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Ménage Amour

SEX CAMP

COWBOY SEX 3

Natalie Acres

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SEX CAMP

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DEDICATION

In the mountains of Southwest Virginia, located on South Holston Lake, a beautiful setting once offered a unique summer experience to those lucky enough to attend.

An all girl's program, Camp Sequoya will forever be remembered by those who spent their summers there.

As the song once rang out around the open fire, "Sequoya we love you and want you to know, we'll always love you wherever we go."

Even now, I find a lot of inspiration from those cherished days of yesteryear. I remember the friends made, the songs sang, and the fun we all had playing through the days of summer.

This book is dedicated to those who remember Camp Sequoya.

SEX CAMP

Cowboy Sex 3

NATALIE ACRES

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Prologue One

Braden Cartwell paced the floor. He glared at the large round clock on the wall as the second hand crossed the twelve. An annoying thud pounded against the wall. Each minute he waited for his daughter was excruciating enough without the reminder, but every sixty seconds he heard the same sound.

One of the lady officers glanced up. Her painted cherry lips curved in a smile, and she made an art out of clearing her throat. She sounded like she choked on a continual rinse of hot salt water. “She’s being processed. They should have her upstairs in a few more minutes.”

Braden gritted his teeth and thanked her. A few seconds later, the loud tick on the timekeeper alerted him again. He’d spent another wasted minute at the police station.

“Do you have a vending machine nearby?” he asked.

The woman studied him like she gave careful consideration to whether or not a criminal’s father should be provided with snack machine information. She looked as if she feared a harsh reprimand for supplying “the enemy” with top secret intelligence. While Braden waited out what might turn into a twenty-minute verdict, he saw movement in his peripheral vision. He turned to find his little girl with tear-stained cheeks and smeared mascara.

Two officers walked her through the double doors, and Braden felt his heart beat harder and harder against his chest. He watched the hefty men release her arms and then the handcuffs.

“Those cuffs were necessary?” he snapped.

“Yes, Mr. Cartwell, all citizens breaking the law are treated the same here, regardless of their last name.”

Braden bit his tongue. Thank God he left the ranch before Peyton told Kane about their daughter’s little joyride. Otherwise, his brother would’ve made the trip by himself. Then two Cartwells would’ve landed behind bars.

“Daddy!” Trixie ran into his arms and he tried his best not to hug her. He wanted to scold her, but she was alive and breathing. After her stunt driving, he considered it more than he could ask for, so he embraced her and held on tight.

“We’ll talk when we get home, Trixie. I don’t want you to answer any questions.”

“I didn’t, Daddy. They wouldn’t let me call you or phone an attorney so I sat in my cell quietly.”

Trixie and silence didn’t mesh. “Yeah, I bet.”

The knot in his stomach returned, threatening to make him sick. His little girl sat in an eight by eight jail cell for nearly six hours before Peyton told anyone where they could find her. She remained quiet to teach Trixie a lesson.

Braden wasn’t happy about her decision. He’d deal with Peyton later. That is, if he didn’t wring Trixie’s little neck for acting so much like her mother in the first place.

The Following Day

“Trixie! Breakfast!” Peyton stood at the bottom of the steps, yelling.

Kane smirked as he started downstairs. “I imagine she’s hung the hell over.”

“Think so?” Peyton snipped.

“Probably, and I hope she’s sick as a dog today. This is getting out of hand, Peyton.”

“She’s your daughter, too. You do something about her.”

“She’s our daughter,” Evan said, entering the foyer. “And getting drunk and drag racing isn’t acceptable, Peyton.”

“I love how everyone thinks Trixie’s capers are my fault,” she said.

Evan studied her for a long time and then said, “I don’t care who’s to blame. What I don’t want is one of our daughters—Trixie, Ansley, or Kimberly—crashing into a guardrail late one night, drunk or high, with a bad boy’s head in one of their laps.”

