



Garron's Gift

Carol Lynne

Good-time Boys: Garron's Gift
by Carol Lynne

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A Total-e-bound Publication

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Warning:

Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

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Dedication

Once again, to my dedicated, often patient, beta reader, Drew Hunt.

I honestly couldn't do this series without you.

Trademarks Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:

Wrangler: Wrangler Apparel Company

Harley Davidson: H-D Michigan, Inc. CORPORATION

Chapter One

Garron was leaving the police station when his cell phone rang. Looking at the display he smiled. "Hey, hot stuff."

"They shot him," Sonny yelled into the phone.

Garron's stomach bottomed out as he stopped in his tracks. "Shot who?"

"Buford, someone killed him."

Quickly searching his memory, Garron came up blank. "I'm sorry, cowboy, but I don't know a Buford."

"He's my goddamn prize-winning Blank Angus bull."

"Shit, I'm sorry. Did you call Rawley?" Garron hurried to his black Harley and climbed on.

"Yeah, he was going to stop and get Jeb and head this way. How long before you get here?"

"I can make it in about fifty minutes. Will you still be there?"

"Yeah, it'll take a while I'm sure. We're just passed the pond on Jeb's side of the fence."

"All right, I'm leaving now. Love you."

"Love you, need you here."

Sonny hung up and Garron looked at the phone a moment before slipping it back into his pocket. Starting his bike, he roared out of the parking lot toward home. Funny how the *Flying G* had become home after only a month, of course a lot of it could be because his heart lived there. Garron decided to take the interstate to shave off a few minutes. Usually he

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took the back roads, but he had a feeling Sonny needed him as soon as he could get there.

Riding down the road, he thought about the phone call. He knew Sonny was supposed to go into town to pick up some new fencing material. Garron wondered if something had happened. Lionel Hibbs used every chance he got to run the two of them down to the rest of the town. At first it was just little comments here and there, but it had moved into shouts of vulgarity as soon as Lionel spotted one or both of them in town.

Garron had to quit bartending two weeks early because Lionel made such a scene every time he came into the Dead Zone, Jim, the owner, thought it was best. Sonny tried to act like the name calling didn't bother him, but Garron knew it did. Sonny'd grown up in Summerville, and for him to suddenly shy away from going into town was a sure sign.

The closer he got to the ranch the faster he went. Something had to have sparked this sudden change in Lionel's behaviour. Killing ranch animals was a big step from bigoted words shouted across the street.

Garron parked his bike by the shed and drove the four-wheeler to Sonny. Topping the slight rise in the landscape, Garron spotted Sonny, Jeb, Rawley and another man surrounding what he guessed was Buford. Slowing down, he stopped just inside the broken fence. Rawley looked up and walked over.

"Glad you finally made it. My brother's going off the deep end." Rawley rubbed at the back of his neck. Garron could tell there was something else Rawley wanted to tell him.

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"What?" Garron asked as he started toward the broken barbed wire fence.

"Sonny and Lionel got into a fight this afternoon in town. I think Lionel ended up with a broken nose, but Sonny came away with a black eye." Rawley said as he followed Garron over to the fence.

Turning back toward Sonny, Garron pointed to the broken wire. "You look at this, it's obviously been cut. I'm gonna go check on Sonny." He walked toward the man he loved, fire heating his veins. How dare Lionel touch Sonny. He had half a mind to go into town and find that bastard right now. The only thing stopping him was the look on Sonny's face when Garron neared. Opening his arms, Sonny immediately walked into them. "You okay?" He looked down into Sonny's bruised face.

"No, but I'm better now." Sonny looked over at Buford. "He just killed him, for no good reason."

Rubbing his hands up and down Sonny's back, Garron looked over at Jeb. "The fence has been cut."

Jeb nodded, "I figured as much." Jeb pointed toward the older man. "This is our vet, Dr. Mac Whitcomb. Mac, this is my brother Garron."

The two men shook hands. Although his hair was totally grey, Mac didn't look much over forty-five. He looked Mac in the eyes. "Can you tell how long ago this happened?"

Scratching his jaw, Mac looked back at the dead bull. "Hard to say with this heat, but my guess would be only a couple of hours."

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Looking back down at Sonny, Garron kissed his forehead. "What time did you get in your fight?"

Garron noticed Sonny's jaws tensing. "About the same time, I reckon."

"How'd it happen?" Garron kept his arms wrapped around Sonny's waist.

"Well, I guess he must've seen me walk into the feed store from his office across the street. When I finished up and left, Lionel was waiting for me. He started saying some stuff that I didn't much care for, and then he pushed me." Sonny gave a slight grin. "That's when I showed him I may be small, but I can still throw a punch."

Garron looked around the group, "You guys thinking the same thing I am?"

Mac nodded, looking back at the bull. "Set up to give him an alibi. I tell you what, I never much cared for that man, but anyone who can order this done is sick."

"Yeah, I think we all agree on that one. The question is, can we find anything to legally link him to the crime," Rawley said, stepping into the circle. "It's so dry out here there aren't any footprints, but I'll continue to search." Rawley pointed toward the dead bull. "What are you gonna do with Buford?"

"Shelby's out in the east pasture digging a hole now. He'll come back with the tractor and pick him up when he's done."

Rawley ran his fingers through his short black hair and looked at Mac. "The bullet still in there?"

Mac looked down at the dead bull. "No exit wound, so yeah. You want me to try and get it out for ya?"

"If you can without damaging the bullet. I'll send it to the crime lab in Lincoln and get a ballistics report done on it. It's a long shot, but it's probably my only piece of evidence."

Garron looked at Rawley, "Did you get some pictures? I'm sure the insurance company will want them, along with the reports from you and Mac."

"Yeah, I got them. I have done this before ya know," Rawley said.

"Sorry, didn't mean that the way it sounded. I just wanted to make sure everything was being taken care of before I took Sonny home."

"Go on and take him, we'll finish up here."

Garron looked down at Sunny. "Where's the truck?"

"Shelby took it. I guess I'll be riding on the back of the four-wheeler." He winked, "What a shame."

Slapping Sonny on the ass, Garron waived goodbye to Mac, Jeb, and Rawley.

* * * *

By the time they reached the house, they were both horny as hell. Making their way into the kitchen, Garron attacked his lips. "Need you."

"Yeah," Sonny said, pulling on Garron's clothes. He managed to get Garron's T-shirt up and over his head, before starting on his fly. As soon as he had him unbuckled and unzipped, Sonny was on his knees. He swiped his tongue across the head of Garron's cock and moaned at the flavour of pre-come. "Love your taste," he said just before taking the crown into his mouth.

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Pulling the soft denim down, Sonny ran his hands over the firm globes of Garron's ass. He felt the taut muscles under his hands as Garron began to thrust. Sonny became lost in the passionate act, slipping his finger between Garron's cheeks to press against his hole. He'd yet to make love to this ass. Because of their size difference, Sonny had naturally taken the bottom's role in their relationship, which, up until this moment, had always suited them both. Right now, however, Sonny wanted inside Garron with a need he'd never experienced before.

Sonny pulled off Garron's cock and looked up at him. "I want you."

Garron must have realised what Sonny was asking because he nodded his head, and pulled Sonny up into his arms. "It'll be easier in the bedroom." Garron pulled up his Levi's and led Sonny up the stairs.

As they quickly undressed, Sonny felt a moment of nervousness attack him. He couldn't understand it. He'd fucked plenty of men before, why this sudden fear that he wouldn't be good enough?

When they were both naked, wrapped in each others arms in the centre of the bed, it dawned on him. For the first time in his life, he'd be making love to another man, and Garron's opinion of him mattered. Breaking their kiss, Sonny looked into Garron's dark brown eyes. "You okay with this?"

Garron smiled and lifted his legs against his chest, presenting Sonny with the most beautiful hole he'd ever seen. "I love you," Garron said. "I've been waiting for you to take the initiative."

Sonny realised it didn't matter if he performed perfectly. The fact that he could express his love for Garron by loving him did. Reaching over to the table for the lube, Sonny tried to slow his breathing. He knew he needed to calm down and go slow. No telling how long it had been for Garron and the way he felt, he wouldn't last long.

Slicking his fingers, Sonny gave Garron a deep kiss while slowly slipping one finger inside his rosette. Breaking the lip lock, he smiled at the man he loved. "You've got a birthday coming up in a couple of weeks."

Moaning, Garron wiggled his ass. "Don't remind me."

"I was thinking about a party. Nothing fancy, just renting the back room at the Zone. Couple of friends, good food," Sonny winked, "maybe a little dancing?"

Garron stilled and looked into Sonny's eyes. "You serious?"

Sonny nodded and inserted another finger. "Of course I'm serious. And if we happened to say a few words of commitment to each other with all our friends and family around, well all's the better."

"Are you asking me to marry you?" Garron panted as Sonny pegged his prostate gland.

"I know we can't actually get married, but it would be close enough in my book." He looked deep into Garron's eyes. "Think about it?"

"I don't need to. The answer is yes." Garron wiggled around a little more. "Now, make love to me."

Sonny withdrew his fingers and applied a large dollop of lube to his swollen shaft. Crawling between Garron's spread

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thighs, he positioned himself at the relaxed entrance. "I love you," he said as he slowly invaded Garron's body.

When he was in to the root, Sonny closed his eyes and rested his head on Garron's chest. "Oh fuck, this wasn't a good idea."

He felt Garron tense around his cock. "You don't like it?"

Moving his head from side to side, he kissed Garron's chest. "Just the opposite. I may never want to bottom again."

Chuckling, Garron swatted him on the ass. "Well don't get too used to it, but I'm up for an equal partnership. But only if you move before I go insane."

Taking a playful nip of Garron's neck, Sonny began to thrust in and out. The louder Garron moaned, the faster Sonny's hips moved, until he was pounding hard and fast inside the hot hole. Yeah, he could get used to a lifetime of this. He watched Garron's face as sweat began dripping off himself, and onto Garron's chest and stomach. "Love you," he growled.

With one hand wrapped around it, Garron's cock erupted in stream after stream of pearly white seed. The involuntary contractions as Garron came, set Sonny off. He thrust in one last time and pumped his lover full of his essence. Collapsing on top of Garron, Sonny's body shook with the intensity of his orgasm.

He was sweaty, hungry, sleepy and totally sated. What more could a man ask for? Sonny smiled as Garron's legs wrapped around him. Evidently he wasn't the only one who didn't want to end the moment. "Do we need to buy rings?" Garron asked as he rubbed Sonny's back.

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Sonny hadn't thought of rings, but the more he did, the more he liked the image of Garron with a gold band on his finger. He tilted his head up to look at Garron. "Can you wear one on the job?"

"Yeah, most of the time. I might have to take it off for something special, but that's no different than the other cops in vice."

"Then, yes, rings for two." They settled back in and drifted off to sleep for a short nap.

* * * *

Sitting down for a late supper, Sonny looked across the table at Rawley. "I'm throwing a big party in two weeks for Garron's thirty-sixth birthday." He took a bite of his hamburger before continuing. "We thought we'd say some commitment vows at the same time." He took another bite and waited for the explosion that was sure to come.

"What did you just say?" Rawley asked, setting down his glass of iced tea.

"I said Garron and I are exchanging vows." Sonny looked his brother in the eye, daring him to disagree.

"You really think that's a wise move? You've got a dead bull and a black eye. What do you think will happen if word gets out about this latest development?"

Sonny pushed his plate back and leaned on the table. "I grew up in this town and I think most people accept me. If a small pocket of bigots choose to hate me because of who I love, fuck 'em."

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Rawley looked at a quiet Garron. "And you? Are you ready for this?"

Garron looked from Rawley to Sonny. "Seems to me, Sonny has the most to lose in this decision and if he's willing to have me despite all that, I'm jumping at the chance."

Standing up, Rawley walked toward the door, leaving his dinner on the table. "You're both crazy." Putting on his hat, he was just about to leave when Sonny spoke up.

"At least we're true to our feelings. You can only hide behind that badge for so long. It sure as hell isn't going to be much comfort when you're old."

Rawley didn't even turn around as he walked out the door and to his SUV. Sonny looked at a wide-eyed Garron. "What? It's the truth. There's so much heat generated between Rawley and Jeb it's a wonder the room doesn't catch fire when they're both in it."

"Maybe so," Garron said, and reached out to take Sonny's hand, "but it's not for you to say. Maybe if you backed off, he'd stop fighting it so hard." Garron pulled Sonny up out of his chair and onto his lap.

"It's just hard to see him so unhappy." Sonny knew he shouldn't have said those things to Rawley, but it was too late to take them back. He rested his head against Garron's and kissed him. "I'm an ass."

"No, cowboy, you're not. You just need to let your brother learn who he really is on his own." Sonny moaned as Garron began rubbing his cock through the denim. "Let's say we hurry and get these dishes done and head back upstairs?"

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Looking at the table, Sonny wasn't surprised to find most of the food still on everyone's plates. "Too bad we don't have a house dog. We could just set the plates on the floor."

Laughing, Garron stood and set Sonny on his feet. "Come on, the quicker we get it done, the faster we get upstairs." He stacked the plates and carried them to the sink. Turning around, Garron winked at him. "And this time, I'm in the driver's seat."

Chapter Two

Before work the next morning, Garron stopped by his brother Jeb's place. He drove under the old ranch sign, which reminded him of something. He needed to talk to Jeb about renaming the place, *The Tall A*, no longer fit. Parking his motorcycle, Garron took the porch steps two at a time. He opened the front door and hollered for Jeb. When he didn't receive an answer, he walked back outside and looked toward the barn. Surely if he was around he'd have come out when he heard Garron's bike pull up.

Shaking his head, Garron headed toward the barn. "Jeb?" He reached the red behemoth and stuck his head inside, "Jeb?" he repeated.

"Just a minute," his brother called back.

Garron followed the voice toward the tack room. Jeb was sitting on a stool talking on his cell phone. He could tell by the goofy look on Jeb's face that he must be talking to Rawley.

"Okay. Yeah I'll call you if I see anything. Bye, Rawley." Jeb disconnected and stuffed his phone back in his pocket. "Hey, big brother."

Grinning, Garron pointed toward Jeb's pocket. "How's your crush?"

"Knock it off. Rawley just called to say he was hauling Lionel in for questioning. He sent the bullet off for a ballistics check, but Rawley said it usually takes a while. He wants me to keep a look out for any trouble." Jeb crossed his arms and looked at Garron. "So what brings you by?"

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"Just stopped by to tell you I'm getting married, or committed. I'm not really sure what to call it, but it's happening on my birthday. Sonny's gonna rent the back room at the Zone and I wanted to ask if you'd stand up with me." Garron felt his face heat, which kind of pissed him off. There was absolutely no reason he should feel embarrassed about getting married, so why was he blushing? He looked up at Jeb and waited for the comment he knew was coming.

Instead of the lecture Rawley had given them, Jeb flew into his arms. "I'm so happy for you." He kissed Garron on the cheek before releasing him. "Of course I think you two are nuttier than Aunt May's fruit cake, but hey, who am I to criticize."

"You think I'm nutty for getting married?" Garron was totally thrown off balance by first, the unexpected hug, and then the whole fruit cake thing.

"No, I think if the two of you want to get married you should run off to Hawaii and take me with you." Jeb stopped grinning and touched Garron's shoulder. "You know it's going to stir the town up."

"Not the town, just Lionel and his lap dogs." He looked his brother in the eye. "I love him. Sonny wants this and I'll do anything for him."

Jeb looked at him for a few seconds before nodding. "Well, then we'll make sure you're both surrounded by people who care for you."

"Thanks, brother." Garron mussed Jeb's curly blond hair, just like he'd done since they were kids.

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Jeb swatted Garron's hand away. "You'd better get to Lincoln before you miss out on a big-time drug deal or something, Mr. Vice Cop."

Garron smiled and waived on his way out. He climbed on his Harley feeling better than he had in a long while. He couldn't believe Sonny Good was finally going to be the one to make an honest man out of him.

* * * *

Rawley ran a frustrated hand through his thick black hair as he turned off the ignition. It had been a hell of an afternoon, and it was bound to get worse. Looking up at the R & R Feedlot sign, he knew it was time for the brothers to talk. Things were coming to a head in town and he needed his brothers to lie low for a while, not that they'd listen to him, but he needed to try.

Ranger and Ryker had always had a strange relationship. It was like an unbreakable bond had formed between the two of them in their mother's womb. They were like those twins Rawley had seen on TV. Having their own language was just one of their many quirks.

Even as kids, they refused to sleep apart. No matter how many times their mother and father had tried to separate them, they always woke up in the same bed. As children, it had been one thing, but as they grew into adults, their father had finally put his foot down. The twins had done the only thing they thought they could and moved out as soon as they turned eighteen. Lucky for them, they'd both worked at the feedlot all through high school and when Old Man Zook

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decided to retire, he sold the business to the twins. By that time, they'd made up with their dad and he agreed to co-sign a loan for them. That had been almost seven years ago.

Getting out of his Sheriff's SUV, Rawley headed toward the small building that housed their offices. In the relatively short time they'd owned the place, business had more than doubled. It seemed when it came to fattening cows, no one in the county much cared what Ryker and Ranger's relationship was. To their credit though, they never flaunted anything in front of people. Most gossips in town only surmised that the two of them were lovers. Not one person had ever seen proof, though. The brothers didn't so much as hold hands in public.

Rawley had heard of a woman sharing their bed a time or two, but to the women's credit they never mentioned their time with the Good twins. Opening the door, the little bell alerted anyone within hearing distance of his arrival. He knew better than to go looking for the two of them, so he took a seat in the small reception area. Looking down at the cracked harvest gold vinyl chairs, Rawley shook his head.

"What?" Ryker said coming into the room, followed closely by Ranger.

"I think ya'll have made enough money to replace these thirty-year-old chairs." Rawley picked at the cracked material.

