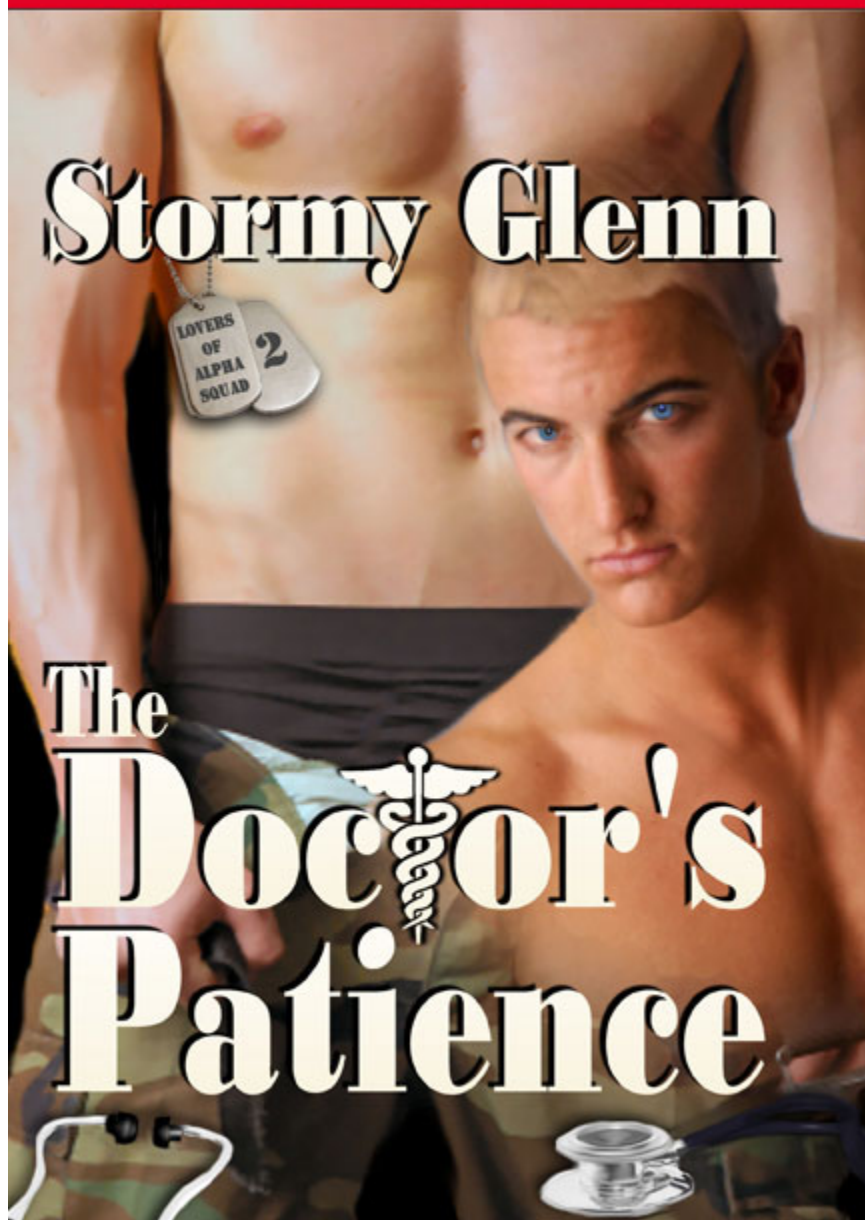


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Stormy Glenn



The  
Doctor's  
Patience



# THE DOCTOR'S PATIENCE

*Lovers of Alpha Squad 2*

**Stormy Glenn**

EROTIC ROMANCE



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**A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK**

IMPRINT: Erotic Romance

**THE DOCTOR'S PATIENCE**

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## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to all of those that believe in true love, hold out for it, and are rewarded with it. For those of you that are still waiting...don't give up. You just need to have patience.

# THE DOCTOR'S PATIENCE

*Lovers of Alpha Squad 2*

**Stormy Glenn**  
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## Chapter 1

Doctor Daniel Evans flipped through his notes as he transferred them into his computer. He tried to put them in some semblance of order as he typed but his heart wasn't in his work today.

He'd pretty much like to be doing anything except paperwork. He was a doctor. He liked working with people, not paper.

Hearing the infirmary door open, Doc looked up to see Cole Daniels walk in. "Hey, Cole. Is there a problem? Is Mari okay?" Doc asked quickly as he got to his feet.

Mari Johnson, the woman that was involved with both Cole and his twin brother, Bear, had been poisoned several days earlier. Doc had seen to her medical needs and had just released her to move from the infirmary to her own bedroom earlier in the day.

"No, Mari's fine," Cole replied. He crossed his arms over his chest and sat down on the edge of the desk. "I just wanted to talk to you for a minute."

"Sure, what's up?" Doc asked as he settled back down in his chair, leaning back to look up at the larger man. Cole Daniels was the embodiment of what every Navy Seal wanted to be...big, strong, and very masculine.

"I wanted to thank you for what you did for Mari. If you hadn't reacted so fast she wouldn't have made it."

Doc shook his head. "No, I was just in the right place at the right time, Cole. If you and the other guys hadn't given me the best equipped infirmary and lab around, nothing I could have done would have made a difference."

"Don't sell yourself short, Doc. You've saved every member of this squad more times than even I can remember. You're worth every penny we put into this place," Cole chuckled.

Doc could feel his face heat up at Cole's praise. Yes, he was a doctor, even a fairly competent one, and he had worked on each member of Cole's special ops team at one time or another. But he wasn't a magician.

Being the only doctor dedicated to the care of a very special group of soldiers did have its rewards, though. Besides being included as a colleague and friend, Doc had one of the best-equipped medical infirmaries he had ever worked in.

That it was built in the basement of the very house they all lived in together only added to those rewards. Doc was able to simply go out his bedroom door, down the hallway and a set of stairs, and he arrived at work.

"Besides," Cole continued, "we had to thank you somehow for saving us from those maniacs at the government labs. What better way than to give you a place to take care of us? With our genetic differences, it's not like we can go to a regular doctor."

"I guess," Doc replied as he thought about the genetic differences Cole was talking about. Five years ago, Cole and the other men in his military unit had all volunteered for a special government project to enhance their natural abilities, both physical and mental.

When they had become stronger and more aggressive due to their genetic alterations, the doctors in charge decided to eliminate them. Doc, who had worked with the men even then, had been appalled and helped them escape.

“No guessing about it, Doc. You put your life on the line to save us when our handlers wanted us eliminated or locked up for life. Every single member of this team would give their life for you and you know it.”

Doc could feel his face burn even brighter. “I didn’t do anything anyone else wouldn’t have done, Cole. What they wanted to do to you was wrong. I just spilled the beans on them. It wasn’t anything special.”

Doc looked up in surprise when Cole began to laugh. “Just spilled the beans? Doc, you sweet talked your way in to see the President of the United States and saved our asses. I’d say that was something special.”

“Look, Cole—” Doc began only to be interrupted when Cole stood up, holding his hand to stop him.

“Okay, Doc, continue to live in your fantasy world if you want. You’re a great doctor and we will always owe you for what you’ve done for us. I just wanted you to know how I felt.”

Doc nodded, flashing Cole a smile. “Noted.”

As Doc watched Cole walk out of the infirmary, he was reminded of the conversation that he had with Mari a few days prior. She had been lying in her hospital bed recovering from her poisoning.

He was confused by the attitudes of Bear, Cole, and Mari. None of them seemed to have issue with the fact that they were all in a sexual relationship together.

And now that Mari knew she was pregnant, she seemed to be pretty sure that neither Bear nor Cole would care who the father was, but would in fact just be thrilled that they had gotten Mari pregnant.

“Go ahead and ask, Doc. You know you want to,” Mari said.

Doc froze as a flush worked its way up his face. Busted! He passed an uncomfortable glance over to Mari. He hadn’t realized that he had shown his curiosity quite so much. He was a little embarrassed that he had been caught.



He walked over to Mari and sat in the chair Bear had vacated a few minutes earlier. He watched his clasped hands for several pensive moments before looking at Mari. "How do you do it? I mean, how do you share yourself with two men without them feeling, I don't know, jealous?"

"I don't know exactly. I guess it just happened. Not that I don't think it might not come up at some point, because I do. How could it not? But Bear and Cole both care about me. According to you, they love me. If they both want me, and they're willing to share, why shouldn't I keep them both?"

"Is that what you want? To have two men?"

"If you had asked me that a month ago, I would have said no. Oh, sure, women always fantasize about having two men, just like men fantasize about having two women."

Doc couldn't help but chuckle at Mari's words. If only she knew. Doc was gay. He had been gay for as long as he could remember. He had never once fantasized about being with two women. Two men, on the other hand...

"But after being with both Bear and Cole, and seeing their ability to share, to love me equally and not make me feel like I am betraying the other one when I have sex with the other, I couldn't imagine anything else," Mari continued.

Doc thought over her words. This subject concerned Doc a great deal. It had been on his mind a lot lately.

"Why do you ask, Doc? Have you fallen in love with someone that wants to be in this sort of relationship?"

Doc's head jerked up, his mouth dropping open in shock before snapping shut. "Not exactly."

She laid her hand on his and patted him. "Tell me, Doc. Sometimes it's better to talk about it."

Doc took several long breaths before talking, trying to gather his thoughts enough to explain to Mari the hell he lived in.

"I've recently become aware of...feelings for someone. Someone I have always been attracted to but until now, that's all it's been, an attraction. Over the last few weeks this attraction has grown into something more."

"Does he know?" Mari asked.

"How did you know it's a *he*? Am I that obvious?" Doc exclaimed as he stared at Mari in surprised.

Mari laughed. "Oh Doc, it would have to be someone you're with on a daily basis for strong feelings to develop. Other than your sister, I'm the only woman here, and I know you're not in love with me. So, by process of elimination, it has to be one of the guys."

Doc could feel his face flush again. He felt a little unnerved knowing that Mari could put things together so easily. Had anyone else figured it out?

Mari shook her head. "No, Doc, I don't think anyone else knows."

"Damn, woman, can you read minds?" he asked.

"No." She laughed again, patting his hands to reassure him. "But I can read panic when I see it. Now tell me about him."

"I hardly know where to start. I've known him for years and I've always been attracted to him. He's just so, I don't know, alpha male I guess. It can be sort of overwhelming sometimes."

"I know the feeling."

"I've spent a lot more time than normal around him recently and found myself looking forward to our time together, wanting our time together. I had hoped that he felt the same way, but I don't think he does."

"Why not?" Mari asked.

"He likes women," Doc replied sadly. "I mean, I've always known he was straight. That's why I never made a play for him. But since we've been working together on this project for Cole—I guess I just started to think maybe there was something there."

"Are you sure he's straight? I mean, could there be a possibility you're wrong?" Mari asked.

Doc shook his head. "No, I don't think so. I've seen him with women. And he definitely likes them."

"Could he be hiding it? A lot of people do, you know. Afraid to come out of the closet and all that," Mari reasoned.

"I don't know, I guess he could be. I mean, there have been casual touches and such. And occasionally I catch him looking at me with that *look*. You know what I mean, that look of someone who is attracted to someone else?"

"Yeah? Sounds promising so far. So what seems to be the problem?" Mari asked.

"What if he's not gay? What if he really is straight? I could ruin a good friendship if I cross that line, you know?"

"What if he's both?"

Doc gave Mari the first smile she had seen in several moments. "That's what I'm hoping. But that comes with its own set of problems. I just can't stop thinking about him."

"And that's why you want to know about sharing."

"Yeah, I guess. I think I would do almost anything if he felt for me what I felt for him." And Doc knew he would. He hadn't ever been this interested in someone before.

"Doc, sharing is great but it's not for everyone. You have to be really sure that's what you want before you do something like that."

"You know, that's exactly what Bear said to me," Doc said, chuckling.

"Well, it's the truth. If you are going to share someone you love with another person, you need to be damn sure you can do it or jealousy will eat you alive. So think about it long and hard before you do it. But don't worry. Things have a way of working themselves out."

"Yeah, I guess you're right."

"You know I am. Jealousy can destroy a relationship," Mari stated firmly.

So, could he share? Could he be in that sort of relationship? Doc wasn't sure. Could he be with a woman just to please the man he knew he loved? Was a relationship even a possibility?

"Hey, Doc, you got a minute?" Doc nearly jumped out of his skin when the object of his thoughts, and many late night fantasies, walked into his office interrupting his trip into the past.

"Sure, Sam, what can I do for you?" Doc asked, hoping his voice sounded normal. His heart rate sure wasn't. If he weren't a doctor he would swear he was having a heart attack.

"I cut myself and I wondered if you could take a look at it." Sam held out his hand, which he wrapped in a kitchen towel.

Doc stood up and unwrapped Sam's hand. The cut looked small, but deep. "Come on. That's gonna need a couple of stitches."

Sam followed Doc into the examination room Mari had been earlier that day and sat down on the exam table. He watched Doc gather supplies from several cabinets and place them on a small silver tray.

He liked watching the smaller man move around the room. Doc seemed so efficient at what he did. Sam had always been impressed by how intelligent Doc seemed. He was great to talk to and never made Sam feel like an idiot, unlike his father who was a prominent Boston businessman.

The sensations Sam felt when Doc held his hand immobile to further examine the cut unnerved him. The feel of Doc's fingers on his skin sent small tingles right to his groin.

He had been having these strange sensations for a while now and didn't know what to do about them. Sam had always thought that Doc was an attractive man but until recently, he hadn't realized how attractive. Or that attraction made Sam curious about more than Doc's bedside manner.

He had never seen Doc date anyone, even though he knew Doc was gay. Doc had been totally truthful about it when Sam had asked a few years ago.

It never bothered Sam until now. Ever since Sam had noticed Doc as more than a colleague, Sam had been more confused than he could remember. He didn't know what to do about the feelings Doc was inspiring in him.

Unlike Doc, Sam had always been with women and since sex with women had never been that mind-blowing, he hadn't done it that often, just when he needed to relieve some tension.

But the sensations he got when Doc touched him felt different than anything he had ever felt. Just thinking about Doc made him hard as a rock, which wasn't a good thing considering Doc was leaning right over the tent in his pants. Sam hoped to hell that Doc didn't notice.

Sam knew that if he even started to think about the late night fantasies he had been having about Doc there would be no way he could hide his reaction from the man, even if Doc was on the other side of the room.

Still, being this close to the man he dreamed about for the last few months was having quite the effect on Sam. It was all he could do not to lean over and bury his face in Doc's neck. Sam had never smelled anything like it in his life, all male, with a soft hint of musk. Sam could smell him all day long.

Doc wasn't doing much better. Just being this close to the man he had been thinking about for the last few months was heart wrenching. He had always been attracted to Sam, but never thought more about it until recently.

Cole had asked Sam to work with Doc on creating a special medical pack that each soldier in their unit could carry on them, something that they could use while out in the field until they could get back to the ranch compound.

While Doc might be their doctor, he never went on missions with them. He was a doctor, not a soldier. The least he could do was make sure his patients could make it back to him to be treated.

That agreement had started the hell that Doc now lived in. He spent several hours a week closed in the small infirmary with Sam, working with him, smelling him, wanting him.

However, it certainly would not be professional to attack his friend and colleague, his very *straight* colleague. Besides, with Sam standing a good six inches taller than his five foot eleven frame, and probably one hundred pounds heavier, Sam could wipe the floor with him.

As kinky as it seemed, the thought of Sam wrestling him down onto the floor made Doc's cock jump up and beg. Doc nearly groaned. He had always been attracted to big tall strong men and Sam had a massive self-confident presence that just screamed to Doc.

Not that he considered himself a sub or anything. He always liked to be on equal footing in a relationship. But something about the bigger man called to Doc on a very basic level.

"So, Doc," Sam began hesitantly. "Do you date?"

Doc nearly dropped the wad of gauze he had in his hands at Sam's question. His eyes flew to Sam's before lowering quickly back down to the hand he worked on.

"Yeah," Doc replied, surprised that Sam had asked. Why in the hell would Sam be interested in whether or not he dated? Unless...

"Why?" Doc asked. He was unable to contain a small kernel of hope growing in his heart. Maybe Sam had noticed the attraction between them.

"I just wondered. I've never seen you go out before."

Doc held his breath waiting for Sam to continue, but after a few moments of silence he finished wrapping Sam's hand and stepped back. "Okay, that should do it. Keep it dry for the next couple of days. I'll take out the stitches next week. And remember to keep it clean."

"Hey, Doc?" Sam said as he stood up from the exam table. "I hope I didn't offend you or anything. I'm just curious."

As casually as he could manage, Doc said, "You didn't. I do date on occasion but lately—"

“Lately?” Sam asked when Doc didn’t continue.

Stains of scarlet appeared on Doc’s cheeks as he finished speaking. “I’ve kind of gotten interested in someone lately and don’t want to mess it up by dating someone else.”

“You’re interested in someone?” Sam asked harshly, clearly astonished, “Anyone I know?”

The hostility in Sam’s voice startled Doc. “Why do you want to know? Why would you care?”

“I don’t!” The force of Sam’s seething reply took Doc off guard. He couldn’t figure out why Sam was so angry. Did Sam think that he was interested in someone he himself wanted?

“Sam—” Doc began.

“I don’t care who the hell you fuck.” Sam’s voice was quiet, yet held an undertone of cold contempt.

Doc stood there in shock at Sam’s outburst as he watched him storm from the room, slamming the door behind him. That had certainly gone well. Not!

\* \* \* \*

Sam slammed the infirmary door behind him, puzzled by his growing anger at Doc, but still angry that Doc was interested in someone enough to stop dating. Doc must have some pretty serious feelings towards this person if he stopped dating just so he wouldn’t mess up the relationship.

A tumble of chaotic thoughts and emotions assailed him. Why in the hell was he so concerned with who Doc dated? What did it matter to him who Doc dated, who he slept with?

It shouldn’t matter to him, but it did. Just the thought of Doc having sex with anyone else filled him with rage. Doc shouldn’t be intimate with anyone...except maybe him.

That thought confused Sam even more. He was pissed that Doc was interested in someone. Sam wanted that someone to be him.

Sam suddenly stopped walking almost as if he had hit a brick wall. He couldn't stand it anymore. He had to know who Doc was interested in. It would eat him up if he didn't find out.

Sam spun around and walked back to the infirmary. He tried not to examine his feelings too much. He had no business prying into Doc's private life but he couldn't seem to stop himself.

Opening the infirmary door he looked around for Doc. He wasn't in the waiting area or the exam room, but he could hear a noise coming from Doc's office. He walked towards the office, pausing in the doorway. Doc's back was to him as he messed with some papers on his desk.

Sam walked right into the office grabbed Doc by his arms and spun him around. He heard Doc's quick yelp of surprise as Sam pressed his mouth to his.

His tongue explored the recesses of his mouth. Doc's tormented groan was a heady invitation as he wrapped his arms more tightly around Doc and pressed his hard erection against Doc's body.

If his lips hadn't been lavishing Doc's, Sam would have grinned as Doc wrapped his arms around his neck and arched into his body. An electrical shock raced through his body when he felt Doc's erection press against his.

Without breaking their kiss Sam lifted Doc up and laid him back onto the desk. He leaned over Doc to press his body over his, their hard cocks rubbing together through their pants.

He groaned when Doc lifted his legs to wrap them around his waist bringing them even closer together. He moved faster against Doc, creating intense friction between them.

Sam's mouth gaped open suddenly as he felt himself begin to orgasm. It was perfect, electric, and sensual. He tossed his head back and growled low and deep and needy as he exploded in his pants. In the background he dimly heard Doc groan as he too found release in Sam's embrace.



Sam rested his head on Doc's shoulder for a brief moment before standing up and staring down at Doc's dazed expression. He never knew a man could look beautiful, but in that brief moment the satisfied expression on Doc's face was more beautiful than anything he had ever seen.

He wanted to put that expression on Doc's face again and again. And that scared the crap out of Sam because he wanted more. And he wasn't in a position to have more.

Sam stepped back when Doc reached up towards him. He watched Doc's hand fall slowly back to his lap. Doc's face showed his disappointment and bewilderment. Sam knew he confused Doc but his emotions were too chaotic to explain.

"Sam?" Doc whispered.

The husky sound of Doc's voice as he said his name had Sam nearly running for the door. He didn't want to examine his actions too closely right now. They were too raw, too jumbled. He had just received more pleasure releasing in his pants than he'd ever had with anyone he had ever been with.

As he raced out of the infirmary and up the stairs, Sam could hear Doc's tormented cry behind him. He knew he wasn't being fair to Doc, but he didn't know how to handle the feelings swamping him.

As Sam reached the top of the stairs, he pressed his hand over his face, the shock of the last few moments paralyzing him where he stood.

His face flushed with regret and anger at himself. The minute he had touched Doc, Sam had been a goner. That's why he had taken such pains to maintain a distance from him. He didn't know if he could fight his attraction to Doc.

Sam knew couldn't be having these feeling for Doc, not now. Not when he was about to move to Boston to live under his father's ruthless control, giving up everything good in his life. Including Doc.

## Chapter 2

Sam avoided Doc the next couple of weeks, going out of his way to elude him. He knew his behavior confused Doc. He was also confused.

He hadn't meant to go to Doc like he had but one thing had turned into another and he had found more ecstasy in those brief moments in Doc's arms than he had ever found with anyone else.

He did everything he could to avoid Doc, leaving the room when he entered, not answering the phone when Doc called. He even left the ranch compound on several occasions to escape Doc, volunteering for every mission that came up.

He had to prove to himself that he was immune to Doc. He couldn't afford to be attracted to him. His life was meant to go in another direction and he couldn't let fanciful notions of having Doc in his life distract him.

His father, a man that Sam despised, had agreed to never contact Sam's brother, Sky, again if Sam would move to Boston and marry the woman he chose.

Sam cringed at the thought of marrying a complete stranger but he would do anything to keep his brother safe from their father. Arthur McKenzie was a cruel and ruthless man that would do anything to get what he wanted. And what he wanted, was Sam's obedience.

By agreeing to his father's demands, Sam knew that he was giving up any hope of being happy, any hope of being with Doc. He knew that before he had even kissed Doc. But he would do anything to keep Sky out of their father's clutches.

That's what made it so hard when Doc showed no signs of relenting in his pursuit of Sam. He showed up everywhere that Sam was. He called Sam, cornered him whenever he could.

Sam started to become desperate trying to evade Doc. He tried to maintain his curtness with Doc whenever he cornered him but Doc seemed determined.

Sam knew he would have to say something to Doc before others became aware of the situation. He didn't want to hurt Doc's feelings but he could not, would not get into a relationship with him. It was impossible. And he knew he only had himself to blame. He should never have gone to Doc in the first place.

Sam waited until the early morning hours before he had to leave on his next mission. He was supposed to be gone for several days, maybe a couple of weeks. Hopefully the time away would give Doc and him some space to deal with their mutual attraction and find a way to end it.

Sam quietly closed Doc's bedroom door behind him, thankful for his stealth training. It wouldn't do for anyone to hear him sneaking into Doc's bedroom. He stood silently by the door waiting for his eyes to adjust to the darkness before moving towards the bed where the smaller man slept.

