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Reunion

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

Men in Love

REUNION

Carol Lynne

Dedication

Dedicated to all the people who've emailed to ask for more.

Chapter One

Pacing back and forth in his small office, Jake Sommers picked up the phone and called Cree, one of his partners.

"Sheriff Sommers."

"It's me. I need you to come home if you can."

"Something wrong?"

"I'm not sure, but I want to tell you and the rest of the family when we're all together." Jake looked through the one-way glass at Remy, his other partner in the five-some. He knew his partner's class was almost over and hopefully the women wouldn't mind having the rest of the afternoon off.

"I'll be there in thirty minutes. Can you at least give me a hint?"

Jake grinned. Cree hated secrets, always had. "It's about Gabe and the mother we've been trying to find for the past eleven years."

"News?" Cree questioned further.

Rolling his eyes, Jake zeroed in on Remy's ass. Even after all these years, he still got a hard-on every time he gazed at those sweet cheeks. "You're not getting any more information until you get here."

"Spoilsport."

"I'm hanging up now."

Cree must've heard something in Jake's voice, because his next words were right on target. "You're staring at Remy again, aren't you?"

"Uh huh," Jake grunted.

"I take it he has on those light blue shorts?"

"Uh huh."

"Damn. Don't let him change clothes before I get there."

"What if he just takes them off?"

"You've got twenty-five minutes. Do your best."

"Call Cory and Jenny for me, would ya?" He loved the women he shared with Cree and Remy, but neither of them knew how to get off a phone under twenty minutes and he something a little more important to do than chat.

"You're gonna owe me big time, cowboy."

"Yep." Jake rubbed his lengthening cock through the outside of his jeans. Remy was instructing the women to take a break and get a drink. "Gotta go. I'll meet you at the house."

After disconnecting, Jake pushed the intercom button. "Remy? Can I see you in my office?"

He watched as Remy turned and nodded before speaking to the women sitting on the thick workout mats. Their business, *Fighting Back*, had grown by leaps and bounds over the last ten years. Women were coming from all over the country to learn how to defend themselves and regain their self confidence.

By the time Remy walked into the office, Jake had his fly open and his cock in hand. Remy's eyes went wide as he let out a whistle. "Is that for me?"

"You and those damn shorts. I need you to cancel your next class, or have one of the other guys take it."

Walking towards Jake, Remy didn't stop until they were cock to cock. "You think it's gonna take that long?"

"Hell, no. But we have to go up to the house afterwards for a meeting."

Remy's hand replaced Jake's, wrapping around Jake's thick length. "Meeting?"

"Mmm hmm," Jake moaned, as Remy stroked him. He struggled to push down the tight spandex fabric of those pretty blue shorts. "Need you."

"Got me," Remy said, licking a path up Jake's neck.

The wet trail ended at Jake's mouth, Remy's tongue pushing in deep and hard. After successfully exposing Remy's cock, Jake wrapped his arms around his love and ground against him.

Releasing the cock in his hand, Remy slid his length alongside Jake's. "Good," Remy grunted, grabbing Jake's ass.

Increasing his pace, Jake bit the tender skin of Remy's exposed neck. It was always like this with Remy. Rarely did they take the time to fully undress, except at night. Most often

their passion got the better of them in the office. In the old days, before the facility was built, the barn had been the place for their afternoon rub-offs.

"Gonna," growled Remy.

"Uh huh," Jake agreed. His cock felt like it would catch fire at the pace they'd set. "Now," he panted, seconds before his cock erupted, shooting thick streams of warmth between them.

"Jake!" Remy shouted as he came.

Pulling Remy with him, Jake led them over to lean against the desk. "So good."

Remy licked and nipped at Jake's jaw before delving in for another tongue tangling kiss. "Always has been."

"Mmm hmm," Jake agreed.

* * * *

By the time they cleaned up and made it to the house, Cree's Sheriff's vehicle was already in the drive.

"Oops," Remy said. "We're busted."

Jake shrugged and got out of the truck. "What else is new?" He wrapped an arm around Remy's waist and headed up the front porch steps, stopping to give Bobo a scratch.

"I can't look at that damn dog without thinking of Blue," Remy said.

Jake felt his chest tighten. The same way it always did when he thought of his old hound. "I miss him, too."

Blue had been gone for three years, but his pup, Bobo had turned into a damn fine kids' dog, even if he had taken Blue's spot on the porch furniture.

When Jake opened the front door, he was almost knocked off his feet by one of his ten-year old twins, who seemed in a hell of a hurry.

"Hey, where's the fire?" he asked, grabbing the back of Cash's shirt.

"Right behind me, and he's pissed," Cash grinned up at Jake.

Jake looked towards the stairs and saw Carson sliding down the banister. Releasing his grip on Cash, he smiled. "You'd better get going. He's gaining on you."

Cash took off, with Carson hot on his heels.

"Hi, dads," Carson said, as he flew by.

Remy looked at Jake and shook his head. "I wonder what Cash did now?"

"No tellin'," Jake said and walked with Remy into the home office where they had all their family meetings.

"It's about time you two got here," Cree said, greeting each man with a kiss.

Jake released his hold on Remy to give Cory and Jenny a kiss, before taking his usual seat behind the desk. He watched as Remy took a little too much time greeting the women. "When the three of you are finished, I'd like to get started."

Remy withdrew his tongue from Cory's mouth and grinned over his shoulder. "You sure weren't in that big a hurry when it was your turn."

"Just sit down, smartass."

Remy took a seat on the wide leather couch and pulled Jenny onto his lap. "Okay, shoot."

Jake didn't really know how to start. "I got a call earlier from someone claiming to be Gabe's sister."

"Sister?" Cree asked, sitting forward in his chair. "Did Gabe ever say anything about a sister?"

"Nope." Remy shook his head. "Of course he was only three when he was abandoned in front of that drugstore in Cheyenne." Remy rubbed his jaw.

"What else did she say? How did she know to call here?"

"According to her, she ran into a guy in Gillette that Gabe served with in the Navy. He told her she was the spitting image of someone he'd once known. When she questioned him further, he told her Gabe's name and said he didn't know where to find him, but he did know the three of us ran *Fighting Back*."

"What's her name?" Jenny asked.

"Addy Constentine," Jake answered. He rubbed his eyes and sighed. "According to Addy, Gabe's real name is Adam Constentine. Although they were told over and over again by their mother that their new last name was Gabriel."

"Shit," Cree spat.

"Yeah. So, not only do we need to find a way to tell one of our dearest friends that he has a sister, but the name he's been using all his life isn't his own."

"We shouldn't tell Gabe anything until we know for sure," Cory chimed in.

Jake nodded. Maybe asking one of Gabe's partners would be the way to go. "I'm gonna call Cotton." He looked from Remy to Cree and narrowed his eyes. "Unless one of the two of you can confirm a birthmark on his inner thigh?"

Both Cree and Remy chuckled and shook their heads.

"Good," Jake replied, and picked up the phone.

He dialled Cotton's, cell number and waited.

"Hello?"

"Hey, it's Jake, how're things in Oklahoma?"

"Good, the centre has a waiting list a mile long. How're things at *Fighting Back*?"

"The same." Jake took a deep breath and looked around the room at his family. "Listen, I received a call today." Jake went on to tell Cotton about the call from Addy.

"Can't be," Cotton said, sounding shocked. "Wouldn't he have remembered a sister?"

"We don't know, buddy. She told me that Adam Constantine had a small strawberry coloured birthmark on his inner thigh, right up close to his groin."

"Fuck," Cotton replied.

"I take it Gabe's got the same birthmark?"

"Yeah he does, pretty little thing. What now?"

"To be honest, I don't know. I think I'll call Bram and have Addy checked out."

"What if she is Gabe's sister? I don't think either of them would like the idea of Bram poking around in her life."

"Too bad," Jake said. Although Bram hadn't been a SEAL with them, they all loved him. With his expertise in tracking people, he was definitely the one to call. "I love Gabe like a brother, and I won't have anyone in a position to hurt him without knowing more information. They'll just have to get over it."

* * * *

Rex hung up the phone and put his head in his hands. He'd hoped for this day for so long, and now that it was finally here, he was torn. What if this woman wasn't on the up and up? She could be after Gabe's money. They'd done pretty well in the oil business and their bank accounts reflected it.

"Baby?"

Startled, Rex looked up to find Gabe standing in the kitchen doorway. He held out his arm and waited for his man to join him. "Hey, sweetheart." He pulled Gabe onto his lap and kissed him.

"Something wrong?" Gabe asked, running his fingers through Rex's grey hair.

"Nope, just tired I reckon. You come in to fix supper?"

"Yeah, well, kind of. I came in to see if you'd like to go into town to eat. Boone and Billy won't be back until late."

Rex shook his head. "I can't believe our boy is getting ready to head off to college in a couple of months." It didn't matter to any of them that Billy was adopted, they loved him like he was their own.

"We have to get him through graduation first." Gabe grinned as his stomach growled.

"Hungry?"

"Starved," Gabe answered leaning in for a kiss.

Rex wrapped his man tighter in his arms and kissed him back. He'd do anything to keep Gabe from getting hurt again. "I need to take a trip to the Triple Spur. Jake has a horse he wants me to look at. His wranglers can't seem to tame him."

Gabe pulled back and looked into Rex's eyes. "When?"

"I'll leave in the morning." Rex ran his fingers up Gabe's spine. He could see the hurt in Gabe's face, in the slump of his shoulders. Rex, Gabe and Boone had very rarely been apart over the years for more than a day at a time. Rex wondered if he should invite them along. Maybe it would be better to hide their activities out in the open.

"What do you say, wanna go to New Mexico?"

"What about work around here?" Gabe questioned.

That was his Gabe, always worried about the facility. "We have plenty of people to help while we're gone. Hell, Thor practically runs things anyway."

Gabe brightened even more. "I'd like to see my old friends." Gabe chewed his bottom lip. "We should wait and ask Boone, and, oh shit, what about Billy?"

Rex rolled his eyes. "Billy's eighteen. I think he's old enough to stay home by himself."

"Yeah, yeah you're right. Okay," Gabe said getting up from Rex's lap. "Let's go eat and we'll discuss it with Boone when he gets home."

"Fair enough." Rex gave Gabe's cock a quick brush with his hand.

* * * *

It was almost eleven by the time Boone and Billy came through the door. "Hey, how was your trip to Stillwater?" Gabe asked.

Boone flopped beside them on the couch and pointed towards Billy. "Let him tell you. I'm too damn tired."

Billy chuckled and started telling them about his day spent on the OSU campus.

Gabe snuggled up with Boone and Rex and listened. Billy had grown into a hell of a young man. With Bram's brother, Thor's, guidance, Billy had learned to do almost everything a walking man could do. Gabe's heart sank, except Billy would never walk. He'd always be the good guy stuck in the wheelchair. They were all very proud that he'd decided to go into physical therapy so he could continue helping out at the centre.

As Billy finished up his story, Boone started to snore. Laughing, Billy shook his head. "I'm going to bed. From the sounds of it, I'd say Dad's ready as well."

"Yeah," Gabe agreed and watched Billy wheel towards his ground-floor bedroom. He looked at Rex and winked. "What do you think would be the best way to wake him?"

Rex grinned and leaned in for a kiss. Gabe savoured every kiss that Rex bestowed. His partner sure knew what a tongue was for. Soon their kiss turned into foreplay, Gabe straddled Rex's lap, rubbing the hard ridge of his erection against his man.

As their moans grew louder, Gabe felt a third hand on his ass and knew they'd accomplished their task. He broke the kiss and looked into Rex's steel grey eyes. "I think someone's awake."

Rex leaned over to Boone and gave him one of those wonderful kisses.

"Let's take this to our room," Gabe said, getting off Rex's lap. He pulled both men up from the couch and headed upstairs.

"So, anything happen while I was gone?" Boone asked, as they entered their large bedroom.

* * * *

Bram hung up the phone. "Problem?" Declan, his partner, asked from beside him.

"Maybe," Bram answered, as Declan ran a soothing hand over his back. "I think I have some new information on Gabe's mom."

"That's great, right?"

"Maybe." He went on to tell Declan about the phone call he'd received from Jake. "That name rings a bell. I just can't figure out why."

Bram turned to Declan and kissed his forehead. "I'm going to get on the computer for a bit. I won't sleep until I figure out why that name sounds so familiar."

Declan nodded. "I'll get Brier to help me with dinner."

"Thanks," Bram gave Declan another kiss before going to his office. He powered up his computer while he unbraided his hair.

He typed the name Constantine into Google and hit enter. The movie by the same name came up as well as more than a dozen entries about the Roman Emperor. Bram knew it wasn't the Emperor that tickled his brain. He kept scrolling through page after page but couldn't find what he was looking for.

Suddenly, he could see the name in his mind like it was written in front of him. "Damn, no wonder I can't find it."

Bram went back to the search button and typed in Constentine. "Pay dirt," he whispered, as he found what he was looking for. Pulling up the first entry for the name Angelo Constentine, Bram held his breath.

He read through the text before going back to search and typing in Chicago Tribune. In the archives section of the newspaper, he once again inputted the name Angelo Constentine.

Article after article filled the screen. "You've been a busy man, Mr. Constentine." Bram skimmed the text until he found the information he was looking for.

"Dinner's ready," Brier, Bram's twin brother, announced, from behind the closed door to Bram's office.

"Be right there," Bram called, shutting down his computer. He'd seen enough for one night. Now he needed to decide what to do about it.

Opening the door, he was greeted by Brier's big toothy smile. "I made your favourite, stir fry," he said proudly.

Bram gave his brother a hug. Brier had been with them for two years and Bram never tired of looking at that smile. They'd had to move away from the rehabilitation facility in Oklahoma as part of Brier's release, but Declan was lucky enough to find a programme in Albuquerque that worked with head injury victims. Because of the abuse Brier had suffered as an infant, he'd never fully recover.

With their move, Bram was able to go back to work for Amir, Nicco, and Mac at *Three Partners Protection Agency*, and he loved it. Pulling away from Brier, he studied the face that was a mirror image of his own. "Declan let you fry?"

Brier grinned and shook his head. "He said maybe next time, but he let me cut up the vegetables. Come on, before it gets cold." Brier led Bram by the hand to the kitchen.

Declan was already seated at the table with a knowing look on his face. "Brier told you his surprise, didn't he?"

"Couldn't help it," Brier said. "I got too excited."

Bram smoothed Brier's shoulder-length hair behind his ears and kissed his cheek. "Surprise or not, it looks like a great dinner, thank you."

"You're welcome." Brier blushed and sat at the table.

After filling their plates, Declan cocked his head and stared at Bram. "Well?"

Bram knew Declan wanted to know what he'd found on the computer. Casting a quick glance at Brier, Bram gave a subtle shake of his head. What he'd found wasn't pretty and the last thing Brier needed was more nightmares to keep him up at night. Declan gave a nod that he understood.

"Mmm mmm, this is good. Where'd you learn to cook like this, brother?"

"Ms. Lilly," Brier answered with his mouth full. He took a drink of milk before continuing. "She said I could come over anytime I wanted, and she'd show me how to cook stuff. I asked her if she knew how to make chocolate cake with icing and sprinkles and she said yes. So I think that's what I'm gonna learn next."

"That's a fine thing to learn. Nicco's mom has sure taken a liking to you."

Brier blushed again. "She said I'm good company."

"You are," Bram said, reaching across the table to pat his twin's hand. "Declan and I might have to go away for a few days on business. Do you think you'd like to stay with Lilly while we're gone?"

"Sure, if it's okay with her."

"I'll call her tomorrow." Nicco's mother Lilly adored Brier, so Bram was sure it wouldn't be an issue.

"Maybe Jackie could drive me to work?"

Bram nodded his head. He hadn't thought of how Brier would get to the training centre. Lilly rarely drove since her heart attack the previous spring. He thought of Jackson Benoit, one of the instructors at the *Three Partners* bodyguard training facility. The tall good looking blond seemed to have a soft spot for his brother. "Would you like to call him, or should I?"

"I don't know his phone number, but if you can get it for me, I'll call," Brier said, with a smile.

Bram smiled back and nodded. It seemed his brother had his first crush. "Right after dinner." He glanced up and saw the big grin on Declan's face. Apparently Bram had been the last to know about Brier's feelings towards Jackie.

Trying to calm their pounding hearts, Declan and Bram collapsed on the bed. "So good," Declan panted.

"Every time," Bram agreed. He rolled over and picked the towel up off the floor to clean his man. "I knew the name Constentine was familiar, I just couldn't place it."

"And did you?" Declan asked, drawing circles around Bram's nipples.

"Angelo Constentine, does that name ring a bell?"

Declan's eyes narrowed in thought. "Yeah, but I don't know why."

"Well, he's been profiled on almost all the major news programmes. He's the big crime boss in Chicago."

"And? How's he figure into Gabe's past?"

Taking a deep breath, Bram sighed. "If Gabe's real name is Adam Constentine, Angelo is his father."

"Oh, no." Declan sat up. "What about his mother? Did you find anything out on her?"

Bram pulled Declan back down into his arms. "According to the newspaper articles, she and the two children disappeared around forty years ago. There were rumors at the time that Angelo himself had them killed. Others speculated it was the handy work of one of his biggest rival at the time, Sonny Graceffa."

"So you think this Addy woman is his daughter?"

"I don't know, but if Gabe is a Constentine and the information gets into the wrong hands, it could be very dangerous."

Chapter Two

The next morning, Nicco received a call from Bram on the newest development. It was decided that Bram and Declan would accompany Nicco and his lovers Amir and Mac to the Triple Spur. The consensus was they should tell Gabe the truth. After living a life wondering why his mother had abandoned him, Nicco was certain Gabe would need all the support he could get.

So far, all indications were that Addy was who she said she was. If she knew about the birthmark, it was a pretty good bet she was Gabe's sister.

The drive up had been a pleasant one. Their lives were so busy they seldom got a chance to talk outside of the office. Amir kept them entertained with stories from the bodyguard side of the business. He was in charge of training new recruits as well as keeping seasoned bodyguards up on current techniques and technology.

Pulling into the Triple Spur almost felt like coming home to Nicco. His eyes immediately went to the top of the barn. It was from that vantage point he'd been able to end Buck Baker's reign of terror over Jenny.

As the car came to a stop, Nicco leant over and woke Mac up with a kiss. "Wakey, wakey."

Mac opened his eyes and yawned. "Good nap."

Everyone in the SUV erupted in laughter.

"Hope so. You snored like you were going into hibernation," Declan chuckled.

Mac grinned. "My boys kept me up too late last night."

That earned him a pinch and a wink from Amir. "Well, we won't do that again, promise."

"Bite your tongue," Mac chuckled along with everyone else.

"So is Addy supposed to be here?" Nicco asked Bram.

"I believe so. Jake was going to call and invite her down. She's been living in Wyoming for the past several years."