"Why should we do that? It's mostly cattle ranchers that come in. If we fancied up the place they might think we're making too much money off 'em." Ryker looked back at Ranger and winked. "Of course we are, but they don't need to know that."

"Yeah, well don't ever invite them to your house then."

Rawley thought of the large stone and timber house the twins had built a couple of years earlier on the edge of the family's ranch land. Surrounded by trees, the house was a dream and Rawley had always felt a little bit jealous.

Ranger sat down in one of the chairs beside Rawley. "No chance of that. Our home is our sanctuary. No business takes place there, ever." Ranger looked from Ryker to Rawley, "So what's brought you here today? Sonny already called to tell us about the bull and the party." He narrowed his eyes a bit, "Or is there something else?"

Heaving an audible sigh, Rawley rubbed his neck. "I had Lionel in for questioning. I know he's responsible and he knows I know, but I've got nothing on him. I sent the bullet off for testing, but that could take a while. It's just so damn frustrating. How am I supposed to protect Sonny if he's bound and determined to let the whole town know he's getting married? Does he think people won't find out?"

Biting his lower lip, Ryker shrugged. "Maybe he doesn't care who finds out. If you loved someone enough to spend the rest of your life with them, would you? I have a feeling when you eventually fall in love, you'll be willing to sacrifice anything to be with them. You just haven't fallen yet."

"I love Meg. We've been together over two years," Rawley said, trying to defend himself.

Reaching over to him, Ranger gripped Rawley's shoulder. "You're not in love with Meg. I'm not saying you don't love her, but it'll never be enough for you."

Shoulders tensing, Rawley stood and looked at his two brothers. "I'm not discussing Meg anymore. The two of you are just like Sonny."

He turned to leave and Ryker touched his arm. "We do have something in common with Sonny. We all love you and want you to be happy."

"I'll be happier once the three of you get the hell out of my love life." Rawley looked at Ryker and then Ranger. Shaking his head, he walked toward the door. "Keep an ear open for any trouble. My guess is this thing with Lionel is just heating up. And the two of you'll be next. Keep whatever's going on between you out of town."

Ranger stood beside Ryker and narrowed his eyes. "I appreciate you worrying about us, big brother, but don't come into our business and tell us how to lead our lives. We refused to take it from dad, and we sure as hell won't take it from you."

Looking back over his shoulder, Rawley nodded. "Fair enough, then just stay the hell out of my love life and be careful."

Rawley walked out the door and climbed back into his sheriff's vehicle. After buckling up, he scrubbed his hands over his face. He was so tired of trying to defend himself with his brothers. Since he'd been a boy, all he'd ever wanted was to be a policeman. Rawley had surpassed that dream when he'd been appointed sheriff. No way in hell would he jeopardise that for some crazy fantasy of love.

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Garron pulled into the ranch yard, feeling like a drowned rat. An unexpected summer rain shower had drenched him most of the way home. Climbing off his bike, he was pleased to see Sonny sitting in his favourite chair on the porch. He grinned as Sonny held up a dry towel and a cold beer.

"Thought you might need both of these when you got home," Sonny said, as Garron climbed the porch steps.

"Good thinking, but what I really need is a kiss." He covered Sonny's lips with his own, teasing them apart. Delving his tongue inside, Garron moaned at the taste of cold beer and Sonny. "You're always what I need first."

Sonny winked and stood. "I can live with that. Get yourself dried off and meet me in the kitchen. I've spent all afternoon on dinner because of the rain, and as much as I'd like to follow you upstairs, I want my dinner hot." Sonny gave him another quick kiss. "You're always hot, so I know I'll get my desert after dinner."

Laughing, Garron smacked his ass as he walked by. "Is Rawley coming home or can I eat in my underwear?"

Sonny stopped in his tracks. "Screw Rawley, I'll call and tell him to find his own dinner." Sonny licked his lips and looked down at Garron's crotch. "Go take a shower and come down wearing the sexy underwear I bought you last week."

Garron rolled his eyes. "You were serious about those? I thought they were like a gag gift. I don't know if they'll even fit."

Looking him up and down, Sonny moaned. "Oh they'll fit, perfectly."

* * * *

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Sonny had just finished the salad, when Garron walked into the room. He almost swallowed his tongue at the gorgeous man standing in the doorway. "Holy fuck."

Setting the salad on the table, Sonny walked over to get a closer look at the white satin thong Garron was barely wearing. As he circled around his lover to get a good look at his ass, Garron covered his butt with his hands. "Stop it. You make me feel like a cheap piece of meat."

Groaning, Sonny pushed himself against Garron's back. "My meat," Sonny said, as he wrapped his arms around Garron. Nipping his shoulder, Sonny worked his hands down Garron's muscular chest to rest on the satin covered package. The material was so soft against his rough and callused hands Sonny felt the cloth snag under his touch. "Damn hands," he muttered to himself.

Covering Sonny's hands with his own, Garron pressed them against his erection. "I love your hands, this underwear? I'm not so sure about."

Licking his way around Garron's neck, Sonny sighed. "You could always take them off?"

"And eat naked? No thanks. Let's just get dinner over with so we can get upstairs." Garron pulled Sonny toward the kitchen table. "Smells good."

Looking at the large pan of lasagne on the table, Sonny suddenly wasn't hungry. "We can reheat it later?"

Garron shook his head, "Nope. You got me into this silly outfit and I deserve a big piece of that lasagne."

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Knowing he wouldn't win, Sonny broke away and took a seat. By the time he'd mixed the dressing into the salad, Garron already had a huge section of the pan on his plate. "Hungry?" Sonny asked, eyeing the huge portion of food.

"Starving," Garron replied with a wink.

They settled in to eat, but after only one small piece, Sonny was full. He looked over at Garron who didn't appear to be any where near finished. Thrumming his fingers on the table, he watched Garron devour the lasagne.

He thought he'd die before he got upstairs with this sexy man. That gave him an idea. Wiping his mouth, Sonny set his napkin on the table and slid down to the floor. The view from under the table was even better.

As Sonny crawled toward Garron, he watched as Garron's legs separated and his cock began to fill. Moving in between Garron's thighs, Sonny pressed his face against the material and inhaled deeply. "Mmm, nice."

He began licking and mouthing Garron's hard-on through the satin, pleased when the fabric quickly became transparent. "You're breathtaking in white satin." He pulled the thong to the side and Garron's bound erection sprang free. Smiling, Sonny immediately took the leaking head into his mouth.

"Fuck, cowboy," Garron moaned, as he reached under the table and threaded his fingers through Sonny's hair.

Sonny knew what Garron was after, so he decided to play nice and give it to him. Relaxing his throat, Sonny opened wide and took as much of Garron as he could. Just when he'd

thought he couldn't go any further, Garron thrust deeper into his mouth.

"Yes. Oh, shit," Garron cried out, as he started fucking Sonny's mouth.

With his jaw still relaxed, Sonny let Garron have his way and he was soon rewarded for his efforts. The taste of Garron's seed exploded in his mouth and down his throat, setting off his own cock. He shivered at the wet sticky feel as his own come saturated his underwear and jeans.

Garron slumped down further in the chair, just as the back door opened. Sonny pulled off Garron's cock and looked at the shiny brown cowboy boots that belonged to Rawley.

"Where's Sonny?" Rawley's deep voice commanded.

Rolling his eyes, Sonny spoke from under the table. "I thought I left a message for you to find your own dinner tonight."

Rawley said nothing for several seconds. "Um, I didn't think you were serious about that. I'll uh, go up to my room for a while." Rawley must have finally noticed that Garron was naked from the waist up. "Sorry, man," Rawley said, as he made his way out of the kitchen.

As soon as his brother was gone, Sonny erupted in a fit of laughter. He heard Garron's chair scrape across the scarred wooden floor and look down at him. "I don't know what the hell you think is so funny. I'm gonna burn this underwear."

Crawling out from under the table, Sonny knelt beside Garron. "Life is never going to be boring with my family around."

Chapter Three

Garron watched Sonny pace back and forth in front of the Dead Zone wearing his new three-piece suit. Checking his watch once again, he looked at Garron. "Where the hell is he?" he questioned for the tenth time. "I talked to him earlier and he said he'd be here."

Garron reached out a hand and stopped Sonny in his tracks. "Why don't we just try calling him?" He pulled out his cell phone and handed it to Sonny. The preacher from Sonny's church had agreed to perform the ceremony as long as Garron and Sonny wrote their own vows and didn't mention the words holy or marriage. Garron would have told him to shove it up his ass, but Sonny had belonged to Reverend James' church since he was a child, so he'd readily agreed.

Looking at the phone Garron held out, Sonny sighed and took it. He punched in some numbers and held the phone to his ear. Garron thought he was cute like this, all dressed up and nervous just like a groom should be.

Jeb came out of The Zone and waived to get Garron's attention. Leaving Sonny to his call, Garron walked over to his brother. "Something wrong?" Jeb asked.

"Who knows? Sonny's calling Reverend James right now. How're things going in there?" Garron inquired sticking his hands in his pockets.

"Everyone's trying to be patient, but I'm thinking maybe we need to let them eat if it's going to be a while."

Garron heard Sonny end the call and turned toward him.
"What did he say?"

As if in a daze, Sonny walked over and handed Garron his phone back. He just stood there looking at the building, which started to worry Garron. "Cowboy? What did the Reverend say?"

"He's not coming. Seems it's not only Lionel and his friends that don't want this to happen. Charles, Lionel's father, doesn't think it's proper for Reverend James to preside over the ceremony either. He threatened to worship elsewhere if the Reverend performed the ceremony and since his money helps keep the church going, Reverend James feels he has no choice." Sonny looked into Garron's eyes. "What are we going to do?"

"Get married," Garron replied, with a quick kiss. "We asked the Reverend here more as a formality anyway. We aren't legally getting married, so we can just hold our ceremony and say our vows without him. In the eyes of our friends and family we'll still be committed to each other."

Sonny took a deep breath and closed his eyes. When he finally opened them, Garron could detect a little more moisture in his lover's beautiful amethyst eyes, but he nodded and smiled. "Okay, well let's get married then."

Pulling Sonny into his arms, Garron kissed him, totally oblivious to Jeb. Delving his tongue into Sonny's hot depths, Garron groaned. "Let's do this. The sooner we're finished, the sooner our wedding night happens."

* * * *

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Holding hands, the twosome walked to the centre of the dance floor. Sonny had asked Meg and a few of her friends to help him with the decorations. They'd decided on wildflowers and dark purple accents. Sonny was pleased with the way it had turned out. He was even more pleased by the man standing in front of him. Garron had been right. They didn't need Reverend James to preside over their ceremony, they only needed each other.

Sonny smiled as he turned toward Garron. He couldn't believe how yummy Garron looked in his black suit and white dress shirt. Hell, he'd even offered to get a haircut for the occasion, but Sonny had put his foot down. He loved the feel of Garron's long silky hair caressing his naked body when they made love.

He could tell Garron was nervous as he watched his Adam's apple bob every time he swallowed. Deciding to put him at ease, Sonny smiled and whispered, "I'll go first."

Sonny received a grateful nod from Garron as he gripped Sonny's hands even tighter. Clearing his throat, Sonny looked up into Garron's eyes. "Several months ago I walked into this very bar and spotted the sexiest man I'd ever seen. Little did I know that man would change my life forever. You've become my entire world, Garron, and I can't imagine a single day without you in my life. Today I commit my life to loving you, to learning from you and to picking up the socks you refuse to see on the bedroom floor." Sonny waited a few seconds while their loved ones laughed. He spent the time looking into Garron's dark brown watery eyes. "My gift to you on this special day, is the gift of my heart. You'll forever hold

it in the palm of your hand." After finishing, Garron leaned forward and kissed him.

Now Sonny waited for Garron to speak. He'd seen him sitting at the kitchen table on more than one occasion over the past week working on his vows. Sonny had also watched as Garron discarded page after page into the trashcan.

Looking down at him, Garron began. "I've spent a lot of time trying to figure out what to say today. Sadly though, I never managed to come up with anything that sounded half as lovely as what you just said. How do you tell someone in a couple lines how much they mean to you? How the air seems to leave the room when their not in it, or how the simple act of going off to work leaves them feeling empty and alone? I'm not the kind of man who can write poetry or pros. I'm just a man who loves you more than he loves his own life. I'm proud to become your husband today, cowboy, and I promise to try and pick up my own dirty socks." He winked at Sonny.

Sonny's throat felt so thick with emotion that he knew he was about to breakdown in a room full of people. Pulling Garron's head down, Sonny kissed him, long and deep. They broke the kiss, and Sonny whispered against Garron's lips. "That was better than poetry and pros. I love you."

"I love you, too, more than you'll ever know." Garron kissed him again before turning toward Jeb and holding out his hand as Sonny turned to Rawley. Lifting the simple gold band, Garron kissed it, before slipping it on Sonny's finger. Sonny felt a single tear slip down his cheek at the action.

Taking a deep breath, he blinked several times to dispel any more tears before kissing the ring and sliding it on

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Garron's much larger finger. They'd had the bands engraved with words close to their heart, 'Until death do us part'.

After settling the ring, Garron pulled Sonny into his arms for a proper wedding kiss. The crowd erupted in applause and well wishes. Sonny couldn't believe Garron was finally his.

* * * *

Immediately following the ceremony, Garron was pulled aside by Evelyn Good. "I'd like a word with you, young man." Evelyn said as she led him to a table in the corner.

Evelyn had flown in that afternoon and other than a quick introduction, Garron hadn't spoken to her. Mrs. Good stood only about five feet five inches tall, but she commanded her sons like a drill sergeant. He pulled out her chair and then seated himself. Chancing a glance at the rowdy crowd laughing, drinking and eating. "What would you like to talk to me about, ma'am?"

The grey-haired woman narrowed her eyes. "My Sonny tells me you're a policeman in Lincoln." She looked him up and down. "They let you wear your hair that long? I've never seen a policeman with tattoos either. Are you lying to my boy?"

Garron was caught off guard. He didn't know whether to be offended or tickled. "Yes, ma'am, I'm a detective with the vice squad in Lincoln. Before coming to Summerville, I worked vice in Chicago." Garron smoothed his ponytail over his shoulder. "This is part of my uniform, I guess you could say. I need to blend in to my environment." He grinned at the

concerned mama bear. "Besides, I couldn't cut it now, your son loves it."

Evelyn smiled and patted his hand. "That sounds like my Sonny. You'll need to watch that boy. He can be a real handful," she said with a grin.

Garron almost choked on that last statement. Oh, if only she knew what a handful of Sonny was really like. "I'll watch him. He'll never get far from me."

Nodding once, Evelyn stood and smoothed down her lavender skirt. "Welcome to the family, young man."

"Thank you, ma'am," Garron said, standing next to his chair. As he watched Evelyn blend back into the crowd, he finally exhaled. He assumed he'd passed whatever test Mrs. Good had given. He felt an arm wrap around his waist from behind, and smiled.

"Momma checking you out?" Sonny asked petting Garron's ponytail.

"Something like that." Garron turned and wrapped his arms around his new husband. "Is it time to cut the cake and dance?"

"Yes on both accounts. I wanted to do the dollar dance, but Rawley said it wouldn't be appropriate. I don't know why. Lord knows I've done my share of dancing with brides at these things, forking over money left and right." He stuck out his bottom lip in a mock pout and Garron chuckled.

"I'll make you a deal. You dance only with me and I'll give you a hundred crumpled dollar bills tomorrow." He leaned down and whispered against Sonny's lips. "Deal?"

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"Mmm hmm," Sonny moaned as the two of them kissed. A shout from Ryker broke them apart. The natives were getting restless, it seemed. Taking Garron by the hand, Sonny walked them over to the cake table.

Garron slowed and pointed toward the head table. "Should I grab my suit jacket?"

"Naw, I had the photographer take plenty of pictures with us all fancied up, time for a few casual ones, I think."

Garron smiled at the two grooms sitting on top of the cake surrounded by wildflower blossoms. Meg, who owned a pottery shop in town, had designed them. "Meg even got the size difference right."

Sonny stood a little taller and looked up at Garron. "Really? Because I thought she made me a little short. I do like the tattoos she painted on your guy though."

He didn't have the heart to tell Sonny that there was indeed that much height difference between the two of them. Instead he picked up the cake knife and looked at the engraved silver handle. "You're mom bring this?"

"Yep, it's been passed down from generation to generation in our family. Pretty, isn't it?"

The knife forgotten, Garron leaned down and kissed Sonny. "Gorgeous," he whispered as he broke the kiss to a chorus of cat calls. Blushing, Garron looked at Sonny. "Okay, cowboy, how do we cut this thing?"

Taking the knife from him, Sonny held it in his hand before placing Garron's over the top of it. "We'll just cut a small wedge out of the bottom tier, and then we feed it to each other." Sonny shrugged, "Its tradition."

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Even though Garron knew he'd feel like an idiot, being fed a piece of cake, no way would he have denied Sonny the experience. He kissed Sonny's forehead and then looked down at their hands. "Let's do it."

After getting a mangled piece of cake cut and on a plate, Sonny took a small chunk and lifted it to Garron's lips. Taking a deep breath, Garron opened his mouth and accepted the token. It was worth everything to see the smile spread across Sonny's face. When it was his turn, Garron held the cake to Sonny's lips and was surprised when Sonny opened wide and took both the offering and Garron's fingers into his mouth. Sonny twirled his tongue around Garron's fingers and gave them a light suck. "Behave," Garron growled as he felt his cock fill.

Releasing his fingers, Sonny grinned. "Thank you," he whispered.

"Let's dance," Garron said as he took Sonny's hand. They walked around the clusters of guests toward the centre of the room for their first dance as a committed couple. As Garron took his groom in his arms, he couldn't believe how at peace he felt. Instead of letting his eyes stray around the private room, Garron only saw Sonny. God he loved this man. He felt totally complete for the first time in his life.

Feeling Sonny's erection pressing against him, Garron winked. "Not much longer and we can get started on that honeymoon." He gave Sonny a slow kiss. "I hope you're not too disappointed that we can't go on a real one right now, but as soon as I have vacation time, I plan on taking you somewhere tropical and secluded."