Stopping at the edge of the bed he took a moment to gaze at Doc's sleeping form. The edge of the sheet came up just over Doc's groin giving Sam a clear view of his muscular chest and tight stomach.

Sam nearly groaned when he realized that the only thing that separated him from Doc's naked body was the thin sheet. Knowing Doc slept in the nude would haunt him for quite some time.

He felt sweat break out over his skin when Doc's hand moved down under the sheet to grab his growing erection. He licked his dry lips several times as he watched Doc's hand move up and down his semi-hard cock. He wanted nothing more than to wrap his lips around Doc's cock and taste him.

Knowing he had to stop this before it got out of hand, he sat on the edge of the bed and reached out to shake Doc awake. “Doc,” he whispered. “Doc, wake up.” Sam watched as Doc’s eyes slowly opened and he blinked several times to bring them into focus.

“Sam,” he said in surprise, “What are you doing here?” He scooted up to sit against the headboard of his bed, pulling the sheet up with him to cover his nakedness.

He didn’t miss the dark look Sam gave him as he watched him move. That Sam was in his room elated Doc. Sam had been avoiding him for days. But now he had come to Doc.

The joy slowly left Doc as Sam began to speak. His voice sounded calm, with no lighting of his eyes, no smile of tenderness, not a hint of attraction.

“Doc, I have something to say to you and then I’ll leave. I’m sorry about what happened earlier. It should never have happened in the first place. I think I gave you the idea that I was open to a relationship with you and I’m not.”

Sam stood up and began to pace around the room as he tried to figure out how to explain this to Doc without sounding like a complete imbecile.

“I didn’t mean to give you the impression that I could have relationship with you. I’m sorry if that’s the way that you took it. What happened that day in your office, well, I can’t explain it. But it can never happen again. Ever!”

Sam stopped pacing long enough to look over at Doc’s unsmiling face. A sour feeling began to develop in the pit of his stomach as he watched the hope leave Doc’s deep green eyes before Doc lowered them to stare at his hands.

He hadn’t meant to hurt Doc but it was obvious that he had. And he only had himself to blame. He had been the one to go to Doc, not the other way around. “Look, Doc—”

“Daniel.”

“What?” Sam asked confused by the interruption.

"My name is Daniel, not Doc." Daniel sighed, clasped his hands together, and stared at them.

"Well, okay, Daniel then," Sam whispered, "Look, you have to stop following me. I can't do this with you. I can't be...like you."

"Like me?" Daniel spat out looking up at Sam. The angry retort hardened his features. "What the hell does that mean?"

Sam knew he wasn't explaining this right. He hadn't meant to make Daniel angry. He just needed to explain to him that they couldn't be together again and then leave.

He had nothing to offer Daniel. And he cared enough about Daniel to not take advantage of his friendship by stringing him along. "I didn't mean anything by it but this thing between us, it can never be. Don't you get that? I can't be with you."

"Is it someone else?" Daniel whispered, holding his breath.

"No, not like that. But that's beside the point. It just can't happen. None of this can happen," Sam replied with a wave of his hand.

"Fine," Daniel said quietly.

"That's it? That's all you have to say?" Sam asked, astonished that Daniel wasn't arguing with him. Daniel had been so persistent over the last several days.

Sam knew he should be relieved by Doc's words. He should just leave but a part of him felt confused and a little hurt that Daniel seemed to be giving up so easily. Maybe Doc hadn't been as serious as Sam had thought.

"What would you like me to say, Sam? You made yourself perfectly clear. You've said what you came here to say and I get it. You don't want me. I won't bother you again," Daniel said, dropping his lashes quickly to hide his hurt. "Now, please leave."

He waited for the sound of Sam leaving for what seemed like forever. He held back tears of disappointment until the door shut and he heard Sam walk away. Then he yielded to the anguish that shook him. He punched his pillow several times before throwing it across the room.

Sam couldn't have made it any clearer to him that he didn't want a relationship with him. He didn't want anything from him. From what Sam had said, he didn't even want friendship from him.

Well, fine, if that's what he wanted, that's what he would get. Daniel wasn't going to chase after someone that didn't want him. Daniel felt his misery like a physical pain as he realized that keeping his heart from Sam wasn't going to be so easy.

Daniel wiped the tears from his eyes as he tried to instill a measure of control in himself. He had to bury his emotions away and retain a firm control of himself if was going to be around Sam on a daily basis and not want him. But he could do it. If nothing else, that's what Sam wanted from him and that's what he could give him.

## Chapter 3

It had been a long two weeks for Daniel as he waited for Sam to come back from his latest mission. Life had seemed to go around him in slow motion as he dealt with the loss of his dream of having Sam in his life.

Daniel sat at his desk, staring off into space and thinking of Sam when the SAT phone to the helicopter beeped. The team was coming in with an injured soldier.

"This is Doc. Over," Daniel said as he picked up the phone.

"Hey, Doc, we're coming in warm. Over," Jake said.

Daniel breathed a sigh of relief. Someone was injured but not badly. "10-4, situation and injuries? Over," he asked.

"Sam got his hands cut on some glass. Bleeding has stopped but the cuts are deep. Blood pressure good, pulse normal. Over."

Daniel felt himself go cold all over at hearing that Sam was injured. He wanted to yell and shout, demand to know more. But he knew he had to put his feelings aside and be a doctor.

"Clear. I'll be ready. ETA? Over," he said through a voice thick with fear.

"Ten minutes or so before we land. I've administered a capsule of pain medication so he's a little doped up but other than he seems fine. Over."

"10-4, Jake. I'll be in the infirmary. Over."

"10-4, Doc. Over and out."

Daniel set the sat phone down and raced to the infirmary. He ran around the room frantically gathering medical supplies before he

realized that he had grabbed enough stuff to treat ten men. Taking several deep breaths he tried to calm himself down.

Finally, feeling much more in control of himself, he gathered what supplies he would truly need and put the rest back. He was setting up a suture kit when the infirmary doors banged open and Jake and Sky walked in carry a drugged Sam between them. Daniel gestured to the exam table and followed as they laid him down on it.

Seeing Sam's injuries, he immediately went into doctor mode and began treating him. It took time to clean and suture all the cuts and abrasions that Sam had on his hands and then wrap them up.

By the time Doc had completed his work, Sam looked like he wore white gauze mittens, both of his hands wrapped from fingertip to wrist.

Daniel gave him a shot of antibiotics and something to make him sleep for a little while before looking at Jake and Sky. "Any other injuries?" Daniel inquired.

"No, just these," Jake said as he gestured to Sam's hands.

"What happened?" Daniel asked trying to sound professional.

"Not real sure, Doc. We got separated during the extraction. He showed up at the LZ that way. Didn't say much after we gave him the pain capsule you designed for us. Just kind of stared off into space."

Sky and Jake both laughed at that. They had felt the effects of Daniel's little pain capsules themselves. It was a really strong pain medication that Daniel had developed just for them due to their enhanced genetics.

It didn't interfere with their increased physical or mental abilities but took the pain away. It also allowed them to return to normal relatively fast compared to other heavy-duty pain medications.

Each of the team members had been grateful to have the little capsules at least one time or another during the five years that they had been working with Daniel.



Daniel nodded and had Sky and Jake assist him in changing Sam into a green hospital shirt and string tie pants. Then he ushered Sky and Jake from the room. His patient needed some sleep.

Closing the door behind them he walked back into the infirmary and grabbed a blanket to cover Sam up. He looked tired.

Daniel couldn't keep himself from brushing back the silky black hair surrounding Sam's face. Even tired he was still the sexiest man Daniel had ever seen in his life.

Wind and sun had bronzed his face giving him a deep tan, his lips were firm and sensual, and the set of his jaw suggested a stubborn streak that Daniel knew from personal experience had been rightly earned.

Daniel looked down the rest of Sam's body, feeling his cock harden at the impressive sight before him. The rich outline of Sam's shoulders strained against the green fabric of his shirt. He looked very powerful, his chest broad and muscular. His legs were long and as firm as tree trunks.

Shaking his head he covered Sam with the blanket pulling it up to tuck under his chin. A moan coming from Sam stopped Daniel as he turned to leave the room. He quickly turned back to Sam, leaning over to hear him.

"Daniel," Sam whispered without opening his eyes.

Daniel had never heard his name on Sam's lips before. Sam has always called him Doc like the rest of the unit. It made him tingle all over. "Stay with me until I go to sleep?"

"Sam—" Daniel began.

"Please?" Sam asked his eyes opening to stare at Daniel, begging him not to say no.

Daniel watched Sam for several moments before he nodded his head and grabbed a chair to sit down next to Sam's bed.

"I missed you, Daniel," Sam whispered as he closed his eyes again.

Daniel had to swallow several times before he could reply. "I missed you too, Sam." He watched as Sam slowly fell into sleep, his features settling into peace as he did.

Daniel had thought he had buried his feelings concerning Sam away so that he wouldn't still want him so much. But with four little words Sam had brought them out all over again.

How did he deal with this? Sam wasn't interested in a relationship. He had made that quite clear two weeks ago. If that was true, though, why did he say what he did? It had to be the drugs.

Daniel waited until he knew that Sam had fallen asleep before leaving the room and going back to his office. Keeping his feelings from Sam was going to be harder than he thought. He would just have to come up with another game plan.

\* \* \* \*

Two days later Daniel walked into Sam's room, stopping dead in his tracks when he saw Sam's gauze covered hands awkwardly moving up and down under the covers.

He walked a little closer until Sam raised his embarrassed eyes to Doc's, stilling the clumsy movement of his hands. He knew instantly what Sam was doing.

"Need some help with that?" Daniel asked as he pulled the sheet back, baring Sam to the knees. He drew deep breath as he gazed at Sam's throbbing cock.

Without missing a beat, Daniel leaned over and took Sam's cock into his mouth, swirling his tongue over the slit on the top. He wrapped his lips around the head of Sam's cock and began to suck, his tongue tracing the veins, his cheeks hollowed.

"Oh damn, that feels good," Sam moaned as he tried to clutch Daniel's head in his hands.

Motivated by Sam's words, Daniel sucked harder, moving his head up and down. Sam couldn't hold back any longer. His pumped

his hips up towards Daniel's mouth, furiously. Sam moaned again as he felt his orgasm approach.

"Daniel, I'm gonna—" he cried.

Sam firing off in his mouth made Daniel rock hard. He sucked eagerly, drinking down Sam's cream, licking him until he was clean then stood up, pulling the sheet back over him.

"Uh, Daniel, I—" Sam began hesitantly.

Daniel closed his eyes briefly before placing his fingers against Sam's lips. "Don't," he whispered in an anguished voice, "Just—just don't."

Daniel would die if Sam said anything. He knew Sam didn't want him. But knowing Sam lay there as his injured hands tried to hold onto his hard cock was more than even Daniel could take.

He hadn't been able to help himself from offering his services, so to speak. But, knowing Sam didn't want him like that, he didn't know if he could stand for Sam to say anything to him.

Daniel turned and walked away, heading towards his office. Shutting the door behind him he sat down at his desk and buried his head in his hands, trying to stop the stream of tears leaking from his eyes.

He tried to wipe the tears from his eyes when he heard the door open and his sister, Jax, wheeled herself into the room.

"Daniel, you okay?" She asked as she put her hand on his shoulder.

"Yeah, I'm okay, honey."

"Then why are you crying?"

He gave a little chuckle as he wiped the last of the moisture from his eyes. "I've just had a hard day."

"Is it Sam?"

Daniel's turned to look at Jax, surprised that she had guessed so accurately what had upset him.

"You know about Sam?" Daniel asked.

“Oh honey, I’m your sister. You think I wouldn’t know when you gave your heart to someone?” Jax laughed.

Daniel shook his head as he looked down at his clenched hands. “I guess you would.”

“Tell me what’s going on. Did he say something to you?”

“No, it was nothing like that.”

“Then what?” Jax asked, the concern clear in her voice.

“I did something really stupid,” Daniel replied feeling like the world’s biggest dope. He should never have gone into Sam’s room. And he definitely never should have done what he did. He had crossed a line and he knew it. He wouldn’t be surprised if Sam decked him the next time he saw him.

“What happened?”

“Sam doesn’t want me like that,” Daniel began slowly trying to figure out best how to explain to Jax the weird situation he found himself in. He didn’t want Jax to think badly of Sam. After all, it wasn’t Sam’s fault that Daniel had sexual fantasies about him.

“Like?” Jax prompted.

Daniel blew out a breath. “Sam doesn’t want me in the same way I want him. I had thought that he might but...well, I sort of made a pass at him.” And then some. “Sam let me know that he doesn’t see me like that. I knew before I even did it how Sam felt but I did it anyway.”

“Oh,” she said, her voice full of meaning.

“Yeah, something like that,” Daniel said as he buried his head in his hands.

“Does Sam know how you feel about him?” Jax asked after a moment.

“Yeah, he knows,” Daniel whispered in despair.

“And it doesn’t matter to him?”

Daniel laughed as he lifted his head to look at his sister. “Jax, you can’t wish someone gay. You’re either gay or you’re not, and Sam is

*not* gay. He was quite polite, actually, when he let me know that there could never be anything between us. He even said he was sorry.”

A tear leaked from his eyes as he remembered Sam’s little conversation with him two weeks ago. It still hurt knowing that Sam didn’t want him. But as he told Jax, you couldn’t make someone into something they were not.

Jax patted Daniel on the shoulder. “Doesn’t make it any easier, does it? Knowing you care about someone and they don’t feel the same, that you can never actually have them? Sure, you can be friends and all, but it’s just not the same as having that person’s love. It still hurts.”

Daniel turned to look at Jax as her voice trailed off. He knew that her words were not just about him and Sam but her own broken heart. “Still having problems with Sky?”

He watched a soft flush fill Jax’s face. He knew of her feelings for Sky, Sam’s brother. When Jax needed someone to talk to, she talked to Daniel.

“Yeah, love sucks, doesn’t it?” Jax laughed, her voice sounding a little bitter.

Daniel smiled as he laid his hand over Jax’s. “Love doesn’t suck, honey. In fact it can truly be a wonderful thing. You remember how much Mom and Dad loved each other.”

“They couldn’t get enough of each other,” Jax murmured.

Daniel nodded. “That’s what I want, a love like theirs. And I’m not willing to settle for less. I guess it just won’t be with Sam.”

\* \* \* \*

Sam listened from his position beyond the office door. He had followed Daniel wanting to talk to him about what had happened only to stop when he heard him talking to Jax.

He listened to their conversation, unashamed that he was eavesdropping. A person could find out all sorts of things by listening to others speak. He had learned that during his Navy SEAL training.

However, he wasn't so sure that he liked what he heard. He had known that Daniel was attracted to him, just as he was attracted to Daniel. He didn't know that Daniel might have feelings for him. That hadn't even been a consideration.

Just because he couldn't be with Daniel didn't mean that he wanted to hurt him, though. Far from it, he didn't want Daniel to hurt at all. But he knew that they could never be together, no matter how much he might want it.

Sam turned away from the door determined to stand by his decision to stay away from Daniel. It was the best thing for both of them. Daniel needed to move on with his life and find someone that could love him the way he deserved to be loved.

Sam had to go home to Boston soon and get married. Just the thought of marrying the woman his father had chosen for him, a girl from the *right sort* of family made his skin crawl.

But he didn't have any other choice. If he did as his father demanded, then his brother would be free to pursue his own life without the heavy hand of his father interfering.

It was the deal he had made with his father, one he would follow through with even if it meant he couldn't have Daniel in his life. His brother deserved a chance at a life.

Sam walked back into his room and changed his clothes before shutting the door quietly behind him. He could still hear voices coming from Daniel's office as he walked quietly by.

He wanted more than anything to walk right in to that office, take Daniel in his arms, and kiss the pain right out of him. But he knew he couldn't do that. The quicker that he severed ties with Daniel, the better.

Sam slowly left the infirmary, the sadness in his heart weighing him down as he went. Jax was right. Love sucked.

## **Chapter 4**

Sam rubbed the bridge of his nose with two fingers, trying to get rid of the tension between his eyes. His head ached. He knew the beginning of a really spectacular migraine when he felt it.

Spending any amount of time with his father always did that to him. And even though it had only been two weeks, he felt like it had been forever.

He hated dealing with his father. Arthur McKenzie was overbearing, egotistical, and Sam knew from personal experience, completely off his rocker.

Sam and Sky had both experienced their father's special brand of control most of their lives. It had been the catalyst that had gotten him and Sky into the Navy SEAL, getting away from their father. He thought that would be the end of his father's control over them.

And that had seemed true, until Sam had received a summons from his father a couple of months ago. He had put it off as long as he could while he tried to figure a way out of this predicament.

After weeks of trying to find another answer and not coming up with one, Sam had given in. He had decided to meet with his father and discuss his demands.

Sam had flown back to Boston two weeks ago to meet with his father, finally agreeing to marry the woman his father had chosen for him and produce an heir for his father.

Even still, he knew he would never leave that child to suffer at the hands of his father, not the way he and Sky had suffered most of their childhood.

Arthur McKenzie wasn't above using physical force to get what he wanted. Because of his financial influence, he had several high ranking police officials in his pocket that looked the other way when he did.

Sam knew that from personal experience. He had gone to the police when he was fifteen and tried to file an assault charge against his father. All it had gained him was a fat lip, some bruised ribs, and the knowledge that his father was evil.

He certainly wasn't going to leave a defenseless child to whatever woman his father had chosen. He hadn't met her yet, and wouldn't until they got married. But Sam was sure she was a doozy.

Now, sitting in the truck with Sky on the way to the ranch they owned with the other men in their unit, Sam wished that could have his freedom too. But, if it meant Sky could have a life away from their father, so be it.

He had two days before he had to be back in Boston for his wedding. Two days to pack his belongings and let Cole know he wasn't coming back. He'd never be back to the ranch.

Just thinking of Sky having a life beyond their father's influence brought back tidbits of the conversation between Daniel and Jax. If he remembered correctly, Jax had feelings for Sky. He wondered if there were anything there, a possibility of them finding happiness together.

"Hey Sky, you got any prospects?" he asked as casually as he could.

"Prospects?" Sky asked in confusion.

"Yeah, you know, are you dating anyone? Interested in anyone? You know, prospects."

"Oh, those kinds of prospects." Sky laughed. "No." He shook his head. "Not really. Why do you ask?"

"Just wondered." He thought for several moments then continued. "Why not? You're a good-looking guy. You should have women hanging around you in droves. How come you don't? In fact, I can't remember the last time I saw you go on a date. Why is that?"



“No reason really. I was interested in someone for awhile but she didn’t return my feelings so I guess I kind of gave up. Just need some time to myself before getting back into the dating thing.”

“Hmm...If you don’t mind my asking, who was it? And why wouldn’t she want you? Did you do something to piss her off?” Sam inquired.

“Just someone I know. And I don’t really think it’s that she didn’t want me but maybe she’s afraid. Our lives are very different and I think it’s more than she could handle.”

“Yeah, it’s not easy getting mixed up in our crap. That’s a lot for anyone to take, let alone a woman.” He thought another moment before jumping ahead with the little thoughts flickering in his head. “What do you think about Jax?”

“Jax?” Sky practically yelled as he swerved the vehicle nearly off the road. He quickly got the truck back under control and turned to glance at Sam. “What about Jax?”

Sam knew he had hit a nerve. He just wasn’t quite certain which nerve he had hit. “She’s pretty. What do you think about her?”

“Why? Are you thinking of dating her?” Sky growled.

Sam started laughing. If only Sky knew. “Ah, no. But you might want to think about it though. I have it on pretty good authority that she has a thing for you.”

“You think?”

Sam tried to hide his smile at the eager expression on Sky’s face. Yep, there was a whole lot more there than Sky let on. He wondered if she was the woman that Sky had been talking about earlier.

“Yeah, I think. And don’t worry, I have no intentions towards Jax. She’s *so* not my type.” Sam chuckled as he thought how much Jax was not his type. She wasn’t Daniel.

Sky seemed a little incensed at that comment. “Oh, and why isn’t she your type? Is there something wrong with her? Just because she’s in a wheelchair doesn’t mean there’s anything wrong with her.”

Sam laughed again at how Sky defended Jax. Seems he had a thing for her too. "Whoa, cowboy, Jax being in a wheelchair has nothing to do with it. She just not my type."

"So, what is your type?" Sky asked.

"Sexy, smart, facial hair." Sam pictured Daniel in his mind as he replied.

"You like women with facial hair?" Sky asked, astonished.

"No." Sam laughed. "I like men with facial hair."

Sky nearly drove off the road again as he stared at Sam, his jaw dropping in shock. "You're gay?"

Sam looked over at Sky, his face grave as he waited for Sky's reaction. Sky didn't disappoint him.

"You're gay? And you never told me? How could you not tell me? I'm your brother, your twin at that. How could you not tell me?" Sky exclaimed.

"Sky, it wasn't something that I felt like talking about. I've only been with women in the past. Until recently, I thought I was only interested in women. Then something kind of happened and I realized that I might be interested in men too. I didn't know if it was a onetime thing or what."

"And now you know?" Sky asked.

"Yeah, I guess I do. But it doesn't matter. There are things I have to do in my life that make pursuing that hard to do." Sky didn't know about the deal he had made with his father. Sam hoped he never knew. It would eat Sky up inside knowing that Sam folded under his father's demands.

But he still had to know that Sky didn't hate him for being gay. "So, do you have a problem with my being gay? Is that going to be an issue for you?"

Sky reached down to pat his brother on the hand. "No, it is a surprise but whatever makes you happy makes me happy. I don't understand it, but hey, whatever trips your trigger," He laughed. "So, who do you have the hots for?" Sky asked.

"Doc," Sam answered before he could stop himself. He hadn't meant to say anything out loud, but Sky's question had taken him by surprise.

He quickly looked over at Sky to gauge his reaction. Sky started laughing. He laughed so hard that he had tears streaming down his face and he had to pull over to the side of the road to wipe his eyes. Sam didn't know whether to be insulted or laugh right along with Sky.

"Oh, Sam." Sky laughed as he wiped the last of the tears from his eyes. "We are such a sorry pair. We both have the hots for the Evans siblings, and we're both afraid to go after them. Man, for such strong alpha males, we are the world's biggest cowards. We suck!"

Sam started laughing as he thought about what Sky said, which just set Sky off again. It took several moments before either of them could contain their laughter enough to get back on the road to the ranch.

Neither of them said a word, just the occasional laugh as they each thought about their conversation. They were a sorry pair. They both had feelings for Daniel and Jax. Neither of them had the courage to go after what they wanted.

It might be the fear of rejection or the fear of the unknown. Whatever it was, Sam didn't want it to keep Sky from being happy. He had no hope for his own life.

"Sky, if you really care for Jax, you should go for it. I know she cares about you. Just give it a shot. What's the worst that could happen? She could tell you no. Hell, without approaching her the answer *is* no. If you go for it, at least then you might have a chance. And I'm pretty sure if you persisted, you might be surprised at the results."

"Yeah, maybe."

"No maybe about it. She cares for you. Just give it a shot. Okay?" Sam insisted.

"Yeah, okay," Sky answered.