The front door of the house opened and their friends came pouring out. Nicco squeezed Mac's thigh. "Ready?"

"Yep."

They piled out of the SUV and made their way to the porch, leaving their luggage for the time being. Cree was the first to greet Nicco, wrapping him up in a bear hug.

"It's been too long," Cree said.

"Not that long." Nicco hugged back. "We were just up for Easter."

"And it's July. As I said, too long." Cree released his hold on Nicco and moved down the line.

Nicco received hugs of welcome from Remy, Jake and Cory, before Jenny stepped up. "I do believe you get more beautiful with every child," Nicco declared.

Jenny ran a hand over her hips. "Well, I definitely seem to be getting broader. I told the men after I had Molly I was done. I think four is a good number."

"Speaking of, where is my pretty little ray of sunshine?"

"Napping, but she should be up in another thirty minutes. She loves it when all her uncles visit."

Nicco grinned. Damn he loved that little girl. At three and a half years-old, Molly was cute as a button with Remy's curly black hair and deep green eyes.

"Let's get inside out of this heat," Jake said, taking Jenny's hand and leading her towards the house.

Nicco put an arm around Amir and walked up the porch steps. "Is Addy here yet?"

Cree shook his head. "She called and said she'd be in around four."

"What time do you expect the Oklahoma gang to get in?" Mac asked.

"Around five or six. It depends on how many stops they make." Cree ushered them inside and closed the door.

Locky was stretched out on the couch reading a book when they entered the living room. Nicco turned to Cory. "Locky's reading already? He's only six. I was still looking at pictures at that age."

Cory grinned. "He's been reading since he turned four. He can't seem to get enough. Jake's decided he's going to be our scholar."

Locky looked up from his book, small wire-framed glasses sitting on the end of his nose. He smiled and set the book on the table as he flew into the waiting arms of Uncle Bram. "Thanks for the books," Locky said, kissing Bram's cheek.

Nicco knew Locky and Bram had a special connection. Bram had confided in him that if he had a son, he'd want one just like Locky. Although Cash and Carson were of Native American ancestry like Locky, Locky's temperament was vastly different.

"You have them all read yet?" Bram asked.

Locky looked at the big Native American sheepishly. "Yeah, but I just keep rereading them."

Bram shook his head. "I'll have to send you some more."

"That would be great." Locky continued to hold Bram around the waist, in no hurry to let him go.

Jake slapped Bram on the back. "Better you than me. I can't keep up with him. He's gone through darn near every book in the library for his reading level."

"I'll get him some harder books. If you don't convince him to try new things, he'll get bored."

"What kind of books, Uncle Bram?" Locky asked.

"Chapter books. I think you'll enjoy them." Bram tousled Locky's spiked black hair.

"I'm sure I will."

Cree walked over and grinned down at his son. "Why don't you go outside and read. You need to enjoy the sunshine."

"Okay, Dad." Locky gave the rest of his uncles a hug before tucking his book under his arm and heading outside.

"Good kid," Bram commented.

"One of the best," Cree agreed.

Cory and Jenny came back into the room carrying trays of lemonade. After everyone had a refreshing drink, they took their seats.

"So, what've we got?" Jake asked Bram.

Bram went on to explain everything he'd learned about Angelo Constantine. When he was finished, he shook his head. "It could not only get messy, but dangerous. Luckily we have an entire staff of trained bodyguards at our disposal should we need them." Bram looked at Nicco for confirmation.

Nicco nodded. "Whatever you need to keep the people we love safe," he agreed. He thought about his mom and wondered just how far Angelo would go if things began to get dicey. His mom had been through enough. Her previous heart attack had shaken him to his core.

Mac squeezed his thigh in support. Nicco looked at his partner and rested his hand over the top of Mac's. He knew whatever happened, he'd have a group of people who loved him at his side.

"So we're telling Gabe as soon as he gets here?" Cree asked.

"Yep. I think it's the best thing. It's his life that will be opened for everyone to see if we decide to pursue this mystery," Bram said.

* * * *

By the time they pulled into the Triple Spur, Gabe couldn't wait to get out of the truck. He hated that long drive from Oklahoma. Even a nice hand job from Boone hadn't helped for long.

As soon as Rex put the truck into park, Gabe opened the door and hopped out. He was in the midst of stretching the kinks out of his body when the front door opened and his friends came running to greet them.

Even after all these years, Boone was still a little shy with the large group made up of mostly ex-military men. Gabe could see it on Boone's face as the group rushed towards them. He pulled his lover to his side and grinned. "I'll protect you," he chuckled, giving Boone's temple a kiss.

"Screw you." Boone snorted and elbowed Gabe in the ribs.

"How was the drive?" Jake asked, giving Gabe and Boone a hug.

"Long and boring," Gabe answered. He got another jab to the mid-section. "Well, most of it was boring," he laughed, looking into the eyes of his lover.

Gabe received hugs and greetings from the rest of his friends with Boone still by his side. A woman on the front porch caught his eye as he was making sure he'd gotten to everyone. He narrowed his eyes and stared. "What the fuck?" he whispered.

There was something familiar about her. Gabe couldn't put his finger on it, but it was almost like a tickling at the back of his mind. *Had he met her before?*

He turned to Rex, who was staring at him over the truck bed. "What's going on?" He suddenly realised everyone was looking at him. His ears started ringing as his blood pressure went up. What the hell was going on and why was everyone watching him?

Rex must've recognised the distress he was in. His lover immediately came around the truck. Standing toe to toe with him, Rex leaned in and gave Gabe a kiss. "Do you know her?" Rex asked.

Gabe looked from Rex to the woman on the porch and back again. "I don't know. Do I?"

Boone's grip on Gabe's waist tightened as Rex began to look guilty. "Rex?" he warned. He'd had enough of the games. Somebody better tell him what the hell was going on before he blew a gasket.

"She claims to be your older sister," Rex whispered.

Gabe's knees damn near buckled. Luckily his men were there to help hold him upright. "Wh...What?" *My sister?* Why didn't he remember a sister? Where had she been when his momma had abandoned him? It was obvious the woman was older than he was, so why didn't she do something to stop it? In seconds he switched from shocked to pissed.

"Would you like to meet her?" Rex asked.

"No. I don't think so," Gabe said. He pulled away from his partners and stalked towards the barn. He needed to be alone, and what better way than to hop on a horse and take off.

"Gabe," Rex called, catching up to him. "Wait!"

Gabe spun and looked Rex in the eyes. "You knew. That's why we're here, isn't it?"

Rex had the decency to look guilty. "We didn't want to say anything until Bram did some checking on her story."

Gabe turned and took three steps before stopping and turning back to Rex. He pointed towards the woman on the porch. "Even if she is who she claims to be, I don't give a shit. Where the hell was she when my mother left me in Cheyenne? Where's she been all these years? Huh? Can you answer that?"

Rex shook his head. "No, but I bet she can. That's why she's here."

"Yeah, well, maybe I don't feel like asking a complete stranger why I had to grow up in foster care. I'm going for a ride. *Alone.*"

He didn't give Rex a chance to object. With one last look at the woman, Gabe continued on to the barn. Rex knew him enough not to follow. Given the mood he was in, he'd have probably punched his lover had he tried to stop him. He felt betrayed, scared and pissed, and he knew he needed to work those emotions out of his system before he confronted the group at the house.

* * * *

Rex watched as the man he loved rode out of the barnyard. He turned to find Boone right behind him. "I fucked up," he said.

Boone wrapped his arms around him. "We did what we thought was right. He'll come around."

"I hope so." He gave Boone a quick kiss before turning towards the house. "Let's go find out about this woman."

They walked arm in arm to the porch. He released his hold on Boone and held out his hand. "I'm Rex Cotton and this is Boone Fowler."

"Addy Gabriel," she said, and shook Rex's and Boone's hands.

He could tell Gabe's sudden departure had upset her. He refused to apologise for his lover's actions. It was a lot to take in on the spur of the moment, and he felt like shit for not preparing Gabe ahead of time. Gabe had every right to be pissed. They'd all been so busy

trying to protect Gabe from getting his hopes up once again, they'd forgotten to put the shoe on the other foot. Yeah. If his friends and lovers had ambushed him, he'd be livid.

"Shall we go in where it's cooler?" Jenny asked.

Rex looked at Jenny and smiled. He'd known her most of her life, having been foreman on her stepfather's ranch. She was still pretty as a picture and sweet as a pot of honey.

As they walked into the large great room, he managed to find an empty chair and pulled Boone down on his lap. With a group the size of theirs, if you didn't double up, someone was always left sitting on the floor.

Bram cleared his throat to get everyone's attention. "Should we start, or wait for Gabe?"

Rex shook his head. "I think it would be best to just catch up with each other's lives until Gabe feels like joining us. He's already pissed that I didn't tell him about Addy. I think it'd be worse if he knew we were in here talking about him."

Addy stood. "Do you think it would be okay if I found Gabe and tried to talk to him one on one?"

Rex looked at Boone. Over the years they'd learned to communicate through facial expressions. It was quite often a necessity with a young boy in the house. He saw the slight nod his lover gave him.

"Yeah, I think that might be the thing to do, but be prepared for a few choice words. You'll probably find him out by the creek." He went on to give Addy directions to the well known thinking spot.

"I don't want to hurt him," Addy said. "From the sound of it, he's been hurt enough."

Rex thought of all the times Gabe had wondered aloud about his mother. He had a strong feeling Gabe was more scared than pissed, but he wouldn't share that with anyone besides Boone. "Just go slow," Rex advised.

Addy nodded and walked from the room. Rex sure hoped like hell he was doing the right thing. Although Addy seemed nice enough, he still wasn't one hundred percent sure he could trust her.

With Addy gone, he turned to Bram. "Okay, tell me everything you've learned about Addy Gabriel and Angelo Constantine."

* * * *

Gabe threw another stone into the water, watching its ripple drift out from the epicentre. He'd been over and over his childhood, trying to remember everything he could, but there were too many damn holes.

He'd stormed off before he even asked if they'd found his mother. Part of him wanted to know. *If they found my sister, surely they had word on my mother, right?* He shook his head.

How many years had they tried to find her? In all that time, Gabe had never felt anger, only curiosity. So where was the anger coming from? He finally decided it was fear. He was afraid to know the truth about why he'd been abandoned. Was he a bad kid? Maybe someone his mom was unable to handle?

The sound of hooves on the hard red dirt had him looking over his shoulder. He expected to see Boone, or more likely, Rex, but instead, the woman who claimed to be his sister was dismounting from a horse.

"Can I talk to you?" the woman asked.

Gabe shrugged and turned back towards the water. He didn't have to look at her any closer to know she had a strong resemblance to him. So maybe it was true, but he didn't have to be happy about it.

The woman dropped to the ground several feet away. "Pretty out here," she said.

"Yep."

"I'm Addy, by the way."

Gabe gave a nod, but still didn't look over at her. "Gabe," he introduced himself.

"Yes, I know."

When Addy said nothing further, Gabe's curiosity got the better of him. "So, you know where our mother is?"

"No. Actually, I just recently found out where you were. I was hoping you could help me find her."

"I've tried for years." Gabe tilted his head to look at Addy. "Why don't I remember you?"

Addy shrugged. "You were young when we fled."

"Fled?" He tossed another rock into the water.

"I don't remember a lot, but I know Momma took us away suddenly. I remember her picking me up from school. I could tell something was wrong because she had you in the backseat of the car. You usually stayed home with one of the servants."

"We had servants?"

"Yeah, but they worked for our father, not for us. They were his eyes and ears. I guess Mom felt she couldn't trust them anymore. So anyway, as soon as Mom picked me up from school we started driving out of town. I asked her where we were going and she said we needed to go away and hide. We drove for two days. Her path never made any sense, mostly back roads."

Addy picked up a stone from the pile Gabe had gathered and tossed one into the water. "We lived in disgusting motels for a while. Mom tried her best to pound into us that we were no longer Constentines. That our new last name was...Gabriel."

Gabe felt like he'd been punched in the gut. "What? What's my name?"

Addy reached out and covered Gabe's hand with her own. "Your name is Gabe Whitlock but it used to be Adam Constentine."

Gabe rolled the name around in his head for a few moments. He didn't feel like an Adam. Constentine was completely out of his realm of comfort. "Why did Mom run in the first place?" He remembered what his sister had said about servants. "Who are we?"

He turned his hand over and threaded his fingers through Addy's. He suddenly realised without knowing the entire story, that Addy was as much a victim as him. The grownups in their lives had a hell of a lot to answer for.

"Angelo Constentine is our father. Do you recognise the name?"

"The Constentine crime family." He felt numb. How could he be the spawn of such a deplorable man? From what he'd seen and heard, Eddy Constentine, his grandfather, had been even worse. The family had run organised crime in Chicago for three generations. *Some legacy.*

"He's still alive, isn't he?" Gabe couldn't remember seeing any reports of one of the countries most notorious gangsters dying.

"Yes, although his stepson, Lenny Rafalo is running things now. Reports are that Angelo has been bedridden for the past four years after a massive stroke left him paralysed and unable to speak."

Gabe again felt as though he'd been punched. "A stepbrother? So Angelo remarried after..."

"Yes," Addy said, cutting him off. "Barely seven years after Mom took us away, Angelo had us declared dead and married Alice Rafalo."

His thoughts were running in so many directions he didn't know what to ask next. The one thing he did know was that he had a sister, and if his instincts were correct, she'd suffered as much as he had.

Gabe gave the hand in his a tug until Addy was in his arms. "Why don't I remember?" he asked. He buried his face in her brown hair, the same shade as his own.

"You were young. It was a really dangerous and confusing time for all of us," Addy answered. She hugged him tighter. "I think Ange...Dad, had people looking for us. Bad people. I remember Mom being really afraid. I think that's why she left me in Salt Lake City, but she still had you with her." Addy pulled away and looked into Gabe's eyes. "Where did she leave you?"

"Cheyenne," he barely managed to get out.

For several long moments the two of them said nothing. "What was Mom's name?"

"She went by Caroline Gabriel, but her name was Theresa," Addy whispered reverently.

* * * *

Rex was beside himself with worry. The sun was only a sliver of orange against the horizon and he was driving himself crazy wondering if Gabe would ever forgive him.

He'd been sitting on the porch swing for an hour when Gabe and Addy walked hand in hand up the steps. He didn't make a move to join them, deciding it would be better for Gabe to come to him.

His lover stopped and whispered something to Addy. She smiled and cupped his cheek before walking into the house.

Gabe turned towards Rex. "Room there for me?"

"Depends," Rex said, sliding over to one side. "Are you still mad at me?"

Gabe looked down at his dusty boots and shook his head. "Nope."

"Then get your sweet ass over here."

Gabe walked the couple of steps needed and plopped into the swing.

Rex immediately pulled his love into his arms. "I'm so sorry, babe."

His lover shook his head. "No. Don't apologise. I know why you did it. Yeah, I was pissed, but I think I was more scared than anything. Sorry I took it out on you."

Rex brushed his lips over Gabe's, testing the water. The second Gabe's lips parted, Rex delved inside, taking the kiss deep. He loved this man so much. Rex knew he'd do anything to ease the turmoil he could feel running through Gabe's body.

"What can I do?" he asked.

Gabe didn't say anything for a few seconds. Then, he buried his face in the side of Rex's neck and sighed. "You can start with one of your famous Rex and Boone sandwiches. Then you can help me find my mom."

Rex grinned. Yeah, getting his man well loved definitely sounded like a good idea. He hated to abandon the rest of the group for the evening, but Gabe's needs came first. "Give me a minute to find Boone and ask Jake if we'll be staying in our normal room."

Gabe nodded and placed a kiss on the underside of Rex's jaw. "Tell them I'm sorry. I just need a little time."

"I'll tell them, but we both know this is one group of people you never have to apologise to. They've all been through enough shit to understand."

Rex gave Gabe one last kiss and stood. "Be right back."

"Not going anywhere," Gabe replied.

Rex found the entire group out on the back patio eating what was left of dinner. Boone spotted him and was by his side in no time.

"How is he?" Boone asked.

"He needs us. He's on the front porch. Why don't you go keep him company while I talk to the group."

"Let me get some hamburgers put together. The two of you haven't eaten since lunch."

That was his Boone, always trying to take care of them.

"Okay," he gave Boone a quick kiss. "No onions."

Boone smiled and with a nod was off towards the food table.

Rex spotted Cree and Remy talking to Bram off to the side.

"Hey," he said as he walked up to them. "Gabe needs a little downtime. He told me to tell you he was sorry, but maybe he'd be better able to deal with all this in the morning."

"Understandable," Cree said. "We'll look for the three of you at breakfast."

"Same room?" Rex asked.

"Of course. The Oklahoman is your room." Cree shook his head like it was a silly question.

It always made Rex feel good to know his friends thought enough of them to have a small section of rooms in the west wing of the dormitory attached to the *Fighting Back* centre, reserved for them. The Sommers clan had made it clear many times that the *Triple Spur* was always open to any of them at a moment's notice.

Rex shook Cree's hand. "We appreciate it, always have."

He detected a slight red flush under Cree's dark complexion. "Get out of here and take care of Gabe."

"I'll do my best," Rex smiled and went to find Boone.

* * * *

Lying between Rex and Boone, Gabe let the tensions of the day wash away. This was exactly what he'd needed.

"I love you two," he whispered, pulling both men in for a kiss.

There were few things he enjoyed more than two tongues dancing and diving around and in his mouth. His cock hardened as Boone started to work his way down Gabe's chest. He felt the playful bites to his nipples before Boone latched on to one of the pebbled nubs.

Gabe's hips gave an involuntary thrust as the sweet suction bruised his flesh. "Yeah," he moaned.

"We're gonna make you feel good," Rex said, as he broke their kiss.

"You do that every day," Gabe whispered, burying his fingers in Boone's long blond hair.

He felt Rex's hand envelop his erection in a tight fist. Rex pumped him, taking time to run his thumb up over the crown to press against the slit.

"Hmm, someone's ready to fuck," Rex grunted.

Boone released his hold on Gabe's nipple. As much as Gabe mourned the loss, he knew what Boone was doing. Within seconds, his lover was back.

"Gonna watch?" Boon asked, holding the bottle of lube.

"Hell yeah," Gabe and Rex said at the same time. They'd spent many years watching their lover stretch himself. Boone had it down to an art form.

Gabe licked his lips and watched as Boone's slicked finger disappeared inside that tight hole.

"Fuck," he groaned.

Boone went from one long graceful digit to three in no time. His lover's head was thrown back as he rode his own hand.

Gabe couldn't take it anymore. "Now."

Boone tilted his head down to look into Gabe's eyes. "Like what you see?"

"Now," Gabe growled again.

Boone removed his fingers and grabbed the towel they always put on the bed before they played. As Boone cleaned the excess lube from his hand, Rex squirted a good dollop of slick onto Gabe's cock.

Poised above Gabe, Boone slowly impaled himself on Gabe's thick erection.