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"Mmm, I like the sound of that," Sonny replied as the song ended. Sonny looked around at the crowd. "How 'bout we stay for another hour or so and then head home?"

Garron nodded, thinking about their ride home on his Harley. Nothing got Sonny hotter, faster, than riding on the back of his bike. He grinned as he thought of the wedding present he'd gotten his man. He hoped Sonny would like it.

They spent the next hour shaking hands and getting hugged by women wearing too much perfume. By the time they stepped out the door, they both smelled like women. The mere thought of which caused Garron to shiver. As they walked toward the Harley, Garron smiled at all the crate paper streamers attached to it. He waited for Sonny to notice his wedding present sitting on the seat and it didn't take long.

"Oh my God," Sonny said, as he picked up the custom painted white helmet. He traced his fingers over the air brushed Black Angus cattle on the side before turning it to read the *Flying G* painted on the back. Sonny looked over at him. "It's beautiful. It's the best gift anyone's ever given me."

Garron pulled him into his arms and kissed him. "I love you."

"I love you, too." He handed the helmet to Garron. "I think it's only right that you put it on me." Sonny took off his customary cowboy hat as Garron set the new helmet on his head and fastened the chin strap.

"Perfect," he whispered, kissing him once more. Garron heard Jeb and the Good brother's laughing in the background at their public display of affection. He turned toward the group of men. "Shut up."

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They broke apart, and Sonny climbed onto the back of the bike, holding his cowboy hat out. "Hey, Rawley. Come get this hat."

Garron seated himself in front of Sonny as Rawley walked over. "The helmet looks good," Rawley said, accepting Sonny's black dress hat. "I'll be home in an hour." He grinned at Garron.

"Try Monday evening and not a second before, big brother." Sonny shot back at him.

Rawley pounded Sonny on the back. "Congratulations."

"Thanks," they both said at the same time.

Rawley stepped back and Garron started the loud bike.

Sonny leaned against him and wrapped his arms tightly around Garron's chest, already trying to work the buttons open on his dress shirt. Garron shook his head as he slowly pulled out of the parking lot.

Once on the main street, Garron started to give the motorcycle some gas when Sonny's head slammed into his back with such force Garron lost control of the bike. As if in slow motion, the bike tipped to the side, spilling both its passengers onto the pavement. Garron landed hard, knocking his head against the pavement as he felt the road tear some of the flesh from his arm. The first thing he did was to tear off his helmet and look for Sonny. Spotting him about ten feet away, Garron tried to crawl toward him. He started screaming hysterically when he saw the amount of blood covering Sonny's beautiful face. The closer he crawled to Sonny, the louder the voices running toward him got.

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"Don't touch him," Rawley screamed as he tried to hold Garron back.

"Fuck you," Garron screamed as he fought to get closer to Sonny. His vision started to grow spotty as Jeb knelt down beside him to help hold him back.

"Garron, listen to me," Jeb said. "You can't touch Sonny or you may cause him more damage. Just wait until help arrives."

"I love him," Garron whispered as he drifted into darkness.

Chapter Four

The sound of sirens woke Garron. He tried to sit up, but was quickly pushed back down to the pavement. "Sit tight, brother. An ambulance is on the way."

Garron looked over toward Sonny. His eyes were still closed and he had several people kneeling beside him, but no one was doing anything. "Help him," he pleaded. "Don't let him die."

Jeb's hand smoothed over Garron's cheek. "He's been shot. Rawley called it in and St. Angeline's Hospital in Lincoln is sending their life-flight helicopter. They told us not to touch him."

Shaking his head slightly, Garron winced. "Shot?" He swallowed around the lump in his throat as he felt tears fall down the side of his face to pool in his ears. "Is he dead?"

"No, Rawley's monitoring his pulse until the chopper gets here. He figured that much touching would be okay and quite frankly, I think he needed something to concentrate on. Sonny's mom fainted as soon as she saw the blood. Meg and Mac already loaded her in their car and are on their way to the hospital."

Garron looked back up at Jeb. "I know I have a slight concussion and a bad case of road rash, but I think that's all that's wrong with me. Can you help me get closer to Sonny? I won't move him, I promise. I just need to be next to him." He sniffled as his nose started running.

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Digging a handkerchief out of his back pocket, Jeb wiped Garron's eyes and then nose. "Come on, big brother," Jeb said, as he helped Garron over to Sonny. When Rawley started to object, Jeb held his hand up. "He won't try and move him, he's already promised. Come on, just let him hold Sonny's hand."

Rawley nodded and moved back enough for Garron. Hearing the ambulance pull up, Garron knew he'd only have a few moments. "Hey, cowboy," Garron said, squeezing Sonny's non-responsive hand. "I'm going to have to leave here in a minute, but I'll be with you soon." Garron heard the chopper overhead and Rawley left to tell them where to land. "Be strong for me because I can't live without you."

The EMT's loomed over Garron and started asking questions. Garron tried his best to answer everything, knowing the sooner he cooperated, the sooner he could go to Lincoln to be with Sonny. Before they picked him up to load him onto a gurney, Garron squeezed Sonny's hand once more. "You fight, you hear me. We've got too many years left for you to give up now. I love you," Garron whispered as they strapped him onto the gurney.

As they wheeled him toward the ambulance, Garron watched as the life-flight crew raced toward Sonny. The last thing he saw as they shut the ambulance doors was Sonny being carried toward the waiting helicopter. Jeb surprised him by knocking on the back window. "I'll follow the ambulance," he shouted through the glass.

* * * *

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After enduring a CAT scan and thorough examination, the Summerville Medical Centre released Garron into Jeb's custody. They gave him strict instructions to follow-up with a doctor in Lincoln if he started feeling dizzy. Garron knew if it weren't for Sonny, the doctor would have never let him leave that night, but most of the people working the ER were also friends of his husbands.

With a heavily bandaged arm and killer headache, Garron sat in the passenger seat of Jeb's pickup. "Tell me again what Rawley said."

"Just that Sonny was still alive when he made it to the hospital. I guess they took him up to surgery before they even removed the helmet. The surgeon told Rawley it might take a while, but they wouldn't know until they got him in the operating room."

Hitting his fist against the dash, Garron looked at Jeb. "Can you please, just this once, drive over the speed limit?"

"What, and risk killing you for a second time tonight? I don't think so. I'm sure Sonny would rather have you arrive safely than ten minutes earlier."

"Just you wait, brother. Your time's coming, and then we'll see how calm you are." Garron settled in for the gruelling drive into Lincoln. He was surprised Jeb didn't say anything. When he glanced his way, Jeb seemed a million miles away, lost in his own thoughts.

Closing his eyes, Garron thought of Sonny. He'd never forget the look of love, awe and total devotion on his face while Garron recited his commitment vows. Had it really only been a couple of hours earlier? The day had been so perfect.

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Garron had never seen Sonny happier than when he toasted his friends and family for their love and support.

Jeb told Garron as soon as he finished with the CAT scan, that Rawley had called one of his deputies and told him to find Lionel Hibbs and bring him in for questioning. Rawley said that they weren't to let him leave until he finished with his brother and got there. Garron could imagine the kind of questioning Rawley intended. He may be the town's Sheriff, but he was Sonny's brother, first and foremost.

Jeb dropped Garron at the Emergency Room door, before going to park the truck. Garron ran inside and asked the lady at the information desk where he could find the Good family. He was told to go up to the second floor, surgical waiting room.

Garron nodded and looked toward the door, just as Jeb ran in. "Second floor," he said as they made their way to the stairs. Taking the steps two at a time, Garron's head felt like it would fall off by the time he reached the waiting room.

Ryker was the first to see him and rushed to his side. "How are you?"

"I'm fine, have you heard anything?" Garron winced as Ryker unexpectedly hugged him.

Pulling back, Ryker must have seen the look on Garron's face. "Oh shit, sorry. How's the arm?" Ryker asked, looking at Garron's heavily bandaged arm.

"Fine," Garron ground out. "Tell me how he is?"

Ryker motioned Garron over to the small room off to the side of the waiting area. Garron walked into the room, and nodded to everyone before turning back to Ryker. "Well?"

"The doctor's nurse has come in a couple of times in the last two hours to update us. According to her, the bullet was a twenty-two calibre, which is good. The helmet stopped the momentum enough that it didn't enter the brain. However, the impact caused an open depressed skull fracture. The surgeon is making sure none of the bone fragments entered the brain. After he's finished assessing Sonny, the nurse said the surgeon would almost certainly use a titanium mesh to cover the area, if the skull fragments turn out to be too small to repair."

Garron looked at Ryker while he analyzed all the information. "Did she say what his prognosis is?"

"No, she said the doctor would be able to tell us more once he finished. They do hold out a lot of hope because Sonny regained consciousness just before they took him into surgery." Ryker grinned, "The doctor was planning to cut the helmet off him, but Sonny begged him not to because it was a wedding gift from his husband."

Garron fell to the chair, and put his face in his hands as he finally broke down. Of all the things for Sonny to be worrying about it was just like him to think of that stupid helmet. He felt a hand on his back, rubbing soothing circles into his tense muscles. Wiping his eyes, he looked over and came face to face with Evelyn.

"Sonny's a fighter. You'll see."

Garron swallowed and gave her a nod. "I can't believe he risked injuring himself more by trying to save that stupid gift."

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Evelyn took Garron's hand and squeezed. "Now you listen here, young man. That gift you gave him saved his life. According to the nurse, the helmet was removed without further injury to Sonny, so just leave it at that."

Looking into Evelyn's worried eyes, Garron longed for his own mother. His parent's had both refused to come down to Nebraska for such a sacrilegious event. Right now though, he wanted nothing more than to be safely tucked in his mother's arms.

Evelyn must have seen the need in Garron's face because she carefully wrapped him in a motherly hug. "He'll be fine. You need to believe that."

Garron nodded and wiped his eyes again. "I'm sorry. I knew having the ceremony in town was risky, Rawley tried to tell us both..."

"That's enough of that. It was a beautiful wedding, everything that my Sonny hoped for. You can't blame yourself for what happened." Evelyn kissed Garron's cheek and turned toward Rawley. "Speaking of which, why don't you go find out who did this?"

"I know who did it, mom. He's sitting in an interrogation room as we speak, but I want to make sure Sonny's going to be okay before I go back to Summerville," Rawley said, never taking his eyes off the floor.

Garron happened to notice the look on Jeb's face. The need to comfort Rawley so strong Jeb's hands were shaking.

"You need to have a little more faith in your brother as well, young man. He's going to be fine, but the longer that man sits, the more alibis he's going to be able to come up

with." Evelyn shook her finger at Rawley. "And you make sure you go by the book. I won't have this little weasel get off on some technicality."

Rawley sighed and looked at his mom. "Promise to call me as soon as you hear something?"

"You know we will," Ranger said.

Garron looked up at his brother. "Why don't you go with Rawley? I'll be fine."

Jeb looked at Garron for a few seconds and then turned to Rawley. "Would that be okay with you?"

"Yeah," Rawley said, as he bent to kiss his mother good-bye. "I'll be back as soon as I finish up with Lionel." He turned back to Jeb, "Come on, I think I'll let you drive if you don't mind?"

Jeb nodded and walked over to Garron. Running his hand over Garron's hair, Jeb leaned over and kissed the top of his head. "Love you."

"I know," Garron whispered.

* * * *

They rode the elevator down and walked out to the parking lot in silence. Rawley headed toward the Sheriff's SUV and Jeb stopped him with a hand on his arm. "Do we have to take that? I'd feel a lot better driving my own pickup."

Rawley stopped and looked at Jeb's hand. Of all the times he dreamed of Jeb finally touching him, this wasn't the scenario he'd fantasised about. "Yeah, we can take your truck."

Jeb pointed toward the opposite direction. "I'm parked over there."

Rawley nodded and they started toward the bright red dual-cab pickup. Rawley tried his best to concentrate on the truck and not the fine ass walking in front of him. *Stop it*, he told himself. This is the exact reason his brother was upstairs in surgery. Summerville was not the place for a man like himself. He'd tried his damndest to make his brothers understand that. Now they were suffering the reality of being gay in a small mid-western town.

Shaking his head to clear his thoughts, Rawley climbed into the passenger seat and fastened his safety belt.

Jeb got in and did the same, but before starting the truck he turned to Rawley. "You okay?"

Rawley just looked at Jeb. His curly blond hair reflected the street light above, creating a halo effect around his head, his warm brown eyes and long black lashes in sharp contrast to the fair hair and skin. If ever he were to fall, this was definitely the man it would be for. He wasn't sure what signal he gave, but the next thing he knew, Jeb had unfastened his seat belt and slid over into Rawley's open arms.

There mouths clashed together in a heated kiss that threatened to completely overwhelm him. He felt the ache of his cock as it pressed against the zipper of his dress slacks and he knew. God help him, but he'd already fallen. The sudden thought of spending his life with Jeb scared Rawley shitless. No, he refused to travel the path of his brothers, always being talked about, never truly safe. Nope, that kind

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of life wasn't for him. He loved his job, and his town and he couldn't see giving either of them up, even for Jeb.

Breaking the kiss, Rawley looked into Jeb's heavy lidded eyes. "I can't do this, I won't." He opened the truck door and fled before Jeb could utter a word. Jogging to his SUV, Rawley felt twisted to the point of nausea. He unlocked the door and sped out of the parking lot.

He had a job to do and nothing would keep him from it.

Chapter Five

Sitting beside Sonny's hospital bed, the doctors words replayed over and over in his head. Brain damage ... would probably need months of therapy ... seizures. Taking a deep breath, Garron reached out and touched Sonny's hand. They had him in a drug induced coma because Dr. Adams said it was best to let him heal a little before waking him. Although very little actual damage was done to the brain, Sonny had been left with a lesion and several contusions. Sadly enough, they just didn't know what they'd be faced with when Sonny woke up.

Everyone had tried to get Garron to take a break and go home for a while, but he just couldn't. Even though it was no longer his wedding night, he knew he couldn't face the house without Sonny. He'd called in and taken the day off work, but promised to be there in the morning. At least he'd be working in the same city with Sonny. He could come by in the morning, at lunch and then camp out in the evening. They'd need his income if Sonny wasn't able to work again. Although, he knew that the Good brothers and Shelby would take care of the ranch no matter what.

A nurse came in to check them both about every hour. She seemed like a nice woman, Mary, he thought her name was. Jeb had told her about Garron's concussion and asked her to keep an eye on him. Mary took the job seriously. Garron wasn't sure if it was because she felt sorry for him or because she thought Jeb was hot. Thinking of Jeb brought thoughts of

Rawley to mind, and the phone call he'd gotten from Jeb the night of the shooting.

Garron wasn't sure what had gone on between Rawley and his brother, but Jeb clammed up as soon as Garron asked about their ride back to Summerville. Thinking of Rawley brought him to Lionel, which was never a good thing. His muscles tensed just thinking about that fucker. Rawley had questioned Lionel for all of an hour before he got a call from the mayor. Seemed Lionel's dad was pulling in favours. Mayor Channing demanded that Rawley let Lionel go unless he had solid proof against him. Poor Rawley was left with no choice but to turn him loose. He went to the judge to ask for a search warrant and the judge said he'd need a little more proof before issuing one. The Hibbs family were notorious for suing anyone who dared to cross them.

Rawley asked Garron to come back to Summerville and reenact where the motorcycle was when he felt Sonny slam into him. Rawley had the trajectory angle from the surgeon but he needed to know approximately where Sonny and Garron had been on the street before determining which building the shot came from. That's the one thing they did know. According to Dr. Adams, the bullet had made a downward path. Garron told Rawley he'd go back to Summerville as soon as Sonny woke up, until then he wasn't leaving.

Dr. Adams had told Garron the previous night they planned to start weaning Sonny off some of the drugs that morning. Hopefully by evening he'd be a little more alert.

A hand to the side of his face made him spring out of the chair and turn around. Evelyn stood looking up at him. Damn,

he was losing his touch. He hadn't even heard anyone come in. "Sorry, you startled me."

"Well it's no wonder you're jumpy. You haven't slept in two days." Evelyn walked over to Sonny and started straightening his bed. She brushed her knuckles across Sonny's cheek before turning back to Garron. "Why don't you go home and get a few hours of sleep? And while you're at it, go by the station and give Rawley the information he needs for his investigation."

Garron shook his head. "I can't leave him until I know he'll wake up."

Walking up to him, Evelyn put a hand on Garron's. "Don't you see Sonny will need you more once he's awake. Now's the right time to go, I'll sit with him." She held up her knitting bag. "I've plenty to keep me busy and I'll call you as soon as he starts waking."

Looking from Evelyn back to Sonny, Garron closed his eyes. He knew she was right, but it just didn't feel right to leave. "I don't think I'm safe to drive right now."

A smile spread across Evelyn's face. "That's why I made Ranger drive me. He's waiting just outside by the nurses' station."

He looked at her for several seconds before giving a short nod. Turning toward Sonny, Garron leaned over and kissed his cheek. Sonny had so many tubes running in and out of him, it was hard to find a spot of skin, but Garron had found the place on his cheek and kissed it often. "Love you," he whispered, "I'll be back in a couple of hours." Garron felt his

eyes begin to burn and blinked rapidly. The Good family had seen him cry enough over the past few days.

Turning back toward Evelyn, Garron shrugged. "Promise me you'll call."

"You know I will."

With a glance back at Sonny, Garron walked out to the nurses' station. "You ready?"

"Yeah," Ranger said.

Getting into Ranger's truck, Garron put his head back and closed his eyes. Fuck he was tired. He felt the truck begin to move, but didn't open his eyes.

"Do you want me to take you home first or by the station?" Ranger asked.

Garron would rather go home, but knew the quicker he helped Rawley the faster they'd prove Lionel was behind the shooting. "What if I see Lionel in town? You know I'll try to kill the fucker."