“Promise me, Sky.” He wanted Sky to be happy. Besides, if Sky hooked up with Jax, Sam would be able to keep tabs on Daniel through him. It would give him some small element in Daniel’s life, even if only as a relative by marriage.

“Yeah, okay, I promise. Happy now?”

Sam nodded. In a little while he would see Daniel again for the first time since the incident in the exam room. It would also be the last time. He had to head back to Boston tomorrow. He had no idea how he was going to hold it all together until then.

\* \* \* \*

Daniel watched Sky and Sam pull into the driveway from his bedroom window. He knew he should be out there with everyone else to welcome them back. But he couldn’t do it. He didn’t want his first glimpse of Sam to be public. He didn’t know if he could keep the emotions he felt off his face.

So he watched from the window as Sam opened the door and pushed his tall frame from the truck. Daniel groaned when he saw how sexy Sam looked.

The wind blew his beautiful coal black hair lightly around his shoulders. The white short sleeved shirt he wore molded to his muscular frame. And his jeans looked so tight across his thick thighs they could have been painted on.

That was *so* not fair. How could he suppose to maintain any semblance of control when Sam looked good enough to eat? He already sported a hard-on just from watching Sam climb out of the truck. What would it be like when he heard that deep raspy voice of Sam’s? Maybe he should just stay in his room.

Sam was only going to be here overnight before moving to Boston tomorrow. Daniel felt his heart break when he remembered hearing that Sam planned to move to Boston. He had been listening to Sky

and Jax talking when he heard it. It had been all he could do to get to the bathroom before losing his lunch.

Sam must really hate him to be moving all the way to Boston to get away from him. Had he upset Sam so very much? Had wanting him been so very bad? Maybe the whole “gay” thing upset Sam? Some people just couldn’t handle it. Maybe it was Daniel.

Daniel felt so confused and upset that he had to take another antacid. His stomach was queasy and his chest felt tight. He knew he was starting to have an anxiety attack. He hadn’t had one in years, not since he had been sitting in the waiting room to see the president. That had been over five years ago.

Daniel let the curtains fall back into place, took off his clothes, and climbed into his bed. Maybe a nap would do him good.

\* \* \* \*

Sam watched Daniel through the window and then the curtains closed. He knew Daniel was avoiding him, not that he could blame him. First he had practically attacked Daniel, then he had sworn he couldn’t get involved. Daniel had to be as confused as Sam.

Tonight was his last night of freedom. Tomorrow he would be in Boston. He just wanted one night to have as his own. Did that seem like too much to ask? One night that he could dream about while in Boston married to some stranger.

He hadn’t known that he would want a night with Daniel when Sky had driven him home from the airport, but now he knew he did. Seeing Daniel watching him through the window had been more than he could stand.

He just hoped that Daniel didn’t turn him away. It would break his heart if he did but Sam would completely understand. He had gone out of his way to tell Daniel they had nothing together. Why would Daniel agree to be with him after that? Still, he had to try.

Sam sat with everyone that evening and had dinner. He watched to see if Daniel would join them but he didn't. Jax told him that Daniel was taking a nap. He had a headache she had stated, trying to explain his absence.

He waited as long as he could before he went to Daniel's room. He knocked softly but hearing no reply opened the door, shutting and locking it quietly behind him. He could see Daniel sleeping in the bed. Again, he seemed to be sleeping in the nude. Sam sure hoped so.

Sam sat on the side of the bed and looked down at the object of his desires. Daniel was a beautiful man, his collar length blond hair hugging his face. His facial bones were delicately carved for a man, but the shadow of his beard gave him a strong masculine look. No one looking at the sleeping man could ever see him as anything but male.

His mouth was full and begging to be kissed. Sam could no longer help himself. He leaned over and pressed his lips to Daniel's. He felt Daniel's response almost immediately as his lips softened and his tongue came out to touch Sam's. Daniel's tongue traced the soft fullness of Sam's lips. Sam moaned as he gave himself up to the passion of the kiss.

Sam's lips seared a path down Daniel's neck, his shoulders. "I want you, Daniel, just for one night. Please." Between each word, he planted kisses on his shoulders, neck, and face before he moved up to recapture Daniel's mouth, his kiss demanding this time.

When Sam pulled away a few moments later, Daniel looked up at him with wonder and shock warring on his face. Sam couldn't help grinning down at him.

"Sam? Wha—" Daniel's voice trailed away when Sam latched onto his bare nipple. "Oh god, Sam, what are you doing?" Daniel groaned.

The sound of Daniel's moan combined with the heady taste of his skin had Sam's cock nearly busting his zipper. He grabbed the bottom of his shirt and pulled it over his head, dropping it on the floor.

Standing beside the bed he quickly pushed his shoes from his feet and shucked his jeans, letting them fall to the floor as he climbed back up on the bed, pulling the covers off of Daniel.

Sam felt all the air in his lungs leave his chest when he gazed down at Daniel's naked body. "Damn that's sexy," he whispered in awe at the site Daniel's hard cock thrusting up from his shaved groin. *Daniel's so beautiful and for tonight, at least, he's mine.*

He reached out a trembling hand to gently caress the smooth skin before running his hand up the length of Daniel's cock. He squeezed him gently then ran his thumb over the tiny slit on the top. Daniel's hips arched off the bed at the contact.

"Sam, what are you doing here?" he moaned.

"I need you, Daniel, please," Sam whispered as he crawled over Daniel. He moaned when their cocks brushed against each other as he settled between Daniel's legs. "Just one night. No promises, no demands, just one night in your arms. Please, Daniel."

Daniel stared up at Sam, then dropped his eyes to Sam's mouth. Sam could tell he was wavering between telling to leave and kissing him by the way he licked his lips.

He was overjoyed when Daniel grabbed him by his hair and dragged him down possessing their lips together.

Daniel's moist firm mouth demanding a response from Sam, which he eagerly gave as he wrapped himself in Daniel's arms. Sam slowly gave himself up to the kiss. It was soft and gentle, at the same time furious.

Sam shivered as he felt Daniel's hands run down his body to grab his ass. God, it felt so good to have Daniel's hands on him. "More, baby, touch me more," Sam begged even as he caressed Daniel's naked body.

He began kissing and stroking Daniel's body. His hands and lips were everywhere. Daniel's finger's gripped Sam as he wrapped his lips around the head of Daniel's leaking cock. He began to suck, his tongue tracing the veins, his cheeks hollowing.

The pleasure felt so intense that Sam was nearly overwhelmed, especially when Daniel thrust his hips towards Sam and cried out.

"Oh damn, Sam, I'm gonna—" Daniel exclaimed out as he felt his orgasm shoot through him.

Sam moaned at the delicious taste of Daniel releasing into his mouth, spurt upon spurt. He moved over Daniel, kissing and flicking him with his tongue as he cleaned every last drop of cream off of him. Not bad for his first blow job.

"Here, you're going to need this."

Sam looked up to see Daniel holding out a bottle of lube. He popped the top and poured some out on his fingers before reaching down and pressing them against Daniel's sensitive skin. He looked up in surprise when Daniel's body jumped.

"Did that hurt?" he asked in concern.

"Hell no. Do it again, damn it!" Daniel ordered.

Sam grinned and looked back down to what he was doing. He pressed his finger against Daniel again, sinking it in slowly. He could hear Daniel's breathing suddenly increase when he started moving his finger around, before adding a second one.

By the time he inserted a third finger, they breathed heavily. Daniel because of what Sam was doing to him and Sam because of the soft whimpering noises Daniel made.

Sam couldn't take it anymore. Sitting up between Daniel's legs he smeared lube on both his cock and Daniel's ass, then placed Daniel's legs over his shoulders.

Sam pushed his hard cock slowly into Daniel past the first ring then more until he was buried up to his balls. He stayed still, waiting for Daniel to get comfortable.

After a couple of minutes Sam started to move, pulling out then pushing in. He moved his cock until he found Daniel's prostate with his long, smooth strokes.

"Oh fuck," Daniel moaned as he arched his back, squeezing Sam's arms with his thighs, "Oh fuck, again, do that again." Daniel arched



his back, squeezing Sam's arms with his thighs. Gripping Daniel's legs, Sam began to move faster and faster until he pounded into Daniel.

Sam pushed his cock farther inside of Daniel and held still as he groaned, "Come for me, baby." Daniel lost it and cum splashed all over Sam, both their bellies and the bed.

The mere thought of the pleasure he gave Daniel put Sam over the edge and he stiffened, yelling out Daniel's name, as he had the most powerful orgasm he could ever remember.

Sam leaned over and captured Daniel's lips with his. It was out of control, frenzied, urgent, and Sam groaned at the intensity of it, but then, reluctantly, he pulled away and flopped onto his back, his arm wrapped around Daniel.

After several minutes of silence Daniel pulled himself away from Sam and rolled to the side of the bed. Something told him that this was it. This would be the only time he would be with Sam. He could barely keep the tears from flowing down his face.

As he stood and headed for the bathroom he heard Sam get up behind him and start to dress. Daniel paused in front of the bathroom door and glanced one more time at Sam, memorizing his exquisite features.

"I love you." The words came out of Daniel's mouth before he could stop them. He felt his stomach clench at the sad look that Sam gave him. Sam didn't want his love. He had known that coming into this. He just couldn't seem to help himself. Why couldn't he keep his big mouth shut?

"Daniel, you know I can't do this. I have to go to Boston. I never lied to you, never made any promises. If I did anything to make you think otherwise—"

Daniel nodded his head as he turned to walk into the bathroom. "You didn't." He gave Sam one more long look. "You made it more than clear that you could never love me."

Daniel closed the bathroom door and leaned against it, the tears he had been holding back flowing freely down his cheeks.

"I'm sorry, Daniel," he heard Sam say through the door.

"So am I, Samuel," Daniel whispered back. His hand slowly ran down the wooden door separating them as if he could caress Sam in the same way.

Why couldn't Sam love him? Would it be so terrible? Was what they could have together so wrong? For the first time since he had admitted to himself that he loved Sam he began to wonder if it was worth it.

Why search for that one true love when it hurt so much? Going into town for a quick fuck with some nameless person didn't hold any appeal for Daniel. That left a life with no sex, no sharing with a loved one, and no happy endings. But it sure as hell beat the alternative.

Sam heard Daniel crying on the other side of the bathroom door. He knew he had caused of it. He wanted to open the door and hold Daniel, tell him how much he did love him, make his pain go away.

But he knew that it was easier this way. He had to go back to Boston. He had no choice. Too many people depended on him.

Sam quietly closed the bedroom door behind him and headed for his room. Grabbing his duffel bag he walked into the dining room. Spotting Cole at the table he asked him to drive him to the airport. He had no reason to stay. Daniel would hate him after this.

## **Chapter 5**

Daniel waited exactly two months before deciding to track Sam down in Boston. When he had seen the pain that Cole and Bear went through when their fiancée, Mari, went missing he determined that he never wanted to go through that.

It had been horrible for everyone but especially for Cole and Bear. There was no sign of Mari at all. She had simply walked out the door and disappeared.

Cole and Bear, along with every member of their unit, searched day and night for her, using whatever skills they had at their disposal. But they were no closer to finding her as when they had discovered her missing two months ago.

Daniel had added to Cole and Bear's burden when he had informed them that Mari was pregnant. He wanted them to be prepared in case they found her injured.

He had stayed at the ranch to help search for Mari until he couldn't stand being away from Sam another minute. He wanted Sam in his life, even if it meant he had to move to Boston to be with him.

Flying into Boston wasn't hard but getting into the estate where Sky said that Sam lived was nearly impossible. It took some fancy talking but he finally got in. He had been waiting in a study type room for nearly an hour when the door opened and Sam walked in.

"Daniel, what are you doing here? Is Sky okay?" Sam asked.

"Yes, Sky's fine." He took a deep breath and continued. "Sam, I had to come."

"Daniel, you need to leave. You can't be here," Sam quickly replied.

“Why did you leave, Sam? No goodbye, no note, nothing. You just left.” It was all Daniel could do not to reach over and grab Sam, pull him close for a kiss.

“I had to, Daniel, you know that. I told you I had to come back to Boston,” Sam explained.

“But why? We have something together, something good. Why would you give that up? Why would you give this up?” he asked as his mouth covered Sam’s hungrily.

His lips were hard and searching as his tongue explored the recesses of Sam’s mouth. It was slow, passionate, and filled with all of Daniel’s longing for Sam. Daniel caressed Sam’s jaw and neck with his hands, never breaking the kiss. It seemed to go on forever.

Sam suddenly pushed Daniel away, “No, Daniel, you’ve got to leave. I don’t want you here.”

Sam pulled the band off his hair and ran a trembling hand through the long black locks. This wasn’t good. Julia would be home any minute. And his father could show up at any time. Sam did not want his father to even know about Daniel, let alone meet him. That would not be good.

“You’re lying. I know you are. You have feelings for me. We have something together and I’m not willing to just give it up. I’ll move to Boston if this is where you need to be. I’ll do whatever you need me to do,” Daniel said as he stepped closer to Sam. “But I will not give you up. I love you, Sam.”

Sam’s heart thudded harder at Daniel’s words. He had never thought to hear them from Daniel again and he wanted them so much. But his joy at Daniel’s words died as he heard the front door open and Julia call out his name.

His eyes closed in a hope of containing his pain when the study door opened and Julia walked in. Opening them, he looked at the hopeful expression on Daniel’s face. Maybe it was better this way.

He didn't want to hurt Daniel but maybe this way there would be a clean break. If Daniel hated him enough, he would forget him and move on with his life.

"Darling, aren't you going to introduce us?" Julia asked as her perfectly manicured hand wrapped around Sam's arm.

Daniel stared at the statuesque woman, her ash blond hair in a perfect coil at her neck, her make-up perfect. Hell, even her blue silk sundress looked perfect. Not a stain or wrinkle on it. She could have stepped off the pages of a fashion magazine.

Who was this woman and why in the hell was she hanging on Sam liked she owned him? Daniel felt a possessive growl begin in his throat. Daniel could barely contain himself when Sam wrapped an arm around the blond.

"Dr. Evans, I would like you to meet my wife, Julia. Darling, this is Dr. Daniel Evans, a friend from back west." He looked up right into Daniel's eyes sending him a silent message with his look. "He just dropping by to bring me some news from my brother."

Daniel stared at Sam in total shock. "You're married?" he asked in an agonized whisper. His heart felt like stone in his chest. Everything in him felt like stone. Sam was married. He had come back to Boston, to get married, and he had never said a word.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, we just got back from our honeymoon," Sam replied.

"How long—?" Daniel asked as he shot Sam an agonized glance.

"Julia and I have been married nearly two months," Sam said. As much as he it pained him to do it, Sam knew he had to end things between Daniel and him here and now.

"Aren't you going to congratulate us, Daniel?" Sam winced when Daniel shot him a look of total desolation. It killed something inside of him to hurt Daniel like this.

"Yes, of course, congratulations to you both. I'm sure you'll be very happy together." He shot Sam a scathing look. "You two are perfect for each other."

Sam watched Daniel grab his jacket and walk towards the door, his posture stiff. He knew he had finally accomplished what he had set out to do, even if it was the last thing he wanted. Daniel hated him.

“Goodbye, Sam.”

Sam felt the words hit him like a ton of bricks. He knew he would never have another chance with Daniel but he had to let him walk away. It was better this way. Daniel would be safe. Sky would be safe. Everyone would be safe, except for Sam’s heart, which lay shattered at his feet.

“That was cruel, Sam. You didn’t have to hurt him like that.”

Sam turned to look at Julia, surprised at her words. She knew he cared about Daniel. Once he had gotten to know her, he had told her everything.

Julia hadn’t wanted to get married, but had felt coerced into it by her father in a *merger* with Sam’s father. Money married money. She was a nice girl and he felt sorry she had to be mixed up in this mess with his father.

“And I really do not appreciate being used to hurt him.”

“I’m sorry, Julia, but you know I had to do it. Daniel and I can never have anything together. You know that more than anyone else. It’s better for him to not have any hope,” Sam said as he wrapped his arms around her and kissed the top of her head.

He felt like a big brother to her. He had no sexual attraction for Julia. Daniel was the only thing that seemed to get him hard now days. No one else did it for him anymore. Not even other men excited him. He knew because he had tried when he got back to Boston. It had been a dismal failure.

“Without hope, what reason do we have to get out of bed in the morning?” Julia asked wistfully.

“Do you still hope, Julia? Even now?” Sam asked Julia as he stared down at her sad faraway look. She seemed to be off in her own little world. She often had that look, like she knew something no one else did, and it made her sad.

“Yes, I still hope, Sam. I have to have hope. It’s the only thing keeping me alive.”

Sam was puzzled at her words. He knew something had happened in Julia’s past but she never talked about it. He had asked but she had refused to talk about it, telling him that he couldn’t change it. No one could.

Sam knew her father had forced Julia into marrying him. He had some sort of hold over her but he didn’t know what. Just another thing Julia refused to talk about.

He felt a need to protect her. She seemed so delicate and soft but he knew she had hidden core of steel. He had seen it every day that she had dealt with the hell they presently lived in.

Once they had gotten to know each other, Julia seemed to want to make the best of their situation, often cheering Sam up when thoughts of Daniel got him down.

But he still felt the need to protect her. He just didn’t know what he needed to protect her from. It was hard for Sam to fight her demons when he didn’t know what they were.

“So, what did the doctor say?” Sam asked interrupting Julia’s thoughts. “Are you okay?”

Sam had insisted that Julia go to the doctor when she had become ill several weeks after their return from their honeymoon. She had fought him in the beginning but eventually gave in.

Julia smoothed down her skirt and walked to sit on the couch sitting in front of the fireplace. “Define okay.” She laughed bitterly.

“Honey,” Sam started as he sat down next to her taking her cold hands in his. “What’s wrong? Are you sick?”

Sam watched a tear slipped down her face. “I’m pregnant.”

Sam inhaled deeply at her news. “Wow, okay, so I guess it worked then,” he said in wonder, referring to the artificial insemination they had tried.

After deciding that they were in this mess with their fathers together and they just wanted to be friends, they had secretly used artificial insemination in the hopes of getting Julia pregnant.

They had started the procedure as soon as they left on their honeymoon, using that as an excuse to visit a prominent doctor in Switzerland. Apparently, it had worked.

“Sam, I’m scared. I know we agreed to do this to keep our fathers happy but now that it’s actually happened, I’m scared. I don’t want them to get their hands on our baby. Look at what they did to us. What do you think they will do to a defenseless little baby?”

Sam shook his head. “I don’t know, Julia. But we’ll figure it out.” He pulled Julia into his arms and hugged her close. She was so upset that her whole body shook.

“Are you upset about the baby?” she asked in a quiet whisper.

“No, honey, I’m not.” Pulling Julia onto his lap he tucked her head under his chin. “How could I be upset that you’re having our baby?”

“Oh Sam, I wish we really loved each other,” Julia cried as she cuddled into Sam’s strong arms. “I wish things were different.”

“I know, honey, I wish we did too. But we can’t choose who we love. But if I could ever love a woman, it would be you. I hope you know that. You have a lot to offer the right man. I’m just sorry I’m not that man.”

“Me, too,” Julia murmured quietly. “I’m sorry I’m not the man for you.”

“Not enough hair on your face,” Sam chuckled. “But I’ll always be here to take care of you, Julia. I won’t let anything happen to you.”

“You can’t stop it, Sam,” Julia said as she sat up straight. “Once they find out I’m pregnant, you know what will happen.”

Sam nodded. He did know what would happen. He had seen his father in action before. With his money and his contacts, he could do just about anything he wanted.



Sam was constantly amazed that someone hadn't taken his father down before now but it never seemed to happen. He seemed like a law-abiding businessman to most people. Only those that truly knew him knew the truth.

Trying to get Julia pregnant had been a gamble but they had felt like they had no choice at the time. They had gotten a lot of pressure from both of their fathers. Now it seemed really stupid but there wasn't much they could do about it.

"Don't say anything right away. Let's just keep this between us. I'll think of something." Sam began formulating ideas in his head on how to get them both out of the situation that they were in with their lives intact.

Julia nodded. "Our fathers will figure out I'm pregnant eventually, so think fast."

Yeah, their fathers would figure it out sooner or later so Sam had to come up with a plan fast, something that would keep both Julia and their baby safe. And he might just know the team of guys that could do it.

## Chapter 6

Sam closed the front door and handed the butler his jacket. “Thank you, James.”

He had been out all day organizing and setting up things with a private attorney his father knew nothing about. If his father knew that Sam had arranged to leave and take Julia, and their baby with him, all hell would break out. Julia was nearly four months along and starting to show. They didn’t have much time left.

He needed just a few more days to get his plans into action before they could leave. Sam planned on taking Julia on a “romantic get away” just for the two of them.

From there, they would spend the next several months traveling until the baby came. Once the baby arrived, then they could make legal preparations for everyone’s safety. But they had to leave before either of the fathers knew Julia was pregnant or the entire plan would fall apart.

“Is Mrs. McKenzie home?” Sam asked the butler as he headed for the living room.

“Mrs. McKenzie is upstairs, sir. I believe she is talking with your father.” Sam could hear the concern in James’s voice. Sam wasn’t too thrilled with it either.

Sam had hired James just before he married Julia for her protection at the recommendation of a friend from the service. He had wanted someone not connected to his father in the house, someone that couldn’t be bought, to be around for Julia when he could not.

James was a fifty-seven year old retired Navy SEAL who stood six foot two and weighed at least two hundred twenty five pounds. He

was built like a brick shithouse with muscles from the top of his bald head to the bottom of his toes.

It had quickly become apparent that James and Sam's father did not get along when Sam's father had tried to strong-arm his way into the house. James had made him wait until Sam had appeared before letting him leave the entryway. Nope, James definitely did not like Sam's father. And that just made Sam like James even more.

Sam nodded at James and headed up the stairs. He checked the upstairs family room, then Julia's den but found them empty. A sinking feeling began in his stomach as he ran towards Julia's bedroom. He tried the door but it was locked. He could hear faint crying noises coming from inside.

Running to his bedroom Sam ran through the connecting closet and into Julia's room. He stopped suddenly, shocked by what he saw. His father had his small delicate wife pinned to the bed as he tried to rape her.

"Stop!" Sam yelled as he pulled his father off of Julia and pushed him away before pulling Julia into his arms, protecting her from his father.

Holding Julia with one hand, Sam grabbed a blanket off the bed and wrapped it around her bruised and nearly naked body before setting her carefully on the bed before standing to confront his father.

"What the hell are you doing?" he asked, feeling rage fill his body at what his father tried to do to Julia. His hands clenched into fists as he glared at him. "Have you lost your mind?"

"Obviously what you have failed to do," Arthur yelled at Sam as he began zipping up his slacks. "All we asked of you was to give us an heir. But could you do that one little thing? No, so we decided I would take care of it for you."

Sam's jaw dropped in shock. "You decided to rape my wife because I didn't get her pregnant? And who the hell is *we*?"

“I wasn’t raping her. She wanted it just as much as I did. Ask her, just ask her. Her father said she’s always wanted it,” Arthur shouted as he pointed at Julia.

