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Christmas with the Stallions



Addison Avery

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DEDICATION

For Tina and Wendy with many thanks for their support

CHRISTMAS WITH THE STALLIONS

ADDISON AVERY

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Chapter One

Haley McIntire stood at her kitchen sink with a warm iron skillet in hand. If the weight of the object didn't remind her of what she clutched, then the smell of recently fried eggs did. Neither encouraged her to dip the pan into suds and scrub away the remains of breakfast. She couldn't tear her gaze away from the window. Oh no, she possessed little motivation for anything more than gawking.

One of the cowboys who joined her for breakfast tilted his hat and smiled. The other hunk in boots waved after he slipped his thick arms into the coat she insisted he wear into the dead of winter.

Absentmindedly, she wiggled her fingers in a hello gesture and then quickly turned around before either cowboy witnessed her pink cheeks. God help her. She was losing her mind.

The young men, less than a hundred yards from the house, probably knew they were the sources behind her reason for staring outside with true interest. Since they shared her roof, too, the flirtations continued around the clock.

Grabbing a dishcloth from the soapy water, she washed the shallow pan and tried to pretend she wasn't interested in the cowboys she'd hired for the holidays. For two weeks, she endured one sleepless night after another. For fourteen days, she'd questioned her motives

and wondered why she employed men young enough to be called out as her sons.

If she'd only bore a few children, she wouldn't have needed to hire help for the winter. Instead, she placed an ad in several local newspapers and hired a pair of studs—students—prior to meeting them. She deserved to squirm. What a lesson learned. At forty years old, she needed a shrink more than she needed two handsome men in their prime.

"You gonna stand there all day and act like you aren't interested in those two young guns out there, or are you gonna get some work done and make a go of the day ahead?"

Haley dropped the rag in the sink and quickly turned around to face off with Shelly, her best friend from the good old days, the one constant companion she'd nearly clung to since her husband died.

"They sure are pretty, huh?" Haley asked with a deliberate sigh.

"They sure are young," Shelly reminded, settling her ass on the ceramic-tile countertop right next to the full kitchen sink.

Haley slapped her knee. "What brings you out here so early this morning?"

"Are you kidding me? I may be married, but I ain't dead, girlfriend. In fact, I'm surprised every woman over forty isn't knocking down your fences and pitching tents in your barnyard."

"Word travels fast, huh?"

"Oh yeah," Shelly said. "The buzz is about and those two you've got tossing a little hay and mucking stalls have every gal within several miles of this place wagging their tongues and revving up their sex toys."

Haley laughed. "Is that right?"

"Damn straight," Shelly said. "So which cowboy inspires you to change the batteries in your vibrator?"

Haley started to take a drink of her coffee and changed her immediate plans when her friend's question caught her off guard. She grabbed a napkin and wiped her mouth. "I beg your pardon?"

“Don’t play that innocent card with me, Haley McIntire,” Shelly drawled. “I’ve known you for how many years now?”

“Apparently not long enough if you think I’m chasing after two college-aged kids.”

“Those fellows ain’t kids, friend,” Shelly pointed out, flipping her dark hair over her back and stretching her neck so she too could spy on the sexy ranch hands.

“Where does George think you are this morning?”

She sighed, leaning over Haley’s shoulder. “Grocery shopping.”

“Ah,” Haley said. “Do you think he’ll get suspicious now that you’ve used the same excuse for the last week and a half?”

“Naw,” she replied. “I’ve explained that with the horrible economy, we need to watch our spending. I’m shopping on a daily basis to help us avoid waste.”

“Interesting.”

“And believable. Money is tight right now, ya know.”

“Sure.” Haley looked up to see who slammed the door behind her.

“Hiya, Colt,” Shelly chirped, bouncing her leg and trying her best to quickly adjust her red blouse so she showed off plenty of cleavage. Sometimes Haley worried about Shelly. For a married woman, she sure liked to flaunt her assets.

“Mrs. Smith, nice to see you again,” he said.

Haley giggled and Shelly corrected him. “Mrs. Smith is my mother-in-law. How about you call me Shelly?”

“All right,” he said. “Shelly, it’s nice to see you.” Then his hot chocolate eyes focused on Haley. “We got a mare down in the lower field.”

Haley grabbed a light windbreaker off the door-side coat rack and tossed it over her arm. “Be right back, Shell.”

“Don’t worry about me,” she said, wagging her brows. “I’ll look around the house at your Christmas decorations while you’re gone.”

“You do that,” she said. “And try not to rearrange my villages. I like them the way they are.”

Shelly grinned. "Yes, but I like to play with all of your toys, darling."

Catching the underlying insinuation, Haley shook her head and hurriedly walked outside toward the pick-up truck. Colt opened the door, and she slid across the leather seat.

Haley waved goodbye to her curious friend. Later, she'd have to tell her while she settled for looking at the Old Workshop Christmas Village, she enjoyed the luxury of a hot and spicy ride, sandwiched in between two of the sexiest cowboys alive.

Studying Seth beside her, she resisted the sudden urge to run her hands through his unkempt, long blond hair, but she might have if he hadn't startled her by his expression and then a warning. "It's bad, Haley," he said, his brown eyes full of concern. "You need to prepare for the worst."

* * * *

Out in the field, Haley knelt beside the mare. "We're gonna have to get Doc Thomas out here," she declared, petting the gentle horse's head.

"I've already called him," Seth told her, glancing up for just a second.

"And?" Haley asked impatiently.

"He's out of town and won't be back until late tonight," Seth replied. "Haley, I think someone may have poisoned her."

"What?" Haley asked in an elevated pitch. "Why the hell would you think such a thing?"

Colt spoke up. "We worked for one of the largest Walking Horse barns in Shelbyville a few summers ago. This mare is showing signs of a poisoned animal."

"That's insane," Haley said, scrubbing her hands together and blowing hot air over her cold fingers. "I don't have enemies and everyone around here knows Daisy was the last horse my...my..."

She swallowed hard and finished her sentence. "Daisy was the last horse my husband bought prior to his car accident."

Seth and Colt swapped a quick glance.

"Enemy or not, this horse has been poisoned," Colt persisted, his dark eyes piercing through hers as he squatted next to the animal.

Daisy released a tortured breath, one where her nostrils flared and her sides swelled to an enormous size. Her eyes opened and closed as she continued her struggle to breathe.

"It's okay, girl, just take it easy," Haley said, trying to comfort her.

Helpless, Colt stood again and rushed to the truck for horse blankets. Pulling them from the back, something in the distance held his gaze and he made a quick inquiry. "Haley, what the hell is that over there?" he asked, pointing.

Haley studied the fence line and the dead remains of the Oleanders she tried to grow soon after her husband's death. She revisited the memory and shook her head. Tears came to her eyes and she responded, "I don't have a green thumb but tried to grow Oleanders this past year. I guess you could say I—"

"Shit!" Seth fell to the animal and Colt followed suit, quickly propping the horse's head on his thick legs.

"What is it?" Haley screeched.

"Oleanders are deadly. They're very toxic and horses, the few that can't leave them alone, die from Oleander."

"No," she cried out. "There's no way. You don't understand. Daisy wouldn't have eaten that plant. Daisy doesn't eat anything outside of a little grass, hay, and sweet feed."

Clearly agitated, Colt pointed toward the scattered branches of the Oleanders. "She must've developed a taste for dead plants, too. Horses can't read all about Oleanders like humans can. She didn't know she'd die if she ate the damn things."

Seth studied poor old Daisy. Then he raised a question. “Why the hell would a horse that hasn’t gone near those plants all summer suddenly take an interest in Oleanders?”

Haley bowed her head. “I tried to figure out if any of the plants could be salvaged and worked all day yesterday digging up the smaller shrubs from the root. I read on the Internet that some folks move their plants inside during the winter months, around the middle of December, right before a hard freeze.”

Colt looked at her with a blank expression and then bit out, “I imagine those are the people who have live plants to save.” He set his jaw. “You should’ve read how deadly those leaves are while you perused the net.”

Haley gulped. He blamed her. Colt held a genuine passion for animals, specifically horses, and spent most of his free time riding.

Daisy’s tremors worsened and Seth snapped. “Hurry, get Doc Thomas on the phone. His answering service should give us some advice or get a quick message to him so he can call us back.”

Haley dialed the number and walked away from Seth and Colt. They looked as helpless as she felt.

“Hello? This is Haley McIntire, and I have a mare I think may have eaten Oleander—”

“Damn it!” Colt yelled using the horse’s body to shove away from her. His silky, black hair flew behind him like a wind-ripping flag as he paced, enraged.

“She’s gone,” Seth declared, interrupting her.

Haley snapped her phone closed. She glared at the ground and the dead animal lying there. Yes, she was gone. Yes, her Oleanders died too. But more than anything else, her husband was dead and after he passed, she’d endured one mishap after the next. From plants to horses, death surrounded her.

Gaping at the cold ground, Haley decided a dark cloud loomed over her. Maybe she should cut her losses. No, there wasn’t a maybe to consider. The time had come for her to work alone.

She stared at Colt and Seth. Then she glanced once more at Daisy. “You’re fired,” she said quietly, moving by them and starting for the house on foot.

“What are you talking about?” Seth tried to stop her by grabbing her wrist.

Shaking him off, she continued toward the house.

A loud neigh rang out and it sounded like anger. The noise was close enough to startle her and Haley quickly turned around.

Seth stood off at a distance. Colt seethed, and she could almost hear the anger in every ragged breath he took.

Haley shook her head. Did she imagine the loud neigh? God, yeah, why not hallucinate? Perhaps her delusions could keep her company throughout the cold winter.

“This is bullshit,” Colt said. “We didn’t kill your horse,” he continued, catching up to her and practically maneuvering alongside her at a sideways pace. “You can’t fire us because of what *you* did.”