After a few seconds, Garron heard Ranger talking on his cell phone. "Hey, I'm bringing Garron to town. Meet us at The Zone. We need to get this done before Lionel comes snooping around." Ranger ended the call. "Rawley will meet us there. It shouldn't take long. Why don't you nap a bit before we get there?"

"If I fall asleep, I'll be hard to wake up for at least a couple of hours. Better to get what needs to be done out of the way first." Garron forced his eyes open and looked at Ranger. "Can I have Shelby call you if he has any trouble at the ranch?"

"You don't even need to ask. Ryker and I know as much about cattle as Sonny does. We'll help Shelby out even if he doesn't ask."

"Thanks."

Ryker drummed his fingers on the steering wheel. "So what will you do if Sonny's bad when he wakes up?"

"What do you mean?"

Shifting uncomfortably, Ryker reached out and turned off the radio. "What if he's not the same?"

Garron knew there was a possibility that Sonny's personality would undergo a change, but he'd put off thinking about it. "Learn to love the new Sonny, I guess. I mean, he'll always be Sonny, but he might have a few more quirks to get used to. Hell, the man has enough now, what's a few more." Garron tried to smile, but now it looked more like a grimace. "I love him and no matter what, that won't change."

"I hope you're right, for both your sakes."

They settled into silence for the rest of the drive. Pulling into town, Garron felt his stomach knot as they neared The Zone. Rawley was already waiting for them in the parking lot and Garron took a deep breath. He'd tried like hell to forget the moment he felt Sonny's head slam against his back. Now he'd have to relive it in detail. "What happened to my Harley?"

"We took it to the dealership in Lincoln to have it repaired."

"Call and cancel the repairs. I'll never be able to look at that bike again. Eventually, maybe I'll get another, but I don't want that one."

"They might as well repair it, insurance will pay for it and then you can sell or trade it in," Ranger said, opening his door.

"Yeah, sorry, I'm not thinking too clearly right now."

"Understandable. Come on, let's get this over with."

Ranger got out and slammed the door.

Taking another deep breath, Garron got out of the truck and headed toward Main Street. He didn't even look at Rawley and Ranger, just tried to picture the path his bike took that night. Closing his eyes, he pictured himself with Sonny wrapped around him. Easing the buttons open on his shirt as he pulled out of the parking lot. He walked into the street totally oblivious to traffic. Luckily Rawley and Ranger were there to make sure nothing happened.

He was so deep in his memory of that night he swore he could smell the perfume that clung to their clothing. Garron walked to the point where he remembered Sonny's head slamming into him. God, he hadn't even known at the time it was the bullets impact that had done it. He knew he lost control of the bike within a second or two after impact, but he was having a hard time remembering where exactly in the road he was when he felt Sonny's helmet.

Opening his eyes, Garron looked around at his surroundings. He saw the scars left on the pavement from his bike and knew it would have been a second or two before that. He looked down at the road and shook his head. "I think it was right about here, but I can't swear to it in court." He looked at Rawley. "Does that help at all?"

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Rawley nodded and shook the paint can in his hand. He walked over and sprayed a circle with day-glow orange. "I'm going to have someone from Lincoln come down who knows more than I do about trajectory. Hopefully, we'll be able to pinpoint which building Lionel was shooting from. The judge won't give me a warrant without some sort of information." Rawley looked at the building across the street. Rubbing his chin, he stood in the centre of the circle and held out his arm. "My guess is it came from there, but people will say I'm prejudice."

"Why," Garron asked.

"Because that building is owned by Charles Hibbs."

* * * *

Charles Hibbs watched the three men in the street from his second-floor window. When he saw Rawley point toward his building he shook his head. "Oh this won't do at all," he said out loud. He picked up the phone and called Lionel.

"Hello," Lionel said gruffly.

"Care to explain why Sheriff Good is standing in the middle of Main Street pointing toward my building?"

"Nope," Lionel replied.

"I'm getting damn tired of bailing you out every time you get yourself into a fix. Just make sure you and your boys get back over here tonight and clean up your mess. I can stall the Sheriff only so long before he comes knocking with a warrant."

"Will do," Lionel said and hung up.

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Charles set the phone back in its cradle and ran his fingers over his bald head. "I wonder how much this is going to cost me."

* * * *

Stepping into the quiet house, Garron threw Sonny's keys onto the coffee table. He wandered to the kitchen and looked in the fridge. He hadn't eaten a decent meal in days, not since the reception. Thinking of the wedding, Garron closed the fridge door, no longer hungry.

He made his way to the bedroom and stripped out of his clothes, deciding sleep would come easier if he were clean. Garron quickly took a shower and shaved. After cleaning up, he felt a little better and climbed into bed. As soon as Garron laid his head on the pillow, he smelled Sonny. Grabbing Sonny's pillow, Garron held it to his face and inhaled deeply. "God I miss you, cowboy." He felt the tears come, but this time there was no one around to see him break down. Squeezing the pillow tighter, Garron cried, whole body shaking, until he drifted off.

Someone shook him, and Garron managed to open his eyes. When he saw it was Jeb, he sat straight up. "What's happened?"

Jeb gave him a slight smile. "Sonny's starting to come around a little. I thought you'd like me to drive you to the hospital."

Garron swung his legs over the side of the bed and ran his fingers through his tangled hair. "Why didn't someone call?"

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"They did, several times. You must have been too far gone, so Ryker phoned and asked me to come over and check on you." Jeb got up and went to the dresser. Pulling out a pair of jeans, underwear, socks and Garron's customary black T-shirt, he tossed them over. "Get dressed and I'll meet you in the truck."

Pulling on his clothes, Garron looked around. "I'll be a minute. I want to pack a bag for me and Sonny. I don't plan on coming back here for a while and I have work tomorrow."

Jeb started to say something, but snapped his mouth shut and nodded before leaving the room. Garron quickly dressed and brushed his hair, pulling it back at the nape. He found a duffle on the top shelf of the closet and started packing. He threw in a couple of changes of clothes for himself and one for Sonny to come home in. Next he rifled through Sonny's drawer and came up with a couple of pairs of pyjama bottoms. Getting his shaving kit, he threw that in too, before zipping the bag and heading downstairs.

Walking up to Jeb's truck, Garron gestured for him to roll down the window. "I know you need to bring Evelyn home, but I'll take Sonny's truck. I'll need a way to get back and forth to work."

"Sure you're okay to drive?"

"Yeah, I'm sure, but I don't plan on going the speed limit so I'll see ya there." Garron didn't wait for Jeb's answer. He threw the duffle in the passenger seat and took off in a cloud of dust. If Sonny was waking up he didn't want to miss a second of it.

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The drive into Lincoln didn't take much time at all. Garron was damn glad he hadn't met up with any patrolmen because he pushed the needle past eighty most of the way. Grabbing the duffle, he locked the truck and ran toward the hospital entrance. Taking the elevator, Garron pushed the button for the fourth floor, and paced back and forth.

As soon as the doors opened, Garron was out and running toward Sonny. He stopped just outside the door and said a little prayer. Walking in the room, he saw Sonny's legs moving under the covers.

Evelyn noticed Garron and walked over as he set down the bag. "He's coming out of it, but he's restless. The doctor said it was perfectly normal, but we need to watch that he doesn't try and pull out any of his tubes."

Garron walked over and sat at the foot of the bed. He ran his hands over Sonny's legs, trying to calm him. "It's okay, cowboy. I'm here now. I'll take care of you." Garron continued to talk softly to Sonny until Jeb came into the room.

"How is he?" Jeb asked Evelyn.

"We don't know yet. Even when he wakes up, Dr. Adams said it may take a few days for him to be coherent enough to do any sort of testing."

"He's fine, he'll be back to his old self before you know it," Garron said, looking only at Sonny.

He saw Sonny's eyes open and watched as they seemed to roll around for a few seconds before the lids closed again. Garron never stopped rubbing and petting Sonny's legs, even

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after receiving a kiss from Evelyn. "I'm going home for the night, but call me if there's any change."

"Yes, ma'am," Garron said, looking at Evelyn briefly.

Evelyn kissed the top of his head again. "I think you've earned the right to call me mom."

Garron's throat constricted and he knew he couldn't talk without breaking down, so he gave her a simple nod. Jeb walked over and gave Garron a kiss on the forehead. "Call me if you need anything."

"Okay."

After the two of them left, Garron started talking to Sonny again. He didn't know how long he talked or how many times he thought Sonny was waking up, but never quite managed it. The next thing he knew a nurse put a glass of juice in his hand.

"Drink this. Your voice is starting to sound like sandpaper."

Garron looked at the elderly nurse and smiled. "Thank you." He drank the glass of apple juice in three swallows and handed it back. "How long will this take?"

"Hard to say, sweetie, every brain injury is different. You just keep doing what you're doing." The nurse patted Garron's back before tossing the plastic cup into the trashcan. She checked Sonny's IV and his urine output bag before leaving the room.

Clearing his throat, Garron went back to talking to Sonny.

Several hours later, Sonny's eyes opened again, but this time they stayed open, although they still looked a little swimmy. Garron stood and went to the head of the bed. "Cowboy? Can you hear me?"

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Sonny's eyelids drooped down, but he gave a slight nod. "I love you, and I've been waiting for you to wake up. Your mom was here earlier, and your brothers have been here every day to check on you." Garron rattled on as Sonny continued to slowly blink, a blank look on his face. Garron finally realised he wasn't getting much response from him. "Sonny? Do you know who I am?"

Sonny's eyes, slid toward him, and he mouthed the word "no."

Chapter Six

Garron finished his reports and turned them in before leaving the police station. Damn he was tired, tired and grouchy as fuck. It had been two weeks since Sonny had first opened his eyes and he still didn't recognize him more than half the time. The doctor said it was normal to lose some short-term memory. That didn't sit well, knowing he was a short-term memory.

Driving back to the hospital, Garron wondered which Sonny he'd meet. It seemed like every time he walked into the room, Sonny was either screaming at someone or crying like a baby. He'd even had Garron taken out of the room on several occasions, claiming he didn't know who he was and was afraid Garron would try to hurt him. Garron had left the room, but not the hospital. The couch in the waiting room was starting to feel like home.

Two nights earlier, Sonny had become violent and actually punched one of his nurses who tried to adjust his catheter. He'd yelled for someone to call the police, insisting that the hospital staff was trying to kill him. It had taken a good deal of talking to get Sonny and the poor nurse calmed down. Garron sure as hell wasn't looking forward to dealing with a scene like that again any time soon.

Walking through the door, Garron was surprised to see Sonny sitting in a chair eating his dinner. He turned when he heard Garron. "Where the fuck have you been? Everyone else

has been in to see me except my own damn husband. You out caddin' around?"

Garron swallowed and sat on Sonny's made bed. "I was here at lunch, and breakfast, and last night, and every day since they brought you in."

"Bullshit, they would have told me if you'd been here." Sonny said, pushing his food tray away.

Sighing, Garron rubbed his eyes. He didn't know what to say to his lover anymore.

"Hey, love? Did you put the roast in the oven for supper?"

Garron looked at Sonny, "Yeah, it should be ready in about an hour."

"Good because I'm starving." Sonny held out his hand. "Come over here and give me some sugar."

Standing, Garron walked over to Sonny and knelt beside him. Leaning in, he kissed the lips he'd missed for so long. This was the closest he'd gotten to Sonny since he woke up and Garron didn't plan on wasting a second of it. He pushed his tongue deep into Sonny's mouth and moaned, feeling himself go hard.

Sonny broke the kiss and looked into his eyes. "Why won't you let me go home with you?" Garron saw the moisture pool in those pretty amethyst eyes.

"Oh, cowboy, I want nothing more than to have you home, but the doctor says you need to stay in here for a little while longer. At least until you get more of your strength back. I'll be here though, every day, just like I have been."

Running his hand down Garron's cheek, Sonny smiled. "I think we should plant some candy trees. I've always wanted some."

Garron closed his eyes, knowing Sonny was off again. "When you get home."

"Yeah, speaking of which, when will they let me leave?"

* * * *

Rawley shook the judge's hand, as he was handed the warrant to search the Hibb's building. It had taken almost three weeks and he doubted he'd find anything, but he had to try. Taking two of his deputies, Rawley walked into Charles' office and presented him with the piece of paper.

Crossing his hands behind his head, Charles leaned back in his chair. "Look all you want, Sheriff."

According to the criminologist from Lincoln, the shooter more than likely had been positioned on the roof of the building. When Rawley and his deputies walked out onto the roof, Rawley's heart fell. He looked over at Craig. "How many roofs have you ever seen that looked like this?"

Craig shook his head, "I don't know many houses that are kept this clean."

"Spread out and look anyway," Rawley informed his deputies. He started walking along the west side of the building that faced Main Street. It was obvious that the roof had not only been swept clean but scrubbed down as well. It was an obvious attempt to cover his tracks, but without evidence, Rawley couldn't prove Lionel had done it.

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Knowing Sonny would be coming home soon, Rawley decided to step up his game and hope that Lionel would get so frustrated he'd let something slip. With new resolve, he motioned his deputies and left the building.

* * * *

Using a walker, Sonny made his way up the temporary ramp and into the house. He'd refused Garron's help so he followed close behind carrying the duffle. Evelyn was already there, having agreed to stay until Sonny was able to get around on his own. She opened the screen door and smiled. "There's my boy." She kissed Sonny's cheek as he passed.

"Mom," Sonny ground out.

Evelyn looked at Garron and he rolled his eyes. Sonny had bitched the entire ride home about something. He was either too hot or too cold, the radio was too loud or he couldn't hear it. This was Sonny's 'I'm-going-to-act-like-a-teenager mood'. God, Garron hated this particular one. He followed them into the house and took the bag to the laundry room.

Looking around it was obvious Evelyn had done a little cleaning. Not that the house had been messy, but now there was the distinct smell of lemon furniture polish. He also smelled dinner. "Something smells good," he said, walking into the kitchen. He knew enough not to hover around Sonny, so he left him in the living room.

Evelyn walked in and opened the stove. Getting a couple of pot holders out of the drawer, she withdrew a homemade beef pot pie. "I figured the two of you'd be hungry by the time you got here."

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Garron's stomach growled at the smell of real food. He'd been living on nothing but cafeteria food and take-out for almost a month. "God, I think I love you." Garron kissed Evelyn on the cheek just as Sonny came into the kitchen.

"What the fuck is going on in here?"

"Oh you hush," Evelyn shook her finger at her son.

"Garron was just thanking me for cooking dinner. Honestly Sonny, if you don't straighten up, Garron's going to set off for greener pastures."

Garron's head shot from Evelyn to Sonny. Sonny blinked a couple of times before turning around and shuffling out of the kitchen. Garron looked at Evelyn. "Why did you say that? There's no way I'd leave him."

"I know that, but maybe he needs to do a little thinking. I know a lot of his mood swings are because of his injuries, but I also believe a lot of them are because he's grumpy and frustrated. Those last two, he can control and he needs to start." She put her hands on Garron's cheeks. "You've been a saint so far, but how long do you think that can last before you get fed up? Nope, better for Sonny to adjust his attitude than to risk his relationship."

Garron sighed, "I hate myself sometimes for the way I feel. I know it's not his fault, but I miss my cowboy. I get tired of always being the strong one. I know the doctor said he'd continue to get better as the bruises healed, but it can't happen soon enough." He looked toward the door. "I'm gonna go find him and make sure he's okay."

Walking into the den they'd converted into a temporary bedroom, Garron found Sonny sitting on the bed. He sat

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down and held out his hand, knowing better than to just assume Sonny wanted to be touched.

After several very long seconds, Sonny placed his hand in Garron's. "You going to leave me?"

Pulling off his wedding band, Garron held it to Sonny's face. "What's that say on the inside?"

Sonny glanced into his eyes and then looked at the ring. "Until death do us part."

Garron nodded his head and slipped the ring back on his finger. "Are you dead?"

"No," Sonny mumbled.

"Enough said." Garron wrapped his arms around Sonny. "I love you, and I always will. There may be times when I get angry or frustrated, but the love part of our relationship is a given, it always will be. Do you remember what the doctor told you about getting better?"

"Yeah, he said it will come."

"Well, even if it doesn't I'm not planning on going anywhere. I'm a tough tick to shake." Garron captured Sonny's lips in a long slow kiss. "Come on, lets eat and then I'll take you on a ride around the ranch. I know how much you've missed it."

Sonny looked into Garron's eyes. The beautiful purple orbs filled with moisture. "I'm sorry. I don't want to be this way. I should have listened and had the ceremony here."

"Now don't go gettin' soft on me, cowboy. If the shooting hadn't happened in town it would have happened out here. Lionel and his friends are nothing but time bombs waiting to go off." Garron kissed the tears on Sonny's face. He stood

and pulled Sonny up. "Now, let's go eat that casserole before it gets cold."

* * * *

That night, as Garron helped Sonny into bed, he wondered if he should stay. Although Sonny had been in a decent mood most of the evening, Garron knew it could change in an instant. Sonny must have read his mind.

"You're sleeping with me, aren't you?"

"Is that what you want?" Garron asked, hoping for a night alone with his love.

"Yes, please," Sonny begged.

Garron undressed quickly and turned off the light before sliding between the sheets and pulling Sonny into his arms. "No acrobatics tonight."

Sonny smoothed his hand down Garron's chest to wrap around his cock. "I think we'd better get it while we can."

The feel of Sonny's hand on him had an immediate effect. Garron thrust into Sonny's grip. Shit, that felt good. Deciding to go with the flow, Garron reciprocated and reached for Sonny. "Been too long. I've missed you," Garron said, taking Sonny's mouth in a deep kiss.

"Yeah, I'm sorry about that," Sonny whispered against Garron's lips.

"No sorrys, not here, not ever." Garron felt Sonny's grip begin to weaken. Not wanting Sonny to feel bad about his current state of health, Garron rolled over on top of him and ground his cock against his lovers. "Yes, right there," he groaned as he felt his balls draw up. "Oh, gonna."