Sam heard a whimper come from Julia’s huddled form on the bed and saw red. He pulled back his fist and punched his father in the mouth. Another punch had Arthur falling to the floor, his lip bleeding.

“Get the hell out of my house and don’t ever, ever, come back here again. Julia is my wife and you will never lay your grubby little hands on her again. And you can tell the same thing to her father.”

Sam grabbed Arthur by the back of his shirt and threw him out the bedroom door after unlocking it. “James!” Sam yelled as he pushed his father down the hallway. James came running up the stairs faster than Sam thought the older man could run.

“Please escort my father out. He is no longer welcome in this house. That goes for Mrs. McKenzie’s father as well. If either of them attempt to get into the house, or anyone connected with them, call the police immediately.”

“Yes, sir!” James grabbed Arthur by the back of his shirt and started escorting him to the door when Arthur began yelling.

“Get your hands off of me! You can’t do this to me! Do you have any idea who I am? I’ll make you pay for this! Mark my words, Samuel, I will make you pay for this!”

Sam stood there until James slammed the door on his sputtering father. Then he started up the stairs. “James, call my attorney and tell him to get his ass over here now. Then I want you to lock up the house. No one, and I mean no one, is to get into the house without my express permission, understood?”

“Yes, sir, of course, right away.” James replied.

Sam ran down the hallway and into the bedroom to find Julia huddled in the corner of the room, the blankets pulled protectively around her. She made no sound but Sam could see the tears streaming down her bruised face.

He walked slowly over to her and picked her up in his arms. Sitting on the side of the bed he began rubbing her back. "It's okay, honey. He won't ever get to you again. I swear it, Julia."

Julia started sobbing, her whole body shaking in reaction to the assault. "My father came over. He said that I had a duty to give him an heir. He—he said that since you couldn't do it, that Arthur would. Then at least it would still be a McKenzie child. Then he let Arthur in."

Sam just held Julia as she cried, letting her get it out anyway she had to. "Tell me what happened, honey."

"Arthur pulled me into the bedroom after my father left. When I tried to stop him he hit me. He told me over and over again while he hit me that I had a duty to provide them with an heir. He even told me that my father had made me just so that the two of them could have an heir, like they had planned this from the day of my birth, like a business deal."

"Did he—?" Sam didn't want to ask but he knew he had to. He needed to know how bad the damage was before he took action.

Julia shook her head. "No, you came in before he could do anything. But what if he tries again, Sam? What if they find out about the baby?" Julia suddenly stiffened in Sam's arms. "Oh my god, Sam, what if something happened to the baby?"

"Honey, I'm sure the baby is fine. Everyone knows that they can take a lot. Just think, that little guy is safe and sound in his own little world. He'll be fine."

"So you think it's a boy then?" Julia asked hesitantly.

"Honey, I don't care if it's the tooth fairy as long as long as he, or she, is safe and happy."

Sam held Julia until she stopped crying and fell asleep. He gently laid her down on the bed and covered her up. She looked so tired, so small and delicate as she curled up on the bed. Sam still couldn't believe that their fathers had planned this. They had actually planned the cold brutal rape of his wife.

He quietly shut the door behind him and headed downstairs to the study. Opening the door he ignored his attorney Ethane Thomas sitting on the couch and went straight to the liquor cabinet, pouring himself a stiff drink before swallowing it down in one gulp. He closed his eyes briefly as the whiskey burned down his throat before turning to Ethane.

"Thank you for coming, Ethane. Things have gotten... complicated." Sam poured himself another drink and one for Ethane before handing it to him as he sat down on the couch beside him.

"Our illustrious fathers have decided that they want an heir no matter what the cost. While I met with you they came over and decided since I could not impregnate my wife, my father would. At least then they would be assured that the baby was a McKenzie."

"But I thought you told me that your wife was already pregnant," Ethane said, cocking his head to one side in confusion.

"She is, but we didn't tell them that. In fact, we kept it from them just because of things like this. You have to understand, Ethane, our fathers have never been told *no*. They have always gotten everything they ever wanted at the drop of a hat. And they want an heir."

"I don't get it. Aren't you and Julia their heirs?"

"Yes, and no. My father hasn't ever been able to completely control my brother or I. He doesn't like that. He wants an heir that is totally under his thumb, one made to think just like him. I'm not it. Neither is my brother."

"So what do you want to do now?" Ethane asked.

"I have to get Julia out of here. I've told James that neither of our fathers are welcome here but that will only stop them for so long. My main concern is for Julia and the baby. They have to be safe. I couldn't care less about my inheritance. Neither could Julia. We just want our baby safe."

"So what would you like me to do?"

Sam stared down at the crystal glass in his hands for several moments before he could speak again. He was still full of anger at what the fathers had done.

"They tried to rape her, Ethane. I stopped my father before he could but he hurt her."

"What?" Ethane exclaimed. Then he suddenly snapped his fingers. "Sam, that's it."

"What's it?" Sam asked confused, trying to remember what he had said.

"If they tried to rape her, we have them." Ethane nearly laughed at the confused look on Sam's face. "Evidence, man, evidence, but we need to act quickly. Has Julia taken a shower yet?"

"No, she's sleeping upstairs," Sam said, slowly coming to realize where Ethane was going with his thoughts. "I see where you're going with this, but I don't want the police involved, not yet. Not until I know Julia is safe."

"She has to see a doctor, Sam, get pictures, a rape kit, the works. And we do need to inform the police," Ethane insisted.

"I know, but now is not the time to go public with this. That would be like waving a red flag in front of a bull," Sam said as he shook his head. "No, we have to do this quietly."

"If we take her to the hospital they may want to call the police. Do you have another suggestion?" Ethane inquired.

"I just might."

\* \* \* \*

Sam sat at his desk and stared at the phone. He knew he had to make this phone call but he was afraid to. What if Daniel refused to talk to him? Sam wouldn't blame him if he did. He would probably refuse to talk to Daniel if he had been as hurtful as Sam had been to him.

But right now he had to look past the hurt he had caused Daniel. He's first concern had to be for Julia and the baby. He could ask Daniel's forgiveness later. Right now he had to put his pride aside and call Daniel and ask him for help.

Picking up the phone he called the ranch. Asking for Daniel, he waited while the phone rang.

"Hello?" said a tired voice on the other end.

"Daniel? It's Sam." He was *so* not surprised when Daniel hung up on him. He deserved it and he knew it but he had to try again.

He held his breath while the phone rang again. When Daniel answered he quickly rushed out his words. "Daniel, this is an emergency!" When Daniel didn't hang up immediately he knew he might be willing to listen. "I need you."

"You don't need me. You have a wife, remember?"

Sam winced at the pain and anger in Daniel's voice. Sam had really hurt him. Maybe if more time had gone by Daniel would be more willing to forgive him but right now Daniel was too angry.

"Daniel, please, I need your help," Sam tried one more time to get Daniel to listen to him.

"Don't call me again," Daniel replied before hanging up.

Sam rested his head against the phone briefly before hanging up. Okay, on to Plan B.

Sam dialed the phone again, this time getting through to a coded extension in Washington D.C. He made arrangements for a jet to be standing by at a local air force base along with a doctor to meet them there.

When he finished, he stood up and headed upstairs. He met James standing outside of Julia's door. James' actions alone showed that he had integrity. He hadn't left Julia since Sam had left to talk to Ethane.

"James, I need you to pack a bag. I know I'm asking a lot of you but we have to stay with some friends for awhile and I would like you to come with us. Julia needs all the protection she can get, and she trusts you."



James smiled broadly at that. "Yes, sir, I will go anywhere that the little miss needs me to go."

"Look, James, I'm not sure how much you know about my father but Arthur McKenzie is a man who is used to getting what he wants. What we're about to do is going to piss him off a lot."

"I understand, sir," James replied.

"I don't know if you do. I've never been able to prove it but I have no doubt that Arthur had something to do with my mother's disappearance. She may even be dead."

Sam wasn't a little surprised at the shocked look on James' face. No one had ever believed him about his mother. After she had left, Sam had tried to report her missing but no one would listen to him, not even the police.

Arthur had carefully explained to the police that Sam was just upset that his mother had left them all for another man. He had sounded sad, sincere, and very much like the cuckolded husband.

"My father is ruthless, James. I have no doubt that he has his fingers in a lot of illegal activities. I've just never been able to prove it. And any witnesses against him don't stick around long."

"If he's involved in so many illegal activities, sir, why has he never been investigated by the authorities?" James asked.

Sam shook his head. "I don't know. Maybe it's his money or the friends he has in high places. Or maybe no one wants to piss him off. You have to remember, to the outside world, Arthur McKenzie is a great philanthropist. He gives a lot of money to this city, to charities, and such."

"A mask, sir?"

Sam chuckled. "Yeah, something like that. Maybe everyone looks the other way so he'll keep giving or he's bought people off. I don't know. What I do know is that we will get no help from anyone in this city. He's got everyone from police officials to city council members on his payroll."

"Sounds like Al Capone," James said.

“Yeah, well, if I could put him away for tax evasion, I would but he has some of the best paid accountants on the planet keeping his ass out of jail.”

“Then I believe removing Miss Julia from this city would be our best course of action. She must be kept safe,” James said. “I will do whatever is required to do that, sir.”

Sam had a feeling that he would. James had seemed to take quite a shine to Julia. He treated her like the daughter he never had. Sam knew James would protect her with his life.

And it made Sam feel good knowing that Julia would have someone with her that she knew and trusted beside himself. Going to the ranch would not be easy on any of them.

“You’re a good man, James.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“James, I really wish you would call me Sam. Sir sounds like you’re talking to my father.”

“Well,” James said with a laugh, “we can’t have that, now can we?”

“No, that wouldn’t be good.” Sam turned to head up the stairs but stopped to turn back to James.

“James, you do know what happened to Julia, don’t you?”

James nodded, “I have a pretty good idea. I heard you and Mr. Thomas talking. I know what needs to be done.”

Sam nodded, “Okay, good. I’m going to go and get Julia ready. If you would, please pack a bag and get the car ready. Something non-descriptive would be good. We don’t want to be followed leaving here.”

“Very good, sir...ah...Sam,” he replied with a smile before walking away towards his room.

Sam laughed lightly as he headed back up to Julia’s room to get her ready. He hated to wake Julia up but it couldn’t be helped. They wrapped her in a blanket, grabbed their bags, and hustled Julia into a waiting car.

It took less than an hour to pick up Ethane and reach the military base where Sam showed his identification, and then they were immediately waved through and directed to the base infirmary, where the base commander met them. The doctor that had been waiting for them took Julia off to examine her, James hovering close behind.

Sam met with the base commander, insuring that they had all the proper clearances before checking over the weapons he had requested. When the doctor brought Julia back in she had changed into jeans and a white shirt.

The doctor handed Sam a packet of pictures and medical reports as he assured him that Julia would be fine, physically, in a few days. Emotionally, it might take a little longer.

The doctor also assured Sam that there was plenty of evidence that Julia had been attacked. All of it had been documented and sealed so that they had a clear chain of evidence. Sam thanked the doctor and the base commander before heading everyone out to the private jet waiting for them and loaded up.

In less than two hours after arriving on base, Sam, Ethane, James, and Julia were in the air and on their way to the ranch in Oregon. He called Sky from the air and asked him to meet them at the local airport.

Sam refrained from asking about Daniel. He would see him soon enough and he didn't quite know what he was going to do when he did. Thinking about Daniel was a lot different than actually seeing him. Sam only hoped that he wouldn't hurt Daniel anymore than he already had.

Arriving at the airport a few hours later Sam helped Julia off of the plane and escorted her to where Sky waited with the car.

He hadn't told Sky he had gotten married, so this was going to be tricky. When he had moved to Boston, he had simply told Sky he needed to take some time away and left it at that.

He had planned on going more in depth after a time, but he hadn't been ready to explain things to Sky when he left. Besides, Sky would have tried to stop him.

Sam had explained this all to Cole, with Cole's promise to keep Sam's secret. Cole had simply listed Sam as *on leave* so that he wouldn't lose his military standing.

As more and more time went by, the more Sam began to realize that agreeing to his father's demands had not been the best choice he could have made. On the other hand, if he hadn't there's no telling what might have happened to Julia. He also had the baby to think of.

He hugged his brother briefly before turning to indicate Julia. "Sky, this is Julia, my wife."

Sky's widened in amazement as he looked at Julia before turning to Sam. "Your wife? You're married? But I thought you were—well, you know."

Sam nodded as he helped Julia into the car. "It's a long story, Sky. I'll explain when we get home. Suffice to say, we are in trouble and we need the team's help." That was a whopper of an understatement!

## **Chapter 7**

Sam helped Julia lay down on his old bed then tucked the blankets around her. He leaned down and kissed her softly on the forehead and turned to leave when her soft voice stopped him.

“Tell him the truth, Sam. He deserves to know.”

“Who?” Sam asked even though he knew who. He just didn’t want to face it, or him. It was too painful and he felt like too much of an idiot. He had hurt Daniel too much. He didn’t think Daniel could ever forgive him.

“You know who, Samuel McKenzie, so stop lying to yourself. He loves you. I could see it in his eyes when he came to Boston. He really loves you, and that kind of love doesn’t just go away. If he loved you then, he loves you now.”

Sam knelt on the floor next to Julia. “I don’t know, Julia, I hurt him pretty bad. I don’t think he can ever forgive me.”

“Do you love him?” She asked the biggest question in the smallest voice.

Sam didn’t even hesitate. “Yeah, I do. I think I always have.”

“Then tell him, Sam. He’ll understand. Hell, beg if you have to. If that doesn’t work, tie the damn man down and make him listen to you.” She laughed.

“That just might work,” Sam replied laughing at the picture of Daniel tied down and gagged. He grabbed Julia’s hand and brought it to his lips. “Thank you, Julia. I don’t know what I would do without you.”

He carefully tucked her hand under the covers and stood up. "Now you get some rest while I go talk myself out of the doghouse with my brother, and Daniel too, if I'm lucky."

Sam closed the bedroom door, nodded to James, who had taken a seat near Julia's door, and walked into the dining room. Most of the team and Ethane sat around the table talking. It always amazed Sam that the dining room tended to be the meeting place of a bunch of rough and tough Navy Seals.

Sam looked around the table at his friends as he sat down. The various conversations around the table trickled down to nothing as they all nodded and said their hellos to Sam.

He smiled and said hello back, noticing Daniel sitting at the end of the table. Daniel avoided his gaze and sitting as far away from Sam as he could while still sitting at the same table.

Sam hurt a little at that but figured he deserved nothing less. Hopefully he would get a few minutes alone with Daniel after this and beg for his forgiveness.

"I want to thank you all for being here. I'm in a hell of a mess and I need your help. First, I want to apologize to some of you that I hurt by keeping my silence." Sam looked over at his brother as he tried to gauge his reaction.

"Sky, we have always been close and I know that I hurt you recently by keeping things from you. This, and the things we talked about in the truck before I left. I didn't tell you because I didn't know how too. I didn't want to hurt you but in my desire to keep you safe I think I may have caused more damage. For that I am sorry."

"Keep me safe?" Sky asked. "Keep me safe from what?"

Sam shook his head lightly. "I'll get to that in a moment. But first, there's someone else I need to apologize to." Sam looked down the table to where Daniel sat, staring down at his coffee cup.

This part was going to be much harder. Sam mentally crossed his fingers and hoped that Daniel would listen to what he had to say and maybe forgive him.

“There is someone else that I hurt. I thought at the time that I had done the right thing. I was wrong. I thought that I could deny what happened between us and neither of us would get hurt. I was wrong. I thought that I could deny my feelings and that they would just go away. Again, I was wrong.”

Sam glanced up from under his lashes to see if Daniel listened to him. The only sign Daniel gave that he even knew Sam said anything to him was the slight trembling of his hand as he held his coffee cup.

Taking that as a good sign Sam forged ahead. “I know I gave you the impression that I didn’t care about you. In fact, I went out of my way to give you that impression. But I do care, very much so. I should have fought for what we could have had together, like you did, but I was too scared.”

Sam knew he was bearing his soul to Daniel in front of everyone but he figured that if he had to beg, it might as well be with an audience.

Maybe then Daniel would believe him. And if he needed to do a little begging in order to get Daniel back into his life, he would do it...on his knees.

“I know I have no right to ask you this after the hurt I caused you but I’m begging you to listen to what I have to say before condemning me to a life without you. Please.”

Sam watched Daniel carefully until he gave a slight nod of his head, never lifting his eyes from his coffee cup. Well, at least he seemed willing to listen. That was something.

“Thank you,” he whispered closing his eyes in gratitude.

Taking a deep breath Sam opened his eyes and looked at his friends sitting around the table. They all stared at him quizzically. He had a lot of explaining to do, to everyone. Folding his hands together on the table in front of him he began.

“About six months ago my father contacted me.” Sam hesitated when he heard a gasp come from Sky. “He made me a deal. He would disown Sky and stay out of his life if I would agree to move back to

Boston, marry the woman he picked out for me, and produce an heir for him. At the time, it sounded like a good deal to me.”

He could see the looks of astonishment on his friends’ faces as well as the horror on Sky’s. Sky understood what he had done, how hard it had been, but the rest of them did not. That too would take a little explaining.

“You have to understand who my father is. He has made millions crushing people, legally and illegally. He’s ruthless when he wants something. Sky and I spent years under his thumb. Joining the Navy SEALs after dealing with my father was a walk in the park. I’ve always thought he was a little crazy. As small children, it wasn’t so bad because of our mother. But then she disappeared and he turned his rage on us. Neither of us came away without scars.”

“Sam,” Sky cried, anguish in his eyes.

“Because I was born first, our father didn’t care about Sky except to use him as a punching bag. I was always going to be the heir. He groomed me from a very early age to take over for my father. Some of the things that I saw, that he did, well, I just don’t understand how someone could be like that.”

Sam took a moment to gather his thoughts before he continued. “My father always made it clear that he expected me to be just like him, to take over for him. Instead, as soon as we were old enough, Sky and I escaped to the Navy. Boot camp was our first true taste of freedom. You may have all thought boot camp horrible. For us, it seemed like heaven.”

Sam stopped to take a sip of his coffee and regroup his thoughts. Getting thirty some odd years of hell into one conversation wasn’t easy. And he had a long ways to go before he completely explained his actions.

“Like I said, six months ago my father contacted me and I agreed to move back to Boston and marry the woman he had chosen for me and produce an heir for him. A couple of months ago I married Julia. I truly expected some plastic society bimbo. It surprised me when I



went on my honeymoon and learned that Julia is actually a very sweet innocent young woman who is just as caught up in this mess as I am.”

Sam could see Daniel’s hand tightening around his coffee cup when he talked about Julia. He knew it hurt him to hear about her but he had to tell it all. In fact, the next part could either make or break things with Daniel.

“The pressure to produce an heir from both of our fathers was intense. A couple of months ago we found out that Julia’s pregnant.” Sam winced when he heard Daniel’s sharp intake of breath. He knew his statement had hurt Daniel even more.

“We had done what our fathers had wanted but we were both terrified of what would happen to the baby if, and or when, our fathers found out. So we decided not to tell them. Instead, I started making arrangements with Ethane here to leave the country.”

“You actually think they would make you disappear, Sam?” Cole asked shocked.

Sky and Sam both instantly nodded their heads yes. “I have no doubt that they could make us disappear. People who oppose our father have a way of going missing. I’ve seen it happen,” Sam said.

“And no one has wondered about it? No one has investigated?” Cole asked.

“Oh, I’m sure it’s been investigated but when you have the police in your back pocket, evidence has a way of disappearing, just like witnesses.”

“Is that what you need our help with? Getting you and Julia out of the country?” Bear asked.

“Leaving the country would have been easy. No, things are much worse than that. Earlier today, when I got home, I found my father trying to get Julia pregnant himself. He tried to rape her. I stopped him in time and forced him to leave.”

Sam listened to the curses that came from those around the table and agreed with them.

Suddenly Daniel stood up. He looked at Sam with such agonized eyes that it was all he could do not to look away. "That's why you called me?"

Sam nodded, not because he wanted Daniel to feel guilty but because he had sworn to himself that from now on he would always tell him the truth no matter what.

"I knew why you hung up on me. You had every right to after the way I treated you," Sam replied.

Daniel turned white, and then green as he ran from the room. Sam jumped from his chair and started after him but Julia stopped him. She had been standing just outside of the dining room entryway.

"Let me," she whispered as she followed Daniel into the bathroom. She closed the bathroom door behind her, leaving Sam waiting outside, his fears growing by the second.

"Here, Daniel," she whispered as she handed him a wet washcloth when he had emptied the contents of his stomach. She handed him a glass of water after he wiped his face.

She watched as he rinsed his mouth. "He loves you, you know."

Daniel turned off the water and looked over at Sam's wife, grimacing when he saw the bruises on her swollen face. Sam's father had really done a number on her. That just made him feel worse.

"Does he?" Daniel asked, skeptical.

"Oh yeah." Julia smiled. "He loves you very much. He did what he did to protect me, to protect Sky. It was wrong but it's what he thought he had to do at the time. But he does love you. On our honeymoon, Sam didn't talk about anything except you."

"And that doesn't bother you? Being married to him, pregnant with his child? And you say he loves me? How can you be so calm about all of this?"

Julia gave Daniel a small little laugh. "He doesn't belong to me. He never did. He's always been yours. As for my being pregnant, we never had sex. We went to Switzerland on our honeymoon and had me artificially inseminated." Julia laughed again. "In fact, that's how I

found out about you. He couldn't...uh... perform. Guess I don't do it for him."

Julia leaned in close and whispered into Daniel's ear, "Of course, as soon as he starts talking about you he's hard as a rock. Guess you're more his type."

"How is all this supposed to work?" Daniel asked, gesturing to her abdomen. "You two being married and the baby, and all. How's this supposed to work?"

"I don't know, Daniel, I guess that's something we will all have to discuss. I won't come between you two, but I also want Sam to be a part of this child's life. If you can live with that, live with me and the baby being in your lives, and knowing that I have no designs on Sam then there doesn't seem to be anything we can't work out."

"How can you not have designs on Sam? How can you not be attracted to him? Are you blind?" Daniel asked, suspicious that Julia seemed so willing to give up a great looking guy like Sam.

"Daniel, I care a lot for Sam. He's been there when I needed him. But sexually, Sam does nothing for me. Maybe I always knew he was gay, so I never developed an attraction for him. Who knows? But the point is I don't love Sam, not like you love him. And he needs your type of love."

Daniel stared at the small woman in total awe. She seemed as sweet as Sam had said. He understood now why Sam had been so protective of her. "And what about you, little Julia, don't you deserve that type of love?" Daniel asked.

"Maybe, someday," Julia said with a secretive little smile. "Right now I just want to concentrate on having a healthy baby and getting out of this mess that our fathers have put us in."

"Thank you, Julia."

"Ah, you're more than welcome, honey." Julia laughed, "Now, I'm going to go because there is a very anxious man outside of this door that has some serious groveling to do."

Julia opened the door and stepped out. Daniel heard her talk to Sam briefly then walk away. He leaned on the edge of the counter when his legs started shaking. His stomach tensed he thought he might throw up again as he waited for Sam.

