

Loose Id

# Body & Soul

LIZ ANDREWS  
LENA MATTHEWS

# BODY AND SOUL

Liz Andrews and Lena Matthews

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## Chapter One

The red lights flashing in Nichelle Turner's rearview mirror were a testament to the type of day she'd been having. Thanks to her middle sister, and boss, Samantha Weller's morning sickness that refused to confine itself to the morning, Nichelle was stuck closing up the diner on a night when she by all rights should have been off at eight.

But because she was a nice person, she had begrudgingly agreed to stay over so Samantha could go home, despite the fact she'd been there since noon. And what was she going to get for her selfless act? A fucking speeding ticket for going three miles over the legal limit.

*Didn't it just freaking figure.*

With a muttered curse, she checked her side and rearview mirrors before signaling and easing to the side of the road. The last thing she needed was more trumped-up charges to be added to the citation she was about to receive.

To add insult to injury, this would be the first ticket Nichelle had ever gotten in her life. Now she would no longer be able to brag she had reached the glorious age of thirty-two without a blemish on her perfect driving record.

This was all Steven Weller's fault. If the bastard hadn't knocked up her sister, Nichelle would have been home by now either soaking in her newly installed hot tub or lying on the couch watching *Heroes*.

"Damn it all to hell." After turning the car off, she flipped on her dome light. She reached over to the glove box and pulled out her registration, all the while telling herself to keep a calm head.

"Just take the ticket and don't argue. Just take the ticket and don't argue." She repeated the little mantra trying to drive the command into her mind. Yet before her fingers closed completely around the white slip of paper she'd been reaching for, her window rattled under the impatient rapping of the officer's knuckles.

"No, he didn't." Mantra forgotten, she sat up and jammed her finger down on the window switch. Before the window had even rolled down completely she was ranting. "Excuse me, but could you not bang on my window?"

"License and registration, ma'am." The officer didn't even bother to bend down so she could see him. She had pulled over just past the main town square where streetlights were few and far between, so unfortunately she was unable to see his face.

"I was in the process of getting it out before you so rudely interrupted me." She yanked her purse off the passenger-side floor and fumbled through it for her wallet. "I keep forgetting DWBs are illegal in the state of Ohio."

"DWB, ma'am?"

"Yeah, Driving While Black." She took out her license and stuck it along with the registration out the window. "It's a crime punishable by lethal injection, right?"

The rich chuckle floating through her window sent her senses on alert. "Still the same ol' Nichelle."

Nichelle tilted her head and peered out her window at Terrance Walker, former town bad boy. He was a handsome man, with closely cropped, dark hair and deep, penetrating

brown eyes. His body filled out his uniform in all the right places, bringing naughty fantasies of playing cops and robbers to mind. “Have the inmates taken over county jail, or what?”

“Why?”

“Shouldn’t you be in the back of the police car instead of driving it?”

Even though he’d been working for the River Bend police force for over six months, it was still comical to her to see the African-American man in a police uniform. When they were growing up, he’d been on the opposite side of the law, and now he was upholding it. Would wonders never cease?

“No, I think I’m in the right seat. By the way, would you like to revise your statement about DWBs?”

“No.” Nichelle wasn’t one to concede defeat, even when she was wrong. “I stand by what I said.”

“Is the *man* out to get you?”

“You’re living proof that he is.”

“I’m the *man*?” His laughter sent shivers down her spine. “I don’t think so.”

She snorted at that statement. He might not look like it, but that uniform put him squarely on the side of the law. “From where I’m sitting you are. Here I am, a law-abiding citizen, being pulled over for absolutely no reason.”

“For the record, I didn’t pull you over for absolutely *no* reason.”

“Ha.”

“Ha? That’s all you’ve got is ha?”

“I don’t *need* anything else. I’ve got right on my side. Check my record. I’ve never received a ticket.”

“Is that supposed to mean anything?”

“It should.”



“Oh, please. Just because you haven’t gotten ticketed before doesn’t mean you’ve never sped.”

“It does in the eyes of the law.” *So take that, Mr. Man.*

His eyes narrowed at her smart-ass comment. “As far as you’re concerned, Nichelle, what I say *is* the law.”

She tried to control the shiver that passed through her body at his words. She shouldn’t be so aroused by his commanding tone. Of course, arousal wasn’t going to stop her from speaking her mind. Nothing did that. “Look at you, back in town for a minute and you’re already terrorizing the citizens again.”

Terrorizing was a bit of a stretch to describe Terrance’s youthful misdemeanors. In a town as small as River Bend, anything above or below the status quo was considered taboo. He had been a wild child...of sorts. He drank a little, partied too loud, and drove too fast. In essence, he was every parent’s nightmare, and every girl’s dream.

“Stopping you for a driving violation doesn’t quite fit the bill, now does it?”

“Depends on what side of the window you’re on, now doesn’t it? Considering my past record, or lack of one, I think you should give me a break. Let me go with a warning or something.”

“Sorry, but I can’t do that. In fact, I need you to please step out of the car.” Gone was any trace of familiarity from his voice. Terrance was all business now, and surprisingly, more intimidating.

With a heavy sigh Nichelle tossed her purse on the passenger’s seat and unclipped her seatbelt. Unlocking the car, she swung the door open and stepped out, slamming it behind her.

“Okay, I’m out. Now what?”

Terrance stepped back, and placed one hand on his cuffs, tapping the metal restraints as he watched her. The way he towered over her was a bit overwhelming. She wasn’t short by a

long shot, but he was well over six feet tall and muscular as well. It was a bit unnerving standing there in the dark, without the protection of her car around her. The only saving grace was the twinkling in his chocolate brown eyes. Unfortunately it was her obvious shock and discomfort he was laughing at.

“You were speeding.”

“I was barely three miles over the limit.” From the way he raised a brow at her response, she could tell he wasn’t impressed with her argument. “Three measly miles.”

“Three miles is three miles. Besides, you’re being defiant.”

“Defiant?” Oh he didn’t know what defiant was. If he thought she had an attitude before, just wait.

“You don’t respect authority and could be a danger to those around you.”

She rolled her eyes and shook her head with disgust. “You have got to be kidding me. Wake me up, because I must be dreaming.”

“No dream, sweetheart. Now assume the position.”

*Assume the position, my ass.*

Nichelle crossed her arms over her chest in an obvious sign of rebelliousness.

“Don’t make me get physical.”

“Just try it.” She fumed. “My brother-in-law is a lawyer and by the time he’s done with you, I’ll own your sweet ass and the station that mistakenly hired you.”

The words had barely left her lips when she was summarily grabbed, turned, and pressed against the side of the car. He pulled her arms out above her head, placing her palms flat on the hood of the navy Saturn. He gripped her wrists in his hands and pressed up against her, until the front of his body was flush with the back of hers.

She could feel every inch of him, including the thick erection growing increasingly firmer against her backside. Terrance brought his mouth to her ear and spoke in a low and menacing tone. “Did you just threaten me?”

“It wasn’t a threat.” Her words might have seemed a bit more fierce if it wasn’t for the way she squeaked when she spoke them.

“Your brother-in-law isn’t here now is he, Nichelle? It’s just you and me. Alone. In the dark. I’d choose my next words very carefully if I were you.”

She was a lot things, but stupid wasn’t one of them. She didn’t open her mouth. Apparently that wasn’t good enough for the tyrant.

“Do you understand me?”

“Yes.”

“Tsk, tsk, tsk.” He tightened his grip. “Is that the way you speak to an officer of the law?”

“No, sir.”

“Much better. Now let’s try this again. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, sir.” She couldn’t believe the words she was allowing to come from her lips. Nichelle knew she should be outraged, but right now all she could focus on was the promise of his touch.

“Good girl.” He released his hold on her and stepped back. Tapping the inside of her ankles, he urged her to spread her legs for him. “Your legs need to be further apart.”

Starting at her shoulders, Terrance began patting her down, moving along her body in a slow but steady manner. She tried to ascertain if he lingered for a bit as he brushed the sides of her breasts, but she was too busy enjoying the feel of his big, strong hands on her to be able to pay much attention.

Good God, he was going to make her come right here in the street and fool that she was, Nichelle was going to let him.

Why oh why didn’t she just stick to the freaking speed limit?

He could get fired for this, but at this particular moment, Terrance didn't care. The feel of Nichelle's body under his hands was worth any trouble that might come his way. She was a sexy little thing, with mocha brown skin and a body built for sin. So hot she damn near scorched his skin and from the way her breathing hitched, he could tell he wasn't the only one affected by their proximity.

"I bet you'll stick to the speed limit next time."

"I barely went over it." Her voice held none of her earlier conviction.

Terrance chuckled at her comment. He'd expected nothing less from his fighter. "Barely will get you fined in my county."

"And apparently molested. I'm more than sure this is illegal in every state, pervert."

And a few other countries as well, but be that as it may, he was still enjoying every second of it. He'd always been partial to her fiery temper. She was a bold, take-no-prisoner type of woman, and that was what made her current submission all the more sweet.

"You can take down my badge number and press charges, if you like."

Her snort had him biting back a grin. "As if they'd take my word over yours."

"If you complain, I promise not to deny a thing."

"Why don't I believe you?"

"Because you're cynical and untrusting." His hands were now under her skirt, cupping her ass. The pretense of patting her down was long gone and they both knew what was happening. Surprisingly, she stood stock still, not responding, but not pulling away either.

"And you're a controlling egomaniac."

"True, but apparently it gets you wet." He had the evidence of that mere inches away from his fingers.

"This isn't smart."

“Maybe not, but I’m thinking neither one of us really cares.” Hooking his fingers in her panties, Terrance pulled them down to her thighs, effectively trapping her legs. “But if I’m wrong you can always say no and I’ll stop right here and right now. In fact, if you do say no, I’ll escort you all the way home and forget that I ever pulled you over. No ticket. No problem.”

There wasn’t a doubt in his mind she wouldn’t stop him. He had expected some resistance when he pulled her over, and as usual, Nichelle didn’t let him down. She was going to flay him alive with her words, then bring him back to life with the warmth of her sweet pussy.

“Don’t feel like you have to do me any favors.”

“Fine, I’ll do myself one instead.” He moved one hand to her hip, anchoring her in place, while the other slipped between her soft, wet folds.

“Does that feel good, baby girl?” Nichelle was completely bare and open to his touch and she moaned as his fingers stroked inside her. Her hands, still on the hood, gripped restlessly at the warm metal. “I take that as a yes.”

“Don’t be too sure of yourself.” She gasped, as his fingers brushed against her sweet spot.

“I’m sure of you. I think you like it all too well, bent over the car, begging me to fuck you while you scream my name.”

“Terrance.” Nichelle’s whimper was barely above a whisper as he slid two fingers deep into her moist center.

“Yeah, just like that, only louder. Begging me with that one word to fuck you as hard and long as I wanted.”

Nichelle jerked as he spoke and he saw her bite her lower lip as she turned to look back at him. He could see her big brown eyes narrowing with resolve as she closed her legs together, trapping his hand between her thighs. “This is insane.”

“Open your legs, Nichelle.” It might have been a bit off kilter, but it felt right.

She shook her head refusing to budge, much to his amusement. Did she really think that was going to deter him? The closed quarters of her thighs wasn't going to stop Terrance from playing her pussy like a grand piano. If anything, it would help him tease and torture her more. “Be honest 'Chelle, if not to me, then to yourself. Do you really want me to stop?”

“Maybe.” Her voice cracked as he wiggled his hand against her sex.

*Maybe.* That was a no if he ever heard one. Chuckling, he entangled his hand in her shoulder length black hair and pulled her head back, exposing her bare neck. “You and I both know what you really want.” He accentuated his words by taking her swollen bud between his fingers and squeezing in the most delicious of ways.

“You think you know me so well.”

Her statement didn't even warrant a response. “Open your legs. Now!”

“Terrance...”

Her body shuddered as his thumb flicked over her clit. Terrance gritted his teeth as he continued to torture her with his fingers. Although the fit was tight, it didn't hinder him from thrusting three fingers inside her over and over, keeping her in a constant state of arousal without allowing her respite. Of course it was torture for him as well. Torture of the sweetest kind.

“You're killing me,” she moaned, as she spread her legs further apart.

“And you love every second of it.” Terrance began to pump his fingers into her with fast, furious strokes. She pushed back, riding his skillful digits. With his other hand he reached around and pinched her clit between his thumb and finger, not relenting as she screamed her release into the dark night.

He watched as she slowly came down from her orgasmic high, but he wasn't ready to let up just yet. In fact, he was just getting started. He wouldn't be satisfied until he pushed her into overload again and again.

“I can’t take any more.” Her voice held a hint of protest, but her body continued to undulate beneath his.

“Yes, you can. You want it; you just don’t want to admit you want it. Give up that iron-fisted control and let me take over.”

“It’s too much.”

“No such thing.” He moved his fingers away from her sweet pussy and stepped back. “Take off your panties and go to the back of the car. Place your hands on the trunk palms down and wait for me.”

“What?”

“You heard me.” He nodded his head in the direction he ordered her to go. “Now.”

Nichelle did as he instructed without uttering a single word. It was a first for her. Amused, Terrance bypassed her and walked back to his patrol car. After glancing both ways down the silent road, he moved to his trunk and unlocked it, slipping his keys into his pocket. Taking off his weapon, he checked the safety then placed it inside, along with his baton and flashlight. He removed the heavy duty belt and set it alongside the other items inside the trunk before closing the lid. This was a big no-no, but then again, so was fucking a suspect on the side of the road.

As he walked back around the side of the cruiser he was overwhelmed by the sight of Nichelle draped over the trunk of her car. Her skirt was bunched around her hips and he could see the curve of her ass exposed in the headlights from his car. She’d spread her legs wide and mimicked the action with her arms. The top half of her body was lying flat against the trunk lid and she’d laid her cheek against the cool metal. Her eyes were wide with a mixture of longing and trepidation, but with a hint of devilishness there as well. She licked her lips and a smile crossed her face when she noted his return.

Pulling his wallet from his back pocket, he dug through it, looking for the lone condom he’d stashed there earlier that morning. After returning his wallet to his pocket he

unsnapped his trousers and pulled down his zipper. Terrance pulled out his cock, quickly sheathing his straining erection.

“What’s the big idea, Officer Walker?”

“You have the right to remain silent.” He ran his hand over her bare bottom, sweeping it down her cheeks to brush across her damp folds. He worked his fingers inside her again. Stretching her tight pussy in preparation for his cock. He was hard and hurting. It wasn’t going to be an easy ride. “You won’t be able to, but you’re welcome to try.”

“Thanks for the warning.” She moaned, arching her buttocks upward, enabling him to go deeper inside her.

Her telltale moans were a sure sign she was primed and ready to go. Since his cock and he were of similar minds, he petted her pussy one last time before removing his fingers.

“Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.”

He moved between her splayed legs and stroked the head of his condom-covered cock over her damp opening. Even through the thin layer of latex, he could feel the heat radiating from her pussy.

“So saying ‘fuck me, fuck me’ will...” she questioned, haltingly.

“Get you fucked.” Terrance took his time entering her. Every second, every inch was a feast, and he wasn’t going to rush through it for anything in the world. He wanted to savor it all. Enjoy every ounce of her to the very last drop.

“Just making sure I understood, officer.” Her voice was lowered and so filled with need it made him unable to hold back any longer.

Gripping her hips tightly, he pulled back until only the tip of his cock remained before plunging forth once more. This time her snug sex opened to him, allowing him to sink balls deep into her hot pussy. “You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you at interrogation time and at court. Do you understand these rights I have read to you?”



“Shut up and fuck me.”

“Do you understand these rights?” Terrance slammed into her with more force, driving home his cock and his point. This was his game, his way. The sooner Nichelle understood that, the sooner he’d allow her to come again.

“Yes, God yes.”

Those were the words he’d been waiting for. Pulling her arms back behind her, Terrance held her immobilized with his hand locked around her wrists. He was pumping into her hard now and Nichelle was pressing back against him, giving as well good as she got.

“Terrance!” she cried out as she rocked back into him. Her voice rang out into the night as he plunged inside of her, thrust after thrust. “God, yes. Yes. Right there.”

“Right there?” Her pussy was an ever-tightening glove and he knew he wouldn’t be able to hold out much longer. “Is that where you want me to stroke inside you? Is this what your hungry pussy needs, baby? My cock in your snug little box?”

“God...” Nichelle was a greedy little thing. Her pussy feasted on his cock as if it was its last meal.

Their tempo sped up to a backbreaking fuckfest. The sounds of their loving were so wild and uninhibited they probably scared off any and all wildlife for miles around. *They* were the animals, mating in the dead of the night. “You feel so good. So tight. So sweet.”

“Please...I...need...to...come,” she begged.

“I’ll give you what you need. Come for me, baby. Come all around me.” Snaking his hand around her waist, he found her clit and pinched it tightly as he thrust one last time. She threw her head back, her keening cry echoing through the night as her orgasm hit her. Her pussy contracted and spasmed around his pumping cock as he came.

Terrance collapsed on top of her quivering body, his own legs barely able to support him. Gathering himself together, he stood and pulled from her body, quickly disposing of the condom in a tissue before shoving it in his pocket. He pulled out a handkerchief and cleaned

Nichelle, who continued to lay across the trunk. Finally, he pulled her to a standing position, his arms supporting her as she lay her head back on his chest.

“That was...amazing.” Nichelle’s softly spoken words split the silence surrounding them.

“*You* were amazing. I couldn’t believe my luck when I saw you driving home this route. It was too good an opportunity to pass up.”

Nichelle pulled away from him, staring into his face before she smiled. “And lucky for me too, since I thought I had missed out on seeing you during your lunch break because I had to close the diner.”

Terrance walked Nichelle back to the driver’s door and helped her inside. “I’m off in an hour. Why don’t you head over to my house and wait for me.”

“Whatever you say, officer.”

## Chapter Two

Even though it was only two in the afternoon, Nichelle was dog tired. If she counted to the millisecond the amount of sleep she'd had last night, it still wouldn't amount to jack crap. Terrance had kept her occupied into the wee hours of the morning. The red glowing numbers of his alarm clock had mockingly reminded her this morning not only of the minutes slipping by, but also of the time she'd spent in his arms.

After their little role playing session by the side of the road she'd driven to his house and taken a shower. It was after he joined her at his home that the real fun began. As if their earlier session had never happened, they'd fallen back into each other's arms. It was almost as if they'd been away from one another for days instead of a few hours. The feeling was surreal, how much she wanted him, even after he had just fucked her into seeming exhaustion. And when she had to leave this morning to head back to her own house to get ready for work, Terrance had simply rolled over to go back to sleep since he didn't have to report until the afternoon.

The bastard.

"You look tired as hell."

Nichelle looked up from the accounts she was supposed to be perusing into the equally tired face of her five-months-pregnant sister, Samantha. “Hi, Pot, it’s Kettle, nice to meet you.”

“Right.” Samantha waddled into the room and sank into the chair in front of the desk. She was barely past the halfway mark of her pregnancy, but already the soon-to-be-new-diva was taking its toll on her. “I have absolutely no room to talk. I look like death warmed over.”

“No, you don’t.” Nichelle loved her sister dearly, but the last thing she was in the mood for was a *woe is me* moment. As far as she was concerned, Samantha didn’t have much to woe about. She was married to the love of her life and was expecting their first child. Plus, she owned a prospering business, which Nichelle managed for her. Samantha’s life wasn’t a *Lifetime* movie in the making. If anyone deserved a good woe, it sure as hell wasn’t her.

“I do. I’m fat.”

“You’re not fat. You’re pregnant.”

“Yes, but --”

“Look, you’re *pregnant*.” Nichelle enunciated the word slowly, in case Samantha didn’t quite comprehend the situation she had gotten herself into. “Pregnant.”

“I know.” Samantha frowned and sat up a bit.

“Apparently you don’t, because all these symptoms you keep whining about, fatness, tiredness, that thing hanging out your butt, are things that go along with letting a man climb on top of you and doing the dirty deed.” Nichelle didn’t deal with whining very well -- something Samantha should have been well aware of. Her sister’s attitude was even more annoying because before she’d gotten pregnant, she’d whined about not being pregnant. It was enough to make a saintified woman drink...not that she was one. “Steven didn’t poke a hole in his condom or hide your pills. You did this to yourself, so deal with it.”

“Could you be bitchier?”

“Yes.” There was no need to lie.

“If this is what happens when you have to work overtime, I assure you, I’ll make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

“Thank you.”

Samantha rose from her seat haughtily and stormed from the room. She wasn’t even gone a full five seconds before she marched back in, with her hands on her hips. “Did the Dalmatians get away again, Cruella?”

“What?”

“I’m trying to figure out what’s behind your bitchy attitude and the lack of puppy fur is the only thing that came to mind.”

“Okay, you’re stupid.” Nichelle had to fight hard to bite back her laughter. Her sisters were the only people on earth who didn’t put up with her shit. They also knew the best way to defuse her temper was to poke fun at it. Sometimes it was hard working with the people who knew her best.

“I know you are but what am I?”

“Stupid.”

“I know you are --”

“All right.” Nichelle pushed her seat back and stood up. “You win. You’re glue, I’m rubber, and we’re both immature as hell.”

“And apparently tired.”

“Apparently.” With a sigh, she rounded the desk and made her way across the room to Samantha. “I didn’t get a lot of sleep last night.”

“Hopefully for a good reason.”

“Is there ever a good reason for not getting any sleep?” Well, for Nichelle there was, but her sister knew nothing about her relationship with Terrance. They were keeping it on

the down low, more because of her desire to keep him to herself for just a little while than for any reason he had. Besides, it wasn't as if they were dating. Dating was something for adolescents, not adults. She was just getting her freak on and enjoying herself.

Samantha frowned at Nichelle. "You know you really aren't a bad person."

"Gee, thanks."

"I'm serious. You deserve to find someone."

Nichelle rolled her eyes. "Don't start the matchmaking. Please."

"I'm just saying --"

"Well, don't. I can find a man whenever I want. I'm just selective."

"Selective? So that's the reason you've pretty much been alone the last few years? Not your badass attitude?"

"Give it a rest. I'm an independent woman. I don't need a man in my life to be fulfilled."

"But you do need one to be filled."

Nichelle picked a paperclip off the desk and threw it at Samantha, who deftly caught it.

"Get the hell out of here, you perv. That husband of yours has your mind in the gutter all the time." Samantha laughed as Nichelle pushed her from the office.

Returning to the desk, Nichelle pondered Samantha's words. Her sisters would keel over dead if they knew everything she did to occupy her evenings. Samantha and Cory thought they knew everything about Nichelle. But they didn't know as much as they assumed. It was just one more reason to keep Terrance a secret. Then she didn't have to try to explain him to the two of them.

Which was a good thing, seeing as how she had a hard time explaining it to herself. Terrance and she were as unlikely of a couple now as they had been when they'd first hooked up thirteen years ago.

According to the saying, “opposites attract,” and in their case it would be true. It wasn’t as if they didn’t share common likes and dislikes it was just they were different personality-wise. Nichelle prided herself on being a smartass; Terrance was the type of guy everyone liked. He was kind. She was not. He was just. She was not. In fact, the only thing she could think of that they did have in common was they both liked her.

In truth, she had never thought she’d see him again. Terrance, along with so many local youths, including Nichelle at one time, had sworn to get out of River Bend and never return.

When she’d run into him at the grocery she’d been amazed to discover he’d moved back to town and taken a job with the River Bend Police Department. They had actually been chatting online prior to his move, but he had never mentioned his plans about coming back home. He’d looked her up on one of those people finder sites. Their conversations had started with the usual what are you doing now stuff, but had soon progressed to reminiscing about old times. She’d never expected him to move back home. Even more surprising was how quickly they fell back into their old routine. Terrance had been her secret lover when they were younger.

She, a worldly nineteen-year-old, had taken one look at him and fallen head over heels. Their nightly encounters started with a few make out sessions, but soon led to so much more. He was the first man she’d ever had sex with and she still compared every lover to him.

Even at the age of twenty-one he’d known what he wanted from her and she’d been only too willing to do whatever he asked, as long as it remained a secret. Back then her momma would have killed her for looking twice at the supposed bad boy, and Nichelle hadn’t wanted to do anything to worry the cancer-ridden woman.

She was more than happy keeping him in the same role as secret lover when they hooked up again. Their time together was usually spent finding the quickest way to rid

themselves of their clothing. She hadn't had as much sex in the previous five years as she'd had in the last four months. The man was a dynamo.

Gathering up her inventory sheets, Nichelle headed to the front of the diner, intent on completing the rest of this paperwork today. She'd wasted too much time daydreaming and arguing with a bratty sibling to get much work done. Unfortunately, she'd barely stepped into the main part of the diner when she ran into little sister number two.

"Chelle, Thank God. I need you to settle an argument."

"I'm working."

"Come on, it's for the kids." Cory gestured to her two stepchildren, who were arguing in a nearby booth. Nichelle really got a kick out of her baby sister's new additions. It didn't matter one bit to her that they looked like runaways from the von Trapp family. Family wasn't a skin color thing. It was a love thing. Besides, Jody sort of reminded Nichelle of herself. The little girl had spunk. It was a trait she greatly admired.

"Fine, what is it?"

The bell over the door rang to announce new customers as Cory launched into her long-winded explanation about the children's argument. Nichelle's attention was riveted to the door, however, as she watched Terrance enter the diner. Like last night, he was in uniform and he looked damn good.

Nichelle had never considered herself a lover of men in uniform, but Terrance's military-honed body was hot enough to make a girl rethink her religion. Just watching him walk into the room had her nipples hardening and her pussy moistening, and the man hadn't even said a word. Damn, she had it bad.

She watched as a man walked in behind Terrance, someone she'd never seen in town before. Although he was attractive, Nichelle couldn't help but return her gaze to Terrance and his bulging biceps. Unfortunately for her, as Terrance made his way to a booth, he caught her staring at him and winked, as if he knew her forbidden thoughts.



“Chelle, are you even listening to me?”

Nichelle startled at Cory’s question and dragged her gaze away from Terrance. “What? Yes, of course.”

Cory glanced across the diner at the new arrival and then back at Nichelle thoughtfully. “Who is he? I’ve seen him in the diner a few times, but I never caught his name.”

“Who is who?”

“Please, girl. I saw you staring. I’ve only seen him around a few months, so he must be somewhat new to town. And mighty fine too, I might add.”

“Keep your eyes on your own man. Elias wouldn’t like you drooling all over someone else.”

“Jealous much?”

Nichelle clenched her jaw, refusing to answer.

“I think I’ll just go on over and introduce myself.” Cory pretended to primp herself as if she was really going to go over and flirt with him.

“You don’t need to introduce yourself. That’s Terrance Walker.”

“Why does that name sound familiar?”

“Because he used to live in River Bend.” She hoped against hope Cory would let it go, but she knew it was futile.

Cory’s brows furrowed as she glanced from Terrance to Nichelle. Then her eyes widened as if a light had turned on inside her brain. “I know who that is.”

“Keep your voice down.” The girl was so uncouth. Nichelle scuttled past her sister and made her way to the counter, where she began to clear up dishes. Unfortunately for her, Cory was hot on her heels.

“That’s the Terrance Walker of bad boy hall of fame. I heard he had a juvie record longer than my arm. Imagine him a cop now.”

“Amazing, isn’t it.” The deep voice that answered Cory belonged to the man himself.

It hadn’t taken him but a few seconds to get seated at the booth when Terrance quickly excused himself to speak with Nichelle. After last night he couldn’t wait to get her alone again.