"So good," Boone moaned.

His lover's body felt like a vise around Gabe's manhood. He reached over and tapped Rex's hip.

"Feed me," Gabe said.

Rex smiled and scooted up until his cock was poised at Gabe's lips. Gabe opened wide and took the leaking crown into his mouth, as Boone began to ride up and down his length.

The emotional toll of the day melted away under the wandering hands of his lovers. Damn, he loved these men. They'd been with him through every false lead over the years. He'd yelled and screamed his frustrations, but his lovers were always there to help calm him down. They let him know on a daily basis he was loved and always would be.

He rimmed the ridged crown in his mouth with his tongue, smiling at Rex's groan. Rex's hand moved to the back of Gabe's head, pushing him further onto his cock. Gabe happily swallowed his lover's length as far as he could, the short curly pubes tickling his nose.

Boone started to make noise, and Gabe looked down and around the cock in his mouth to see Rex jerking Boone off. Oh yeah, that was a beautiful sight.

"Not going to last," Boone panted, pushing himself between Rex's fist and Gabe's cock.

Rex adjusted his position and leaned forward to devour Boone's cock. The new arrangement seemed to agree with Boone. Gabe gripped his lover's hips as Boone rode him at a frenzied pace.

"Fuck yeah," Boone shouted.

Gabe felt the tightening of Boone's muscles before he heard the loud slurping noises Rex began to make. Opening his throat, Gabe prepared himself for the load of cum he knew was about to erupt from Rex's cock.

He was quickly rewarded by rope after rope of Rex's seed. The smell and taste of his lover pushed Gabe over the edge into bliss. He felt like his head would explode as he tried to ride out his own climax while remembering to swallow Rex's essence.

Within seconds the three of them fell into a boneless heap. He was thankful Rex had enough energy to reposition himself to rest his head on the pillow. Gabe turned his head and kissed the older man.

"Love you," he whispered, before turning to Boone for a kiss. "Love you, too."

As his eyes drifted shut, he felt the mattress dip as Rex sat up and found the towel.

"Let's get you cleaned up before you fall asleep," Rex said.

Gabe grinned as he felt the soft terry towel wipe lovingly over his cock. He knew he could get through anything as long as he had Boone and Rex with him. He rolled to his side, spooning himself against Boone's back. As soon as he got rid of the towel, Rex joined them, pressing himself to Gabe's back. Yeah, this was normal, and that's just what he needed.

Chapter Three

"It's three a.m., what do you say we call it a night," Mac said.

Bram looked at his old friend and boss. "You go on up. I think I'm on to something."

Bram looked back at the computer screen.

Addy had given them a name to search for, and finally, after all this time, Bram was close, he could feel it. It would've made it much easier if they knew what social security number Caroline Gabriel was using, but he'd found people with less information in the past.

He felt Mac's hand land on his shoulder. "Sorry, buddy, but my mind is getting so foggy I'm not really helping anyway."

"It's fine," Bram said. "If I went to bed, I wouldn't sleep anyway."

Mac chuckled. "With a man like Doc in your bed, I can see why you wouldn't sleep."

Bram reached out and punched Mac on the shoulder. "Declan sleeps like a stone these days, and a sleep deprived Declan is not a good thing."

"So the honeymoon's over?" Mac kidded.

"Far from it," Bram answered. "We just go to bed early, and get all our playing done at a decent hour."

"Hmmm, I'll have to bring that up to my guys. Lord knows, I could use a little more rest than what I normally get."

"That's your fault for being greedy. I can't imagine trying to keep up with two men. Hell, Declan wears me out and he's only one."

"Better get yourself a better diet and exercise programme." Mac laughed as he left the room.

Getting back to work, Bram replayed everything Addy had told them. She'd said Caroline had told her she was going to get well, but she'd be back. So why hadn't she? His first thought left him cold. She obviously wasn't the woman they'd secretly thought. Caroline didn't abandon her children to be rid of them. She left them to keep them safe.

Unfortunately, finding the right Caroline Gabriel was like looking for a needle in a haystack. He'd already searched states beginning A thru C. He was now searching the property listings for Caroline Gabriel in Delaware. Damn, this was going to take a while.

* * * *

Soft lips woke him. Bram opened his eyes and smiled. "Morning."

"Why don't you go up to bed?" Declan asked.

He loved it when his partner got all nurturing. "I'm okay. I think I might've found something, but I need to do a little more looking."

Bram sat up and stretched out his back. It wasn't the first time he'd fallen asleep at the computer, but his back and neck were protesting anyway. He turned his chair to pull Declan into his lap.

Like always, Declan snuggled in. "What did you find?"

"I'm not really sure it's anything, but I found a property listing for Caroline Gabriel in a small town in Kansas. Do you remember what Addy told us? About what her mom had said when she dropped her off?"

Declan shook his head. "Sorry."

Bram ran a hand down Declan's back. "She said her mom told her she was going to get well, but she'd be back for them."

"Okay, yeah, I do remember her saying that."

"Well, I found a listing for Caroline in the town of Wellsville, Kansas. The small farm was paid for in cash. The only thing I need to figure out is how she got that much money, and what happened to her afterward. According to county records, the property taxes have been kept up to date. So why didn't she ever go back for her children?"

"Who paid the taxes?" Mac asked, stepping into the room.

"I haven't gotten that far yet," Bram said sheepishly. "I'm embarrassed to say that I fell asleep while searching."

"I can do that," Mac said. "Why don't you go and get a couple hours of sleep. I promise to wake you when I find something."

Bram looked from Mac to Declan. He hated to bug out on a search, but if they found what they were looking for, he knew he'd be on a plane by the end of the day.

"I think I'll take you up on that."

Declan got off his lap and pulled him to his feet. "Come on, sleepyhead. Let's get you to bed."

Bram turned to Mac who was taking his place at the computer. "Thanks, Mac."

"Don't thank me. We all wanna find Gabe's mom. I'm just doing my part."

Bram let Declan lead him out the door and to the truck. Normally they'd just walk to the dorm, but Declan must have seen the fatigue on his face. He was helped into the passenger seat and given a quick kiss.

"Love you," Declan said.

Bram grinned and kissed him back. He hoped he had the energy to show Declan just how much that love was returned.

As they drove the short distance to the dorm, Bram couldn't get Caroline off his mind.

He turned to Declan. "Do you think Caroline would leave her kids permanently?"

"No," Declan said. "I reckon if she didn't try and track them down, something happened."

"Yeah," Bram said, rubbing his eyes. "That's what I'm afraid of."

* * * *

By the time lunch rolled around, they were all assembled at the large dining table, sharing stories and laughing. Mac held Nicco's hand under the table as everyone finished their meal.

"Why don't you kids find something to occupy yourselves while the grown-ups talk," Cree said.

Mac grinned as one by one the boys left the table grumbling. Molly sat with her arms crossed, refusing to go.

"Molly," Cree said in a stern voice.

Molly looked at Nicco, and Mac had to cover his grin. Boy, that girl sure knew how to use those big green eyes to her advantage. Mac watched as Nicco visibly melted. Afraid his lover would cave, Mac cleared his throat. It wasn't that he didn't love the little bundle of black curls, but what they needed to talk about wasn't meant for children's ears.

Nicco looked at him and then back to Molly. "Sorry, sugar, but you'd better do what your daddy says. I'll come find you when we're finished and we can colour a picture or something."

Molly narrowed her eyes in thought for a few seconds. Mac noticed the rest of the group focusing on the power struggle.

"Two pictures," Molly said.

Nicco started chuckling. "Deal."

Molly rose and started to walk from the room. She stopped in the doorway and turned back to Nicco. "I'll be in my room."

"Okay," Nicco answered, with a wink.

Mac leaned in to Nicco and held up his finger. "She's got you wrapped around her little pinkie."

"Yeah, she does," Nicco agreed.

His lover looked so cute. Mac couldn't resist placing a kiss on those soft sculpted lips. Nicco being who he was, immediately opened his mouth, begging for Mac's tongue. Not one to disappoint, Mac gave it to him.

Bram cleared his throat several times, before Mac withdrew from the kiss. He looked over at his friend and shrugged. He wasn't embarrassed in the least. He knew his friends were used to sudden outbursts of affection.

He straightened in his chair and pulled the piece of paper from his jeans pocket. The information that he'd managed to find earlier wasn't something his friends were going to want to hear. "The house that Bram found in Kansas was purchased with a single lump sum of cash by Caroline Gabriel a couple of months after Gabe was left in Cheyenne."

Mac looked at Gabe. He didn't want to cause the man any more pain than what he'd already been through, but the facts needed to be spelled out. "Since then, the taxes on the small farm have been paid by Windwater, Inc. From everything I've been able to gather,

Windwater is one of the corporate fronts the Constentine family uses for their holdings and investments."

Gabe's jaw dropped. "Why would my father pay taxes on a house for a wife that left him?"

Mac watched as Gabe ran his hand over the gooseflesh of the opposite forearm. "What about Caroline? Is she still alive?"

Mac shook his head. "I don't know. According to the electric company records, the house has been without power for more than twenty-eight years. I think it's safe to say Caroline isn't living there."

"Do you think she left any clues behind?" Addy asked.

"Only one way to find out," Bram added. "I called the airline and there's a flight to Kansas City leaving at four."

"I'll go pack," Gabe said, standing.

Mac looked at his friend. He knew there was no way he could keep Gabe from making the trip.

He turned to Nicco. "I think I should go with Bram and Gabe."

"Gabe's not going anywhere without me and Boone," Rex declared.

Mac hated the thought of a group of them descending on the town, but what could he do? He knew if it were Nicco or Amir facing something of this magnitude, he'd also insist on going.

He nodded. "We'll leave for the airport by one-thirty."

As Gabe and his partners left the room, Mac noticed Addy. She was just sitting there, her head down. "Addy?"

She finally looked up. "We both know Momma's dead. She would've found us otherwise."

He couldn't deny it. Mac nodded his head. He knew he and Bram were going to the farm to look for clues. Windwater was still paying the taxes for a reason. Basically, he knew he and Bram would be looking for a grave. His guess was that Rex knew it, too.

"I don't want to go," Addy said, breaking into his thoughts.

"It would probably be better if you didn't," Mac agreed.

* * * *

"We have a problem," Alec said, stepping into Lenny Rafalo's office.

Lenny looked up from the papers on his oversized desk. "What kind of problem?" Lenny narrowed his eyes and gestured for Alec to take a seat.

He hated going to Lenny with problems. His Uncle Angelo's stepson didn't take bad news well, and Alec usually caught the brunt of it.

"Tony called. Someone's been poking around looking for information on Windwater."

The pen in Lenny's hand flew towards him, hitting Alec in the chest. "Sorry, boss," Alec said, as Lenny rose from his chair.

"Was it the Feds again? What did they find? There's nothing but legitimate business transactions under Windwater." Lenny paced back and forth in front of the large picture window in his office.

"Tony doesn't know what they found, but they were looking specifically at Windwater stockholders and one of the files."

"What file?" Lenny spun around and stalked towards Alec.

"The farm in Kansas." Alec braced himself for the explosion he knew was coming.

"What! How the hell did they get that far into the system? That file was buried." Lenny grabbed the back of Alec's short black hair and yanked his head back.

Those flat brown eyes stared into his, and Alec worried for a few seconds he wouldn't see morning. He didn't know what kind of farm Lenny would have a stake in, but from his employers reaction, it was something big.

"I don't know," Alec admitted. "Tony just told me to relay the message."

Lenny released Alec's hair after giving it one final jerk. Alec felt the pain all the way to his toes.

"I want you to leave for the farm immediately and see if anyone is snooping around. I'd rather not involve anyone from outside the family if I can help it," Lenny ordered.

"What should I do if someone's there?" Alec asked. He was afraid he already knew the answer.

"Kill whoever is poking into my business. Get with Tony. He'll give you the information you need."

"Right away." Alec stood to leave.

"Alec!" Lenny yelled after him.

He turned around. "Yes?"

"Fuck this up and die. I don't care if you are a Constantine."

With the warning firmly implanted, Alec nodded and left. *Shit*. He'd done a lot of things he hadn't been proud of over the years, but Lenny normally didn't have him mixed up in the violent end of the business. He decided he'd better make a few phone calls before hopping a plane to Kansas City.

* * * *

Gabe looked out the window as their rented SUV travelled south on I35. He was surprised. He'd always thought of Kansas as farm country, but the Kansas he saw was nothing but mile after mile of sprawling suburbia. He couldn't believe the sizes of some of the houses they'd passed. Who knew?

"About another thirty minutes," Bram said, map in hand.

Thirty minutes. Gabe took a deep breath. He'd waited a lifetime to find his mother, and here he was, thirty minutes away from the truth. He knew his friends weren't vocalising their opinions, but they all knew this wasn't merely a fact finding mission.

Despite everything, part of him was relieved. He'd torn himself up over the years trying to figure out why his mother hadn't loved him enough to keep him.

"You doing okay?" Boone asked.

Gabe turned to his lover and nodded. "I'm glad the two of you are here."

Rex leaned across Boone's lap and kissed him. "We'll face it together."

"Yeah," Gabe said, looking back out the window.

They rode in silence until the off-ramp to the small town of Wellsville.

"This is where it'll get a little tricky," Bram said. He pulled out his laptop and brought up a county road map.

Gabe gripped Boone's hand as Bram gave Mac directions. As they drove down yet another gravel road, Gabe smiled. Yep, this was the Kansas he was expecting. He tried to imagine growing up this far out in the country. *Yeah, I would have loved it.*

Bram pointed towards a dirt driveway almost hidden by overgrown brush. "This is it," Bram said, shutting his laptop.

Gabe looked around. It was easy to see the farm had been abandoned for decades. The front porch roof had actually collapsed on the barely white farmhouse. He wondered if it was even safe to go inside.

Gabe opened his door, and stepped out. He heard the rest of the doors open and close, but didn't bother to turn around. His heart was in turmoil. Could his mother really be here, her bones left forgotten, no headstone to mark her grave?

Rex's arms wrapped around Gabe from behind. "You want to start inside or in the barn?"

"Inside," Gabe mumbled. He turned to Mac. "Why don't we stick together, do this as a team?"

Mac nodded and walked towards the porch.

"You think it's safe?" Gabe asked Mac.

"I think it'd be better to go in the back door. The house seems stable enough, but no need to take a chance with this porch," Mac said.

As soon as they all were inside, they split up into three groups, with Gabe, Rex and Boone taking the upstairs, Bram the main floor and Mac the basement. Gabe remembered Bram's mother's body being found in the basement and shivered. No wonder his friend had quickly chosen the main floor.

Gabe led the way up the narrow staircase.

"Be careful," Rex warned.

Gabe nodded and tested each step before putting his full weight on it. At the top of the steps was an equally narrow hallway leading to three bedrooms. *One for each of us.*

He stepped into the first room and looked around. It was empty. Of course it would be. It wasn't like he expected it to be furnished for a small boy. Rex walked over and opened the closet, inspecting every square inch.

"What're you looking for?" Boone asked Rex.

Rex shrugged. "Anything. You never know what might hold a clue."

Gabe had a feeling this was going to turn into a very long day. He turned from the room and went to the next. The remains of what appeared to be a thin mattress lay directly on the floor. He felt his gut clench. This was his mother's room. He knew it.

The three of them looked at each other. It seemed his partners had come to the same conclusion.

"Do you want me to do this, and you can check out the last one?" Rex asked.

"No." Gabe walked over and stood above the bare mattress. It appeared to be the only thing in the room. "Check the closet," he said to Rex. Surely his mom would've had clothes.

He heard a creak that caught his attention. He turned to see Boone rocking back and forth on a floorboard.

"Careful," Gabe called.

Boone shook his head. "It's not rotted, just loose."

Rex joined Boone to give the floor a closer look. Rex dug in his pocket and pulled out his ever-present pocket knife. Gabe held his breath as his lover pried the board open. A whistle indicated that Rex had found something.

He made his way over to the corner of the room. The three of them looked at the shoebox-sized metal container tucked between the floorboards.

"Open it," Gabe said.

* * * *

"So, you think you can open it?" Gabe asked Bram.

"Yeah, I just need my picks out of my briefcase." Bram carried the box to the SUV and set it on the seat while he dug out one of his favourite tools. He looked at the rusted padlock and chose what he thought was the right pick. After about three minutes, the lock finally gave. Bram set his tools on the floorboard and stepped back.

"It's all yours, Gabe."

Bram could see Gabe's unease in the set of his shoulders. He imagined he'd feel the same way in his friend's position. Gabe lifted the box off the seat and turned, setting it down in the driveway.

"Everyone ready?" he asked no one in particular.

"Do it," Rex said.

Gabe opened the box, and four jaws dropped. Money, what appeared to be a lot of it, was stacked in bundles inside the rusted metal. Gabe began pulling the bundles out one by one and passing them to Rex and Boone.

"This is what I was after," Gabe said, pulling a thick envelope from the bottom of the box.

It occurred to Bram they hadn't seen or heard from Mac in a while. Surely the basement wasn't that big. "I'm gonna go check on Mac while you guys go through that stuff. Better yet, it would probably be wise to take it back to the hotel and do it."

Gabe narrowed his eyes and looked around the empty farmyard. "I suppose you're probably right. Go get Mac and let's go. We can always come back in the morning."

Bram walked back inside the house and towards the kitchen and the basement steps. "Mac? How you coming?" he asked as he started to descend the stairs.

"You alone?" Mac asked.

Bram stopped. *Shit.* "Yeah, what did you find?"

"I'm not sure."

Bram continued down the stairs. The quickly fading light streaming through the small windows made the interior almost too dark to navigate.

"Where you at?" he called, trying to get his eyes adjusted to the enveloping darkness.

A flashlight rounded a corner. Bram assumed it was connected to Mac so he started walking that way. Mac led him around the large heating unit to the back corner of the damp room.

Mac shined his light on a section of the rock wall. "Notice anything?"

Bram studied the wall for several long moments. "It doesn't match up with the other walls."

"Yeah, you're right. It's a bump-out. And look at this." Mac swung the flashlight to the left, illuminating another section.

"Fuck, they used two different kinds of stone." Bram took the flashlight from Mac and followed the lighter shade of rock. It was obviously more than a simple patch job. He handed the light back to Mac. "What do we do now?"

"Come back tomorrow with tools." Bram heard Mac sigh. "Question is, do we tell Gabe?"

"Of course we tell him," Bram said. "Or have you already forgotten how pissed he was yesterday?"

Mac narrowed his eyes. "How would you feel if you knew your mother's body was sealed behind a rock wall?"

Bram turned to walk out of the basement. "You're asking the wrong person, Mac."

* * * *

After checking in, the group met in Mac and Bram's room. Gabe handed the money to Boone. "Why don't you count this while we go through the rest of the papers?"

Boone nodded. Gabe noticed his lover had been particularly quiet since they'd arrived. He hoped it was nothing more than concern, but he vowed to keep a close eye on his partner.