Through the tears, she saw her home in the distance. She watched Shelly back out of the driveway in her old, black Toyota Camry. She must’ve gotten tired of waiting.

Haley stopped walking and started shouting. “I want you gone and out of here by morning! I’ll pay you two weeks wages,” she added, glancing over Colt’s shoulder in an attempt to address Seth, too. “Just pack up and get out.”

She ran but she didn’t get far. Colt caught her around the waist, snapped her wrist to her side and held her hand firmly between them. Then he looped his arm around her middle. “This isn’t about that horse, Haley. You know it. I know it.”

“Yes...yes...it...is,” she declared, stuttering all over the place.

“No, it isn’t,” he said. “I saw the pain in your eyes just then. You wanted comfort, but you were afraid to let us console you.”

“Stop,” she said, squirming. “I’ve already told you. The both of you are fired.”

Seth approached cautiously. His breathing sounded peculiar too, almost like he was a stallion brought in to tease the mare he wouldn't be permitted to take. Odd, she thought, why on earth would she compare Seth to a stallion? Maybe her bizarre thought patterns further indicated signs of stress.

She squirmed again. "Don't," she said. "Let me go."

"No way in hell," Colt said, cupping her neck, his palms rubbing her nape in an instant massage.

Her nipples spiked with the friction. God help her, she was turned on by the man's touch. One rough caress, a back and forward motion, and she felt the heat building between them, even in the wake of her heartbreak.

Seth inched close enough to stand guard or stop the kiss Colt looked like he most definitely planned to deliver. Only Seth didn't move again. Colt did.

Colt's gaze firmly locked on hers, and the intensity of the neck massage changed to downright sensual. He glanced over his shoulder when the pounding of hooves sounded out around them. Haley didn't pay any attention to the beautiful palomino circling them. She'd seen the horse plenty of times over the last couple of days. The damn stallion had become an annoyance really and sometimes he stalked her, circling and circling.

She moistened her lips and Colt most likely saw the gesture as an open invitation. His lips crashed against hers and melded to her mouth like they'd belonged there since he arrived. In many ways, maybe this was what she needed from the beginning. Only, right then and there, wasn't the best timing for any kind of first kiss.

Pushing him away, she glared at both men. The horse behind the earlier noise seemingly vanished, and she studied Colt and Seth long enough to see if she detected one ounce of amusement, only she didn't find humor in their expressions.

Maybe the kiss was sincere, she thought. No, she decided, Colt was throwing around his weight. The kiss seemed more like a claiming.

She touched her mouth with her icy-cold fingertips. "I want you...to go. I mean it. If you can get packed up and out of here tonight, I'll pay you each an additional week's salary."

Seth shook his head. "We're not going anywhere, Haley."

"You're fired," she informed once more, still shaking from the earth-moving experience.

She wondered where the wild horse went and searched the field for the palomino that had been there a minute before. The stretch of open land lured her eyes, but the deserted area looked basically bare with the exception of Daisy's dead form.

"I fired you," she stated again.

"Like hell you did." Colt said, taking a few steps back, allowing more distance between them. "We're not leaving, and you're not ordering us off this property again. If you do, I'll tie you up and bound you to your bed until you beg for mercy."

She swallowed hard. "You'll what?"

"We're fresh out of patience here, Haley," Colt informed. "We're gonna tell you what's on our minds. Then, we're gonna show you."

Chapter Two

Seth insisted she ride rather than walk. She refused to get in the truck on her own so Colt picked her up and tossed her in the back. Thank God there were heavy horse blankets to keep the chill from nipping too hard at her exposed skin.

Once the truck came to a stop near her porch, she decided stubbornness hung onto her like a disease for which she'd never find a cure. Her peaked anger didn't warm her whatsoever.

Colt offered her a hand while Seth grabbed their coats and gloves from the truck. She flatly refused Colt's generosity.

Colt grunted. "Have it your way."

She thought she'd won. Squaring her shoulders, she started to jump down. When she did, Colt scooped her up and carried her to the porch.

"Damn it," she screeched. "Let me go!"

"I'm going to," he replied. "Give me a minute."

"I'll be right there," Seth called out. He turned his face toward the wind and, tilting his chin upward, his nostrils flared. He immediately wheeled around on his boots, staring at Haley with pure lust in his eyes.

Colt grinned. "I know. Don't even say it. I know."

"You know what?" she demanded as Colt turned the doorknob.

"Christmas Eve is tomorrow," he said, walking through her hallway.

"So what, it's Christmas Eve? I can't fire you the day before?"

“You’re not firing us,” he reminded gently. “And we’ve already been over this. I guess you liked the idea of being strapped to a bed for long and indulgent hours of foreplay.”

She slid down his body as if he orchestrated the exact way he wanted to let her go. Smiling, he said, “Nice.”

The audacity! She should’ve slapped the cocky expression right off his smug cheeks. Instead, she found herself speechless as she watched him bend over and light the gas logs in the fireplace. The one mention of foreplay spiked her interest in a way she should’ve never allowed.

When he stood again, he pulled the curtains back. The large picture window overlooked the lower field. There, in the paddock, the beautiful palomino ran from one gate to the next. He reared high, kicking out his front legs as if the world angered him.

She watched in awe as the horse acted out on some kind of tantrum. “Where did you say that palomino came from?”

Colt didn’t answer her. Instead, he shrugged out of his coat and leaned in behind the massive Christmas tree and plugged in the Christmas lights.

“The horse, Colt?” she asked, halfway turning her head to glance at him but unable to look away from the beautiful golden stallion as his erect penis dropped and he stamped at the dusty ground beneath him.

“Oh, my God,” she whispered. “He’s excited, aroused.”

“Seth’s not the only one.”

She turned around and said, “Where are the mares?” Then, his response hit her square in the face. “What did you say about Seth?”

* * * *

Colt and Seth disagreed on a primary point. One of the reasons Seth ran for the lower field to thrash out his fit was because of the

discussion they had driving back to the house. Seth didn't want Haley to know about them, at least not yet.

Colt couldn't postpone honesty especially since they were running out of time. Stallions with a mate to claim were required to stand with their mare before Christmas morning. Colt felt an obligation to tell his mate the truth before he took her and honesty would lead to his claiming.

He couldn't tear his gaze away from Haley. The woman was more beautiful than any woman he'd ever pursued. The way her auburn locks bounced like curlicues accentuated her ivory complexion, casting a hint of color on her high cheekbones. When she looked at him, her royal-blue eyes sparkled with the lust hiding behind them.

Yes indeed, he loved everything about Haley McIntire. Colt's feelings had grown from love at first sight to an obsession, a dire need even Seth couldn't explain to him.

Seth had been in love with a human shifter once before. Colt, on the other hand, had loved only Haley. The experience was new, fresh, and so exhilarating.

Clearing her throat, she said, "What did you mean about Seth?"

Now or never, he thought. "Haley, I think there's something you should know," he began, pointing to the couch. "Why don't you have a seat?"

God help him if she sat too close. His erection pressed against his zipper, already harder than he ever recalled. If she took a seat next to him, he wouldn't deny himself. All the more reason to remain on his feet, he mused.

Seth continued to show off. He ran from one side of the corral to the next, stretching out his front legs in an effort to slide within centimeters of the fence. Then, his tail arched and he made a mad dash for the other side. Colt silently gave him credit. The damn boy was beauty set in motion.

Colt couldn't wait for him to give up the show. Then, maybe Haley would redirect her focus.

“You didn’t answer me,” she said. “Are the mares secured in the barn?”

Ah yeah, Haley, he thought. The one Seth wants is already inside, safe but not necessarily protected from a good breeding.

“Haley,” he sighed, touching her curls and admiring the silky ringlets as they looped around his finger. God help him, from the moment he first saw her, he wanted to run his hands through those strands just to see if the pretty locks were as soft to the touch as they looked.

He worked his hands through her hair and indulged. At first, he was able to resist, fingering his way through the length, but then he weaved his hand closer to her scalp.

“That feels nice,” she said, her defenses shattering, and startling him all the more.

He lowered his head to hers. “I want you to feel nice all over.”

The tingling sensation in his hands and limbs shot through his body and headed straight for his balls when she faced him. “This is wrong,” she whispered. “This is the house I shared with my husband. This is so wrong.”

Colt didn’t feel guilt, but he carried some of hers. He saw the mix of lust and longing in her expression, right along with the heartache. He wanted to take away her pain, kiss away her apprehension, and right then and there, he wanted nothing more than to love her.

Gripping her head between his palms, he said, “I have to tell you something.”

She shook her head and then kissed his lips, closing her eyes when she moved forward. Damn it to all fucking hell, he thought. And sure enough, hell was indeed about to break loose.

Chapter Three

A loud bang outside stopped the kiss from gaining substance. Haley stared out the window and immediately saw her dilapidated fences. The palomino must've plowed through the side rails and ran for those mares. "What the hell?"

"Damn it, Seth!" Colt exclaimed, running for the door.

Snatching the jacket she'd only just discarded, Haley followed him to the barn. "Seth? How is any of this Seth's fault?"

She heard a skirmish between horses and quickly rounded the corner to find the palomino and another horse she'd never seen, in a massive fight. Hooves clanged together so loud they sounded like pots and pans.

"Colt!" she screamed over her shoulder, searching the barn for her employees. "Seth!" she yelled, louder. The horses continued to battle for ground there.

Think, Haley, think.

She groaned, turning toward the stalls. She had no idea which mare was in heat. She rushed down the barn and grabbed a pitchfork.

"Stop this!" she screamed, shaking the large, long-handled fork in their direction. Where were those dang college boys when she needed them?

The two wild horses fought hard. Nipping at one another, they angrily butted heads like two bulls might do and then continued to rear and strike, buck and kick.