As he approached the two women he heard Nichelle’s younger sister refer to his juvenile delinquent status. He’d had a feeling he was the topic of conversation between the sisters and wasn’t disappointed. Terrance smiled in appreciation when Cory jumped as he spoke, the guilt at being caught talking about him evident on her face. He had known returning to River Bend would bring back all the old rumors, so he might as well concede to them up front.

“Sorry, I didn’t realize how close you were,” Cory apologized sheepishly.

“I’ll make sure I clear my throat the next time so you’ll know it’s safe to talk about me.”

Cory raised a brow at his blatantly rude comment. “Thanks. I’d appreciate it.”

“Good to know.” Terrance bit back a smile. It seemed spunkiness ran in the Turner family. “Good morning, Nichelle. You’re looking lovely this morning.”

Of course she had looked even lovelier earlier this morning when she had been naked in his bed.

Nichelle’s lips spread in a quick smile at the compliment and then dashed away. Though it had been small and fast, Terrance had seen it, as did Cory, who was now watching her older sister with a wide-eyed look. Nichelle brought her hand up to her hair and brushed a few wandering dark strands back behind her ear. The gesture was a blast from the past, bringing forth a rush of memories of a younger, shyer Nichelle. “Morning.”

Cory cleared her throat, breaking the spell that had been weaving its way around Nichelle and him. "I'm Cory, Nichelle's sister." She stuck out her hand as if daring him to shake it.

"I know exactly who you are." Cory might not remember him, but he remembered her. She and her other sister had been one of the main reasons he and Nichelle had had to sneak around back in the day. As the oldest girl, her mother expected her to set an example, which in turn meant no hanging out and sleeping with the likes of him.

His answer, however, startled the woman. "You do?"

"Yes." Cory looked much as she had when she was younger, except the cute little girl had grown into a pretty young woman. She was as lovely as all the Turner women, with skin the color of rich chocolate and eyes as dark as a starless night. Yet she didn't hold a candle to her older sister's beauty. No one could. "Nichelle and I were friends back in the day."

"You were?" Cory frowned and turned to her sister. "You had friends? Where the heck was I?"

"Hard to believe, isn't it?" Nichelle's dry tone made her sister to laugh.

"A bit." Cory turned back to Terrance and eyed him up and down. "So what are you doing back home?"

"Terrance is with the River Bend Police force now."

"You mean he didn't steal the outfit?" Cory's eyes widened in mock shock.

"Shut up," she grumbled as Terrance bit back a bark of laughter. His 'Chelle was flustered by his appearance in the diner. They had an unspoken rule about keeping the particulars of their relationship just between the two of them, and at first, Terrance had been all right with it, but now it was getting old. Very old.

"So you're a po' now." Cory turned her attention back on him, sizing him up. "How poetic. Bad boy turns good. Nice."

"Thanks," he said dryly. He was *so* glad she approved.

“That must have shocked a few folks.”

That was putting it mildly. Hell, some days his turnaround amazed him still. “It did, your sister included.”

“Did it now? Oh wait.” Cory’s eyes glistened with glee. “Oooh, please tell me you’ve stopped her for speeding.”

Last night, yes, and the memory of that would stay with him forever, but that incident wasn’t anything he was willing to share with Cory.

“No, he hasn’t, thank you very much. My record is completely intact.”

“Aww.” Cory’s menacing grin turned quickly into a frown. “And here I was hoping you had given her a ticket.”

Terrance cocked his head in confusion. “Why would you want me to give her a ticket?”

“We Turner girls are very competitive. She’s held that damn perfect driving record over our heads for years. I was really looking forward to watching the mighty one tumble.”

Even though he could tell she was teasing, he still didn’t like it. From what he knew of their past, Nichelle had given up having a life of her own to help her sisters out. As far as he was concerned, Cory should be grateful for all she had done for them, not wishing bad things to befall her. “Well, she’ll get to hold it over your head a bit longer.”

“Damn.”

“Do the two of you mind not talking about me as if I wasn’t standing right here?”

Terrance could tell Nichelle was exasperated with her sister and possibly him, and since he wanted her in a good mood for later on tonight, he decided he’d leave her be for now. “I don’t mind at all.”

“If we must,” Cory teased.

“You know what...” Nichelle took a deep calming breath and turned until her sister was out of her direct line of sight. “Was there something you wanted?”

Where would she like him to begin? “To order.”

“Oh, let me get on that,” Cory said sheepishly, grabbing her notepad from the white apron tied around her waist. When Terrance didn’t immediately head back to his table, she grinned slyly and said, “Why don’t you continue catching up while I go take your friend’s order. Would you like coffee?”

“Yes.” Anything to get the pest to leave.

“How would you like it?”

“Black,” Nichelle and he said at the same time, much to Cory’s apparent delight.

“Right,” she said with a large grin. “I’ll get right on that.”

“Damn it,” Nichelle cursed to herself as her sister walked away. “I’m never going to hear the end of it. I should have just kept my big mouth shut.”

“Why? I like the fact you know what I want.”

“It was just coffee.”

“No, ‘Chelle, it’s so much more.” He knew it and so did she. “So, that was the notorious Cory we’ve been hiding from all this time.”

“I wasn’t hiding.”

“Right,” he drawled, amused. Was she lying to him or to herself? “Be that as it may, I think it went rather well. The ground didn’t open; it didn’t rain frogs or anything.”

“I thought we had a ‘you don’t come in here when I’m here’ deal.”

“We did.”

“And?”

“It’s time to renegotiate.”

“You think so, do you?”

Terrance smiled at her fiery declaration. “No, baby. I know so.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.” She turned to walk away, attitude on high. “Goodbye, Terrance.”

“I want to see you tonight.”

“I have plans.”

Nichelle couldn’t lie to save her life. He knew she didn’t have plans and even if she did, he was coming over tonight, no matter what. “Break them.”

“No.”

“I wasn’t asking, Nichelle. I was telling you.”

Her body stiffened at his words. “No.”

“I’ll be at your place at seven-thirty,” Terrance continued, not breaking his train of thought.

“What part of no didn’t you understand?”

“I understood. I’m just not complying.”

“Do you seriously expect me to roll over and just do whatever you say?”

“No, I definitely expect a fight on my hands. One I’m looking forward to.”

“Are you ready to order now?” Cory was back, pad in hand, and from the look of utter fascination running rampant on her face, she’d heard what he said.

She was a nosy little thing, but then again, everyone in the diner was paying them a bit more attention than necessary. Small towns never really changed.

Ignoring Cory for a moment longer, he pinned Nichelle with his gaze. “I’ll see you later tonight.”

Terrance returned to his table after giving Cory his order and watched the two sisters as Cory continued to follow Nichelle around, obviously trying to find out more about his comment regarding tonight. It was only after he heard his companion clear his throat for the second time that he turned away.

“Sorry about that. I got a bit distracted.”

Alejandro Ortez, his former partner, chuckled. “So I see. Who is she?”

“Our waitress?” Terrance picked up his coffee and pretended to play dumb, but Alejandro wasn’t buying it.

“No, the other one.”

“An old friend.”

He quirked his eyebrow questionably. “What type of friend?”

“The very *good* type.”

“Oh, I like that type.”

“As do I, partner.” Even though their partnership had ended when Terrance had moved back home, it was hard to fall out of old habits.

Alejandro had been his partner when he’d joined the Chicago PD and they’d become fast friends. Although a lot of the cops figured the two of them had been hired to make the quota for minorities, the two ex-military men had proved their worth, becoming highly decorated officers. When Terrance decided to quit and return home he had left his colleague in a bit of a lurch. Unfortunately for Alejandro, the next person they had partnered him up with hadn’t been as well trained as Terrance, which led to Alejandro being shot on the job.

Although his shoulder was healing up just fine, Alejandro had turned his leave into a much needed vacation and had surprised Terrance by just showing up this morning on his front steps. “She sure is a pretty one.”

“I couldn’t agree more.” Terrance turned his attention back to Nichelle, who was marching around the diner like a drill sergeant, taking orders with an attitude. Her demeanor sort of reminded him of a more attractive black version of Flo, from the old television show *Alice*. All she needed was a bouffant hairstyle and a piece of gum.

Alejandro's deep laughter drew his attention. Smiling, his friend's gaze was firmly locked on Nichelle, who was giving an older guy hell. "So are all the women in town as high spirited as your little filly?"

"First, if you refer to the women in town as horses you are more than likely going to get a tongue lashing. Secondly, I have no idea about the other women in town since I have my eyes set on just one."

"Man, you've got it bad."

"I've got no problems with that. I'm ready to settle down and I know what I want. No need to look anywhere else."

"Really, I didn't know small towns had such interesting occupants."

"Oh hell, you'd be more than surprised. Nichelle's related in some way, shape, or form to at least a half dozen police cases in the last few years."

"Do tell."

"Samantha, Nichelle's middle sister, was stalked, attacked, and kidnapped."

Alejandro sat up in shock. "What the hell?"

"I know, hard to believe in Mayberry. Samantha's brother-in-law, Logan Crane's wife, Evelyn, was also attacked, almost raped, and her parents' farm was vandalized. And you'll never guess who was behind it all -- Samantha's father-in-law. To top it off, everything was supposedly paid for by Samantha's sister-in-law's husband, Marc Gossner. That whole clan is one big Jerry Springer episode waiting to happen."

Alejandro shook his head in disbelief. "I was wondering why they needed another cop on the force, but I'm beginning to get the picture."

"Cory over there" -- Terrance nodded across the room -- "has a husband with a former drug abuser ex-wife, who they have a restraining order out against."

"So what you're saying is the whole family is born under a bad sign."

"Not at all, just that small towns aren't as picturesque as you'd think."



“Maybe you guys can put that on the town’s brochure or something. Visit River Bend, the small town of crime.”

“It’s not that bad, man. I was just pointing out I won’t die of boredom here. More than likely from a gunshot wound, or something along those lines.”

“Can we not mention gunshots, please?” Alejandro said dryly.

“Sorry, man.”

“Asshole.”

“Right back at you.” Terrance glanced over at Nichelle, who was ringing up a customer, and grinned. “Don’t get me wrong though; there are plenty of reasons to love River Bend.”

“From the hungry look on your face, I’m thinking you’re not talking about the scenery.”

“Not hardly.”

“Should I warn her?”

“No need, she’s got her guard up enough as it is.” But if Nichelle thought it was enough to deter him, she had another trick coming.

## Chapter Three

A good book, a cold glass of wine, and comfy clothes, these were the things dreams were made of.

Nichelle snuggled back on the couch, plumping the pillow under her head to make herself more comfortable. Life didn't get much better than this. She was a successful, beautiful woman. She didn't need a man hanging around to have a good time.

Yet despite that NOW power statement, Nichelle couldn't help stealing another glance at the clock on her cable box. It was twenty past seven. Ten minutes until Terrance had said he was coming to take her out. And knowing him like she did, she knew he'd still show up.

Terrance wouldn't let a little thing like her "no" send him packing. Unfortunately, she could tell he was itching for a fight. Despite their agreement to keep their relationship secret, he'd deliberately showed up today at the diner. There was no way her sisters wouldn't figure out things after that incident. And if he thought she'd blindly roll over and just go out to dinner with him tonight after all that, he was dead wrong.

Not that she cared, of course, because she wasn't going. In fact, she had gone out of her way to prove a point to the bossy bastard. Instead of being dressed for a night out, she'd gotten into comfy clothes as soon as she'd come home from the diner. Gone was her work

wear and in its place was the grubbiest clothing she could find. Hopefully with her outfit of choice -- sweatpants she'd cut off and made into shorts, a white wifebeater sans bra, and a pair of thick cotton socks scrunched around her ankles -- she'd get her point across.

Of course, it made little sense to try to drive home a point when inside she really craved to be with him. But it was the principle that held her back. If she let him get the upper hand now, he'd run with it, and not just all over her body. Terrance had a way of getting under her skin and under her clothing, and right now, she wasn't so sure if she wanted him to do either.

Sighing, Nichelle set her well-read Zane novel, spine up, on the couch and reached for the platter of dark chocolate she set out next to her wine. Hopefully the chocolate would do what the wine and book hadn't, get her mind off of Terrance. Although why she thought rereading anything by Zane was a good idea right now was beyond her. The steamy erotic novel had her more keyed up than she'd been before she'd grabbed the book. And that was saying something.

Nichelle should have just read her Bible and called it a day.

A loud, sharp knock on the door startled her out of her silent reverie. She quickly glanced at the clock and noted Terrance was five minutes early. If she *had* intended on going out with him, this would have been a plus in her book, but since she wasn't going anywhere, it was just one more reason to be irritated.

Being the pain in the ass that she was, she waited a good minute or two before standing up and making her way to the door. Heaven forbid he think she was waiting for him to show up, even though she had been. She needed to present a front of someone who was in control of her life, not someone who was willing to be controlled.

Closing her eyes, she took in a deep breath, hoping to calm her racing heart, then slowly opened the door. Well, damn. The man looked good. He'd changed from his uniform

but still looked mighty fine. His crisp white shirt set off his dark complexion nicely, and the tailored black trousers were cut to emphasize his long lean legs.

The easygoing smile he'd been wearing when she opened the door quickly melted away. Nichelle had expected that, but what she hadn't expected was the calm, cool manner in which he addressed her. "Evening, Nichelle."

"Terrance." Well, two could play that game.

"Are you ready?"

"For..."

"Our date, of course." Terrance glanced at his watch and then back at her. "I assume you own a clock; you must know what time it is."

"I do and I do."

"Then I gather this is what you decided on wearing. It's fine with me. In fact, I think it's very nice. It shows off your" -- smiling, his gaze lowered to her breasts pressed against the thin white shirt -- "bold fashion sense. Not many women could pull it off, but on you, it works. Do you need to grab your purse and keys before we leave?"

"You know I'm not going anywhere in this."

"Really." Terrance cocked a brow mockingly. "Do you need more time to change?"

"I'm not changing because I'm not going anywhere."

"I disagree. Strongly. Now go get dressed."

"Mother," Nichelle mumbled under her breath. How dare he be so goddamn presumptuous? She turned, intending to slam the door in his face, but was stopped when he stepped forward, halting her movements with a hand to the wooden panel.

"I take it there's a problem?"

“You take it right. Problem number one being you standing in my doorway. If you would so kindly step back I can shut the door and return to my book, taking care of any further problems.”

Nichelle knew it was a futile request. She could tell from the set of his shoulders he wouldn't be backing down anytime soon. And damn her traitorous body for responding to his domineering presence. She could feel her nipples tightening at the idea of him pushing his way into the house and having his way with her. *What the hell?* Her mind was in the gutter.

“Not going to happen. However, if you need help changing into suitable attire I'd be only too pleased to assist you.” As he took another step forward she had to subconsciously tell herself not to step back. She needed to hold her ground, literally as well as figuratively.

“I already told you I wasn't going out with you tonight. You should have listened when I said no.”

Terrance stood silently for a minute, before a wicked grin spread across his face. “Darling, you don't tell me no. You know better than that. Besides, if you wanted to spend the night in, all you had to do was say so.”

As he stepped toward her again, Nichelle broke and retreated one step. Unfortunately, it was all he needed. He pulled the door closed, effectively trapping her in the house with him.

“You are deliberately twisting my words.”

His gaze swept over her body and she knew when he caught sight of her nipples through the thin white shirt.

“You look very comfortable tonight. I'm feeling overdressed.”

Nichelle's eyes widened as Terrance unbuttoned the top two buttons on his shirt. “Stop! What do you think you're doing?”

“Making myself as comfortable as you are. Of course, I’d be a hell of a lot more comfortable on the couch.” Terrance walked past her and sat, stretching his long legs out with a sigh. “You’re right. Staying in is a much better idea. We should order food. Do you have a preference?”

“I’d prefer if you left.”

“Liar.” He rolled up the sleeves of his shirt, getting more comfortable by the second. “But if you want to play hard to get, I’m up for it. I have a hankering for games, as you know.”

Did she ever. But she wasn’t going to think about that or the way she willingly played them with him time and time again. She had to stay strong. It was the principle of the matter. If she didn’t teach Terrance now not to take her for granted, he’d never learn. “Do I have to call the cops?”

“What for? I’m already here.”

“Are you going to try to force your will on me?”

“It depends,” he said with a shrug of his shoulders.

“On?”

“On how long you plan on playing the helpless victim. I can tell you now, ’Chelle, there are much more exciting ways for you to play that role. Ways that would leave both of us very satisfied.”

“I’m already satisfied.”

“Yeah, I can tell.” Terrance settled back on the couch then frowned. Sitting up, he reached behind himself, pulling out her book. One quick glance at the author’s name had him grinning like a loon.

Great! Now she was never going to hear the end of this. Stalking over to the couch, Nichelle held out her hand. “Give me that.”

Instead of immediately complying, he raised an eyebrow and set the book down on his lap. His finger tapped against it in the most annoying manner. "What do you say?"

"Now."

He shook his head and made a tsk, tsk sound. "That's not the magic word."

"Fuck you."

"Closer. Much closer, but still no dice."

Enough was enough. "Oh my God, you are insufferable."

"And you're spoiling for a fight. I wonder why?" Terrance rose from the couch and tossed the book down onto his abandoned seat. With his gaze firmly connected to hers, he walked over to her and didn't stop until they were standing face-to-face. "Last night, you were sweet as honey and today bitter as a lemon. What's up with that 'Chelle?"

"You know what's up."

"If I did I wouldn't be asking."

"You broke the deal."

"The deal." His brow furrowed together. "Are you freaking kidding me?"

Crossing her arms over her chest, she met his incensed look with one of her own. "Does this look as if I'm kidding? I was very clear with you on how it has to be."

"Has to be or how you want it to be?"

"How we agreed it would be. I can't speak for you, but I don't want everyone all up in my business."

"We have nothing to hide and I refuse to be your dirty little secret again."

"That's not how it is and you know it." Frustrated, she took a step back, needing to gather her bearings.

"Really? Because that's how it looks to me."

“You’re missing my point and on purpose, goddamn it,” she fumed, as she took another step back. Unfortunately that particular step would be her last. Her back was flat against the wall. She’d run out of running room and if the smile on his face was anything to go by, he was damn happy.

“I think I got your point. You’re running scared. Admit it.” He crowded her until there were only a few feet between them.

She wasn’t willing to admit anything. “If you think this intimidates me, you’re sadly mistaken.”

“I don’t think it intimidates you, baby; I think it turns you on.” Placing his hands on either side of her head, he took his final step forward, pressing his rapidly growing erection against her dampening pussy.

Her knees weakened but she held strong. “Like I said, you have a huge ego.”

“It’s not the only thing that’s huge when I’m around you. Tell me you wouldn’t miss this. Tell me you wouldn’t miss me.”

She would die first. “Go to hell.”

Terrance couldn’t help but smile again at her feistiness. Although it was true he could be a controlling bastard when he wanted to be, he’d been honest with her when he told her he was tired of hiding. He was ready to be open and honest about their relationship and he needed to convince her of that.

“I think you’re only trying to delay the inevitable.”

“Which is?”

“You and me out in the open.” Before she could protest once again he bent his head and captured her lips in a heated kiss. He might as well give her a preview of what he had planned. He swallowed her gasp of surprise and set out to explore what he’d been missing.



Her mouth was like a hot, spicy rum, dark and delicious and oh so intoxicating. After four months in her bed he had already become addicted to her taste. Although she didn't fight him, it took her a minute to respond to his persistence. Before too long, however, he could feel her body begin to relax against his as he plundered her softness.

He wasn't sure when she wrapped her arms around him, but the light caress of her fingers along the back of his neck sent a shiver of anticipation through his body. Nichelle's touch was one thing he hadn't known how much he'd missed until he suddenly had it again.

Breaking their kiss, he leaned his head against hers, breathing deeply. "Damn, baby, your fingers are driving me wild."

"I'm not doing anything." Her softly spoken words, after all her earlier posturing was almost anticlimactic.

Raising his head, he cupped her chin, tilting her face up. "I want you, Nichelle, and if you're honest with yourself you want me too. Now, do we go another fifteen minutes for round two or do we skip to the good stuff?"

Her big brown eyes betrayed her indecision. "Can't we take this letting everyone know about us a little slower?"

"How much slower?" He didn't know how much slower than dead stop they could go.

"We don't need to take an ad out in the paper or anything."

"I'm not advocating shouting it from the rooftops. But I don't want you running if I decide to come into the diner."

"I just don't want to tell everyone and then be bombarded by questions."

"Baby, you have no problem telling me to back off, you need to do the same thing to everyone else."

Terrance watched the various emotions play across her face. Wanting and longing battled with worry and doubt. It was only a few seconds, but he wasn't taking any chances

with her decision. His hands moved to cup her breasts, tracing her cotton-covered areoles with his thumbs. He could feel the shudder of desire passing through her body at his touch.

“I can’t think when you touch me.”

“Don’t think, baby, just feel. This feels right, you know it does.” He pinched her nipples lightly as he spoke and her eyes fluttered closed and she gasped.

“Tell me you don’t want me around anymore and I’ll leave. I won’t bother you again.” Terrance knew it was a calculated risk, but he was banking on the fact Nichelle wouldn’t be able to throw him out.

“I don’t want you to leave.” The admission wasn’t whispered or hesitant, which pleased him to no end.

“Tell me what you do want.” Terrance stared into the dark pools of Nichelle’s eyes, waiting for her answer.

“I want you to take me upstairs and make love to me. The first time hard and fast, and then slow, driving me crazy until I don’t think I can stand one more minute until you make me come.”

“That I can do.” Hell, he could probably take her hard and fast right against the wall with no effort at all. His cock was rock hard and practically bursting from his trousers. But he was going to prove to her she could have him any way she wanted; if that meant waiting until they got upstairs, then no problem.

Stepping away from the wall, Terrance pulled her into his arms for another bruising kiss before releasing her yet again. “You lead and I’ll follow.”

“I bet you don’t say that often.”

“How often is never,” he teased, taking her hand in his.

She moved to head up the stairs, but paused and turned back to him. “Do you have something?”

“Something?”

“Protection. I don’t have anything in the house.”

“Yes, I have a few condoms with me.”

“A few?”

“I like a challenge.”

“Then that explains your attraction to me.” Nichelle, as usual, had to have the last word, and Terrance was man enough to let her. He didn’t need to prove he had balls by besting her.

Before heading up the stairs, she locked the front door and turned off the downstairs lights. The cop in him was glad she was being careful; the horny man in him wanted to rush her fine ass up the stairs so they could get on with the get on.

Just as he thought he’d reached the end of his patience, she headed up the dimly lit stairs, her sexy hips swaying from side to side as she climbed to the second floor.

An ass man from way back, he took his time coming up behind her. He was enjoying the view too much to rush it. By the time they made it to the master suite of the house, he was hard enough to crack a walnut.

Despite his lust raging like an inferno, he took the time to look around the furnished room and take in the decor. He was a firm believer that a lot could be said about a person by what they surrounded themselves with in their bedroom and Nichelle was no different.

The ivy colored walls were bare except for a few geometrical placed family photos and a wall-mounted flat screen television. The iron headboard, floral comforter, and matching curtains didn’t appear cheap. He’d never been allowed in Nichelle’s home before, but apparently the restaurant business paid well.

He walked to her nightstand and picked up another framed photo. This one was of a younger Nichelle, surrounded by her sisters and mother. This was the Nichelle he had known, and the one he still saw when he looked at her.

“Reflecting on the past?” she asked, walking up beside him and taking the photo from his hand. She glanced down at it briefly then set it back in its spot. The unspoken “hands off” came across loud and clear. Tonight, though, Terrance would let it pass.

But only tonight.

“No need to look to the past, when the future looks bright.” He chuckled as he pulled her flush against his body.

Always a fighter, she arched a brow at him and encircled her arms around his neck. “Prove it.”

“I’d love to.” Before she could utter another word, he wrapped his hand in her soft sable hair, and covered her sass-talking mouth with his own.

The sweet taste of her was too tempting to forgo for long. While he held her to him with one hand firmly lodged in her hair, he used his other to explore the soft satin skin beneath her shirt. Yet it wasn’t enough. Not anymore. He had to be in her.

Releasing his grip on her, Terrance took a step back. “Undress.”

“Me or you?” Her voice was choppy and her eyes were glazed over with need.

“You. I’ll take care of me.” He didn’t think he’d be able to hold back if she touched him right now.

She hesitated for a moment, then brought her hands to her shirt and pulled it over her head before sliding her shorts down her thighs. Although he’d seen her just last night, the sight of her smooth brown skin had him biting back a groan. He stared like a hungry man, his mouth watering for its first taste as she stood naked before him.

“Earth to Terrance.”

Nichelle’s laughingly lyrical voice pulled his gaze from the apex of her thighs to her grinning face. “What?”

“Are you going to undress?”

“Baby girl, I’m just trying to remember how to breathe.”

She sauntered over to him and brought her hands to the buttons of his shirt. “Maybe I can give you a hand.”

Taking her hand in his, he brought it down to the erection straining behind his zipper. “I’ll take care of the shirt. You take care of the pants.”

“You have yourself a deal.”

## Chapter Four

Nichelle stroked her hand over the front of Terrance's trousers, her fingers tracing the outline of his bulging erection. Although she wanted to tease him a bit, she was just as anxious to have him in her hands. Quickly unfastening his trousers, she pushed the material down over his hips, exposing his straining cock to her hungry gaze.

"Mmm." The greedy moan slipped out before she could help herself.

"It's all yours." He winked as he toed off his shoes and stepped out of his trousers.

True to his word, he had removed his shirt and now stood before her just as naked as she. He was so damn sexy. There wasn't an ounce of fat on him. His body was muscular and so defined it was as if he'd been carved from the finest ebony wood. She wasn't one to drool over men, but if she had been, Terrance would be the one.

His chuckle made her glance up sheepishly. "Turnabout is fair play. You got your chance to look."

"I'm not complaining. You can look all you like."

"I think I need a closer view." She dropped to her knees, taking his cock in her hands. Leaning forward she engulfed the head, running her tongue around the dark crown.

His laughter turned to moans of ecstasy as she took him as deep in her mouth as she could, which, from the long length of his cock, wasn't that far. She stroked his shaft as she sucked him, filling her senses with his warm, salty taste.

"Damn, 'Chelle, that feels so good." His muttered words spurred her on and she doubled her efforts. Knowing how she was affecting him made her want him all the more.

She lowered her hand down to his balls and began playing with them, using her nails to playfully scratch. The suppressed groans above her told her she was having the desired effect. Terrance's hand moved behind her head and slowly began pulling her toward him, pushing his cock further into her mouth. His hands clenched into fists the way she loved. He pulled on her hair, using it as a lever to control the pace. Slowly, he picked up the tempo and she began to lose herself in his increasingly urgent thrusts.

Although she was mindful of keeping her hand firmly on his cock so she wouldn't go down too far, Nichelle allowed Terrance to control her movements. His domineering, take-charge attitude had her pussy aching to be filled.

Her body felt ablaze with passion and she released his balls to reach down between her legs to relieve a little tension of her own. The lips of her sex were slippery with the evidence of her excitement. Coating her fingers with her damp dew, she fringed her erect clit furiously as she continued to suck his cock.

His guttural moans spurred her own. The more turned on he sounded, the more turned on she became. The once silent room filled with the dirty sounds of loving.

"Damn, baby," he hissed, pistoning his hips faster. His grip tightened in her hair, making her scalp tingle from the pressure, but it wasn't enough to deter her. Soon her fingering proved too much distraction and Nichelle's own choked moans spilled out from around his cock. "Enough, 'Chelle. I don't want to go off in your mouth."