The thick, yellowed envelope held three birth certificates, the deed to the farm, a small address book, and a single photograph. Gabe held the faded picture up to the light.

"Do you recognise either of these men?" he asked Bram.

Bram put his tiny reading glasses on and took the picture closer to the bedside lamp. "I'm not sure. Hang on." Bram set the picture down and went to the desk to power up his laptop.

Gabe lay back on the bed and held the birth certificates to his chest. After all these years, he finally had proof of where he'd come from. Even if his father wasn't the kind of guy he'd always wanted for a dad, at least he knew the truth.

"You okay?" Rex worked his hand under Gabe's shirt and rubbed his chest.

"Yeah. Long day," Gabe said, pulling Rex on top of him.

"Got it!" Bram exclaimed.

Rex rolled off and they both sat up. "What did you find?"

"What I found doesn't make sense, but I'm betting it's what sent your mother into hiding." Bram carried the laptop over and sat on the other side of Gabe. He reached over and picked the picture up from the table.

"See this guy here? That's Vincent Graceffa. Years ago he tried to challenge your father for control of Chicago."

"And the boy?" Gabe asked. Gabe studied the picture again. The two people in the photo were embracing outside of a restaurant.

"He's your stepbrother, Lenny Rafalo."

"What?" Gabe looked at the laptop screen. There, big as day, was a picture of the current crime boss of Chicago, Lenny Rafalo. "Why would he be embracing my father's biggest rival?"

"Good question. One I bet your mother asked as well. At the time of her disappearance, Lenny worked as a runner for your father."

"When he was that young?" Gabe couldn't believe a mother would allow her son to get mixed up in something like that. Had his mother said something to Lenny? Could a young teenage boy have been the one to put the fear of God in Theresa Constantine? Gabe realised he was dealing with a world completely foreign to him. He looked from Rex to Boone. If someone from the crime family learned he was alive, would they go after his new family?

"Time for bed," he said. He stood and pulled Rex to his feet. He needed to have a serious talk with his men.

* * * *

After Gabe and his lovers returned to their own room, Bram and Mac readied themselves for bed, which included individual phone calls home. Now, as Bram laid in the darkness, he couldn't stop worrying.

"What should we do if we find Theresa's body?" he asked Mac.

"Nicco asked me the same thing when I spoke to him." Mac audibly sighed. "I don't know. If we inform the police, we take the risk of it hitting every paper from here to Chicago. But at the same time, if we don't, we'll be guilty of a multitude of crimes including destroying evidence."

"Would it be such a bad thing to draw Lenny and his gang of thugs out into the open? Shine a bit of the spotlight on them?" Bram asked.

"What about Gabe and Addy?"

"I don't know," Bram whispered. "I doubt the police would release their names to the press, but there's always a chance someone would dig them up."

They lay in silence for several moments, both of them playing out scenarios.

"We'll talk to Gabe in the morning. He can call Addy and ask her. In the end, it really is their decision."

"Yeah," Mac agreed. "But it could always lead danger to our families as well."

Bram hadn't really thought of that. Was he willing to take the chance with Declan, Thor and Brier? He knew Declan and Thor could decide for themselves, but Brier was different.

"Is it worth it?"

"Hell I don't know anymore. Maybe we should bypass the local police. I've got a pretty good friend who works for the FBI. I'll call him first thing in the morning. They might be interested since this involves the Constentine family."

Bram felt a little better. Yeah, maybe calling in the Feds was the way to handle it. He decided to put a call into Jackie and ask him to keep a close eye on his brother. He grinned in the darkness. He was sure both men wouldn't have a problem with the new arrangement.

Chapter Four

After a morning spent on the phone, Bram felt a hell of a lot better. Jackie had reluctantly agreed to move Brier in with him until they knew it was safe. The phone call to Thor hadn't gone as well as he'd hoped. Although Thor agreed to send his wife and children to California to stay with Kelly's parents, he refused to leave the rehabilitation centre.

It sounded like the rest of his friends had similar problems with their loved ones. Jenny and Cory agreed to send their children, along with Kate and Ben's two kids, to Cree's mother's house on the reservation, but they also refused to go. *Stubborn people*. The day the commanding officer of the ex-SEAL team married the equally stubborn Kate, everyone knew it was a match made in heaven.

They stopped by a hardware store and bought the supplies they thought they would need and headed back to the farm. Gabe was overly quiet. He'd been that way since he'd been told about the false wall in the basement. Gabe agreed the FBI was the best way to proceed, but Bram could tell the decision was still weighing heavily on his friend's mind.

Mac's friend with the Feds had put them in touch with a guy from the Kansas City office. Agent Mitch Grant had agreed to meet them at the farm. They were all surprised to see a black sedan when they pulled into the driveway. Grant sure as hell didn't let grass grow under his feet.

"I'll fill him in on all the details if that's okay with you?" Mac asked Gabe.

"Do what you need to do," Gabe mumbled.

After a quick introduction, Bram, Rex, Boone and Gabe carried the pick axes down to the basement. It was Gabe's first look at the wall they'd all been discussing. "It seems too big for a grave," Gabe remarked.

"Yeah, that's what Mac and I thought, too."

It only took them about ten minutes to chip away a big enough hole to look through. The four of them looked at each other, wondering who should be the first to take a look. Finally, Gabe handed a flashlight to Bram. "You go."

"Maybe we should holler at Mac and Agent Grant," Bram said.

"No need. We're right here," Mac answered.

Bram nodded and turned on the flashlight. Shining it into the hole they'd made, he involuntarily gasped.

"What?" Gabe asked, placing his hand on Bram's shoulder.

He'd never seen anything like it, piles of rusted cans and empty glass bottles. What the hell had gone on in that room? He turned off the light and took a step back. "It looks more like a garbage dump than a grave."

"Huh?" Mac asked and took the light from Bram's hand, taking a look for himself. "Fuck," Mac said. "Let's finish this."

Soon the pick axes were once again chipping away at the mortared stone wall. Within thirty minutes they'd cleared a space big enough to walk through. Bram set down his axe and gestured to one of the battery powered lanterns. "Let's get those things fired up and take a look."

Agent Grant was the first to enter. "Stand just inside the opening and don't touch anything," he warned.

Bram couldn't help but to roll his eyes. As they stood inside the six by twelve foot room, he tried to take it all in. With four lanterns illuminating the interior, the scene took on a more gruesome appearance.

It wasn't spoken aloud, but Theresa had obviously been entombed alive with only a small ventilation pipe for air. How long had it taken her to go through the food supplies and water left to her? Was that the purpose, to make her suffer a slow death? Perhaps her captor had not been able to actually bring himself to kill her outright.

Gabe dropped his lantern and Bram knew he'd discovered his mother's body. Rex and Boone immediately took Gabe from the room. Bram heard footsteps on the stairs and knew Gabe's men were taking him to get some fresh air.

Grant walked in the direction Gabe had been searching. "I'll have to call someone to retrieve the remains."

"Can you keep Gabe and Addy's name out of the papers?" Mac asked.

"I hope so," Grant answered.

* * * *

Rex helped Gabe sit in the shade of the SUV. Boone disappeared into the back of the vehicle and came back with a bottle of water.

"Here," Rex said, handing the water to Gabe.

Gabe took a long swallow before handing it back to Rex. "How long do you think she was alive?"

"I don't know, babe." Rex pulled Boone down on the ground beside them. The three of them naturally moved together, wrapping each other in an embrace.

"Maybe if I'd have known, I could've saved her," Gabe mumbled.

Hearing Gabe's self-inflicted guilt tore Rex in two. "No. You were a boy." He knew what needed to be said wouldn't be easy for Gabe to hear, but it was better than his lover internalising the situation. "I'm sure your mom was gone long before you were old enough to do anything about it."

Gabe looked at Rex with tears in his eyes. "It would've been easier on her if they'd just killed her."

"Yeah, I think that's the reason they didn't."

"Angelo will pay for what he's done," Gabe said.

"Hopefully he will," Rex tried to soothe.

"I feel like marching into my father's home and demanding answers. What kind of animal could do that to his own wife?"

* * * *

Hidden in the brush, Alec's heart skipped a beat. *Adam?* Could Adam really still be alive after all these years? He wondered how Lenny would take this new development. He was almost certain the news his only son was alive would send his Uncle Angelo's health into a downward spiral.

Alec smiled. He'd give almost anything to be the one to tell Angelo. After his own mother's death, Aunt Theresa had often sought him out to comfort and mother him. He'd admitted to himself long ago he'd felt betrayed when Aunt Theresa had abandoned him as well as her husband.

Now, from what he'd just heard, she'd paid the ultimate price for leaving Angelo Constantine. He quickly wrote down the license plate number of the SUV for future reference, his, not Lenny's.

Alec quietly backed his way out of the brush and down the road where he'd parked his own rental car. He knew he was expected to give Lenny a full report, but Alec knew he wouldn't tell him everything until he saw his uncle's face. Lenny may be a snake, but it was Angelo who needed to pay the biggest debt, and Alec planned on collecting.

* * * *

It was decided they would all fly home after the small team of federal agents showed up at the farm. They needed to form some kind of plan in case Lenny's men came knocking at their door.

As they pulled into the *Triple Spur*, Mac's cock started to harden at the thought of seeing his men. They were very rarely apart these days, and talking on the phone just wasn't the same. He honked the horn as he parked behind the myriad of other vehicles.

The front door opened and Nicco and Amir were the first out. Mac smiled. It appeared he wasn't the only one with a stiff cock. He opened his door and climbed out, bracing himself for the impact to come.

Nicco and Amir hit him at damn near a full run and immediately sought out his lips and tongue.

"Missed you," he said, kissing his lovers.

It never got old. That's what amazed him the most. One would think after more than ten years, the fire would start to burn out, but if anything, their ever-expanding love for each other fuelled it.

"Let's get the talking done, and then we can greet each other properly," Amir said.

Mac suddenly remembered Gabe. He glanced towards the house as Rex and Boone walked him inside.

"Gabe's not good," he informed his lovers. "I don't think he said more than a handful of words since we found his mom."

"Luckily he has plenty of friends around him. We'll help him through like he's helped all of us," Nicco said.

"What did you decide to do with Lilly?" he asked as they headed towards the house.

"Mom jumped at the chance to go on another cruise. I wasn't sure it was a good idea, but she said if it was her time, it didn't matter where she was." Nicco shrugged.

Mac knew all too well what a stubborn woman Lilly could be. At least she was out of harm's way. "Bram has Jackie looking after Brier."

Nicco and Amir stopped dead in their tracks. "Does he think that's a good idea?"

"Yeah, why wouldn't he?" Mac asked.

"Because there's something brewing between those two," Amir answered.

"Yeah, so? Brier isn't allowed to take a lover? Can either of you think of a better man than Jackie?"

"It's not that, but do you think Brier's mentally able to handle a physical relationship?"

Mac thought of the handsome man. Brier had come a long way in the last ten years. "I'd say if anyone deserves the chance to be loved it's Brier. I trust Jackie to know what he's doing."

"You guys coming?" Jake yelled from the porch.

"Not yet, but we're hoping," Nicco yelled back.

Mac bumped Nicco with his hip and winked. The threesome quickened their pace and walked into the house. The rest of the group was already assembled around the dining room table. Mac noticed that Addy and Gabe were missing.

Rex must've noticed the worried look on Mac's face. "They'll be okay. Gabe wanted to talk to his sister in private."

"Do you think he's a little more accepting of Addy now?" Mac asked.

"Yeah. I think finally knowing his mother is gone has helped him see the importance of holding onto the only blood family he has left."

"So." Cree clapped his hands together, startling Mac. "What's the plan?"

"Well, we'll have to wait until Agent Grant can get a positive ID on Theresa's body. The FBI will take over the investigation. All we have to do is to keep each other safe," Bram said.

"Just like old times," Jake said with a sigh. "I hope to hell this is the last issue any of us have with bad people."

Bram stood and narrowed his eyes at Jake. "Brier wasn't bad, just confused."

Jake held up his hands. "Sorry. I didn't mean..."

"It's okay," Declan said, cutting Jake off. "Bram's a little protective of his brother."

"As he should be," Jake said. "I'm truly sorry, Bram."

Bram nodded his head and sat back down. "Why don't we work out a watch schedule before we take a break?"

* * * *

"Hello?" Jackie answered.

"It's me. How's Brier?"

Jackie looked across the kitchen at the man in question. He looked so damn cute as he happily licked the chocolate beater.

"Good. He's making me a cake."

Bram laughed into the phone. "Lilly must've shown him how before she left."

"Yeah, I reckon she did." Jackie had fought with himself for months over his inappropriate feelings towards his boss's twin. With Brier now staying in his house, he was going crazy. "Uh, Bram? I need to talk to you about something."

"No you don't. Brier's a grown man. As long as he consents, that's all that matters. I've seen the two of you together, and I don't think you'd ever take advantage of his limitations. If you're serious about him, go for it."

Jackie's jaw dropped. He'd hoped he could convince Bram his intentions were honorable, but he was shocked his boss already knew his feelings towards Brier. Jackie's cock hardened as he watched Brier's pretty pink tongue snake out to lick at the chocolate batter.

"Thanks."

"Just take care of him," Bram said.

"I'll guard him with my life."

"I wasn't just talking about his safety."

"I know," Jackie said.

"Talk to you tomorrow."

"Okay." Jackie hung up the phone and leaned against the counter.

"Was that Bram?" Brier asked.

Brier had a smudge of chocolate on his cheek, and Jackie couldn't resist walking over and swiping the brown spot with his thumb.

"Yeah," he managed to choke out, when Brier took Jackie's hand and licked his thumb.

"It's good," Brier said. "You should try some."

Was Brier flirting with him? Jackie's eyes zeroed in on Brier's lips. Without thought, he leaned forward and swiped his tongue across them.

"Mmm. You're right."

Brier's eyes grew big as saucers. He got a funny look on his face and looked down.

"I'm sorry," Jackie apologised. "I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

Brier looked back up at him. "My body felt funny when you did that."

"Funny how?"

Brier took Jackie's hand and pressed it against the fly of his jeans. "This usually happens when I dream about you."

Jackie swallowed. Oh fuck he was in trouble. The feel of Brier's erection pressing against his palm felt so damn right. He gave Brier's cock a tentative squeeze, testing the water.

Brier moaned and closed his eyes. "That feels good. Do it some more."

God help me. He knew he was going too fast, but this thing between the two of them was bigger than his conscience. Jackie squeezed Brier again and was delighted when he received another moan.

"Are you okay with this?"

"I've wanted you to see me like a real man," Brier confessed. "I want you to make love to me."

Jackie's hand stopped. "Brier? Have you had sex before?"

"Sure. Not since I left the hospital though."

Jackie felt bile rise in his throat. "Who did you have sex with in the hospital?"

Brier looked confused. "People who worked there asked me to. Why, did I do something wrong?"

He could see the tears begin to pool in Brier's dark brown eyes. "No. You didn't do anything wrong." He kissed Brier's forehead. He knew he needed to talk this new development over with Bram before he let things between him and Brier go any further.

"How much longer does your cake need to bake?"

Brier looked up at the clock. "I take it out in fifteen minutes." He pressed himself against Jackie. "Can we try that kissing thing again?"

"In a little bit. I need to go to my office for a few minutes, but I'll be back before the cake is out of the oven."

"You wanna help me with the frosting?" Brier asked, smiling.

"Yeah. I'd like that," he answered. He placed a quick peck on Brier's cheek. "I'll be back in a little bit."

"Okay. I'll wash the dishes."

Jackie nodded and went to his study. He picked up the phone and called Bram.

"Hello?"

"It's Jackie. There's something I need to talk to you about."

"Didn't we already have this conversation?" Bram asked. Jackie could hear the irritation in his voice. Evidently he'd called at a bad time.

"Not this one. I don't really know how to even begin."

"Spit it out. You're starting to worry me."

Jackie ran his fingers through his short blond hair. "Brier just told me he had sex while in the psychiatric hospital. He said people who worked there asked him and he did it."

"What!"

Jackie pulled the phone away from his ear. He evidently had Bram's full attention.

"Sorry, Bram. That's all he said. He didn't give me any names. I don't know if they were doctors, orderlies, or what."

"Shit."

"Would it be okay if I investigated it while you're gone?"

"You'll have to go to Oklahoma to do that. Of course you could stay at Gabe's rehab facility if you did that, and Thor could keep an eye on Brier while you're gone."

Jackie could tell his boss was working through things verbally. It's what he always did, so Jackie just waited.

"I'm sure Gabe wouldn't mind if you stayed in the house. If you're going to do it, the best time is now. After the story hits the papers, things will probably get a lot more dangerous. Hell, Jackie. Maybe you should just wait until this whole mess is over."

"The longer we wait, the less likely the culprits will still work there. You know how it is."

"Yeah, I know but is it worth putting Brier in danger?"

"What about Thor? He's still on Gabe's land. Aren't you worried about him?"

"Sure, but Thor can take care of himself."

"And I can take care of Brier," Jackie spat back.

He was met by total silence.

"Bram? I need to do this."

"If anything happens to Brier..."

"It won't. I'll take care of him."

"See that you do," Bram said, and hung up.

Jackie set the phone on the desk. He didn't know if he'd ever heard that particular tone from Bram. He knew some would think he was overstepping his bounds, but they didn't

know Jackie's heart. Brier had worked his way in and nothing would stop him from seeking revenge on those who had taken advantage of the man he was quickly falling in love with.

"Cake's done," Brier called.

"Be right there." He took several deep breaths. Once again he warred with himself. If he took Brier to bed, would he be as bad as those who had abused him in the past?

Maybe it was self-justification, but Jackie didn't think so. Those men might have taught Brier about sex, but he could teach him about love.

* * * *

"What was that all about?" Declan asked as Bram set down the phone.

Bram still couldn't believe it. He told Declan about the phone call as he wrapped his lover in his arms.

"Hasn't that poor man been through enough?" Declan shook his head.

Bram ran his chin over the top of Declan's head. "I think Jackie will be good for him. He's already very protective."

"So you're okay with it?"

He lifted Declan up until they were eye to eye. "I can't imagine my life without you. What kind of brother would I be if I didn't wish the same kind of love for Brier?"

"Do you think he's able to handle it...mentally?"

They rarely spoke of Brier's mental limitations. His brother was learning at an alarming rate. Bram suspected his reduced mental growth was due in large part to the sheltered environment of the hospitals he'd lived in all his life. Now that he'd been out for a few years, Brier was doing wonderfully.

"Do you think Brier loves me?" Bram asked.

"Without a doubt. The man worships you."

"If he can love me, why not Jackie? The two of them may never be able to sit down and discuss world politics, but Brier definitely has the capacity to love. If that's enough for Jackie, who am I to try and keep them apart."