A soft tumble of hay landed at her feet and a few buckets of grain spilled on top of the mess they'd already made. "Shoo!" she said, trying her best to get the two untamed horses out of her barn.

“Damn it! If I knew which mare you wanted, I’d fucking let you have her!”

As if she said the magic words, the horses stopped their aggressive behavior and both of them looked at her with heated eyes. “Oh shit,” she said, dropping the barnyard tool and placing her palms forward.

They were going to run straight over her just because she interrupted their dispute. She bit back fear. “I was just teasing. You two go ahead and play.”

Oh, great. She’d truly lost her mind. She spoke to the horses like they fully understood her.

“Easy,” she said, backing down the breezeway. “Easy, boys.”

The horses started walking. Nostrils flared. The sweat rolled off their backs and steam rose from their beautiful, sleek coats. They marched forward reminding her of the Budweiser horses and how they used to lead long city parades. They walked with precision, beating out their pursuit with heavy hooves clopping against the ground.

“Good, boys,” she said. “Easy now,” she added, trying to inch away from danger.

A few more backward steps and she’d bolt for the office. Then, she’d lock herself there until Seth and Colt came back from wherever they disappeared. Her nerve endings were on red alert. These horses were vicious animals, the kind of studs waiting to breed.

She blinked and tried to think again. What kind of mare caused this kind of commotion?

Another step back and then another. “Shit!” she exclaimed when they cornered her, almost like they knew she planned to dart left and head for the confines of the grain room and office.

Neighing softly, the black horse nuzzled her arm. The palomino, the horse with attitude, snorted.

Haley petted the black horse’s silky coat. She smiled when she thought about Colt. Funny, but his hair was almost the same color.

As suddenly as she thought about Colt, he appeared right before her eyes. A few seconds later, another man stepped out of his palomino shell. And he was raging mad.

* * * *

“We agreed no stunts!” Seth exclaimed, giving Colt a shove.

Haley’s eyes widened. She looked from one man to the next. “What the—”

“If I waited on you,” Colt said, “she’d never know the whole story!”

“You didn’t have to show her the truth! It was your choice here. There’s nothing written anywhere that says the male shifters have to explain the transformation to their human mates. She can’t refuse you even if she wants to, so why bother showing her what we are? Huh? Christmas is two days away. Everything would’ve worked itself out!”

“What are you talking about? Mates? Shifters?” she asked, clearly dumbfounded. “What would work itself out?”

Colt glared at Seth. “I believe in forming honest relationships.”

She shook her head. “Wait a minute here. What is all this? I just saw two hors—”

“Damn it, Colt! Listen to me. She can’t resist a Stallion-mate! She didn’t have to know! On Christmas morning, if we hadn’t claimed her she would’ve shifted all on her own and the instinctive tug would’ve made us impossible to refuse. Your way only complicates things,” Seth continued, making a profound point to avoid Haley at all costs. Colt trotted into this mess and he didn’t mind to gallop out of the barn and leave Colt parked in front of her, explaining himself.

Haley coughed. She held her chest and asked calmly, “Where did those beautiful horses go?”

Seth chuckled. “Damn, Colt, where did those handsome studs go?”

“I got your stud right here,” he said, smacking his cheek playfully.

Seth seethed. Colt's attempt to lighten the mood didn't work. He was furious.

"What the hell is going on here?" Haley demanded.

"You don't know yet?" Seth asked. "Damn, it's taking her a little longer than—" He couldn't think about Sydney now. Sydney left him when she found a few wild stallions she claimed were her real mates. Maybe she was right. He'd felt the true magnetic draw from Haley, something similar to what he'd once felt with Sydney only much, much stronger. He just wanted to stand at stud for the first time and get the initial mating process behind them.

Haley's eyes softened then, which was unexpected, and Seth addressed Colt. "Give her a minute," he whispered. Haley wobbled on her legs and Colt wrapped his arm around her waist.

"She'll transform only after we take her," Seth said. "Or on Christmas morning, which I would've preferred."

"No," Colt stated flatly. "She's trying now."

"She can't," Seth said. "And she'll only get weaker when she has the urge. If we're going to enjoy the joining, we take her now."

Haley shook her head. "I don't understand," she said. "I...don't..."

She fainted. Colt and Seth caught her before she hit the sawdust. "Get this place cleaned up, and I'll take her up to the house," Colt ordered.

"Hell, no," Seth said, cradling her in his arms. "You made the mess when your big hooves kicked over those hay bales." He strode toward the barn doors and looked over his shoulder. What the hell, he thought. Why not devil him some? "Haley here whispered she can't wait to ride her stallion."

"Ha," Colt said, grabbing the first bale and tossing it aside. "If she said anything at all it was more along the lines of, 'you surely don't expect a grown woman to ride a pony?'"

Chapter Four

Haley woke up drowning in desire. Her hands felt clammy and her nipples ached for some reason. Then there was the issue—a true problem since she didn’t have a way to solve it immediately—of moisture between her legs.

She stared into the fireplace and focused on what she saw there. Two horses, beautiful stallions, ran with a chestnut-colored mare. They frolicked in an open field, the mare leading the way with her tail high and her ears pricked forward.

She swallowed when she saw the next image materialize in the logs. Two men and one woman strolled toward her. She gasped when their faces became clearer. She saw herself in the middle. Colt and Seth were on each side holding her hands. They were smiling, relaxed, not nearly as tense as they’d been since they’d started working at the ranch.

Oh Lord, she thought, holding her palm to her forehead. She must have lost some time or something. She looked outside into complete darkness. She forced herself to sit up, and stared into the knowing eyes of Seth and Colt.

“Well, boys,” she said, pushing herself forward on the balls of her hands. “I guess we need to have a talk.”

Colt ran his open palm over the length of his face. He then locked his fingers in between his legs and that’s when she saw the clear evidence of a thick bulge in his denim pants.

Seth sat comfortably on the other end of the sofa. His left leg crossed over his right. He picked at a thread hanging from his pants, carefully studying the way it knotted at the end.

Colt stood. “We’re called The Stallions—and none of us are blood related by the way—we’re only connected by the common factor we all share,” he began. “We’re shifters, half human and half horse.”

Choking as she cleared her throat, she said, “You expect me to believe you’re part animal?”

Seth chuckled. “Oh, it’s true. Don’t you remember what you saw in the barn?”

No, she thought. *No. No. No.* She saw an image, her imagination playing tricks on her and nothing else. Now, she was simply having a dream. Why sure, that explained everything.

Colt stood over her. “We’re able to shift at any time consciously, and when anger is stronger than any other emotion, we shift without warning.”

She studied Seth. “So you’re telling me when that palomino—”

“You mean Seth,” Colt corrected.

“Whatever,” she continued. “You’re telling me the palomino was Seth, and he shifted because of the intensity of his anger?”

“It’s true,” Seth said. “I was mad as all hell.”

“I see,” she stated flatly. “And because of your fury, you became a horse?”

“Yes,” he said. “Something like that.”

She laughed. “Yeah, right, and when I’m quick to anger, I turn into a jackass.”

“Damn, I hope not,” Colt said, rubbing his thumb over his bottom lip. “I kind of dig the boobs.”

“I thought you preferred hooves,” she said.

“We’ll talk about that later,” Seth said, eyeing Colt.

“Oh, no,” she said, wagging her finger toward them. “If the two of you believe I’m turning into a horse, then you need to tell me what I can do to stop it.”

“You can’t,” Seth said, standing.

She saw evidence of his arousal, too. Good Lord, she had to get up. She couldn't just sit there in front of a roaring fire, eye-level to a couple of hard cocks.

Colt helped her stand. "Haley, we're yours. Like it or not, we're all you'll have for the rest of your natural life."

She blinked then. Over and over again, she tried to focus on the men standing in front of her, taking into account she certainly found them desirable. In fact, she found them extremely attractive before they began all this weird shit.

"Explain natural life," she said, moving to the bar and pouring a scotch on the rocks. No, on second thought, straight up sounded better. She took a swig straight from the bottle.

"We believe we shift through one life and begin the next one with the ability to choose whether or not we'll continue to shift," Colt explained.

"I see," she said. "So when you shift into your death state or whatever, then you can choose to leave me behind?"

"No," Colt said. "Shifters don't choose their mates here or in the afterlife," he told her. "We're fated to stay together forever, even after this life."

"But what if—"

"God, her scent is killing me here," Seth said, licking his lips and running his large hand over the front of his pants.

She raised her arms and sniffed. "I don't stink, thank you very much."

Colt laughed. "He's not talking armpits, doll."

She gulped. "Oh, dear Lord," she said. "In the barn...I'm the...oh my God. I'm the mare you two were looking for?"

"Yes and no," Seth explained. "I knew where to find you, but technically, since Colt wanted you to know more about the shifting process, I couldn't take you."

"You wanted me to fuck you as a horse?" she asked, totally disgusted.

“No,” Seth said. “I wanted you to cleanse me.”

“You wanted what?”

Colt clarified. “Haven’t you ever been to a breeding facility?”

“No,” she said taking a gulp of scotch. “And I’m a woman who isn’t particularly interested in the process.”

“You will be,” Seth told her. “At the breeding stables, often one horse teases the mare while the other one is prepared. The handlers will wash him when he demonstrates his arousal. The mare brought in for breeding often meets another stallion first, and then they introduce the real stud, the one meant for breeding.”

“Oh,” she said dryly. “So you wanted Colt to tease me while I bathed and prepared you?”

“Something like that,” Seth said.

She took a deep breath. “This is absurd. You honestly wanted me to arouse you while you were in your horse form so you could transition back into a man and do the dirty deed while Colt here watched?”

“I’m not exactly a bystander,” Colt said. “He would’ve transformed back into a man and encouraged you to bathe me, too.”