"I don't mind." She was a desperate woman and so close to her own release nothing else mattered. But Terrance, as always, had a different idea of what was to come.

“I love to see you touching yourself, but you don’t come until I say so.” He pulled away as he spoke and Nichelle groaned in disappointment. She sat back on her heels, staring longingly at him. She knew things were going too good to be true. “Don’t worry, baby. I’m not going anywhere. We’re just going to move this to the bed.”

Pulling her up, he guided her to the bed. But instead of pushing her down and moving between her splayed legs like she thought he would, he lay back on the bed himself.

“I want you to be in control tonight.”

“That’s something new.”

“I’m always willing to try something new,” he teased, wiggling his brows. The gesture should have made him look all sweet and adorable, but with his cock jutting out, the last thing he appeared was sweet. Hot, sexy, irresistible, yes. Sweet? No.

“I’d say.” Now this had promise. “Do I get to do anything I want?”

“Anything within reason.”

Nichelle knelt on the bed next to him and ran her hands over his chest and abs. She deliberately avoided touching his cock, which was hard and straining toward her hand for contact. Instead, she leaned over him and licked at his nipple before gently nipping the tiny bud. Terrance jumped in reaction. “Damn, is that what it feels like when I do that to you?”

“I don’t remember. We’ll have to try it later.” And just in case he forgot she planned to remind him. As she turned her attention to his other nipple, she reached down to grab his cock. With her thumb she spread the precum over the head and ran her hand down his cock.

He was so thick her fingers barely touched. Without warning, she released her hold on his cock and sat up.

“Where are your pants?”

“I thought you liked me out of my clothes.”

Men could be so dense sometimes. “I do, but I need one of those condoms you so handily brought with you if we plan to go any further.”



“Oh, I plan to go further. Much, much further.” The tone in his voice hinted at what was to come, which made her smile with anticipation.

Hopping off the bed she quickly found the condoms and returned to his side. She ripped open the package and rolled the latex over his straining erection slowly, making sure to stroke him several times in the process. She’d seen girls do it with their mouths in porn movies, but she had never acquired a taste for spermicide, so this way would just have to do.

“Fuck me, ’Chelle.” From the low groan coming from him, he didn’t disapprove of her methods at all.

Nichelle grinned to herself. Terrance was still giving orders, even though he’d told her she was the one in control. Lucky for him she was more than ready to do his bidding. She’d teased herself just as much as she had him and now she was ready to feast.

Nichelle swung her leg over him and straddled his body. His hands came up to grasp her hips, but he continued to let her call the shots, not pushing her at all. Reaching behind her, she grabbed his cock and slowly guided it into her dripping pussy.

Her legs quivered with tension as she lowered herself onto him. It took her a few downward strokes before she could fully seat him within her. The last plunge down stole her breath and filled her to the brim, causing them both to cry out with pleasure.

The feeling of being filled once more with Terrance was pure heaven. The sensation was so intense she had to take a moment to gather herself before she moved. It was that perfect.

Closing her eyes, she allowed her body to accustom itself to him before she undulated her hips. His answering groan caused her to smile and open her eyes. “Relax and enjoy it.”

She leaned forward and stole a quick, hot kiss before beginning her unhurried ride. She rose back up into a sitting position, then slowly began to rock her hips, to and fro, allowing an inch of his cock to enter her, before sliding up and almost completely off him again.

As she rode him, she reached up to cup her breasts, enjoying the feel of them in her hands. Her eyelids fluttered closed as she palmed the firm globes.

“You’re killing me.”

Opening her eyes slowly, Nichelle smiled as she pinched her nipples, dragging the sensitive flesh away from her body for a brief moment. She continued to rock her hips back and forth while she played with her breasts.

“Damn, you look so hot right now.” His face was flushed with passion. His desire for her was overpowering. “I wish you could see what I see right now, baby. How your sweet pussy is swallowing my cock. How sexy you look, fucking me. Where is a fucking camera when you need one?”

“No. Cameras. Allowed.”

“Is that the only rule?” His eyes were glazing over as he gripped the comforter tightly between his fingers.

“Yes,” she managed to say between thrusts, barely able to talk now.

“You’re my kind of woman.” His voice so low it barely registered.

Lost in the sensation of him now, Nichelle released her breasts and leaned forward, bracing her hands on the headboard. She slid all the way down on him, burying his cock deep inside her, then slid off again until just the tip remained.

“Faster. God. ’Chelle, faster,” he panted. His fingers held onto her hips, digging into her skin hard enough to bruise. The pain was a welcoming aphrodisiac, spurring her into quickening her pace.

She began moving harder against him, taking more and more of his cock into her wet pussy. She maintained the rhythm, lost in her own world, her eyes closed, biting her lower lip. Her orgasm was so close, but she didn’t want the feelings to end. The harsh sounds of flesh slapping against flesh filled her ears as blood rushed to her head.

“Yeah, baby...that’s good,” he grunted, moving his hips to thrust deeper into her. She started moving faster on him now, sliding his cock in and out of her, gripping his shoulders for leverage. His mouth moved to tongue her nipples as her breasts hung over him and he reached between their bodies to strum at her clit.

Suddenly, her whole body tensed, her legs squeezing his hips, and a series of low moans escaped her throat. Her inner walls tightened and the first wave of her orgasm washed through her. Nichelle could hear Terrance urging her on before he shouted his own release. She collapsed against him, completely boneless and sated beyond anything she’d felt in the last thirteen years. She was exhausted, worn out. But she felt good too, as if she were on top of the world.

As Terrance lay in Nichelle’s bed he had no illusions regarding their relationship. She’d had sex with him because it was what she wanted tonight, but he knew it didn’t change her attitude in general. Although he wanted to build something with her, she was more into building walls.

Her fingers stroked lightly over his chest as she lay beside him, her cheek pressed against his heart. “Tonight was...amazing. Thank you.”

“Why are you thanking me? You were just as much a participant as I was.”

She playfully slapped him on the shoulder. “Dork. You know what I mean. Allowing me to have my wicked way with you. Without being a controlling bastard.”

“You’re welcome,” he replied sarcastically and since he knew she was trying to be complimentary, he didn’t push it. “How about we actually go out tomorrow night?”

“I don’t have any plans.” She propped her head up, staring into his face for a long moment. “I could probably fit you into my schedule.”

“That’s sweet of you.” She had to be a hard ass. Even up to the very end.

“No problem. Now, I hate to be a party pooper, but you’re going to have to head out.” She leaned up and kissed him, softening her words with her actions.

Terrance lay as if in shock for a moment. Was she really throwing him out? “What’s the problem? I’m good enough to fuck but not good enough to spend the night?”

Nichelle sat up, her arms crossed over her bountiful chest. “Listen, I know I said I was willing to start letting people know about us, slowly, but I didn’t plan to do it by having you just spend the night. My sister lives just down the street, with her two young and impressionable children. I’m not ready for those questions just yet.”

He was confused by her reasoning. “Why not use this as the first step? I don’t understand the difference.”

“The difference is that she doesn’t even know we’re dating. I don’t want the first word she hears about it to be that you spent the night.”

“Oh, I see. Because then she might find out you’ve been lying to her this whole time.”

She sighed loudly. “I haven’t been lying. I’m just keeping my personal life personal. Maybe I’m explaining it wrong. But please believe me, it has nothing to do with you and everything to do with me and how I was raised. I’ve *never* had a man spend the night, okay?”

He knew arguing with her would get him nowhere. And besides, knowing she’d never had a man spend the night actually made him feel better, in some twisted way. But one day soon she’d be changing her tune. He was going to make it his mission in life.

“All right, baby. I’ll go home. But just remember -- this isn’t the end, only the beginning.” He stood up from the bed and quickly located his clothes and began dressing. As he finished, he turned back to Nichelle and found her kneeling on the bed, watching him intently.

“Thank you for understanding. Or at least abiding by my wishes.”

Terrance pulled her from the bed and captured her mouth with a bruising kiss. “This time I’m willing to do it. But not forever.”

As he headed to the door, she stopped him. "Let me grab my robe and I'll walk you to the door."

He nodded and watched as she hurried from the room to grab her robe from the bathroom. He hated to see her cover up her body, but on the other hand he certainly didn't want the neighbors to be catching a glimpse of her either.

When she returned, he took her hand and they walked down the stairs together. At the front door she pulled him toward her again for a final kiss and he put all his pent up desire and frustration into that kiss.

"I'll see you tomorrow." She stood in the doorway until he reached his car and he turned to wave as she eventually closed the door. He started the car and headed home, wondering just how much ribbing he was going to get from Alejandro. He was pretty sure the other man wasn't expecting him back tonight. And like any good friend he would probably make sure Terrance didn't live it down.

When he arrived home, he headed straight into the dimly lit living room, willing to get the mocking over and done with it. To his surprise though, Alejandro didn't start in right away. The other man who had been sprawled out on the couch watching the evening news simply sat up and hit the mute button.

"Home early."

"We decided not to go out after all." Okay, Nichelle decided, but he didn't have to let Alejandro know.

A lazy grin spilled across Alejandro's face as he leaned back on the couch and kicked his heels up on the wooden coffee table. "Did you eat in?"

If it were any other man, he wouldn't have spoken a word, but with Alejandro it was different. They were like brothers. No...closer. Alejandro had saved his hide more times than he could count, and he had done the same for the other man. Their jobs were such that death was always a possibility and they took the chances they did knowing the other one was out

there to watch their back. As partners they had faced the world head on, knowing either one of them would die for the other. It forged a relationship that was impossible for almost anyone else to comprehend.

“Not this time.” He grinned wickedly. “But Nichelle surely got a mouth full.”

Chuckling, Alejandro shook his head. “That’s my boy.”

Terrance moved around the table and dropped down into the matching suede recliner next to the couch. He turned on the table lamp, flooding the room with a warm soft light. “Of course, if you repeat this conversation, I’ll have to kill you.”

“Please, dawg, you know I got your back.” Alejandro made a face as if he was affronted by Terrance’s comment.

“I also know you gossip more than any woman I know.”

“Yes, because you’re all about the silence, right?”

Terrance chuckled. When Alejandro was right, he was right. The two of them were like schoolgirls when it came to their dates. Whether bragging about their conquests or comparing notes they always managed to find something to say about the women in their lives. He blamed it on too many hours spent on stakeouts. They had to find something to talk about.

To be fair, Terrance went out of his way to speak kindly about women. He never felt as if he was objectifying the women he was with, merely commenting about how lucky, or unlucky, he was. “I might have shared a bit of information a time or two.”

“Right. A time or two.” The conversation lagged into a comfortable silence as Alejandro turned his attention back to the muted news and Terrance leaned his head back on the chair and closed his eyes.

He quietly reflected on his evening with Nichelle, replaying the highlights in his head, until he began to feel his cock faintly stirring once more. Too bad she hadn’t let him stay over. Round two was beginning to sound hella good to him.

“What’s with the stupid little grin?”

He opened his eyes and found Alejandro staring directly at him, with brow raised.

“Stupid little grin?”

“Yes, stupid little grin. You look like the freaking Joker.”

Laughing, he raised his hands above his head and gave a bone cracking stretch. “I think I’ll be heading off to bed.”

“I don’t think so, T. You’re not going to be going just yet.”

“And why not, mother?”

“Because apparently there’s something you want to share with the group.”

“No.” He stood, pulling his shirt out of his pants to hide his semi. “I don’t think I do.”

“There’s something I want to know.” Alejandro stood as well, crossing his arms over his chest.

Terrance recognized the stubborn look on his friend’s face and sighed. He knew with absolute certainty, that even if he went to his room, Alejandro would follow behind him, bugging the hell out of him until he got his answers. His friend was annoying that way.

“What?”

“Was she worth it?”

“Worth what?”

“Coming back to Mayberry. Was she worth it?” Alejandro looked at him intently. His dark eyes narrowed and focused on Terrance’s, as if he was looking for any sign of deception.

“What makes you think I came back for her?” He wasn’t going to admit or deny anything. Not until he saw where Alejandro was going with this. His friend had a devious stretch a mile long and Terrance wasn’t going to fall into his trap.

“Didn’t you?”

“Why do you ask?”

“I keep thinking back for a good reason for you to have left the force. Left our partnership.”

“Left you, you mean.”

“I didn’t say that.” His expression took on a mocking look of disgust. “I’m not pining away for you; you’re not that cute.”

“Good save, I was afraid I was going to have to kick you out for a second.”

“I’m looking around here, around this town, and I just don’t get it. What appeal does this town possibly have? I’ve been here for one day and I’m already ready to kill someone. Not because they’ve done anything, but because I’m bored.”

“Don’t go shooting up our citizens out of boredom.”

“Then explain.”

“My family’s here. It’s where I grew up.”

“They’ve always been here,” he stubbornly volleyed back.

“Just going to beat this into the ground, aren’t you?”

“Maybe.”

Terrance rolled his eyes at his friend’s childish answer. “Then beat it by yourself. I’m going to bed.”

Alejandro moved in front of him, blocking his exit from the room. “Say it.”

“What?” He was beginning to get annoyed.

“Say it was for her.”

“Why?”

“Because I took one look at her today and felt drawn to her. And if it wasn’t because of her you came back then tomorrow I’m going to go back there and introduce myself.”

“You do realize I am sleeping with her.” He felt the need to remind the other man.

“And I don’t really care. I think she might be the one.”



“What!” Terrance took a threatening step forward. There was no way he was going to let Alejandro within a mile of her. Nichelle was his. “If you even...”

“Gotcha.” Alejandro’s words took a moment to register with Terrance. He’d been so focused on not killing his friend that he had to stop to process what the other man was saying.

“You were *playing* me?”

Alejandro threw back his head and roared with laughter. “Damn, I didn’t think it’d be so easy. But you fell for it, hook, line, and sinker.”

“You’re an asshole, you know that?” he finally said. To his annoyance his comment only fueled his friend’s amusement.

“Wooo...” Alejandro gasped, holding onto his sides as he laughed. “You should have seen your face.”

“If I was carrying...”

“I knew you came back for her. Pussy.”

“Have a good night, Alejandro. It might be your last,” he warned, walking away. Terrance pretended anger, but he knew if the situation had been reversed, he would have probably pulled the same kind of prank. Besides, although he didn’t want to admit it at the time, he had come back for Nichelle. No use denying it. He wanted her and was willing to do anything it took to get her. Even put up with a smart aleck house guest.

## Chapter Five

Sitting in her office, Nichelle had found herself daydreaming more than once today. Well, not daydreaming so much as replaying the events of last night in her head. She couldn't wait to see what Terrance had planned for tonight. For someone so reluctant about getting together with him, she certainly had caved like a house of cards pretty quickly.

"Hey 'Chelle, there's a crazy man out here."

"What?" Nichelle glanced at the doorway at her sister Cory, who was watching her with a bewildered expression on her face. Cory was always making these sweeping, all encompassing statements that needed a lot of badgering to get to the truth of the matter.

"Some guy *specifically* asked to be seated in your section."

"You've got to be kidding me." They shared a shocked look. It wasn't an everyday occurrence to have someone ask to have Nichelle wait on them. In fact, the opposite was usually the case.

She wasn't known for her overly friendly outlook with customers. In truth, she disliked them. She was great with numbers, but crappy with people. She only worked the floor when she had to, and today fortunately hadn't been one of those days. Now some butthead was going to go and ruin that.

Fuckers.

“No lie. I tried to be nice and tell him you weren’t working the floor today, but he insisted. I tell you, total Looney Tunes.”

Nichelle couldn’t understand who would be asking for her, but her curiosity got the better of her and she headed out into the diner to see who it was. When Cory first mentioned someone was there to see her, Nichelle’s heart had sped up a bit, thinking it might have been Terrance. But after Cory’s story, she was completely stumped. No way would Cory have left out that little tidbit.

Just as she was getting ready to walk in, Cory stopped her. “I just remembered something. I think it’s that guy who was with Terrance the other day. The Hispanic looking one.”

Nichelle realized she didn’t know the man’s name so she’d have to go out and ask him who he was and what he wanted. Pushing open the door, she walked toward his table.

“Hi, my sister said you were looking for me.” It took an act of God for her to say the words politely. She didn’t like surprises, and he was definitely a surprise.

The man looked up from the menu he’d been perusing and smiled. Nichelle was taken aback a bit at his full-wattage smile. She normally wasn’t one living for *la vida loca*, but the boy was *fine*. He had black, shoulder-length wavy hair that he wore pulled back in a ponytail at his nape, hazel green eyes, and the most bewitching smile she’d ever seen. “Hello. I’m Alejandro Ortez. Nice to meet you.”

“Nice to meet you too. What can I do to help you?” She didn’t want to be rude, but she had work to do.

“I can think of a few things.”

*No, he didn’t.* “Let me rephrase the question. Would you like to order something?”

“Eventually.”

“Eventually?”

“Yes, although food wasn’t my main reason for coming in here.”

“Then what was it?” Had she stepped into the Twilight Zone or what?

“I just had to meet the woman who had snagged Terrance’s attention the other day.”

“Oh.” Nichelle could feel her face flush and was glad her dark skin tone covered her embarrassment.

“Yes, oh. He’s really taken with you and I have to say, I can tell why.”

“We’re just old friends from way back.”

“Funny, he said something along those lines as well.”

“He did.” Nichelle wasn’t sure how she felt about Terrance talking about her behind her back, but there was something about this man’s demeanor that didn’t make it seem seedy. Her ready-made defenses began to subside, and she found herself relaxing enough in his presence to question him. “What else did he say?”

“This and that.” He grinned.

“And that means...”

“It means if you sit down and have a drink with me, I might be willing to share more.”

Was he flirting? Confused for a second, she just stood there staring at him. As if sensing her reluctance, Alejandro teased, “I promise not to bite...hard.”

Was that supposed to be a threat or a promise? Still unsure, Nichelle glanced around again, looking for a hidden camera or something to explain this odd occurrence. When nothing appeared out of the ordinary, she caved.

“Okay.” She slipped into the opposite side of the booth, mesmerized by the stranger and with the way he was studying her. There was nothing overtly sexual in his look, but at the same time she could feel herself responding to the way he watched her.

“I guess you decided to join the customers instead of serving them.” Cory’s snarky comment broke the spell Alejandro seemed to be weaving around her. Before Nichelle could speak, however, he answered her sister.

“It’s entirely my fault; I assure you,” he said, pouring on the charm. “I really wanted to meet your sister and when she graciously agreed to join me, well...”

*Graciously.* Cory’s head whipped around to her so fast it was damn near comical. Nichelle pressed her lips together to avoid bursting into laughter. She could almost see the wheels turning in her sister’s head. Cory looked back and forth between Nichelle and Alejandro as if she couldn’t figure out if he was playing a trick on her or completely serious.

“Could we get some drinks, please?” she asked, trying to knock Cory out of her curious stupor.

“Oh yeah, sure. What would you like?” She took their order and moved away from the table but Nichelle could see her looking back at them and shaking her head in wonderment.

“So, why don’t you tell me about yourself?”

“You first.” She wasn’t about to just bust out her life story to a complete stranger. “How do you and Terrance know each other?”

“He didn’t tell you?”

“No, we didn’t exactly talk about you.” They had been too busy fucking to do much talking.

“I’m wounded.” Alejandro held his hand over his heart. “We were partners in the Chicago PD. He quit and left me with a rookie, who promptly fucked up and got me shot. I’m here recuperating.”

“Oh my God.”

“Tell me about it,” he said dryly.

“I’m so sorry to hear that. Is everything okay?”

“I still have all my equipment working, if that’s what you’re asking.”

His causal manner and pleasant nature made it almost impossible for her to take his words as anything other than teasing. “I wasn’t.”

“Damn, too bad. Seriously though, I’m doing okay, but the doctors won’t release me to go back to work yet. Thought I’d see how T was doing in the sticks. I never expected to find someone as lovely as you hiding out here.”

“I’m not hiding.”

“If you say so.”

“I do.”

“Uh huh.” His tone was indulging at best. “Now your turn.”

“For...”

“To share.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Everything.”

“There’s not enough coffee in all the world for that.”

“There’s enough.” His gaze didn’t leave hers as he spoke and the previous smile was gone, replaced with a look of longing. For what, she wasn’t exactly sure.

“Let’s...let’s, uh, start off small.” She was usually the one with the quick comebacks, not the one stumbling and stammering over her words.

“Okay, how about this, why do you live in River Bend? Don’t you have a hankering for the night life?”

She snorted. “Hell, no. I was never much into the nightclub scene. Besides, if I really want to I can drive to Columbus for that.”

“What’s so appealing about River Bend?” He was obviously persistent.

“It’s simple really, I’m all about my family and they’re here.” Nichelle was starting to get her game back. “Why do you ask, anyway? Are you thinking about moving here?”

He tilted his head. "Touché. No, I'm just visiting a friend, but --"

Before he could continue Cory came back with their drinks. She eyed them as she set them down, her gaze questioning and unsure. "Everything okay, sis?"

"Yes."

"All right. I'll be right over there." She pointed to behind the counter. "If you need anything."

"Okay." She grinned, amused by her sister's actions.

Alejandro waited until Cory walked away before asking, "Does she think you're going to need help?"

"Actually, I think she was speaking to you."

"Me?" Her answer seemed to surprise him. "Why on earth would I need help?"

"Because you're sitting with me. I'm not known for my winning personality," she admitted.

"Then it has to be your beauty you're known for."

It took her a second to comprehend his comment, but when it hit her, it made her smile. He was a master bullshitter. No wonder he and Terrance were best friends. They both had that natural ability to talk a woman right out of her panties. Lucky for her, she wasn't wearing any. "I have to give it to you, officer. That was slick. Does that line normally work for you?"

His hazel eyes crinkled in delight. "It wasn't a line. You have to know you're an attractive woman."

Uh huh, she was on to him now. "Just as you have to know I'm sort of seeing your friend."

"*Sort of.*" Alejandro sat back in his booth and smiled. "Now, isn't that an interesting turn of phrase. Sort of. Hmmm...what do you mean by that?"

“Damn, you’re nosy.” Nichelle took a sip of her tea, amused at his blatant attempt to get information.

“I’m an officer. Nosiness goes with the job.”

“You’re off duty, Officer Ortez.”

He sat back up and leaned into the table so he was closer to her. “And you have a beautiful smile.”

“Stop it. It’s not going to work.” She refused to be charmed by this rascal.

“It already is.”

Two could play this bugaboo game. “Does Terrance know you’re here and all up in his Kool-Aid?”

“No, and before you ask, yes, he’s going to kick my ass when he finds out.”

“So why risk it?”

“Boredom,” he replied with a shrug of his shoulders.

His answer didn’t ring true. And she had always been one to call a spade a spade. “I don’t believe you.”

“Neither do I.” Startled at the interruption, Nichelle glanced up to find Terrance standing over them with a slight frown on his face. “I’m going to have to kill you, aren’t I?”

Alejandro stared at his best friend, trying with all his might to hold back his amusement. His boy had it bad. Damn bad if a little conversation like this was enough to rile him. On the other hand, he knew Terrance well enough to know he was wearing his “I’m a badass” face, which only went to show he wasn’t as upset as he sounded. In fact, he was willing to bet the other man was waiting for his own reaction.

“You could try.” After last night he figured Terrance was just waiting for the right moment to put one over on him, not that he could blame him.



A smile flitted across Terrance's lips before he shrugged his shoulders negligibly and slid into the booth beside Nichelle, who was watching them with an amused look of her own.

"Why do I feel like I missed the first act of this little play?"

Terrance slung his arm around her shoulder, pulling her in close. Although he might have been joking about killing him, Alejandro was getting the faint territorial vibe he was putting out.

"Darling, you didn't just miss the first act, you missed the first couple of seasons. This one" -- Terrance jerked his thumb toward him -- "has a habit of trying to make me believe all kinds of shit."

"What he's neglecting to tell you is he usually does. And now I know why. You have to be naïve to grow up here in *Pleasantville*. I didn't know places like this still existed."

Terrance opened his mouth to retort, but Nichelle quickly covered it with her hand. "Okay, I get it. No more need to demonstrate the one-upmanship."

"You're taking all the fun out of it." Alejandro pouted.

"Boo hoo hoo. Cry me a river."

"This girl doesn't put up with any bullshit," Terrance noted proudly.

"So how comes she's with you?" He couldn't help the dig.

"Enough already. Do I need to separate you two boys?" Nichelle sounded like every harried mother he'd ever known.

"Sorry." They both apologized simultaneously, with shit-eating grins.

"No problem. It's been fun, but I really need to get back to work."

Terrance scooted out of the booth and she quickly followed. He kissed Nichelle lightly before releasing her. "I'll see you tonight."

“I’m at work.” She glanced around quickly as if making sure no one had caught the little gesture.

*How interesting.*

To no surprise, Terrance didn’t back down. “That explains the apron.”

“Ass,” she muttered, then turning to Alejandro she asked, “How could you possibly stomach being his friend?”

“It’s a hard job, but someone has to do it.”

“Better you than me.”

“Watch it, woman,” Terrance growled. “Before I really give the good people of River Bend something to stare at.”

“Gee, thanks.” Rolling her eyes, she turned and walked away while Terrance rejoined him sitting back down in the booth.

As she moved away from their table, Alejandro watched her hips sway and wondered why he was so intrigued by the little spitfire. Intrigued wasn’t exactly the right word. Drawn was more like it. At first, he had come in simply to annoy Terrance, but then, over the course of their conversation, his motives changed from annoying Terrance to wanting to know more about Nichelle.

“She is some woman, isn’t she?”

Alejandro’s attention was brought back to Terrance. “Yes, she certainly is. I can see why you returned.”

“You just can’t let it go, can you?”

“Of course not, but I’m willing to pretend for now.” He grinned. Why would he ever let go of a good gem like this, when he knew it bugged Terrance so much. If his friend had been thinking at all, he would have never responded to him like he did. It was asking for trouble. “What’s with the kissing ban? Isn’t she into PDA?”

“Nichelle apparently thinks she has a reputation to protect.”

“Good girl?”

“No, hard ass.”

He bit his lip to stifle a laugh. Nichelle, a hard ass, right, and he had a twelve-inch dick. “You’re kidding, right?”

“Not at all.” Terrance shook his head as if he too didn’t quite believe it. “Some people think she’s a bitch, and she works hard to prove them right.”

“Why?”

“Because she’s cantankerous that way.”

“She’s not fooling you, I take it.”

Terrance cocked his head to the side and raised a brow. His expression held a note of mockery. “Did she fool you?”

“Not for a second.” Alejandro considered himself a good judge of character. It was essential in his line of work. In their short talk, he picked up a lot of things from her, some said and some not said, but none of it in any way, shape, or form came off bitchy. And he knew bitchy. He used to be married. “You just keep proving to me why this town sucks.”

“To be fair, ’Chelle feeds into it.”

“Because they left her no choice.” He instantly defended her, annoyed for her sake that she had to deal with small-minded folks.

“Settle down, Matlock, you don’t have to prove your case to me.”

“Sorry,” he said a bit sheepishly. “So, you two are going out tonight. What are you doing?”

“Not really sure. Thought maybe dinner and a movie, but there’s not much playing.”

In his exploration of River Bend, Alejandro had found the town sported one movie theater that played two shows. Surprisingly, the shows were both newer releases, but unfortunately neither choice was terribly interesting.

“Well, let me know if you need me to vacate. I’m sure I can find something to do.” He wasn’t sure exactly what in this one-horse town, but he was willing to make the sacrifice for his buddy. Terrance hadn’t been a monk when they were partners in Chicago, but he wasn’t a player either. Alejandro was happy he seemed to have found the woman for him. Even if he himself found her interesting as well.