Declan rolled over on top of him and sat up. "You're right." He bent over and took Bram's nipple between his teeth. Bram hissed as the erotic sting travelled from the bite mark straight to his cock.

"Gonna ride me again so soon?" he asked his lover.

"Definitely," Declan reached over and picked up the bottle of lube.

Bram moaned as Declan dripped some of the slick liquid onto his erection. Declan handed the bottle to him before positioning himself.

He felt the crown of his cock breach the already stretched hole of his lover. As Declan's warm heat surrounded his cock, Bram thrust up. Declan's eyes rounded, surprised.

"Warn a guy," Declan chuckled.

"Just trying to keep you on your toes."

Declan's brow rose. Uh oh, he knew that look. Declan planted his feet on either side of Bram's hips. "Oh, you're so in for it now."

Bram stretched his arms out above his head. "Do your worst."

* * * *

"Smells good," Jackie said, walking into the kitchen.

"It sunk a little in the middle, but I think it'll taste good," Brier answered.

"Sure it will. You ready to make that frosting?" Jackie opened the cabinet and took down another mixing bowl. He looked up to see a blush spread across Brier's bronzed skin.

"What?" he asked.

Brier held up a plastic tub of chocolate frosting. "Miss Lilly said this is just as good and a heck of a lot easier."

Jackie laughed and wrapped his arms around Brier. Unable to help himself, he stole a kiss, this one with more purpose. He ran his tongue over Brier's lips.

"Open for me," he instructed.

Brier opened and Jackie's tongue dipped inside. He felt the soft wet interior of Brier's mouth as his cock hardened to world class proportions. Brier's tongue tentatively touched his before withdrawing.

Jackie broke the kiss after a soft nibble to Brier's lower lip. "Nice," he said.

"Is that what real kissing is like? I've seen Bram and Declan do it, but I had no idea it would feel that good. I should've been kissing people a long time ago."

Jackie was a little shocked. "No one's ever kissed you like that?"

"No. But hopefully they will in the future."

An overwhelming streak of jealousy raced through Jackie. "Save them for me, okay? If you're kissing me, I don't want you kissing anyone else."

"Really?" Brier smiled.

"Really."

"I'd like you to kiss me all day."

Jackie grinned. He didn't have a problem with that. He reached for the can of frosting and tore the vacuum seal from the top. He dipped his finger in and painted Brier's lips.

Brier gave him a cute grin before snaking his tongue out to lick at the frosting. "Nope," Jackie said. "That's mine."

"Then you'd better hurry before I eat it all," Brier laughed.

Jackie picked up the tub of frosting and led Brier to the large oak table. Even though Brier was well over six feet tall, Jackie out-muscled him. He easily lifted Brier onto the table and began to unbutton his denim shirt.

"What are you doing?"

"Making love to you," Jackie said. He spread Brier's shirt and pushed it off his leanly-muscled shoulders.

"But it doesn't hurt?" Brier said. The look of utter confusion on his face had Jackie pausing as he dipped his fingers into the frosting once again.

"I'm not sure what all has been done to you by men in the past, but making love is supposed to be beautiful and enjoyable."

"Show me," Brier whispered.

He laid that tall sinewy body back onto the table, and Jackie doubted he'd ever in his life seen a sexier sight.

With a large dollop of chocolate on his finger, Jackie drew a line from Brier's lips, down his neck and to his new lover's right nipple.

"Mmm." Brier moaned, as Jackie licked and sucked at the pebbled nub.

He lightly nipped the sensitive skin as he moved up Brier's chest and neck to those perfect lips.

He had to mentally bite his tongue to keep words of love from spilling out. Yeah, he loved this man, but was Brier capable of loving him back? The question turned over and over in his mind as he continued to kiss the frosting from Brier's lips.

His hands roamed down Brier's sleek chest to his jeans and the hard package trapped underneath the denim. As much as he wanted to rip the material from Brier's body, Jackie forced himself to go slow and easy.

"I'm gonna suck you," he said. "But you can't come in my mouth yet. We'll get tested first."

"I have to take a test?" Brier asked.

"Yes, sweetheart. We need to make sure neither of us have any viruses or diseases. It won't hurt."

He had a strong feeling he'd better use a condom in case they both lost their heads in the moment.

"Come with me." Jackie pulled Brier up from the table and led him into the bedroom.

He opened the drawer to make sure he still had a supply of condoms. His search in the drawer was fruitless.

"Hang on," he said. He went to the bathroom and searched under the sink. "Shit." How long had it been since he'd brought someone home?

Jackie walked back into the bedroom to find Brier stripped out of his clothes, lying on his bed. *Double shit.* He started to undress himself, eyes glued to the lupine body on his bed.

"Damn, you're sexy," he said, as he crawled over the top of Brier. "I don't have any condoms, so we'll have to be content with this."

Brier pulled him down and kissed him, thrusting his tongue into Jackie's mouth. What Brier lacked in finesse he made up for in enthusiasm. How could men have used Brier like

that and not taken the time to show him the finer points about making love. *Well duh.* They'd used him as a sex toy, not caring if he received pleasure in return.

Jackie vowed to show his lover the difference between getting fucked and making love. His hands travelled down Brier's sides and underneath. He held the firm butt cheeks in his hands and squeezed, sliding his cock against Brier's.

Brier broke the kiss and spread his legs. The new position brought them even closer.

"Feels good," Brier moaned, as Jackie ran a finger down the cleft of his ass.

"It gets better," Jackie said.

He squirted a small amount of lube onto his fingers. He initiated another kiss as he shifted to grind his cock against Brier's. The tightly puckered hole under his finger finally gave way and suddenly he was inside.

Brier's moans increased as he started to move on Jackie's finger. They'd have to run by the drugstore on the way to the airport in the morning. If a single digit could produce such erotic sounds, Jackie couldn't imagine what his cock would produce.

He felt his own climax building as he slipped another finger inside Brier's body. Jackie searched for and located the smooth walnut-size gland that would make his lover fly.

Brier's cries as he shot his hot seed between them didn't disappoint. Oh, he could get used to this. He felt like a king as Brier continued to writhe in ecstasy.

When he gazed deep into Brier's eyes, the utter profound look of love that was returned tipped Jackie over the edge. His cock erupted, shooting stream after stream of thick white cum.

Jackie's body continued to shudder as he removed his fingers and took Brier's mouth in an all consuming kiss. Brier's tongue played charge and retreat with his, until they were forced to break for air. Jackie slid their stomachs together, the feel and smell of their combined essence almost overwhelming to his senses.

"Shower with me," he whispered against Brier's lips.

He knew he had to talk to Brier about going to Oklahoma and what he'd be doing there, but he wanted to put it off a while longer.

Chapter Five

"What'd you find out?" Lenny asked from his position of power behind Angelo's old desk.

"I need to speak to Uncle Angelo," Alec replied.

"No. You need to speak to me. I'm the one taking care of this family now," Lenny reminded him.

"But it's information Uncle Angelo needs to know," Alec tried once more.

He knew it was a long shot. Lenny's need to control every aspect of the organisation was legendary. The look on Lenny's face only proved it.

"Angelo's in no condition to be bothered."

It was clear to see Alec had lost the argument. "Whoever's been digging for information must've found it. They pulled a strongbox along with a body out of the house. Well, technically, the FBI pulled the body out."

Alec braced himself for Lenny's reaction. "And did you do the job I sent you to do?" Lenny asked, cool as a cucumber.

"Kill them? No. There were five of them, plus about a dozen Feds. I thought it better that I got the information back to you without getting caught."

Lenny rubbed his square jaw. "Did you get anything on the men? Who they were, where they were from?"

Alec schooled his features. He knew he had to give Lenny something, but how much? "No. They were driving a rental which tells me they were from out-of-town."

Lenny flicked a hand at Alec as if he were a fly. "Leave me."

Alec nodded and retreated from the room. Once in the hall, he looked around. When he saw no one in the immediate area, he pressed his ear to the door just in time to hear Lenny say, "We've got a problem. They've found her."

Alec had heard enough, he backed away from the office and strode out the front door. Alec had simply told Lenny a body was pulled from the house, but evidently his boss knew

exactly who that body belonged to. Was Lenny covering his own tracks or the tracks of someone else?"

* * * *

Jackie reached over and ran his knuckles down Brier's cheek. "Babe? We're almost there."

Brier's long black lashes fluttered before his eyes finally opened. "Really? Seems like we just left." Brier leaned in to Jackie's touch. "That feels nice."

Jackie smiled. "Yeah, it does." He loved the soft skin under Brier's jaw. "I talked to Thor, and he told me Kelly and the kids were going to wait until after we arrive to leave for the airport. So at least you'll get to see them for a little while."

"Why are they going to the airport?" Brier asked, sitting up straighter in the seat.

"Remember, I told you there might be some bad men coming around the rehabilitation centre? Well, Thor doesn't want his wife and kids there if they do."

Brier bit his lip and turned to look out the passenger window. "Are the bad men coming because of me? Because of what I told you?"

Hearing the worry in Brier's voice, Jackie eased his sedan to the side of the road and put it in park.

"Sweetheart? Look at me."

Brier's troubled black eyes finally met Jackie's.

"The bad men who might be coming have nothing to do with you. I've already told you that."

"I know, but sometimes people don't tell me the truth. They worry about me too much."

"Not me. I'll always tell you the truth, and I expect the same from you." Jackie ran his fingers through Brier's hair to rest behind his neck. "I am going to need more information from you though."

"About what?"

"The men who asked you for sex. Do you remember their names?"

"Sure," Brier answered. "Carl and Jimmy."

He watched as Brier visibly shuddered. "And Rick. He was the mean one. If I said no he'd hit me."

Brier rubbed the side of his head. Jackie noticed he did that a lot when he was upset. "Is that all of them?"

"Yeah. Does that help?"

"That's good, sweetheart. That helps a lot. Can you tell me what kind of jobs Carl, Jimmy and Rick did at the hospital?"

Brier appeared thoughtful for several moments. "Well, they all wore blue uniforms. You know, that kinda baby blue I hear people talk about?"

"Yeah, I know the colour. But do you know what they did as a job?"

"Rick gave me pills. I saw Jimmy and Carl doing sweeping and stuff. Sometimes Carl would empty the trash can in my room."

"Good. That's good, Brier."

"What're you going to do with Carl and Jimmy?"

Jackie didn't want to scare Brier, but he'd promised to be totally honest. "I'm going to make sure they never again get the opportunity to have sex with someone in the hospital. What they did was wrong. They need to get into trouble for it."

Brier's eyes filled with tears. "But they were nice to me. It hurt, but they usually brought me a candy bar afterward. They're going to be mad at me for telling. They told me it was our secret, and now I've told on them and they'll get into trouble."

A single tear crested and dripped down Brier's cheek. "Will I get in trouble, too?"

"Oh, no, sweetheart. No one can blame you. But those men knew better. That's why they told you to keep it a secret."

"What will happen to them?" Brier asked, still biting his lip.

"Well, I'm not sure yet. We'll need to speak to the police. You'll have to tell them what you told me. From there, it's in their hands, but I want to be here to make sure they take the situation seriously."

"Promise the police won't put me in jail?"

"I promise."

Jackie leaned over and pressed a gentle kiss to Brier's lips. He wanted to linger over the kiss, but he knew they needed to get to the ranch. Pulling away, he put the car into drive.

"Now, let's go see your niece and nephew."

Brier grinned. "Can I get more of those kisses later?"

"Yep. Kisses and a whole lot more."

Within ten minutes Jackie parked the sedan in front of the main house. Before he opened his door, he spotted two running children.

"Looks like we have a welcoming party," Jackie chuckled.

He wasn't sure he'd ever seen Brier move so fast, but his man was out of the car and running towards the kids in a split second. Jackie stood back as Brier fell to his knees. Both children tackled him to the ground with hugs and kisses. If there was ever a doubt in his mind as to Brier's capacity to truly love someone, seeing him with those kids quieted his fears.

"Jackie! Help me," Brier giggled.

Not knowing the kids, Jackie felt a little uncomfortable joining in the fun. He walked over and looked down at the laughing pile. "Looks like you've got it well in hand," he joked.

"Catherine and Joseph, you'd better not hurt my big brother," Thor yelled, wheeling to Brier's rescue.

The kids eventually climbed off Brier's chest. Jackie held a hand down and pulled Brier to his feet, turning back to Thor.

"Thanks. I didn't quite know what to do. They seemed to be having such a good time."

Thor chuckled and held out his hand. "It's nice to see you again, Jackie. Been awhile."

"Too long," Jackie added.

He'd met Thor several times when he'd visited the training facility, but seeing the paralysed man in his own environment was nice for a change.

"Who's he?" Catherine asked Brier.

Brier wrapped his arm around Jackie's waist. "This is my boyfriend. Isn't he cute?"

Jackie didn't miss the disapproval on Thor's face. It seemed Brier's younger brother wasn't going to go as easy on him as Bram had. Oh well. He was up to the fight. For Brier, he'd fight anyone.

"Kids, why don't you take Uncle Brier to the house? I know your mom wanted to see him before we leave for the airport."

When Brier started to tug on Jackie's hand, Thor stopped him. "Would you mind if I talked to Jackie?"

Brier glanced from Thor to Jackie. "But I want Kelly to meet my new boyfriend."

"She will, buddy. I just need to talk to him for a few minutes."

Brier nodded, leaning in to give Jackie a peck on the lips. "I'll miss you."

Jackie smiled. "I'll be right there, sweetheart."

Jackie watched as Brier swung Catherine to his shoulders and followed Joseph. He braced himself for the scolding he knew was coming.

"What're you thinking?" Thor asked, once the kids and Brier were out of earshot.

"That I'm falling in love for the first time in my life," Jackie answered simply.

Thor crossed his heavily muscled arms. "I don't buy it. Brier's a hell of a good-looking guy, but he's not exactly boyfriend material. So what's in it for you, besides a quick fuck?"

Before Jackie could control himself, he had the front of Thor's T-shirt bunched into his fist. "You sonofabitch!" he spat.

"Yep. I am. But that's beside the point," Thor agreed, removing Jackie's hold on his shirt. "You still haven't answered the question."

"And I don't plan to. The fact that you even asked it tells me you don't know your brother at all. There are so many things to love about Brier my head is still spinning."

"Does Bram know?"

"Yeah. I talked to him before I ever laid a hand on Brier."

Thor's brows shot up. "And he approved? Just like that? He handed over his brother?"

Jackie hadn't noticed the pain visible in Thor's eyes. "What's this really about? I know you don't have a problem with Bram and Brier's sexual preferences, so why do you disapprove so much? Or is it just me you find lacking?"

Thor broke eye contact. "I just don't want to see him hurt, again."

"You think that's what'll happen? Believe me, I wouldn't have started something with Brier if I weren't sure of my feelings. I know in many aspects he's more fragile than most people. I respect that."

Thor started wheeling his way down the asphalt drive. "Come on, I'll introduce you to my wife."

Jackie stood where he was for several moments. He knew he hadn't convinced Thor of anything, so why was the younger man giving up the argument?

* * * *

Two days later, Mac's cell phone woke him. He struggled to get his eyes open as he answered. "Hello?"

"Mac, it's Mitch Grant here in Kansas City."

Mac shook his head and sat up. "Hi, Agent Grant," he yawned.

"Sorry to wake you. I forgot about the time difference."

"That's okay. What've you got?"

"We were able to make a positive ID on Theresa Constentine. According to policy, we need to notify her husband. I thought I'd give you a heads-up."

Mac reached over and ran his fingers through Nicco's hair. "Are you gonna be able to keep Addy and Gabe's names out of it?"

"I'm still not sure. The Chicago bureau is sending a couple of agents in on the case. Needless to say, they're very interested. I can't tell you much, but I wanted to let you know so you can keep an eye out."

"Thanks. I'll tell everyone at breakfast. Give me a call if anything else turns up we need to know about."

"I will if I can."

Mac closed his phone and set it back on the bedside table. Lying back down, he spooned against Nicco's back, soaking in the warmth from his lover.

"Agent Grant?" Nicco mumbled, face buried in Amir's neck.

"Yeah. It was Theresa. They're telling Angelo today, and he wanted to give us warning."

Nicco grunted and wiggled his ass against Mac's morning erection. "Does this mean we have to get up?"

Mac opened one eye and glanced at the clock. "We've still got a few minutes."

Mac reached over and picked up the lube from the table. After slicking his cock, he returned his attention to Nicco. With the remaining lube on his fingers, he separated Nicco's ass cheeks, and pressed against his lover's hole until he entered the warm moist heat.

"You're still pretty stretched," he commented in Nicco's ear.

"Well it's no wonder. I had Amir buried in there only a couple of hours ago." Nicco began to ride Mac's finger. "I'm ready whenever you are."

"Oh, I'm ready." Mac removed his middle finger and replaced it with the head of his cock. He pushed in slowly and reached for Nicco's own cock.

When he encountered Amir's mouth, he chuckled. "When the hell did you wake up?"

"About two moans ago. Couldn't let the two of you have all the fun," Amir mumbled, face still buried in Nicco's groin.

As Mac slid in to the root, he helped manoeuvre Amir around into a sixty-nine position with Nicco. Pulling out, he thrust back inside, feeling the walls of Nicco's ass squeezing his cock just right. This was his favourite way to wake up, hands down.

* * * *

Through his investigations, Alec managed to find the name of the man who'd rented the SUV. From a prepaid cell phone, Alec called the number listed on the renter's agreement.

"Hello?"

"Macdougall?"

"Who is this?" Mac answered.

"Before I tell you that, I need you to hear me out."

"You've got about fifteen seconds to convince me not to hang up."

"I've been working as an FBI informant in the Constentine crime organisation for the past sixteen years. Recently, it's come to my attention that you know an Adam Constentine."

"Go on," Mac replied.

"Adam's my cousin. My name is Alec Constentine. Sixteen years ago, I found out my uncle had his own sister killed, my mother. Since that time I've been gathering inside information on the family, hoping to prove Angelo's involvement."

"And why are you telling me this?" Mac asked.

"Because I wanted to warn you, well, warn Adam. The Feds just left the family compound after informing my uncle and his successor, Lenny Rafalo, that they'd identified Theresa Constentine's body. The house is in an uproar. Lenny's going off the deep end and Uncle Angelo was just taken to the hospital with chest pains. I need to find somewhere to go. If Lenny starts paying off more Feds for information, my ass is history."

"Can I reach you at this number?" Mac asked.

"Yes. It's prepaid, but I'll hang onto it for a little longer," Alec replied.

"Give me thirty minutes. I might have an idea for you."

Alec hung up and shoved the phone in his pocket. With his luggage already in the trunk, he drove to the local mall and waited for Mac's phone call.

* * * *

Mac strode into the dining room where a game of poker was taking place. "I just got off the phone with Alec Constentine."

"What?" Gabe looked up from his cards. "Who's he? How did he know to call here?"

"He's a cousin of yours. According to him, he's working with the Feds and has been for some time."