“Amen, brother, preach on,” Braden said, walking past them in pursuit of the kitchen. “You, of all people, should remember the dangers of fast cars and faster women.” He continued his slow stroll toward the kitchen, reading over a section of the newspaper. He looked up when Kane slapped a pile of bills against his chest.

Braden clutched the papers. “What’s this?”

Kane shook his head and pointed toward Peyton. “Ask her mother. She’ll tell us when Trixie is behind bars, but somehow it’s okay to spend five thousand dollars shopping online. Fashion is important. We need Trixie to look good when she’s drunk and passed out.”

“Kane,” Peyton warned.

“Don’t *Kane* me. I’ve had it. I’m only going to say this once. I’ve had it.”

“You said it twice, Daddy,” Trixie said, bouncing down the steps and smacking kisses on all of their cheeks. She hurriedly made her way closer to the kitchen. “And for the record, a boy’s face hasn’t been in my lap.”

“Thank God,” Braden stated dryly.

“Trixie,” Peyton began, “you’re out of control. I never thought I’d see the day when...”

Kane slapped Peyton’s bottom. “What’s wrong, sweetheart? Can’t face the truth or say it aloud?”

Evan tried to conceal a smile, too. “Braden, you deal with the bills. Kane,” he pointed, “*you* ground Trixie.” He took a few steps forward, reached for Peyton and dragged her with him. “And you, Mrs. Cartwell, are coming with me.”

“Great,” Kane moaned, understanding Evan wanted to leave the discipline of their daughter to them for his own ulterior motives—to take Peyton to bed all by himself.

Trixie smiled sweetly, playing the dumb role, something she probably learned from watching her mother's theatrics for so many years. "And what will my punishment be today?" The question loaded, she shot her mother a smile with a raised brow to boot.

Kane and his brothers brought Trixie and her sisters up in an unconventional home. They weren't in the dark about their mother's relationship with them. Sure, they tried to avoid some questions, but once Trixie hit the teenage years—the smartass era—her mouth led her astray. Sometimes Kane thought she just couldn't help herself. Whenever she could taunt them, she pushed her luck and tried their patience.

Kane narrowed his gaze and lifted his index finger to shake it high a few times. "You, young lady, are going to work at a summer camp. For once in your nineteen years, you will do something you don't want to do—make an honest living and w-o-r-k."

Trixie's mouth dropped. "Daddy, I don't understand. Can you provide a better definition? Is it a French word, or German perhaps?"

"Grief, Trixie," Peyton said, making her final escape with Evan. "One day soon, you'll push too hard."

One day they would all realize Trixie stood out as the angel of the trio. The twins, Kimberly and Ansley, along with their best friend, Patience McKay, had the potential to become every parent's worst nightmare. In fact, those girls could teach Trixie new tricks.

Placing her hand over her heart, Trixie said, "If you'll let me hang out here before college starts in the fall, you'll never regret it. I'll be as quiet as a church mouse and behave better than the nuns living there. Promise."

"I don't think so," Kane replied, ignoring Trixie's theatrics. "I know just the place for you this summer. A place called Cow Camp hires college students every year. You'll have your room and board plus a few hundred dollars. Besides, since the McKays are taking your sisters to Florida for a month, I'd like to have a few weeks to play around with your mother."

"Gross, you're really sick," Trixie exclaimed. "If you want me out of the house, I'll go, but I'm not going to a camp in the middle of nowhere." She closed her eyes tight and squeezed them shut for a few moments. "Nope, I don't see me there. Any other ideas?" She looked up again and grinned, flashing her fathers the best of smiles in an apparent last effort to save herself.

Braden ripped open another envelope and pulled the bill out with a gasp. Trixie's mouth fell wide open. *Oh no*, Kane thought, watching his daughter's expression.

Without a doubt, she knew by the envelope which store sent the dreaded bill. She held her breath while the dramatic swell of air filled her cheeks. Kane might as well wait for her explanation or Braden's screech.