“Nah, no need to hit the streets. We’ll figure something out.”

“No, really, man. I don’t have a problem avoiding your crib. It’s the least I can do for showing up out of the blue like I did.”

“Welcome anytime’ means welcome anytime. You know that.”

And he did. Terrance was the only family he had, and it meant a lot that his friend was willing to open his doors to him. “Thanks, man.”

“No prob.” Terrance held his fist out to him, causing Alejandro to smile and to do the same. They lightly knocked their hands together in the worldwide male version of bonding. They were manly men, and this was as touchy-feely as their pride could allow them to be.

“So have you heard anything from the captain?”

He grimaced as Terrance brought up the sore subject. He hadn’t exactly told his friend the whole story when he’d shown up on his doorstep.

“Uh oh, that look is not good.”

“Let’s just say it’s a good thing the doctor hasn’t released me to return to work yet because I think the captain was trying to figure out a way to suspend me.”

“What the fuck? You’re his best guy on the streets. What’s been going down since I left?”

He sighed heavily. “I forgot to mention that when the newbie fucked up I sort of went after him in the hospital and broke his jaw.”

Terrance raised his eyebrows in question. “That’s not like you.”

Alejandro shrugged his shoulder. He wasn't sure if he could explain what it had been like since Terrance left. The force was the only thing he had left. He'd felt terrible after injuring the kid, but at the time all he could think about was the time he would be off. The idea of sitting at home stretched out before him like a death sentence.

As soon as the doctors had released him from the hospital he'd lit out for Ohio. In fact, he hadn't even checked in with the captain. Although he wasn't sure of the reception, Terrance's long-past invitation seemed like a godsend. And as much as he ragged about the town, it really wasn't too bad. At least the few people he'd interacted with so far.

"I should call the captain and throw myself on the mercy of the court. I mean a couple weeks' suspension is nothing, right?" Alejandro didn't know if he was trying to convince Terrance or himself.

"Look, man, is something going on?"

"Nah, it's just not the same since you left. I'm too old to break in a newbie. They're all too stupid to live."

"Damn, you're in a pissy mood. You PMSing?"

"Ha, ha, very funny. At least I'm not pussy whipped."

"You only *wish* you could be pussy whipped."

The sad thing was that it was true. When he had become so nostalgic he had no idea. But the idea of having someone like Nichelle in his bed was appealing. Unfortunately, he needed to stop thinking of her in terms of his bed. She was Terrance's girl and from what he saw today that wasn't going to change anytime soon.

## Chapter Six

When Terrance picked her up for their date Nichelle had no idea they'd be driving to Columbus to try out a nightclub. She was looking forward to a new venue where the entire town wasn't watching and whispering about their new status as a couple. Ever since she'd finally agreed to come out of the closet, so to speak, he'd taken her out almost every night.

They'd been to dinner and the movies, played pool, gone bowling, and had even had a picnic by the lake. And every time they'd run into someone who'd make a comment about them dating. Usually it was in the context of shock and surprise since few could believe someone would willingly want to date bitchy Nichelle. If it wasn't so amusing she might have been offended.

Thankfully, tonight they'd be going out of town where no one would know them, let alone feel the need to make comments. Added to her pleasure was the fact that Alejandro would be joining them. They had gotten to know each other very well since their initial meeting at the diner. They'd talked several times on the phone when she'd called Terrance's house and he'd even come into the diner on a few occasions and hung out with her.

That, of course, had tongues wagging all over town. People weren't sure if she had one suitor or two, and sometimes she wasn't either. She saw Alejandro just as much as she saw

Terrance and he went out of his way to be attentive. There wasn't a day that went by she didn't talk to him on the phone or see him in person. And when he did visit, he never came empty-handed. Sometimes it was flowers or candy, sometimes a little trinket he picked out just for her.

The best part was Terrance didn't seem to mind at all. In fact, sometimes it seemed as if he was encouraging their friendship. Nichelle knew that although he loved his job, he often worried about something happening to him, especially since Alejandro had come to town. She thought it comforted him a bit to know his friend was there just in case. She knew he was a comfort to her.

"Are you sure you don't mind me coming along?" Alejandro asked for the second time since they had headed out.

Nichelle turned her head around to gaze at him and frowned. "If you ask again I'll make Terrance pull over to the side of the road and beat you senseless."

"That might be an incentive, honey," Terrance interjected.

"I *never* say anything I don't mean," she continued. "I'm glad you're coming. When the old man here poops out on the dance floor, I'll have you for backup. I plan to dance the whole night long."

"Who are you calling old man? I'm only a few years older than you."

"Exactly, older."

Nichelle smiled as Alejandro's laughter wafted up from the backseat. She liked to hear him laugh. In fact, there wasn't much about him she didn't like. "You've got a fiery one there, T. You better watch yourself."

"I think you're the one who better watch himself. It wasn't me she was threatening to beat."

"Jealous much?"

"Of you, never."

“You guys would compete over a stick of gum.”

“And I’d win,” Terrance boasted.

“Over my dead body.”

“That can be arranged,” Terrance said. “You forget. Unlike yourself, I have a gun and I know how to use it.”

“I’ve seen you fire that thing. I wouldn’t brag about know-how if I were you.”

Nichelle rolled her eyes at their bantering -- something she’d discovered they loved to do. It was never mean-spirited. They both gave as well as they took, and it never failed to end in laughter.

“We’re here.” She had been excited ever since Terrance mentioned going to the nightclub. She hadn’t been dancing in forever and a day. “Now you two chuckleheads can shut up.”

Lucille’s was an R&B hotspot that played songs people could actually groove to, none of this hip-hop, shoot-‘em-up, gangster, so-called music the youth of today partied to, and that suited her just fine. She was old school. She liked songs about love and making love and breaking up. Songs about something, not just body parts.

Once inside Alejandro offered to buy their first round while they found a table. The place wasn’t as crowded as she thought it would be, and that was a good thing. They found the perfect spot, a small table practically equal distance from the bar and the dance floor. They wouldn’t have to worry about being trampled by people in a rush to get to either area.

The driving beat of the music throbbed through Nichelle’s veins, but she wasn’t quite ready to dance yet. She needed a few drinks in her before she could let loose on the floor.

Before she had time to lose herself in a song, Alejandro was back with drinks in his hands. He handed her a shot glass filled with golden liquor and passed a matching one to Terrance.

“Salute,” he toasted, clinking their glasses with his own.



The fiery taste of tequila barely had time to flavor her lips before a waitress was next to them taking their order. In no time, Nichelle was feeling absolutely no pain.

When *Mary Jane* came on, the urge to dance could be resisted no longer. She stood, grooving to the beat as Rick James sang his ode to marijuana. "Let's dance."

Terrance glanced from her to Alejandro. "Who?"

"Both of you. Come on."

Terrance immediately joined her, but Alejandro stayed seated. He shook his head and waved them on. "You guys go have fun."

"No. We can all dance."

Alejandro leaned over and raised his voice so he could be heard over the blaring music. "I don't dance."

"You do tonight." She grinned and took his hand into hers, pulling the reluctant man from his seat. "Why did you agree to come if you don't dance?"

"Because I wanted to watch you."

Although he'd been flirty since she'd met him, this was the first time he sounded almost serious. It was as if he was saying watching her dance would be the highlight of his evening.

"Well, you can watch me from the dance floor."

Nichelle headed toward the other dancers, trailed by the two men. Once out there she threw her inhibitions to the wind. They danced. They laughed. In general, they had a good time. She didn't dance with just one of them; she danced with both of them. Sometimes at the same time. Sandwiched between the two of them, she swayed to the beat, brushing against them as she moved.

When the song moved to a slower one, they moved back toward the table, her hands clasped in each of theirs. She collapsed in her chair in utter exhaustion.

"Who's the one pooping out now?" Terrance laughed.

Furrowing her brow, she pointed to the bar. "Just for that you have to get me a drink."

"No problem, Granny," he said before heading off.

"He is so going to pay for that later." Turning her attention to Alejandro, she added, "And you can massage me."

She swung her feet into his lap and sighed with delight as he gently removed the torture devices -- also known as heels -- and began to massage her toes. She loved being pampered by the two of them, her every whim being answered.

"Your drink, milady." Terrance pressed a cool beverage into her hand and even handed her some cocktail napkins so she could wipe her brow.

"Thank you, kind sir." She closed her eyes, letting the calm of the moment sweep over her.

"I think I had the easier job," Terrance remarked to Alejandro. "Once you get started on her feet you'll be stuck for a while."

"You know I'm sitting right here. I *can* hear you." Nichelle cocked an eyebrow. "You better be nice to me if you want me to be nice to you later tonight."

Through Alejandro's strangled laughter, Terrance began apologizing profusely. Eventually Nichelle would accept, but it was nice to watch him grovel a little.

After she had finally recovered, she agreed to join Alejandro on the floor for a slow song. He pulled her into his arms and she laid her head on his shoulder. The black shirt felt like silk under her cheek and smelled of a combination of his cologne and the uniqueness that was him. It felt very comfortable and right.

Despite his earlier protest about not dancing, he moved with grace and skill. "I don't know why you don't like dancing. You're very good."

"Thanks, but I don't often get the opportunity to go dancing."

Pulling back for a moment she looked him in the eye. "Why not? Don't the women you date like to dance?"

She was shocked to see he looked almost flustered. “Actually, no.”

Laying her head back on his shoulder, she let herself sway along to the music. “Oh, I see. You don’t date so much as do the mattress mambo.”

“It’s not like that.”

She didn’t answer, content to just continue dancing. She didn’t need him to validate what she’d said. She instinctively knew the truth. To her amusement though, Alejandro admitted it willingly. “Okay, so maybe it’s like that a little bit.”

Nichelle laughed. “Hey, it happens to the best of us.”

As the song ended she stepped back begrudgingly, only to be caught in Terrance’s arms.

“I think this is my dance.”

Terrance watched as Alejandro’s eyes shuttered before quickly excusing himself to return to the table. Turning Nichelle in his arms he pulled her in close. She wrapped her arms around him and laid her head on his shoulder in an imitation of her previous dance.

“So what were the two of you talking about?”

“Oh, this and that.”

“Tease.”

“Jealous?”

Now that was the question of the hour. As he had sat at the table and watched them dance he would have pegged them as a couple. They had moved together with the grace and agility of two people who seemed to have known each other for many years instead of a couple of weeks. Surprisingly, instead of being offended by the thought, he was actually comforted.

“Not at all.” He answered honestly.

“Good.”

*Was it?* When Alejandro first started hanging around Nichelle, Terrance had waited for the pangs of jealousy to start. But they never came and he was beginning to wonder why. When his friend had punked him that first night in town, he'd been more than willing to take the guy out, but now the idea was the furthest thing from his mind.

"Alejandro is a great guy." He spoke loudly so she could hear him over the music. "The best partner and the best friend I've ever had."

"You don't have to talk him up to me. I think he's pretty amazing as well. Especially since he was there all those years to watch your back when you were in the big, bad city."

"He did at that." Too bad Terrance hadn't been there for his friend when he needed him. Maybe then he wouldn't have been shot. "Do you think I could convince him to give up the high life and move to the middle of nowhere?"

The thought had come out of nowhere, but now that it was out in the open it felt surprisingly right.

Nichelle glanced up into his face, searching for something, but what, he wasn't exactly sure. "Are you serious?"

"Yeah. Why, do you think it's a bad idea?"

"No, not necessarily a bad idea, but has he ever let on he was interested in leaving Chicago?"

"Not really."

"Well I wouldn't be making plans for the man without his input. He's on a leave of absence, enjoying his visit with an old friend. Don't assume just because you moved back to River Bend everyone else would want to live here too."

"I just thought it'd be nice to have a partner around I knew I could trust, no matter what." And to know there'd be someone there for Nichelle if, God forbid, something ever happened to him.

"I can watch your back."

“I’d rather watch yours.” Feeling the need to change the subject, he spun her out, much to her delight, before swinging her back in his arms.

He didn’t even want to think of realistic possibilities, but he had to. Tomorrow wasn’t promised to anyone, but his line of work wasn’t helping anything either. Nichelle, as badass as she liked to pretend to be at times, was one of the most vulnerable people he knew. She might never admit it, but she craved being taken care of. All her life she had put others first; now that he was around, he was turning the tables on her and she loved it. Thrived on it, even.

By the time the song ended, Terrance was more than ready for another drink, but since he didn’t relish letting anyone else drive his car, he opted for a soda. Nichelle and Alejandro harbored no such qualms and had another round, teasing him unmercifully as they toasted to their designated driver.

Then it was off to dance again. Earth, Wind & Fire had every club goer crowding onto the floor. Unfortunately, the club had picked up a bit and there were more people than ever bumping into each other. Even though Lucille’s was a good spot it wasn’t large enough to hold all the patrons it attracted.

Tired of smashed feet, they headed back to the table only to find someone else now occupying it. Instead of getting pissy they jointly decided to leave. There wasn’t a reason under the sun to fuck up a good buzz and fight over hard seats and overpriced drinks. When they reached the car, Nichelle snagged the backseat passenger door handle.

“Did I call shotgun?” Alejandro questioned.

“No. I had a bit too much to drink and I want to lie down.” She opened the door, but before getting in she wiggled her brows at him. “You want to get in the back with me so I can have somewhere to lay my head?”

“Only if you want a lumpy pillow.” Despite the fact he was so obviously teasing, Terrance caught a bit of truth in his words. And like earlier he waited for the jealousy to sink in, but once again, it didn’t.

“I’m partial to lumpy pillows.”

“I don’t know, that’s such a tempting offer,” Alejandro said sarcastically.

“Then why not take her up on it?” Terrance asked, surprising them all.

“Are you sure?” He could see the indecision marring his friend’s features.

“Of course he’s sure.” Nichelle hopped into the car and grabbed Alejandro’s hand, pulling him in beside her. “Now you get buckled in so I can get all snuggly wuggly.”

Terrance slipped behind the wheel and headed toward home. After only a few minutes he could tell Nichelle had fallen asleep by the soft snoring coming from the backseat, which wasn’t surprising after all she’d had to drink. He knew for a fact it wasn’t Alejandro, who sat stock still and staring straight ahead.

“Hey, man, I hope you had a good time tonight.”

“Yeah, of course. Even the dancing was okay.”

“Okay? I’d say better than okay. You had Nichelle grinded on you like no tomorrow.”

“Hey, T, it wasn’t like that.”

“Dude, I’m fucking with you. Don’t worry about it. She was out to have a good time and I’m glad she did.”

“Yeah, me too.”

Terrance thought he caught a glimpse of Alejandro sweeping her hair away from her face. He’d never seen such tenderness from him before, even with the women he’d dated in the past. Like him, it seemed as if Nichelle brought out the need to protect in Alejandro as well. Which worked well for him.

He waited a few more minutes before speaking. He didn't want to disturb Nichelle's slumber but there was something he needed to get off his chest. Lowering his voice, he spoke softly, "You know River Bend is a small town with little to no crime --"

"Unless you count Nichelle's extended family, right?" Alejandro's voice was just as low as his.

Her connection to the River Bend crime spree still made him chuckle. "Well yeah, them, but otherwise, it's not like we're doing undercover work."

"Uh huh."

"On the other hand, we're on the main road to a couple of bigger towns, so I've seen my share of drug dealers passing through."

"Uh, T, where is this conversation going?"

He wasn't making this very easy. "All I'm saying is even though we're a sleepy little town, I can never be too careful."

"Of course not, man. You're a cop. Danger comes with the territory."

"Exactly, and sometimes it gets me worried."

"You thinking about leaving the job?"

"Oh hell, no. It's what I am. I doubt I could do anything else."

"So, what --"

"It's Nichelle," he admitted. "I worry every now and then about something happening to me and leaving her alone."

No cop liked talking about death, and Alejandro wasn't any different. His voice rose a bit as if he was affronted by the conversation. "Hey, man, nothing's going to happen to you."

If only he could guarantee that, life would be great. "We don't know that."

Alejandro was quiet for several minutes and Terrance wondered what he was thinking. He didn't have to wait long. "You're right; you don't know what could happen. But dude,

she's got a ton of family around. It's not like you'd be leaving her to pick up the pieces alone. 'Cause from the vibe I'm getting, you're thinking about being around for her for the long haul."

"Yeah, I am." He only wondered if he was the only one.



## Chapter Seven

Standing on the stoop at Terrance's house, Nichelle straightened her sundress, wondering what plans they had for tonight. He'd told her to come over and dress comfortably, but wouldn't tell her anything else. Of course she'd never find out standing out here, she thought, as she leaned forward to ring the door bell. It was just a few moments later the door opened and Terrance greeted her with a huge smile.

Pulling her into the house, he kissed her briefly before stepping back to give her the once over. "Damn, baby, you look good."

She preened before him, doing a little twirl. "I'm glad you like it."

"I just hope you didn't go to too much trouble."

No trouble at all, if she didn't count the agonizing hour it took to pick out a dress and restyle her hair. "No, not really."

"Well I hope you don't mind, but I thought we could grill out here and maybe watch a DVD. Work ran late and I didn't have time to make plans like I wanted to."

"That's okay. I love steaks on the grill."

"Well, there's one more little thing I forgot to mention."

She resisted the urge to roll her eyes. *Men. Why couldn't they just come out and say whatever was on their mind?* "Let's hear it."

"I kind of told Alejandro it was okay if he joined us. I didn't think you'd mind, but since he's staying with me I didn't feel right about throwing him out of the house."

She chuckled at the worried expression on his face. Although she should try to draw out his pain, she sincerely didn't mind the other man joining them. They all had a great time together when they hung out. Besides, it was nice he didn't want to kick his friend to the curb just so they could stay in. "Of course, I don't mind. I'm sure there are lots of Terrance anecdotes I can pump him for."

"Lord, I hope not," he muttered under his breath as he led her into the living room.

Alejandro was behind the bar putting some finishing touches on a pitcher of margaritas. Dressed in a crisp white shirt tucked into a pair of faded jeans, he had cleaned up nicely for the evening.

"Hey, Nichelle, sorry about busting up your date. How about a margarita to soften the blow?"

From the happy glow in his eyes, she was willing to bet he had already had a drink or two before she arrived. It was a good look on him. "I can always be bribed with a good drink."

He poured her a jumbo drink before serving himself one as well and joining her on the couch. "Now we can continue our discussion from the other night."

"Hey, what am I, chopped liver?" Terrance complained as he poured his own drink. "And you two don't have time to laze away on the couch, we need to make dinner."

"We're guests," Alejandro said, winking at her. "Besides, Nichelle's been on her feet all day serving people. I think we need to cater to her tonight."

She definitely liked the sound of that. "I second that notion."

"All in favor."

“Aye,” they said in unison, much to Terrance’s obvious amusement.

“I don’t have a single problem catering to her, but you, on the other hand, I’m not pampering at all. Now get in here and give me a hand.”

“Fine.” Alejandro sighed dramatically. Turning his attention to her, he continued. “But if I have to slave away, then you have to come into the kitchen to wield the whip. I need a reason to work.”

“Pervert,” she said with a laugh.

“You have no idea.” He smiled as he helped her to her feet, slipping his arms around her.

“You are a first-class charmer.”

“Why, thank you.”

“I don’t think it was meant as a compliment, dickhead.” Terrance smacked him in the back as he deftly slipped her from the other man’s grasp. “Don’t listen to a word he has to say. It’s all lies.”

“What are all lies?”

“Anything he says.”

When they reached the large, open kitchen, Terrance surprised her by picking her up and sitting her on the granite counter. “Your seat, milady.”

Alejandro leaned against the counter, his arm brushing against her thigh. “So, I want to hear how the town bad boy hooked up with the good girl.”

“Hey!” Terrance scowled. “Stranger things have happened.”

“Oh yeah, like what?”

“The town bad boy is now a cop.”

“Who cares about that? I want the dirt from all those years ago.”

“I’ll give you my Terrance stories if you give me yours.”

“Hey, now, is this beat up on me day?” Coming over to her, Terrance kissed her lightly, stroking his hand along her arm.

“Stop trying to distract her,” Alejandro complained, pushing him out of the way.

She laughed as the two men got into a play shoving match. It was kind of nice to have them both fighting for her attention.

“Here.” Terrance tossed a tomato to Alejandro. “Make yourself useful, gimpy, and cut this up for the salad.”

Alejandro caught the fruit in midair. “See what I have to put up with around here?”

“What *you* have to put up with. What about me?”

“You both are big babies.” Even though it wasn’t spoken aloud, she could tell from their good-natured bickering just how deep their friendship ran. It reminded her of her sisters, who could fight with the best of them but would defend their siblings with their last breath. Since neither man had any brothers, they had become that for each other.

“But I’m the cuter one, right?” Although Alejandro’s words were teasing, she could tell there was a bit of seriousness to his question.

“Dream on, Fabio. I’m cuter, right, ’Chelle baby?”

“I refuse to answer that question on grounds I might incriminate myself, officers.” Nichelle took a sip of from her chilled glass, loving the freedom she felt to flirt outrageously with the attractive men.

“See, that means she thinks I’m hotter.” Alejandro grinned.

“Please, she just doesn’t want to hurt your feelings.”

“When have I ever worried about hurting anyone’s feelings?” she felt compelled to point out.

“Then who?” Terrance cocked his brow inquisitively.

“It’s like this, guys. You’re asking me to choose between double fudge brownies and New York style cheesecake. It’s an impossible choice.”

“Okay, fine,” Alejandro conceded. “I just want to know one more thing.”

“What?”

“Who’s double fudge brownies and who’s cheesecake?”

“Are you two always this competitive?”

“Yes.” They both answered at the same time.

The three of them continued to laugh through dinner preparations, with Alejandro and Terrance flirting with her equally. The margaritas flowed like water and by the time the steaks were ready to grill she was feeling wonderful.

As they all tramped out to the patio to start the grill, Alejandro and Terrance began arguing about the proper way to light a traditional charcoal barbeque.

“You need to pile the charcoal into a pyramid and then light it.”

“No way. It’ll take forever for the coals to all get hot. Just spread them out and get them all going at once.”

“Nichelle, darling, help me out here. Tell your man Terrance I know what I’m talking about.”

She laughed and shook her head. “Nope, sorry, I can’t be the tie breaker. I failed Grilling 101.”

“What, ’Chelle, you got to be kidding me? You don’t know how to cook on a grill? You work at a diner, for goodness sakes.”

“So what does that have to do with anything?”

Terrance pulled her into his arms, her back to his front as they stood in front of the grill. “Now just watch while I give you grilling lessons. In no time at all you’ll be an expert.”

Nichelle could feel the outline of his erection cradled in her buttocks. She was as aroused as he seemed to be. Having the flirty attention of two men was a powerful feeling. She relaxed in his arms and let him lecture. Alejandro just shook his head as he downed another glass, quickly refilling it.

“You realize, of course, if we follow his method we’ll be eating at ten o’clock at night.”

“I think you got that backwards, buddy. I *know* what I’m doing.”

“We’ll see. Unfortunately, Nichelle can’t be impartial anymore, so I’m stuck out here in the cold.”

“And why can’t I be impartial?”

“Because I can’t give you equal treatment.” Alejandro waggled his eyebrows suggestively.

“Says who?”

“The man with the badge, baby.”

“Oh, him; he’s just a big pussycat.”

“Did you call me a pussy?”

Nichelle giggled, but Alejandro literally choked on his drink at Terrance’s question.

“Man, she’s laughing at you. You may be holding her, but I may just have a chance at her vote after all.”

They finally got the charcoal lit and the steaks on the grill, but by the time dinner was ready, Nichelle was buzzed, hungry, and aroused. A bad combination for sure.

This wasn’t exactly how Terrance had imagined spending the night with Nichelle, but he’d be damned if he wasn’t having a great time. Alejandro being with them was only the icing on the cake. He had a way of making her loosen up. Seeing the way she came alive in their joint presence made him happy.

It was times like these he couldn't believe he'd stayed away so long. Thirteen years ago he'd been young and naïve about life. He'd easily left town, thinking he had the world at his feet. And for a while it was true. Eventually, though, he returned home only to realize everything he'd ever really wanted had been right here all along, starting with the woman before him now.

"So I want to know, if Terrance managed to escape why haven't you?"

"Now that's the question of all questions." Terrance was curious about her answer as well.

"Oh, hell, if we're going to start philosophizing, I'm going to need another drink. Anyone else?" she asked as she stood up.

"Please." Although Terrance wasn't normally one to partake of too much alcohol, they weren't driving tonight and he was willing to let go.

He watched her hips rock as she made her way into the kitchen. Just seeing that sway made his cock stand up and take notice. But he wasn't the only one noticing her sexy swing. Alejandro's gaze was glued to her ass, much as it had been glued to her all evening.

Once again, he waited for the green-eyed monster to come roaring forth, but it stayed silent. "It's a mighty fine view, isn't it?"

Alejandro's gaze slid back to him, but he waited a few seconds before answering, as if judging his body language. "Any normal, red-blooded man couldn't look away."

"That's for damn sure."

Alejandro grinned and raised his glass while he did the same before they both downed their drinks.

Nichelle returned with her own full glass and a new pitcher in tow as well. "Somehow I thought we might be needing this."

She passed the pitcher to Terrance before settling herself in the lounge chair. “So tell me, Alejandro, is the idea of someone staying in the same town where their family lives so amazing?”

Terrance answered instead. “Yes.” Especially when that person wanted to get out as much as she had always claimed.

“Sorry, boys, there’s no story. I just did.”

“I can’t believe that,” Alejandro said.

And neither did Terrance.

“Why?” she asked, laughing. Her eyes were glittering with more than just the alcohol. Terrance was seeing his ’Chelle more lively than he had since they were teenagers. “Some people are quite happy to live the quiet life.”

Still Alejandro persisted. “But don’t you ever wish you had gotten out?”

“Coulda, shoulda, woulda,” she said, with a shrug of her shoulders.

“And that means...”

“In other words, it is what it is. I’m not going to cry and moan because I made a decision and stuck with it. I did what was right and if the situation presented itself again, I would do what I did exactly the way I did it.”

“Exactly?” he asked, baiting her.

“Yes.”

“You wouldn’t change a thing?” Terrance couldn’t help but intervene here.

Her brows arched questionably. “Do you have a ‘for instance’ you’d like to share with the group?”

Did he ever. “What about the nights at Sapphire Lake?”



Her eyes widened a bit, and her full, sexy lips spread in a teasing grin. “You’re going to have to be a bit more specific, Terrance. I recall spending many nights at Sapphire Lake. Some with you and some without.”

“Damn.” Alejandro’s laughter rang out loud and clear. “I’m in love.”

That last little bit of information she shared Terrance could have happily lived without, but he saw her response for what it was, Nichelle’s way of pushing back. “Were the ones without me as...interesting as the ones with me?”

“It depends on what you mean by interesting,” she volleyed back.

“I mean, hands bound behind your back with a belt, doggy-style loving interesting.”

“I think I should have another drink.” Alejandro’s voice had lost some of its amusement and had been replaced by hunger.

“Not all of them.”

“But some of them?”

“I’m not the type to kiss and tell,” Nichelle teased.

“I used to watch you. Long before we ever talked. Hell, long before you were legal.”

“You did?”

“Oh yeah. Pretty little Nichelle. I didn’t know much back then; hell, I was only a kid myself, but I knew what I liked and you were it.”

“I’m flattered.”

“You should be more than flattered. I set out to capture you and I did a damn fine job of it.”

“Capture me?”

“Yep. Don’t you remember, right before you turned eighteen, you’d been sniffing around Rodney Nevers?”