"What'd he want?" Nicco asked.

"I'm not sure, really. Sounds like all hell is breaking loose in Chicago. Angelo suffered chest pains after the Feds informed him about Theresa's body and Lenny is out for blood. Alec's afraid Lenny will uncover his ties to the Feds. He's getting ready to run."

"So why call you? Aren't the Feds supposed to protect informants?" Nicco prodded.

"He said he wanted to warn Adam. But I want to run something by you. I think if Alec's wanting to disappear, we give him a place to do it."

"Not here," Gabe spat, shaking his head. "It could be a trap."

"Yeah. I know. That's why I think we should offer him a bed in our training facility. He'd be surrounded by an entire dormitory of bodyguards, both to protect him and to watch him."

Mac glanced from man to man, trying to gauge their reaction.

"For how long?" Gabe finally asked.

"For however long it takes. If Alec's on the level and he has been working against the Constantines, they won't think twice about killing him. I can't live with that knowledge, can any of you?"

"I trust your judgment," Gabe informed him. "Do me a favour though, and don't tell him my name until we know for sure."

"Goes without saying," Mac reassured. "I also think we should bring Brier, Thor and Billy here to the *Triple Spur*. You did say you'd already cancelled guests, right?"

"Yeah," Gabe sighed. "It's gonna be hell getting the schedules back on track once all this is over, but having a bunch of kids there just didn't feel right. I think I'll have Billy go stay with one of his friends though. He's only got a couple weeks of school left before he graduates, no sense in upsetting the apple cart now."

Mac looked towards Bram. "You wanna call Thor?"

Bram released the braid from his hair, something he always did while in deep thought. "They've just started the hospital investigation. I'll call Jackie and get an update on how that's going before I tell them to pack up and head out."

Mac nodded. "The sooner the better. From what Alec said, Lenny's on the war path. It's only a matter of time before he finds one of us. I'd sure feel a hell of a lot better if we were all together. As we've proved in the past, we're still one hell of a team."

With permission given, Mac went back into the office and dialled the number Alec had called him from.

"Hello?" Alec answered almost immediately.

"It's Mac. I'm going to give you a safe option, take it or leave it."

"What is it?"

"My partners and I own a bodyguard training facility in Albuquerque. I'll make arrangements for you to hide out in the dorm there until we can figure out the next step. If what you say is true, the Feds should be willing to help you somewhere down the line."

"Maybe. But right now I can't trust them. Lenny's arm reaches pretty far."

"I understand that. It's the reason I'm offering in the first place. You get yourself down to *Three Partners Protection Agency* in Albuquerque and you'll be surrounded by an entire facility of men trained to protect you."

There was a momentary pause before Alec spoke. "I appreciate it. I'm not sure why you're doing this, but thanks."

"I'm not sure either, other than I believe you. I'll call the facility and tell them to expect you." Mac hung up and pocketed his phone. He sure as hell hoped he was doing the right thing.

* * * *

Jake found Cory in the kitchen assembling shish kabobs. Wrapping his arms around her waist from behind, he began kissing her neck.

"I don't suppose you have enough for a few more people, do you?"

Cory butted her ass against Jake's groin. "Depends. Is Ben coming?"

Chuckling, Jake nipped the soft skin of her earlobe. "Yes, but Brier, Jackie, Thor and Billy are also driving in."

Cory turned in Jake's arms and pulled his head down for a kiss. "You're in luck. Bram already told me his family was on the way."

"Mmm, well then I guess instead of spending the next ten minutes convincing you to feed an army, I can do other things." He ran his hands up Cory's thighs to the nude pussy underneath. "Quickie?" he asked.

"Hey, get your hands out of the cookie jar," Remy said from the doorway.

Jake glanced over his shoulder and winked. "Make me."

Within seconds, Remy was pressed against his back, biting his neck. Remy's hands wandered to the zipper of Jake's fly. Once he had Jake exposed, Remy began stroking. "At least let me join in," Remy growled in Jake's ear before nipping him again.

Jenny's giggle sounded behind them. "I guess I'll put dinner on the grill. Geeze, the kids go away and you all turn into exhibitionists again."

Cory moaned as Jake thrust three fingers deep into her pussy.

Jake glanced at Jenny and smiled. "It's been a long time since we could sate our needs when they hit us. As much as I miss the kids, I plan to take full advantage of the situation."

Jenny picked up the platter of shish kabobs, still laughing. "Should I send Cree in? You know he'll pout if I don't."

Jake removed his fingers and lifted Cory onto the counter. "Let him know, but I don't plan to wait on him."

Jake reached down and grasped Cory's ankles, bringing her feet to the wide granite countertop. With his lover's wet pussy on full display, he bent and sealed his mouth over the pink flesh. He delved his tongue as deep as he could into Cory's channel as his lover's moans grew louder.

As he ate Cory's pussy, he felt Remy separate his butt cheeks. Jake hummed his approval when a warm tongue circled his hole.

"Um, guys? There's someone watching the house."

Jake removed his tongue and turned towards Jenny's distressed voice. He reached around and smacked Remy's head, getting his attention.

"Did you see them?" he asked, pulling up his jeans.

"No, but I saw a reflection on top of the hill, like someone was watching through a pair of binoculars.

Or a scope. "Shit." He lifted Cory off the counter. "You and Jenny go to the safe-room until we check it out."

Cory nodded and started to walk away. Jake pulled her back into his arms and kissed her before handing her over to Remy. He strode the few steps to give Jenny a short but deep kiss.

"One of us will come and get you," Jake said.

"Be careful," Jenny whispered against his lips.

They all left the kitchen together, waiting for Jenny and Cory to run up the stairs before continuing. Jake and Remy found the rest of the group in the office.

"We've got trouble," Jake informed everyone. "Jenny just went outside to start grilling and she saw a reflection on the hill behind the house. Her best guess is a pair of binoculars.

"Fuck. How'd they find us?" Nicco asked, pulling his gun out of the holster under his arm.

"I don't know, but I don't like it," Jake replied, unlocking the gun cabinet.

Mac stepped into the centre of the room to address the group. "Alec thought Lenny might be trying to pay-off a couple of Feds. Sounds to me like he succeeded."

"So where does that leave us?" Jake asked, handing Cree and Remy both rifles and handguns.

Mac turned to Bram. "You'd better call Jackie and warn him before he comes pulling up the drive." Bram nodded and picked up his cell phone.

"And I'll call the station. Lenny's money may be able to grease the FBI's hands, but he sure-as-shit wouldn't be able to influence my guys."

Bram hung up his phone. "Jackie's only about two miles from here. I told him I thought it'd be better if he just came on in, instead of turning back. Ben, when they get here, I'd like you to run out and carry Thor inside. It'll take too long to get his wheelchair, and the quicker we can get them under this roof, the better."

Ben nodded and headed towards the front door, gun tucked safely in the small of his back.

Jake could feel the adrenaline pumping through his veins. Although the danger was very real, it was nice being back together with his team. He trusted each one of them with his life and the lives of his loved ones.

"Maybe there's just one of 'em. Could be some flunky Lenny sent to keep an eye on us." Remy added, peering through the wooden blinds.

"We'll see what happens when Jackie pulls up," Mac said.

From his position by the window, Remy chuckled. "I hope no one's hungry. It looks like our dinner is burnt to a crisp."

"Won't that alert the guy that we're onto him?" Declan asked, stepping up beside Bram.

"Yeah, but that may be a good thing. If he's alone, he may just cut outta here." Jake looked out the front window. "Here's Jackie's car now."

As soon as the car pulled to a stop, Ben was out the door. "Shit. Jackie's not with them," Jake informed Bram, going over to hold the door open.

Brier ran inside on Ben's orders and straight into his brother's arms. Ben carried a protesting Thor in and set him on the couch.

"Where's Jackie?" Bram asked.

"He went after that man," Brier informed him. "He asked me if I knew how to drive a car. I told him yeah, but I didn't have a license. Jackie said it would be okay this time and told me to drive here and run into the house."

Jake could see the fear in Brier's expression. "Will Jackie be okay?"

Bram kissed his brother's temple. "He's doing what he's been trained to do."

Feeling guilty, Jake picked up his rifle. "Jackie had the right idea. I can't believe we've been cowering in this house like a bunch of pussies. We're trained SEALs. What the hell are we waiting for?"

Ben pulled the gun from his waistband and nodded. "I'm in."

Jake watched as Cree, Remy, Nicco, Mac and Amir also picked up their weapons. "Bram, why don't you and Declan stay here and protect the house?"

"Give me a damn gun," Thor yelled.

With all the excitement, Brier began pacing in circles, pulling at his hair.

"Brier?" Bram tried to calmly get his brother's attention. "Why don't you go sit on the couch with Thor?"

Brier shook his head and continued to pace. "Jackie can't die," Brier began to chant.

Bram stepped in front of Brier, stopping his forward progress. "Nothing's going to happen to Jackie. This is his job. If you truly want to be with him you'll have to accept that."

Brier wrapped his arms around Bram and started to cry. Thor made a disgusted sound from his position on the sofa. "I can't believe you're condoning Brier's relationship with Jackie."

Bram shot his brother a narrow-eyed look. "Not now, Thor."

Thor threw his hands in the air.

Before they had a chance to file out of the house, Remy shouted, "Here comes Jackie!"

The door opened and Jackie flew inside. Before saying a word to anyone, the big man's gaze surveyed the room, finally landing on Brier.

"You okay?" he asked, taking Brier into his arms.

Brier nodded and buried his face against Jackie's neck.

"Find anything?" Bram asked.

Jackie continued to hold a shaking Brier as he met Bram's gaze. "There wasn't anyone up on the hill when I got there, but I found something where the grass was flattened." Jackie reached into his pocket and pulled out an empty film container.

"The guy was taking pictures?" Declan asked in disbelief. "I can't believe we've been in an uproar over a damn photographer."

Bram rubbed his chin. Jake knew Bram's mind was usually three steps ahead of everyone else's.

"Gabe, call your local police department. Have them drive by your place. I have a feeling we were just played with."

Gabe picked up the phone and started dialling.

Bram turned to Cree. "Do you know any Feds?"

Cree nodded. "There are a couple in Santa Fe that I deal with quite a bit."

"Call 'em. See if they can come to the ranch without letting anyone know. I don't trust anyone from the FBI in Chicago. That guy up on the hill didn't just pick this house out of a phonebook."

Jake walked over and wrapped his arm around Remy. "I think you can go up and let the girls know its okay to come out."

Remy gave Jake a deep kiss before leaving the room.

Jake turned to Bram. "Give me your best guess as to what the hell is going on?"

"I think Lenny wants to keep us busy looking over our shoulders. He's got to be planning something, but I've no idea what." Bram looked over at Gabe, who was still on the

phone. "I have a feeling Lenny's the one worried about Gabe showing up. Which makes me wonder if he was the one behind Gabe's mother's murder."

"But he had to have been just a kid when Theresa was sealed in that basement," Jake said.

"Yeah, but if Lenny was already meeting with Sonny Graceffa when Theresa and the kids ran, I can almost guarantee Lenny was no average kid."

Gabe hung up the phone and gathered Rex and Boone to his sides. "A call came into 9-1-1 while I was on the phone with the police chief." Gabe looked from Rex to Boone. "The entire centre is on fire."

"Fuck," Boone said, dropping to his knees.

The entire room gasped. Everyone knew how much the centre meant to Boone.

Rex and Gabe knelt beside Boone and wrapped him in their arms.

"The house?" Boone asked.

"Everything," Gabe confirmed. Gabe wiped the tears trickling down his cheeks and looked at his friends standing around him. "What've I gotten you all into? I'd like to find out who killed my mom, but it sure as hell isn't worth risking my friends and family."

Cree came up behind Jake and hugged him. "Jay and Abe will be here within two hours."

Jake nodded and leaned back against his lover's chest. "I feel like we're sitting ducks."

"Yeah. I was just thinking the same thing."

Jake turned around. "So what're we gonna do about it?"

* * * *

By evening, the *Triple Spur* was being patrolled by twenty of the biggest, meanest bodyguards *Three Partners Protection* had to offer. With Brier asleep in the adjoining office, Bram pulled Jackie aside.

"What's the latest on the sexual abuse charges against the hospital personnel?"

Jackie directed Bram further away from the others in the room. "The police and DA are still looking into it. Only one of the guys still works there, and he's been put on leave

pending the investigation." Jackie ran his fingers through his short blond hair. "I'm a little worried though. Brier didn't do well in the initial police interview."

"It upset him?" Bram asked.

"No. Maybe a bit embarrassed, but I think that's because I told him what those men did to him was wrong. No, the problem was he was almost emotionless during the entire thing. I'm not sure Brier understands how wrong it was for those men to take advantage of him. If this thing goes to trial and he has to testify..."

"The defending lawyer will rake him over the coals," Bram finished.

"Yeah."

Scratching his jaw, Bram looked over at Thor. "What's Thor say about it?"

Jackie huffed and rolled his eyes. "I know Thor's your brother and all, but he's being a complete dick about the whole thing. He's made it quite clear that in his opinion I'm no different than the men from the hospital."

Bram had caught on to a little of the tension between Jackie and Thor. He reckoned it was time he had a talk with his younger brother.

"Let me do some thinking on the situation. If it comes down to it, maybe we can cut a deal and save Brier the humiliation of testifying."

Jackie nodded. "I'm going to go sit with Brier if you need me."

Bram watched Jackie walk from the room before taking a seat beside Thor. "So, what burr do you have wedged under your saddle?"

"Excuse me?"

"What beef do you have with Jackie and Brier being together?" Bram clarified.

"Uh, well, let me see," Thor made a point of scratching his temple. "Could it be that our brother has the mind of a teenager, and yet you're allowing him to get into a sexual relationship with a man who should know better?"

"Brier's mind is getting better all the time. I still think most of his problems came from being isolated in psychiatric hospitals his entire life. No matter what you might think, Brier has the ability to love, and he loves Jackie."

"Yeah? And did he love the men who fucked him in the hospital? You tell me, Bram. What's the difference? He didn't know those men were using him just like he doesn't understand that Jackie's doing the same damn thing."

Bram reached out and grabbed the front of Thor's shirt. "Never in my entire life have I been ashamed of you. Until now." Bram released Thor and stood. "I'm glad you're not in charge of Brier's care."

Bram started to walk off, but stopped and turned back to Thor. He was beyond pissed at his younger brother, he was disgusted with him. "What would your life be like right now if I'd taken the attitude you have? If I hadn't pushed you to get out into the world and prove that you were just as good as anyone else? Brier has lived through a hell that you and I can only imagine. For once in his life, I want to see him truly happy. And if you think Jackie is taking advantage of Brier, you're pathetic. Jackie could get any piece of ass he wanted, but he doesn't want just any piece, he wants our brother. I've seen the two of them together enough to know they bring out the best in each other. So get off your fuckin' high horse and start thinking of Brier as a man instead of a child."

Bram didn't wait for Thor to reply. He spun back around and was a little surprised to see all eyes on him, including Jackie's. He excused himself and strode to the kitchen. Bram opened the fridge and pulled out a beer.

"Is there one in there for me?" Jenny asked, walking into the room.

Bram dug another beer out of the fridge and handed it to the kind woman. "Sorry you had to hear that," he mumbled an apology.

Jenny sat at the kitchen table. "Don't apologise to me. I understood every word of what you said in there, but I also see Thor's side of it. I'm not saying that I agree with him, but then it doesn't really matter what I think."

Bram dropped into a chair and took a drink. "So, help me see Thor's side? Because honestly, I can't."

Jenny took several sips of her beer. "I don't think it's about anything other than guilt. Thor feels guilty about not protecting Brier from those men in the past. I think he's carrying his frustration over to Jackie."

"Thor feels guilty? What about me? I'm the one who's been responsible for Brier since we found him again." Bram lifted the end of his braid and released the leather thong,

shaking his hair free. "I think my guilt is why I so desperately want to see my brother happy for once in his life."

"Probably," Jenny agreed. "But even though you were the one legally responsible for Brier, it doesn't mean Thor loves him any less. The two of you are just dealing with your guilt in different ways. It doesn't make him wrong. He's worried because he loves Brier."

Bram fingered his hair, taking in all that Jenny had said. "How'd you become so wise?"

Jenny laughed. "Well, I've got four kids, three husbands and a wife to try and figure out on a daily basis. Believe me, it helps to read between the lines."

Bram leant in and placed a kiss on Jenny's cheek. "Thanks. So are you telling me I should apologise to Thor?"

Jenny shook her head. "I'm not telling you to do anything. Just helping you to see the other side of the coin." Jenny rose and kissed Bram's forehead. "It'll work out. Thor just needs to see Brier and Jackie together a little more."

Bram nodded. "Okay."

After Jenny left the room, Bram finished his beer and joined the rest of the group. So far the biggest news they'd received from the FBI was that Angelo had died earlier in the day. Gabe was still trying to digest the information. He'd talked with his sister a few times, and it sounded to Bram like Gabe wanted to drop the whole situation into the Federal Agent's laps and forget about the revenge he wanted extracted on his father.

Bram found Mac sitting on the couch in the family room with Nicco and Amir.

"Anything new?" he asked.

Mac nodded. "Angelo was conscious long enough to scratch down on a sheet of paper that he didn't know about his wife." He shrugged. "The Feds are trying to figure out whether or not to believe him."

"So where does that leave us?" Bram wondered.

"That's just what we were trying to figure out," Nicco said. "Do we sit back and let the Feds handle it, or do we further risk our safety by going after the truth ourselves?"

"And Gabe wants us to drop it," Mac added.

"Yeah. Maybe we should bring Alec up here to talk to Gabe. If anyone has a theory on who's behind Theresa's murder it would be him."

“Already ahead of you. Lon and Taggert are bringing him up as we speak,” Mac informed him.

Bram’s brows rose in surprise. “You’ve got Lon and Taggert working together?”

Amir chuckled and Mac elbowed his partner in the ribs. “They need to work it out between them. Maybe being forced to babysit Alec will help.”

“I’m gonna go check in with Cree before I retire for the evening.”

As Bram left the room, he thought of Taggert and Lon riding in a car together for the drive up from Albuquerque. He didn’t know what exactly had gone on between the two security specialists, but they couldn’t even be in the same room without fighting. Suddenly he felt sorry for Alec.

Chapter Six

By the time they arrived at the *Triple Spur*, Alec was about to pull his hair out. The two Alpha's in the front seat had done nothing but bicker the entire ride.

"Thank god we're here," he mumbled.

Two sets of eyes turned to stare at him. "You got a problem?" Taggert questioned.

Alec had to reel his temper back in. Yes, these two men were driving him nuts, but they were also the ones protecting him.

"No. No problem," he muttered.

Taggert's deep blue eyes stared at him for a few more moments before turning back to Lon. "Why don't you get Alec inside while I find an open spot to park the car?"