He watched the door open slowly and a very apprehensive Sam stepped inside and shut the door behind him.

“Daniel, I—” Sam began only to stop and look wildly around the bathroom.

Daniel had never seen him so unsure of himself. He wanted to make it go away but he was still afraid that Sam would change his mind like he always seemed to in the past.

Daniel could see uncertainty in Sam’s eyes when he finally looked down at him.

“I’m sorry, Daniel. You have no idea how sorry I am. Can you forgive me? Have I fucked things up too much for that?” Sam paused. “Do you hate me, Daniel?”

Daniel looked at Sam closely. He seemed very sincere but Daniel wasn’t totally convinced. The fact that Sam had apologized to him in front of all of there friends didn’t make his fear go away.

He had hoped too many times only to have Sam destroy that hope. But it did give him something to hold onto. Daniel just had to figure out what that something was.

“I don’t hate you, Sam, but I don’t know if I can trust you. We’ve been through this before. I told you how much I loved you and you didn’t seem to care. It was like it didn’t mean anything to you.”

“It did, Daniel. I meant a lot to me. But I couldn’t do anything about it. You don’t know how much I wish I could change things. But I can’t. I can only promise to love you more than anyone’s ever loved you. And I promise that from this moment on I will never lie to you about anything.”

“Nothing?” Daniel asked, feeling distrustful of Sam’s words. He crossed his arms over his chest and stared at Sam, one eyebrow raised.

"No, nothing. I will always be completely honest with you," Sam reaffirmed.

Daniel remained silent for a moment before asking, "Then can I ask you a few questions?"

"Yes, anything," Sam nodded quickly.

"You *do* love me?"

"Yes, more than anything the world," Sam answered without hesitating.

"Have you had sex with Julia?" The words nearly choked Daniel but he had to ask.

"No, but that is my child she is carrying. We did artificial insemination while on our honeymoon." Sam said, confirming what Julia had said to Daniel moments earlier.

"Is this just a fuck buddy type of thing or do you actually want a relationship with me?" Daniel asked.

"God, I want you so much, but I'll take anything you're willing to give me," Sam whispered.

"A relationship? Out in the open, where everyone can see us?" Daniel had to know how far Sam would go. Would they just meet behind closed doors? Would Sam love him in front of all of their friends and loved ones? What was Sam's idea of a relationship?

"I'll shout it from the rooftops if you want, take out an ad in the national papers, whatever you want. I am not ashamed of loving you."

"Have you had sex with anyone since that first time...between us?" Daniel asked.

Sam knew that Daniel might hate him if he told the truth but he had promised. "Yes and no. I thought I was just confused about my attraction to you. I wondered if it was just you or if I was attracted to other men so I tried to have sex with a man I met at a bar. I couldn't even get aroused by him."

"And women?" Daniel choked out.

"After the fiasco with the guy at the bar, I tried with a woman I had been with before, again, nothing," Sam answered with a cringe.

Daniel remained silent for so long that Sam was afraid that he had ruined things with his last statement. He nearly jumped out of his skin when Daniel gave him a seductive glance.

“Julia said you only get hard around me. Is that true?”

“Yes.”

“Are you hard right now?” Daniel glanced down at Sam’s crotch.

“Yes,” Sam groaned as he rubbed the length of his aching cock in his jeans. Daniel’s eyes followed the movement of Sam’s hand, licking his suddenly dry lips.

“Let me see,” Daniel ordered.

Daniel nearly swallowed his tongue when Sam unbuttoned his jeans and pushed them down around his ankles, baring his hard cock to Daniel’s hungry gaze.

“Do you want me to touch you?” Daniel whispered.

“God, yes,” he moaned as he wrapped his hand around his cock. “Please.”

Sam almost screamed when he felt Daniel’s lips wrap around the head of his cock. “Daniel,” he whispered as he let go of his cock and wrapped his hands in Daniel’s hair. No one could do to him what Daniel did with his tongue. And it had been so long since he had felt this.

Sam felt Daniel ran his tongue over the slit at the top of Sam’s cock and then under the edge of the crown. His thighs tighten under Daniel’s hands. Sam knew he wouldn’t take long.

When Daniel closed his lips completely around Sam and sucked him all the way down until his nose touched soft curls at the root before pulling back again, Sam let out a long groan.

Daniel repeated this again and again until Sam’s hands clenched in his hair and he erupted in Daniel’s mouth with a loud roar.

Daniel swallowed all of Sam’s seed and slowly licked him clean until Sam’s legs gave out and he collapsed beside Daniel on the bathroom floor, his head resting on his shoulder. He turned his head and kissed Sam, sharing the unique taste of him.

“Daniel,” Sam whispered in between kisses, “I want you to make love to me.”

Daniel pulled back in surprise. “What? But I’ve never—”

“Neither have I, but I want you to be the first. I want you to know that I love you and want everything with you.”

“I don’t want to hurt you,” Daniel said.

“You won’t.” Sam nuzzled the side of Daniel’s neck before his large hands took his face and gently held it. “Please, Daniel?” Sam pleaded as he kissed Daniel lightly on the lips.

Finally after several moments of looking into Sam’s eyes Daniel nodded his head in agreement.

Sam was ecstatic. He quickly stood up and undressed, dropping his clothes on the floor before looking around for some sort of lube. Finding a container of Vaseline under the sink he figured that it would work.

Sam heard Daniel inhale deeply when he lay down on the bathroom rug on his back and spread his legs giving Daniel a clear view of Sam’s impressive attributes.

“Don’t you want to be on your knees?” Daniel asked hesitantly.

Sam shook his head as he grabbed his thighs and pulled them up. “No, I want to see you when you take me.”

Daniel knelt on the towels on the floor between Sam’s legs, running his hands up and down Sam’s thighs. He reached over Sam and grabbed the Vaseline, coating his cock.

Sam held his legs up to his chest as Daniel rubbed the Vaseline onto him then gradually pushed one, two, then three fingers inside. Sam pushed against him, moaning. Finally, Sam nodded that he was ready.

“Now, Daniel, I need you now,” Sam begged.

Daniel leaned over Sam and put his legs over his shoulders and began to slowly push into him. Daniel slowly began thrusting upward pushing himself deeper into Sam.

All of a sudden, Sam felt Daniel push all the way in. He buried his face in Daniel's hair and cried out. He had never felt anything like it in the world.

Pulling from Daniel's hair, Sam watched Daniel's face as he began moving in and out of him. Daniel's expression showed pure rapture. Sam had never seen anything more beautiful.

"Daniel, I'm going to come soon. Harder, baby, please." With that, Daniel sat back up and pounded with all he had to give, hitting Sam's pleasure spot with each thrust.

"Daniel, I love you." Sam grabbed Daniel's head and pulled him down for a kiss, his tongue caressing the inside of Daniel's mouth. His body trembled beneath Daniel's as he came so hard he had to break their kiss to cry out his gratification.

"Daniel, oh my god—oh damn. Daniel!" He moaned between each word, his cum spurting out all over his abdomen and stomach.

Just watching Sam's release put Daniel over the edge. His body stiffened and he tossed his head back and growled as he exploded into Sam's tight ass for the first time. It was the most intense climax he could ever remember having.

Daniel collapsed on top of Sam, his face buried in Sam's neck, his breathing hard. He felt Sam's legs fall back to the floor as he wrapped his arms around him, pulling Sam closer.

"Daniel," The sound came out as a groan of anguish. "I was so horrible to you and I don't know how I'll ever get you to forgive me for that. I know I will never forgive myself for how I hurt you. I truly am sorry, Daniel. I love you so very much."

Daniel moved so he stood in front of Sam and then looked down at him. He thought his heart would break when he saw the anguish in Sam's eyes.

He grabbed Sam by the hand and pulled him up so they stood next to each other again. Daniel gently kissed Sam, holding him close. He explored his mouth, showing him that he still loved him when words failed him.



For a minute no sound could be heard in the room other than that of their kisses, but then, reluctantly, Daniel pulled away. He took a deep breath and then looked up at Sam.

"What you did hurt, Sam. I won't lie to you about that. But I've never felt more alone then I did when we were apart. No, don't say anything," he said when he saw Sam try to speak. "I love you, Sam. That never changed. But I still hurt. It's going to take me awhile to trust you. Can you live with that?"

Sam nodded even as his heart ached. "I know you're hurting," he whispered. "I know you think that I will break your heart like I did in the past. I can see that look on your face, like you're waiting for me to hurt you again."

Sam paused in his explanation, leaning his head down so he could rub his cheek against the top of Daniel's head. "I want that look gone, Daniel. I want to take away the pain and make you believe that what I'm telling you is the truth."

Daniel let out a soft sob as he wrapped his arms around Sam. When he spoke, Daniel's words sounded husky even to his own ears. "My fears aren't all gone. I can't lie to you about that, but I do love you and I am willing to try."

"I'll take anything you can give me, Daniel," Sam whispered gently. "I know I have a lot to make up for, baby, and even if it takes the rest of my life, I will try every second of every day to show you how much I love you."

## Chapter 8

Sam held Daniel's hand as they walked back towards the living room where everyone had moved. When Daniel went to separate their hands Sam only held on tighter.

"No, I'm not ashamed of loving you and I won't hide it from anyone, especially not our friends," Sam said. "Besides, after my grand speech earlier, I'm pretty sure they know how I feel about you."

Daniel gave Sam a half-hearted smile, still a little uncertain of him. He expected Sam to step away from as soon as they got to the living room.

He was so surprised when Sam sat down in one of the overstuffed loveseats and pulled him down to sit next to him, wrapping his arms around Daniel and cuddling him so tightly against his side that Daniel nearly yelped.

Glancing round the room under his lashes Daniel tried to gauge everyone's reaction to him and Sam. What he saw surprised him. There wasn't a single frown among their friends.

No one seemed to be staring at them outright. No one seemed overly shocked by their behavior. In fact, there didn't seem to be more than a passing smile aimed in their direction.

After a few moments Daniel settled down next to Sam and laid his head on Sam's shoulder. He reached down and laced his hand with Sam's, getting a kiss on his head in reward.

Daniel had to blink several times to clear the tears in his eyes before he could turn his attention to the others in the room. Most ignored them, carrying on their own conversations.

Julia sat next to Caleb, a big grin on her face as if she had something to do with their reunion. And Daniel had to admit she had some right to her smugness. Without her, he wouldn't be sitting next to Sam, holding his hand.

"I'm sorry, Julia. I forgot to introduce you to the men I work with," Sam said as he looked at Julia. "Daniel, you know. His sister Jax is downstairs. You'll meet her later."

"You can't miss her," Cole said. "She's the one trying to get a speeding ticket in that damn wheelchair of hers."

"Most likely," Sam chuckled. "The man next to you is Caleb Boudreaux. Right behind him is his brother Rune. If you haven't noticed already, Caleb and Rune are twins."

"Everyone member of our team are twins, Sam," Cole added.

"True, but we're not all identical twins like Caleb and Rune," Sam replied. He pointed to the man standing in front of the fireplace. "That's my brother, Sky."

Julia nodded at him.

"Cole and Bear Daniels," Sam said as he pointed at the two large men sitting across from Julia. "Cole is our commander. Last but not least, Jake and Nick Logan."

"You're all twins?" Julia asked, looking around the room.

Sam nodded. "Yep. We're part of a special ops team. We all live here at the ranch until we have to go on a mission. I was a part of the team until I took a leave of absence to go to Boston."

"What sort of missions?" Julia asked.

"Well, I think that—" Sam began.

Daniel turned his attention away from Sam when Sky interrupted. "Sam, whatever made you agree to anything father would demand? You know how he is. God, I can't believe that you did that, and without discussing it with me first."

"I honestly believe that I was doing the right thing, the only thing that I could do. You more than anyone else knows what he's like

when he gets an idea in his head, like a dog with a bone. He will not let it go. And he wanted an heir,” Sam explained.

“I don’t get that, Sam,” Cole began, “I thought you and Sky would be his heirs. Why would he need another one?”

“I don’t completely understand it myself. But what I figure is that he wanted an heir he could groom after himself. In his mind, Sky and I both failed him by not being selfish pricks like he is. He needed someone that he could control, manipulate, make in his image.”

Sky began pacing in front of the fireplace as he glared at Sam. “So you agreed to marry Julia, a complete stranger, and produce a child for him? Have you lost your ever-loving mind? Why would you give that monster another child to hurt?”

“Sky, I honestly wasn’t thinking that far ahead. As soon as Julia told me she was pregnant I knew what I had done, and tried to fix it.”

“You can’t fix this, you idiot. You just gave him a new target. God, I can’t believe that you could be that stupid. You know what he’s like. You grew up in the same household I did,” Sky shouted.

“Sky,” Julia interrupted. “You need to give Sam a break. He knows he made a mistake but now we need your help to fix it.”

“You need to stay out of this! You have no idea what you’re talking about,” Sky yelled at Julia.

Julia jumped to her feet and stomped over to Sky. She began poking him in the chest with her finger as she yelled back at him.

“You forget, dumb ass, I’m carrying the new target. As for not knowing what I’m talking about, I know a lot more than you think I do. I’m the one that bastard tried to rape. I’m the one pregnant with the next McKenzie heir. I’m the one Arthur forced to get married, just like Sam. Do you think I wanted to marry him?”

“Hey!” Sam interjected.

“Oh! You shut up, too!” Julia yelled as she glared over at Sam before looking back to Sky. “There’s a lot more going on here than even you two fools understand.”

Julia suddenly stopped talking and clamped her hand over her mouth as if she had said too much. She looked between Sky and Sam before quickly sitting down on the couch, lowering her eyes to the floor.

Sam, as well as the other occupants in the room, watched Julia's action with curiosity and trepidation. Julia looked terrified. It made Sam's chest tighten with apprehension. Something was definitely going on.

Sam kissed Daniel on the head and let go of his hand as he stood up. He walked over and knelt at Julia's feet and took her trembling hands in his. He could see the fear in her eyes as she raised her agonized face to his.

"What is it, honey? What do you know?" he asked softly trying not to frighten her even more. "What has you so upset?"

Julia sat in her chair, making no response, just staring at Sam for several moments. "I can't tell you," she whispered finally. "They'll kill her."

"Kill who, Julia? Who will they kill?" Sam asked quietly, the room going totally silent at her whispered words.

"My baby."

"Julia," Caleb began as he wrapped an arm around her. "None of us here will let anyone hurt your baby. She, or he, will be safe and sound. All you need to worry about is having a healthy baby. You have an entire team of Navy SEALs to protect you and your baby."

Sam was momentarily stunned at the little speech Caleb gave Julia. He never talked that much, ever. But he quickly recovered and added his assurances to Caleb's.

"Julia, I'd never let anything happen to our—" Sam began only to be interrupted when Julia waved her hand in Sam's face.

"You don't understand," she said quickly, "I told you that you didn't understand. Why can't you just let it go? Please!"

"What don't we understand, Julia?" Sky asked as he came to stand behind Sam.

“They have my daughter,” she exclaimed.

“Your daughter? You have a daughter? Why didn’t you tell me? Where is she?” Sam began shooting off questions to her only to be stopped by Daniel’s hand on his shoulder.

“Sam, stop. Can’t you see how hard this is for her? Give her a little space.” Daniel sat down on the floor next to Sam and rested his hand on Julia’s leg trying to reassure her.

“Come on, honey,” Daniel said, “tell us the rest of it. We need to know everything. I know you’re scared, and you have a right to be, but without knowing the whole picture we are going into this blind.”

Bear came up beside Sam and handed Julia a glass of juice. She drank it down and handed the glass to him, thanking him, before wrapping herself in the blanket Cole handed her. When Caleb reached down to hold her hand she latched onto it like a lifeline.

Sam watched the entire interaction with a small grin. Julia was a sweet woman, and she had these men jumping through hoops in less than thirty minutes. It would be interesting to see which one of them eventually won her heart. He had no doubt one of them would. His money was on Caleb.

Seeing Caleb holding tight to Julia’s hand and the little looks of confusion she kept giving him under lashes, Sam knew she didn’t need him anymore.

He stood up, grabbed Daniel’s hand to pull him up, and went back to the loveseat. It pleased Sam when Daniel curled up next to him as he had been before.

“Julia, please talk to us. You’re safe here,” Sam said after he settled Daniel closer to him.

Sam waited and gave Julia the time she needed to compose her thoughts. After several moments, she began talking, never letting go of Caleb’s hand.

“My daughter, Robin, is five years old. I met her father when I went college to study medicine. I was in my third year of residency when I found out I was pregnant. When I told Robert, he was ecstatic.

We made plans to get married. Then my father found out.” Julia paused briefly when the memories became too much, burying her face in Caleb’s shirt as he held her in his arms. After a few minutes she lifted her head and wiped her face and began again.

“My father hated Robert. He came from the wrong side of the tracks, the son of an auto mechanic. When my father, Douglas, couldn’t buy Robert off, he had him killed.” There were several gasps and a few curses throughout the room.

“After I had Robin, my father used her to keep me in line. He knew I knew that he had killed Robert. He told me so to my face. He said that if I didn’t do exactly what he told me to, he would kill Robin too. I knew he would so I did what he told me to do. I would have gone to the police but I had no proof of anything.”

Sam squeezed Daniel’s hand in his as he watched Julia take a deep breath. He needed the reassurance Daniel’s touch provided him. “Then what happened, Julia,” he asked.

“My father and Arthur came up with this brilliant plan to have an heir. At first they wanted me to marry Arthur. Then they decided on Sam. They told me that if I didn’t marry Sam, I would never see my daughter again.”

“They wanted you to marry my father?” Sky asked astonished.

When Julia nodded Sam asked the next question. “If they wanted you to marry my father then why did they make you marry me?” Sam dropped Daniel’s hand and sat forward, leaning his arms on his legs and he stared at Julia in confusion.

“I’m sorry I didn’t tell you, Sam, especially after the way you shared your feelings about Daniel with me. But I couldn’t. They said that they would kill Robin if I said anything,” Julia said.

“Honey, I understand, you did the only thing you could under the circumstances. But please, now is not the time for secrets. We need to know the truth, all of it.”

Julia stared at everyone in the room one at a time then nodded her head as if she had finally come to a decision.

“There’s a special provision in your grandfather’s will that says only a blood heir of his can inherit his estate. This is your mother’s father and his estate is the financial basis of your father’s empire. Without it, your father would be broke. Your father has controlled it since the minute your mother disappeared. As a blood descendant of your grandfather’s, the estate is supposed to go to you, not your father. He wants an heir from you so that he can continue to control that financial fortune.”

“I still don’t get it. Why me and not my father?” Sam asked still confused. He glanced over at his brother to see if he felt as confused as Sam did. The slight nod Sky gave him confirmed that he did.

“It took me awhile to figure it out myself. It’s simple really. Arthur McKenzie is not your biological father. He married your mother when she was pregnant with you and Sky. So you had to produce the heir in order for it to be a blood relative.”

“He’s not my father? Then who is?” Sam exclaimed. His eyes widen in shock at the implication of Julia’s words.

“I don’t know who your real father is. I suspect only your mother did. Since Arthur had married to your mother by the time you were born, you were given his last name. I suspect it was one of those *saving face* type of marriages,” Julia replied.

“And how do you know this?” Sky asked.

“I overheard a conversation between your father and mine. They’ve been in business together for years, long before any of us were born,” Julia explained.

“He’s not our father, you can call him Arthur,” Sky growled.

Sam just stared at Julia totally shocked by what she had said. He felt Daniel wrap his arms around him, rubbing his back with his hand. Sam took several controlling breaths, thankful that Daniel was there for him, before he looked back at Julia.

“I always felt that Arthur hated us, but I could never figure out why. This explains a lot. God, he hated us so much,” Sky said.



"We couldn't walk across the room right without him getting mad at us," Sam added. A sudden thought came to him. "Julia, do you have any idea what happened to our mother? Is she really dead?"

"You don't know what happened to your mother?" she asked.

"No, we came home from boarding school when we were about eight years old and she had simply disappeared," Sam said. "We were never allowed to speak about her after that. We weren't even allowed to say her name. If we brought her up at all Arthur went ape-shit on us."

"I remember one Christmas when I bought a present for her. It must have been a few months after she disappeared," Sky began quietly as he stared off into space like he was in his own little world. "I put it under the tree for her. I felt so sure she would be there for Christmas. She never missed a holiday with us. When Father...uh, Arthur...found it, he beat me so bad I spent the rest of my Christmas vacation recovering."

"Sky, you never told me that."

Sky sent a sorrowful little smile over to Sam. "You weren't there that Christmas. He had you shipped off to some sort of holiday visit with one of his business cronies. He told me that you wanted to be there."

"Sky, I never went to visit any of his cronies. What are you talking about? When did this happen?" Sam asked.

"It was the first Christmas after Mom left. If you weren't with one of his cronies, where the hell were you? You should have been home with me," Sky said loudly, his hands tightened into fists as he glared at his brother.

"I worked the entire Christmas after Mom left. Arthur wouldn't let me come home. He told me that only lazy people celebrated holidays. I spent my entire vacation working in one of his factories. He told me you worked in another factory. Why do you think I never went home for holidays after that? He had me working."

Sam ran his hand through his hair as he looked down at the floor. "God, I can't stand holidays now," he said quietly.

"You were a child, Sam, how could you be working?" Julia asked.

"That didn't matter to my father. If you had free time on your hands, you worked." Sam dropped his hands between his legs as the clenched into fists. "It was as simple as that."

"So, you've never celebrated a holiday?" Daniel asked quietly.

"No, not after our mother left."

"And since you joined the Navy?"

"No, holidays meant that I was separated from Sky and had to deal with my father. I hated holidays. I still do," Sam said.

"Okay, so do we actually know that your mother's dead? Could she have just left?" Cole asked.

"I don't know. I don't think she could have left though. You don't just leave Arthur McKenzie. He wouldn't take it well." Sam raised his head to look at Cole. "I don't know if she's dead either. But if she didn't die, why would she leave us with him? Did she not want us? Not love us?" Sam asked, desperately trying to remember anything he could about his mother's disappearance.

"She loved you. She always did."

Sam's gaze swung around to look at James. He stood with his arms crossed over his chest, leaning against the wall by the hallway.

"Don't ever think your mother didn't love you. She had to leave. Arthur gave her no choice. You have to remember, back then, women didn't have a lot of choices. That was nearly thirty years ago," James said.

"But, what about—" Sam began.

"You?" James asked. "She tried to take you with her when she left. Arthur wouldn't allow it. He lied to the courts, convinced them that she was a danger to herself and to you. They gave Arthur custody. If she had known what you two have gone through since she left it would break her heart."

“James, what are you saying? Do you know what happened to our mother? Do you know where she is?” Sam asked hesitantly, almost afraid of the answer.

James watched Sam and Sky for what seemed to Sam like forever before he nodded his head. “Yeah, I know where she is.”

“She’s alive?” Sky asked in a subdued yet shocked voice.

“James, how long have you known where my mother is? That she was alive?”

“I’ve always known,” James replied.

Sam stood up and began walking towards James, Sky just a step behind him. “James, if you know where our mother is you need to tell us. If Arthur knows where she is, he’ll hurt her. She’s not safe.”