“Oh my God, that’s right. I completely forgot I had a crush on him. How did you know?”

“He was bragging all about it. And there was no way in hell I was going to let him have you. He was a wuss and you would have run all over him.”

“He was a nice guy, you mean? At least I thought so until he suddenly stopped calling. I was so upset I didn’t want to date anyone for a while after that.”

“I know, but my plan worked and when I showed up at that bonfire, you were more than interested in getting a little down and dirty with the bad boy of River Bend.”

“I was eighteen by then and you’re right, I wanted to sow some wild oats.”

“Damn, Terrance, this is a lake I think I need to visit. Why wasn’t that on the list of sites to see?”

“It’s definitely a place you need to see.” Terrance chuckled.

“Yeah, it’s the first place we had sex.”

“Oh, really, how was it?” Alejandro queried.

“What’s to tell, he saw, he conquered, he came.”

“That’s not exactly the way that saying goes.”

“I’m suddenly feeling the need to defend my honor. The way you’re telling the story, I’m the only one who came,” Terrance protested.

“Now I didn’t say all that. I came.”

“Damn straight you did. I wore your scratch marks on my back for a week.”

“Hmm, she scratches?” Alejandro asked with interest.

“And bites too,” Terrance added with a smile.

“If that’s a problem I’ll have to remember to refrain and hold back,” Nichelle said.

“It’s not a problem.”

“Hell, no.”

Terrance was surprised that Alejandro and he had both answered at that same time. Nichelle laughed. "Duly noted."

"I just have to know, are you a screamer as well?" Alejandro asked with a sly grin. She looked at him coyly from beneath her lashes. "What do you think?"

Terrance didn't know what Alejandro was thinking right now, but he was certainly turned on. In fact, the heat level between the three of them was off the charts. Deep inside he knew he should probably call this to a halt, but for some reason he wanted to watch it play out.

His little Nichelle was coming into her own, blossoming under the attention she was receiving from the two of them. In fact, the more competitive they were, the more interested she seemed.

"I think you're a sexy little handful. But a screamer...I'll have to reserve my judgment."

"Maybe you'll have to just hear for yourself."

Terrance knew Nichelle was probably referring to the fact that if she spent the night Alejandro might hear those screams. But he also had a feeling both he and Alejandro had a completely different image come to mind at her words. One he hadn't thought of before but that was making him wonder.

Alejandro swallowed hard before answering. "I guess tonight I'll have to sleep with my door open."

"I don't think that's going to be necessary."

Neither did Terrance, but for entirely different reasons.

"Well, now, who's ready for a movie?" Terrance joked.

"Hell, I think I'm ready for a cold shower," Alejandro complained.

If things went the way Terrance thought they were going that wasn't going to be necessary for any of them.

## Chapter Eight

After the scintillating conversation during dinner, cleanup duty afterwards was almost subdued. When the kitchen was clean, Alejandro grabbed a beer from the fridge and tucked it in his back pocket. The action seemed a bit odd to Nichelle. “It’s going to be awful hard to watch a movie sitting on that.”

“I think I’ll skip the movie.”

“Why?” Terrance asked, as he took down a bag of chips from the top of the fridge. “It’s not a chick flick or anything.”

“It’s not that,” he said, shrugging his shoulders lightly. “I figure you guys have had enough group time. You’ve played the gracious host long enough. I’m going to read a book I brought with me.”

Terrance paused in the midst of opening the bag and glanced over at Alejandro with a mockingly surprised look on his face. “You can read?”

“No, I lied. It’s really a magazine and I’m just going to look at the pictures.”

“Really, what type of magazine?” Terrance sounded a little interested now.

“Okay, first of all, eww,” Nichelle butted in. “Second, don’t be an idiot. You’re more than welcome to watch the movie with us. Stop being a tittie baby and come on.”

“Well, since you put it so nicely.” Alejandro’s dry tone didn’t fool her for a minute.

She could see the relief in his green eyes. Besides, Nichelle had crafted being alone to an art form. She, of all people, knew how daunting it could be to sit back and watch other people have fun. “Stop whining and come on.”

Alejandro snorted and turned to face Terrance, who was watching them with an amused grin. “She’s a bossy little thing, isn’t she?”

“Yes, she is,” Terrance said proudly.

“And *she’s* still in the room,” she reminded them. “Grab us something to drink as well while I go put the movie in.”

“Aye, aye.”

“Much better.” Alejandro saluted her and marched with legs kicked out far in front of him to the fridge.

Rolling her eyes, Nichelle turned to go into the other room but was stopped by Terrance, who grabbed her arm. He pulled her to him quickly and dropped a light kiss on her lips. Mouthing “thank you,” he released her and went back to work readying the snacks.

And people said she couldn’t be nice. Smiling, she prepared the movie and by the time she had it set up, Alejandro and Terrance were in the room. When she neared Terrance he reached out and pulled her down to join him on the couch while Alejandro sat in the recliner, and they all settled back to watch the movie.

The movie was a thriller and she snuggled into Terrance’s arms as she found herself getting drawn into the suspenseful storyline. She had gotten comfortable and kicked off her shoes, curling her legs half under her and resting her hand on Terrance’s thigh. The movie was a bit more sexually charged than the trailer had led her to believe, and she felt herself squirming in her seat.

After their earlier conversation at dinner, her arousal level was at an all-time high. It didn’t help that a few times during the movie she noticed Alejandro’s attention drift from the

screen to the two of them. She so badly wanted to glance his way, but didn't because she was afraid of what she might see, and also what she might give away.

It was almost a shame she and Terrance were together, because if Alejandro had come to town she would have definitely gone after him. The man was seriously hot and funny to boot. They actually had a similar sense of humor and a lot in common. The alcohol she'd had made her feel free to speak her mind during dinner, but now she wondered if she'd said too much. Although Terrance hadn't seemed too worried since he'd joked with both her and Alejandro as well.

As they sat there, Terrance started to play with her. He started off small, gently stroking her bare arm, assuring she was constantly aware of his touch. But the longer they watched the movie, the bolder he became. Her body was humming lightly in response to the ongoing caresses, the naughty sex scene on screen, and Alejandro's intense scrutiny. One action alone she could have handled with ease. All three? Well, that was just maddening enough to make a good girl turn bad.

Feeling bolder than usual due to her liquid courage, she decided to respond in kind to Terrance's teasing ways. After stealing a quick glance at Alejandro, whose attention was diverted to the television, she softly began to run her fingers over Terrance's jean-clad thigh.

She bit back a grin and looked straight ahead, trying her best to appear as innocent as possible as she felt him tense under her hand. Two could play the seductive game of cat and mouse. Instead of backing down though, Terrance decided to up the ante.

In the guise of stretching, he moved his arm away from her shoulders and took her hand in his. At first she thought he was giving her a subtle warning to stop, but his actions quickly put that idea to bed. Acting nonchalant, he brought her hand to his lips, kissing each of her fingers before licking her palm. She started at the action, turning her head slightly to look at him. Terrance waggled his eyebrows, a slight smile playing around his lips.

Then to her complete surprise, he moved her hand away from his mouth and placed it on his crotch. Her eyes widened and her gaze immediately flew to Alejandro to see if he noticed. She couldn't tell, but she thought he had looked away just as she turned her attention toward him. Although their talk during dinner was pretty racy, she was actually slightly embarrassed to think Alejandro might see her hand on his friend's crotch.

Terrance might think he had the upper hand, but she was more than willing to show him just how wrong he was. Cupping his erection through his jeans, Nichelle squeezed gently, testing his resolve. He cleared his throat and shifted in his seat, but he didn't move her hand. Alternating her touches, she moved her fingers lightly over his cock, marveling at how he further hardened under her skillful hands.

Glancing up, she saw Alejandro staring at them and her fingers stilled for a moment. The television and a light they had left on in the hall dimly lit the room, but it was enough of an illumination for her to read the heated look he sent her away.

His lips were slightly open and his eyes were locked on hers. She wasn't sure how long he had been watching, but as they looked at each other she saw him nod, ever so slightly. She wasn't sure exactly what the nod meant, but she felt as if he were telling her to continue what she had been doing. She should have been outraged, but instead she was turned on by the fact he was watching them.

"What's wrong?" Terrance's whispered words drew her attention to him. Tearing her gaze away from Alejandro she tilted her head up to look into Terrance's eyes. His pupils were so dark as to look black in the dim lighting, and the intensity in his gaze multiplied her desire one hundred fold.

What could she say? *Your friend is watching us and I think I like it.* It was the truth, but she wasn't sure how he'd react to it. "Nothing."

“Okay.” Terrance turned his attention back to the screen as she fought hard not to look in Alejandro’s direction. She wasn’t sure if Terrance knew he could see them, but she did, and it made her want to do more.

Gathering her courage, she stole a quick look back at Alejandro, and saw he was still watching her. He had moved his hands to the arms of the recliner, but he looked anything but relaxed. His fingers were gripping the chair like a lifeline.

*What the hell am I doing?* She pulled her hand away from Terrance’s lap for a second, cursing herself for her lapse in judgment. Then to her surprise, Alejandro raised a brow questioningly and looked from her hand to her face as if to say, now what?

Startled, Nichelle jerked backed. Was he daring her? Did he think she wouldn’t do it? Daringly, she lowered her hand back to Terrance’s pants, finding him as hard as before. “If you keep this up, I won’t be held responsible for my actions,” he whispered.

“Keep what up?” she asked as she tightened her grip on him.

“That,” he hissed. Despite his warning, his hips jerked upward, pressing his cock against her hand.

“Oh, this?”

“Yes.” His muted groan, though low, was still audible. If he was trying to keep this just between the two of them, he was doing a piss-poor job.

“Shhh,” Nichelle whispered mockingly. “You’re going to disturb Alejandro.”

With her hand still in his lap, rubbing his denim-covered erection, she turned her attention to Alejandro, who was regarding her intently. “Don’t you hate when people talk during the movie?”

“More than anything.”

“See?”

“You know two can play this game, don’t you?”



“What game would that be?” Nothing instilled courage more surely than alcohol, and she had drunk more than her fair share. Feeling bold, she wet her lips, loving the way Terrance’s eyes dropped to them for a second before he raised his gaze again.

“Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

“Ooo, I’m shaking in my boots.”

“I have a feeling you’ll be more than shaking when we’re done.”

Nichelle felt anticipation rush through her body at his words. She was more than ready to go wherever he was leading tonight.

Terrance stared down into her face, seeing her eyes alight with desire as they spoke. “How much have you had to drink?”

“I’m sober enough to know what I’m doing, but drunk enough not to care.”

“And tomorrow?”

“Let’s worry about tomorrow, tomorrow.”

His ‘Chelle wasn’t one to cry and whine about regrets the next morning, but he needed to be sure she understood what he was proposing. He had watched throughout the movie as Alejandro had stared at the two of them. If it had been a little darker he wouldn’t have put it past the other man to have unzipped his pants and whipped out his dick.

Terrance knew he was pushing all three of them into an unknown realm. Alejandro was his best friend and Nichelle was his woman. He loved them both, but tonight he’d seen something between the two of them. Surprisingly, this didn’t worry him as much as one would think. In fact, he knew she was getting turned on just by the fact Alejandro had been watching them. Terrance wondered what she would do if things went even further.

Staring across the room at him, Terrance was pleased to see his friend wasn’t looking away, but held his gaze steadily. Terrance nodded slightly and then moved his arm back

around her shoulder. But instead of stroking her arm, he slipped the strap of her sundress down and inched his hand toward her breast.

Her hand left his crotch and gripped his thigh as he slowly exposed her breast. Her head was up and he was sure her gaze was locked on Alejandro. When his fingers found her swollen nipple and squeezed, she gasped, her body arching slightly at his touch.

“Tell me, 'Chelle, do you like him watching?” He hadn't lowered his voice. He wanted Alejandro to not only hear his question but her answer.

He watched her swallow and bite her lower lip, but she stayed silent.

“Yeah, tell us, do you?” Alejandro's voice was rough with desire as he spoke.

Terrance squeezed her nipple again and she nodded with a jerk, her eyes fluttering closed for a moment.

“Open your eyes, 'Chelle. I want you to see him looking at you.”

She opened her eyes at his command, staring across at Alejandro.

“Are you wet knowing I'm watching?” Alejandro asked.

Finally finding her voice, she answered, “Yes. Are you hard watching him touch me?”

Alejandro moved his gaze from her to Terrance and they stared at each other for a long moment. Terrance knew his friend well enough to know he was assessing the situation to see just how far he was willing to go.

“Answer her.” His voice brooked no argument. He wanted to know the answer as well. He would hate it if he was the only one enjoying tonight's little festivities.

“Nichelle, I've been hard from the minute I first laid eyes on you.”

Okay, he hadn't been expecting that, and from the little gasp she let slip out, Terrance was willing to bet she hadn't either.

Moving his hand across to her other shoulder, he pushed the other strap down until both of her breasts were bare. He leaned down and moved her hair to one side, bringing her

soft dark skin into view. He inhaled deeply, filling his lungs with her earthy scent as he brushed his lips across her nape. She trembled beneath his gentle touch, her breath coming in short little gasps.

“Maybe...we should take this slow.”

“We can go as slow --”

“Or fast,” Alejandro interjected.

“As. You. Want,” Terrance promised between kisses.

“That’s the problem. I’m not sure if I want to go fast or slow.”

“Can I make a suggestion?” Alejandro asked.

“No.” Terrance didn’t want to push Nichelle. If she wanted to bring things to a halt, right now he was willing. Even though they were moving at lightning speed, he was in no hurry.

He knew where things would eventually lead. He could feel it in his bones. This was right. The three of them together.

“Be nice, Terrance,” she chided.

“You mean nicer than this?”

“He has a point,” Alejandro agreed. “He’s been awful nice, sharing this lovely view and all. The best host I’ve ever had, that’s for sure.”

“You like the view?” She almost seemed to come alive with the knowledge Alejandro was enjoying the voyeuristic aspects as much as she was enjoying the exhibitionism.

“No, honey. I love it.”

“Would you like to see more?”

“Do you want to show me more?”

“What do you think, Terrance?” Her query wasn’t surprising. He figured at some point she’d be trying to figure out what he thought about all this.

“I think it’s your call.” Terrance knew he was walking a fine line between the two of them. He wanted them all to know and understand Nichelle ultimately controlled the situation, but at the same time he was getting his message across to Alejandro.

“What was your suggestion?” she asked.

“As Terrance said, this is your show, baby. You make the rules. And if it will make you feel more secure for me to sit here while you two do your thing over there, I’m more than happy to comply.” Terrance knew Alejandro was more than willing to take whatever she had to offer.

“That doesn’t seem fair to you.”

“It won’t be a hardship, I assure you.”

“Doesn’t seem that fair to me, then.” Not fair to her. Interesting. His ‘Chelle was thinking about her wants and needs for once and Terrance couldn’t have been happier. He wanted to stand up and cheer, but figured it would probably break the mood.

“And what would make it more...fair?”

“It seems to me he gets to see me, see us, and yet I don’t get the same opportunity.”

“You want to watch me?” Alejandro asked in obvious amazement.

She nodded her head. “I want to see just how much you like watching me. I want to see what it’s like to watch as well as be watched.”

Alejandro turned his head back to Terrance once again, as if asking permission to go through with this. Terrance inclined his head toward Nichelle. It was her show and if she wanted to watch he had no qualms about it.

“Your wish is my command.” Alejandro reached down and unbuttoned his jeans, dragging the zipper down carefully over his obvious erection. He pulled his cock from his pants, watching for her reaction.

Terrance could see her nipples, already hard from his touch and exposure to their gazes, tighten even more as she watched Alejandro palm his cock.

“Look at how fucking hard I am for you.”

“He showed you his, now let’s show him yours.” Terrance grasped the skirt of Nichelle’s sundress and began to slowly drag it up her legs, exposing her long brown limbs to both their gazes. When he finally reached the apex of her thighs, Alejandro groaned in appreciation at the sight.

Somehow Terrance wasn’t surprised to find she wasn’t wearing panties. He wondered if she had arrived at the house that way or had decided to lose them sometime during the evening. He’d have to remember to ask her about that later.

“Isn’t this just the finest pussy you’ve ever seen?” Terrance pulled her legs apart for Alejandro’s benefit. Her soft, bare pussy was glistening with her dew and he could smell her arousal in the air.

“It’s fucking gorgeous.” Alejandro was rubbing the tip of his penis with his thumb, spreading the precum gathered there.

Terrance reached down and parted the folds of her pussy, rubbing his fingers along the seam. She bucked in his arms, her head leaning back against his shoulder and her hands gripping his arms tightly.

“That’s it, baby, show him how much you like his touch. Show me how much you like me watching,” Alejandro encouraged as he continued to stroke his own cock in slow, easy jerks.

“Look at how hard he is for you. And you’re so wet you’re soaking my hand.”

“Are you hard for me too?” She tilted her head back to look at him, her eyes burning with longing.

“Fuck yeah, baby. I could pound nails with my cock I’m so hard.” He didn’t want her to think this wasn’t turning him on just as much as it was her.

“You don’t think I’m a wanton, lying here with my breasts exposed and my dress hiked up to my hips?”

“No.” Both men responded immediately. Neither one of them wanted her to believe they thought any less of her because of what was happening. Terrance couldn’t explain it, but he just knew this was a special circumstance, the three of them.

The only thing left to do was see how far she was willing to take it.

## Chapter Nine

Nichelle felt as if she were having an out-of-body experience. She saw the woman in the living room, held in Terrance's arms, legs spread wide for Alejandro's viewing pleasure, but she still could hardly believe it was herself. She'd never done anything as shameless in her entire life.

Although she could lie and blame the alcohol, she wasn't truly drunk. The margaritas had only lowered her inhibitions, allowing her to be more carefree than she normally was. Of course, the encouragement she was receiving from both men certainly strengthened her resolve.

She just had to decide how far she was willing to go. It wasn't surprising, but Terrance's support made her interest in Alejandro that much easier to accept. Being with two men had never crossed her mind before meeting him. "You know being with two men is a fantasy for most women, one they usually don't ever have the opportunity to fulfill."

Although Nichelle couldn't see Terrance's face, she could see Alejandro, and he looked almost as if he'd swallowed his tongue. She was sure they were both wondering exactly what she was suggesting. And frankly, she wasn't really sure herself. Having both men catering to

her sexually was a big turn on. But could she handle the emotional implications? Of that, she wasn't sure.

"Is it one of your fantasies?" Alejandro was still stroking his cock as he spoke and she had to stop herself from licking her lips. The need to taste him was almost overwhelming.

"Yes," she admitted. It wasn't as if she was going to lie about it at this point.

Nichelle turned her head to look at Terrance over her shoulder. She could feel the length of his cock poking against her back. However, he continued to make it about her, stroking her pussy lightly with his fingers. He kept her just on the edge, never letting her get past that point of no return. His other hand grasped her breast, kneading the soft flesh and occasionally pinching her nipple. The ongoing touches were driving her to distraction.

"Tell us what you want, baby," Terrance urged.

"I want to touch you. I want to touch both of you." As the words left her lips, she felt the rightness of it all. Which was odd, really, because this situation was worlds apart from not only how she'd been raised, but also from the life lived by everyone she knew.

Alejandro released his cock and stood, his jeans riding low on his hips. Walking toward her he stretched out a hand and pulled her to her feet. Only with his support was she able to stand. Her legs felt like jelly. Alejandro held her loosely, though, not presuming too much.

Nichelle, however, was having none of his standoffishness. She grasped his shoulders and leaned toward him, brushing her lips softly over his. His erection was between them and she wished she were naked so she could feel the wetness she knew was there.

Behind her she could hear Terrance standing and the sound of him unbuttoning his jeans. Unable to control herself any longer she licked her lips at the thought of touching and perhaps even kissing both their cocks.

Alejandro groaned at her action. "Damn, honey, you're tempting a man beyond endurance."

"What'd she do?"



“She’s licking her lips as if she can’t wait to eat.”

Terrance grasped her hips, pulling her back against him. “You could tempt a saint, ’Chelle.” Looking over her shoulder at Alejandro he said, “You’re no saint, man. Her breasts look like they need some attention.”

She could see Alejandro’s eyes flare at the suggestion. He looked at her a moment to judge her reaction.

“I love to have my nipples squeezed. *Hard.*” She emphasized the last word purposely.

Alejandro reached out and cupped her breasts in his hand, his thumbs gently gliding over her erect tips. At the same time she felt Terrance seizing her sundress and pulling it down over her hips to pool at her feet. She stood before the two men completely nude while they, although cocks out, were still mostly dressed.

“This is unfair. I wanted to touch you guys.”

“Give us time, ’Chelle baby, we’re working on it.” His words were muffled for a second and when he stepped up behind her she could finally feel the truth of his words. Terrance was now as nude as she was. His hard cock pressed against the crease of her ass as he nuzzled in behind her, driving home how much better naked was.

“Your turn, Alejandro.”

“As you wish.” Alejandro stepped back and pulled his shirt over his head, dropping it carelessly to the floor beside him. He stepped out of his loafers and pushed his unbuttoned pants down and off his legs. Standing proudly nude before her, he kicked his pants out of the way and made his way back to her. His body, much like Terrance’s, was lean and ripped, yet shades lighter than either of theirs.

Then, as if he’d never left her side, Alejandro returned his fingers to her breasts, and began to tease and her torture her nipples in the sweetest of ways. Terrance, meanwhile, swept his hand over her ass and down between her legs.

She closed her eyes at the overwhelming sensations rocketing through her body. Four hands touching and tempting her. It was too much.

Opening her eyes, she reached forward and took Alejandro's cock in her hand. He was hot to the touch, burning with desire for her. It was a heady feeling. Her hands explored the hard flesh, learning the length and breadth of him.

"Shit, T, her hands..."

"I know, man. My 'Chelle is amazing."

"Amazing doesn't begin to describe it." Alejandro's head was thrown back and his jaw clenched as Nichelle stroked him.

"Open your legs for me, 'Chelle. Let me in," Terrance ordered.

She widened her stance and he thrust two fingers deep into her pussy. Her flesh was swollen with want and need as he filled her. She jerked her hips, fucking his hand.

"Terrance!" she cried out unable to help herself.

"Do you like that, 'Chelle, fucking my hand as Alejandro pinches your nipples?"

"If she doesn't, I do." Alejandro sounded like she felt, on the brink of madness. His cock jerked in her hand as she gripped him with all her might, stroking him in an unsteady rhythm thanks primarily to Terrance's torturous assault on her pussy. "She's going to kill me, man."

"You don't want to die before you get a chance to touch this sweet pussy," he said as he delved inside deeper. Her pussy contracted around his fingers. "You haven't felt pussy until you've felt this tight box, man. She's burning my hand, eating my fingers up with this greedy little snatch."

"I can't wait."

"You're going to have to, because I'm not turning her loose until she comes." Terrance was fucking her, not only with his fingers but with his words, fueling her passion higher

with each thrust, each comment, each image he painted in her mind. “Do you, baby? Do you like the feel of both of us pleasuring you?”

“Yes. God. Yes.”

“How much?”

“I...” Did he really expect her to answer at time like this? “Love it...I...love...it.”

“Enough to come for us right here and right now, baby?”

“God, yes. Please. Please let me come.” Who was she kidding? She had been on the verge of coming since dinner.

“My pleasure.” Terrance sped up his strokes. His fingers, thick and long, plunged deeper and faster inside her hot tunnel, while Alejandro milked her nipples, squeezing them with enough pressure that her pleasure-pain sensor damn near combusted.

Lost in her gratification, she released her hold on Alejandro’s cock and gripped his forearms instead, holding on with all of her might. Her hips rolled, her back bent, and she took with glee the thrusting of Terrance’s fingers inside her trembling body.

Nichelle held back for as long as she could before she gave in and surrendered to wave after wave of orgasmic bliss. A wrenching sob broke free from her dry lips. Her legs gave out beneath her, and if it weren’t for Terrance’s hands she would have puddled at his feet.

“Ahh...damn, baby.” Terrance pulled her up and anchored her to him. “That was beautiful.”

She opened her mouth to respond, but the only thing that came forth was the sound of her harsh breathing. Her skin was dampened with dew, chilling her body as she trembled in his arms. Yet as intense as her release was, it wasn’t enough. She wanted more, so she asked for it.

“What did you say, ’Chelle?”

She parted her lips to try again, but was interrupted by Alejandro’s guttural voice. “She said she wants more.”

“More, 'Chelle, is that what you want?” The teasing tone was gone from his voice and in its place was the sound of man who hungered for more himself.

With one word, she could satisfy them all. Just by giving in to their joint desires, she could make three people very, very happy. Did she want more? Hell, yes, she did. “Yes.”

“Do you know what you’re asking for, baby?” Alejandro brushed his hands across her damp cheek, as his gaze held her own. His eyes were ablaze with passion, his need as evident as her release had been only seconds earlier. “Are you sure you want to go on?”

“Yes.”

“Then tell us, 'Chelle. Tell us what you want to do,” Terrance demanded. His hold tightened around her.

“I want...” Nichelle cleared throat so her words would not be mistaken. “I want you to take us to your room, to your bed; then I want the two of you to fuck me.”

“There’s no going back once we enter that bedroom.”

“Who wants to go back?”

As they entered the bedroom, Terrance waited for a shadow of doubt to cross over Nichelle’s face, but nothing appeared. She seemed very determined and excited, as if now that the decision was made she couldn’t wait for the actual event to occur. And if he were honest with himself, Terrance was looking forward to it as well. Knowing she would be well-pleasured by Alejandro and him, that she would be giving them both satisfaction as well, was an exhilarating thought.

“Nichelle, are you sure about this?” Terrance knew Alejandro wasn’t trying to discourage her, but to just make sure she knew she could back out at any time despite what he’d told her downstairs.

Taking Alejandro’s hands in hers, she brought them to her mouth, kissing his knuckles. “Yes, I’m sure. I know this seems...extraordinary, but it will be good.”

Alejandro chuckled. "Of that I have no doubt."

"Then get on the bed so I can have my wicked way with you." She squeezed his cock as she spoke.

Alejandro went to the bed and placed the pillows up against the headboard before settling himself into a sitting position. In the meantime, Nichelle turned into Terrance's embrace, wrapping her arms around his neck and pulling him toward her for a kiss. Her tongue slipped between his lips, moving against his own as they tasted and explored. Just as he started to draw her closer to deepen the kiss, she pulled back.

"I'm going to take Alejandro into my mouth and suck him until he explodes. I want to drink down his cum as you fuck me from behind."

The sheer perverseness of her words and the images they created in his mind had him ready to come right then.

"You're killing me, 'Chelle."

"Not yet."

She smiled seductively as she sashayed over to the bed and Alejandro, who had been stroking his cock as he waited patiently for her arrival. Climbing onto the bed, she settled herself on her knees between his splayed thighs.

"Did you miss me?" Nichelle asked as she leaned forward to kiss the other man.

"More than I'd miss my next breath."

Bypassing the bed, Terrance walked to the nightstand table and pulled a condom from the drawer. With the foil wrapper in hand he moved up beside Nichelle on the bed. After dropping the condom on the quilt, he cupped her ass and began to slowly massage the full brown globes.

She had moved her kisses from Alejandro's lips down his chest, licking at his nipples as she made her way down his body. Finally reaching his cock, she pushed his hands away,

replacing them with her own. Alejandro's hands clenched the comforter on either side of him as she slowly lowered her head.

Terrance saw her tentatively taste Alejandro, licking the precum that had gathered at the crown of his cock. He watched for a moment as she sucked and swirled her tongue all around it. He moved back behind Nichelle and spread her legs wider. He could see the lips of her pretty, tawny tinged pussy, still wet with her essence.