“I’m not giving either one of you a shower. If you need one, and you probably do, there’s the bathroom,” she said pointing down the hall. “And as you know, the towels are in the closet.”

* * * *

Minutes later, Haley stared at the tiled shower wall in total disbelief. They’d taken her suggestion to heart and now she stood on one side of the shower curtain while they stripped off on the other. Why was she doing this?

She looked down her body and noticed the obvious, perhaps even her reason for agreeing to shower with them in the first place. Her breasts were full, nipples pointed forward, and if she’d cared to dip her fingers into her vagina, she’d find her pussy wet and ready.

She closed her eyes and saw clipped images. The horses appeared again. This time, they ran across an open field into a large rock formation. The palomino led the way and the black horse followed behind her—or rather the chestnut mare—his nose at her tail, urging her forward.

For some reason, she felt like her feet plodded the ground. The sun was bright in her image and the sweat dripped off their sleek coats. *Just a little more*, the black stallion seemed to say. *You're almost there. We're almost there. Keep walking. You're heading in the right direction.*

She leaned her head back and allowed the water to drizzle over her hair and spine. Her mouth opened and the water trickled into her throat. Her eyes closed again.

She saw Colt standing over her. His feet remained flat against the floor and his length hung in front of her lips. Her jaw fell and her tongue slipped out of her mouth, catching the water drops, aching for something more than a little H₂O.

Sit up, Haley. Taste me.

The next image appeared. Colt spread her legs and penetrated her and at the same time Seth entered her mouth.

“Oh, God!” she screamed as her hips moved forward, grinding at the man who wasn’t there.

Someone yanked the curtain back and Colt stepped in the shower, followed by Seth.

Seth shot Colt a wicked grin. Then he addressed Haley. “The images you’re having will get worse if we don’t consummate our relationship. You’ll think you’re dying from lust, burning from the most intense heat you’ve ever felt in your life. Some describe the sensation as having hot wax drizzled over their body parts.”

Haley believed him, and, looking at them now, she wasn’t sure she’d deny them anyway. Their bodies were perfect, rippled in precise places, and both men possessed tempting identical forms.

The only difference between them existed in their eyes and hair color. Their facial features showcased marked similarities—high cheekbones, thick lips, and dark, long eyelashes to conceal their hooded eyes.

“You’re right,” she said breathless.

Colt stepped in front of her, handing her a washcloth and a bar of soap. “I belong to you.”

Trembling, she took the soap and rag while totally entranced, and she bathed him. Her hands smoothed over his broad shoulders and she caressed his arms. Nervously, she lathered his body in suds and avoided the one area she couldn’t bring herself to touch. No, not yet, she thought. If she handled his penis when she was this excited, she wouldn’t be able to give Seth the attention he deserved.

Colt touched her nipple with his forefinger, moving it in a circular manner before he turned her to face Seth. Colt’s lips went to her shoulders and his tongue swiped away water as she massaged the soap deep into Seth’s skin.

Seth looked at her with an incredible lust. She saw its existence heavy in his eyes as he parted his legs and moved her hand down.

The rag hung from his dick when she moved her fingers away. He smiled and gently took her hand in his. “Like this,” he said, rubbing the cloth over himself and showing her the proper way to clean a man, a proud stallion waiting to mate.

When she worked the cloth over his erection, she felt him pulse into her palm, the eagerness of his masculine member pressing forward and encouraging her to quicken the pace. Up and down, she moved over him until Colt reached around her and tweaked her nipples again, rolling them gently but causing her exquisite pain and unmatched pleasure.

She reached for Colt again and, lathering the soap in her hands, she didn’t take the cloth Seth offered. Instead, she scrubbed her palms together until they were foamy and she moved them up and down Colt’s stomach until she felt the tip of his dick at her wrist. Staring at

him, dying to see his reaction, she moved lower and massaged his length.

He closed his eyes and dropped his head back. “Ah, yeah, that’s it, baby. Stroke me.”

Curious when she felt the size of his cock, she glanced down. Heavens, she thought swallowing, she’d have to turn into a shifter, too, in order to handle something so enormous.

Seth stepped behind her. His hands careened over her hips and he massaged her lower back with his thumbs. “I’m taking you now,” he said in a guttural tone. “I can’t wait.”

Colt chuckled. “We’re basically standing at stud service, remember. There’s only a certain point during our stimulation when we can still enter you. If a stallion is too aroused, his penis becomes too wide and he’s forced to wait. I gotta tell you, sugar. I’m about there now.”

Chapter Five

Seth never imagined her caresses wielded the power to heal. He'd been bitter for so long and had forgotten what it felt like to have a woman's touch warm him.

When Colt carried her to the couch, Seth lay hard and waiting. Trying not to think about her didn't work. He'd practiced mind over matter, fearing if he didn't get a grip on his libido, he'd wait hours to take her.

"Come here, Haley," he whispered when Colt released her on the cushion next to him. Dragging her on top of his body, he wanted to ride her from the back first, fearing if he took her facing forward, he would lose himself in her eyes. But Colt wanted her sweet ass first.

Colt's foot stamped down beside their thighs and he latched on to her hip. Reaching under her, Colt's hand closed around Seth's dick and he pulled him through his closed fist.

"Hell, yeah, feel me," Seth moaned.

"I gotcha," Colt growled, licking her arm and nipping at her elbow.

Haley didn't look down, but she wiggled her body, her shape forming to his. Colt pumped Seth up and down while Haley pretended not to notice.

Seth stroked the flaps of her pussy, the intimate folds swelling as he manipulated her pleasure and drew from her heat the moisture needed to swirl around her back opening. She felt so sweet and responsive.

Kissing her back, Colt carefully studied Seth. They shared mutual unspoken wishes. They finally had their woman. The one they'd

searched for essentially found them when she placed an ad for farm hands. Now, they could join together and start their own family of Stallions.

Seth thrust inside her pussy and Colt eased his way into her ass. The impalement made her whimper, but she didn't look away. Instead, her eyes watered down with a woman's desire, filtering through the apparent pain in search of something meaningful. Seth knew she'd find everything she needed in the depths of his gaze.

"Are you okay?" he whispered as Colt stroked behind her.

"I'm perfect," she said, grunting after a sudden thrust. "This is so...surreal."

Colt held on to her waist and fucked her ass. "Ah, baby," he said. "This pretty bottom is exactly what I've wanted."

The lights flickered on the Christmas tree, each staggered row taking a turn about shining as they flickered in sync, up and down, over and across the full pine tree. The brightest light wasn't the angel topping off the magnificent tree. Oh no, they held her in their arms; locked, stocked, and barreled. As if on cue, together they plunged their way into one life-changing orgasm.

* * * *

She woke up in the barn. Looking around at the shavings piled around her and the hay tossed about, she knew without moving what had happened. She shifted. At some point during their lovemaking, she transitioned into a mare, one ready for breeding. She extended all four legs and gasped.

"Shhh..." she heard Colt's voice but when she stretched her neck, she couldn't find him.

"You're fine, Haley," he said, stroking her neck then. "You need to stay like this for another hour or so. Try not to move. We need you to rest so we can make sure the breeding process took. If you stand up

and the semen runs out, then we'll have to try this again until you take."

Good God! They want me pregnant? She immediately jumped to her feet. Heaven help her, she felt so big, fat, and extremely large. Now, they wanted her pregnant?

She stamped her feet—hooves—and glared at Colt. She wanted to scream out loud. Tell him how angry she was and then *poof!* She changed into her human form again, immediately appearing in the stall beside him. Only he stood fully clothed and she was as naked as the day she was born.

Shivering, her teeth clattered together. "What is this about a pregnancy?"

Seth came running when he heard her outburst. The two men exchanged a quick, silent stare.

"You want children, don't you?" Colt asked.

"Hell, no!" she exclaimed. "Absolutely not!" Well, on second thought, maybe someday.

Seth looked stunned. "Haley, all shifters want children."

"This one doesn't!" Tears streamed down her face. Of course she wanted children, but she'd have to be completely insane to bring a child-foal into this world. What kind of life would her child have? What kind of upbringing would she provide for a little one when she wasn't even sure how she'd take care of herself?

"You're overreacting," Colt said calmly. "And for the record, you're probably pregnant now. As much as we—"

"Don't you dare say breed," she warned.

Seth smiled. "We didn't breed, darlin'," he said, moving into her so she could feel the heavy weight of his cock. "We fucked like wild animals."

"We are wild animals!" she said, screaming. Immediately, she transformed back into a horse.

Get me out of this body!

Seth sighed and then said, “Okay listen, Haley, first of all, you have to learn to control your emotions.”

Yeah right, like you did in the paddock when you tore through my fences? No thank you.

“When you’re in human form and you’re mad, you’ll shift to your horse form. When you’re angry as a horse—or a stubborn mule, which is probably the case with you more often than not—you’ll shift back to your human form.”

She glared at Seth and then stared at Colt. All of this happened because of them. She resented the hell out of them right then.

“And by the way,” Colt said grinning, “we’re shifters, not mind readers so when you’re in this state, you can’t expect us to know what you’re thinking.”

God bless America, she wanted to kill them!

She shifted back. “This is so fucked up!” She paced in the stall. “Move!” she exclaimed, trying to push by Colt.

“You’re going to go back and forth like this if you don’t calm down,” Seth told her, backing into the corner of the stall and squatting down like he fully intended to watch another few transitions. “And it really is quite exhausting.”

She gritted her teeth and tried to calm down. She shifted back to a horse. Colt coaxed her out again by making her mad enough to bite nails and she shifted once more.

“Okay,” she said, after she switched from horse to human a few more times. “What now?”

Colt snaked his arm around her waist. “Now, you can start loving us.”

Seth chuckled. “Or at least admit you have some strong feelings.”