Braden marched down the hall and tossed the bills on the old walnut table. "Oh, but Trixie, I can see you there, all right. In fact, I can't think of any other place I'd rather send you. Pack up, baby doll. You're going to spend the next few months learning what it means to rough it."

Prologue Two

“Pratchert?”

Stephen Pratchert looked up the second he heard his name. “Yeah?”

The fellow lurking above him pointed to a photograph. “That your kid?”

“No,” he snapped, instantly plotting the idiot’s death for such an assumption. Trixie Cartwell wasn’t a kid. Men with a higher level of intelligence probably considered her well on her way to womanhood.

One of those arrogant Cartwells fathered Trixie, the oldest daughter of Peyton Storm. Which one she belonged to was anyone’s guess, but from what he’d been told, she called all of her over-protective fathers “Daddy.”

“She’s a beautiful girl, whoever she is,” the inmate said, refusing to go away.

“She’s mine.”

“She’s your daughter?”

“Hell no,” Stephen said. “She’s my woman.”

The guy chuckled. “Yeah? How long you been in here, Pratchert?” He snatched the glossy black and white photo from Stephen’s hands and gawked.

“A while.”

“This doesn’t look like an old picture.”

“It’s not.”

“And she’s your woman?”

Pratchert sneered. “Damn right.”

“How’d you manage to find one who looks like her?”

“Lucky, I guess.”

“I’d say. Hell, she’s probably still in disposable diapers.” The fellow laughed again and turned away from Stephen’s cell long enough to eye his own confined quarters located nearby.

“She’s been waiting for me,” Stephen declared. “She doesn’t know it

yet, but I'm everything she's been waiting for and a little bit more."

The man grabbed his balls in a crude manner and shook with laughter then. "Do me a favor and tell her if she wants to wait for two, I got twenty years to life and then I'll set her right."

Stephen slapped the picture against his cot and glared at the man in his pathetic orange jumpsuit, forgetting he wore one of the same. "I'd appreciate it if you never mentioned my future wife in that manner again."

"Wife, huh?"

"That's right."

The prisoner continued snickering and walked away. A few minutes later, the buzzer sounded out and the prison bars shifted each railed door into place. The clanking sound around the cell block jolted Stephen back in time.

Three weeks, he reminded himself. Twenty-one days and he'd walk out a free man. He couldn't let anyone there provoke him, regardless of how much they tried.

For years, Stephen dreamed of returning to the outside world again. He was going home, and he had a woman waiting for him when he arrived there. He'd find her, and when he did he would spend the rest of his life showing little Trixie Cartwell a really good time.

Chapter One

Cow Camp

June 1st

Trixie stood perfectly still. She blinked her eyes over and over again. Speechless and unable to move, the young Cartwell looked like she might have gone into shock. Peyton warned them. Trixie wasn't equipped to handle rugged conditions. Perhaps she was right.

"Trixie, are you okay?" Braden asked, setting her luggage down on the dusty hardwood flooring. Evan stood at the door because he didn't like tight spaces, and Kane continued his attempt to squeeze one more piece of luggage into her small living quarters.

Kane snapped his fingers in front of her face. "Trixie!"

"This is a bad idea," Evan declared. "I can't believe these conditions. Look at this place. The campers are in fancy lodges and the counselors are in areas barely large enough for a cot? Bullshit, what if one of these rooms catches on fire?"

"Come on, Evan. With a window in the front and one in the back, she's safer here than at home," Braden pointed out.

"It's like a stable," Trixie muttered, staring straight ahead. "You're forcing me to live in a stall." She didn't budge, only stared. At least she wouldn't get lost in her own home. She barely had room to turn around. Cozy seemed like a big word for the tiny space.

The filthy wood plank flooring resembled the dirt floors of the 1800s. Evan kicked up a cloud of grit and grime. His daughter's eyes widened. Naturally, the little drama queen did her best to make sure someone noticed her theatrics.