Unwilling to rush this special moment, he paused for a minute and took in the sexy view before him: Nichelle on all fours, ready to receive him as she pleased Alejandro at the same time. If anyone had told him this was how tonight was going to end he would have deemed them demented, yet here they were, and the enormity of what was about to take place had him stiff and aching.

His cock was hard enough to break through concrete and he had to fight his base desire to plunge into her fist-tight pussy and fuck her until he exploded deep within her core.

She moaned around Alejandro's cock as she began to take him further down her throat. But he still refrained from touching her, as if he wasn't allowed. With his hands at his side on the bed, he dug his fingers into the quilt and looked up into Terrance's knowing gaze, with eyes filled with need.

Alejandro stared at him for a long while, as if asking his friend what to do. Terrance knew he was being overly careful about stepping out of bounds, but at times like this, there were no lines to clearly define the dos and don'ts. They just had to go on instinct.

"Hold her head while she sucks you, man," Terrance advised him. "She loves it when you wrap your hand in her hair and control the motions."

Alejandro reached out tentatively, running his fingers through her ebony strands and grasping her head. Knowing his friend was in good hands, or rather that he'd now taken her into his good hands, Terrance returned his attention to fucking his girl.

Slipping his fingers between her legs, he thrust a questing digit inside. She moaned around Alejandro's cock at the invasion and his friend gave an appreciative groan as well.

"Damn, T, whatever you did you can do it again? Her mouth was vibrating."

Terrance laughed. "Just wait until I start fucking her. Your head will probably come right off."

Nichelle lifted her head briefly and turned to look back over her shoulder at Terrance. "Are you going to fuck me or just do a narrative of the events?"

Terrance and Alejandro shared a grin over the top of her head as she bent back to her task. They both knew they were fucked, and not in the hot, sexy way if they didn't keep 'Chelle happy. "Don't worry, baby, I'm going to do much more than talk."

Adding a second digit, Terrance fucked her with his hand, watching as she pushed back against him every time she raised her head. She was getting into a rhythm with the two men, rocking between, giving and getting. Terrance pulled his fingers from her hot pussy, sucking them into his mouth to taste her sweetness.

"Shit, T, fuck her. Do it now. I'm so close to coming, if you don't you're going to ruin her plans."

He didn't need to be told twice. Ripping into the foil, he quickly removed the condom and sheathed his cock. After smoothing the latex into place he lined himself up behind her tempting ass and centered himself at her wet opening. As he pushed forward, her hot snatch enveloped him, surrounding him with the molten warmth of her body.

Her head rose once again and she let out a low, husky groan. Her back bowed as she mewled with pleasure. The action allowed him to delve even deeper inside her, much to the obvious pleasure of them both.

Terrance bit down to stifle his groan as he sank balls-deep in her snug passage. Nichelle, on the other hand, had no qualms about expressing her pleasure. She cried out

expansively and moved to bury her face against Alejandro's thigh, but was stopped by the man's firm grip in her hair.

"Ah, ah, ah." He drew her head gently back until her eyes met his again. "Where do you think you're going?"

"I...please..." The words were more moaned than spoken, but her meaning was very clear.

So Terrance did as she begged. He pleased her. He thrust into her, savoring the feel of her juicy pussy as he pumped into her over and over. He dug his nails into the flesh of her hips, using his grip on her skin as an anchor as he plowed into her. But while he was busy fucking her, Alejandro was busy bantering with her.

"You're normally so full of sass, aren't you? But look at you now. Stuffed full of T's cock at one end, with me waiting up here to fill your mouth with mine. Where's all that brazen talk now, 'Chelle?"

"I'm still...here." She panted. "If. You. Can. Dish. It. I. Can. Take. It."

Terrance had to hand it to her, she was talking a good game -- even if it was a bit stilted -- but he knew it was all talk.

"We'll see about that, baby." Alejandro took his shaft in hand and lowered her head until she took him deep within her mouth. "Suck my cock. Swallow me down, my pretty little tyrant." Alejandro groaned, as sure a sign as any that she'd satisfied him like she'd promised.

"That's it, 'Chelle," Terrance encouraged as he pumped into her. "Suck him down, baby."

"Fuck, man...she's..."

"You don't have to tell me." Terrance groaned as she pushed back against him. She was a greedy little thing, hungry for every last inch of his cock. "I know what a talented cocksucker I have, don't I, baby? But her pussy's better, man. Ten times better."



His cock slapped in rhythm to Alejandro's pumping hips, and the sounds of their mutual loving filled the room. It was the sexiest serenade he'd ever had the privilege of hearing. The combined moans, groans, and sounds of flesh hitting flesh were arousing in themselves, and added to the visual masterpiece of the three of them together was just the icing on the cake.

"Spread your legs more, baby. I want to go deeper, harder, faster in this sweet cunt." He purposely spoke coarsely, knowing how the dirty words turned Nichelle on even more. And as if on cue, her cream spilled out as he pulled back, soaking the quilt beneath them and filling the room with her musky scent.

Terrance glanced down and watched as she rocked back against him. Her rosette was a tempting sight, giving him some ideas he'd like to try out in the future. Thoughts of taking her there while Alejandro stuffed her sweet pussy filled his mind.

"Damn!" Alejandro squeezed his eyes shut as he threw his head back. "I'm not going to last here, T. Feels too good. Too good."

Terrance worked his hips in and out of her, all the while pulling her back to meet his demanding thrusts. The feel of her slick flesh was far too good to resist for long. He could feel his impending orgasm racing up his spine.

"I'm going. Fuck...damn..." With the harsh sound of Alejandro's release ringing throughout the room, Terrance sped up his thrusts. He wasn't far behind his friend, but he refused to come before Nichelle did.

Thankfully he didn't have long to wait. Rearing up, Nichelle pulled away from Alejandro's spent cock and grabbed onto his arm with one of her hands, leaving the other beneath herself to prop herself up. She dug her nails into his flesh and held on as Terrance pounded into her.

"Yes. Yes!" she moaned. Turning her head, she sent him a pleading look. Her eyes were filled with desire and her lips were puffy and damp. "Harder...please...fuck...harder."

Terrance answered her plea, fucking her harder and deeper than before until her knees rose from the bed from the power of his thrusts. Nichelle screamed out her climax, her body pitching forward with the force of her orgasm.

With the sound of her ongoing release ringing in his ears, he locked his jaw and thrust into her one more time, spilling his seed inside his latex covering.

“Fuck. Fuck. Fuck,” he chanted as he held onto her hips for dear life. His release had been all consuming, all powerful. Never before had loving been so intense, or felt so right.

## Chapter Ten

The sound of water running roused Alejandro from his sound sleep. Remnants of the night before played out in his mind, much as it had in his dreams, bringing a small, buoyant smile to his face. Without opening his eyes, he uncurled his body and stretched out his long legs. Much to his surprise he wasn't the only one in the bed. The warm, soft flesh startled him, causing him to spring up into a sitting position and glance over at the sleeping form huddled beneath the comforter.

The room swayed a bit from the quick movement, sending shards of pain off in his head like firecrackers on the Fourth of July. Grimacing, he brought his fingers to his temple and massaged the tender flesh.

How much had he drunk last night? Enough, apparently, to forget the golden rule of "know when to leave." He should have returned to his own room. Hell, he'd planned to, but the evening hadn't ended after the fucking had.

Even though Nichelle had rung them dry, they kept at her, forcing her to come over and over until she cried off, begging for a reprieve for her overworked body. That should have then been his key to leave, but she'd asked him to stay, just for a moment longer, until

she drifted off to sleep, and he had. Only a moment longer had apparently turned into hours because here he was still in bed with her, and Terrance was nowhere to be found.

The sound of the shower was a good indicator of his friend's whereabouts and also the perfect opportunity for him to make his escape. As carefully as he could, Alejandro pulled back the quilt and eased himself from the bed. In the process he accidentally uncovered Nichelle's shoulders and upper back.

Unable to help himself, he stared down at the sleeping temptress. Her enticing brown skin made him ache to touch her again. Last night's debauchery didn't come close to satiating the hunger he felt for her. A hunger which, by all rights, he shouldn't even feel.

Nichelle belonged to someone else. Not just any someone, but to his best friend. The man who was like a brother to him. Yet even though Terrance was all these things to him, Alejandro had still betrayed him. Not with his deeds, but with his feelings.

Terrance might have been willing to share Nichelle's sweet body with him once, but he knew that was all it could ever be. He didn't have a place in their lives after last night, and he couldn't stand by and watch them bask in each other's affections after he'd once been included. It would kill him. Then again, walking away and never seeing her again would have the same outcome, but at least his friendship would remain intact.

With one final parting glance, Alejandro covered her back and pressed a soft kiss upon her head. As quietly as he could he made his way out of the room and down the stairs to the guest room where he'd been staying.

After taking a quick shower, Alejandro dressed in a clean pair of jeans and red T-shirt. Pulling out his suitcase, he threw it on the bed. The idea of packing and sneaking out held some appeal, although he knew he'd eventually have to face Terrance and Nichelle at some point. Better to do it from a position of power, though, with him taking control and making the first move, than to wait for the awkward conversation where T had to ask him to leave.

Just when he'd finally talked himself into getting with the program, there was a knock at the bedroom door.

"Hey, man, you up for some breakfast?" Terrance poked his head around the door. Alejandro watched as his smiling visage quickly turned to one of confusion. Gesturing to the suitcase, he asked, "What's going on?"

"Not much. It's time I headed back to Chicago and the job." Alejandro turned to pull open the dresser drawer but was stopped by Terrance moving over to stand directly in the way.

"Did I miss something? Because you never mentioned shit last night about having to get back to work. In fact, if I recall, you hadn't even talked to the captain."

Just hearing the words "last night" from Terrance had Alejandro sweating. He'd hoped to even avoid reference to the event. "Not yet, but I plan on checking in with him today." He tried again to open the drawer, but T wasn't budging.

"I wasn't born yesterday. You may not even have a job to go back to from what you told me. So you want to tell me what the real deal is?" Terrance crossed his arms over his chest and put on his "bad as I want to be" look.

"Dude, you may intimidate the yokels in this town, but it's not going to work on me." Alejandro tried to lighten the mood, but he didn't think it was working.

"Stop with the bullshit, man. I know this has to have something to do with last night. So 'fess up."

Alejandro nodded his head before saying, "Yeah, it does."

"Hey, man, we're friends. And I thought we were all on the same page. But if not, you gotta let me know."

"Look, everything last night was cool. You're the best buddy a guy could have, and Nichelle was...well, indescribable. But that was one night. And I don't want my presence to

make anyone feel uncomfortable, so I thought I'd just head out. In time it will be like nothing ever happened."

"I don't know what the fuck you're selling, but I'm not buying it. Yeah, last night was great. But you being around isn't going to be a problem. Nichelle wanted it and so did you and I."

"Of course I wanted it. Hell, what living, breathing man wouldn't want Nichelle?"

"I don't see what the problem is."

"Because you don't want to see." Alejandro had tried to do this the easy way, but Terrance wasn't cooperating.

"Fine, why don't you show me the light, then?"

Agitated, Alejandro ran his hand through his hair. "The reason last night was special was because it was Nichelle. I don't think it would have worked with anyone else."

"Yeah, I know. It just seemed right, the three of us."

"But it was just one night."

"It doesn't have to be."

"I think it does. Because if it happens again, I could start to develop feelings for Nichelle. I don't think you want that."

Alejandro felt the white lie was necessary. Terrance didn't need to know those feelings were already there. Unfortunately, his friend was more than perceptive.

"Dude, you can't fool me. I know you have feelings for her, otherwise it wouldn't have worked. I never would have allowed it otherwise."

"Then you're a fool."

"Maybe." Terrance agreed. A shadow of annoyance crossed over his stone features, erasing all traces of the easygoing man who'd entered the room only moments before. "But

I'm not the only fool in this room. I'm telling you I'm fine with this. More than fine, but I'll be damned if I forced you to fuck my lady."

The fact Nichelle was Terrance's lady and not his, or theirs, was part of the problem. "No one said you did."

"If you want to leave I can't stop you, short of shooting you in the other shoulder, that is, but I don't want you leaving here with any misunderstanding. I would never share Nichelle with anyone lightly. In fact, you are the only person I would, or ever will share her with."

"I..." He didn't know how to respond. As weird as it sounded he was touched by Terrance's words. "Still man, this could lead to --"

"Happiness. For all of us."

"How do you figure? If this continues the way you say, someone is going to get hurt."

"Did Nichelle look as if she was hurting last night? Did I? Did you?"

"You're deliberately not getting my point."

"That's because you're not making one," he drawled with distinct mockery.

"Fuck you, T."

"Hey, now, I thought that was my job?" Nichelle's words rang out in the room, startling the two men who had been standing with their backs to the door. Turning around, Alejandro cursed his rotten luck as he eyed her leaning against the door, wearing one of Terrance's white dress shirts.

The little nymph hadn't bothered to button a single button. The shirt lay draped over her jutting breasts, covering and yet revealing everything all at the same time. The tail of the shirt ended just below the middle of her thighs, forcing his gaze to drift up a smidgen to her bare pussy.

If he thought it was going to be difficult walking away before she entered the room, it was nothing compared to how he felt now.

“What did I miss?” Her dark, earnest eyes sought his.

“Nothing,” he lied, not wanting to get into this here and now. There was a lot to be said for sneaking away like a coward.

“It didn’t sound like nothing to me.” Nichelle sauntered all the way into the room. She stopped in front of Terrance, wrapped her arms around his neck, and kissed him. Before Alejandro could muster up the courage to look away, she broke away from Terrance and turned to him.

To his surprise, she shyly smiled up at him. Placing her hands on his shoulders, she rose up on her tiptoes and brushed her mouth across his. Her lips were still warm and moist from kissing Terrance, but Alejandro didn’t mind. He pulled her to him and parted her lips with his tongue, kissing her with all the untapped desire bundled inside him.

“Tell me again you’re going to just walk away.” Terrance’s words flittered through his lust-filled brain. The words also had another, much more dire consequence. They caused Nichelle to pull away.

Her luminous eyes widened in shock and dismay. “You’re leaving?”

“I…”

Terrance moved in behind Nichelle and pulled her flush against his body, his face full of derision. “Tell her, man. Tell her you want to walk away.”

Alejandro took a step back, separating himself from them, to gather his wayward thoughts. Hell, no, he didn’t want to leave, but he had to.

Didn’t he?

“Is that what you want, Alejandro?”

“No.” But want had nothing to do with it. “But it’s what I should do. It’s for the best. For all of us.”



Terrance wanted to kick his friend's ass all the way to Chicago and back. The man had shit for brains. It was like trying to reason with a wall. "Thanks for thinking for Nichelle and me. We really appreciate it, seeing as how we can't think for ourselves."

"I'm confused," Nichelle said. "When we went to bed everything was fine, yet this morning it's not. What did I miss?"

"Alejandro trying to sneak out, for one."

"Sneak --"

"I wasn't sneaking." Alejandro insisted with growing impatience. "It's true I was packing but it's not like I was going to walk out the house while the two of you were asleep."

"Right..." Only because he hadn't been able to.

"Why were you even packing? Did something happen last night you didn't want to happen?"

"No."

Irritated, Nichelle pulled away from Terrance and placed her hands on her hips. "Then what?"

Much to Terrance's amusement Alejandro took a step back. Crossing his arms, he leaned back against the wall and let Nichelle take charge. Alejandro was finding out the hard way about Nichelle's fierce nature. She might be a pussycat in bed, but she was a tigress everywhere else. Besides, he knew Alejandro would have a much harder time saying no to her than he would saying no to Terrance.

"Look, I don't want to come between you and Terrance."

"If I recall correctly, it was me who was between the two of you last night."

Terrance bit back a grin at the flush that covered Alejandro's face. He was in for it, and Terrance didn't feel the tiniest bit sorry for him.

"I know, I was there."

“And you seemed to enjoy it as much as we did.” She turned back to Terrance as if to ask him to confirm her words. “I’m not mistaken, am I?”

“Not at all,” he said smoothly, putting the ball back in Alejandro’s court.

She nodded her head as if satisfied with his answer and turned back to face Alejandro. “So then what’s your damage?”

“You.”

“Me!” Her body stiffened in shock.

“Yes, you,” Alejandro said impatiently.

Terrance dropped his arms down to his side and stepped forth. “Be careful what you say, man.” Alejandro was his boy and all but if he said anything that hurt Nichelle they were going to come to blows.

“No.” Nichelle held her hand up as if to silence him. “I want to hear what he has to say. What about me is the problem?”

“The problem is, neither one of you seemed to consider for an instant I may not be satisfied with just being the stand-in fuck buddy.”

“Who asked you to?” Terrance was tired of the bullshit. “You think I didn’t think this through? That this is just a whim? Well, it isn’t. Not for me.”

“Or me either.”

Alejandro’s stone-faced expression didn’t change one iota. His friend was a stubborn cuss and it was apparently going to take more than logic to get through to him. Maybe it was time for Terrance to be completely up front with him.

“Man, you of all people should know what a dangerous job we have. We’ve talked about this. I worry about some hyped-up perp getting off a lucky shot one night. You know how quickly that shit can happen. And the thing that worries me most of all is...” Terrance paused to take a breath in. “That if this happens Nichelle is going to be left alone again.”

“Terrance.” Nichelle turned to him and her brown eyes filled with tears. “Don’t think about stuff like that.”

“I have to,” he said stiffly. “But since you’ve been here, man, I haven’t been as worried, because I know you’ll look after her.”

“I don’t need looking after.”

Now that was funny. “The hell you don’t. Everyone else might believe the hype, but I know the truth about you.”

“And just what might that be?”

“You want to be taken care of once in a while. You’ve spent so much time taking care of everyone else, you deserve it. I think you even crave it. But you can’t admit it to yourself because you think it’s somehow going to make you weak.”

“I...”

Alejandro jumped in. “It’s true, Nichelle. Even for the short time I’ve been here I can see it. Your family depends on you, the big sister who will take care of all their problems.”

“Oh, come on. That’s not true.”

“Bullshit, ’Chelle,” Terrance added. “You put your own dreams aside to care for your mom and raise your sisters.”

“Of course I did. And I’d do it again. I don’t regret my decision.”

“I know that, baby, but you’ve gotten into the habit of doing for others instead of thinking about yourself. Last night was one of the few times you did something just for you.”

Nichelle looked back and forth between him and Alejandro. “I do things for myself.”

“Not really. Who covered Samantha’s shift the other night with no regard to her own schedule? Who is always willing to babysit Cory’s kids, even when you are tired?”

“So I helped out. So what?”

“All I’m saying is that you’re always willing to do whatever your family needs. But who’s taking care of you?”

“My family loves me.”

“Of course they do, but they’re starting their own families. I’m here to take care of you now.”

“I’m not a weakling who needs someone to cater to them.”

“Of course you’re not a weakling. You need to realize, though, everyone needs someone to take care of them every once in a while. And if something happens to me, then Alejandro’s here.”

“Stop saying that, nothing’s going to happen to you.” Nichelle stepped into his embrace, wrapping her arms around his waist and hugging him tightly.

“You know I’d be here for you, man.” Terrance looked up at Alejandro and nodded, knowing it was one of the reasons they were friends. They would do anything for each other.

Nichelle pulled back from Terrance and turned around to Alejandro once again. “Hey now, when did this start to be about me instead of you? I’m mad at you for trying to leave.”

Alejandro put up his hands in mock surrender. “I give up.”

“Good, because I think we’re both sick and tired of arguing with you. Now didn’t I come in here to invite you to eat breakfast?”

Alejandro nodded. “Yep, I think that’s where this started.”

“Let’s go eat, then.”

Nichelle headed to the kitchen and Terrance turned back to look at Alejandro. “I’m not stupid enough to believe everything is all okay now. I think we owe it to all three of us to stick this out and see what happens. And even if things don’t end up where I think they will, I’m still serious about needing you around for ’Chelle. Because as much as she hates to admit it, she needs a keeper.”

“Like I said, man, I’m here for you. I’ll stick around until I know what’s happening in Chicago at least.”

“Sounds good. Now let’s make pancakes.”

Terrance headed after Nichelle to the kitchen with his best friend following. It wasn’t perfect, but he thought they might actually be on the right road.

## Chapter Eleven

Work at the diner had been unbelievably dreary and Nichelle was looking forward to finishing for the day. When she'd left his house this morning, Terrance had kissed her soundly before telling her to be ready to get picked up promptly at closing time. She couldn't wait to see what he had planned for them. After last night her senses were on overdrive.

Being with both Alejandro and Terrance had been an experience to remember. One, in fact, she wouldn't mind repeating tonight or every other night hereafter. Just thinking about them touching her, kissing her, making love to her had her squirming in her chair.

Despite how great the sex between the three of them was, she had a niggling feeling it was more for all them. Much more. In her own mind she knew her attraction to Alejandro had blossomed into something she'd never been expecting, that her connection to him was just as strong as the one she had with Terrance. It was a scary concept, the three of them together, one that would take some time getting used to. But she had all the time in the world.

There was no doubt in her mind that including Alejandro in their relationship was the right thing to do. It might be unconventional to others, but she didn't care. She was long past looking for approval from the masses anyhow.

“Hey, sis, your ride is here,” Cory’s voice called out as she walked by.

Nichelle quickly gathered her purse, checked her hair and lipstick in the mirror, and headed out into the diner. She came to a complete stop, however, when she saw Alejandro and not Terrance waiting for her.

The teasing light she was used to seeing in his eyes was missing, and in its place was wary resolve. He was still building walls, and she’d be damned if she let him get away with. He belonged to her now, as assuredly as Terrance did. Now all she had to do was get him to admit it as well.

With the exception of Cory and Billy, the short order cook, the diner was empty. But because her sister was in the room, it was the perfect opportunity to make a point. Smiling, she walked over to greet him, hugging him tightly and briefly kissing him on the lips.

“Hey, mister, I missed you.”

The look of shock on his face was priceless as he glanced over at Cory, as if checking to see if she had seen their exchange. Nichelle followed his gaze and smiled. From the stunned look on her sister’s face, she had definitely noticed. Cory would be on the phone with Samantha the second she stepped out of the room. Good.

She was done worrying about what her family thought. And Terrance had made a very good point this morning: it was time she started living her life for her and not just as an asset to her family. She loved them and would be there for them, but she was going to have her own life as well.

Besides, if he thought she was going to pretend like they were strangers he had another trick coming. She’d just done that with Terrance and discovered it got her nowhere and it didn’t make her happy. *They* made her happy and she didn’t care what anyone thought about it.

It almost seemed as if last night had freed her from her inhibitions and her self-built walls.

“Terrance working late?”

“Um, yeah, he asked me to come pick you up. He received a call right when he was getting ready to leave and won’t be done for a while.”

“Then I guess you’re stuck keeping me company.” Slipping her hand into the crook of his arm she sauntered from the diner, waving her hand over her shoulder to Cory, who was staring after her like she had two heads.

Once outside, Alejandro hurried them over to his car. After opening the door for her, he went around to his side and slid behind the wheel. He started the car and took hold of the steering wheel, but instead of putting the car into gear he turned and faced her. “Do you think that was a good idea?”

Nichelle didn’t even try to play dumb. “Yes, I do.”

“Well, I don’t.”

From the scowl on his face, his position was more than obvious. “I kissed you, so what? We’re friends, more than friends.”

“And everyone knows Terrance and I are friends.”

Suddenly something occurred to her. “Are you worried they’ll think you two are more than friends?”

“Hell, no.”

“Then what’s wrong.”

Alejandro tightened his grip on the steering wheel. “Did it ever occur to you people will think I’m doing him dirty?”

“We both know you’re not, so why do you care what other people will think? Besides, that was just Cory, not the world at large.”

“And you’re fine with your sister thinking you’re cheating on Terrance?”

“I’m not cheating.”



“Aren’t you?”

“Is that how you see it?” Why did men have to make things so complicated? “Because it isn’t how Terrance or I see it. I want to be with you, you want to be with me, and thankfully Terrance wants us to be together as well. Didn’t we hash all this out already?”

He didn’t respond; instead, he started the car and headed toward Terrance’s house. They drove in silence for a bit, until fed up, Nichelle unbuttoned her seatbelt and turned to face him.

“Put that back on.”

“Talk to me.” She laid her hand on his thigh and Alejandro stiffened in response.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“I do.” Her hand began to creep up toward his thickening cock. “And from the tent in your pants I think you do as well.”

“You’re playing with fire, Nichelle.”

She might be playing with fire, but she wasn’t afraid of getting burned. In fact, she wasn’t afraid at all. Being with Alejandro felt right. Terrance had realized it last night as well. She just needed to convince the man gripping the wheel like a lifeline.

With a sigh, Nichelle removed her hand and watched as he relaxed ever so slightly. She would let him stew, but only for a bit longer. She buckled back up and left him to his silent reverie as she plotted her next course of action. The only time Alejandro freely admitted his desire for her was when they were in the midst of an intimate situation. Lucky for the both of them, she was willing to take one for the team to get him to see reason.

Once they reached the house she followed him into the living room. “I’ll keep you company until T gets here. Then I’ll head to bed.”

The hell he would. While he began to search for the remote, she put her plan into action. Quickly and quietly, she began to unbutton her blouse, letting the silk material slip down over her shoulders and onto the floor. Next she unbuttoned her pants and pushed the

khaki material over her hips until she was standing in just her matching teal bra and panties. She walked forward just as he turned around with the remote in hand.

“What the fuck?” The remote dropped from his hand, clattering to the floor as Alejandro stood staring in shocked stupor.

She smiled seductively. “Wonderful, we’re both on the same page.”

“Terrance isn’t going to be home for a while.”

“And...”

“I don’t think he’d appreciate finding you and me here like this.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him down toward her. “I think you’re wrong about that. Why don’t we find out?”

He grabbed her wrists, prying her arms away from him. “I don’t feel like losing my best friend on a whim.”

“You’re not going to lose him. He and I both understand there’s more to this than just having a good time. I’m just trying to convince you of that.”

“By fucking me? Nice plan.”

Although he’d pulled her arms from around his neck he still had held her wrists. Nichelle leaned forward, placing a soft kiss along his jawline before licking up toward his ear. “You want me and I want you.”

“We can’t do this.” Although his words held conviction, she didn’t hear it in his voice. And from the look of his cock straining at his zipper, his body didn’t believe what he was trying to tell himself either.

“My pussy is so wet I bet you would slide right in. I feel empty.” Stepping forward she rubbed herself against him, enjoying the feel of his roughness against her soft body. She’d been fantasizing about sex all day and now that they were here, like this, she wanted him to fuck her.

“Don’t tempt me.”

“Am I a temptation? Because you seem to be doing a pretty good job of resisting me. It would almost give a girl a complex.”

Alejandro closed his eyes, taking a deep breath. But instead of calming him, it was as if the action spurred on his lusts. When he opened his eyes she could see the deeply held desires there, no longer banked, but pooling at the surface just waiting to be set free.

Pushing her down to the sofa he knelt over her. He pulled off his T-shirt, revealing his muscled chest. “Is this what you want, baby? A man panting with lust over you and you don’t care who it is. Will any dick do?” He pressed his jean-covered cock against her dampening panties, humping against her in a parody of what she truly desired.

“Not any cock and not any man. Right now I want you.” She attempted to wrap her arms around him again, but he thwarted her. Unclasping his belt he quickly removed it from the loops in his jeans and wrapped it around her wrists, securing them together above her head. The action pushed her chest up and Alejandro pulled down the cups of her bra, exposing her breasts to his gaze.