"Yeah, come for me," Sonny begged as his heat seeped between them.

God, Garron loved the smell of Sonny's seed. Latching on to Sonny's neck, Garron pumped jet after jet of come between them. Ears ringing, Garron collapsed to Sonny's side and pulled him into his arms. "Love you."

"Mmm, love you," Sonny yawned as he drifted off to sleep.

Garron knew he should get up and get a warm washcloth to clean them up, but he'd missed the smell of their combined essence so much he decided to leave it. He'd deal with the crusty mess in the morning, but right now, Sonny was in his arms.

Something woke him sometime later. He reached for Sonny and felt a cold empty bed. Springing up, Garron grabbed his jeans. Walking out of the den, Garron noticed the front door standing wide open. How the hell did Sonny manage to get up and out of the house without waking him?

He flipped on the outdoor lights and ran, barefooted into the ranch yard. "Sonny?" he yelled as he frantically searched the area. "Sonny," he yelled again.

He rounded the corner of the barn and saw a naked Sonny standing in the field behind the barn. Garron ran up to Sonny and wrapped his arms around him. "Damn, cowboy, you scared me to death. Why are you out here?"

"Just trying to remember where the chicken house is? I forgot to feed them earlier, but I don't remember where they are."

Garron could hear the frustration in Sonny's voice. He knew if he told Sonny they'd never had chickens it would

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either confuse him more or make him think Garron was lying to him. "I'm sorry. I forgot to tell you, I sold all the chickens. I hope you're not mad. It's just that we weren't here and the eggs were just going to waste. I'll get us some new ones this weekend, okay?"

Sonny looked at him for several seconds before nodding. "Yeah, it's okay. I never much liked them anyway. Is it time for you to go to work?"

"No, it's time for us to go back to bed. Sonny started to follow and it was then that Garron noticed Sonny didn't have his walker. He could tell by the way he was shuffling his feet that he was tired. "Hey, cowboy? I know you don't need it, but I sure do miss carrying you in my arms. Would you let me do that, please?"

"Okay," Sonny said. His voice still sounded a little far off.

Garron scooped Sonny up and walked toward the house. He'd been honest about one thing. He had missed the feeling of carrying Sonny. A naked Sonny was just icing on the cake.

Chapter Seven

Pulling up in front of the twin's house, Garron parked. The Good brothers had called a meeting, and he was glad to see Rawley was already here. It was the weekend and usually he'd be working with Sonny. Hell, he hadn't even gotten his morning snuggle, the meeting being called at such an ungodly hour. Garron opened the door. At least he should be home in time to get Sonny his lunch.

Evelyn had gone home a few days earlier on Garron's insistence. Sonny was using her as a crutch, and Garron believed until he started doing some things on his own, he'd never fully heal. It was hard to watch, but Garron knew it was the best thing for him.

Looking up at the house, Garron was impressed. He'd never been to Ranger and Ryker's sanctuary, as they called it. Set back in a grove of trees, the house wasn't even visible from the road. Garron doubted very many people had ever seen it. The twins were a very closed off pair, not antisocial, just private.

Climbing the steps, Garron marvelled at the deep porch that ran the length of the house. It was set up almost like an extra living room, with big comfortable looking outdoor furniture. Made sense he guessed, since the twins were both big men. Knocking on the door, he listened to the overhead ceiling fans as they stirred the thick, Nebraska morning air.

"Hey, glad you could make it," Ryker said, opening the door. He stepped back and Garron walked into the two story

great room. Exposed beams crisscrossed overhead, accented by more fans.

"I hope this meeting is short," Garron said. "I don't want to leave Sonny for long. The weekends are kind of special to us." He followed Ryker into the kitchen where Ranger and Rawley were talking at the kitchen table.

"Coffee?" Ryker asked.

"Sure." Garron sat down.

"How's Sonny?" Rawley asked.

"Good, well, better. You know you can move back home. Sonny only wanted you out for that weekend." Garron's jaws tensed as he thought about his wedding night.

"You had enough company with mom there." Rawley said, sipping his coffee.

"You're not company, man, you're family. Have you been staying here?" He nodded at Ryker as he reached for his cup.

"Hell no," they all said in unison.

"I've been staying with Meg, but I haven't even been there much. I've been spending my off hours following Lionel. That's one of the things I wanted to talk to you all about." Rawley got up and poured himself another cup.

"I'm starting to catch some heat from the mayor. It seems Lionel doesn't like being followed. He complained to his daddy and his daddy climbed all over Mayor Channing." Sitting back down, Rawley looked around the table. "I've been told rather subtly to either stop following Lionel or Summerville would be looking for another Sheriff."

"That fucker," Ranger said, slamming his fist on the table. "What the hell does he expect you to do?"

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"I don't know. I think the mayor wants me to drop the whole thing. He keeps telling me the city has spent money on this investigation and I've still come up empty." Rawley closed his eyes and shook his head. Garron noticed the lines of fatigue in his face, and wondered how much the investigation had cost him.

"I have the ballistics report on both bullets, but they don't do me any good without the actual guns to test. We know the bull was killed by a Browning Hunting Rifle and Sonny was shot with a simple twenty-two gauge rimfire, which almost everyone in the county owns. The roof of the Hibbs building was the location of the shooter, but that proved clean. Too clean." Rawley scrubbed his hands over his face. "I don't know what else to do. The judge won't give me warrants to look for the guns and I haven't heard a word around town. So I've been watching Lionel, hoping he'll break."

"What do you need from us?" Garron asked.

"I need someone on Lionel's ass twenty-four seven, and according to the mayor it can't be me."

Garron thought of spending even more time away from Sonny. With his long work days and the two hour commute, it sure wouldn't leave much time. "Sorry, man, but my time is kind of limited right now. I could do maybe two evenings a week and a half day on the weekend. Maybe it would help if we ask a few more people to help. I'm sure Jeb would be willing." Garron didn't miss the flex of Rawley's jaw at the mention of his brother.

"Craig would probably take a shift once or twice a week." Rawley looked over at the twins. "You two know anyone?"

"Well Shelby for sure, that's a given." Ranger looked at Ryker. The two of them seemed to have a conversation without words. Ranger finally nodded and looked at Rawley. "Why don't we hire a few outside guys to take up the slack? I don't think Garron should be involved for several reasons. First, Sonny will start to question why he's gone and with the way he's been, that might turn ugly. Second, Sonny really shouldn't be left alone. If Lionel knows Garron is following him, what's to stop him from calling one of his buddies and asking them to pay Sonny a visit? And third, I don't know that Garron can be that close to Lionel and not kill him."

"Yeah, we could probably all chip in and hire a few off duty cops or something from Lincoln." Rawley turned to Garron. "This could be dangerous. When you're dealing with someone like Lionel you never know. Jeb isn't trained for it, so I think it would be best to leave him out of this. Besides, it's not his fight."

"The hell it's not," Garron said, narrowing his eyes at Rawley. "He's gonna come asking why he wasn't asked to be involved, and I'm going to send him your way."

"Do what you have to," Rawley growled.

Garron looked at Rawley for several seconds. "I know this is frustrating for you, and I appreciate everything you're doing to try and get something on Lionel, but pushing people who care about you away isn't the answer."

Rawley drained his cup and looked at his watch. "I'm heading into town. Lionel should be awake by now." He looked at his brothers. "Can one of you relieve me at two

o'clock? I'll go home and get a little sleep and be back for the night watch."

Ranger nodded, "We'll get on the phone and find some help."

"I'd appreciate it," Rawley said with a wave as he walked out.

After Rawley's SUV was heard pulling out of the gravel drive, Garron looked at the twins. "Let me make some calls. I worked with a couple of guys in Chicago on some undercover stuff and they're always looking for an excuse to get out of the city for a bit. I'm thinking one undercover and one tailing Lionel should work."

"There's a pretty nice little apartment over the offices at the feedlot. We've been thinking of renting it out anyway. Tell you're buddies they can stay there," Ryker said.

"Mind if I use your phone? I'd just as soon not have Sonny overhear me."

* * * *

Two hours later, Garron was finally headed home. He'd managed to hire Nate Gills, a friend of his and a damn fine surveillance man. Nate hadn't known anyone else that was looking for work, so Garron broke down and called an old marine buddy of his who put him in touch with Rio Adega. According to his friend, Ryan, Rio was the best at undercover work.

Shaking his head, Garron wondered how they'd gotten to the point of hiring outside men to catch one scrawny pansy-assed man. At least Nate wasn't presently on assignment, so

he said he'd hop the first plane and be down by nightfall. Rio said he'd rather slip into town sometime within the next couple of days. If Ryan considered Rio the best, Garron would play by the man's rules.

Parking Sonny's truck, Garron hopped out and went straight to the barn, where Sonny had been spending most of his time. Sonny still wasn't able to get around like his old self, but he'd made great progress within the last couple weeks. Although he still had a few episodes of memory loss, his personality shifts had also settled down.

Whistling, Garron walked into the barn. "Hey, there's my cowboy." He walked up to Sonny and gave him a kiss. "Still shovelling shit, I see."

Sonny flashed him a smile. "If I could only teach the horses to use the can." Sonny set his pitchfork against the stall and leaned in for another kiss. "Where were you when I woke up?"

"I had a few things to do. Errands I've been putting off." He hated lying, but they'd all agreed to keep Sonny in the dark, for now. "I thought maybe after you're done with your morning chores, you'd feel like a picnic by the creek."

Teasing Garron's lips with his tongue, Sonny moaned. "Can we ride the horses?"

"Sorry, cowboy. The doctor said no riding for a while longer. I thought we'd just take the farm truck." He felt Sonny sigh more than heard it. "I'm sorry. You're well on your way to recovery. Let's not screw it up by getting ahead of ourselves."

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"Okay." Sonny took another kiss. "By the time you make the food and grab a blanket, I should be finished. Shelby's already checked on the cattle this morning, so I gave him the rest of the day off."

As much as Garron wanted to strip Sonny down where he stood, the thought of skinny dipping sounded even better. "I'll go grab the food." He gave Sonny one more kiss and headed toward the house, suddenly feeling a whole lot better.

After grabbing some left-overs from the fridge, Garron hunted up an old quilt and a cooler of pop. Beer sounded damn good, but Sonny wasn't really supposed to have any. He looked down at the cooler and shrugged, getting back into the fridge for four bottles of beer. He didn't think two apiece would hurt.

Loading the truck, he called to Sonny. "Get a move on, daylights a wastin'."

"I'm coming," Sonny said as he made his way toward the truck.

"Not yet, but I have high hopes for the day," Garron said with a wink. He helped Sonny into the truck after giving him a quick kiss. Getting behind the wheel, he looked over. "Ya think we should take a couple of fishing poles?"

Sonny shrugged, "If you'd rather fish than get naked, by all means grab them."

"Forget fishing," Garron chuckled as he drove out onto the little farm road. "Talk to your mom since she left?"

"She called to say she'd made it home. I think she still isn't very happy with you for sending her away." Sonny picked at the rip in the thigh of his jeans.

"She's a mom. I didn't really expect her to like it, but I think it's for the best." Garron reached over and took Sonny's hand. "You feeling okay?" He noticed Sonny had gotten quiet.

"Yeah, I'm fine. A headache is all." He looked at Garron and grinned. "It's not bad enough to keep me from the creek though."

"Okay, just let me know if it starts getting worse and we can head back." Garron wanted a day out of the house with Sonny, but not at the expense of his suffering. He turned off the farm road and slowly made his way to the shaded area by the creek. He was glad to see some late season wildflowers were still sprinkled here and there in the field.

Garron got out of the truck and reached into the back, lifting the weed-eater out of the bed. He saw Sonny roll his eyes, and shrugged. "Hey, I'm still a city boy at heart. I don't mind picnicking, but I refuse to be surrounded by tall grass and weeds. I like to see the snakes and varmints coming."

Sliding out, Sonny laughed. "Are you telling me my big strong husband is afraid of snakes?"

"Shut up," Garron said as he started the weed-eater and began trimming a wide area of grass. He even trimmed a path down to the water, hey, if he was going to be accused of something anyway, he might as well go whole hog.

After spreading the blanket out, Garron went back for the cooler and basket. He was pleased to see Sonny already taking his boots and shirt off, by the time he got back to the blanket. "Looking good." He was too. The muscle tone Sonny had lost in the hospital was coming back nicely, and damn did his man look fine.

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Unbuttoning the top of his Wranglers, Sonny laid back on the blanket. "Do I get some lovin' before we eat?"

"You know it," Garron said stripping out of his clothes. Naked, he crawled across the blanket and nibbled his way up Sonny's ever-present six-pack to his lips. "Love you," he said covering Sonny's lips.

"Mmm," Sonny moaned and pulled Garron's naked body closer. Garron felt the rough material of Sonny's jeans rub against his aching cock and damn near came. Breaking the kiss, he looked down at Sonny. "You feel up to riding me, cowboy?"

"Yee haw," Sonny said as he stripped off his Wranglers.

Garron reached for the picnic basket, and Sonny raised his brow. Garron held up the tube of lube. "What's a picnic without this?"

Settling between Sonny's spread thighs, Garron slicked his fingers. "Gonna make you feel so good," he said as he ran his hand across the tight rosette. Although they loved each other almost every night, this would be the first time they'd made love since the accident.

Garron didn't even get a finger inserted before Sonny suddenly sat straight up and wrinkled his nose. "Ooh, you smell that?"

Surprised, Garron looked up a split second before Sonny crashed back down on the blanket. Garron watched helpless as Sonny stared sightlessly up through the tree canopy. "Sonny?" Garron moved to kneel by Sonny's head. "Cowboy? Can you hear me?" Sonny's eyelids began to flutter and Garron knew he was having a seizure. The doctor had told

him it could happen, but Sonny had been on medication to prevent it. He ran his hand over Sonny's tight as fuck abdomen until he slowly started coming around. The whole thing probably only lasted a couple of minutes, but it seemed like hours to Garron.

"What happened?" Sonny mumbled.

"You had a seizure. Did you take your medication when you got up this morning?" Garron asked as he started getting his jeans back on.

"I don't know," Sonny tried to sit up, but fell back and held his head.

Stuffing his feet into his boots, Garron wrapped the blanket around Sonny and picked him up. Sonny started squirming in his arms. "What're you doing? I don't want to leave."

"Too bad. We need to go home and get that medicine in you. We can try the picnic thing tomorrow if you feel like it." Garron carried Sonny to the truck and then went back for the rest of their stuff. Carrying the cooler and basket, he wondered if he should call the doctor. He'd read all the pamphlets the hospital had sent home with them and according to them, unless a seizure lasted more than five minutes or Sonny had another, he should be okay.

Getting in the truck, he was glad to see Sonny had fallen asleep. He'd have to figure out a way to remind Sonny to take his medication when he wasn't there. Leaning down, Garron kissed Sonny's cheek. "I love you."

Chapter Eight

The phone woke Sonny later that afternoon. He reached for it just as Garron's arm swung over him and snatched up the receiver. "Hello," Garron's voice rasped out, rough from their long nap.

Turning over, Sonny petted Garron's chest as he talked in short responses. Must be someone from work or maybe someone he didn't want to talk to because there wasn't a hint of friendliness in Garron's deep base voice. Oh shit, maybe it was Lionel. Sonny sat up, feeling the tension tightening his muscles. His head still rocked, but he was getting used to the ever present headaches. "Is it Lionel?" he whispered, wide eyed.

Garron shook his head and ended the call abruptly. Setting the phone back on its cradle, Garron pulled him back down onto the bed. "It wasn't him, but I need to go into town for a few minutes." Garron swirled his fingertips around Sonny's nipples.

"Why? Who was on the phone?"

"It's just business, cowboy," Garron said nibbling at Sonny's neck.

"What kind of business?" Sonny couldn't help but feel suspicious. Garron had been secretive lately and disappearing, like this morning.

Sighing, Garron stopped kissing him and looked into his eyes. "It's about Lionel, but I don't want to talk about it."

What the fuck? "You don't want to talk about it? Well screw that. I want some answers. What the hell is going on with Lionel? No one tells me anything any more. I don't even know how the case on him is going."

Taking a deep breath, Sonny watched Garron pull away as he swung his big muscled thighs over the edge of the bed and stood. He started putting on his jeans, totally avoiding Sonny's questions.

"Well, what? Am I not to be trusted with the truth anymore?"

He watched as Garron's face screwed up in a pinched look. Oh, he'd struck a nerve. That's exactly what was going on. Now he was pissed. Despite the pounding in his head, Sonny got up and grabbed a pair of Wranglers out of the drawer, he had no fucking idea what had happened to the jeans he'd worn earlier in the day. Pulling out a clean pair of socks and a white v-neck T-shirt, Sonny started getting dressed. "You don't want to talk, fine, I'm coming with you."

"No you're not. I need to do this alone. Please don't ask me for details because I can't give them to you. Trust me, please, just trust me."

God, he wanted to trust Garron, Lord knows he did, but something was definitely going on and he wanted the truth. Squaring his shoulders, Sonny narrowed his eyes at the gorgeous man in front of him. "You're not taking my truck without me, and that's final."

Garron rubbed his eyes and released another loud sigh before going to pick up the phone. Sonny listened in complete disbelief as Garron asked Jeb if he could borrow his truck. So

that was it? Sonny turned and walked out of the bedroom and straight to the barn, snatching his keys out of his truck on the way. Sonofbitch, not only was Garron keeping things from him, he was using his brother to get around talking to him. Fucker.

Sonny picked up the grooming brush and went out to the pasture. Whistling, he was happy to see Lightning come racing toward him. Damn, that horse sure did like to be groomed. "Hey there boy," Sonny crooned to the Black and White Pinto Gelding. "How's my pretty baby been?"