"Really?" she asked, coughing and waving her hand. "I've changed my mind. Horses wouldn't be allowed here. This shit hole is more like ant accommodations."

Kane kicked her bags in a corner. Evan read his facial expression as pure disgust. His brother wasn't comfortable with her living arrangements any more than he was, but Kane rarely admitted defeat.

Trixie's unit, from what the administrator explained on the phone prior to their arrival, was one of the counselor quarters without a dresser. The cabin included a bunk bed option. She could use the top bunk, a flat piece of plywood with a thin mattress on top, to store her luggage and belongings. A sink with a cabinet-style mirror located above it occupied one of the dark corners. The small bathroom housed a stand-alone shower and toilet.

"I'm sure you'll make the most of the weeks you have here," Braden said.

Evan swallowed tightly. He hated to leave her there, but Trixie asked for this kind of summer when she started hanging around the wrong crowd and partying until dawn. They needed to get a firm hand on her or else she'd throw away her youth in hopes of living off family money for the rest of her life. Evan had bigger dreams for her. They all did.

"You can't be serious," she whispered. "After seeing this place, you're still leaving me here?"

Braden cranked open one of the roll out windows. As soon as his hand left the lever, he shook off the mess of sticky cobwebs. "Cow Camp has one of the best reputations in the country. I'm sure you'll adjust and get along fine, Trixie."

Evan wondered. Trixie indulged in the finer things in life. He didn't know how long she'd make it, but he knew one thing for sure, she would pull the biggest stunt of her lifetime to get them to come back and pick her up.

"I'd like to see the three of you try this," she quipped, flopping on the bottom bunk. She must have hoped to find a little spring in the mattress. Instead, she shrieked, "This feels like a solid sheet of metal!"

"Everything all right in here?" A clean-cut fellow with short, sandy-blond hair, deep blue eyes and a great tan stuck his head inside her gloomy new home.

Trixie shrugged. "I suppose so, if you like finding yourself somewhere under the confines of hell." She barely paid attention to him. The cowboy gave new meaning to the word gorgeous, and she noticed that much, but unless a fellow looked like a true god right now, like those often described

in Greek mythology, getting all worked up over a man seemed pointless. “This is fucking unbelievable.”

“A word like that one will guarantee you a spot on kitchen detail if the right guy hears you.” With his thumb moving over his shoulder, he added with a whisper, “Speak of the devil.”

Purely accidental, Trixie gasped. She clasped her hand over her mouth, but the delayed reaction didn’t help. As if the gods themselves surrounded her and read her mind, ten seconds earlier, in walked Zeus.

The kind of creature who quickly earned a gal’s undivided attention regardless of current circumstances, the newcomer not only showed off a buff body, but also had a flawless complexion. She quickly added another adjective to the typical tall, dark, and handsome descriptors—haunting.

The fellow who entered first acted uninterested in Trixie’s gaping. He chatted on about the camp, and after she gawked all she could stand, she rejoined the conversation when he said, “I kind of like the way things are set up here. At least the junior counselors have better accommodations than most of the senior staff. Can you imagine spending all day and all night with a bunch of spoiled, screaming kids?”

She probably mumbled something stupid. Sort of preoccupied with the man in the middle, Trixie decided the god-like fellow looked specifically designed with a woman’s vagina in mind.

The guy with sand-colored hair and sun-kissed skin said, “I just realized I forgot polite introductions. I’m Rory Matthews.” He extended his hand toward Evan, who stood the closest. Then he took the time to introduce himself around the room. When his hand met Trixie’s, his eyes twinkled and he brought her wrist upward and kissed her fingertips. “Miss Cartwell, I hope you like the confines of hell since I have a feeling we’re in for a few hot summer nights.”

Trixie quickly peered over his shoulder and released a sigh of relief when her fathers didn’t turn around. They seldom ignored come-ons to their daughters, so they probably didn’t hear Rory’s thick implication, and thank goodness. It wasn’t beneath any of them to have the young man’s job before they left if they felt like he might present a few problems, never mind opportunities. Trixie concentrated on those possibilities, indulging in the sparkle of mischief lingering in his expression.