Her nipples were hard, but they tightened even further as he continued to stare but not touch her. She shifted under him, desperately needing contact. As if he could read her mind his hands reached out and pinched her nipples hard, causing her to arch off the couch in reaction.

“Oh, God, more, please.”

“Do you like pain?”

“I don’t know, yes, maybe a little.”

He bent his head, sucking a nipple into his mouth while his hand continued to worry at the other. The dual sensations were driving her crazy and she wanted, no needed, to touch her pussy and ease the throbbing there.

“I can’t take any more. I need you to fuck me.” He lifted his head and sat back. The cool air wafted over her wet nipple and she whimpered with need. “Please.”

Quickly unbuttoning his jeans, he stood and pushed them down over his hips and past his legs, stepping out of them. Reaching into the back pocket, he pulled out his wallet, retrieving a condom before throwing the denims onto the floor. As he tore open the foil packet she spread her legs in a silent invitation. Once sheathed, he reached down and ripped off her panties, not even bothering to take them off. His dominance thrilled and excited her, reminding her of the games she and Terrance played.

Instead of fucking her, however, he bent her legs and pushed them wider before kneeling between them. Spreading open her lips he lowered his head and swiped his tongue over her moist opening. He lapped at her pussy like a starving animal, suckling her essence. She writhed beneath him, pushing her pussy into his face and begging for more.

“Lick my clit, please suck it. I want to come.”

“You wanted this, wanted me. We’re doing this my way.”

He made a feast of her pussy, driving her to the point of ecstasy again and again without fulfillment. His tongue would torment her clit, but never give her just what she needed.

“Stop teasing me,” she cried, her body craving his.

He pulled back, his face wet with her juices. “Tell me.”

“Fuck me, Alejandro. I need your cock.”

Clasping his cock in his hand he centered himself before plunging into her heated depths. His thick shaft stretched her swollen tissues and filled her aching emptiness. The feel of him finally inside her made her cry out in rapture.

“Yes, yes, fuck me.”

Alejandro withdrew and plunged forward once again. He pressed her legs back, pushing into her body as if he could reach right through her. Every time he plunged his cock into her she could feel heat radiating up to her belly. She raised her legs higher to allow him

to plunge deeper inside. The new position had him hitting her clit on each thrust and she could feel her orgasm building.

“I’m going to come.”

“Not yet.” He was thrusting into her like a madman, but she didn’t want to wait. She clamped her vaginal muscles with his every thrust, milking his cock for all she was worth. His face grimaced as if in pain, but she knew it wasn’t pain he was feeling. She wondered if he was trying to hold back his orgasm to purposely prolong the lovemaking, as if this would be their only time together.

“Take it, baby. Take all of me.”

He pushed into her one last time and held himself deep inside as she exploded around him. She screamed his name as he groaned his own release. Collapsing over her prone body, she could feel his heart beating and the sound of his harsh breathing as he attempted to regain control.

“Looks like somebody got started without me.”

Alejandro turned, allowing Nichelle to see over his shoulder. Terrance stood at the entrance to the living room, hands on his hips and in full uniform, with a frown on his face. *Well, fuck.*

With his hand on the butt of his gun, Terrance walked around the back of the couch and stood in front of the television so he was facing the two of them. The musky smell of sex was heavy in the air. The aroma, combined with the erotic sight before him of Nichelle bound and filled, had him hard pressed to keep his erection at bay.

The choppy noise of lovemaking had greeted him long before the sight had, and it had taking everything in him to not undress and join them on the couch. Even though it was what he wanted to do more than anything else, Terrance had a point he needed to make, and there was no better time to do that than now.

“When I asked you to pick up Nichelle this wasn’t exactly what I meant.” It was what he’d hoped for, but not what he’d meant. “What’s going on here?”

To his sick, twisted pleasure Alejandro moved out and off Nichelle in one quick swoop. “This is entirely my fault,” he said, as he grabbed up his pants and pulled them on.

Terrance glanced over at Nichelle, who was still bound by her hands and bit back a grin. Alejandro might feel slightly remorseful, but from the devilish grin on her face, she didn’t. Not at all. In fact, the little temptress had the audacity to wink at him before stretching her legs out on the couch and crossing her feet at the ankles.

“Somehow I doubt that.”

“No.” Ever the gallant hero, Alejandro was hell-bent on taking all the blame. “I did this.”

“Did you, now?”

“Yes.”

Terrance cocked a brow. “So you forced her?”

“Hell, no.” Alejandro spat the words out as if they were distasteful.

“Then it wasn’t just you.” Terrance took a step forward and much to his amusement, Alejandro stepped in front of him, blocking him from getting closer to Nichelle. “If I were you, I’d step away.”

“I can’t do that, man.” Alejandro stood his ground, refusing to give way under his intimidation.

“Oh, but you can.”

“If you’re going to be angry at anyone, then be angry at me. Blame me.”

“Trust me, I know exactly who to blame, don’t I, Nichelle.”

“T --”

“I’m willing to bet, this was all her doing. She made the first move. She forced the issue. She seduced you. She’s good at that, aren’t you, baby?”

“Yes, I am.” Nichelle sat up and rose to her knees. She rested her bound hands on her thighs, blocking his view of her sweet pussy. She was a vixen and if he hadn’t already been head over heels in love with her, he would have fallen then and there. “It was all me.”

“No, it wasn’t.” Alejandro’s back was to her, so he missed the way her dark eyes twinkled with unabashed pleasure. She was enjoying this, just as much as Terrance was. But that wasn’t much of a surprise to him since she’d always been a fan of role playing.

“Alejandro.”

“What?” His friend’s body was tensed as if he was braced for Terrance to throw a blow.

“Move.”

“If you --”

“Now.” Terrance couldn’t wait a second longer to get his hands on Nichelle. Pushing past Alejandro he strolled to the couch and grasped her arms in his hands. “I think it’s time you learned your lesson.”

“Long past,” she purred.

Terrance pulled her flush against him then released one of her arms and delivered a well-aimed smack to her ass. The sound resonated in the room as did the heated gasp that escaped from her lips. “What a bad girl you are. Forcing poor Alejandro to go against his hard held beliefs and making him fuck you.”

“He was hard, all right.”

*Smack! Smack!*

“You should be ashamed of yourself, whoring around behind my back.”

“I couldn’t wait until you came home to do it right in front of you.”

“And that’s why” -- *Smack! Smack!* -- “you’re being punished, you dirty little slut.”

"I'm not a slut," she protested.

"Then what do you call a woman who fucks two men?"

"Lucky." She grinned.

"Damn straight." Terrance fired off two more smacks before pulling her off the couch.

"Get down on your knees. Now!"

He helped her to her knees so she wouldn't fall, then released her to remove his utility belt. Glancing up, he spotted Alejandro standing where he'd left him, with a stunned look on his face. "Are you just going to stand there or are you going to help me punish her? If we don't keep her in line, who will?"

Alejandro might have taken a while to catch on, but Terrance's words finally spurred him into action.

"She's been a very bad girl. Even after I warned her she didn't stop throwing herself at me."

"Is that true, 'Chelle? I think you purposely got him naked and made him fuck you before I arrived so I couldn't join in. What do you think you could do to make it up to me?"

Staring up at him with desire-filled eyes, she licked her lips. "I could suck your cock, officer."

Since he'd planned for that eventuality all along, he was more than willing to accept her suggestion. He tossed his utility belt aside and unfastened his pants, pulling out his cock. Nichelle scooted forward on her knees, the little witch, hungry to taste him. Guiding his cock into her open mouth he groaned as her lips closed around him.

"That's it; show me how much you want to make it up to me."

She stared up at him as she took him deeper into her mouth, coating his length with her saliva. He gripped her head lightly, threading his fingers through her hair, but allowing her to set the pace. Without her hands to guide her, she started to bob her head slowly back and forth, taking more and more of him with every movement.



“Hey, man, I brought along a gift I think our girl will like. It’s on the hall table. Why don’t you go get it?”

Alejandro’s eyes went wide at his words, as if he couldn’t believe Terrance had referred to Nichelle as “our girl.” But that’s exactly what she was becoming -- theirs, not just his.

Alejandro returned with a brown paper bag and pulled out the items Terrance had bought. He raised his eyebrows as he held up the anal plug and lubricating gel.

“You think she’ll like it?”

Since Alejandro was standing behind her and she had Terrance’s cock in her mouth, Nichelle couldn’t turned around and see what he was holding up. But even without knowing what it was she hummed her approval in response.

The vibrations around his cock caused him to tighten in an effort to hold off his orgasm. He wanted this to last as long as possible, but she was making it impossible. Her mouth was urging him on as she continued to take him to the back of her throat.

Terrance watched as Alejandro knelt down behind her and grasped her legs, pulling them slightly apart. His hand dipped between her thighs and Terrance could tell when he penetrated her pussy because Nichelle bucked against him, swallowing his cock for a moment. The sensation just about blew the top of his head clear off.

“T, she is so fucking wet. She’s loving this.”

“Fuck her pussy. When you did that she swallowed me whole.”

“Oh, shit.”

Alejandro began stroking her while Terrance gripped her head firmly and began to take control of her movements. Pulling out almost completely, he thrust back in forcefully, working his hips back and forth as he fucked her sweet mouth, pushing in harder and deeper.

Unable to hold out any longer, he shouted out his release and emptied himself into the back of her throat. Swallowing, she took everything he gave her, licking and sucking him as he finally collapsed back into the chair behind him.

Staring across at Alejandro, he nodded toward the toy.

“Now I think you need to get your next punishment.”

Nichelle turned to stare at Alejandro and they both noticed when she finally registered the anal plug. Instead of fear, he saw excitement and longing in her eyes. She was looking forward to what was coming next.

## Chapter Twelve

Terrance and Alejandro were dead men. Nichelle could barely move an inch without the butt plug making its presence known. If they were at home this wouldn't have been such a bad thing, but here, in public, surrounded by friends and family, it was horrible. She was aroused and serving barbeque to a bunch of people she'd known all her life.

"Damn it," she grumbled as she shifted her feet again, trying to get comfortable.

"Hey, now," Samantha warned, giving her a nudge with her shoulder. "There are kids about, girl. What's wrong with you today? You seem antsy as hell. Do you need to take a break?"

Taking a break would mean sitting down, something she definitely wasn't up for trying just yet. "No, no, I'm fine."

"I was hoping we could talk. You know there are plenty of volunteers who can take over for you."

The barbeque was the annual police fund-raiser. All the local restaurants closed their regular establishments and worked at the event instead, donating their proceeds from their sales.

“Talk about what?” She didn’t delude herself into thinking her sister just wanted to shoot the breeze. This discussion most likely was the result of Cory burning up the telephone lines last night after she left the diner with Alejandro.

Samantha looked around warily before replying, “This and that. Come on, we’ll walk over to the lemonade stand.”

“Okay.” Nichelle knew they’d be talking eventually. She supposed it was better to have the confrontation in public. At least then they’d both have to remain civil. Turning her apron and tongs over to a willing volunteer she joined her sister for a trek across the town square.

Surprisingly they walked in silence but as they reached the lemonade stand she figured out why. Cory was waiting for them, three lemonades in hand. Ambushed. Just wonderful. Not only did she have something stuck up her ass, she was going to have to deal with her sisters being an additional pain in her ass. Lovely.

Instead of waiting for them to bombard her, she struck first. “Okay, I’m here. Spill it.”

“Spill what?” Samantha eyes were hidden behind the dark sunglasses she wore but her face was expressive as could be.

“Whatever it is you two want to gang up on me about. I don’t have all day.”

“No one is ganging up on you,” Cory denied. “We just want to talk to you.”

Great. A dating intervention. “About what?”

Samantha and Cory stole a quick glance at each other before turning to her once more. Samantha, the eldest and boldest of the two, spoke first. “Cory and I were just wondering if you and Terrance broke up.”

“And we want to let you know we’re here for you, if you want to talk about it,” Cory added. “I know you’re not one to go on and on about feelings and stuff, but we’re ready to listen, if you want to open up.”

“If you need --”

“Hold up, Oprah and Dr. Phil.” Nichelle held her hand up to halt their words.  
“Terrance and I haven’t broken up.”

“You haven’t?” The surprise on Cory’s face was priceless.

“No.”

Samantha shared their younger sister’s confused look. “Are you dating exclusively?”

“Why do you ask?” If they were going to be nosy, she was going to make them come out and ask, not pussyfoot around like they were.

“Because.” Samantha stole another look at Cory, confusion flooding her features. Nichelle almost laughed, knowing they were trying to figure out how Alejandro fit into the picture. “We’re just wondering if you’re dating someone else.”

*Maybe not in a conventional way.* “Yes.”

“It just doesn’t seem like you,” Samantha said softly.

“Yeah, it’s hard enough imagining you dating one guy let alone two.”

“Gee, thanks.” Nichelle knew she sounded a bit harsh, but she was beginning to realize her sisters didn’t see her as a woman who dated and had a life, but rather just as an extension of their own families.

“I didn’t mean it that way.” At least Cory had the grace to look ashamed.

“Don’t worry about it. So are we done here?”

“No.” Samantha stepped forward. “We should talk about this.”

“Why?”

“You’re dating two guys, both of whom are cops, with guns and handcuffs.”

*Mmm, handcuffs.* “And your point is?”

“This is going to end badly, ’Chelle,” Cory warned. “You don’t play friends against one another, especially friends who are in macho careers like law enforcement. You’re going to get hurt.”

“I’m not going to get hurt. No one is. Terrance, Alejandro, and I are in an open relationship.”

“Do they know that?” Cory asked.

“What a stupid question. Of course they do.”

“And they’re okay with it?” The awe in Cory’s voice was hilarious.

“Of course they’re not.” Samantha sounded aghast at the notion. “In fact, I don’t believe they even know, do they, Nichelle? I can’t believe you. Cheating on Terrance and with his best friend. What a horrible thing to do to him.”

Fed up, Nichelle tossed her hands up in the air. “You don’t even know him.”

“It’s the principle.”

“No, what it is, is none of your business.”

“You’re my business.”

“Funny, when I was giving my opinion about both of your relationships, I strongly recall the two of you telling me to butt out. Now the shoe is on the other foot and I’m telling you the same thing. Butt out.”

“You didn’t butt out,” Cory reminded her.

“Then learn from my mistake.”

“It’s not just the two men we’re worried about,” Cory added.

Nichelle was surprised, wondering what else they had on their minds. “This is true confessions day, so let’s hear it.”

“I overheard Terrance and Alejandro talking a few days ago and I know Alejandro isn’t here to stay. Don’t you think you’re playing a dangerous game, especially by including someone who won’t even be around town for much longer?”

Nichelle found herself at a loss for words. Although Alejandro had agreed to stay after that horrible morning when she thought he was going to run out on them, it was something none of them had talked about much since then.

Personally she didn't want to think of the possibility of him leaving for good. In her heart she felt that both Terrance and she needed him here, with them. But he hadn't revealed any more about his status in Chicago and neither one of them had pushed him on it. Nevertheless, she wasn't going to give her sisters the satisfaction of knowing they'd found her one weak spot.

"Look, I appreciate your concern, but I know what I'm doing. In fact, we all do. Can't you just trust me and let me be happy in my decision?"

"This isn't like a decision to get your hair cut. This is major."

"I know that." And she did. Even though it was happening fast, she wasn't going into this lightly. For the first time in her life, things felt right. She was happy and come hell or high water she was going to hold on to her happiness, no matter what anyone else thought. "I've thought this through."

Samantha laid her hand on her stomach and asked, "Have you thought about what we're going to tell the kids?"

To be honest, she hadn't. "No, but I don't see why we have to tell them anything."

"Because I assume you're not going to keep them in the closet."

"Right, but there's no need to sit them down and discuss it either. It is what it is."

"So are they going to be Uncle Terrance and Uncle Alejandro?"

It had a nice ring to it. "I don't know."

"What about when you have kids?"

"Will you stop it!" Damn, Samantha could test the patience of a saint. "Having kids is not in my immediate future. We haven't talked about having kids, or getting married, or living together. We're taking this one day at a time."

“But --”

“Samantha, give it a rest.”

“Wait. Wait. Wait.” Cory held her hand up to get attention focused on her. “I just have to know. Are you doing them both?”

This was so not their business, but still...she had to share. “Yes.”

“At the same time.”

“Yes.”

Samantha’s eyes were as wide open as Cory’s mouth. “Like front and bac --”

“Hello, ladies, is everyone enjoying themselves?” Terrance walked up behind Nichelle, wrapping his arms around her and forestalling any response she might have gotten from her sisters.

Cory and Samantha both stammered hellos while Nichelle enjoyed the warmth of his embrace. She wanted to ask him where Alejandro was, but decided that would put her sisters into a further uproar. The only consolation from their confrontation was she’d forgotten about the toy in her ass for a few moments.

Of course now that the thought had crossed her mind the feeling of fullness returned tenfold. She shifted in response and then stiffened when Terrance whispered in her ear, “How’s your toy, baby?”

Nichelle turned her head, eyebrows raised in warning. “Shh.”

“Nichelle, we can talk more later. Just know that we love you and we’re here for you.” Samantha was glancing back and forth between her and Terrance as she spoke.

“Did I interrupt something?” Terrance asked.

Nichelle looked at them and realized for all their protests and questions they both loved and cared for her very much and wanted only the best for her. Just as her own lifestyle had changed and she’d adapted to it, they were going to have to adapt to her. And they would, because they were family and nothing would change that.



“No, just girl talk.” Nichelle pulled away from Terrance and gave first Samantha and then Cory a hug, whispering “I love you” in each of their ears. Then turning back to Terrance she took his hand in hers as they began to walk away. She spotted Alejandro coming toward them and without relinquishing Terrance’s hand, linked hands with the other man as well.

She was with her men and she was announcing it to the whole world. Maybe not with a bullhorn, but it was enough of an announcement that word would start to get around. They were together and if anyone had a problem with it, well, it was just too damn bad.

Terrance wasn’t sure how he felt about Nichelle outing them in public as she had, but he knew it wasn’t anything he was going to call her to task for. Their relationship wasn’t anything he was ashamed of nor was it something he was going to hide. His only real issue was he didn’t want people to think he and Alejandro were sharing more than Nichelle. It was petty and he knew it, but it was tough enough being a black man on a predominately white force. The gay rumor would put him in an entirely new category and he wasn’t going for that.

As discreetly as he could, he pulled his hand away from Nichelle as they walked across the town square. Alejandro, on the other hand, didn’t, and that was fine with him. “Looks like I interrupted a good conversation.”

Nichelle’s snort said otherwise. “I’m not sure if I would call it good.”

“No?”

“No.”

“What happened?” Alejandro came to a stop, and since they were holding hands, his movement or lack thereof, halted hers as well.

“My sisters being sisters. Nothing to worry about.”

Alejandro glanced at Terrance, who could only shrug his shoulders in response. He was an only child. Sibling dynamics were something he knew nothing about.

“What exactly does that mean?” Alejandro questioned.

“It means just that.”

“Nichelle,” Terrance warned. If they were going to be in an open relationship they were going to have to learn how to be honest with each other, even when what they had to share wasn’t pretty.

“Fine.” She sighed heavily. “They wanted to know what was going on with the three of us.”

That was kind of what he figured. “And you said...”

“I told them the truth. We’re together. All of us.”

“Well, they didn’t spit on me so I guess they took it semi-well.”

“Well enough. They love me so they worry about me.”

“They’re not the only ones who love you, you know?” Terrance had decided to lay his heart on the line. If he was ready and able to share her, she needed to hear the words from him about how much he loved her.

“They’re not, are they?”

“No.” He pulled her away from Alejandro and into his arms where she belonged. “I love you, ’Chelle. I think I always have.”

“You think?” Even though her words were challenging her eyes were watery pools of chocolate. His little hard-ass was a big ol’ softy, despite what she and the rest of the world thought.

“I came back to this town because of you, didn’t I?”

“I knew it,” Alejandro crowed triumphantly.

“Shut it,” he warned, without glancing away from Nichelle. “If moving back here isn’t proof enough of my devotion to you, then I don’t what is.”

“You might *think* you’ve always loved me, but I *know* I have always loved you. I loved you when we were younger and I love you now.”

She wrapped her arms around his neck and he pulled her hips close. Bending his head, he captured her mouth in a heated kiss. Her soft, full lips parted instantly, letting his tongue slip into the wet cavern of her mouth.

Pulling away, Nichelle turned in his arms and leaned back against his chest. They both stared at Alejandro expectantly but to his amazement his friend didn’t utter a word. Narrowing his eyes, Terrance vowed to maim him. There was no doubt in his mind Alejandro had fallen for Nichelle, but as usual he was being stubborn about facing the obvious.

Refusing to let the mood sour, Terrance squeezed Nichelle and lowered his lips down to her ear. “You never answered my question. Are you enjoying your little punishment?”

“That’s not what you asked me earlier.”

“And you never answered me. Don’t make me spank you while you’re wearing it.”

“Yes and no,” she answered quickly. “I’m enjoying it but it’s hard to concentrate on things.”

“You don’t have to worry about concentrating any more. You’re off in a bit, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Good. I want you to head to my house and undress. Wait for us on the bed.”

“How much longer are you going to be?”

“Does it matter? Just do like I say.”

“You’re so freaking bossy.”

“And you love it.”

“Tyrant.” Turning around she dropped a quick kiss on his lips before walking away. His eyes were trained on her ass as she moved across the lawn. Just knowing in a few short hours he was going to buried deep inside her tempting derriere made his balls ache and his cock hard.

Turning his attention away from Nichelle and back to his friend, he sighed heavily. “You’re an idiot, you know that, right?”

“What did I do now?”

Terrance shook his head in disgust. If Alejandro was stupid enough to not appreciate the gift before him, then it was his own fault.

“Man, don’t give me that look. I didn’t want to intrude on your moment, okay?”

He wasn’t sure if the excuse was convenience or not, but if Alejandro wanted to believe it was the only reason he kept quiet, who was Terrance to dispute the man? He had come to the conclusion when he needed to declare his love for Nichelle in his own time. Alejandro would have to do the same.

They spent the next hour patrolling the event, ensuring all the booths had everything they needed. They ran errands and cleaned up, both intent on the job at hand. Terrance knew he couldn’t think about Nichelle or he’d never finish the work that needed to get done. When they were finally relieved, he clapped Alejandro on the back.

“Come on, our girl is home waiting for us.” Just saying the words had him imagining just what Nichelle had been doing since she’d left. He’d only told her to be naked and waiting on the bed. He wondered if she’d taken the initiative to remove the anal plug or if she’d left it for them.

Alejandro smiled wickedly. “I wonder how she’s been enjoying her wait.”

“If I know her, she’s been anticipating this for a long time. When I put her toy in right before she left to work her shift this afternoon she was practically begging for more.”

Terrance knew he was as well. The idea of being able to fully share Nichelle in the most intimate way possible had him hard and throbbing. He could only hope the reality lived up to the anticipation.

When they finally made it home, the house was silent, as if empty. However, he knew Nichelle was there since he'd seen her car parked outside. Alejandro followed him up the stairs to the master bedroom, where he pushed open the door to the most magnificent sight in the world.

The pillows had been moved off the bed and the covers pulled down. In the center of the bed was Nichelle, nude as he had ordered. She lay with her head away from the door, her legs tucked under her body, and her back bowed. Her arms were stretched out in front of her and her face was pressed against the sheet. The soft curves of her ass were on display and he could see the naughty toy was still in place where he'd inserted it earlier that day.

"You've been a very good girl."

"Thank you." Her voice was husky and low and pulled at him as much as her body did.

Walking over to the bed, he trailed his hand over her back, feeling the ridge of her spine until he reached her ass. His cock was straining at his zipper as if fighting to break free. Glancing up, he noticed Alejandro had walked around to the other side of the bed. He watched as the other man lifted her head and stared into her eyes.

"This is your last chance, Nichelle. Is this what you want, to have both of us sharing you, me fucking your pussy while T fucks your ass?"

Terrance watched her lick her lips and then smile seductively. "Yes, that's exactly what I want."

"Then come here." Alejandro pulled her upright until she was on her knees before him. Threading his fingers through her hair he brought her face toward his and kissed her soundly.

## Chapter Thirteen

Clasped in Alejandro's arms, Nichelle let herself sink into his kiss. This was one night she when wasn't going to think or analyze anything. Instead she was going to feel. She was already wet and longing for them from her time spent lying nude on the bed awaiting their arrival. But Terrance's touches along her spine and Alejandro's dirty words had her more than primed for the sex to come.

The bed dipped, signaling Terrance moving behind her. He laid his lips against her shoulders, dancing his tongue against her heated skin. She was trapped in the best possible way between the two men she loved. In a position akin to the one they would soon make love in, with Alejandro in front and Terrance at her back.

Terrance's hands came up from behind her and cupped her breasts, pulling her back against him in the process. His bold move broke her heated kiss, but it allowed Alejandro to step away from her and begin to undress.

"Your heart is beating fast, 'Chelle," he whispered in her ear as he pinched her nipples. He manipulated her aroused peaks, adding extra pressure just the way she liked it. Her pussy, already wet, continued to weep. "Is it because you're watching Alejandro undress and you know what's going to happen the second he's nude or because you're nervous?"

Words alone couldn't begin to describe how excited she was, but it wasn't only excitement that had her heart pounding. "A little bit of both."

"You don't have to be nervous, baby. You know we'd never do anything to hurt you."

"Tell that to my ass."

"Oh, I'll be having words with it later, baby. Don't you worry."

"I think there's something we need to do before you have words." Alejandro, now nude, sat on the bed with his feet on the floor. Turning to look at her, he said, "Come here, Nichelle, and lay across my lap."

Although his command was given quietly, she knew better than to ignore it. She lowered herself over his lap and arched her rear end a bit, knowing instinctively what he was after. He didn't let her down.

Alejandro brushed his fingers lightly down her spine to the crease of her buttocks until they encountered the toy lodged snugly in her ass. He took hold of the base of the plug and painstakingly began to remove it. Then to her surprise, instead of pulling it all the way out, he plunged it back in, over and over. Fucking her ass with the pink plug much the way Terrance would be with his cock in only a matter of minutes.

"Alejandro..." she moaned.

Terrance slowly began to disrobe as he watched the naughty backdoor action.

She was being overwhelmed with the sensations and they were just getting started. Alejandro varied his motions, sometimes twisting the plug and then pulling and thrusting. Nichelle watched Terrance undress as her ass was worked and she ground her pussy onto Alejandro's lap in a desperate bid for relief. Terrance removed his final article of clothing just as she thought she would reach her pinnacle.

"Gather the pillows together, Alejandro. I want her sexy ass raised and I want her comfortable." His eyes bore into hers, even though he spoke to Alejandro. "We can't have our girl tired out before the main course."

With a final twist, Alejandro pulled the toy out and tossed it aside. His hand lovingly caressed the same bottom he'd so wickedly caressed moments before. "Are you ready, baby?" Shaken, all she could do was nod her head. "Then let me up, love."

She rose up and waited until Alejandro had arranged the pillows as Terrance had instructed. When he was finished he moved in front of the pillows, his cock as hard as stone. Instead of immediately doing as she was told, she took a minute to take in the moment. To savor what was, and what would soon be. Tonight, she would truly be theirs in every way possible. Nothing would be left undone, untried. She was giving herself to them fully, with no holds barred.

"Second thoughts, baby?" Alejandro asked, always the cautious one.

His question didn't even warrant a second to mull it over. "Not remotely."

"Good," Terrance responded. "I only have one question."

"What?"

"Where's the lube?"