“Now you just hold on right there. I’ve been keeping your mother safe from Arthur for better than twenty years,” James said harshly. He uncrossed his arms, his hands curling defensively into fists at his side. “If you think I’m going to drag her into the middle of this shit storm, you have another thing coming.”

“James,” Sam began his voice raising. He stepped close enough to James that their chests nearly touched. Sky stood right beside him, both men angry.

“Samuel,” Daniel said. He walked up behind him and pulled him back with a hand on his shoulder. “Honey, let him talk. If he’s been able to keep your mother safe for twenty-five years, he must know what he’s doing. Besides, wouldn’t you like to know *how* he knows your mother?”

Sam let Daniel pull him away before his last words sank in. He turned back to James, his posture less threatening as his hands unclenched. “How *do* you know my mother?” he asked, curious now.

“That parts a little trickier,” James said. He walked fully into the living room and sat down in one of the vacant chairs. His elbows rested on his knees as he clasped his hands together, looking over at Sam and Sky.

“Your mother and I met when she went on vacation in celebration of her eighteenth birthday. God, she was beautiful.” James smiled softly as he remembered. “She’s still as beautiful as the first day I met her. We fell in love almost immediately and knew we wanted to spend our lives together. We loved each other very much.”

He waited several moments before continuing as he thought back to the past. “When she got pregnant, her father disowned her. I knew that I had to do something. I had a family to support so I joined the service. The plan was that I would have your mother join me as soon as I got out of boot camp.”

James looked down at his hands for a moment, taking a few deep breaths before looking back up. “Somehow, your grandfather convinced your mother that I wasn’t coming back and she needed to do the right thing and marry Arthur. So she did. When I got back from boot camp, she had already married him. Thinking I was doing the right thing, I went away.”

James looked around the room waiting for comments but when none came, he went on. “Leaving your mother was the dumbest thing I ever did in my life. Your mother’s life with Arthur was hell.”

Sam smirked when he heard Sky mumble under his breath, “Been there.”

“Your grandfather quickly learned of his mistake and tried to fix it. He helped your mother get away from Arthur and get a divorce but he couldn’t get you two away from him because Arthur’s name was on the birth certificate,” James continued. “By then, Arthur had become too powerful. He had too many contacts in high places. So your grandfather made that little clause in his will, hoping it would keep the two of you safe. I guess it didn’t work.”

Sam didn’t say anything when James stopped talking. He felt too dazed, too confused. He just stared at James, trying to figure everything out in his head.

“So, you’re our real father?” Sam asked quietly nearly afraid to voice the thoughts in his head.

James had tears in his eyes as he nodded. "I never thought I'd be able to claim you as my sons. I spent my life watching you from afar. I was so proud of you both."

Sam raised an eyebrow when James' face reddened slightly. "I had worked with Ethane on a few cases. When he mentioned to me that you were looking for someone to protect Miss Julia, I jumped at the chance. It gave me some small part of your life."

"I have a question," Ethane said, interrupting James. "Is there any possibility that Arthur could have had James investigated and know who he is?"

"No, I thought of that," James quickly said. "I had Lillian moved to a secure location before I took the job. I would never do anything that might endanger her. I love you boys, and I always have, but your mother is my life."

"Okay, what do we know at this point?" Ethane asked.

"Well," Julia began, "we know that Arthur and my father will do anything to get their own way, even kill. They have my daughter and are using her to keep me in line. I'm worried what they might do to her now that I've pissed Arthur off."

"That brings up another question. If Arthur knew that the heir had to be a blood relative, and there is DNA testing now days, why would he try to get you pregnant, Julia?" Ethane asked.

"He hates Sam and Sky because they defied him. He hates anyone related to them. I think at that point, he couldn't have cared less whether he got a blood heir or not. Besides, who would say it wasn't a blood relative?"

"That makes sense, in a very weird sick sort of way," Sam chuckled. "Julia was already married to me and Arthur had no idea of my...feelings for Daniel. I'm sure he thought Julia and I had a normal marriage."

"God damn, that man is sick. We have to do something to stop him," Bear said vehemently. "He's destroying lives for his own sick pleasure."

“But what can we do?” Julia asked. “He’s too powerful. If we try anything he’s going to kill Robin.”

“Julia, what makes you think that Arthur will kill your daughter?” Daniel asked.

“Arthur may not, but my father will. Douglas Spencer is every bit as ruthless as your fa—as Arthur is. They’ve also been good friends for years. They would work together to get what they want,” Julia assured them.

“I won’t let him touch a hair on her head, little one,” Caleb promised as he hugged Julia tight to his side.

Sam smiled, amused at the protective stance that Caleb had taken towards Julia. The odds that he would try for Julia’s heart kept getting bigger and bigger. Sam didn’t think it would be a bad match. Caleb would protect Julia as much as he could.

“Julia, do you know where they have Robin?” Sam asked getting back on track.

Julia nodded her head. “Before I agreed to marry you, my father picked Robin up at school. He is her grandfather so the school released her to him. Why wouldn’t they? Afterwards, he called me and told me that if I ever wanted to see her again, I would marry you. He lets me talk to her on the phone once a week, though.”

“When did you speak to her last?” Sam asked.

“Just after Arthur and my father came to the house. He wanted me to agree to go along with Arthur’s little plan so he let me talk to her.”

“Your father just gave you to Arthur even though you were married to Sam?” Caleb asked through clenched teeth. His arms tightened even more around her small form when she nodded.

“None of you are getting this,” Julia shouted. “These men are evil. They will do anything they can to get what they want. They don’t care who they hurt along the way, or who they kill. If someone defies them, they disappear or show up dead. Look what they’ve already done to Sam and Sky. They have no guilt about taking someone out if they don’t do what they want.”

“Well, I believe our first order of business is to get Robin away from them and bring her here to the ranch where she will be safe,” Sam began. “James, you’re positive our mother is safe?”

“Definitely, I don’t take chances with Lillian’s life, ever!” James said vehemently.

Sam nodded at James’s strong assurance. He would be more comfortable with his mother here at the ranch but he had trusted James with Julia’s life, he would trust him with his mother’s life too.

“We also need to gather together whatever information we can on their business dealings. Jax, can you handle that part?” When Jax nodded Sam turned to Ethane. “My father doesn’t know who you are. Do you feel safe enough going back to Boston and digging around a little? I want you to look into my grandfather’s estate. Find out everything you can on concerning the conditions of his will.”

Ethane nodded.

“Then for now, I think that’s everything. I also think we all need a break. This has been a long night for all of us and we need some downtime. Why don’t we all get some sleep and we’ll meet back here in the morning to finalize our plans?” Sam asked, shivering at the feel of Daniel’s hands tangling in the hair at the nape of his neck.

Everyone nodded their heads in agreement. Tonight had been very emotional for everyone. It just added to the stress everyone else was under, especially Cole and Bear.

Sam knew he would be devastated if anything happened to Daniel, barely able to function. But here they supported him and Sky and would help fight with them against his father. Sam couldn’t ask for two more dedicated friends.

“Julia, will you be okay? Do you need anything for pain?” Daniel asked from his position next to Sam.

Julia shook her head, “No, I’ll be fine, Daniel, but thank you for asking.”

“I’ll take care of her,” Caleb said, causing Sam to look over at the pair, and eyebrow raised in query.

Sam smiled as he watched the two of them leave the room. Yep, Caleb was definitely after Julia. Sam felt okay with that as long as Julia didn't mind.

He had his hands full with Daniel. He kept wiggling around next to him, causing Sam to have a hard time concentrating on any more conversation, a real *hard* time.

Sam could see a devilish little grin on Daniel's face as he his hand strayed precariously close to the waistband of Sam's jeans, causing Sam's cock to harden like a rock. Daniel knew exactly what he was doing. And Sam couldn't be happier about it.

He stood up and pulled Daniel up to stand in front of him. Sam held Daniel in his arms, hiding his hard cock behind Daniel's body, and started walking towards Daniel's bedroom.

Sam totally ignored the whistles and catcalls coming from their friends. He got as far as the hallway before he couldn't take another step without kissing Daniel.

Holding Daniel against the wall, he maneuvered him so that Daniel's legs were on either side of him and pushed his aching cock up against Daniel's. "God, you drive me crazy," he groaned against Daniel's lips.

"Good," Daniel chuckled as he wrapped his hands in Sam's hair and kissed him back.

It was hot, frenzied, and conveyed all of Daniel's need. Sam ground himself against Daniel through their jeans, thrusting harder and harder until he erupted in his pants, nearly dropping Daniel when his knees went weak.

He laid his forehead against Daniel's as he tried to regain his breath. Looking into Daniel's eyes they both began to laugh. "I don't think I will ever get enough of you, love. You make me go up in flames," Sam murmured quietly.

Daniel smiled, pecking Sam on the lips. "And your problem with this is?"



Sam laughed as he carried Daniel down the hallway to his quarters, kicking the door shut behind him, “No problem at all. In fact, I look forward to it in the years to come.”

## Chapter 9

The next morning a very tired, and somewhat sore, Daniel followed Sam into the dining room for breakfast. Sam looked around, chuckling when he realized that they were the first ones there.

As they got some food and then sat down, Sam realized that he loved the fact that Daniel willingly held his hand while they walked and sat beside him, his hand on Sam's thigh.

Sam had been nervous that Daniel would never forgive him, but the more time he spent with Daniel, the more relaxed Daniel seemed. He loved it, and he loved Daniel.

He knew that Daniel would be somewhat nervous about their relationship for a long time to come, but for now he just wanted to enjoy himself, and Daniel.

Sam smiled as he watched Daniel attack his breakfast like he hadn't eaten in days. The worry lines around his eyes seemed to have faded and he laughed a lot more.

But Sam could still see some doubt in his eyes. The only thing Sam figured he could do was to show him his love every second of every day. Eventually Daniel would believe him. In the meantime, he didn't want Daniel out of his sight.

Sam looked up and smiled when Julia walked in with Caleb. Caleb had his arm wrapped around her and had her pulled tightly to his side.

After grabbing a plate full of fresh fruit and some juice Caleb sat down at the table and pulled Julia down to sit next to him, pulling her chair close and promptly started feeding her fruit.

Julia looked over at Sam and blushed at his raised eyebrow. Sam burst out laughing when Caleb looked over at him and growled possessively. Julia seemed to flush even more and buried her red face in Caleb's arm. That just made Sam laugh even harder.

"Sam?" Daniel whispered quietly as he squeezed Sam's hand.

Sam turned to Daniel and could immediately tell that Daniel was upset and needed a little reassurance. He stifled the rest of his laughter and pulled Daniel's chair closer to him. He reached over and turned Daniel's worried face up to his own.

He placed a small kiss on Daniel's lips before looking into his eyes so Daniel could see he told the truth. "I love you, Daniel, you know that, right?"

Daniel hesitated a second then nodded his head.

"I also care for Julia. She is the mother of my child, and I will never abandon her. However, I have no doubt that you are going to be my life. Do you understand that?"

Once Daniel had nodded again he turned to look at Julia and Caleb. His tone now serious as he said, "Caleb, If Julia allows you into her life, so be it. It's her choice. She is a beautiful, sweet, young woman and she deserves some happiness."

Sam paused for a moment, gauging Caleb's anger as he continued talking. "I also want you to remember two things. One, Julia is pregnant by artificial means. And although we are married, I have never known her in *that* way. Hell, I've never even seen the woman naked." He tried not to laugh as Caleb growled at that.

"Two, my heart belongs to Daniel. It always will. I have no designs on Julia other than her safety and happiness. I will do everything within my power to make sure that no one ever hurts her again. So, if she chooses to be with you or anyone else, that is her business. If you hurt her, then it becomes my business."

Sam was a little worried, not that he didn't trust Caleb, but because the man was so big. He stood six foot five in his stocking

feet. Julia, a tiny snippet of a woman, stood barely five foot four. Caleb had a good foot and a hundred and twenty pounds on her.

Besides that fact, Caleb had always been known to not play well with others. To look at them, anyone would think with Bear's size he would be the dominant one, but Caleb's intimidating demeanor surpassed even Bear. Sam worried that Caleb would overshadow Julia's sweet personality.

Caleb watched Sam for awhile before nodding his head. "Fair enough." Caleb was a man of little words.

"Julia, how do you feel about all of this?" Sam asked. He looked up, smiling when everyone else started to trail into the dinning room, some grabbing food, others just coffee.

Julia lifted her head from where she had it buried in Caleb's arm. She flushed red again but continued to look at Sam. "He's sweet."

Sam's jaw nearly hit the floor at her statement, as did everyone else's.

"Sweet? Did you just call Caleb sweet?" Rune asked from across the table. "You do know who you're talking about, right? Caleb Boudreaux, the meanest, orneriest Cajun outside of Louisiana?"

Julia glared at Rune until he held up his hands in surrender. "That's mean. Caleb *is* sweet. You're just jealous because he's better looking than you."

Sam nearly fell out of his chair laughing. Caleb and Rune were identical twins. Only after years of knowing them both of them had he been able to truly tell them apart.

Caleb just grinned and kissed the top of Julia's head before feeding her another piece of fruit.

"So," Sam began once he contained his laughter, "You're okay with this then?" He gestured towards Caleb.

Julia looked at Caleb, her face blushing. "Yeah, he'll do," she smiled at him.

Caleb raised an eyebrow at her but said nothing, just handed her another piece of fruit.

"That's good enough for me," Sam replied as he turned to everyone else sitting at the table. "So, anyone come up with any brilliant plans overnight on how to get our asses out of the fire?"

Ethane nodded. "Yeah, I think I may have something, but it will take some fancy footwork on my part."

"Do tell."

"Well, I've been thinking a lot about your grandfather's will. It seems to me that his estate is the backbone of your father's financial empire. Am I right?"

Sam shrugged. "Got me."

"You're correct. Arthur McKenzie didn't have a penny to his name before he married your mother," James added. "Oh, he had all of the right connections, even then. Knew all the right people. I think that's why your grandfather liked him so much in the beginning."

"Sounds about right," Ethane said. "However, according to your grandfather's will, his estate can only go to a blood relative. So why does your father control it? Why isn't it in your control?"

"We never wanted it?" Sky asked sarcastically.

Sam just rolled his eyes then looked back over at Ethane. "I didn't know that it was an option, Ethane. I always thought it was Arthur's money."

Ethane shook his head. "You should have control of it, not Arthur. Both you and Sky are over the age of eighteen and you are your grandfather's only blood relatives. If Arthur was your biological father, that might be one thing, but he's not. James is."

"Hmmm, I didn't think of that," Sam said, his eyebrows drawn together in a frown.

Ethane turned to James. "James, did Lillian ever sign anything, or was there anything unusual involved in her divorce from Arthur?"

"I don't think so. Nothing I can remember anyway," James replied.

"Is there any way that you can ask her? Would it be safe to call her?" Ethane asked.

“Yeah, give me a minute.” James stood up and moved off to one side of the room, pulling out his cell phone and punching a button on speed dial.

Sam watched intently as James began speaking to someone on the other end, his voice too low for them to make out the words. Sam realized that his mother was on the other end of the phone, just a few feet away.

Surprised showed on Sam’s face when James turned back to them and held out the phone. “Do you want to talk to your mother?” James asked.

Such a simple sentence. And it scared the crap out of Sam. His mother—he hadn’t spoken to her in nearly thirty years. What would he say to her?

He hadn’t even dealt with James being his father. It was nearly too much for Sam to take in. He just sat there looking at James holding the phone out to him like it resembled a snake. He felt frozen. Unable to move or react.

James’s face showed his disappointment as his hand slowly lowered. He started to turn away when Daniel stopped him.

“James,” he said softly holding out his hand for the phone. James stared at him momentarily then handed the phone to him. Daniel took the phone and began speaking to Sam’s mother.

“Hello? Lillian? My name is Daniel. No, Ma’am, I’m Sam’s...uh... boyfriend. Yes, ma’am, he’s right here. No, ma’am, I’m sure he does want to talk to you. Yes, I’m positive. Well, this is all just a little much for him. Until yesterday he thought that Arthur McKenzie was his real father and he didn’t know if you were dead or alive. Yes, ma’am, it has been a very hard situation for everyone.”

Daniel smiled over at Sam, making him nervous. Daniel started laughing when Sam reached for the phone, trying to hold it away from him. “Yes, ma’am, he’s a very good boy.” Daniel laughed even harder when Sam began tickling him to get the phone.

Sam pulled the phone away from Daniel and placed it to his ear. "Hello?" he said quietly, swallowing the lump in his throat, "Mom?"

"Samuel?" whispered the soft voice on the other end. "Oh, Samuel, I missed you so much." She began crying.

"Oh, Mom, don't cry. I'm here now." He looked at James, begging him with his eyes to fix it.

Lillian cried for a few more minutes then sniffled. "You're right, we should be happy now. Is—is Sky there?"

Sam looked over at his brother who practically bounced in his seat. "Yeah, he's here."

"How is he? Is he okay? Oh, I've been so worried about him. He was so small as a baby. Is he okay?" Lillian asked.

"Yeah, Mom, he's fine." Sam looked at Sky as he tried to picture his brother as small and couldn't. He stood upwards of six foot four. Nope, small he was not. "He's more than made up for it."

Lillian sniffled a few more times then said, "So, tell me about this young man of yours."

Sam felt momentarily surprised by her question. He really hoped that it would not be an issue between them because he would not give Daniel up for anyone. But, from the tone of her voice it didn't seem to be a problem.

"Uh, well, he's a doctor," Sam said.

"Do you love him?" she asked quietly.

Sam glanced over at the smiling Daniel. "Yes, Mom, I love him. He makes me very happy."

"Oh that's good, Samuel. That's all I ever wanted for you, for you to find someone you could love like my James."

Sam couldn't believe he was actually talking to his mother, not after all of these years. He felt Daniel squeezed his hand, giving him his silent support. Sam smiled back squeezing his hand in thanks.

"Uh, Mom, I wanted to ask you a few questions if I could. That's why James called. I need to ask about when you left," Sam said.

“Oh, Samuel,” Lillian cried, “I’m so sorry about that. I didn’t want to leave you. I had to. I didn’t have any other choice. I couldn’t do anything. I had no way to prove that you weren’t his. They didn’t have DNA testing in the 1970’s.”

“Even if you couldn’t prove that Arthur wasn’t our father, you were still our mother. Why didn’t you just take us with you?” Sam asked. He tried not to sound like he accused her of anything, but it was hard.

“Oh Sam, I tried to take you with me but Arthur stopped me. He had some of his friends testify and say that I was a bad mother, crazy. The judge gave you to Arthur for your safety. I couldn’t do anything. I’m so sorry.”

“Mom, it’s okay. James told us you had no other choice. Neither Sky nor I blame you. It’s okay,” Sam whispered. Sam’s heart hurt as he listened to her cry. Finally he couldn’t stand it anymore and he handed the phone back to James. “Fix this,” he demanded of James.

Sam wrapped his arms around Daniel and buried his face in his hair to hide his tears. He felt Daniel rub his back, trying to comfort him.

James sat down in one of the chairs at the table and listened to Lillian cry, interjecting a word here and there. Several times he held the phone away from his ear when her crying became too loud.

Finally, Lillian’s crying wound down. “Okay, Lillian, yes, I’ll tell him. Yes, dear, I’m sure Sky will call you as soon as he can.” James glared at Sky, daring him to disagree. Sky just smiled and nodded.

“Okay, yeah. I’ll tell him. Yes, Lillian, as soon as possible. No, I don’t think he does, but I’ll ask him.” James looked over at Sky again. “Your mother wants to know if you have anyone special in your life, Sky?”

Sky’s eyes quickly glanced over at Jax. “No, not at the moment,” he replied sadly.

“No, Lillian. Yes, that’s what he said. Okay, hold on.” He looked at Sky again, rolling his eyes. “She wants to know why not?”



"Tell her I haven't met the right girl yet." Sky laughed.

James stifled a laugh as he put the phone back to his ear. "Yes, you heard him. I have no idea." He listened to her talk for several moments. "Okay, I'll tell him. Yes, Lillian. Okay. I love you too. Bye, honey." James snapped his phone closed and stuck it back in his pocket before turning to look at those at the table.

"Well?" Sam asked. He pulled his face away from where he had had it buried in Daniel's hair to look at James. "What did she say?"

"Okay, your mother told me that we need to look into her father's will and the order from the judge at her divorce that gave Arthur control of you and her father's estate. She doesn't think it was legal. She said that her father's will was iron clad. He made sure of that."

James shook his head, a grimace coming across his face. "Somehow Arthur got the judge to give him control of your grandfather's estate the minute he passed away. I don't understand the legalities of it all but Lillian said that's where we will find our answers."

Ethane nodded his head in agreement. "That's kind of what I figured. I had my assistant fax me a copy of the will and all court documents from the divorce this morning. I'm still looking them over. I also think we need one more thing."

He looked between Sam and James. "We need an independent lab to run DNA testing to prove that James is your biological father."

"Daniel can do that right here," Sam interjected. "We have a state of the art lab downstairs."

Ethane shook his head. "No, we need someone not connected to you and I'd say Daniel is just a little prejudiced where you're concerned. We need an independent lab to run the test."

He looked over at Jax. "Jax, my understanding is that you are quite the computer whiz. Do you think that you can find out about Arthur's holdings? And maybe Julia's father's holdings too? I need any information you can find, holdings, financials, everything."

“Sure, should be no problem,” Jax replied “Maybe I’ll look into their history while I’m at it. Seems to me that these two are just a little too friendly. There’s got to be a connection there.”

“Now comes the hard part. We need to get Robin safely away from Douglas and back here to the ranch before we proceed with taking Arthur down,” Sam said. “I don’t want them to use her to keep us in line. We also need to do it as soon as possible. I don’t want them to have any idea that we are on to them before then. Any ideas anyone?”

“If Jax can get me a list of all of their properties, it shouldn’t be too hard to find out where she is. I say we just go in and get her. It’s not like we haven’t done this sort of thing before,” Cole said. “This is what we are trained for.”

Sam watched everyone at the table nod their heads in agreement. One of their own was in need and they would all, to a man, do whatever it took to help. That’s what friends do.

“Then we are all in agreement?” Cole asked. Every person at the table nodded. “Okay then, operation *Rescue Robin* is in effect. Jax, you find out what you can on the computer. There has to be a trail somewhere.”

Jax nodded and wheeled herself out of the room.

“Jake, I want you and Nick to fly back to Boston,” Cole said as he looked at two other members of his unit. “Watch them. I want to know their every move. Hell, I want to know what they have for breakfast before they are done eating it.”

Cole looked at another member of their unit. “Rune, you gather our supplies. Standard mission gear. You know what we need. Sam, you and Sky stay here with Ethane, go over every piece of paperwork you can find out how to bring these assholes down. Caleb—”

“I will bring the little one home to her mother,” Caleb announced quietly to everyone.

“Yeah,” Cole chuckled, “I thought you might. Okay, then you go with Jake and Nick. Find Robin and bring her home to her mother.

That leaves the rest of you here to protect what is ours. I want extra safety measures taken every precaution. James, I know you said you had moved Lillian to a safe place but I would feel a lot more comfortable if you would bring her here where we can keep on eye on her. Besides, I am sure Sam and Sky would like to see their mother.”