She narrowed her gaze. “You expect me to love you when you’ve turned me into a seventeen-hands-high beast?”

She shifted back.

“Yes,” they said simultaneously, leaving her in the stall and securely fastening it.

“And maybe by morning,” Colt said, “you’ll have time to think this through and realize you already do.”

Seth shook his head. “Haley, we’re in your system now and there really isn’t anything you can do about this except make it easier on yourself. Accept us as your mates. Let us show you how to make your transitions smoother. Then, we can get on with a little living and a whole lot of loving.”

Chapter Six

She found a little peace of mind after she shifted back into her horse body. She was much warmer sleeping as an animal rather than as a human. Little doubt existed in her mind. Seth and Colt wanted her to spend the night in the barn.

Resting her head in the sawdust, her ears twitched when she heard something. *Interesting*. Being a horse wasn't as bad as she'd first imagined. In fact, it was kind of neat. Maybe being one part animal and the other part human offered a few advantages. Her senses seemed sharper and right then, she was more aware of her emotions than she'd ever been.

More than anything in the world, she wanted to run now, see if she galloped as beautifully as any other horse, not that she'd see herself in a large moving mirror. She'd still like to know what it felt like to have her mane flowing across her neck with her tail moving swiftly behind her, lightly dancing in the wind.

She snorted. They locked her up when she wanted to escape. She jumped to her feet and shook all over when the anger lurched her back into human form. Hmmm, she thought, looking up. *I can climb over the bars. Then, I'm home free.*

A few minutes later, she dropped to the ground, concentrated on transitioning back to her horse form, nudged open the cracked barn doors, and loped into the hills. Her hooves pounded against the ground as she ran.

She jumped across a rippling brook with the cold night air whipping around her. Faster and faster she galloped.

Whee! Delighted, she jumped a pile of logs but then halted quickly when she heard someone whistling for her.

In the distance, she heard, “Haley! Here, Haley girl! Come on home now, Haley! Here, Haley girl!”

How dare they?

They called to her like she was some damn horse! Oh no, she thought. Oh no! Oh no! It was too late. She was human again and too darn tired to switch back.

* * * *

Seth was a magnificent palomino. When he appeared on the ridge, he kicked out his anger, showing off his blond mane and tail in the process. A few minutes later he stood in front of her, the hard man with one hell of a sizeable erection. She noticed his clothes draped over his arm.

“Neat trick,” she said tilting her head toward his outerwear.

“I’ll teach you how to shift with your clothes,” he promised.

“You like me without them.”

He snickered. “Maybe.”

“No doubt,” she teased, eyeing his hard-on.

“Haley,” he said, looping his thick arms around her. “What the hell were you thinking?”

“I wasn’t,” she said. “I just wanted to run, see what it felt like to be free, wild, and totally loose.”

Seth’s expression softened. “I remember my first time, too,” he admitted. “But you could’ve waited until Colt and I came for you.”

“Why? So you could try to get me pregnant again?”

He snickered. “Do you think that’s the only reason we want you?”

“I don’t know,” she said, pushing away from him. Goosebumps covered her body and her nipples were erect when a sudden cold wind blew a gusty chill over them.

“It isn’t,” he said, snaking his arms around her hips and falling to the hard ground.

“I’m freezing,” she complained.

“I’ll warm you,” he whispered, claiming her mouth and licking his way into the freedom she allowed with parted lips.

Kissing Seth was like kissing an angel with broken wings. His gaze held hers while their mouths opened and closed, accepted and gave licks and nips, tongues dueling for the right to lead. Then, he turned into the aggressor, yanking her closer, and nuzzling her with ferocious passion guiding him down her belly, up to her breasts, over to her ear, down her side, and finally straight into the core of her sex.

His tongue thrust inside her hot walls and she arched for him as he pulled her forward, his hands clasping her bottom and raising her to him. He licked her folds and then sipped her moisture, pressing his tongue forward and lapping at her like he planned to eat her alive.

“Seth,” she whispered. “Oh God, Seth.”

“Come for me,” he mumbled against her mound, nuzzling her flesh and inhaling her scent. “Let me drink you in, darlin’.”

So engulfed in her own lust, she didn’t see Colt approach but she sensed him there. With the back of her hand pressed against her mouth, she braced for the orgasm and arched forward. Keeping her eyes closed, she waited for his first touch, the feel of Colt’s hands roaming over her.

Seth should’ve been licensed to waggle his tongue inside a woman’s pussy. Good heavens, he called out the heat, the kind of climax a woman couldn’t take over and over again because multiples would’ve damn near killed her.

Suddenly, as if things changed for him, he braced himself over her. His palms were on either side of her head and his cock pressed at her folds.

“Bend over more,” Colt whispered.

She gasped.

Seth winked. “It works out great for all of us this way,” he explained.

Colt stared at her then, looking over Seth’s shoulder as he positioned Seth’s ass in front of his cock. “Stallions are highly sexual, Haley. We’re close to our mates, male and female.”

Spreading her legs, she fingered her clit, rolling the little button back and forth, waiting for Colt to take Seth and encouraging Seth to succumb to the lust building between them.

The sweet tip of his head swelled beyond her pussy lips and he pushed inside her walls. “Hell, woman, don’t touch what belongs to me.”

He reached under her and fingered her ass as he stroked her vagina. Colt sank in behind Seth and she felt the impalement point. The sharing soon jolted her into a new awareness. Their bodies rocked together. Seth released one guttural sound after the next and she watched his varied expressions—the evidence of pain and pleasure rocking him when Colt’s pace increased.

“That’s it, sugar,” Colt said. “Work those thighs, honey.” His gaze drifted down to Seth’s ass and he suddenly changed his tempo, thrusting hard and staying put for a second before he reared back and forth in an intense swaying move.

“Now,” he said through clenched teeth.

She worked her legs, rolling her hips forward and back, taking the gifts Seth’s cock gave as he divided her legs more, plunging inside and going as far as her body allowed. “Yes!” she exclaimed. “Oh yes, right there. Fuck me harder, Seth. Go deeper. Ah...God yes!”

Colt collapsed on Seth’s back and Seth stroked her pussy with timed momentum. When Colt moved away from him, Seth pushed her knees up and hammered forward, claiming his orgasm, riding it out, and driving his cock into the depths of her warm pussy.

“Yes! Yes! Fuck yeah!” he said in a husky voice.

His cum jetted forward, spinning through her walls like hot lava. When he finally relaxed, he waited until he was flaccid again before

he pulled out, something she noticed both Stallions did, for fear withdrawing would hurt her.

Licking her nipple, he pinched and released the other one. "I love you," he whispered. "I love everything about you."

"I know," she said. "And I'm falling for you, too," she said. "Both of you," she promised, reaching for Colt.

"Don't," Seth warned. "When a Stallion takes another Stallion, they're aggressive for a few hours after they've had sex. Most of them stay highly aroused following the act."

Colt's lips tilted in a tempting smile and then he shifted into a dark beauty, rearing high and showing off. He turned and galloped for the house.

"Want to run or ride?" Seth asked, pulling her against his chest.

"I want to slide all over your back," she teased.

Seth's eyes immediately turned to hot milk chocolate. "You'd better be careful, Haley. I know you're still wet, and I can give you more ideas for seduction and foreplay than you'll ever handle."

"I want to ride," she taunted, petting his head.

"Define ride," he said, kissing her lightly on the cheek. He tossed his clothes toward her. "You'll probably need these since you haven't learned to move around with your clothes in hand."

She wiggled her upper body into the shirt and wrapped his coat around her. "I'm riding you bare-butt," she said holding up his pants.

He chuckled. "Then you may not make it all the way home if I have your sweet heat rubbing across my back."

A few minutes later she rode across the open land with Seth under her. The friction she felt at her folds left her with a sensation as if he touched her with his own hands, his hot lips, or even his oh-so talented tongue.

When they stopped in front of the porch, the sun was trying to peep through the clouds. Sliding down Seth's body, she stroked his damp coat and said, "Uh-oh, I think we have our morning company."

Chapter Seven

Shelly asked for it and she bit off more man than she could chew. After fucking Seth, Colt had one thing on his mind—his unmanageable libido. The only thing driving him was smoldering lust, pure and hot.

He first tried avoiding her. He didn't want Shelly, but Shelly made him hard. He was only a man, a man with a Stallion's sex drive. Shelly was in heat, God help him he could smell her arousal, her thick scent filling his nostrils.

"So," she said, twirling her long, dark hair around her forefinger. "When will they be back?"

"I don't know," he bit out, gripping the kitchen counter behind him and glaring at her breasts. She was so turned on her nipples pressed against her thin shirt. He could clearly see them.

"You know," she said, swaggering over to him. "I've never been happily married."

"But you are married," he pointed out, pulling out his shirt in an effort to hide the bulge in his pants, one a seductress like Shelly wouldn't miss.

"Am I scaring you, Colt?" she asked, licking her lips and looking at him like he was sex in a saddle.

"No," he said. "But I'm warning you, Shelly. I'm horny. I'll fuck you right here and won't care who walks in and catches us."

The damn kitten purred as though he offered her a delicious promise and a bowl of hot cream to lure her right on in. "You'd fuck me?"

"Damn right I would."

“What about Haley? Aren’t you attracted to the boss?” She moved closer, her hand cupped and ready to grab.

She had no way of knowing Haley had already been in his bed. Haley hadn’t been around her since the day before. Seth and Colt kept her so busy, she couldn’t have spoken to Shelly on the phone.

“I’m in love with Haley,” he bit out, the sweat rolling off his forehead now.

“Love,” she said, “is a strange and beautiful thing.” Her hand ran up and down her blouse and in the middle of a wink, all of the buttons were loosened and her blouse opened. Temptation lingered and it was only a touch away.