When Lightning swung his head up in greeting he knocked it against Sonny's jaw, sending daggers of pain racing through his head. Dropping the brush, Sonny sat down in the grass and held his head. Never in his life had he thought he could live with this kind of pain on a daily basis. He just hoped to hell it got better because most days he felt like he'd rather be dead than endure another day.

He heard running footsteps seconds before Garron's arms wrapped around him. "You okay, what happened?"

Sonny tried to shrug off Garron's arms. The last thing he wanted right now was to be touched. Every nerve ending in his body was on high alert. "Don't touch me," he whispered. He heard a truck pull up in the yard and knew it was Jeb. "Just go, I don't need you."

Garron released him and stood. "I'll go, but I'm not leaving you here alone while you're like this." He walked off and Sonny could hear him talking to Jeb. "I'll be back in an hour or so," Garron yelled out as Sonny heard the truck travel back down the drive.

His head was starting to right itself finally, and he looked over to where Jeb was sitting on the porch step. Poor Jeb, being forced to baby-sit the crazy man.

Struggling to his feet, he dug the truck keys out of his pocket and walked toward Jeb. "I'm going to town."

Jeb, the sweet man that he was, looked at him wide-eyed. "I, uh, don't think that's a good idea. Garron said you've had a bad day."

"Yeah well it's not going to get any better until I find out what the hell is going on. Since your brother won't talk to me, I'll have to find out on my own." He looked at Jeb, seeing spots dance around his field of vision. "Unless of course, you'd like to tell me where Garron disappeared to this morning?"

"I don't know," Jeb said shaking his head. The wind ruffled Jeb's blond curls and damned if Sonny didn't believe him.

"Then he's keeping both of us in the dark." He held out the keys. "Either you drive me or I'll drive myself."

Looking down, Jeb seemed to be considering his options. He kicked the dirt a few times before grabbing the keys out of Sonny's hand. "You are so going to get me into trouble."

* * * *

Garron pulled up in front of The Zone, and rested his head on the steering wheel. Damn Rawley for getting him into this mess. He couldn't keep doing this. Hiding things from his husband just felt wrong, even if Rawley did think it was for the best. He was going to have to talk to Rawley about Sonny's suspicions. After the way he'd found him in the

pasture, Garron knew the secrets were doing more harm than good.

Getting out, Garron walked toward the bar. Opening the door, he looked through the smoke haze and spotted Nate, sitting in the back corner. Nate smiled, and gave a little wave. That got a slight grin out of him. Nate was one of the few men he knew who could be so tough on the job while being just a tad too feminine at the same time.

Stopping by the bar to get a beer, Garron made his way to the table. Nate's sable brown hair was still impeccably styled in that just-got-out-of-bed look that he'd favoured last time Garron had seen him. Pulling out a chair, Garron sat down next to the much smaller man and patted him on the back. "How the hell have you been?"

Nate waved his hand slightly in the air like he was brushing away the smoke. "Peachy, although Chicago is boring without you." Nate stuck out his bottom lip.

Oh yeah, Nate's going to drive Lionel bat shit following him around. Garron smiled at his old friend. "I'm sure you're finding plenty of sugar daddies to keep you happy." Nate was famous in Chicago for attracting the richest men in town. Although, being as flighty as he was, he never stuck around long before he was on the hunt for the next eligible bachelor, and sometimes not so eligible.

"Boring, Chicago is filled with stuffy bores." Nate looked around the bar. "Although muscled farmers are having a direct affect on my slacks."

Garron laughed like he hadn't in ages. Nate always could lighten any situation with his own brand of charm. The

thought of finicky Nate getting it on with any of the men in The Zone had tears rolling down his face. He knew he looked insane, but the more he laughed the harder it was to stop. Damn the tension must be really getting to him.

The next thing he knew, Jeb's hand was thrust in front of his face. "Give me my goddamn keys."

Surprised, Garron looked up at his brother. "What the hell are you doing here? I thought I told you to keep an eye on Sonny."

"Don't fucking say another word, just give me my keys." Garron passed the keys to Jeb, but grabbed his wrist. "What the hell is wrong with you?"

Pulling out of Garron's grasp, Jeb pointed toward Nate. "Don't think you can hide your little piece of candy from Sonny any more. He saw just like I did and took off." Jeb started to turn away and Garron grabbed him again.

"Wait, Goddammit, this is not what you think." That was all he got out before Jeb's fist slammed into his face. Garron's head snapped back, and he reached for his nose. By the time he dug his handkerchief out of his pocket, Jeb was already out the door. "Fuck," he said, looking over at Nate. "Do you have a rental car or something?"

Wide eyed, Nate nodded slowly. "In the parking lot."

"Come on," Garron started walking toward the door, holding his bleeding nose. Outside, he spotted Jeb's truck speeding down the street. Turning toward Nate, Garron held out his hand. "I'll drive you to the apartment at the feedlot and then call Rawley. He can brief you while I settle a little domestic dispute."

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Buckling up, Nate shook his head. "Man, I'm sorry if I caused any problems at home."

"Not your fault," Garron said as he peeled out of the parking lot. "Sonny's brother, Rawley, thought it would be best if we kept this from him, and now it's back-fired right in my face. I'm gonna kill Rawley if Sonny has an accident on the way home." Garron shook his head, still unable to believe what had just happened. He knew exactly the way it would look to Sonny and the sad part was that he couldn't blame him. He'd been sneaking around, having secret meetings behind Sonny's back for several weeks now. Dammit, he should have known better than to keep it from his husband.

Pulling up to the feedlot office, Garron pointed upstairs. "That's the apartment up there," he dug in his pants for the key. "Here's the key. You'll have a roommate within the next couple of days, but no one knows exactly when. Ryker and Ranger, Sonny's twin brothers own the place. They said there was a separate entrance around back. I'll call Rawley and have him come over."

Nate nodded, getting out of the car. "Pop the trunk and I'll get my bags."

"Thanks for coming, Nate. Sorry everything's so fucked up right now."

"Don't apologise, just go make it better." Nate closed the door and pulled two large suitcases out of the trunk.

Garron shook his head, you can take the man out of Chicago, but you can't take the fashion hag out of the man. Nate waved and Garron took off toward home. Shit, at least he hoped it was still his home.

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He pulled out his cell. "Hey, you son-of-a-bitch," he said when Rawley answered. "Sonny saw me meeting with Nate at The Zone. He's mad as fuck and I need to deal with it, so I need you to go fill Nate in on the situation. I just dropped him off at the feedlot. This is all your fucking fault. You had to keep people we both care about in the dark, well Sonny and Jeb both took off in their respective trucks like the hounds of hell were chasing them. If something happens to either of them, it'll be your fault."

Garron didn't wait for an answer. He was finished taking advice on Sonny from Rawley. He'd do things his way from now on and if Rawley didn't like it, well that was too fucking bad.

Chapter Nine

Garron's jaw dropped at the scene in front of him. His clothes lay strewn across the front yard, his duffle bag perched on top of his pile of books. "Fuck," Garron exclaimed. He just hoped he wasn't locked out of the house. Picking up handfuls of clothes as he went, Garron walked up the steps and put the pile on one of the rockers. Taking a deep breath, he tried the door and was pleased when the knob turned. He looked around the downstairs, but found no sign of Sonny.

Climbing the creaking steps, Garron made his way to the bedroom they'd started using again. Opening the door, he gingerly stuck his head in, "Cowboy?" He followed his head with the rest of his body, slipping into the room. Empty. Where the hell could he be? He saw that the master bathroom door was open and it too appeared empty.

Turning to leave, he heard a whimper coming from the walk-in closet. Bile rose in Garron's throat as he opened the door and looked down on a whimpering Sonny. He was rolled into the foetal position with his arms wrapped around his head, empty hangers all around him.

"Shut the door," Sonny screamed.

Garron knew when Sonny got one of his headaches, the light hurt his eyes. He quickly stepped inside and closed the door. Kneeling on the floor, Garron felt around for Sonny. There, he felt an arm. Mapping Sonny's body with his hands, Garron laid down beside him. "I'm so sorry, cowboy. I know

you don't want to hear this right now, but it's probably my best shot at explaining while you can't run away."

Feeling Sonny's soaked T-shirt he decided to undress him. "I'm gonna help you out of your clothes first. Do you need a fan or a cold cloth?"

"No," Sonny mumbled.

Easing Sonny's clothes off, Garron took care not to move his head any more than absolutely necessary. The fact that Sonny was letting him do even that much was a testament to how bad he was hurting. Once naked, Garron positioned himself so Sonny was between his legs, leaning on his chest. Garron started massaging Sonny's neck and shoulders before working his way up to his head. The new growth of hair was only about an inch long, tickling his palm as he spread his fingers, being careful of the sensitive scar. Rubbing in a slow circular pattern, Garron whispered words of love as he tried to relieve his cowboy's pain.

When he felt Sonny's body begin to relax, he began explaining himself. "Listen to me, love. I have never, nor will I ever, cheat on you. The man you saw me with today is Nate Gills. He's sort of a private detective. Your brothers and I brought him in to help keep an eye on Lionel. I worked with him in Chicago and believe me, he's not my type."

"What's wrong with Lionel?" Sonny whispered so softly Garron barely heard.

"Rawley's meeting brick walls in his investigation. Seems the Reverend isn't the only person in town swayed by Charles Hibbs and his money. But Rawley has been tailing him every night. He asked me to meet him at the twin's house this

morning to ask for our help in following him. I told him I could help some, but being here with you was more important to me. In the end, we decided to hire Nate and one other fella who'll be slipping into town to work undercover at the bar. Rawley's already cleared a job for him when he shows up."

Sonny reached up and stopped Garron's hands. "Why didn't you just tell me? Do you have any idea what it did to me to see you sitting there with that guy? I know I'm not the same man you fell in love with, and chances are I'll never be again. I'll always get these headaches, and I might have memory loss for some time. What happens when you get tired of taking care of me?"

Shifting Sonny again, Garron spread out beside him and covered Sonny's lips with his own. Garron tried to put all the love he felt into that one soft kiss, knowing Sonny couldn't handle anything too jarring. "I love you, don't you believe that yet?" He ran his hand down Sonny's chest to circle his soft cock. "This is nice, but it's not the reason I'm here." He ran his hand back up to cover Sonny's heart. "This is."

"You know you'll need to talk to Jeb. I think he was as hurt as I was. And I also want to help with Lionel."

Sighing, Garron rested his cheek on Sonny's chest. "Rawley doesn't want Jeb involved. He won't say it, but he's afraid something will happen to him. As far as helping with Lionel, that's a definite no-go. I'm not even going to help follow him because I think I might kill him if I get that close."

Garron chuckled and tweaked Sonny's nipple. "Besides, as homophobic as Lionel is, he's going to go nuts having Nate follow him around town."

"So this Nate's definitely gay then? I thought so when I saw him, but he's gorgeous and when you said he wasn't your type, I thought that meant he was into women."

"No, cowboy. Nate's not my type because even though I like my men small and lean, I like them to be real men. Nate's a little too flamboyant for me. Of course I think a lot of it's an act, but he'd never admit to it."

"Will you do me one more favour?"

"Anything you want, cowboy." Garron leaned up on his elbow.

"Find my medicine and get us a pillow and a blanket so we can take another nap. These headaches sap the energy right out of me."

Kissing his forehead, Garron got up. "I'll be right back."

* * * *

Garron bought two things in town the next day. An alarm clock, set to go off when it was time for Sonny to take his medicine, and a small pill vial to wear around his neck with his headache medicine in it. Sonny had explained to him that the headache the previous day had snuck up on him so fast he didn't have the faculties to go and find his pills. This way, Sonny would only have to reach as far as his chest for relief. Garron was quite proud of himself, as was Sonny when Garron presented it to him.

Sonny slipped the chain around his neck and then got wide-eyed and covered his mouth. "Oh my God, I don't believe I forgot. I never gave you your birthday or wedding presents."

"Yes you did, you gave me two wonderful gifts. The first when you became my husband and the second when you survived the shooting."

Sonny gave him a gentle punch in the arm. "Awe geeze, you're going to make me blush." He gave Garron a kiss and held up his finger. "Wait right there." Sonny disappeared into the house and Garron sat down in one of the rockers on the porch.

A few minutes later, Sonny came back through the door with a file folder in his hand. He extracted a piece of paper and handed it to Garron. "This is your birthday present. I had a guy in Lincoln draw it up for me and I was going to have it done after I found out if you liked it."

Garron looked at what appeared to be a tattoo design. The drawing was two interlocking G's with Angus bull heads on either side. The more he studied the picture the more he liked the design but he didn't quite understand it. "It's nice. Where are you gonna have it inked?"

Sonny rolled his eyes, and pointed toward the letters on the page. "See, it's a double G for Good and Greeley, and I thought I'd have it done on my upper back, between my shoulder blades."

Garron felt completely stupid for missing Sonny's meaning. "I think you'd look hot with a tattoo, but I think you need to get over your headaches some first. Those bitches hurt like hell. The last thing we need is to throw you into another seizure or migraine."

"Yeah, you're probably right." Sonny opened the folder and took out two more sheets of paper. "Here's your wedding presents," Sonny said, handing the sheets over proudly.

Garron took the papers and looked at the first one. It was the deed to the ranch, which Sonny had changed to add Garron's name along side his as owner. The second was a drawing of a new ranch sign with the Double G logo cut out in it. Pulling Sonny down on his lap, Garron kissed him. "I love that you did this, but this is your family's land. You can't just give me half of it."

"Yes I can, and I did. I've already talked it over with my brothers. Besides, it's too late now, it's already done, and the new sign should be here in another month or so."

Looking around him Garron was filled with a sense of peace. He took a deep breath and inhaled the dust of his first real home since he'd left his mom's when he was seventeen. Sonny squirmed around on his lap, and Garron's cock began to fill. "Unless you feel up to doing something about the havoc you're creating in my jeans, I'd stop that."

Sonny squirmed some more and grinned. "I feel good today." He wrapped his arms around Garron's neck and straddled his thighs. "Carry me to bed, lover."

"That's what I needed to hear." Garron stood with Sonny still in his arms. "You're not expecting any visitors are you? Because once I get you in bed, that's where we're staying the rest of the day." *God bless Sundays*, Garron thought.

He was glad he'd gone over first thing that day to talk to Jeb. As predicted, Jeb was pissed at Rawley. Lord, he

wouldn't want to be in that man's shoes right now. Jeb was a force to be reckoned with when angry.

"I haven't heard from anyone," Sonny said a little too softly.

Carrying Sonny through the house and up the stairs, Garron looked him in the eye. "What's wrong? I can tell by your voice that something is bothering you." He shouldered the unlatched door open and set Sonny on the side of the bed. He knelt at Sonny's feet and looked him in the eye, waiting for a response.

"I think I weird people out. Even my own brothers don't come around much anymore." Sonny toed off his boots and pulled his T-shirt over his head.

"Well," Garron said rubbing his jaw, "I think Rawley doesn't come around as much because he feels guilty. When he looks at you it's just a reminder that he still hasn't found a way to make Lionel pay for what he did. As far as Ryker and Ranger? Who the hell knows with those guys. They didn't come over much before you got shot. I think they survive in their own little world."

Sonny smiled, "Yeah, you're right about that, they always have." Sonny pulled Garron's shirt over his head and ran his hands down Garron's chest. "I'll have to talk to Rawley, but for now, get naked and in this bed with me."

Standing, Garron quickly discarded his clothes before slipping between the sheets with his man. Pulling Sonny into his arms, Garron kissed him slow and deep, twining his tongue with Sonny's. "Love you."

"Love you right back," Sonny sighed against his lips as he started plucking and rubbing.

The two of them moved in a lazy dance of passion, mapping each other's body with hands and lips. Moving down Sonny's body, Garron licked a ring around his navel before dipping his tongue inside. Sonny giggled and swatted his head. "You know I'm ticklish there."

"Yep," Garron said, doing it again before moving south. He licked his way around Sonny's heavy sac, feeling the soft hairs brush his tongue, before sucking one ball inside. Sonny moaned and Garron grinned to himself. He'd missed those sounds. Releasing his sac, Garron travelled up the length of Sonny's erection, dotting the rigid, heavily veined cock with kisses. Reaching Sonny's weeping crown, Garron swiped his tongue across the slit and was rewarded with a groan and a good amount of pre-come. "So good," Garron said, as Sonny tapped him on the head with a tube of lube.

Looking up, Garron smiled and took the lube. "You wantin', cowboy?"

Spreading his legs even wider, Sonny nodded. "Please."

Slicking his fingers, Garron explored Sonny's poor neglected hole. After preparing the outside, Garron pressed a finger to the tight rosette and Sonny opened right up for him. It may have been a while, but Sonny's body remembered him, greedily taking one finger and begging for two. Obliging, Garron pressed another finger into his lover.

"Yes, oh shit, yes," Sonny cried, pre-come dripping down the length of his cock.

Good-time Boys: Garron's Gift
by Carol Lynne

Deciding they were both beyond ready, Garron sat up and applied a good amount of lube to his cock. Stretching out over the top of Sonny, he used one hand to guide himself to Sonny's entrance. Taking Sonny's mouth in a passionate kiss, Garron slowly pushed home. He felt the grip of Sonny's muscles around his cock and wondered how he'd gone without for so long. He meant what he'd said to Sonny earlier about love being about his heart and not just his dick, but this was a definite bonus.

Sonny began squirming under him, letting Garron know he was ready. Setting a slow rhythm, Garron made love to his man. Still afraid to jar his smaller frame, Garron rocked in and out with a slow, smooth rhythm. "You're mine, only you," he said between kisses.

"Yours," Sonny sighed, back bowing.

Picking up the pace the slightest amount, Garron wrapped his hand around Sonny's slick cock. Garron's balls started a steady slap against Sonny's ass. "Come for me, cowboy." He watched Sonny's face as he milked his cock to completion, Sonny crying out his name.

The look of total joy and love on Sonny's face had Garron tumbling over the edge to join him in dual ecstasy. Easing down beside Sonny, Garron felt his eyes begin to burn. The idea that in a split second he could have lost this wonderful man, had Garron thanking the heavens once more. Never would he take this love for granted, he vowed.