Once Rory dropped her hand, Trixie let her self control go and she stared the larger fellow up and down. When he didn't look her way and seemed more interested in the papers stacked on his clipboard, she took a deep breath and returned her focus to Rory.

He pointed and shrugged. "I guess you haven't met Mitch."

She shook her head fast. She came close to panting and drooling too.

Taking Rory's cue, he said, "I'm Mitch Colony, the senior counselor in charge of room assignments, job details, and scheduling. I'm also the camp administrator."

* * * *

Her fathers immediately studied the giant. Maybe they wouldn't realize she thought of him as a tempting snack covered in sex appeal. They followed him around her closet-size cabin. He most likely put them at ease playing off his role of womanizer—which she saw in an instant he most definitely perfected—by acting like the responsible man in the position of authority.

Trixie recognized the name. He didn't have to go to the trouble of listing his job tasks. The Colony family owned the camp. Her fathers shared lots of stories about his grandparents on their drive to the Abingdon area and South Holston Lake. The Colony heirs inherited most of Southwest Virginia. Those holdings included Cow Camp.

The travel time out to the camp, located in a remote area, offered a little eye-opening awareness. Her fathers planned to leave her in the middle of no man's land.

The god of all gods finally gave Trixie a thorough once-over. With the complete appraisal complete, he added a wink and returned his undivided attention to her fathers.

"So who can sign as her next of kin? I'm assuming two of you are her uncles and one of you—"

"Don't assume," Trixie groaned.

"Okay, so who can sign for you?" he asked, moistening his lips and staring right at her breasts. She wished she could find the humor in all of this. Then, she might keep her arms close to her boobs and push them up for show. *Ah well*, she thought, kneeling next to her luggage. *Why not give the*

masked devil a show? Blessed in the chest area, from her bent position, Mitch could enjoy a fair enough view of her cleavage. She shook her padlock and cursed the small brass contraption when it didn't snap right open.

Mitch continued to gape at her boobs. She stayed crouched over long enough to guarantee he saw they were real, not all blown up with silicone or saline.

With an exasperated sigh, she said, "Any of them can sign for me since I'm here against my will."

"Is that right?" he questioned, laughing. "I've never held a counselor against her will," he added. "It sounds kind of fun."

"If you need a signature, any of them can hold a pen."

Kane glared at her. Yeah, she pushed her father's buttons and she liked it. Paybacks and hell kind of went hand in hand.

"Oh, I get it." No, he didn't, but she got his drift.

"They aren't gay. They're all my fathers," she further explained, standing again, and only because she realized her gaze drifted eye level to the boss' cock. "Just call me lucky. God knew I needed a lot of discipline, so he gave me three fathers and one mother to keep them in line."

She watched as the first bead of sweat popped on Mitch's forehead. Rory quickly excused himself, quietly backing out of the cabin altogether.

"Yeah, we get a lot of looks and questions back home," she explained, taking the paperwork and shoving the forms toward Braden. "For the record, Braden is the brainy father and the one who handles finances. Kane is my biological father who strong-arms everyone until he gets his way. And Evan, well Evan is comic relief. He makes most people laugh. That is, of course, with the exception of my mother. He frustrates her to no end because of the games they like to play. Read between the lines." She batted her eyelashes.

Mitch's lips tilted in amusement. Smart enough to enjoy her comments without responding, he quickly thumbed through his worksheets.

"Trixie!" Braden exclaimed. "That's enough."

Kane leaned over and kissed her on the cheek. "Since I'm the father with muscles, you should've sweet-talked me some. I might have stuck around to help you get settled. Now, I think it's about time to go. Don't you, Evan?"

Evan pressed a kiss to her forehead. “I do. Braden, sign the paperwork and let’s head home.”