Damn it, he thought. Why did he have to fuck Seth? His damn dick felt like it was going to explode. Even if he took Shelly now, he’d have to place some distance between them. He’d rip her apart if he gave her what she wanted.

Shelly’s tongue rolled over her bottom lip. “I’d like to fuck you, too,” she said, reaching for his belt.

No shit. He needed Seth and Haley to rush through that door right about now.

God help him, he also longed for relief. He needed something substantial right then. Otherwise, he was going to rip right into Shelly, and she’d probably cry foul the second he took her.

He heard voices and looked up at his saving grace. They arrived in the nick of time. Seth rushed inside, pale with worry, understanding the potential for recourse after Stallion intercourse.

“We aren’t interrupting anything, I hope,” Seth said with a scowl.

Quickly, Shelly backed away from Colt and tried to button her blouse. Haley slowly entered the house too. First, she shot Colt a seething glare. Then, she stalked over to Shelly. “You’re married, Shell.”

“Well, I...”

“You what?”

“I...was...tempted, all right?”

Colt observed the way his feisty woman came into her own. The new fillies chosen for mates were often older women paired with males still in their prime. Younger stallions could handle them sexually but many of the females became die-hard possessive and protected their territory after mating with the stallions.

“I was never tempted to take off my shirt for another man when I was married,” Haley said, placing her hand on her friend’s upper back. “Why don’t you go home and see if you can’t convince your husband to come home for a little afternoon nookie. There’s none of that here for you.”

Shelly stopped at the door. “Oh, my God.”

“What?” Haley snapped.

“You’re fucking both of them, aren’t you?” she asked.

Colt expected her to deny their joining but instead she said, “You’re damn right I am, and I’m not a woman who shares.”

Shelly narrowed her gaze. “You always were selfish, Haley McIntire,” she snipped, slamming the door when she left in a huff, but at least she disappeared before Colt did something he’d regret.

* * * *

Colt headed straight for the shower. He wanted to get cleaned up and he needed to calm down. Then, he planned to fuck Haley straight through the day with very few breaks.

When he heard her enter the bathroom, he said, “I’m only warning you once, Haley.”

“Don’t bother,” she said, yanking the designer vinyl curtain back. “Seth already told me and if it’s sex you need, you have me.” She stepped inside the large shower and he immediately grabbed her, snaking his arms around her and lifting her to him in one sudden move.

Her legs wrapped around his waist and he slipped inside her folds. “Good God, this feels right.”

With palms to her ass, he hammered inside her, pressing her back against the shower stall wall. Humping her like he couldn't go deep enough, she clawed at his shoulders and rode his cock, grinding her mound against his pelvic area as he stretched her, taking her all the way to the base of his cock. Uncertain at various points of where his body ended and hers began, he tirelessly screwed her.

"Colt," she said breathlessly. "Slow, take things slow."

"Can't..." he said, stroking her evenly, "I can't right now." He clasped her hand with his and held it high above her head. God help him, she felt tight around him, milking his skin, threading his cock so deliberately that he swore when she climaxed. The heat was intense, the friction remarkably even more pleasurable than the first time he'd fucked her.

"I love you," he said, screwing her still harder. "God, I love you."

"Yeah," she said, nipping at his lips. "Then when you're this horny, you find me. Not Shelly, but me."

She squeezed her legs and rode him. His hips moved faster and faster and his thighs bunched. "Oh, shit," he muttered. "Come for me right now. Again, baby. Let me feel you milk it, doll. Take hold of this cock and ride, baby. Oh, God yeah, ride me."

He gripped her perfectly shaped bottom and moved her up and down his shaft until he filled her with his cum. Then, he waited a few minutes and started all over again.

Chapter Eight

They woke up to freezing room temperatures. The cold air filled her senses and she realized at some point during the night one of her men opened up the window. She inhaled. Christmas hung in the air, and her nostrils filled with the scent from the small pine trees she used to decorate her entire house.

Incredibly saturated, she wanted sex and since she had two men there to please her, she didn't have to want and not indulge. Watching them sleep, she found it highly erotic seeing them cuddle in one another's arms.

Their thick limbs tangled and—upon closer inspection—she saw their cocks touching. Damn! How fucking sexy could two men sleep?

Turned on by their intimacy, she hated to wait, but decided to let them rest a little while longer. Rather than wake them up to service her own needs, she rushed downstairs and started the coffee. She situated the gifts around the tree and then made the hike back upstairs. She froze on the steps when she heard the animalistic noises coming from her bedroom.

“Yeah, baby. Suck it, Seth. Um, yeah, that's my boy. Swallow that cock. Lick me.”

She tiptoed down the hall and eased the bedroom door open. There, in the middle of the bed, she saw passion, love, and some of the hottest oral sex she'd ever witnessed.

Seth took Colt all the way to his throat. The men were locked in a gaze she didn't dare interrupt. Seth sipped at Colt like he tasted better than a first cup of morning coffee.

“That’s good, Seth. Let me fuck your pretty mouth,” Colt said, spreading his legs and moving faster and faster.

He grabbed his ears and groaned. “Hell yeah,” he said, changing his stance again and slapping his thick balls against Seth’s chin.

Colt’s heavy sac smacked Seth’s face as Colt held his head closer to his groin. “Coming,” he called out, fucking harder for his release. “Ah, God!” he exclaimed. “That’s it, suck it,” he said, patting his face while screwing his cock into Seth’s deep throat.

Seth collapsed against the mattress and Colt knelt down to stroke his belly. Taking Seth’s engorged tip to his mouth, he said, “Come here, Haley. I want you to watch.” Then he gripped Seth’s dick and sucked the cum straight out of him.

* * * *

They’d asked her what sexual experience she wanted for Christmas and she told them double stuffing. They’d looked at her with hungry eyes.

“You mean—”

“I mean double penetration in my pussy,” she informed, but then felt her cheeks burn hot by her own request.

Seth stretched out on the bed. He took his cock to hand and tilted his head in Colt’s direction. “You’ll have to take us now, while we’re still somewhat soft, otherwise these two dicks won’t fit inside your tight little snatch.”

She spread her legs and then her pussy lips parted. “Then hurry. You’d better start now before I change my mind.”

Straddling one leg, Seth pointed his cock toward her vagina. Colt, positioned between her legs, eased her open with the head of his dick. “That’s it, good girl,” he said.

“Now,” she said. “Please take me now.”

With a lopsided smile, Seth said, “You heard our girl.”

“Yeah,” Colt acknowledged, nodding. “God, yeah,” he added when they slipped inside together.

“Oh, shit,” she said, closing her eyes.

“Don’t worry, the shifter fillies are able to handle this, honey. Relax,” Colt whispered. “Just enjoy us.”

The men used one another for balance and together they fucked her at the same time. Seth pinched her nipple and rolled it to a hard point.

She stared at her men and thought about Christmas. What a gift she’d received in Seth and Colt.

“Wider, honey,” Seth said, jarring her into the here and now again.

She felt each stroke and every ripple as they took her to ecstasy and brought her down again. Then, their expressions changed. The heavy look of dire need changed to pure fulfillment and they pounded into her, their cocks swelling with the pulse of their building release.

She exploded again and they came with her, thrusting forward and pulling back, almost withdrawing before they collapsed on top of her, their hands rubbing and caressing her as they whispered soft promises against her skin.

“I’ll love you forever,” she said, feeling the surge of emotions taking over her mind, soul, heart, and spirit.

“You’ve loved us always,” Colt informed, stroking her head and withdrawing with Seth when he made the first move.

“I...” she couldn’t think. Had she loved them since the day she’d met them? Possibly. She certainly found them hard to resist and since the first day, fantasized about them. But even daydreams couldn’t have prepared her for this.

Seth cradled her in his arms and Colt slid in behind him, making sure he embraced her as much as Seth.

She’d never felt so loved. She’d never felt safer. She’d never felt such passion. And she’d also never felt queasier.

Chapter Nine

She rushed to the bathroom and hovered over the commode. Her face was in the bowl before she had time to contemplate what was happening to her.

Seth and Colt rushed in. Seth grabbed a washcloth and tried to bathe her face and neck with the cool rag.

“No,” she said, placing her hand up. “Please...let me sit here alone.”

“Not a chance,” Colt said, sitting behind her with outstretched legs, tickling her back as she lost her breakfast, lunch, and dinner from the day and probably even the week, before.

“I’ve...never...been...so...sick,” she said, throwing up all over again.

Seth sat on the vanity and watched her.

She waved them away. “Please! Oh, please,” she said softly. “Leave me here by myself.”

“We can’t Haley. Let us help you,” Seth said.

“What do you mean you can’t?” she demanded, hugging the toilet. “I don’t want anyone to watch me puke!”

She quickly grabbed the rag from his hand, wiped her mouth, and peered over her shoulder. “Oh no, oh no you don’t,” she said, shaking her head violently. “I am not pregnant. Don’t you dare look at me that way, Colt Stallion. I must’ve eaten something that didn’t agree with me.”

Colt grinned and kissed her shoulder. “Merry Christmas, Haley.”

Quickly, she turned what she hoped was a venomous gaze toward Seth. “You planned this!”

Colt rubbed her back. “Haley, calm down. This bathroom is big but I’m not sure the space will accommodate a horse. Remember, you’ll shift when anger is your strongest emo—”

She neighed out loud when she shifted right into her horse form. Stamping her hoof mighty close to Colt’s treasured cock, she tossed her head up and down.

The bathroom was big enough for her. She didn’t care about making room enough for three.

She wanted them out of there. Right then and there, she wanted them to disappear. They’d tricked her. Damn it to hell, they knew she was pregnant all along. She glared into the mirror behind Seth. Hmm, she thought, at least she was a right pretty horse.

Yeah, and soon she’d be a pretty pregnant horse.