James thought about it for several minutes then nodded his head. “Yeah, I guess it might be better to have her here where I can keep on eye on her. But that means that I won’t be leaving anywhere. I won’t leave Lillian here by herself.”

“That’s fine. That just gives us one more person for protection. I assume you know how to handle a gun?”

James just looked at Cole, rolling his eyes. “Nope, never handled one in my life,” he smirked.

“Yeah, that’s what I thought. Okay, you’re on protection duty as soon as you get back with Lillian.” Cole looked at everyone at the table seriously. “I’m hoping you all understand why Bear and I have to stay here. In case there’s any word on...Mari.” He could barely get her name out. “In case there’s word, we have to stay here. I hope you understand.”

“Cole, we don’t expect you to go,” Sam reassured Cole, patting him on the back. “You’re needed here, as is Bear. No one thinks any less of you for staying. We all miss Mari and want her home. If it were Daniel, I’d do the same thing.”

Cole nodded his thanks.

“Any more questions?” Cole asked. When no one said anything he asked, “Does anyone have anything else to add then?”

“What about what they did to Julia? They both need to pay for that,” Caleb stated firmly.

“Damn, that’s right. We have all that evidence from Julia’s rape kit,” Sam said, slamming his hand down on the table.

“Julia’s rape kit? What are you talking about, Sam? I thought you stopped him before he raped Julia?” Cole asked.

“I did. But before we flew out here from Boston we had Julia examined by a doctor. He did a rape kit on Julia. While there wasn’t actually any sexual evidence since Arthur didn’t rape Julia, we have pictures and all the medical information from her injuries. I had it all documented and sealed by the doctor.”

“Could this put them away?” Cole asked.

Ethane saw where Cole was going with this. “Yeah, any prosecutor on the planet would be thrilled with what we have. It would be a slam dunk conviction.”

Caleb looked down to where Julia cringed next to him. “Can we convict them without using this information? Without dragging Julia into this?”

Sam looked over at Julia and the silent tears falling down her face. He immediately felt horrible for not considering her feelings in all of this. He was so intent on punishing Arthur and Douglas that he hadn’t considered how this might affect her.

“Julia,” Sam asked quietly, “How do you feel about this? Do you want us to use this or not?”

“They need to pay for what they did. If this can help, then use it.” Julia wiped her face as she looked at Sam. “I’d rather not if we don’t have to. I would prefer to just forget it all.”

Sam nodded, “Okay, honey, if we can get them without using it, we will. I’ll do everything I can not to.”

“Julia, we will find what we need to get them without using you to do it. I promise,” Ethane said as he patted her knee. “I know we can find a way. We are all relatively intelligent men here.”

When Caleb looked at the hand touching her knee and growled at it, Ethane laughed. “Well, most of us anyway. Some of us are still cavemen.”

The laughing at the table only made Caleb growl more as he pulled Julia tighter against him. Finally the laughter died down and Cole said, “Well, then, everyone know what they need to do?”

When everyone nodded Cole scooted his chair back and stood. "Okay, let's get to it then."

Almost as if they had choreographed it, everyone stood, pushed their chairs in, and walked away from the table to do what they were assigned to do.

Jake and Nick packed to go to Boston. Caleb escorted Julia to her room. Ten minutes later he left and went with Rune to pack their standard mission gear. The four-man team left for Boston fifteen minutes later.

Ethane and Sky began going over the papers that had been faxed to Ethane earlier. Jax hit her computer and James left to get Lillian. Cole and Sam insured that more protection was added around the ranch as well as informing their ranch hands of the needed extra security.

After everyone had left Julia walked back into the dinning room and sat down. She looked over at Daniel, the only other person left sitting at the table. "Is it always like that?"

Daniel laughed. "Yeah, pretty much. But usually it's all of them leaving."

"It must be hard being left behind."

"It is. But they are my friends, my family," Daniel said as he set his coffee cup down on the table. "I want to be there to make sure they're okay. But, ultimately, I know the best thing I can do is to be here when they come home. But, yeah, it's hard to sit here knowing that they are out there in danger."

"How do you deal with it? I mean knowing what they do is so dangerous? How can you handle it?" Julia asked.

"I love Sam and I love the guys. I know that they are all good at what they do. They never take chances. Cole is a good commander. He would never make one of them do anything that they couldn't do. He always has their welfare in mind."

Daniel took another sip of his coffee as he tried to decide how much to tell Julia. "They are also very close. Closer, I think, than a

normal team would be because of their shared experiences. Any one of them would give their life for any teammates without thinking about it.”

He took a deep breath as he continued. Daniel didn’t want to give away the team’s secrets but he knew Julia needed to know.

“I guess that’s how I deal with it. They all take care of each other, look out for each other. They are connected in some elemental way that you and I will never understand. If you decide to get involved with Caleb, you need to understand that. They need each other just to survive. Caleb will never be *normal*. He will never be like other men.”

He grabbed Julia’s hands in his and looked at her closely. “But if you decide to give your heart to Caleb he will take care of you, treasure you, and protect you for the rest of your life, and your children too. It’s worth the heartache, Julia, when we sit here at home and worry about them.”

“So we’re just supposed to sit and wait for them to come home?”

“Sort of.” He laughed.” But think of it this way. These guys go out and face danger on a daily basis and beat it. They get into horrible situations. Providing a home for them, a safe place where they do not have to be strong or unfeeling, we can give that to them. I’m not saying you have to be Little Miss Homemaker, just be here to welcome them home with open arms. Just love them. It’s well worth it.”

“I just don’t know if I can handle knowing he’s out there in danger,” Julia said.

“Give it time. Get to know him.” Daniel squeezed her hands. “But if you really want proof, when he gets home, go to him and open your arms. See what his reaction is. You’ll be pleasantly surprised, I promise.”

“I’ll think about it.” Julia pulled her hands away and looked around the room. “So is this what you do while you wait? Just sit here?”

Daniel chuckled. "Oh no, I have plenty to keep me busy."

"Need some help?" Julia asked. "I'm going to go crazy if I just sit here."

"Sure, come with me and I'll have you so busy you'll forget he's even gone." Daniel stood up and reached for Julia's hand. Julia smiled, stood up, and followed Daniel out of the room.

## Chapter 10

It had been two weeks since the team had left when the call finally came. Caleb and Rune had seen Robin. She looked fine. They also believed that they had a plan to get her free from Julia's father, Douglas, but it would take some maneuvering on their part.

In the meantime, Sam and Sky had worked out a plan with Ethane to pull the power and financial support away from Arthur. It was all a matter of timing.

"Okay, I've come across some court documents that state that the bulk of your grandfather's estate was supposed to be held in trust for you until you reached the age of twenty-five years old."

"We're thirty-eight, Ethane," Sky remarked.

"I know. The estate should have been turned over to you years ago. Arthur never did that. In fact, he's used the money to further his own interests."

"So, do you have an idea how we're supposed to get it?" Sam asked.

Ethane nodded. "For one, Lillian signed an affidavit for me that states Arthur knew he was not your biological father when she married him and when she divorced him."

Sam chuckled when Sky let out a low whistle. "Bet that's going to piss Arthur off."

"Well," Ethane said, "you add that to the DNA tests that came back confirming that James is your biological father, and Arthur doesn't have a leg to stand on. With that alone we could take it all away from Arthur."



Sam shook his head as he sat forward, resting his elbows on his knees and clasping his hands together. "No, he'd just find some other way to make our lives miserable. We need to put him away."

"I was hoping you'd say that," Ethane said as he grinned. "I want to file charges against Arthur for fraud and embezzlement. Everything that your grandfather's money purchased now belongs to you two...the companies, the houses, the cars, everything."

Sam's eyes widened as his mouth dropped open. "Ethane, that's a lot of money. Are you sure?"

Ethane nodded his head. "I'm willing to bet that every penny can be traced back to money Arthur withdrew from your grandfather's estate. If we can prove all of it, Arthur's financial empire will crumble."

"So, what do we need to do then?" Sky asked as he too sat forward.

"You and Sky have to file paperwork with the court system that says you want your grandfather's estate turned over to you. We also need to get an injunction signed by a judge to keep Arthur from liquidating any of his assets until a court certified accountant can go over everything and trace the money Arthur's used."

"That might take a bit," Sam said.

Ethane nodded. "Several months for sure. You need to decide what you want to do about that little girl before I file these papers. Arthur will know within hours what I've done."

Sam shook his head. "We can't do anything until Caleb gets Robin free. I don't know what they would do to her if they got mad enough."

"Then I suggest you arrange for Caleb to get her before I see the judge. I have no doubt that he has friends in the courts. He'll know probably before I even get out of courtroom."

"I think we need to give the word to Caleb in person. If you can get all of the paperwork ready, Ethane, we can be waiting by the

courthouse for Caleb's call. Once it comes, we won't have a lot of time before Arthur gets wind of things. We'll need to move fast."

Ethane nodded as he gathered his papers together. "Sounds good to me. I'll get this all ready. It shouldn't take me more than a day once we get back to Boston. Once we get the call from Caleb, we can go right on in."

"Won't we have a problem getting in to see a judge? Don't you need an appointment for that or something?" Sky asked.

"Usually, that's true but I just happen to know this judge who owes me a favor," Ethane chuckled. "I'm sure he would see me if I asked nicely."

Ethane stood up and started out of the room only to stop and look back at Sam and Sky. "There is one more thing. The injunction papers have to be served to Arthur. Do you want to go when that's done?"

Sam's lips twitched as he envisioned the look on Arthur's face when he was served and injunction that not only took all of his money away but kept him from stealing anymore. His face soon broke out in a grin. "Oh yeah!"

\* \* \* \*

"Hey, baby, you in here?" Sam called into the infirmary looking for Daniel. He flew out in the morning and wanted a little time with Daniel before he left.

Sam had no idea how long he would be gone. Leaving Daniel behind was the one part of this whole thing he did *not* look forward to.

"Yeah, back here," called Daniel from storage room. Sam followed the sound of his voice, finding Daniel squatting next to a box of gauze pads that he stacked on a shelf.

"Hmmm, nice," Sam mused looking at the way Daniel's tight jeans molded to his ass.

Daniel turned to look at Sam over his shoulder giving him a sexy look, "Like that, do you?"

Sam licked his lips. "Oh yeah," he nearly growled as his cock began to swell.

Daniel went to his knees and crawled over to Sam. "Then you'll really love this," Daniel chuckled as he unbuttoned Sam's jeans and pulled his hardening cock out. Daniel looked up into Sam's half-lidded eyes as he wrapped his hungry lips around him.

Sam nearly fell to his knees from the pleasure of having Daniel's tongue caressing him. "Oh yeah, baby, just like that," he groaned as he wrapped his hands in Daniel's hair and pushed his hips towards him.

"You feel like heaven." Sam didn't feel shy about talking dirty during sexual play. And it *so* turned Daniel on. He went hard as a rock in a matter of seconds.

Daniel lips broke into a smile around the head of Sam's cock. "Who the hell is Heaven?"

"Funny, now get your lips back around my cock, smart-ass." Sam laughed as he began slipping his boots off. "Hold on, honey, don't let go."

He used his feet to push his jeans down and off his legs until he stood naked above Daniel from the waist down, his legs spread as far as he could stretch them.

Daniel knew what he wanted. He licked his fingers and ran them down past his balls to the puckered hole beyond. Rimming the edge he stuck one finger quickly all the way in as he sucked Sam's cock down until he hit the back of Daniel's throat, then another one.

"Oh god, yeah, harder, baby, harder." Daniel pushed a third finger in and began pumping into his tight hole even as he began to suck his cock harder, moving his head back and forth.

Sam began pumping furiously when Daniel's fingers found his prostate, his hands clenching Daniel's head still as he felt his orgasm

approach. "Daniel, I'm gonna cum!" he cried out as he erupted inside of Daniel's mouth.

Daniel drank down Sam's seed, pumping all three of his fingers into Sam's ass a few more times before pulling them free. He grabbed the buttons of his jeans and nearly ripped them free in his haste to get his pants down.

"Knees," he demanded breathlessly, "Need in you, now!" He yanked on Sam's shirt to pull him down even as Sam dropped to his knees and turned around, waving his ass in Daniel's direction.

"Come and get me, baby."

Daniel grabbed a bottle of lotion off the shelf and squirted it on his hard cock before grabbing it and lining it up with Sam's hole. He slowly began pushing in past the first ring. Hesitating, he waited until Sam could take him then slid in a little more, trying to take his time so as not to hurt Sam.

"Too slow, Daniel," Sam cried as he pushed back with his hips, impaling himself on Daniel's cock, wrenching a deep moan from Daniel.

"Oh damn, you're so tight," Daniel cried out as his eyes nearly rolled back in his head. He began slowly pumping himself in and out of Sam, the tight feeling of Sam wrapped around his needy cock almost more than he could take.

Daniel leaned over and began placing kisses along Sam's back, his hands running up and down Sam's sides. He buried his face into Sam's back, smelling his woodsy scent, as he grabbed Sam's hips, his fingers digging into him, and began to furiously pound into Sam, his cock caressing Sam's prostate with every stroke.

"Sam," Daniel roared as he felt his balls tighten up and the head of his cock exploded. He heard Sam cry out and felt him clench tightly around Daniel's cock as he found his own release.

Even as he continued to push the last few times into Sam, Daniel reached around under Sam and grabbed his drained cock, pumping it

a few times until Sam became too sensitive and collapsed to the floor beneath Daniel with a groan

Daniel pulled himself free of Sam and grabbed a towel from the shelf to clean them both up before collapsing on the floor next to Sam. He reached over and wrapped Sam in his arms, kissing him lightly on the lips before tucking Sam's head under his chin.

"Love you, baby," he whispered into Sam's hair.

"Love you too, Daniel, always."

\* \* \* \*

Daniel stared down at Sam who slept curled around him, his head on Daniel's chest and tucked under his chin. Sam's arms wrapped around him and a leg pushed between his.

For such a big strong alpha male, Sam seemed to crave cuddling with him and this seemed like his favorite position. Sam nearly always got into this position when they crawled into bed or after sex. He'd even pull Daniel's leg over his hip so that their cocks pressed together when Daniel wrapped his arms around him.

Strange position considering that Daniel's feet barely reach Sam's knees. Sam seemed to like it and Daniel couldn't deny him anything so he went with it, sometimes turning to Sam before he even asked. Sam seemed the most comfortable sleeping like this, with both of them totally wrapped around each other.

Sam had been in Boston for three days when he had called Daniel and told him he missed him, asking him to come to Boston. Daniel hadn't even hesitated, just caught the next flight out.

Sam had met him at the airport, wrapping him in his arms and frantically kissing him right there in the airport in front of everyone before dragging him back to his hotel room.

Once there, they had barely made it in the door before Sam began making love to Daniel until they both fell into a satisfied sleep, Sam wrapped around Daniel in his favorite position.

Daniel glanced over at the clock. Sam needed to leave for the courthouse and Daniel to catch his flight back to the ranch. He hated to wake Sam but knew that he couldn't be late. Like everyone said, timing was everything.

"Sam—Sam, come on, honey, time to get up. You can't be late, baby. Wake up," Daniel said softly as he rubbed Sam's back.

Sam nuzzled Daniel's chest even as he opened his eyes and looked up at Daniel. "Morning, sexy. You sleep okay?" Sam asked as he reached up to kiss Daniel good morning.

"Yeah, I slept great. You?" Daniel asked as he returned Sam's kiss, rubbing his hands down Sam's chest.

"Much better now that you're here. I hate sleeping without you."

"Sam," Daniel laughed, "We've only slept together, what, all of two weeks? How could you possibly know whether you like sleeping with me or not?"

"Two weeks, four days, and..." Sam looked at his wristwatch, "roughly seven hours. And believe me, I know."

"Sam—" Daniel began only to be interrupted by Sam sitting up and crawling up to sit back against the headboard.

"Come here," Sam said as he held out his arms to Daniel.

Daniel turned over to sit between Sam's legs, scooting back his back pressed against Sam's stomach, Sam's semi-hard cock pressed between them.

When Sam grabbed him by the chin, tilting his face up, Daniel raised his eyes to meet Sam's. He swallowed hard at the love he could see shining in Sam's pale blue eyes.

"Baby, listen to me," Sam said after releasing Daniel's lips. "I love you. I will always love you. I know I still have a lot to make up for and it may be awhile before you truly believe me, but I do love you."

Daniel's mind whirled as he watched Sam reach over to the nightstand and pull a small blue velvet bag out of the drawer. What was Sam up to?

"I had planned on taking you out to a dinner, romancing you, wining and dining you, whatever it took, before giving this to you. But I think this might be a better time. I want you to know that I really am in this for the long haul."

Daniel watched with baited breath as Sam opened the small velvet bag and turned it upside down, dumping two gold bands in the palm of his hand.

"From the moment you became mine I knew that I would never love another. You're it. There will never be anyone else for me. I want to spend the rest of my life with you, Daniel." Sam took a deep breath before hurrying on.

"Now, I know we can never be legally married, at least not right now, but I want the world to know you belong to me, just as I belong to you. In my heart you are already my partner. I want to share everything with you, our hearts, our money, our names, everything."

"You want me to take your name?" Daniel whispered. He was astonished at Sam's words.

"No, baby, I want to take yours," Sam said. "I want you to know that I really mean this, forever."

"Sam, you don't have to take my name for that. Just love me. That's all I need. "

"I know that, Daniel, and I do love you, but you mean more to me than anything in the world and sharing your name would be an honor for me."

"You'd do that? Legally change your name to Evans?"

"Samuel Evans...kind of has a nice sound to it, don't you think?" Sam asked

"No," Daniel began. "I think Sam and Daniel Evans sounds much better." He took one of the simple gold bands out of Sam's hand and slid it on Sam's trembling finger. He held out his hand, his ring finger lifted and waited while Sam slid the other gold ring on it with shaking hands.

“My parents were the two happiest people I ever knew, as long as they stayed together. They lived and breathed each other. Jax and I used to tease them because they couldn’t go more than two hours without talking to each other on the phone. They seemed so happy just being in each other’s presence, whether they read a book, watching a movie, or just sitting together on the porch, as long as they were together, they were happy.”

Daniel lifted a hand to wipe to wipe away the tears he saw gathering in Sam’s eyes. “I always wanted that kind of love. I hoped that if I waited, if I had patience, that I would find it,” Daniel whispered.

“And have you, Daniel? Have you found that kind of love?”

“Definitely,” he whispered as he reached up and wrapped his arms around Sam’s neck pulling him down into a long love filled kiss. It was a kiss to end all kisses, sweet, loving, sensual, passionate, everything Daniel felt for Sam he put into his kiss.

Sam felt his heart melt all over again as Daniel kissed him. He knew this was right, knew that Daniel had finally forgiven him, that he loved him.

He would never take Daniel’s love for granted. He had nearly lost Daniel because of his own foolishness. He would never be that stupid again.

Daniel belonged to him now and he would hold on to him with all his love and strength for the rest of their lives. “I love you, Daniel.”

“I know.”



## Chapter 11

“Are you ready for this, Sam?” Ethane asked as he looked over at him.

Sam nodded...then shook his head. “Not really. I hate having anything to do with my—with Arthur. I’d rather not have to do this at all but I won’t miss the look on his face when he discovers his little shenanigans are over.”

Sam glanced over to where his brother was leaning against the side of the building. His face was tilted up as he watched the tall building that housed the courthouse they were waiting to enter.

This wasn’t going to be easy for either of them. Arthur McKenzie had been a monster when they were growing up, not a father. Neither Sam nor Sky had come away unscathed.

Sam could only hope he was a better father to his child than Arthur had been to him. That was assuming Julia didn’t kick him to the curb after all the hell his family had brought into her life.

Even though he had her word that she wanted him in the baby’s life, Sam wouldn’t blame her in the least if she did. And then there was Caleb to deal with. He knew Caleb had his sights set on Julia...and Julia didn’t seem to be fighting it.

Sam was deep in his thoughts, he nearly jumped out of his skin when his cell phone rang. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled it out and flipped it open.

Taking a deep breath, he answered the phone. “Hello?”

“It’s done.”

Sam rolled his eyes. Just once he wished that Caleb would speak a complete sentence. Sometimes, it was very aggravating trying to get

information out of him. Although, Sam would probably have a heart attack if Caleb had an entire conversation.

“How is she?” Sam asked, referring to the little girl that Caleb had rescued.

“Fine. I’m taking her home,” Caleb replied.

“Okay. We’re going to head on in to the courthouse then. Call us when you land.”

Sam chuckled, flipping his cell phone closed when Caleb just grunted at him. He looked over at Sky, nodding towards the building as he put the phone back in his pocket.

“Caleb has Robin and he’s taking her home to Julia,” Sam said to Ethane, who nodded and picked up his briefcase off the ground. “Let’s do this.”

Sam and Ethane walked up beside Sky and the three of them walked into the large courthouse. Sam and Sky walked behind Ethane, who had suddenly become all business.

He actually looked a little different than his usual smiling self. The dark navy blue business suit he wore wasn’t unusual, but the straight stern face and briefcase Ethan held in his hand gave him a decidedly uptight lawyer look.

Ethane stopped outside of a large wooden door. He turned to look back at Sam and Sky as he grabbed the door handle. “Okay, wait right here. The judge may want to talk to you.”

Sam swallowed hard, his nerves just about frayed. He looked around the hallway they stood in, spotting a wooden bench to one side. Gesturing to Sky, he went and sat down.

Until Ethan called them, there wasn’t much else they could do but wait. Sam sat down, crossing one leg over the other as he watched people coming and going.

When Sky sat down next to him, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, Sam reached over and rubbed his brother’s back. “How you holding up?”

Sky chuckled. “As well as expected, I guess. You?”

Sam shook his head. "Truthfully? I'm scared."

Sky sat up and turned to look at Sam, astonishment written all over his face. "You? Why?"

Sam dropped his arm from Sky's back, shrugging his shoulders. "You and I both know what he's like. This is going to piss him off worse than anything we've ever done. What if he decides to go after Daniel?"

"You don't think he really would, do you?" Sky asked.

Sam gave a little lift of his shoulders. "I don't know. But, besides you, that would be the quickest way to hurt me. Arthur's going to want revenge."

Sam watched Sky turn to look back down at his hands, twisting them nervously in his lap. He didn't think anyone except Sky truly understood the fear they had of Arthur McKenzie.

After their mother had disappeared, their lives had been hell. Even after all of these years, the time they had spent in the service and no matter how big and strong they were now, Arthur was still the big bad man that had beaten them for the smallest transgression.

That wasn't something a person could get past overnight. Logically, Sam knew that Arthur had no real control over them. But, there was a part of him that was still the small boy wanting his father's approval, and wondering why his father was so cruel.

Sam didn't know if he would get past that any time soon. He knew for Sky, it was worse. At least Sam had the distinction of being the first born child. It had given him some leeway. Sky, on the other hand, had no value for Arthur McKenzie.

"What are you going to do if he goes after Daniel?"

Sam lifted his head and looked over at Sky. "Kill him."

Sky chuckled. "Yeah, I can see that. With all of our contacts and know how, we should be able to make a body disappear fairly easily."