Without a word, Lon opened the passenger door, got out and gestured for Alec to join him. Alec opened his door and climbed out of the car to stand beside the impeccably dressed bodyguard. He hadn't had a chance before now to talk to the men one on one, and he was curious.

"So, what's the deal between you and Taggert?"

A pair of caramel eyes drilled into Alec. "None of your business."

Lon gave him a slight shove, almost knocking Alec's slight frame to the ground.

Alec quickly put his hands out to brace his fall when a large milk-chocolate-coloured arm caught him around the waist. Alec breathed a sigh of relief as he leaned against Lon's broad chest.

"Sorry about that," Lon said, releasing Alec.

Alec looked up at Lon. "Just remember I'm not as *sturdy* as you."

He hoped Lon wouldn't take the statement the wrong way, but damn, the guy had to be at least twice his size.

Lon gave the door a brief knock before entering the large house. Alec couldn't believe all the people milling around. It looked like some kind of command post. "What's going on?" he asked Lon.

"Need to know basis, and you don't," Lon answered.

Alec crossed his arms. At least in the Constantine family he got a little respect. These men were treating him as if he were the criminal. Oh wait, he kinda was. Well, he hadn't actually done anything illegal while working for Lenny, but he hadn't done much to stop it either. He had worked with the Feds for purely selfish reasons, reasons that may now cost him his life.

A picture of the last guy that had crossed Lenny sprang to mind. *Fuck. What've I gotten myself into?* He felt the sweat pop out on his brow as he remembered the photos Lenny had proudly shown him of a dismembered body that was once Chaz the Spaz. Alec's knees started to buckle, but once again, a strong body was there to hold him upright. This time the body belonged to Taggart.

"What'd you do to him?" Taggart asked Lon.

"Nothin'."

Alec looked up at Taggart. "Lenny's gonna kill me. I know it. Some day, some way, he's gonna find me and chop off my arms and legs."

Taggart looked down at him for several moments. "Not if I can help it."

"There you are," a good-looking man said, coming into the entry hall.

"It's Lon's fault," Taggart quipped. "He insisted on driving like an old woman."

"I was going the speed limit. Maybe you should try it once in a while," Lon shot back.

"Enough!" The guy turned to Alec. "I'm Mac. We spoke on the phone?"

"Yes." Alec held his hand out to shake the peacekeeper's hand. "Thanks for doing all this."

Mac chuckled. He swung his gaze from Lon to Taggart. "Don't thank me yet. These two just might drive you crazy before this thing is over."

Alec wanted to agree but once again held his tongue. "Is Adam here?"

Mac shifted uneasily from foot to foot. "He is, but he's already gone to his room for the night." Mac ran his fingers through his hair. "You might as well know. Angelo died earlier today."

Alec nodded. "I'm not surprised. He looked horrible the last time I saw him."

"According to the Feds, Angelo was able to write a note that not only had he not killed his wife, but he hadn't known why she disappeared in the first place."

Alec rolled the information around in his mind. His uncle's temperament had changed shortly after Aunt Theresa's disappearance. Alec had always chalked it up to seeing his uncle for who he really was for the first time, but maybe...

"So what now?"

"That's what we're hoping you can help us with," Mac said.

Mac led Alec into the dining room, where a makeshift command post had been set up. "Alec, I'd like you to meet Agents Jay Brown and Abe Merriweather."

Alec took a step back and bumped into Lon's chest. "You called the Feds?" He knew the lure of money could change the most trusting man into a traitor. Alec turned and looked up at Lon. "Please get me out of here," he pleaded.

"Relax," Mac said. "These are the good guys."

Alec spun around to face Mac. "You don't know that. I've seen plenty of public officials paid off over the years."

One of the agents, Jay, stepped forward. "We've already been made aware of your concerns about the field office in Chicago. I can guarantee the agent we're working with is safe. As a matter of fact, he shares your concerns."

"What's his name?" Alec asked.

"Special Agent Joseph Dunn."

Alec nodded. He'd dealt with Dunn before. "Have him check out Agents Pete Williams, Bradley Simms and Alan Westmoor. I saw their names scribbled on a piece of paper on Lenny's desk before I high-tailed it out of town."

Agent Brown grabbed a notepad and jotted down the names. "Will do."

"Have a seat," Mac said, gesturing to a chair.

Alec sat and looked around the room. The testosterone level was stifling. Mac turned a chair around and straddled it, facing Alec.

"Okay. We need to pick your brain a bit."

"Okay," Alec agreed.

"If Angelo didn't have Theresa killed, who would be your primary suspect?"

"That's easy. Lenny. He had everything to gain and nothing to lose." Alec glanced at Taggart, standing guard beside him even in a room of police and federal agents. "If you can get Joe Brussel, you can get Lenny."

Agent Brown braced his hands on the table and leaned closer to Alec. "Who's Joe Brussel? Why don't I know that name?"

Alec knew if the FBI didn't do their job, he was as good as dead with the information he was about to impart. "He's a seventy-six-year-old man who lives in Newport News, Virginia. He also happens to be the man who sets up and runs Lenny and Uncle Angelo's fake trusts and corporations. Joe Brussel is the mastermind behind Windwater, Inc."

"That's the company that paid Theresa Constantine's property taxes," Mac said.

"Yep. You won't find Joe's name attached to anything. I guarantee it, but you will find the physical evidence in his possession."

Brown held up his trusty note pad. "Do you know where his offices are located?"

Alec smiled. "No offices. Joe lives in a double-wide trailer just outside of town. Well, it looks like a rundown trailer, but his real home is underneath. You see Joe was one of those doomsday guys. He has a complete bomb shelter right there in Newport News."

"Why haven't you given the FBI this information before now? I thought you were working with them?" Mac asked.

"I was, but I didn't give a shit about Joe or Lenny. I fed the Bureau snippets here and there so they'd know I was willing to cooperate, but all I really wanted was to find something good on Angelo. Do you have any idea how many people he's killed or had killed over the years? I wanted him to go to prison for that shit, not tax evasion. I thought he'd killed my Aunt Theresa, and I wanted to be the one to take him down."

"But now you're questioning Angelo's involvement in the murders," Mac continued.

"Don't get me wrong. I'm sure Angelo has plenty of blood on his hands, just not Theresa's. Despite everything he was into, my uncle was a very religious man. He went to confession once a week because he was constantly afraid something would happen and he wouldn't have been cleansed of his sins. He wouldn't have lied on his deathbed."

Alec looked from Mac to Agent Brown. "You want Lenny, get Joe."

* * * *

Three days later, Jackie's phone woke him from a sound sleep. "Hello?"

"It's Bram. I need to talk to you this morning without Brier around."

Jackie looked at the clock. "It's only five."

"Yeah, but it's important. Meet me in the common room down the hall in ten minutes."

Jackie set his phone back on the bedside table and wrapped his arm around the man snuggled against him. Brier's hand began inching its way to Jackie's groin. "Playing possum?" he teased.

"No. Just don't want to open my eyes yet," Brier answered, running his fingers through the short patch of hair at Jackie's groin.

With his cock impossibly hard, Jackie wanted nothing more than to roll over and make love to the warm man in his arms.

"I have to go to a meeting in a few minutes. Will you stay in bed for me?"

Brier opened his eyes. "Can I go?"

"No, sweetheart. I think this is business. But I'll be back in no time and we can pick this back up."

"More kisses?" Brier asked.

"A lot more kisses." Jackie smiled. He loved that the simple things in a relationship made Brier so happy. "Will you keep the bed warm for me?"

Brier nodded and began licking Jackie's chest, circling the pebbled nub with his tongue. Jackie's balls were threatening to erupt with the slow teasing torture Brier was inflicting.

With a growl, Jackie eased away. "Sorry. I can't right now, but I'll be back."

He dressed quickly and gave Brier one more kiss before leaving the room.

Jackie found Bram standing in front of the window, worrying his hair. Shit. He knew that wasn't a good sign. "What's going on?"

Bram turned to face him. Before he was able to school his expression, Jackie saw the anguish in his friend's face.

"I got a call last night from Prince Zahar. There's been a bit of a shake-up in his kingdom. He wants me to send him some of our best recruits to replace his personal guards."

Jackie had worked for Prince Ali Zahar on several occasions and knew what Bram was about to tell him. "And he wants me."

"Yeah. At least for a while. He wants you to train the new guards personally. I tried to tell them you were already assigned, but the Prince wouldn't budge. He wants you or no one."

Jackie knew what the Prince's business meant for *Three Partners*. He looked in the direction of the room where his lover laid waiting for him. "Why can't I train them here?"

"Ali thinks the training will be more effective in Jurru." Bram turned away momentarily. "And I happen to agree. The guys I'll be sending have never worked for royalty. They need to be taught the lay of the land as well as proper protocol."

"Why does he want his bodyguards replaced with Americans?"

"Because American guards have no stake in the political mess brewing over there. Ali feels they'll be less likely to be influenced by those trying to overthrow him. He barely escaped an assassination attempt last month from one of his trusted guards."

"How long will I be there?"

"Three months tops."

"And Brier?"

"I'll look after my brother." Bram stepped up and put his hands on Jackie's shoulders. "I know it's going to be hard for him, but this is what you do. If the two of you are going to make this work, Brier needs to understand this is part of your life."

The thought of leaving Brier for three months killed him, but Bram was right. "When do I have to leave?"

"Prince Zahar's private plane is already en route. You're set to fly out of Albuquerque tomorrow morning."

That meant he'd have to drive back to Albuquerque in a few hours. "Get me a list of the recruits. I'm gonna go break the heart of the man I love."

Jackie returned to the room. His stomach was churning with regret at what he had to do. Brier didn't make it any easier by the way he was sprawled seductively on their bed.

"Waiting for me?" he asked, zeroing in on Brier's long fingers as they worked his cock and asshole.

"No one else," Brier panted.

Jackie stripped out of his clothes and crawled his way up the bed. He licked his way from the head of Brier's cock, down his length to pay homage to the heavy set of balls before continuing to his lover's stretched hole. The taste of the lube did nothing to thwart his desire.

"Fuck me," Brier moaned, hooking his forearms under his legs and bringing them to his chest.

Jackie grabbed the lube and slicked his cock. "I thought you liked foreplay," he commented as he pushed the head of his cock through the outer ring of muscles.

Brier laughed. "I've already foreplayed with myself."

Groaning at the image the words brought to mind, Jackie plunged deep into Brier's heat. "Damn, you feel good." The walls of Brier's ass squeezed Jackie's cock as he set a steady rhythm.

He lowered himself to his forearms and took Brier's mouth in a ravenous kiss as he fucked his man with all the love he felt. As Brier's tongue thrust into his mouth, Jackie prayed their new relationship would survive a three month absence.

Brier's heels digging into Jackie's shoulders pushed the unhappy thought away, and he concentrated on making them both fly.

He broke the kiss and playfully slapped Brier's ass. "Turn over."

Once Brier was on his hands and knees, Jackie thrust back inside. He gripped Brier's hips and set a hard fast pace, pegging his lover's gland on every thrust. Brier went wild, his silky black hair, thrown from side to side in the morning sunshine, looked blue.

"Aaagghh!" Brier yelled, the walls of his ass clamping Jackie's cock as he came.

The added pressure jerked Jackie over the edge into pure bliss. His cock erupted in shot after shot of cum. He pushed his man to the bed and lay on top of him.

"I love you," he whispered in Brier's ear.

"Love you," Brier mumbled into the pillow.

As Jackie tried to regain a normal heart rhythm, the impending announcement weighed heavily on his mind. Withdrawing his cock, he walked into the bathroom and washed his dick before wetting a washcloth for Brier.

Brier was still face down when Jackie re-entered the room. He began wiping away the evidence of their lovemaking as he tried to figure out what to say.

"You know that meeting I went to?"

Brier turned over and looked up at him. "Yeah?"

"It was about a job. I'm going to have to go away for a couple of months, but I promise to call you every day." There, he'd said it.

"Huh? What do you mean you're going away? Where to?"

"Jurru."

Brier bit his lip. "Where's that?"

"It's a small kingdom on the Arabian Sea."

"Well you can't go," Brier stated.

"I have to, sweetheart. It's my job." Jackie reached out to Brier, but his hands were pushed away.

Brier rose and walked towards the bathroom. "If you love me you won't go." He slammed the door.

Jackie heard the lock click into place, barring him from entering. "Shit!"

* * * *

Gabe looked around the breakfast table at his friends. It had been several days since his father's death and he still didn't know how he felt about it. Boone's hand landed on his thigh and gave a reassuring squeeze.

"You okay?" Boone asked.

Gabe gave his partner a brief nod. "The more I hear, the more conflicted I become. It seems like everyone around me has some kind of death wish. First there's Alec, determined to testify against Joe and Lenny when it goes to trial, then there's Addy who seems hell-bent

on stepping into Lenny's shoes? It's plain nuts if you ask me. Why can't they both just let it go? I've already told Addy I want nothing to do with Angelo's estate."

Rex leaned against Gabe from the other side. "Addy's not planning to step into Lenny's shoes. Once Lenny's found guilty, she has a legal right to the Constentine money and holdings, at least the money gained legally. She wants to do something good with it. I think it's commendable."

Gabe shook his head. "You're as crazy as she is. Do you think the organisation is just gonna let her step in?"

"That's why we're assigning some of our best men to surround her at all times," Nicco added, butting into the conversation.

"It won't be enough."

Hell, he'd just found his sister and cousin, and once again, his family would be taken from him because of the Constentine dynasty. Gabe knew a lot of his mixed feelings had to do with personal guilt. He'd refused to help Addy in her plan, preferring to keep his true identity a secret from the outside world. His family meant more to him than revenge on a dead man.

Gabe stood and stretched. The hours he'd spent worrying were quickly catching up with him. He'd been on the phone with the police and insurance company for most of the morning. Boone was taking the loss of the centre hard. Even though they knew it could be replaced, the time it would take to rebuild meant kids already looking forward to spending time on the ranch would have to be disappointed.

He also wouldn't be surprised if his damn insurance wasn't cancelled after this. First, the old farmhouse Buck Baker had lived in burned, now its replacement. Gabe rubbed his eyes. They'd been lucky enough to have good friends. Cree, Jake and Remy had already offered to let them stay in their dorm suite until their house could be rebuilt. Boone had called the parents of the friend Billy was staying with to make arrangements for him until school was out. Despite all the niceties, Gabe just wanted to go home. He wanted his old life back.

As soon as he said it to himself he regretted it. If it hadn't been for the last couple of weeks, he'd never have met Addy or Alec. Maybe it was worth having his entire home and business burned down.

Gabe glanced at Rex. "I'm gonna go find Cree."

"He's in the gym," Remy told him.

"Thanks."

Gabe found Cree running on the treadmill when he entered the spacious home gym. Brier was in the corner of the room using the weight machine, but Gabe steered clear of him. Since Jackie left for Jurru, Brier had become a different person. The gentle man often snapped at people for no apparent reason. When he wasn't grouchy he was either crying or sullen. Bram was even more worried because Brier seemed to blame him for Jackie's departure.

"Hey," Gabe said, stopping beside the treadmill.

Cree punched a few buttons and the belt slowed to a walk. "What's up?"

"Do you have a few minutes? I'd like to talk to you about the house plans."

"Sure." Cree pushed another button and the treadmill slowed to a stop. He stepped off and used the towel hanging over his shoulder to wipe his face and neck. "Why don't we go in the kitchen? I think I could drink a gallon of orange juice."

On their way out the door, Cree turned back to Brier. "You need something to drink?"

Brier shook his head but didn't make eye contact. He just continued to bench press an unbelievable amount of weight.

Gabe shook his head. "He's gonna blow out his shoulder if he keeps that up."

"Tell him that," Cree mumbled. "On second thoughts, don't. At least in here he isn't inflicting his mood on anyone else." They reached the kitchen and Cree pulled out a pitcher of juice. "Want some?"

"No," Gabe said. "I talked it over with Rex and Boone and we've decided to scale down the house and put more of the insurance money into the centre. We want you to design a dormitory like the one you have here on the *Triple Spur*."

Cree drained his glass and refilled it. "I can do that. How much do you want to scale down the house?"

"A lot. We figure a ranch-style would suit our needs. "Three bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, kitchen, dining room, living room and den."

"Sounds easy enough."

"We also want to enlarge Thor's house and rebuild Maggie's old house for Billy." Gabe felt the catch in his throat. There wasn't a day that went by that he didn't mourn for Rex's mom, Maggie. She'd been gone for going on four years, but it still hurt like it was yesterday that her heart had finally given out.

Cree whistled. "You're giving Billy his own place?"

"Yeah, well, we figured it was the best way to ensure he came home as often as possible. Besides, he plans to work at the centre when he graduates college, so he'll be moving back for good then. That's why we want it to be the same size as our house. Hopefully he'll meet a nice girl at college and settle down."

Cree chuckled. "You just want a couple of grandbabies."

"You're damn right I do." Gabe smiled. It felt good to forget his troubles and think about the future. He reached over and stole a drink of Cree's juice. "How long do you think it'll take to come up with some house plans, or would we be better just buying something generic and having you put your special spin on them?"

"Well, the second option would definitely be quicker, so it's up to you."

"I'll talk to Rex and Boone. As far as the centre, I think a mirrored blueprint to what you all did here would work, with the exception of another large open room attached to the front for therapy."

"You got it."

Gabe squeezed Cree's shoulder and stood. "Thanks. At least that's one thing off my mind."

Jenny and Cory walked into the kitchen as Gabe was walking out. He stopped to give each woman a kiss on the cheek before retreating back to the dining room.

* * * *

Bram was almost asleep, his cock still buried inside Declan when all hell seemed to break loose across the hall. Bram jumped up and pulled his briefs on before running to Brier's room. He tried to open the door but it was locked. "Brier! Open this door!"

The sounds of breaking glass continued. Bram kicked at the door with his foot, the thought of Brier hurting himself foremost on his mind. When Brier refused to open for him, he ran back to his room and picked up his cell phone. Punching in Remy's number, he waited.

"What's going on?" Declan asked, getting his clothes on.

"Brier's going nuts." He was just about to hang up and try Cree's phone when Remy answered.

"This better be good."

"Brier's having a melt down of sorts, and I need another key to his room."

"Be right there," Remy said, hanging up the phone.

Bram stepped into his jeans and put on his shoes, the sound of breaking glass still echoing across the hall. "What the fuck have I done to him?"

He raced back to Brier's door and tried again. "Please, brother, let me in."

All he got in response was an animalistic growl. Bram glanced over his shoulder as he heard the other doors in the vicinity open. His friends came pouring out of their rooms, all of them half-dressed.

"What's going on?" Mac asked.

The sound of breaking wood answered Mac's question. "We should've never sent Jackie away."

"It's his job!" Mac yelled, grabbing Bram by the arm. "You can't let Brier make you feel guilty over this."

Bram shook off his friend's hold.