She stamped her hoof again and transitioned back. Seth hurriedly grabbed a blanket from the bed and wrapped it around her, gathering her in his arms.

“What are you doing?” she demanded.

“Shh,” he whispered.

“Hurry,” Colt said, following them down the hall.

She panicked, fear rampant in her veins. “You mean I’m having this baby now?”

“Why hell no,” Colt said. “But since you’re such a stubborn woman, we’re getting you out of the house so that when you—”

Seth barely made it to the front porch before she shifted back once more. “Damn it, Haley. I want you to stop this behavior.”

He called out to the open wind as she took off at a gallop and headed for the lower fields. The only thing she heard behind her was Seth telling Colt, “Let her go. She’ll come back when she’s ready.”

* * * *

Being a horse was better than being human. Being pregnant as a horse was more tolerable than a pregnant human, too. In her horse

form, she wasn't sick and in fact, she felt better than she'd felt in ages.

She trotted along the fence line of the property and spotted Shelly's black Toyota coming up her driveway. She didn't care, she thought. Let them have a go at Shelly, too. After all, it was Christmas. Maybe they'd shift her into a horse and then she could run wild and free with her best friend.

She looked up and saw Shelly get out of the car with her arms loaded down. A peace offering, she thought. Uh huh, sure, that's why she wore a bright red dress so short it barely covered her.

Snorting, Haley raised her front hoof and reared high. No damn way, she thought. She used the holidays for an excuse to come in and flirt with her boys, correction...her stallions. Oh no, this didn't work for her. Shelly had it right before. Haley didn't share, and she certainly wouldn't give her time alone with her men.

Galloping over the open fields, she jumped a small creek and sloshed through a few puddles. When she finally reached her porch, she concentrated on shifting back. The transition took her from cantering for home in her horse body to rushing through her front door covered in mud and of course, completely nude.

"Oh, my God," Shelly gasped, quickly placing her boxed goodies on the kitchen counter. "Haley!" she rushed toward her. "What the hell happened to you?"

Colt ran downstairs and happened to have a large towel in hand. He must've been watching for her. Wrapping her body against his, he said, "Damn it, you're sleepwalking more and more." He brushed her hair out of her eyes. "Are you all right?"

"Ye...esss," she said, shivering and thankful he thought of an excuse.

He quickly picked her up and carried her toward the stairs. "Hello, Shelly," he said coolly. "There's fresh coffee on. Make yourself at home. Seth will be down in a minute."

"Oh, um—okay, great," she said. "I'll wait on you, Haley."

Lucky me, she thought, jealousy still flaming her temper. Colt carried her to the bathroom and Seth moved out of the way. “Is Shelly still downstairs?”

“Of course,” Haley bit out.

“Don’t ask,” Colt advised Seth, stepping into the shower and tossing the towel on the floor. He undressed after he helped her stand under the spraying nozzle.

Lathering her body with a floral-fragranced soap, his words soothed her as much as his hands. “You’re so beautiful, Haley. So sexy.”

He was erect but a perfect gentleman as he handled her care with gentle fingers and soft lips. He bathed her and then used a thick towel to pat her down and dry her. Her hair stuck to her cheek and slowly he pulled it away, smiling as he looked down on her. “Want me to get rid of Shelly?”

“No,” she said. “We’ve had a Christmas morning tradition for years. We make a list of all the things we wanted for Christmas that we didn’t get, all the things we did and what we can do to encourage our hus—well, we used to jot down what we were going to do to manipulate the fellows into getting us what we wanted the following Christmas.”

Seth leaned in the room, clutching the doorframe. “Shelly wanted me to tell you that she has her pen in one hand and a coffee cup in the other.”

“I’ll be right there.”

“You’re feeling okay, aren’t you, doll?” Seth asked.

“Yes,” she said, dropping the soft towel and strutting to her closet. She’d been running around for what seemed like days, either in a horse’s body or completely nude. It felt good to finally choose something nice and warm to wear.

When she walked out of her closet with her sweatshirt and leggings in hand, two sets of eyes kept her undressed. She grinned. “We have company, you know.”

The evidence of their lust pointed forward. They were hard and erect, so aroused that she knew she'd return downstairs alone. They couldn't leave the bedroom.

"Well," she said. "I'll let you boys have your guy time."

Seth stopped her from dressing. "Just a quickie?"

"No," she stated flatly. "I'm still a little queasy."

Colt slid a kiss on her cheek and then embraced Seth. Nipping at his lips, he said, "You don't know what you're missing."

Her nipples immediately ached for their hands, their full lips, their sensual tongues, but she remained focused on her clothes. After shoving her head and arms into the pink hoodie, she slipped on her leggings. At the same time, Colt slipped his dick into Seth's open mouth.

"Dear God," she said, watching. "How am I supposed to go downstairs now?"

Colt chuckled. "Just remember what you have to look forward to and get rid of Shelly fast."

She thought of the last time Colt had taken Seth. God, yes, she knew what waited for her on the other side of a cup of coffee. She watched Seth's hungry eyes as he sucked Colt's cock.

Reluctantly, she backed out of her bedroom and left them with a quick warning. "Don't either of you move from this room. And FYI, I'm not sharing you with Shelly."

Chapter Ten

Shelly tapped her fingernails on the kitchen table. “Okay, so I don’t get it. Every year we do this and we both have these long lists. You don’t have anything written down.”

Maybe her friend failed to notice the obvious. Her husband died over two years ago. Haley looked at her blank piece of paper and then pushed away from the table. “When did we start this ridiculous tradition, Shelly?”

“Uh, When I started seeing George and you started dating Hank.”

Hank...she smiled when Shelly said his name. Oddly, she hadn’t heard anyone mention his name around her in a long time. They always said “husband” and she even referred to him as her husband but rarely Hank. The name held pain. The name brought back memories. The name served as a reminder. Hank was dead and he wasn’t coming back.

She walked over to the Christmas tree and stared at the ornaments. She fingered the lights and traced a large red bulb she didn’t remember from previous Christmases. Maybe she bought it the year before Hank died. She couldn’t recall much about their last Christmas. Things between them had been strained. They still loved one another, but they were under tremendous stress managing the ranch and adding on to the house.

“Are you all right?” Shelly asked, true concern in her voice.

“I’m perfect.”

“Then come over here and make your list, woman!”

“No,” she said, picking up a few fallen pine needles from the floor. “Shelly, I want to lay Hank to rest.”

“You want to what?”

“Hank is dead,” she said flatly. “His memory will live on forever but there are some traditions—like our silly lists—that should have died right along with him.”

“This has something to do with those boys you’re keeping here.”

About the time she mentioned Colt and Seth a very loud noise banged out upstairs. It sounded out in an even tempo. *Bang...bang...bang...boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!*

She had enough sex in her marriage bed to know the sound of her own headboard meeting the back wall. Clearing her throat, she said, “This has nothing to do with Seth and Colt.”

Shelly’s expression was priceless. She looked over at the steps and then pointed upstairs. “Is that what I think it is?”

Boom! Boom! Boom! Bang, bang, bang.

“What are you talking about?” Haley tried to keep a straight face.

“Are they...no, surely not.”

“Are they what?” Haley asked, amused.

The noise continued and it was louder, harder, faster.

Shelly stood and went to the bottom of the steps.

“I wouldn’t go up there if I were you,” Haley cautioned.

Shelly took her words as a dare or a challenge, apparently, because she practically sprinted up the stairs.

“Don’t say I didn’t warn you!”

* * * *

Colt couldn’t get enough of Seth. He flipped him over and shoved his legs apart. “That’s it,” Seth coaxed him. “Fuck my ass, baby. Shove that big cock in my ass and ride me.”

Colt teased him. Damn it, he wished Haley was there to join them. He wanted her to see this, watch him fuck Seth in a position that would allow her the best vantage point.

He fisted his cock against Seth's balls. Damn, he'd love for her to watch him enter Seth, see him slip his long dick inside Seth's ass and watch as he milked his cock.

Colt rubbed his penis all over Seth's bottom until the pre-cum leaked onto his opening. "You want me bad, don't you?" he asked, pressing the tip to his bottom and watching his opening pulse, waiting for acceptance, eager for the first penetration.

"Damn it, Colt," Seth said. "Give me what I want, big daddy." He slapped his hands against the mattress and scooted forward, trying to capture his cock.

"Big daddy?"

Colt and Seth looked over at the open door. "Shit!" Seth said, trying to close his legs.

. "You need something, Shelly?"

She blinked. Colt didn't move and wouldn't allow Seth to squirm away from him. Colt got off on this sort of thing. He always enjoyed providing a show and if she had the nerve to walk up on them, let her watch. He didn't care.

"I..."

"You what?" he said, rubbing his swollen tip over Seth's ass. "I'm gonna fuck him, so if you don't want to see, then you might want to leave."

By this time, Haley stood at the door. "Hey, beautiful," Colt said, grinning.

"Hey," she said, eyeing Seth and then Colt. "I warned her."

"She may want to join us," he said, rubbing and teasing Seth until his bottom relaxed again.

Shelly's mouth hung open. "I...I..."

"You what, damn it?" Colt snapped, rubbing his thick tip over Seth's ass.

Shelly yelped, turned and ran back down the hall. Colt shrugged, winked at Haley and spread Seth wider. Sinking inside his tight ass, he growled, "Get rid of her and do it fast."

Haley strolled to the bed. She tilted Seth's head up and kissed him. "I love you," she said. Then she framed Colt's cheeks. He stroked slower while she kissed him, making sure his dick entered Seth as his tongue parted her lips.

"And I love you, too," she said, breaking the connection. "Now, hurry up. Shelly's leaving and I have a surprise waiting for you downstairs." She glanced at Seth's bottom. Her gaze settled first at the base of Colt's dick, then her eyes turned hungry and she followed his length all the way to the point of penetration. "Good heavens," she said, unable to move.

