted. "I don't understand."

"A female from your past wanted to repay the money used to bring her out here."

Logan's eyes widened and he gazed into the distance where the kick of dust obscured the riders. "Was that our mail order bride...?" he trailed off as if he'd forgotten either her name, the question he'd been about to ask, or didn't believe the answer he'd get even if he did finish.

Derek stared at the pouch. "Besides the fact that I never expected any money from a dead woman, why would she bring this now? It's been months."

"Women like to honor their debts just like men do, but often we aren't afforded the opportunity."

Logan pulled the drawstrings and handed her back the pouch. "Tell you what, why don't you take this with you for the next trip into town. You can pick up some more books and seeds. I know those are the only two things you ever want, anyway."

"Not true. I want you and Derek each and every day."

"Yeah, but we don't cost anything." Logan grinned.

"Yet, you are priceless to me." She reached up and kissed his mouth and then kissed Derek, too.

"The next time you see your friend, tell her she can stick around and introduce herself. I'll bet she has interesting stories to tell about

her adventures on the way to South Dakota.”

“You aren’t mad at me for keeping the information from you two all this time, are you?”

Derek shook his head. “Course not, but you could have said something earlier.”

“I know. But at first I didn’t realize you were the two men she contracted. After I found out, I didn’t want to make you feel badly. Then when Clyde’s contract fell through and you made me an offer, I was sidetracked by lust. When I finally remembered, I didn’t know how to tell you the exact truth.”

“It all worked out exactly like it was supposed to, don’t you think?” Logan grabbed her hand and led her back to the house.

“Well, I know I got the two men that I wanted.”

“And we certainly got the right woman. Come on in and we’ll reassure you.”

Clarissa smiled and followed her two men inside prepared to be convinced.

## **THE END**

**[www.ElleSaintJames.com](http://www.ElleSaintJames.com)**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

There are rumors that Elle Saint James used to live in Intercourse, PA, where she devoured gothic novels filled with seductive heroes seeking redemption from feisty heroines. This was where her erotic writing imagination was developed.

Others are convinced Elle Saint James spends her afternoons supervising the cleaning of her personal dungeon and her nights directing the delicious torture that goes on there. Fortunately, her slaves take dictation, enabling her to write while otherwise engaged.

However, neither of these scenarios are entirely true.

The majesty of the Rocky Mountains, as well as her gorgeous husband, serve to inspire Elle Saint James' dark and deliciously sexy novels. She writes for those who are not afraid to take a walk on the wild side and explore more erotically charged sexual adventures in reading.

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