Chapter Ten

"You've reached the voice mail of Rawley Good, leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as possible." *Beep*

"Rawley, you son-of-a-bitch, I've been trying to get you on the phone for three days. Who are you to decide what's best for me? In case you haven't noticed, Sonny's now a part of my family too. Not to mention the fact that my own brother was on the front of that motorcycle when Lionel took his shot. I've got just as much right to help you catch that bastard as anyone else. You know what I think, I..." Jeb swore as he was cut off.

Goddamit, he slammed the phone down. Rawley had him tied up in so many knots even a sailor would be stumped. Jeb relived their kiss, every waking minute of the day and in every dream at night.

Shaking his head, Jeb wandered outside. Taking a seat on the porch swing, he rocked back and forth. The longer he sat watching the sunset, the more ideas he came up with. He needed to prove to Rawley that he could take care of himself. Maybe a good old fashioned bar fight was what was needed. Getting up, Jeb decided to pay a little visit to The Zone.

* * * *

Rawley listened to Jeb's message open mouthed. He didn't even know Jeb could get so riled up. He tried calling him back, but the answering machine at his ranch clicked on. "It's Rawley, give me a call."

He hung up and walked to the small stoop in front of Meg's bungalow. Knocking, he thought about Jeb. Shit, why did he tell him to call? The last thing he needed right now was to talk to him. He'd done a damn good job of avoiding his calls for days.

Meg opened the door and smiled. "Hey, Sheriff." She stepped back and let Rawley enter. He walked over and plopped down on the couch. "Rough day?" Meg asked, taking her chair beside the couch.

"Rough doesn't begin to describe my day. I spent all evening in Mayor Channing's office getting my ass chewed over this Lionel thing. Seems Lionel went to Daddy about the queer following him around town. Channing pretty much told me to put a stop to it or he'd have my job."

"Can he do that?"

"Yep, he's the mayor and my job's an appointed position, not an elected one. He pretty much owns my ass, well technically the City does, but we both know the council does anything he wants them to. Meanwhile I'm screwed." Rawley ran his hands through his thick black hair.

Getting up, Meg walked over to the couch and sat down. She wrapped her arms around Rawley and hugged him close. "You've been my best friend since I moved here, and I know how much this job means to you, but at some point, you have to take a stand. What this friend of Garron's is doing isn't illegal as long as he doesn't actually harass him, right?"

"Right. Nate's staying a good one hundred and fifty feet away from Lionel. He's damn good at annoying the crap out of him though. Which is exactly what I wanted."

"You need to tell Channing Nate isn't doing anything illegal, therefore, the Sheriff's Department has no say in what he does." Meg smoothed her hand down the side of Rawley's face.

Rawley looked into Meg's eyes for a long time before leaning forward and kissing her on the nose. "Why can't I be in love with you?"

"Because I have all the wrong parts," she said with a grin.

Nodding, Rawley sighed. "Jeb left another message on my phone. He's still pissed."

Taking a deep breath, Meg held Rawley's hands. "I've been fine these last couple of years helping you hide who you really are, but that was before you found someone to care about. Would it really be so bad?"

Rolling his eyes, Rawley nodded. "It would cost me my job."

"I don't really think that's legal besides, from the sounds of it, you're about to lose it anyway," she said giving him the look.

Oh, he knew that look. Meg was getting ready to lecture him on life and love, like she had any room to talk. She'd been a frightened domestic violence victim when she'd come to town. They'd managed to strike up a friendship when she'd reported her ex-husband for making threatening phone calls. When the men in town started sniffing around, Meg had gone to her only friend, Rawley. They'd struck a deal, keeping them both safe from prying busybodies, and so far it had worked like a charm. Now though, Rawley could tell something was on her mind.

"Just spit it out, Meggie."

"I think it's time we both grew up and moved on. You'll always be my best friend and you know that, but Mac asked me out, and well, I'd kinda like to go."

The fact that she was even considering opening herself up again brought a smile to Rawley's face. "Mac asked you out? What about me? The whole town thinks we're dating."

Meg laughed and swatted Rawley's chest. "I think we're not fooling as many people as we thought." She eyed him again. "It's time for you, too. You care for Jeb Greeley, I know you do. If the mayor fires you for seeing him, then sue his ass and live off the money. You can always get a job in Lincoln."

"But I always wanted to be the Sheriff of Summerville, not just a policeman in Lincoln." Rawley knew it sounded like he was pouting and he was. It just wasn't fair.

"This job has always been important to you because you really had nothing else in your life. I know that sounds harsh, but I think it's the truth." Meg tilted his chin up. "You have the chance to have that something else. Grab it. You can have a relationship and still be a cop. Yeah, you may no longer get to be the big honcho sheriff in town, but I have a feeling it won't matter to you as much as you think."

"What about Lionel and his friends? What if they decide to go after Jeb? Seeing Sonny shot down in front of me was almost more than I could handle, but what if it were Jeb?"

"That's something you need to discuss with him, not me. All I can tell you is that I would give my life for the right person. I'm betting Jeb feels the same way." Meg reached

over and picked up the phone. She held it out to him and stood. "Call him, at least talk to the guy."

Taking the phone, Rawley watched Meggie walk into the kitchen. Pulling the slip of paper out of his billfold, Rawley called Jeb's cell phone.

"Yeah?"

"Hey, it's me. You got a minute to talk?" Rawley stood and paced around the tiny living room.

"Nope," Jeb slurred. "Just fixing to whoop somebody's ass."

Rawley stopped in his tracks, his eyes narrowing. "Where the hell are you?"

Jeb gave a little chuckle, "I'm Zonin', man."

"Don't you move until I get there." Rawley stuck his head in the kitchen and waved goodbye to Meggie. "I'll call you," he mouthed. She nodded and smiled.

Going out to his SUV, Rawley still had the phone to his ear. He could still hear Jeb mumbling incoherently, "Man, you hurt me real bad. I'm gonna show you I know how to fight. Now I just need to find one."

"Listen to me," Rawley said in a harsh voice. "You don't need to get into a fight to prove anything to me. I'll be there in two minutes, stay put."

"I really liked you, did you know? I thought maybe you were the one for me," Jeb continued to slur. Rawley heard the phone clank around a little and then he heard only background noise.

"Jeb? Are you there? I'm out in the parking lot. Can you walk out by yourself?" With no reply coming, Rawley had little choice but to walk inside the bar. Looking around, he spotted

Jeb face down on a table, the locals laughing at him. Feeling his anger heat his blood, Rawley stepped over and looked around. "You're laughing at him? What the hell kind of people are you?"

Shaking his head, Rawley reached down and picked Jeb's limp body off the table. "Come on, I'll get you home." Carrying him more in a fireman's hold than a lover's, Rawley took Jeb out to the SUV. Settling him into the passenger seat, he buckled him up and hoped like hell, Jeb wouldn't puke.

Pulling out, Rawley looked over at the sleeping man. Damn, even drunker than a skunk, Jeb was still the hottest thing on two legs. His fingers itched to run their way across the long black lashes fanned down against Jeb's cheekbones. He didn't think he'd ever seen a natural blond with black lashes like that. Unable to help himself, Rawley reached over and ran his knuckles down Jeb's chiselled cheek.

Moaning, Jeb leaned his face into Rawley's touch and smiled in his sleep. What was he gonna do? He weighed his options all the way to the Tall A. Sitting in front of Jeb's house, he finally came to a decision. This time when he lifted Jeb he carried him like a lover, not a sack of potatoes.

He was a little surprised to find the house unlocked and vowed to talk to Jeb about it in the morning. Carrying the small lean body, Rawley made his way to the master bedroom. Laying him down on the bed, Rawley took Jeb's boots and shirt off. His cock immediately hardened at the sight of Jeb's sweet as sin body. Leaning over him, Rawley placed a kiss to Jeb's slack lips and sighed into his mouth as Jeb began to kiss him back.

Lowering his body, Rawley took the kiss deeper as he began to rub against Jeb's straining erection. Spreading his legs, Jeb's eyes opened and he stared heavily lidded into Rawley's. "Fuck me," he said against Rawley's lips.

That snapped Rawley out of his lust-filled haze. He stopped moving and kissed Jeb again before shaking his head. "I don't want to fuck you. I want to make love to you, but there are a few things I need to take care of first."

"Like?"

"Once I make love to you, I won't be able to lie to myself or the town again. I'll surely be fired and I need to take care of Lionel before that happens." He kissed his way along the side of Jeb's neck and up to his ear. "Tell me you'll wait for me?"

Jeb looked at him for several moments before nodding. "Stay with me tonight?" he slurred. "Just to hold me." Rawley wrapped his arms around Jeb and buried his face in his blond curls. "I can do that." Stripping down to his underwear, he got them both under the covers. Jeb rested his head on Rawley's chest and it felt right. "Promise me no fights."

Jeb yawned and burrowed into his arms even deeper. "I won't go lookin' for any, that's as much as I'll promise."

"Fair enough." Rawley felt Jeb's breathing even out and in minutes he was snoring softly. Rawley couldn't get over how right Jeb felt sleeping in his arms. His cock was hard as a rock, but he knew Jeb would be worth the wait. Rolling his eyes, Rawley thought of Meggie and how right she'd been. Now he had another reason to tie up this investigation.

Chapter Eleven

Turning the chicken, Sonny looked over at Garron. "How's your friend doing with Lionel?"

Garron's shoulders stiffened momentarily like they always did when Lionel's name was mentioned. "He's having a ball. According to Nate, Torture is his middle name." Sonny watched as a smile spread across Garron's face at the thought of Lionel being followed by a very openly gay man. "The funniest part about it is that little shit has endeared himself to a lot of the townspeople. It's one of the reason's Nate's so good at his job." Garron went back to mashing the potatoes and Sonny felt the green eyed monster start to creep up his spine.

"They like him more than me?" Sonny asked, covering the frying chicken.

Garron turned off the mixer and pulled Sonny into his big arms. Sonny traced the tattoo on Garron's neck with his fingertip. "I know, you don't have to say it. I'm being stupid again."

"Never stupid, but you are a bit paranoid at times. You and I both know that most people in this town adore you. Why do you think Nate's fitting in so well? Folks around here have already accepted the gays. Believe me, they wouldn't have broadened their minds had it not been for you and your brothers." Garron bent down and kissed him.

Sonny ran his fingers through Garron's long hair and nodded. "I'm glad I have you to knock some sense into me

sometimes. It's not that I don't like Nate, hell, I don't even know the man, but every time I see him I think of you two sitting in The Zone." Sonny felt Garron's shoulders tense once more. Standing on tip-toes he kissed him. "Here's me shutting up now."

Garron smiled and swatted his ass. "Let's finish this dinner and watch a movie."

"Mmm, you, me, The Rock, and some hot buttered popcorn. Sounds like a perfect evening." He licked up the side of Garron's jaw.

With narrowed eyes, Garron kissed him again. "I don't really like The Rock being in the same breath as the two of us. You and me eating hot buttered popcorn and *watching* The Rock."

"Jealous?" Sonny asked, batting his lashes.

Garron grunted and went back to making the potatoes.

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Leaning against the wall at the back of the bar, Nate watched Lionel and his buddies throw darts and guzzle whiskey. Knowing assholes and whiskey didn't mix, he eyed the brand new bouncer, again. He couldn't help it. Rio was the object of every one of his teenage fantasies, tall and dark with an accent that drove him wild. He'd yet to meet his new roommate, but had been briefed on what he looked like. Rio had slipped into town that afternoon and started work an hour later. Nate was beginning to wonder whether it was a good idea to share such a small space with this Latin

heartthrob. He could so see himself walking around with a hard on for the rest of this job.

Lionel yelled something across the bar, breaking his musings. Looking right at him, Nate smiled and gave one of his infamous waves. He knew it drove people crazy, probably the reason he did it. People didn't think you were smart or able to take care of yourself when you were too feminine. Well, everyone but Garron. He did it to Garron because he knew it threw him off his game and Nate just liked to fuck with his head.

Turning around, Lionel said something to his buddies and they all laughed. Nate rolled his eyes, bigots were all the same. It didn't matter where they were from or what kind of accent they had, the words were always the same tired words gay men had heard for years. Popping his neck, Nate took another glance toward Rio. Sitting on a high stool just inside the door, he had his arms crossed in front of him, and boy oh boy what nice arms they were.

Feeling his cock start to also take notice, Nate tried to distract himself. All he needed was for Lionel to disappear while he went into the bathroom to jerk off. That would sit real well with the Good brothers. Besides, this thing with Lionel was starting to get personal for him. Thinking you could buy your way out of trouble reminded him too much of his own father. Nate would like nothing more than to bring Lionel and his dad down, like he'd done his own father. Thinking of Bruce Gills brought the customary upset stomach.

He was lost in the past, when a large shadow fell between him and Lionel. Nate looked up into the bulldog face of one of

Lionel's cronies. "Care to dance," Nate said and batted his eye lashes.

The dog faced man, picked Nate up by his designer shirt collar and held him against the wall. "Stay away from Lionel. He don't like queer boys in this town."

Nate spotted Rio heading his way and Lionel trying to slip out the door. Knowing it was a ploy to distract him, Nate took matters into his own hands. A well placed jab of his thumb to a nerve ending in the bulldogs neck, had Nate on his feet in no time. He passed Rio at a run winking as he went by and out the door. Lionel was just getting into his expensive luxury car, when Nate pulled his rental one hundred and fifty feet behind him and flashed his lights as a courtesy to let Lionel know he was ready.

Giggling, Nate followed the smoke from Lionel's tires as he spun out of the parking lot and headed toward the other side of town. Nate knew this kind of defeated the purpose of following the bone head, but at least he knew Lionel wouldn't be doing anything illegal with a tail on his ass all night. He slowed as Lionel turned into the gated driveway of his father. Pulling up across the street, Nate parked the car and got out his binoculars. Seeing what he needed to, he set them in the seat and called Rawley.

"Hello," Rawley's voice sounded rough from sleep.

"Sorry to bother you, boss, but I just followed Lionel to his father's house and guess who else is here?"

"I'm not in the mood for twenty questions right now, Nate."

"Oh, right, well your favourite person Mayor Channing's car is also parked in front of the house and two others that I don't recognise."

Clearing his throat, Nate could hear Rawley whispering to someone before coming back on the line. "Do you have a camera with you?"

"Sure do, I got you covered. I'll download the pictures to your email account tonight."

"Talk to you tomorrow." Rawley fumbled with the phone before hanging it up.

Nate would swear he'd heard another male voice. Woo hoo hoo, things are not always what they seem in Summerville, Nebraska.

* * * *

The ringing cell phone woke Rawley. Extracting Jeb's head from his chest, Rawley bent over the side of the bed and grabbed his uniform pants off the floor. Unclipping the phone from his belt, he flipped it open. "Hello," he said as Jeb stirred beside him. Reaching out, Rawley brought Jeb back against his chest as he listened to Nate. He spoke in what he thought was a quiet voice, but suddenly Jeb sat up and looked at him.

"Is it Sonny? Has something else happened to him?"

Rawley covered the mouth piece, "No, baby, it's just Nate. Lay back down, I'll be done in a second." He quickly finished his call and set the phone on the side table. Cuddling back down under the covers, Rawley wrapped both arms around Jeb, and kissed the top of his head. Jeb was already back to sleep and Rawley knew he was only seconds away. He was

amazed at how comfortable he was. He hadn't slept with anyone since he was away at college. Rawley grinned, he was damn near a virgin again he reckoned.

Yawning, Rawley fell asleep with a grin still on his face.

The next morning Rawley woke to the smell of coffee and an empty bed. Sitting up he swung his legs over the side and ran his fingers through his hair. Looking at the clock, he wasn't surprised it was early. Ranchers usually woke before the sun was up and he'd just spent the night with one. Rawley chuckled, thinking about the headache Jeb most certainly would have.

Getting into his clothes, Rawley walked into the bright sunny yellow kitchen. Jeb was making bacon and eggs and drinking a cup of coffee. He turned when Rawley cleared his throat.

"Morning," Jeb said, a tinge of pink shading his cheeks. "Sorry about last night. I never could hold my liquor."

Deciding to break the morning uneasiness, Rawley walked over and gave Jeb a quick kiss. "At least you didn't puke in my SUV."

Jeb blushed even darker, "Yeah, well there is that." He gestured toward the skillet, "Hope you like your eggs scrambled."

Running his hand up Jeb's back to land behind his neck, Rawley pulled him forward for another kiss. "Scrambled is great."

While Rawley sat down, Jeb filled a coffee cup for him and brought the food to the table. Jeb turned the spoon toward Rawley, allowing him to take what he wanted. Growing up

with three hungry brothers Rawley smiled at the manners Jeb exhibited without thought. Putting half the eggs and bacon on his plate, he reciprocated by waiting for Jeb before digging in. Taking a bite of the yellow fluffy eggs, Rawley moaned, "These are good."

"Thank you. They're fresh. I get them from Mr. Thompson down the road."

Rawley nodded his approval as he continued eating. Finishing up, he wiped his mouth and took a drink of coffee. "I noticed you have a computer. Do you mind if I check my email before I leave? I'm expecting some pictures from Nate."

Jeb's eyebrows rose. "What kind of pictures?"

Reaching across the table, Rawley covered Jeb's hand. "Not those kind. Nate followed Lionel to his dad's house last night. He spotted Mayor Channing's car and two others, but he didn't know who they belonged to. I told him to snap a few pictures and he said he'd email them."

"Mayor Channing? I wonder what sort of business he'd have with Charles that time of night." Jeb scratched his curly blond head in thought. "Oh, I'm sorry. Sure, you can use whatever you want." Jeb stood and started clearing the dishes.

Rawley stood and put his hand out to stop him. "You cooked, I'll clear."

"That's okay, you go do whatever you need to," Jeb said with a smile and a wink.