"Are you watching, joining, or leaving us to our alone time?"

"Do you need alone time?" she asked, still focused on the way their bodies connected.

"Shit, Haley," Colt said, beads of sweat dripping from his forehead. He pushed his cock into Seth's ass. He felt his lips quiver. God help him, he needed her to go, just walk away.

"Do you?" she asked again.

Seth watched him now. His gaze burning bright with seduction, the wantonness shining through his pupils and his body responding to the impalement, and Seth waited for his answer, too.

He started to pump, thrusting his cock inside Seth like a wild beast unleashed. "God, yeah," he said, pushing Seth's legs apart and firmly gripping his knees. He stared into his eyes and he saw a part of himself, the part Seth had always owned and yet never verbally acknowledged.

She walked away at some point and he pushed higher into Seth's ass. Gripping Seth's cock, he caressed the shaft, rubbing his thumb over the slit.

"Ah hell," he said, licking his fingers and then touching the head again. "Come on, stud, come with me," he said, pulling him forward, working his penis with the best of hand jobs. "Come!" he barked, towering over him and leaning in long enough to kiss his lips and swipe his tongue over his bottom lip.

With his cock buried to the root, he felt the sensations building, the way Seth's ass cheeks divided and then squeezed around him. He rushed for the finish, bracing for ejaculation.

He reared back and plunged forward. "Now!" he said, pumping and pumping until Seth's cum jetted across Colt's hand, drenching his knuckles and running down his wrist.

Colt exploded, his own release filling Seth's bottom and spraying out in a volcanic eruption. "Man, oh man, you feel so tight," he said, trembling as his climax subsided. Remaining inside his bottom, he didn't pull out immediately. He slowly worked himself out, easing back one inch at a time as his length slowly diminished.

"I've always known I couldn't live without you," Seth said. "But now—"

"The circle is complete," Colt told him. "The feelings we've had for one another are stronger now that we have Haley and she's carrying our child."

Seth nodded. "My feelings are stronger, but I've always known I love you."

He winked. "You like my cock. That's what you like."

"I like more than your dick crammed in my ass," he informed. "I love the man behind the cock and the cocksure attitude."

Colt felt a sudden urge to fuck him all over again, and his dick swelled to his satisfaction rather than completed its attempt toward a flaccid state.

"You can't be serious," Seth complained, stretching under him.

Colt ran his hands over Seth's perfect abs. "I'm serious about loving you, and I'm damn serious about fucking you until you feel me all the way to your soul."

"Oh, I believe you," Seth said. "I just wanted to hear you say it."

Colt winked. "Now, you've heard," he said, moving into his bottom again. "Merry Christmas, baby."

Chapter Eleven

“They’re gay,” Shelly said.

“Well, yes, it would appear so,” Haley replied, amused.

“But you...” She paused and then arched a brow. “You knew they were gay and you still wanted them in your bed anyway?”

“Yes.”

“Then what does that make you? Gay, too?”

Sometimes Haley understood why her best friend ended up with the biggest nerd in the county. She wasn’t the brightest woman and not only did she ask stupid questions, but she also expected dumb answers. When she received them, well, that was just fine by her. She didn’t know the difference.

“Yes,” Haley finally answered. “That makes me gay, too.”

“How long have you known?” Shelly asked, dead serious. “I mean, you know...how long have you been *gay*?”

Amazing, Haley thought. Maybe she didn’t realize how the dumb questions just became a little dumber. “I think I’ve always known,” she admitted.

Shelly immediately adjusted her blouse, taking the time to button her shirt all the way up to the collar. “Well, I’m still your best friend,” she informed. “And I still love you, but I don’t want to tempt you.” She cleared her throat and rambled on. “I won’t be going shopping with you anymore, and I would appreciate it if you don’t come in the bathroom while I’m using the potty.”

“Agreed,” Haley said. Good heavens. *Potty*? Shelly was a true ditz.

“Well, anyway,” she said yawning, “I’ll let you go upstairs and enjoy your gay sex.” She cleared her throat. “I baked cookies and brought over sliced turkey and dressing. Oh, and there’s a pumpkin pie in the refrigerator.”

“Thank you, Shelly,” she said, leaning in to kiss her cheek.

“At, at, at,” she said, scolding and shaking her finger. “No gay sex over here, sister.”

Haley grinned. “Okay, I’ll keep my lips to myself.”

“Good,” she said, laughing. “Merry Christmas, Haley.”

She slipped out the door and Haley watched her leave. Somehow, she knew it was the last time she’d see her best friend. As she watched her wave her final goodbye, Haley whispered, “Merry Christmas, Shelly.”

* * * *

Haley sat by the Christmas tree and stared into the fireplace. She searched for a vision, something to show her what to expect next, but she didn’t see anything there. When she heard something behind her, she didn’t turn.

Colt said, “What did you have to show us down here that you couldn’t bring upstairs?” The lust was heavy. Thick need laced through the syllables.

“I want to have sex with you as a horse,” she said without looking up.

“You want to what?” Seth asked, obviously excited by the suggestion.

She rubbed her arms and stood up. Facing her two gorgeous men, she said, “I want to mate with you, breed with you, stand for your stud service, or whatever the fuck you want to call it. I want to ride that pony.”

Snickering, Colt said, “Told you she’d eventually call that thing out as a pony.”

Seth growled and took a step forward. “We can’t take you right now,” he said. “We’d kill ya if we transformed into our stallion states after the fucking we enjoyed upstairs.”

Colt smacked Seth on the bottom. “How about another time?”

“When?” she persisted.

“Later,” he promised, grinning.

The chattering stopped and they shelved the teasing. They stood there in an uncomfortable silence.

So, Haley thought, this is it. She’d suspected something like this all along.

“When were you going to tell me I’d have to leave here?”

Seth and Colt looked at one another and then Colt said, “We weren’t allowed to tell you until we were sure you were pregnant. It’s easier for a successful breeding to take place if the mare is comfortable in her surroundings, and you wouldn’t have gotten pregnant if you’d been uptight over leaving.”

“So when do we go?”

“Soon,” Seth said, unplugging the tree lights and turning off the gas fireplace.

“Soon as in now?”

“It’s Christmas,” Seth explained. “It’s a time for celebration. It’s a day of giving,” he looked at Colt and added with a chuckle, “and receiving.”

“It’s time for new beginnings,” Colt informed. “The stallions take their mates home for Christmas.”

“But that doesn’t explain why I have to leave everything behind now.”

“No,” Colt said, petting her hair like he might stroke her in her horse form. “But the time comes in everyone’s life when they have to leave the past behind and look to the future.”

“But you have school,” she reminded.

“We never had school,” Colt explained. “We used the ad you placed for an excuse to approach you. We live in Wyoming on a nice ranch you’ll love.”

She gasped. “Wyoming?”

“Yes,” Seth said. “It’s over two thousand acres and nothing but land and mountains, open ground as far as you can see. We can run wild and free during the day and at night, we’ll make love under the stars before falling asleep in one another’s arms.”

“Sounds like heaven,” she said, sorrow filling her heart as much as the joy. “But there are things here I don’t want to leave behind.”

“We’re building a small replica of your house in Wyoming,” Colt said. “We’ll come back here and hire professional movers to handle everything. Your farm manager is due back tomorrow morning and the animals will be fine until he arrives.”

At some point, she’d walked outside. She stood on the porch watching Colt and Seth for the longest time. Without warning, they shifted. Funny, she’d become so accustomed to the shifts she barely noticed the difference between them regardless of their forms.

“I can’t just leave,” she said, spinning, her mind rushing forward so fast she hardly noticed she too had transitioned.

Nuzzling her, Colt and Seth seemed to expect her to follow them. They nudged her forward and she reluctantly followed them into the whipping breeze of mountain air.

This was once her home, she thought as Seth and Colt trotted off, picking up their pace and running ahead of her. But not anymore.

Wait! Wait! She wanted to cry out loud but they couldn’t hear her. Colt stopped once and reared high in the air as if to say, *Choose! Choose!*

Did she have a choice? Her gaze locked with Seth’s and she saw a brief moment of sadness lingering there. Yes! She thought excitedly. She did have a choice. She wasn’t bound by the shifting abilities she’d discovered through Seth and Colt. Free will still existed and her

right to choose wasn't lost just because she changed into an over-sexed shifter.

Colt continued to neigh and his front legs thrashed at thin air. Exhausted and apparently angry because she didn't chase him, he turned away and galloped into the hills. Seth waited.

Haley stretched her long neck and she gaped at the ranch she once shared with her husband. Then she started trotting toward her stallions. When Seth took off at a full gallop, she quickly broke into a gentle lope.

On top of the ridge, her stallions stopped and waited for her. She nuzzled them when she met them at the peak.

She didn't know where she was going or how long it would take to get there, but she didn't care. As she tried to tease her stallions by raising her tail and prancing around them playfully, acknowledgement surrounded her.

Haley left the past behind because the future offered more. She was in love with the Stallions, two strong and able shifters who adored her and one another. They were leading her on a delicious adventure into a whole new world.

They walked in a slow, predatory circle, nipping at her tail. She released a loud and excited neigh when the recognition hit her. They were taking her home, but first they planned to love her like crazy.

She kicked up her heels and toyed with them. *There's only one way to keep the boys interested, she thought. Make them chase me.*

Breaking into an all out gallop, she ran down the hill, across an open pasture, leaping over creeks, ponds, and fences. Yes, she thought. *Yes! Yes! Yes! I'm wild and free! But most of all, I am loved! I'm truly loved!*

And finding love was more than anyone could ask for, on Christmas Day or any other.

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Addison Avery is the author of various works of erotic fiction. Addison's upcoming novel, *Mighty Men with Weapons*, will debut from Siren Publishing in 2010.

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