Remy came bustling through the outside door, still naked, holding up a set of keys.

"Jesus, Remy," Gabe groaned, shaking his head.

"Bite me," Remy spat. "I came as fast as I could."

Bram took the key from Remy and put it into the lock. "Let me go in. I'll holler if I need help."

He pushed the door open and quickly shut it again. Despite his friends' concern, this was a family matter.

"Brier," Bram gently spoke his brother's name.

Brier turned, a bedside table hoisted over his head. "Get out of here, Bram."

Bram shook his head. "I can't do that. Why don't you put that down and let me clean you up?"

Brier looked down at his nude body, small cuts littered his bronzed skin. Brier started to put the table down, but stopped midway and threw the heavy piece of wood in Bram's direction. Bram dodged the flying furniture and ran to tackle his brother to the ground. He felt horrible as Brier winced, broken glass embedding itself in his back.

"Stop it!" Bram screamed. He wrapped his arms as tightly as he could around his crazed brother. "Have you taken your medicine lately?"

Brier tried to break Bram's hold, shaking his head from side to side. "It doesn't let me get mad! I want to be mad!" As if all his anger had abandoned him, Brier broke into tears. "I miss him," he wailed, beating his hands against his forehead.

Bram caught Brier's hands before he could do even more damage to himself. "I know you do, but this isn't the way to deal with it." He held his brother's shaking body as Brier continued to fall apart. "Do you think I should call Dr. Sharp? Maybe a few days in his care would put things into perspective?"

Brier shook his head violently, cutting it on the broken glass as he did so. "Please, Bram. Please don't send me back there. I'll be good, I promise. Please. I'll take my medicine. I won't be bad anymore, but please don't send me back there."

Bram sat up and pulled Brier into his arms, peppering his head with kisses. "Okay. Okay, I won't, but you have to calm down." He rocked Brier back and forth until his brother's tears turned to silent trickles of pain down his face. "Come on. Let's go get these cuts taken care of."

Brier opened his eyes, seeming to see the devastation in the room for the first time. He gasped and looked at Bram. "What've I done?"

Bram cleared a place on the floor and hoisted Brier to his feet. "It's okay. Just stand right there."

Bram stood and picked Brier up into his arms. It wasn't easy. His brother was damn-near as big as he was, but he couldn't let Brier step across the floor strewn with glass.

As soon as he opened the door, he was met by his friends. "Help me."

Nicco and Mac stepped forward and helped Bram carry Brier to the common room. They laid him face first on one of the sofas.

"I'll need a first-aid kit with a pair of tweezers." Bram felt the bile begin to rise in his throat as he looked at the glass embedded in Brier's skin. "Maybe we should take him to a hospital?"

He earned a gentle slap to the back of his head by Declan. "Hello? Doctor in the house."

"We've got a pretty extensive kit in the office. Hang on," Jake said and ran out the door.

As Brier lay there, he continued to cry and make apologies to Remy, Jenny, Cory and Cree for what he'd done to his room. Jenny wrapped her robe tighter around herself and knelt beside the couch at Brier's head. She ran her fingers gently through Brier's long hair, giving him the mother's touch he'd never known.

Brier turned his head to face Jenny. Without a word, he lifted one of Jenny's hands and covered his own face with it as he continued to cry.

Bram turned to Mac and Nicco. After making sure they both had shoes on, he asked them to find Brier's pills amongst the devastation in the room.

It took over an hour for Declan to remove the pieces of glass. There were only a few wounds that were questionable, but Declan decided butterfly bandages would be their best option. As depressed as Brier seemed to be, they were all afraid of taking him to the hospital for treatment.

Remy opened a new room for Brier to sleep in, and Bram helped him to bed.

"Jenny? Will you stay with me?" Brier asked.

Jenny smiled and nodded. "For as long as you need me to."

Cree shot a worried glance at Bram.

"He'll be okay. His medicine has started to kick-in, there won't be any more outbursts. He just needs rest, but if you want me to stay in the room with them I'll be more than happy to."

Cree looked at Bram for several moments before shaking his head. He walked over to Jenny and kissed her. "Sleep well."

Jenny nodded. "I'll be home in the morning." Cree stepped back.

Jake and Remy took their turns giving her a goodnight kiss.

Bram went to the closet and retrieved another blanket. "I'd help Brier get into some clothes, but they might rub against his cuts. Do you mind sleeping on top of the covers?"

Jenny took the blanket. "Not at all." She lay down next to Brier and covered herself up. "We'll be fine. Won't we, Brier?"

Brier nodded and pulled Jenny's arm around him.

Bram turned off the light and shut the door.

He turned to Mac. "One month and then I need you to find a replacement for Jackie."

Chapter Seven

Cree woke with Remy's lips wrapped around his morning erection. "Good morning," he groaned.

Remy gave him a grunt and continued swallowing his cock.

A quick glance at the clock told Cree he had an hour before he needed to be at the station. He spread his legs further apart, and let his lover climb between them.

"Why don't you ride my cock with your ass instead of your mouth?"

Remy released Cree's cock and reached for the lube. "Thought you'd never ask."

He handed the well-used bottle to Cree and turned around, shoving his ass in Cree's face.

As he lubed up his fingers in preparation, another hand landed on Remy's ass. Cree added slick to Cory's hand as well. "Gonna help me, sugar?"

"Yep." Cory worked a finger inside Remy's ass alongside Cree's.

Remy was first to moan at the invasion, but Cory quickly followed with her own noises of pleasure.

Cree looked down to see Remy's face buried in his wife's pussy. He could still hear Jake sawing logs on the other side of Cory. He laughed.

"Leave it to Jake to miss all the fun."

"That's okay," Jake mumbled, his voice scratchy with sleep. "I'll have Jenny all to myself later when the three of you are worn out."

Remy lifted his head and scoffed. "Dream on."

Cree and Cory continued to stretch Remy until he was ready.

"How're we gonna do this?"

Cory got a gleam in her green eyes and lay back on the bed. "Remy, you've got double duty this morning."

Cree grinned as Jake cleared his throat and took the bottle of lube away from him.

"Actually, both of you have double-duty," Jake told Cory as he pulled her over onto his cock, plunging deep into her pussy.

As Cory began to ride his cock, Jake wasted no time stretching her asshole for Remy's waiting cock. Cory bucked and thrashed as Jake worked his way up to three fingers.

"I think you'd better hurry," Jake told Remy, removing his fingers.

Remy applied lube to his erection and eased his way into Cory's hole with a groan.

Cree grinned as Cory's entire body shuddered with the invasion. Once Remy was seated to the root, he lined up his cock and plunged his way into Remy's ass.

"Fuck!" Remy shouted.

Cree gripped Remy's hips as he continued to drive his cock in and out of his husband. With every hard thrust, Remy buried himself to the hilt inside Cory as she continued to ride Jake. He loved mornings like this. The only thing missing was Jenny, but the squeezes of Remy's anal muscles were distracting him nicely.

Cory was the first to call out her orgasm, quickly followed by Jake. Remy continued fucking Cory for several more seconds before he too lost the battle and came. Cree was determined to wring every ounce of pleasure out of his partners before he had to leave for work. He always hated it when they played without him.

Cree changed angles slightly, causing Remy to call out. "Goddammit! Are you drilling for oil?"

Laughing, Cree continued assaulting Remy's ass, knowing his husband loved a good brutal fuck. The stuttered thrust was his first indication he could no longer stave off his climax. He leant forward and bit Remy's shoulder as he pumped his lover full of seed.

As he continued to pump volleys of cum inside Remy, he rolled them to the side off of Cory. Cree licked at the bite mark as he held tight to Remy.

"Love you."

"I know you do, but damn, when did you turn into a vampire?" Remy chuckled.

* * * *

Gabe was sitting down to breakfast when Mac's cell phone rang. He quickly unclipped the phone from his belt.

"Mac."

He reached over and took Boone's hand as Mac continued the conversation in clipped answers. Gabe knew the call had to be from the FBI. The agency had planned a midnight raid on Joe's trailer.

"Okay, give me a call if you find out anything else." Mac snapped his phone shut and secured it to his belt. "They have Joseph Brussel in custody. They confiscated a truckload of files and three computers. The Feds are in the process of trying to get an arrest warrant for Lenny."

Gabe gripped Boone's hand even tighter. "Will they let us know?"

"Yeah. Once Lenny's in custody."

Mac sat at the table and started filling his plate with scrambled eggs, sausage and bacon. Gabe had completely lost his appetite. He pushed his own half-eaten breakfast away.

Addy stood and walked over to Gabe's side. She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek. "It's almost over."

"That's where you're wrong. It's just beginning. If you insist on doing foolish shit, at least be honest with yourself. Lenny can easily reach beyond jail to exact revenge if you try and fuck with his business."

Addy made a sound of disgust and released her hold, returning to her seat. She started to take a bite of her breakfast, but stopped and dropped her fork. "I may die in the process of dismantling the Constentine holdings, but I'll be damned if I'll ever be afraid of those assholes again. They've taken everything from me, my mother, brother, and my name. All these years I've been stuck in neutral. I couldn't go forward, knowing that I was living a lie. How could I possibly meet a man and get married without revealing my true identity?"

"You can sit there and be smug all you like, but you have a family. You've found love and acceptance. I can't do that until I make things right. I'm not asking for your help, just your understanding."

Gabe's eyes began to burn with unshed tears. He'd given thought to Addy's future but not her past. He realised what he'd taken for strength in Addy was actually bitterness.

Although he had no desire to exact revenge, Addy definitely did. Who was he to deny his sister that?

He nodded his head and looked at Mac, Nicco and Amir. "Have you assigned guards who are used to dealing with this type of criminal element?"

Mac looked from Addy back to Gabe. "After an extensive interview with Addy, I think I've come up with the perfect group of guards to fulfil her needs."

"Who?" Bram butted in, eyes narrowed in suspicion.

"I'm reuniting Black Dog Four. I've already got Carlo on route from Nicaragua. Jack is flying in from DC and Renaldo's been relieved of his duties in Santo Domingo. The only one left to find is Lobo, and I'm sure we'll have him located by nightfall."

Bram almost choked on his sip of coffee. "Seriously? They haven't worked together since that incident in Chile a few years ago."

Gabe noticed the uneasy look on Addy's face. "What's with this Black Dog Four unit?"

Mac waved away Gabe's concerns. "They're four highly-trained ex-special ops guys that we've used in the past. You don't need to worry about their skills."

Gabe tried to digest everything he'd learned so far. "So what happened in Chile?"

"That's...private information."

"Just drop it, Gabe. I've already approved each and every man who'll be with me on this journey," Addy stated.

"So there'll be just four guards on Addy? I think more are necessary," Gabe added.

"We're sending a regular security detail, but Black Dog will surround Addy at all times." Mac dismissed any further questions by answering his ringing phone.

Gabe watched him walk towards the window, speaking low into the phone. He couldn't tell what the discussion was about, but Mac's voice rose several times in expletives.

A heavy slap on his back almost tossed him into the table. He looked over his shoulder to see a grinning Ben. "You leave enough for me?"

Kate smacked Ben on the arm. "We just ate."

Ben rubbed his still-flat stomach. "And?"

Ben's ever-present food obsession broke any tension that remained in the room. His ex-team leader took a plate from the sideboard and sat in Mac's vacated seat. Kate stood beside Ben's chair with one hand on her hip, watching her husband load his plate.

"That will eventually catch up with you, you know?"

Ben shrugged his broad shoulders. "Maybe. Guess you'll just have to make sure I get plenty of daily exercise for the rest of my life." He gave his wife a wink and dug in.

Mac walked back to the table and crossed his arms. "I was sitting there."

"Was, being the operative word," Ben chuckled without looking up from his plate.

Mac sighed. "Lobo's on his way. The team should all be here by late this evening. As soon as we get clearance from the Feds you'll be ready to go," Mac told Addy.

She wiped her mouth on a napkin and stood. "I'll go get my things packed. Gabe? Do you want to help me?"

Gabe rose, willing to grab all the time he could with Addy before she left. He gave Rex and Boone a kiss before following Addy to her room upstairs. He made himself comfortable on her bed as she dug her suitcase out from the closet.

"I know you think I'm being an ass, but I just worry about you. The Constentines have taken enough from me already."

Addy set the suitcase on the foot of the bed and sat beside him. "To be honest, it's kind of nice to finally have someone who gives a shit about me. And no matter what happens, I need you to know how much I love you. I'll do everything in my power to keep your name a secret. I'll tell anyone who asks that Adam is dead if you want me to, but I'm tired of pretending to be someone I'm not."

"You mean a Constentine?"

"Yeah, that among other things. I really don't have a death wish. I'll do everything my bodyguards tell me to do, I promise."

Gabe wrapped his arms around his sister. "Call me daily."

"Do you think that'll be safe?"

"Buy one of those prepaid phones. You can call me day or night."

Addy squeezed him tighter and nodded. "Thanks for trying to understand."

* * * *

After receiving the call that Lenny was in custody, Jenny suggested an impromptu barbeque to celebrate. Mac knew it would likely be their last big hurrah for a while as a group, so he'd sent Nicco to town to get the thickest, juiciest steaks he could find, while Amir made a run to the airport to pick up Carlo and Renaldo. Lobo would be the last to arrive as usual.

As he sat drinking a beer, Jack joined him, having flown in a few hours earlier.

"Seems like a nice group of friends," Jack commented.

"Yeah, they are." Mac glanced at the good-looking blond man. "They tend to get a little carried away at times though, so don't be surprised if clothes start dropping throughout the evening."

Jack chuckled and took a swig of his beer. "Nothing wrong with a little nudity."

Mac's eyes landed on Addy as she spoke to Gabe and his family. "You talked to Addy much yet?"

"A little. She's one brave lady."

Mac speared Jack with his gaze. "Will you be able to handle this assignment and all it entails?"

"I think so. I won't really know for sure until the rest of the guys get here. We've all kept in touch, but things changed between us after Maria's death."

Mac nodded and finished off his beer. "Care for another?" he asked, pointing to Jack's bottle.

"Naw, I'm good." Jack didn't even look at Mac, his gaze seemingly riveted on Addy.

Mac had just fished another beer out of the cooler when Nicco returned, bearing white-wrapped packages of meat.

"There you are," Nicco said, coming up to give him a kiss.

"You did get enough didn't you?" Mac asked. "The Black Dogs will probably be hungry and then there's always Ben," he chuckled.

Nicco laid the packages on the counter beside the hot grill. "If not, I saw a couple cows on the way back."

Mac started to unwrap the meat, but was interrupted by Jake. "I'll do that."

Rolling his eyes, Mac stepped back. Jake seemed to be under the impression no one could cook a steak better than him. Of course Mac knew better, but given the choice between standing over a hot grill and cuddling with his hot man, he decided to give up without a fight.

He led Nicco over to the chair he'd occupied earlier and pulled the big man down in his lap.

"We're gonna bust the chair," Nicco said.

"No we won't. I bet these chairs have held more than two people before," he chuckled.

"Well, when Amir gets his ass back here, we're moving to a stronger seat."

"Deal."

As Nicco started making small talk with Jack, Mac lifted the back of his lover's shirt and began to scratch and pet. He smiled as Nicco's muscles flexed under his ministrations. Nicco was like a cat in that regard, he loved to be touched in any situation on any part of his body.

"To the left," Nicco grunted, shifting his back to give Mac better access.

Holding a big bowl of potato salad, Jenny walked up to Mac. "Cree said to check with you since you've been the liaison with the FBI. Do you think it's safe to bring my babies back home?"

"Yeah. You might wait another day or so though, just to make sure. At this point, Lenny has to know giving us hell isn't going to get him out of the charges the Feds have on him."

With a huge smile, Jenny turned and set the bowl on the buffet table. Despite having Brier to mother the last day or so, he could tell she was going crazy without her babies around.

Amir walked through the French doors, flanked by Carlo and Renaldo, two of the most handsome men he'd ever come across. Mac knew it was partly the reason the men were so good at their jobs. All of team Black Dog had been carefully chosen for looks, temperament, battle skills and sexuality. It had been Mac's project several years earlier. He'd read a book about the Spartans and decided to put together a team of men who had sexual chemistry. The idea was to see if lovers worked better as a team than merely friends. The experiment

had seemed like a complete success until he'd sent them to guard Maria Valdez. Since that job, all four men had refused to work together again. Mac hoped guarding Addy would heal the open wounds left because of Maria's death.

Without getting up, Mac held out his hand. "Nice to see the two of you again." He shook with both men.

Beside him, Jack stood and faced Renaldo and Carlo. The three men seemed to study each other for a few moments, before Jack finally wrapped his arms around Carlo and gave him a brief kiss.

"Glad you came," Jack said, breaking contact with Carlo to give Renaldo a kiss and hug.

"Let me introduce you to Addy." Jack gestured to Addy and led the other two men over.

"You think it'll work?" Amir asked, taking Jack's seat.

"It'll either bring them all together or drive them apart permanently, but at least they won't be walking zombies anymore."

"And Addy? Does she know they used to all be lovers?" Amir further questioned.

Mac nodded. "Why do you think I got them back together? I've been waiting for the perfect woman, the perfect situation."

"First round of steaks are up," Jake announced.

Mac waited to see who would jump up. When no one did, he gave Nicco's ass a slap. "Come on, let's eat."

* * * *

Mac hugged his friends as he prepared to take his family home.

"Give me a call when you're ready for help with the house," he told Gabe.

"We will, thanks."

Nicco, Amir, Bram, Declan and Brier climbed into the SUV as Mac got behind the wheel. Brier was still quiet, but at least he was calm. Mac and Bram had decided to up Brier's workload to a full-time position, hoping to keep his mind occupied on something other than Jackie.

As they set off down the road, Nicco reached across the console and held Mac's hand. "It's been an eventful couple of weeks."

Mac nodded. "It sure has." He still worried about Gabe and how he was handling the knowledge of his mother's death, but he knew Rex and Boone would see him through the tough times. "Gabe didn't ask, but I'm going to talk to Addy about donating some of the Constentine millions to the rehabilitation centre."

"I'd imagine she would anyway," Nicco said.

"Probably, but it won't hurt to mention it." Mac looked in the rearview mirror to make sure both cars filled with his employees and their charges were behind him. "We'll set Alec and Addy up in the dorms for now. Addy and the Dogs won't be with us for more than a couple of days, but Alec could be staying a while."

"A long while most likely. Unless the FBI gets Lenny's trial pushed through the system it could be months. Maybe we'd be better off having him find a house or something to rent."

"We'll see. It's still early days. I have a nagging feeling this is far from over."

About the Author

An avid reader for years, one day Carol Lynne decided to write her own brand of erotic romance. Carol juggles between being a full-time mother and a full-time writer. These days, you can usually find Carol either cleaning jelly out of the carpet or nestled in her favourite chair writing steamy love scenes.

Email: carollynne@carollynne.info

Carol loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at <http://www.total-e-bound.com>.

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