His words broke the tension and she smiled.

"On the dresser," Alejandro answered, stroking his hand over her cheek.

"First I'm going to fuck this sweet ass of yours. Fill you with my cock while you suck Alejandro, but don't make him come. He needs to save his strength for your tight pussy."

Alejandro ran his thumb over her lips, parting them, and she sucked the questing digit into her mouth.

"That's good, baby, but I have something better for you."

She watched him take his cock in hand and guide it toward her lips. Opening wide she took him in, loving the feel of the thick stalk of flesh filling her mouth. He threaded his fingers through her hair, holding her head still as he began to thrust steadily into her mouth.

"Now open up, baby, and give me what I've been waiting for."



She tried not to flinch as Terrance eased two slick fingers past the tight ring of her anus. The plug had prepared her for the fullness but not for the way he thrust in and out of her tight hole. All of her apprehensions subsided, her embarrassment lay by the wayside. This felt too damn good to worry about anything other than being able to take his full, thick length. And she wanted to, just as much as she wanted Alejandro to sink balls deep inside her pussy. Two hard dicks for the price of one, life didn't get better than that.

She cried out her pleasure around Alejandro's cock as Terrance tormented her back entrance. Two fingers soon became three and his gentle thrusts became more demanding. "You should feel how tight she is."

"Oh, I plan to." Alejandro's words were heavy with lust. "Tonight's your turn, but tomorrow, my friend, tomorrow is a different thing altogether."

"Yes, it is." Terrance removed his fingers. The probing digits were quickly replaced by the head of his latex-covered cock. The condom seemed twice as slick as the fingers, which had only moments before been inside her. Then again, knowing how thick he was, it was probably a good thing.

"Relax, Nichelle." Alejandro's voice was soft and soothing. "Let him in, baby."

Terrance's fingers dug into her hips as he slowly pressed forward. There were a few seconds of intense sensation as the crown of his cock pushed past her barriers. Her muscles stretched to accept his thick shaft. Caught between pleasure and pain, she held herself still, letting him do all the work.

She groaned as Terrance began to slowly fuck her ass. With each thrust he would pull out until just the head was enclosed before pushing back into her. Each stroke forced his balls to slam against her, pushing her mouth further onto Alejandro's cock. The constant back and forth was beginning to drive her crazy because there wasn't enough friction on her clit to allow her to come. Instead, she was slowly being driven insane.

"T, man, we gotta stop soon. She's got a wicked little tongue."

The slap on her ass was unexpected. “Are you being a bad girl, ’Chelle? I told you not to let him come.”

With her mouth full of Alejandro’s cock she wasn’t able to answer, but she didn’t figure Terrance was really expecting one. Moving back slowly, he pulled his cock free of her ass just as Alejandro stepped back, leaving her mouth free as well. She moaned in disappointment at the emptiness she felt.

As if he could read her mind, Alejandro caressed her face lovingly. “Don’t worry, baby, soon you’ll be more than filled.”

“Let’s switch things up here. Why don’t you lie down?”

Alejandro grabbed a condom from the bedside table and quickly sheathed himself before tossing the pillows aside. He lay across the bed while Terrance moved Nichelle out of the way. Leaning down, Terrance whispered into her ear, “Now I want you to ride him, ’Chelle.”

Without a word of complaint she straddled Alejandro’s hips. She reached between them and grasped his erection, placing it at the entrance of her pussy. Ever so slowly she let herself sink onto his cock until she was fully seated.

Alejandro’s eyes were barely slits as she sat atop him. “Come down here, baby. I want to taste those tits.”

Leaning over him with her hands braced on either side of his head she let her breasts drag over his lips. Behind her she could feel Terrance parting her buttocks and his cock poised at her entrance.

Alejandro’s tongue snaking over her nipples diverted her attention for a moment and Terrance took advantage of her distraction, pressing forward.

“Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.”

Nichelle’s fingers dug into the sheets as her body opened to his invasion. He pushed in slowly, never wavering, inch by delectable inch. The fullness and burning were

overpowering, and she wondered if she was going to be able to take them both. Just when she was prepared to call a halt, her body began to adjust to the two cocks filling her.

“How do you feel, 'Chelle?” Alejandro could see her face and she wondered how bad she must have looked for him to seem so worried.

Leaning down, she brushed her lips over his, teasing them both. Terrance's cock sank impossibly deeper at her movement, but her body had finally adjusted. “I'm good. But I need you guys to move. My clit is on fire and I feel like I'm going to spontaneously combust.”

“You heard the lady, she wants us to move.”

Terrance pulled back slowly as Alejandro pushed his hips up and together they finally set a motion. While one pushed forward, the other withdrew. Nichelle lay between the two of them, letting them manipulate her body, enjoying all the sensations bombarding her. She knew she wouldn't last long now that her clit was getting the attention it so desperately needed.

Before she realized it they began to change their rhythm, with them both thrusting into her at the same time. Terrance's fingers dug into her hips as he slammed into her ass; Alejandro's head was thrown back and his neck taut as he thrust into her pussy.

“I'm going to come,” Terrance shouted, pushing hard one last time and pressing his cock into her depths. He leaned over and bit her shoulder, the delicate area just where it curved into her neck. The sensation of pain along with the two cocks inside her pushed Nichelle over the edge as well. Alejandro followed just a few seconds later, grasping her hips and slamming her onto him as he came.

Terrance slowly withdrew from her ass and Alejandro rolled her over onto her side and pulled himself free as well. Nichelle felt sore in so many places she didn't think she could move. She could hear the two men moving around the room. Suddenly she was scooped off the bed and opened her eyes to see Terrance carrying her into the bathroom. Alejandro was sitting on the edge of the tub, running her a bath, but stood when they came into the room.

“I added some bath salt that will soothe you, baby.”

Still held in Terrance’s arms she leaned over and kissed him. “Thank you for taking such good care of me.”

“I’d do anything for you, Nichelle.”

As Terrance lowered her into the tub, she watched Alejandro quietly leave the room. She was going to hold him to his promise.

Terrance watched Nichelle stroll around the kitchen, naked as the day she was born, with a sense of pride. Not only was he lucky enough to be involved with one of the sexiest women in the world, he was twice as blessed because she was kinky.

Kinky and sexy. There weren’t any words in the English language that ended in “y” that he liked more...well, maybe with the exception of freaky.

With a contented sigh, he picked up his steaming cup of coffee and inhaled the chicory scent. Just as he tilted it up to take a sip, he spotted Alejandro walking into the kitchen and raised the cup in a salute to his friend. “Morning.”

“Morning.” Instead of joining him at the table, Alejandro walked over to Nichelle, who was in the process of making toast, and turned her around.

“Wha --” Before she could utter a word of protest he covered her mouth with his.

*Now this is what I call a good morning.* Content with the world around him, Terrance reached for his paper and opened it. Cup in hand, he scanned the front page leisurely. Today was his day off. He had absolutely nothing better to do all day than to hang out around his house and fuck their girl.

Unfortunately, though, Nichelle had to go in for an afternoon shift, but they had several hours to wear her out before she had to leave.

“Hmm...”

A low, guttural moan garnered his attention. It was a sound he knew oh so well. Eyebrow cocked, he glanced over the top of the paper and smiled. Apparently he and Alejandro were of like minds when it came to today's activities.

"Can't that shit wait? She was in the middle of making me breakfast."

"No. It can't." Alejandro pulled away from her and reached into his pocket and retrieved a condom. After slapping it down on the counter he pushed his sweatpants down to the floor.

Terrance glanced over at his friend's bulging erection and snorted. "I guess not."

Alejandro stepped forward once more and spun her around until she was facing away from him. He pulled her tightly to him and ran his hand down from her luscious, full breasts, to her taut stomach and to her mound, where it dipped inside. Her knees buckled but Alejandro held her to him tightly as he fingered her.

"I'll...finish in a minute..." Nichelle whimpered. "Or ten."

"The things I put up with." He sighed dramatically.

"You're so kind," Alejandro replied dryly.

"I know." Casually, he folded the paper and set it down. Moving his chair away from the table, he turned to face the two of them head on. This was a show he surely didn't want to miss.

And man, was he glad he did. The sweet, heady scent of her arousal permeated the air as she came, sending his cock from a semi to a stiffy in two seconds flat.

Her body, trembling from her release, held him spellbound. She was never as lovely as she was when she was caught in the rapture of her climax.

Alejandro picked up the condom from the counter and sheathed his cock. "Lean forward."

Nichelle didn't even hesitate. She bent forward, displaying her luscious charms to their hungry gaze.

Breakfast be damned. Terrance watched with growing arousal as Alejandro slid his cock deep inside her.

She gripped the edge of the sink and pressed her hips back as if begging for more. “Hmm...yes...fuck...”

Her cries of passion had his balls tightening. Terrance unbuttoned and unzipped his pants, freeing his aching cock into his waiting hand. Stroking himself, he yearned for his turn. He could barely wait until it was him sinking inside her wet, tight pussy. No matter how many times they took her, it still fit his cock like a glove. She was so hot. So tight. He could fuck her all day and never grow tired.

Maybe this time he wouldn't fuck her. Instead he'd fill her mouth with his cock. Watch as her full lips surrounded his thick shaft as he fucked her face.

On second thought, why the hell was he waiting? Nichelle had proven on more than one occasion she enjoyed it when they double-teamed her.

Rising from his chair, Terrance dropped his pants to the ground, intent on heading toward the enraptured duo, but before he could take a single step, the phone rang.

“Fuck,” he muttered as he glanced from the cordless phone lying on the table to Alejandro and Nichelle. He could ignore it, but it went against everything inside him to do so.

Although he knew it was ridiculous he pulled up his pants before reaching for the phone. He knew no one would know if he was standing there butt naked or wearing a parka. Leaving his pants unzipped, they rode low on his hips as he quickly walked away from the kitchen. There was no need to let whoever was on the other end of the phone know there was fucking going on just a few feet away.

“What?”

“You always were a surly bastard.” The gravelly voice of his ex-captain and Alejandro's boss, took him by surprise.

“Hey Cap, why are you calling here so damn early?” Terrance had a sinking feeling he knew exactly what the man wanted.

“I’m looking for that damn rogue ex-partner of yours. We need to discuss some shit.”

“Uh, he’s not available right now. What’s up?”

“I want his ass back in Chicago; that’s what’s up. I’m done being mad and we need his help, bad. Although if you repeat that I’ll deny it.”

Damn it, just what he figured. As soon as he and Nichelle had convinced Alejandro to stay and see how things worked out between the three of them, this had to happen. Why couldn’t the captain have called to say he was being suspended indefinitely? Terrance was in the process of trying to work out a job offer to help convince Alejandro to stay.

“Okay, I’ll let him know to call you.” He quickly ended the call and turned back toward the kitchen to find Alejandro standing in the doorway.

“Who was that?”

The other man must have heard the end of his conversation, so there was no way he could lie and say the call wasn’t for him. “Captain wants you to give him a call. I didn’t want to interrupt you, so I told him you were unavailable.”

Alejandro nodded. “Thanks, man, I appreciate it. Probably wants to tell me to come clean out my locker.”

Terrance knew he could say nothing, but eventually it would all come out anyway. “No, actually he wants you back in Chicago. It sounded like the sooner the better.”

“You’re kidding me.”

“I wish I was.”

“Why? I’d thought you’d be happy I was returning to duty and you could start fucking your girlfriend all by yourself again.”

“You just don’t get it, do you, man? We want you here, Nichelle and I both. I was trying to work out a job. And even if you won’t admit it, we all know she’s falling for you.”

For such a smart man, his friend was staring at him as if shell-shocked. “No way, man, she loves you.”

“Of course she loves me. But that doesn’t mean she can’t love you too. I just can’t believe you’re willing to give up on something like that.”

“Look, man, it was fun while it lasted, but as much as you both try to sell it, I’m not buying. Something like this doesn’t last forever. It’s an anomaly. You just have to enjoy it while you can. It’s time for me to return to the real world now.”

The soft feminine gasp had them both finally noticing Nichelle standing there naked, ready to call them to breakfast. Terrance could see her eyes were wide and the hurtful words said by Alejandro had been overheard.

“What’s going on?”

Terrance crossed his arms over his chest. It was time for his friend to face the wrath of the woman scorned.



## Chapter Fourteen

“You make it hard as hell for a fella to say goodbye to you.”

Nichelle closed her eyes and took in a deep, calming breath. She was going to need it. Alejandro was leaving town and the asshole actually expected her to be okay with it. He was out of his mind if he thought she was just going to be hunky dory with him leaving her.

With her resolve and shield in place, she opened her eyes and glanced up from the paperwork she'd been going over to stare into the eyes of the man who was breaking her heart.

It had been three days since she had last seen him. Three long days filled with unreturned messages and hurt feelings. She'd known from the minute he received his phone call he was going to go back, she just didn't understand why.

Instead of arguing when he told her his news, she'd simply dressed and gone home. For the first time in a long time she called in sick to work. Worried, Samantha had offered to take her to the doctor but as far as Nichelle knew, there wasn't a medical cure for heartbreak.

During those three days she'd seen Terrance but had refused to see Alejandro. She wasn't going to give him a goodbye fuck and she refused to beg him to stay. That wasn't her style. Neither was it in her to fight a losing battle. He wanted to leave. Fine. Good riddance.

“You came to the diner to say goodbye?”

“It seemed poetic.”

“Poetic?”

“Yes, it was the first place we met.”

“Would you like me to bronze the booth in honor of the meeting?”

Her sarcasm brought a sad smile to his face. “So this is the Nichelle I’ve been hearing about. I was wondering if I was ever going to meet her.”

“You’ve said your goodbye. Feel free to leave.” She wasn’t going to cave. She had to keep her facade up or he’d know how much he’d hurt her.

“It’s time for me to go, but I can’t leave with you mad at me.”

“I don’t care enough to be mad.”

“Liar,” he said softly.

“Coward.” The second the word slipped out she was immediately upset with herself. Why the hell couldn’t he just slink out of town and leave her to her misery? “Forget I said that. Look, Alejandro, you want to go? Go. No one is stopping you.”

“Except you.”

“How the hell am I doing that?”

Instead of answering her question though, he fired off one of his own. “Why haven’t you returned any of my calls?”

“Because I didn’t want to.”

“Why did you refuse to see me?”

“Because I didn’t want to.” Upset, she rose from her chair and crossed the room to the door. “And I don’t want to see you now. Terrance and I got along just fine without you before you showed up and we’ll get along just fine without you once you’re gone.”

“He’s going to ask you to marry him.”

Alejandro's words spun her around to face him as nothing else could. Terrance wanted to marry her? "He is?"

"Yes. Maybe not today or next week, but soon. I know him. He's in love with you and as much as I lo --" Alejandro hesitated for a moment, as if he'd gone too far. "As much as I care for the both of you, I can't just sit back and watch the two of you marry."

"Why?"

"Because our arrangement can't last forever. He's going to grow tired of sharing you one day. I can't just put my life on hold until that day arrives. It would be foolish."

"No, what's foolish is me thinking we were in a relationship while you were thinking it was an arrangement." She shook her head in disgust. "This wasn't just a dirty fantasy I was trying to fulfill. I wanted you to be a part of me forever. I told my family about us. I was willing to alter my world to include you and you're not even prepared to try. To try. You're damned skippy it's time for you to go. Long past."

Tears welled in her eyes but she refused to let them fall. He wasn't worthy of them. Opening the door, she stormed from her office and into the kitchen, needing to put as much distance between the two of them as she could. She was just barely into the restaurant part of the diner before he caught up with her.

Alejandro grabbed her arm and spun her around, his eyes alive with anger. "You are so damned stubborn."

"And your point is what?" She yanked her arm from his grasp.

"I can't leave like this. Leave with you hating me."

"You don't have a choice."

"That's right, goddamn it. I don't. I can't stay here and fall even deeper in love with you than I already am, just to chance losing you later. I have to get out now, while I can still walk away."

His words did more damage than they did good. "You don't love me."

“The hell I don’t.”

“You don’t walk away from love.”

“Hey.” Samantha hurried over to the two of them, her face filled with worry. For the first time Nichelle took in their surroundings. The diner wasn’t packed but there were still seats filled with voyeuristic customers who were getting their money’s worth today for sure. She cursed silently, angry with herself for allowing him to make a scene.

“What’s going on here?” Samantha demanded, aligning herself with her sister. She didn’t have a clue what was taking place, but her pose spoke volumes on how she automatically took Nichelle’s side.

“Nothing’s going on here.” Nichelle looked at Alejandro once last time, committing his face to memory, then turned her back on him. “Not anymore.”

She stalked back to her office, intent on locking the door and wallowing in her despair for awhile. She’d tried to do the brave face thing and she was still miserable. Alejandro had said his good-byes and so had she. If he loved her as he claimed, he was a bastard for leaving without fighting for her. He didn’t deserve her.

Reaching her office, she took hold of the door, ready to slam it shut. Unfortunately, Samantha had followed her back to the office and stopped her attempt at relieving her frustration with a hand on the wooden panel. She loved her sister dearly, especially after she stood up for her without question, but she didn’t think she was up for a big rehash of today’s events.

“Sammy, can we not do this?”

“I’m sorry, ’Chelle, but we need to talk.”

Nichelle walked around the desk, collapsing in the chair and waved her hand regally, signaling that Samantha join her.

“Okay, what do we need to talk about?”

Samantha stared at her bug-eyed for a moment. “Oh hell, I don’t know, maybe the soap opera performed live in the diner two minutes ago.”

“I apologize. That was completely unprofessional, but I can guarantee it will never happen again. Alejandro’s leaving town.”

“So I heard. I also heard he’s in love with you.”

Nichelle laughed bitterly. “Lucky me. He’s so fucking in love with me he’s running away to another state.”

“At least you still have Terrance. You do still have Terrance?” Samantha looked worried for a moment, as if maybe she’d put her foot in her mouth.

“Yes, I still have Terrance. In fact, Alejandro said Terrance is planning to ask me to marry him. It was his big excuse why he was leaving.”

“It makes sense.”

Nichelle sat up suddenly in her chair. “How can you say that?”

“Okay, how would you feel if Alejandro told you he was planning to marry someone else, but you could hang around and he’d fuck you?”

Nichelle’s indignation immediately deflated. “You don’t understand. I had fallen in love with Alejandro as much as I had with Terrance. I loved them both and they loved me. It wasn’t as if Alejandro was an afterthought.”

“Then maybe you need to prove that to him instead of ignoring his every overture. The man was desperate to talk to you, ’Chelle. He admitted he loves you. He needs to know he’s not the third wheel, but an integral part of your triad or whatever it is you three call it.”

Nichelle cocked her eyebrow questioningly. “Triad? Who are you with the fancy lingo?”

Samantha laughed. “After your talk to Cory and me the other day I did some research. There are more relationships like yours than I ever realized. I want to be supportive, ’Chelle,

but if you let Alejandro go without a fight, you're not the sister I know. Where's the boss, the take-no-prisoners, know-it-all girl we all know and annoy?"

"You've been waiting a long time for this talk, haven't you?"

"I didn't necessarily think it would be a talk involving two men, but yeah, I've been dreaming of this day since the little relationship-saving speech you gave me about Steven. I'd also like to point out Alejandro isn't black. So technically you're part of the Technicolor rainbow like Cory and I. Welcome to the club."

"He's Mexican. That's like a light-skinned, bilingual black man."

"Whatever." Samantha waited for a second then plopped her hands on her hips. "Come on, girl. Don't you have a man to go knock some sense into?"

"Can't you hear the *Rocky* theme song playing?" Nichelle joked.

\* \* \* \* \*

What the hell was he doing? Alejandro stared out his windshield at the "Glad you came to River Bend" sign wondering, and not for the first time, if he was making the right decision. He had wanted to say goodbye to Nichelle, needed that closure, but their meeting hadn't gone well. Instead he'd blurted out his love for her and she'd walked away from him feeling hurt and betrayed.

He had hoped his leaving would in some way salvage his friendship with Terrance, but even that was doubtful. The other man was pissed he had hurt Nichelle and continued to insist he was making a mistake. And sitting here in his car at the edge of town he was beginning to believe Terrance and Nichelle just might be right.

But at the same time, he still wondered if he was right. If...no, *when* Terrance married Nichelle he would officially become the interloper he'd always insisted he was.

*He insisted.* Alejandro thought long and hard on those two words. *He insisted.*

All this time it had been him who'd erected walls and built barriers and no one else. The longer he thought on the situation the longer he felt like an idiot.

If he had no problems sharing Nichelle with Terrance, why did he keep insisting Terrance did or would later on down the line? He didn't trust his former partner, but more importantly he didn't trust himself. He saw only the negative possibilities, not the wonderful ones.

Looking down the road he debated his choices. He could start the car and drive out of River Bend to a job he didn't want, a partner he didn't like or trust, and an empty bed and broken heart. Or, he could turn around and head back to his best friend, the woman he loved, and the life he had only dreamed of living.

Life had no guarantees. It was true things could go the way he feared they would with Nichelle and Terrance, leaving him with a broken heart. But if he left, his heart would break anyway.

Heartbreak now or *maybe* heartbreak later, even a blind man could see the obvious choice.

The flashing red lights startled him out of his silent reverie. Confused, he looked in his rearview mirror at the officers pulling up behind him. What the hell was this all about? He wondered if some concerned citizen had called in about the man sitting on the side of the road. When the car parked behind his, his question was answered. Terrance was behind the wheel and Nichelle was riding shotgun.

Amused, Alejandro watched through his rearview mirror as Nichelle, still wearing her work clothes, stepped from the car and walked to the driver's side of his car. He waited until she was standing next to the car before he rolled down the window and peered up at her.

"What's the problem, officer?"

"You mean besides your stupidity?"

Damn, he loved this woman. "Yes ma'am, besides that."

A brief smile flashed across her lips before she slid back into character.

Hmm...Nichelle playing bad cop, he could get use to that.

“So you admit your behavior of late has been downright stupid?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Would you also agree you’ve broken several laws, such as ‘thou shalt not break thy girlfriend’s heart?’”

“That sounds more like a commandment to me.”

“Are you trying to be funny?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Good. Get out of the car.”

Alejandro waited until Nichelle stepped away from the car before he opened the door and stepped out. As soon as he closed the door, Nichelle was on him. She took his arm in her hand and pushed him around until his back was to her and he was facing the car. “What the hell?”

“Put your hands on the roof.”

“Why?”

“If I were you, sir, I’d do as she says. She has a bit of a temper.” Alejandro glanced over at Terrance. He was standing by the trunk of the car with a shitty ass grin on his face. At some point during Nichelle’s pseudo-interrogation, Terrance had joined them. The other man looked highly amused at Alejandro’s present circumstance.

*Asshole.*

Slowly lifting his hands, he placed them palms down on the roof of the car. “I know my rights.”

Nichelle pressed up against him and slid her hand down to his groin. “You have no rights. Welcome to Nichelleland.”



Her hand rubbed against his denim-covered cock, bringing him to life with her firm touch. “Seems like a friendly town to visit.”

“Not for you.”

“No?”

“You’re not visiting. You’re here to stay.”

Alejandro tried not to smile, but it was hard when his woman was blatantly fighting for him. Which was why he was going to throw caution to the wind and take the biggest chance ever. He had someone in his life who cared enough to track him down and bring his ass back home.

“But officer, I don’t have a job.”

Terrance spoke up. “I think I can help with that. We’ve got an opening on the force next month due to a couple of retirements. In fact, I bet we could get you started even earlier if you were interested.”

Hell, yes, he was interested. No more late-night drug deals and stupid partners getting him shot. He sent Terrance a grateful look, knowing his friend would get his appreciation without words. Especially since this job offer most likely didn’t come out of the blue, but was something T had to have been working on for a while.

Nichelle was pressed against his back and had unsnapped his jeans and slowly lowered his zipper. She slipped her hands inside and cupped him intimately as she spoke. “Now you have a job, any other complaints?”

Alejandro bit back a groan as her hands began to explore him. “I don’t want to complain, officer, but I don’t have anywhere to live either.”

“Not true. I know of a room just waiting for you,” Terrance pointed out.

“Sir, I think your complaints are just excuses.”

“You’re right, officer. I was prepared to leave, but I just couldn’t do it. I was ready to turn my car around and come back when you pulled up.”

Thinking he heard a sob behind him, he quickly turned the tables on her and broke her hold on him. He soon had her pressed against the car with her pelvis cradling his growing erection. Staring down into her face, he saw that although her eyes were filled with unshed tears, a smile lit up her face with an almost inner glow.

“You bastard, I thought I had lost you.” Punching him lightly in the shoulder she wrapped her arms around him, snuggling her face into his chest. The feel of her in his arms was so right he wondered how he’d ever thought he could leave her. Looking up, he watched his friend smile broadly and give him the high sign. The fact Terrance not only approved, but was part of Nichelle’s plan to find him only proved to him once and for all that his friend wanted him in their lives as well.

“Never, baby. I’m never leaving again, so you better be sure.”

“I’ve never been surer about anything in my life.”

“That’s good, because I love you, damn it. I know I said it at the diner, but I want you to understand what that means. I never thought I’d say those words to another woman. I didn’t think it was possible to fall for anyone so hard and so fast.”

“I love you, too.” Turning, she included Terrance in her declaration as well. “I love you both so much and I can’t believe how lucky I am to have you both in my life. I certainly was never expecting this, but I’m not going to turn down the opportunity to have two gorgeous hunks of men in my bed every night.”

The three of them laughed and Alejandro squeezed Nichelle tightly, shocked at how much he’d missed having her in his arms in just the last few days.

“I hate to break up this party, but we’re not exactly guaranteed privacy out here. Besides, I know of a nice big bed just waiting at home.”

“And you did promise to take my ass. Another promise I’m not letting you out of,” Nichelle reminded him.

“That’s definitely one promise I plan to fulfill tonight.” Just the thought of taking her anally while she sucked Terrance down her throat had him hard and throbbing.

“Hey, man, you better put that thing away before she decides it’s an invitation. She has no problem getting her jollies by the side of the road.”

Nichelle shot Terrance an evil glare while he quickly stuffed his cock back into his pants and gingerly zipped up. It was a close call, but he was willing to make the sacrifice now for the known payoff later night.

Terrance walked over, his hand extended. “Hey, man, glad to have you back.”

“Thanks.” When Alejandro would have shook his hand, Terrance grabbed him and pulled him into a hug, slapping his back heartily.

“And if you *ever* piss her off like that again, I’m going to kick your ass. She’s been a bitch to live with this week.”

“I’ve warned you before about talking about me as if I’m not here.” Nichelle softened her harsh words by wrapping her arms around Terrance and hugging him tightly to her.

“Sorry, ’Chelle. It won’t happen again.”

“As if I believe that.”

Alejandro felt a sense of contentment wash over him. He could see them all together in the future, just like this, arguing and loving and living their lives.

 THE END 

## **Liz Andrews**

I am an Ohio native who loves rooting for the home team. When I can manage to unlock myself from the ball and chain that connects me to the Internet I enjoy reading, going to the movies and hosting dinner parties for my friends. In the real world I have my MBA and work in the hospital business. However, I much prefer to escape into the world of books. I have admired and read various writers for many years and am happy to have finally joined the rank of author.

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## **Lena Matthews**

Lena Matthews spends her days dreaming about handsome heroes and her nights with her own personal hero. Married to her college sweetheart, she is the proud mother of an extremely smart toddler, three evil dogs, and a mess of ants that she can't seem to get rid of.

When not writing she can be found reading, watching movies, lifting up the cushions on the couch to look for batteries for the remote control and plotting different ways to bring Buffy back on the air.

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