Sam nodded. "I say we give Ethan a chance first but if that falls through, I'm done hiding from him. I won't let Arthur interfere with my life anymore. Not now."

“Now?” Sky asked curiously.

Sam grinned. “Daniel’s agreed to marry me.”

He watched Sky look at him, an eyebrow raised in query. Sam could barely contain his joy at just being able to say the words about Daniel’s commitment to him. The smile on his face just got bigger the longer Sky stared at him.

“Really? So, Daniel’s going to be my brother-in-law, huh? You think that will give me an *in* with Jax?”

“Couldn’t hurt,” Sam chuckled.

“Well, congrats, brother. But I’m counting on you to put in a good word for me with Jax,” Sky said as he reached over and shook Sam’s hand.

“You’re okay with it?” Sam asked.

Sky nodded. “I just want you to be happy. As long as Daniel does that, I could care less about anything else.”

“He does. He makes me very happy,” Sam replied.

“So, he’s forgiven you for fucking up?”

Sam shrugged his shoulders again. “I imagine I’ll be making it up to him for years to come. There will always be that part of Daniel that will always wonder if I’m serious about him. But, at least he’s giving me the chance to prove it to him.”

“You have to admit, he has a right to feel that way. You kept telling him you couldn’t be in a relationship with him then kept going back to him. I imagine it was pretty confusing for him.”

“Yeah, I know,” Sam said, nodding his head. His hands clenched into fists as he remembered the things he had done. “I wanted him, maybe more than I’ve wanted anything in my life. I just didn’t know how to have him.”

“And you do now?” Sky asked.

“No,” Sam chuckled. “I’m still playing this by ear. I’ve known Daniel for years, but other than thinking he was a good looking man, I never considered having a relationship with him until recently. It just didn’t come up.”

“What changed your mind?”

“Daniel did. Oh, Cole had something to do with it when he put us on the same project but Daniel was what really made me see what a wonderful man he is. It’s more than just how hot he is. It’s the way he thinks, how he cares for people.”

“Yeah, he’s pretty special,” Sky replied. “Although, hot? Not so much!”

“Bite your tongue!” Sam laughed. “Daniel’s very hot! You’ve just never seen him when he—uh...never mind.” Sam could feel his face heat up as he realized what he had been about to say.

“And I hope I never do, bro. He may trip your trigger but he doesn’t do a thing for me. His sister, however...” Sky chuckled. “There’s some seriously sexy genetics in that family.”

Before Sam could reply, the large wooden door Ethane had gone through opened and Ethane motioned to them. Sam and Sky jumped to their feet and quickly walked across to him.

“The judge wants to talk to you both for a moment,” Ethan said as he held the door open for them to walk through.

Sam’s hands clenched anxiously at his side as he walked into the room. He waited while Ethane shut the door then walked into another room, following closely behind them.

“Judge Harris, I would like to introduce you to Samuel and Skyler McKenzie,” Ethane said as he gestured to them before taking one of the two vacant seats.

Sam looked over to see an older man dressed in a simple white dress shirt, black tie, and black slacks sitting behind a large wooden desk.

The stern look on his face gave Sam an ominous feeling in his stomach. Was he going to deny their claim? Sam could feel his stomach start to flip flop as he sat down in the other vacant chair across from the judge. He felt Sky stand behind him, one hand on Sam’s shoulder.

“Gentlemen, Ethane has provided me with a lot of paperwork here,” the judge said as he sat back in his chair. He held a pen in his hands, rubbing it between his fingers. “I don’t like paperwork.”

“Uh...” Sam said, turning to look at Ethane in confusion. “I’m sorry, sir?”

“If I’m going to agree to sign this injunction, which will just add more paperwork to my already large load, tell me why I should do it.”

“Because Arthur McKenzie is a sick bastard that—”

“Skyler!” Sam exclaimed as he turned to look back over his shoulder at Sky. “Not helping here.” He turned and looked back at the judge, thinking on his words before he spoke.

“Arthur McKenzie has spent most of his life using people for his own gains. The money, that we suspect is the foundation of his financial empire, was left to us by our grandfather.”

“And why haven’t you gone after this money before now?” the judge asked.

“Because we didn’t know it was ours. Our mother disappeared when we were eight years old. We thought she was dead and—” Sam said.

“I’m assuming that since she signed an affidavit that she’s not?”

Sam shook her head. “No, she’s been in hiding for several years, living with our biological father, James. Ethane should have given you blood tests to prove that.”

Sam watched the judge shuffle through the papers in front of him, finally holding one piece of paper up to read. After a moment, he nodded his head. “Yes, it’s right here.”

“Arthur McKenzie is not our father. He has no right to that money and we want it,” Sam stated vehemently.

The judge looked up at Sam, an eyebrow raised. “So, this is all about money?”

Sam shook his head. “No, it has nothing to do with money. Hell, I wouldn’t care if every last penny got donated to charity. I want Arthur stopped. This is the only way we could think to do it.”

"Legally, you mean?" The judge chuckled.

Sam's eyes widen considerably as he stared at the judge. "Uh, yeah." He cast a quick look over at Ethane out of the corner of his eye to see how he was taking the judge's words.

He felt a little better when he saw the smirk on Ethane's face. Sam looked back at the judge, the knots in his stomach loosening up just a little.

"Arthur McKenzie has a lot of power in this town. It's time that ends. I have no doubt that if the right people investigated, they would find that not all of his dealings have been legal. However, because of the people he knows—" Sam started.

"Because of the people in his pocket, you mean," Sky added from behind him. "The people he's bought off."

Sam nodded. "He needs to be stopped. Not just because we hate the bastard but because he's using his power to ruin people's lives," Sam said.

He watched the judge read over several more pieces of paper, feeling each minute tick by like it was forever. Finally, the judge lifted his head and looked at Sam and Sky.

"What are your plans if I sign this injunction, Mr. McKenzie?"

"Well, once he's served, Ethane said that we need to have a court certified accountant go over Arthur's accounts. He says that every penny could probably be traced back to our grandfather's estate."

"And after that?" the judge asked.

"Get married!" Sam exclaimed.

The judge looked confused for a moment, quickly looking back down at the papers in his hands before looking back up at Sam. "I was under the impression that you were already married, Mr. McKenzie."

"Yes and no, sir" Sam answered hesitantly.

"Either you are or you're not, son, which is it?"

"Technically, I am married. And Julia's a wonderful girl. But it's just a marriage of convenience for both of us. If we can get this thing with Arthur dealt with, we plan on getting divorced."

“And you’ll be getting remarried? Is this new girl more *wonderful* than your present wife?”

Sam could feel his face heat up as he cast a quick glance over at Ethane, desperately looking for assistance.

“Daniel is a very nice young man, judge. I think that he and Sam will be very happy together, if we can get this mess with Sam’s stepfather cleared up,” Ethane replied, chuckling quietly.

“I see,” the judge replied, setting the papers in his hands down on the desk. “And do you plan on having a marriage of convenience with Daniel also?”

“Uh, no, sir, not if I can help it,” Sam replied.

“And you, young man?” the judge asked as he looked past Sam to Sky. “What do you plan on doing if I sign this injunction? Do you have any wives hanging around?”

Sky chuckled. “No sir, but if I play my cards right, I may get a date with Daniel’s sister.”

\* \* \* \*

The moment they stepped out of the judge’s office, Sam leaned back against the wall and let out a loud relieved sigh. He couldn’t believe the judge had signed the injunction.

Sam had been sure, after all of the questions he had asked, that the judge was going to tell them he couldn’t, or wouldn’t, do it. He had almost fell out of his chair when the judge had signed the injunction keeping Arthur from liquidating any of his holdings.

He had admonished Sam and Sky for letting things get this far even as he signed a restraining order that would keep Arthur from contacting Sam, Sky, or Julia for the next two years.

It had been gut wrenching, mentally taxing, but it was done. At least that part of things. Now they just had to have Arthur served. Sam looked over at Sky and grinned. He couldn’t wait.



"I assume the two of you are ready to have Arthur served?" Ethane asked.

"I am," Sam said. "Sky?"

"Count me in," Sky replied.

Ethane nodded. "Come on, then. We need to go downstairs and file these papers then request an escort to have these papers served on Arthur. Because you're the complainant, you are not allowed to serve them yourself but I don't see why you can't accompany the processor."

Sam and Sky followed Ethane down the stairs to the filing office. They waited just outside while Ethane filed their paperwork, leaning against the wall to wait.

When Ethane came out, Sam stood up straight, an eyebrow raised. When Ethane nodded, Sam blew out another sigh of relief. The papers had all been filed. Now came the interesting part of things.

Sam, Sky, and Ethane waited outside the filing office for about a half-hour for the process server to arrive. When he did, a small nerdy looking fellow, they suggested that a uniform officer accompany them.

At first the processor argued until Ethane explained the situation, then agreed. He arranged for two uniform officers to accompany them and they left for the McKenzie office building.

The closer they got to McKenzie Enterprises, the more nervous Sam became. His hands started to sweat and his heart beat faster. He knew if he didn't calm down, he was headed for a top of the line panic attack.

Pulling his cell phone from his pocket, he dialed Daniel's number, holding his breath until he answered.

"Hey, baby, how'd it go?" Daniel immediately asked when he answered the phone.

"Talk to me!" Sam ordered.

"Doesn't sound like it went real well, Sam. What happened?" Daniel asked.

“No, it went fine. The judge signed everything and we’re on our way over to have Arthur served,” Sam said quickly.

“Oh, that’s why you called. So, what do you want me to say? Should I tell you what I’m doing right now...all by myself...in the stock room...no one to play with? Maybe I should tell you what I *not* wearing?” Daniel chuckled.

Sam smirked, then chuckled. Then he started laughing. He laughed until tears streamed down his face. When his laughter finally died down, Sam wiped the tears from his eyes.

He could see Sky and Ethane staring at him like he had lost his mind. He just might have...if Daniel hadn’t been there to save him. “I love you, Daniel.”

“I know.”

## **Chapter 12**

Sam climbed from the car and stood on the sidewalk. He looked up at the tall gray mortar and glass building in front of him. It was tall, maybe fifty floors or more. Arthur McKenzie must love it.

It seemed rather cold and impersonal to Sam, much like Arthur himself. Sam wished he could pull it down brick by brick and destroy the huge symbol of Arthur McKenzie's power.

Turning to look at Ethane and Sky as they climbed out of the car behind him, Sam realized that he was about to do just that. Ethane held the first brick in his hand.

"Ready?" Ethane asked.

"You seem to be asking that a lot today, Ethane. You know any other words?" Sky chuckled.

Ethane smiled. "One or two but I thought I'd save those for when I meet the bastard."

Sam chuckled, nodding his head. He could understand the need to call Arthur every four-letter word he could think of. It was almost a compulsion.

However, he knew that he needed to keep his cool. Sam had no doubt that Arthur would try something stupid. Sam and Sky held all of the cards and Arthur wasn't going to give up easily.

"Okay, let's do this," Sam said as he headed into the building, Ethane, Sky, the process server, and two uniformed officers behind him.

The ride up the elevator to the thirty-seventh floor seemed to take forever. As he watched the floor numbers on the digital readout pass, Sam's hands began to sweat again.

He quickly rubbed them on his pants, hoping that no one around him could tell how apprehensive he really was. He felt like a five-year-old going to see his parent when he knew he had done something bad.

Sam turned to the two uniformed police officers, noting their uniforms, gun belts, and badges. "When we get there, it would better if you waited outside for just a few minutes. I can get us into the office, then Ethane can come get you if we need you."

Both officers nodded.

As the elevator doors opened to the thirty-seventh floor, Sam had to take a deep breath before he could get his legs to work. When he could move again, he walked out and headed straight for the large double glass doors marked McKenzie Enterprises.

"Can I help you?" said a very neatly dressed young woman behind the counter.

"Yes, I'm here to see Arthur McKenzie," Sam replied.

"Do you have an appointment, sir?"

Sam shook his head. "No, but I'm his son, Samuel McKenzie. I'm sure he'll see me." Sam had the satisfaction of watching the woman's momentary surprise before her cool mask of disinterest slipped back over her face.

"I'll see if Mr. McKenzie is available. Please have a seat," the woman replied as she gestured to the cushioned chairs against the far wall with one hand, picking the phone up with the other.

Sam quickly reached out and stopped the woman from dialing the phone. He gave her his best friendly smile.

"Oh, please don't tell him we're here. I know the way. Besides, this is a surprise. My brother Skyler flew in from the West Coast just to see our father."

The woman seemed to hesitate for a moment, then slowly hung up the phone. "I'm not sure that's such a good idea," the woman said slowly.

Sam smiled at her again. "Please? Arthur hasn't seen my brother in quite some time and I so wanted this to be a surprise. I can show you my ID, prove to you that I am Arthur's son."

Sam said as he started to reach for his wallet. The woman quickly held up her hand. "No, that's perfectly okay, Mr. McKenzie. I know you're his son. He has pictures of you and your lovely wife on his desk."

Well, that comment would explain why Sam's flirting wasn't working. Maybe Sky would have better luck. Sam motioned for Sky to come talk to the receptionist.

"Well, I know he doesn't have any pictures of Sky's wife because he's not married."

"Really?" the receptionist replied, her gaze moving to Sky as he walked up. "I...er...I mean, please, go right on in. I'll hold Mr. McKenzie's next appointments until he tells me otherwise."

Bingo! Sam smiled, nodding his head at Sky, then towards the woman. He bit his lip to keep from smirking when Sky turned on the charm, and smiled at the reception, making her cheeks blush.

Turning to head towards Arthur's office, Sam couldn't help but question what he would have done if the receptionist had been a man. While no one was as gorgeous as Daniel, Sam wondered if he would have flirted?

After a moment, he dismissed that thought. After his experiences on his original return to Boston, he had tried to be with other men and it hadn't worked.

Sam was pretty sure he was only interested in Daniel, and he was perfectly happy with that. Daniel's sexy little body would keep him interested for years. His keen intellect would keep Sam interested when his mind wasn't in Daniel's pants, no matter how infrequent that might be.

Stopping before a large wooden door, Sam waited for Sky, Ethane, and the process server to catch up to him. When they did, he opened the door and walked in. He didn't bother knocking.

He immediately spotted Arthur sitting behind his big cherry wood desk, a pen in one hand, and a drink in the other. "A little early to be drinking, isn't it, Arthur?"

"Samuel, to what do I owe this pleasure?" Arthur sneered at him as he stood to his feet. "Come to apologize for kicking me out of your house?"

"Not exactly," Sam replied as he stepped forward into the room allowing Ethane, Sky and the process server to enter behind him. "I have a friend I'd like you to meet."

Sam indicated the process server who stepped forward. "Are you Arthur McKenzie?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm Arthur McKenzie. What is this all about? What's going on, Samuel?" Arthur huffed as he looked over at Sam, the Sky.

"Arthur McKenzie, you've been served," the process server said as he slapped some papers on Arthur's chest, then turned and left the room.

"What the hell is this?" Arthur shouted as he opened the papers and quickly read over them.

"I'm an attorney, Mr. McKenzie. I would be happy to explain exactly what these papers are," Ethane said as he stepped forward.

Sam stepped over to stand next to his brother, his heart beating rapidly in his chest as Ethan explained what the papers were. He felt Sky's hand briefly brush his, giving him a little squeeze as he watched his stepfather's world fall apart.

"Judge Harris has been kind enough to sign this injunction. Simply stated, it says that you are prohibited from liquidating any of your holdings or accessing any of your bank accounts until such time as a court appointed accountant can go over your financial accounts," Ethan explained.

"The second paper is a restraining order. It states that you are prohibited from contacting Samuel and Skyler McKenzie and Sam's wife Julia for the period of two years. At such time, they may file another restraining order against you."

"In a nutshell, *father*, everything you own, everything that you built on money that should have belonged to Sky and me is now ours. Your little empire is gone," Sam said gleefully.

Arthur threw the papers down on his desk as he glared across at Sam and Sky. "That's ridiculous. None of this belongs to you or your brother. I built it and it's mine."

"It was yours. But it was built on money that belonged to us. Money that should have been given to us when we turned twenty five, as our grandfather's will stated," Sky said vehemently.

"You don't know what you're talking about. I—" Arthur shouted.

"I know exactly what I'm talking about. You're not my father. You have no right to that money. Grandfather left it all to blood relatives. You are not a blood relative."

"I'm your father, Samuel, and you need to remember that," Arthur replied.

"No, James is my father and the judge has the DNA testes, plus an affidavit from my mother, to prove it." Sam laughed at the surprised look of surprise on Arthur's face.

"Yes, Arthur, Lillian is very much alive and in a very safe place. You won't get to her. And it wouldn't matter if you did. Every bit of evidence that we have has been turned over to the courts."

Sam smiled at the little smirk that covered Arthur's face at his words. He put his hands flat on the desk and leaned forward. "Don't even think about it, Arthur. Several copies have been made of everything and put in safe places. You can't make this evidence disappear."

"We have the evidence of your attempted rape of Julia McKenzie," Ethane added. "And, I also believe that the police will be

highly interested in the kidnapping of Julia's daughter, Robin, who has been safely returned to her mother."

Sam had the satisfaction of watching Arthur's face flush red, then turn nearly purple in rage. "It's over, Arthur."

Standing back, Sam started to turn around to smile at Sky when he caught Arthur's quick movements out of the corner of his eye. He turned back just in time to see Arthur pull a small silver pistol out of his desk and point it in his direction.

With a loud yell, Sam pushed Sky and Ethane out of the way just as he heard the gun go off. A split second later, he felt a searing pain in his arm as he fell to the floor.

He grabbed his arm, absently noting the red blood seeping through his fingers as pain began to swamp him. *Fuck, that hurt!*

The sudden thought that Arthur was still armed had Sam struggling to his feet to stop him. All he could think about was that Arthur was going to go after Sky next. He hadn't been able to save his brother after all.

Just as Sam gained his feet, Arthur came stomping around the desk, waving the gun wildly in his hand as he yelled at Sam and Sky. "You'll never get my money. I'll kill you first, then your mother. Then I'll go after that bitch of a wife of yours."

Sam threw himself in front of Sky and Ethane as Arthur took aim again. He could see the rage and insanity glowing in Arthur's eyes as he started to pull the trigger.

This was it. He was going to die right here in some cold cement and glass building, hundreds of miles away from the most important thing in his life.

Regret and grief swiftly filled Sam as he realized he was never going to see Daniel again. He would never be able to prove to him that he truly loved him.

Tears filling his eyes, Sam lifted his hand as if he could ward off the bullet he knew was coming. This close, the shot was sure to be lethal. He was going to die!



Just as Sam accepted the fact that he would never see Daniel again, the door behind him flew open, banging loudly against the wall, as two uniformed police officers ran in, guns drawn.

Before Sam could react, the police officers yelled out for Arthur to drop the gun. When he turned the gun on them, Sam heard two shots ring out and Arthur's white shirt began to turn red.

Sam stood there, dazed and quickly going into shock from blood loss and pain. He watched as Arthur fell to the floor, the gun dropping from his hand.

"Sam?" someone said. "Sam!"

Sam turned his head to see Sky standing next to him, a similar stunned expression on his face as he too looked down at Arthur. The bloom of red on his chest was still spreading across his chest.

"Sam? Come on man, snap out of it. You need to come sit down before you fall down," Ethane said as he pulled on Sam's good arm. "It's over, Sam, come on."

Sam glanced over at Ethane, his forehead crinkling in confusion. "It's over?"

Ethane smiled at him. "Yes, Sam. It's over. Arthur will be going away for a long time now and there's no way he can get out of this one."

Ethane pulled Sam over to sit in one of the office chairs as he explained. "He tried to kill you, Sam, then he tried to kill two uniformed police officers. That's attempted murder. He'll go away for a long, long time."

As Ethane applied pressure to Sam's wound, Sam watched the police call the paramedics and backup. He could see that Arthur was still alive by the slow rise and fall of his chest. He didn't know if he was happy about that or not.

If Arthur died, then all of this would be over, no question. But did he really want the man dead? Or did he want him alive long enough to receive the justice he so richly deserved?

"Sam?"

Sam turned his head to see Sky sitting next to him, holding out a cell phone to him. Sam tilted his head in confusion as he reached for the phone. "Hello?"

"Sam?"

"Daniel?" Sam asked.

"Hey, baby, how are you? Sky says it's all over," Daniel said.

Sam looked over to where Arthur lay on the floor, one of the police officer's working on him, trying to stop the bleeding until the paramedics arrived.

"Yeah, I guess it is," Sam replied. "Ethane says it is, anyway."

"Are you going to be okay?"

Sam looked down at the small wound in his arm where Ethane held a towel against it. Then he looked over at Arthur again. Lastly, he glanced over at Sky, who didn't have a scratch on him.

"Do you still love me?" he finally asked of Daniel.

"Of course," Daniel replied quickly.

"Then I'm going to be fine."

## **Chapter 13**

Daniel stood watching out the window as the men of Alpha Squad walked towards the house. They all laughed as if they didn't have a care in the world and life was wonderful. And it was. Daniel couldn't be happier.

All had gone pretty much as planned in Boston. Robin had been returned to her mother, not a scratch on her. Caleb had ridden in like a white knight and delivered her to her mother in the middle of the night.

He hadn't even waited for the rest of the group to be done in Boston before flying Robin home to her mother. Daniel was pretty sure that Julia had been properly grateful, as he had not seen Julia or Caleb again that night after putting Robin down to sleep.

Ethane had helped Sam and Sky see a judge and file their court documents. They had been lucky enough to get a judge that Arthur and Douglas did not have in their pockets.

Even now the police were investigating them both for numerous crimes, including Arthur's attempted rape of Julia and the shooting of Sam. Daniel wouldn't be surprised if both Arthur and Douglas, Julia's father, had criminal charges filed against them before too long.

Some of the best news had been the return of Mari. The deranged doctor that had kidnapped her had been out for revenge against Cole and Bear for the deaths of his brothers during a mission. They were even now planning their wedding.

Sam's injury had turned out to be just a flesh wound. Still, Daniel had been very upset when he had talked to Sam until he had actually

gotten a look at the wound himself and he could reassure himself that Sam was okay.

Lillian and James had been waiting at the ranch for their sons when they returned from Boston and it had been a wonderful heartfelt reunion for all.

All in all, it had been an eventful time for everyone. But Sam was back in his arms now and okay. He had even moved all of his belongings into Daniel's quarters as soon as he had gotten home from Boston and unpacked. They even planned a commitment ceremony to be held here at the ranch in a couple of weeks.

Daniel stepped out the front door and into Sam's waiting arms. He had his love, his friends, and his family. What else did he need? He had everything he had ever wanted. Patience did pay in the end.

# **THE END**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stormy Glenn believes the only thing sexier than a man in cowboy boots is two, or three, men in cowboy boots. She also believes in love at first sight, soul mates, true love, and happy endings.

When she's not being a mother to her six teenagers or cleaning up after her two 70 pound lap puppies, you can usually find her cuddled in bed with a book in her hand or her laptop, creating the next sexy character for her stories.

Stormy welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website at [www.stormyglenn.com](http://www.stormyglenn.com)



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