Walking around the table, Rawley took another kiss. "Mmm bacon kisses are my favourite."

"Had a lot of them have you?"

The smile disappearing from his face, Rawley looked into Jeb's eyes. "I've not been with anyone for almost eighteen years."

"Wow, and I thought I led a celibate life-style." Jeb looked at him for a few second and smiled. "That's good to know though. At least I won't have to fight any old lovers anytime soon."

Rawley shook his head. "You'll never have to fight an old lover. In the past, I've only had brief encounters that lasted at most a weekend. No one's cared for me like that."

Setting the dishes in the sink, Jeb turned back toward him. "I do."

"I know and I feel the same way about you." He walked toward the door and stopped. "I have a feeling I'll knock on your door one of these day's and never leave."

"No need to knock, the doors always open for you."

He knew Jeb was speaking metaphorically but it reminded him of the night before. "I wanted to talk to you about that. With everything that's going on, you need to lock your door at night and when you leave the house for any length of time."

"Yes, Sheriff Good," Jeb said with a smile.

Shaking his head, Rawley walked into the little den next to the kitchen and powered up the computer. Logging into his email account, he waded through the junk and found what he was looking for. Pulling up the pictures, he enlarged the screen to get a closer look at the cars. Smiling, he grabbed a pad and pen and wrote down the information he was after.

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Feeling a hand on his shoulder, he looked up into Jeb's face as he squinted at the computer screen. "Get what you needed?"

Rawley tapped the picture. "Nate managed to take a picture of the cars, house number and license plates. He's good. I'm going to head into the station and run these plates. There might just be more going on here than we thought."

Chapter Twelve

Wearing a pair of ratty shorts, Ranger poured the charcoal into the grill. "So what's this meeting about?"

Taking another drink of his beer, Rawley looked out over the countryside. "Something's going on and I thought we could all put our heads together to figure it out. I invited Jeb to join us by the way."

Lighting the charcoal, Ranger turned and looked at Rawley, brow raised. "Something else you want to talk about?"

Shrugging, Rawley continued to avoid his brother's knowing look. "Not much to say, yet. There are feelings there on both sides, but this investigation needs to be taken care of before they're explored." He finally met Ranger's eyes. "You know I'm certain to lose my job when word gets out. I can't very well arrest Lionel if I'm an ex-Sheriff."

Closing the lid on the grill, Ranger walked across the big deck and wrapped Rawley in a hug. He didn't say a word for a long time and Rawley was damned grateful. He'd thought about Jeb all day, and he knew his heart was out there for everyone to see.

Breaking the contact, Ranger stepped back and grabbed his bottle of beer. "I think this town might be ready for a gay Sheriff, once you get the Hibbs' family taken care of. Summerville is one of the rare places in the world where people actually judge you more by the content of your character than who you're sleeping with."

"And I say hallelujah to that," Nate said walking out through the French doors. He continued passed until he reached the railing. Taking a deep breath, Nate spread his arms. "I love it here. I've lived my entire life in the city, had no idea what I was missing." He turned, tilting his head to the side. "Think there'd be any work around here for a gay private investigator?"

"You thinking of staying?" Rawley asked. Nate seemed like such a city boy.

"I'm telling you, man, I love this town. I don't feel this accepted even within Chicago's gay community. But there's the whole work thing to screw it up."

"Not really," Ranger said, finishing off his beer and reaching for another. "Lincoln's not that far away and it's a pretty good size city."

"Hmm, I'll have to give it some real thought." Nate walked over to the cooler and pulled out a wine cooler. "My new roomie didn't even bother showing up at the apartment after work," Nate said with a pout. "Probably hooked up with that waitress he was talking to all evening."

Ranger's eyes narrowed the slightest bit. "Which waitress?"

Nate rolled his eyes, "Well duh, there are only two and one of them has grandkids."

"And one of them is still a child," Ranger replied.

Nate looked shocked. "I don't know who you've been looking at, but I'm gay through and through and I can even tell you there's nothing childlike about that woman." He took a drink of his wine cooler.

Rawley watched as a twinkle appeared in Nate's eye. Oh shit, Nate was about to push Ranger. "She seems like a sweet one, too. Don't understand why someone hasn't scooped that lady up and carried her to the alter. Of course, with a body like that, I'm sure many have carried her to their bedroom."

"That's enough about Lilly," Ranger said a little too gruffly. "That girl's barely twenty-one."

"And ... at what age did you lose your virginity?"

Without saying a word, Ranger stood and went into the house. Rawley looked over at Nate and shook his head. "You're mean."

"Yeah, I know, but sometimes the writing's on the wall and you just have to take the time to read it. I'm not a private investigator for nothing. I've got a good eye and an even better intuition."

Rawley heard the door open, and looked over to see Sonny, Garron and Jeb walk out. Sonny and Garron went immediately to the cooler and Jeb stood back, biting his lip a little. Rawley could tell Jeb wanted to touch him, but didn't know how Rawley would feel about finally being out to his brother. Knowing these next few minutes would change his life, he held out his hand. "Come here, baby."

Jeb looked at him and seemed to exhale. A grin tilted the corner of his mouth as he walked toward Rawley. Taking his hand, Jeb seemed surprised when Rawley pulled him down onto his lap. Jeb quickly looked from Rawley to Garron and Sonny.

Sonny seemed to study the scene in front of him before smiling and raising his bottle to Rawley. He turned to Garron

and pulled him toward the house, "Let's go see if Ryker needs any help."

Garron nudged Nate on his way by. "Come on inside. I think you should get to know my cowboy." Nate nodded and followed.

Alone, Rawley pulled Jeb's head down for a kiss, sweeping his tongue in for a taste. "I missed you today."

"Really?" Jeb's face lit up.

Pulling him back against his chest, Rawley kissed the top of his head. "Really, truly."

The two of them sat just like that, not talking just being, wrapped in each other until the door opened and Ranger came out with a plate full of steaks. He looked at the two of them snuggled in the chair and smiled. "That's a good look for you, Rawley."

"I'm thinking you're probably right," Rawley replied, rubbing Jeb's side.

* * * *

Seated at the long dining table, Garron wiped his mouth and pushed his plate back. "So, can we talk about why we're all here, now?"

Rawley finished up and took a drink of his beer before answering. "I got the plate information back on the two other cars at Charles' house. One's a lawyer out of Omaha and the other a big developer from Lincoln." Rawley rubbed his jaw. "Now what do you suppose that meeting was about?"

"So you think Charles and Lionel are in some business venture with Channing?" Garron reached under the table to

hold Sonny's hand. He knew the mention of Lionel still affected Sonny as much as it did him.

"Either they're going into business or money is changing hands to smooth the way. We all know Channing runs the council in Summerville. If you wanted to get something passed the council, Channing is the obvious way."

"Kickback?" Garron questioned.

"I don't know yet, but something's going on, and you don't meet with people at eleven o'clock at night if everything's on the up and up. Too bad we didn't put our undercover guy in the town bank."

Jeb cleared his throat. "You don't need someone inside the bank." Jeb looked at Garron.

Garron nodded back, knowing his brother was about to reveal a part of himself he didn't share with most people.

"None of you, besides Garron of course, know what I did before inheriting this ranch." Jeb started fiddling with his silverware until Rawley gently stilled his hands. Jeb looked up at Rawley and gave a half-smile. "I used to work as an accountant for a not so reputable employer. I did a lot of things I'm not proud of, until one day I woke up and decided I was better than that. I called the FBI and reported my own employer. After meeting with them, I continued to work for the company, gathering evidence. I was basically a stool pigeon."

Watching his brother, Garron wanted to reach across the table and take his hand. He knew how hard it was for him to disclose this information. Garron still remembered Jeb coming to him in tears, ashamed of what he'd been doing for the

company. It was a testament to both Rawley and Sonny that he was willing to share it with them now.

"I worked with an agent that would probably help us find out what we need to know, but I'll have to talk with Rawley privately before I call him." He looked up at Rawley, who nodded and stood. Taking Jeb by the hand, Rawley led him into the living room.

After they'd gone, Garron looked around the table. "My brother trusts you not to spread this information outside this room."

Ryker held up a hand. "You don't even need to say it."

Sonny pushed back his chair and stood, gathering plates. "I'm going to start the dishes. You guys talk about your next move or whatever. I've had enough for the day."

Stilling Sonny with a hand on his back, Garron tried to read Sonny's mood. "You okay?"

"Yeah, just want to get the dishes done and go home." He smiled down at Garron.

Garron felt better, thinking Sonny was simply getting back to his old horn-dog self. "Okay, cowboy, you clean up and we'll finish plotting our revenge," he winked back.

As soon as Sonny left the room, Garron leaned on the table. "Seems we have two problems now. We still need to find evidence against Lionel and we need to know how Channing is involved in all of it." Garron looked at Nate. "Lionel might need to be pushed a little harder, are you up for that?"

Nate wiggled in his chair, rubbing his hands together. "You know it. Especially if I have that big hunk Rio around to help protect me."

Garron watched Ryker and Ranger both bristle at the mention of Rio's name. He wondered what that was about? Giving his head a shake, he continued, looking from Ranger to Ryker. "You think the two of you could subtly question the ranchers around the area? See if they've heard about any new developments going on around the county?"

"Sure, shouldn't be too hard. We usually swap shit when they come in to the lot," Ryker said.

He was interrupted when Sonny came back into the dining room with his hands on his hips. "I can't find any clean dishes to set the table with." He looked at Ranger. "Do you guys have paper plates you want to use for dinner?"

Everyone at the table looked from Sonny to Garron. Pushing his chair back, Garron walked over to Sonny and put his arm around him. "We just finished eating, cowboy. You went into the kitchen to wash the dishes."

Sonny looked at Garron. He seemed confused for a few seconds, before his face pinked. "Yeah, I'm sorry." He looked around the room before going back into the kitchen.

Turning back to the people at the table, Garron shrugged. "He still has memory lapses occasionally, but he's getting much better."

* * * *

By the time they got home and into bed, it was late. Rawley had reappeared after the small glitch with Sonny, and Jeb agreed to call the FBI agent he'd worked with in the past.

Sonny had been quiet the rest of the evening. Garron couldn't tell if it was the thing with the dishes or another headache. Snuggling up to Sonny's naked body, Garron ran his hand down his torso to brush across his cock. "You're awfully quiet."

Burrowing into Garron's neck, Sonny nodded. "I'm sorry if I embarrassed you tonight."

Pulling away just enough to tilt Sonny's head up, Garron kissed him. "You didn't. Those people are your friends and family. You had a slight memory lapse, so what."

"What if I always have them?" Garron could see the sheen of tears in Sonny's eyes.

"Then you do. I don't think you understand how close you came to dying. It's a miracle the only effects you still have are headaches and the occasional memory glitch." He kissed Sonny, slow and deep. "Everyone around you understands that. You're harder on yourself than anyone else."

Sonny nodded and rested his head on Garron's chest. Running his fingers through Sonny's quickly growing hair, Garron was happily surprised when he felt Sonny's hand working its way around his chest. Sonny stopped to pluck at a nipple before latching on with his mouth. Garron felt his cock immediately go hard at the unbelievable sensation. "Feels good," he moaned and pulled Sonny on top of him.

Sucking harder, Sonny ground himself against Garron's cock. Knowing he'd have a nice bruise in the morning, Garron

smiled and spread his legs. "You gonna make love to me tonight, cowboy?"

Releasing Garron's nipple, Sonny looked up and nodded. "It's been a while."

"Yeah it has, and I'm needin'." He spread further and wrapped his legs around Sonny's back. "You get me ready?"

Nodding enthusiastically, Sonny held out his hand for the lube. Retrieving it from the bedside table, Garron handed it over. Kneeling between Garron's spread thighs, Sonny rubbed Garron's stomach. "Turn over for me while I get you ready. You're not quite as flexible as me," Sonny chuckled.

"I just haven't had as much practice, Mr. Bottom." Garron turned over and slid his knees under him presenting himself to the man he loved. "Good enough?"

A wet tongue slid across his rosette. "Fantastic," Sonny cooed before placing a kiss to his opening.

God, it had been a while since Garron felt anything like this. Balancing on his shoulders he reached back and separated his cheeks, giving Sonny more room to work. "Ahhh," he groaned as Sonny scraped his teeth across the sensitive tissue. Garron felt his cock begin to throb, pre-come dripping onto the sheets below.

When he felt a hot tongue working its way into his body, Garron growled. "I'm gonna shoot if you don't stop."

Removing his tongue, Sonny slicked his fingers and slid one inside. "Come if you need to, but I intend on taking my time. It's not everyday I get you into this position."

Garron's body accepted the invasion like a starving man accepts a loaf of bread. "More," he moaned, looking behind

him at Sonny. With a hand slowly stroking his own cock, Sonny looked damned sexy as he pushed another slick finger alongside the first. "Please," Garron begged as Sonny rubbed across his prostate.

Withdrawing his fingers, Sonny slapped Garron's ass playfully. "Turn back over."

Willing to do anything to relieve his torture, Garron flipped over and hooked his arms under his knees. Presenting himself once again, he licked his lips. "Now, cowboy."

Nodding, Sonny positioned himself at Garron's hole and slowly pushed in to the root. "Oh fuck," Garron yelled. The painful pleasure of having Sonny inside his body tipped Garron over the edge. He reached down and held his cock as pulse after pulse of come rocketed from his body. Shit, Sonny hadn't even started moving yet, and he was already finished.

Looking up at his cowboy, Garron blushed. "Sorry about that."

Lowering himself, Sonny kissed him. "Don't be sorry, it was hotter than hell." Sonny started moving in a slow rhythm, letting Garron get used to his size before picking up speed. Soon, Sonny was leaning back, sitting on his heels as he pistoned in and out of Garron's body at lightning speed.

Despite knowing he wouldn't be able to come again so soon, Garron enjoyed every deep thrust Sonny gave him. The look on Sonny's face was one of concentrated effort, the tip of his tongue sticking out the side of his mouth. Garron smiled, thinking his love looked cute.

Deciding to give him something else to think about, Garron reached down and lazily stroked his half-hard cock. Sonny's

eyes zeroed in on the new scene and his pace picked up even more. He thrust into Garron hard. Sonny actually started moving Garron slowly up the bed on each thrust until Garron had to put a hand against the headboard. "Like that do you?"

"What do you think?" Sonny grunted, sweat running down his chiselled abdomen.

Releasing the hold on his cock, Garron slid his hand down to the point of contact, feeling Sonny's cock slide into him. The touch was all it took for Sonny to bury himself as deep as he could and stiffen. Garron swore he felt the jets of come like a power washer inside his body. "Fuuuccckkk," Sonny screamed as his body started vibrating with the strength of his release.

"Come here," Garron said pulling Sonny down on top of him. He ran his tongue across Sonny's lips and dipped inside. They ate at each others mouths like they had the first time in the restroom of The Zone. Never would Garron get his fill of this man. Before long, Sonny would be riding his horse. Back to the taciturn rancher he'd first met. Garron couldn't wait, but he also knew that Sonny would be forever changed by the shooting, just as he'd been. Sonny may show it in headaches and memory loss, but Garron knew it went deeper than that for both of them.

Despite everything, their love was stronger than it had ever been, and Garron vowed to make sure they lived every day to the fullest. He also vowed to make sure Lionel paid for what he'd done to his love.

* * * *

Fixing the latch on the corral gate, Jeb thought of Rawley. The last few nights spent sleeping in his arms had been the best of his life. Now if they could just get this investigation over so they could do something beside kiss and sleep. He was brought out of his thoughts by his ringing phone. Hoping it was Rawley, Jeb flipped it open and looked at the display. Not Rawley, but someone almost as good.

"Hey, James, how's that beautiful wife of yours?"

"Sore," his friend chuckled in his ear, "she gave birth to a baby girl about an hour ago. Congratulations, you've just become a Godfather."

"Oh, wow." Jeb walked toward the house. "I thought it wasn't supposed to happen for another couple of weeks?"

"Yeah, well you know women, always impatient," James joked. "Sophia's beautiful, man. She's already got her mother's curly black hair. No clue on the eye colour yet, but right now they're as blue as the ocean."

"How's Niki? Did she make it through the natural childbirth thing okay?" Jeb walked into the house and opened the fridge.

"Ha, she begged for an epidural about two hours in. Thank God."

"Well I'm opening a beer right now to toast the three of you. I'll make a trip up to Chicago this month to see my new Goddaughter. Will you be able to swing a Christening by then?"

"Oh I'm sure we can. You know Niki, when she sets her mind to something..." James stopped talking and Jeb heard

someone else in the background. "Hey, man, let me call you back later, the nurse just brought Sophia back in."

"That's fine, you did good for a worthless fella like yourself."

"Gee thanks. See ya, buddy."

"Give the girls my love," Jeb said before hanging up. A Godfather, him, wow. Taking another drink of his beer, Jeb walked outside and sat on the porch swing. He couldn't believe how happy he felt.

The sound of a car coming up the road got his attention. He didn't recognise it, and was a little surprised when it pulled into his drive. As the small blue compact got closer, he saw Meg behind the wheel and Rawley in the passenger seat. The look on Rawley's face told him something was very wrong.

The car stopped and Rawley got out. He looked up and gave Jeb a little wave before going back toward the popped trunk. Shutting the trunk, Jeb watched as Rawley walked toward the porch with two big suitcases in his hand.

His chest tight, Jeb stood and walked to the steps. Rawley looked up at him and set his bags down. "I've been relieved of my duties as Summerville Sheriff. I no longer have a need to hide the way I feel about you. Care for a roommate?"

...To be continued in Rawley's Redemption available soon from Total-e-bound.

Good-time Boys: Garron's Gift
by Carol Lynne

About the Author

An avid reader for years, one day Carol Lynne decided to write her own brand of erotic romance. Carol juggles between being a full-time mother and a full-time writer. These days, you can usually find Carol either cleaning jelly out of the carpet or nestled in her favourite chair writing steamy love scenes.

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