Trixie took a few steps, but couldn’t take more than three or four without bumping into someone. She eyed Mitch. “Dad probably doesn’t have to fill this out. I’m nineteen.”

The lone confession must have sounded like music to the boss-in-charge’s ears. He studied her with new lust, the unharnessed kind that darkened a man’s hooded eyes and made it damn near impossible to keep itching fingers out of his pants for repositioning purposes.

“Nineteen, huh?” Mitch asked, a guttural edge lacing through a newfound tone. “Nineteen is a good age.”

Whatever. Nineteen sounded like a safe age. Mr. Colony’s dick could twitch now. His size would imprint his pants any second, especially if he didn’t look away. Trixie should’ve cupped her hands under her boobs and tempted the devil right on out of him.

“Then I guess you’re old enough to take care of everything yourself, huh?”

“I manage,” she said flippantly. “But I’m hardly the responsible one in the family. Ask them.”

“I’m disappointed to hear that,” Mitch drawled. “I took you for the kind of gal who knows how to take control of situations. I’ll make sure to keep an eye on you.”

“It won’t be a burden,” she replied.

Chuckling, he returned his focus to Braden and pointed to the signature line on the top form. He slapped Braden’s back—what a mistake—and said, “Since your daughter needs someone to handle her affairs, you can sign here. This gives us permission to seek medical attention for Trixie in the event of an accident as well as releases the camp from all responsibility in the event of—”

“Wait a minute!” she exclaimed. “Am I going to get hurt here?”

“Not unless you try,” Kane growled from the porch. “And Trixie, just so you know, if I have to come back here to pick you up early, we’re going to have an unpleasant surprise for you at home. You’re on your own for the rest of the summer without an allowance from us.”

She blinked repeatedly, much like she did when she first saw the likes of her new sleeping quarters. This Cow Camp experience proved difficult to

choke down in one gulp. Torn between staying, now that she'd met Rory and Mitch, and begging for mercy and a fast trip home, Trixie decided her fathers didn't look like ambassadors for leniency at this point.

"Come on, Kane, let's not embarrass her in front of her new boss," Evan said.

Braden signed all of the paperwork and handed the forms back to Mitch. "Looks like she's all yours."

* * * *

Trixie spent the rest of the afternoon cleaning up and adding personal touches to her home away from home. After her fathers left, she decided to make the most of her situation. Things could've been worse. They could've sent her to an all-girl summer program. At least a few good-looking men worked at Cow Camp.

She stared at the red-and-white-checkered curtains hanging loosely over the screened windows. She wasn't crazy about the décor, but thank goodness her mother encouraged her to take items from her room to liven the place up. She must've realized even hell needed an interior decorator with some sense of style.

Fortunately, she thought ahead and brought her iPod along with her laptop computer. With the only two survival items a gal needed, she'd barely notice her surroundings. Besides, if she cared to guess, she probably wouldn't spend a lot of time in her cabin.

A light tap on the door startled her right when she started to make up her bunk. She saw the shadow of a large guy on the other side of the thin window covering. She gave the flimsy door a push and opened it up to find Mitch standing there with his clipboard in hand.

Her mouth dried upon sighting. He didn't look as professional as he had earlier. When the newcomers and their parents wandered around, Mitch wore khaki slacks and a short-sleeve, polo-style shirt with Cow Camp stitched on the pocket. Now, he wore a muscle T-shirt with Cow Camp scribbled across the front and tight running shorts.

Man, the guy possessed some great legs. His muscular thighs were tight and shapely, just the way she liked them. He probably worked out on a

regular basis and jogged four or five miles a day. Good grief, he had it going on.

“Trixie?”

“Huh?” She realized she gawked at his lower limbs probably around the same time he noticed. Oh, for heaven’s sake! She felt her skin heat. She moved out of the way and politely said, “Would you like to come in?”

He flashed his natural dimples, but declined the offer. “Why don’t you step out here on the porch and let’s go over a few things about the camp. You’re one of the few new counselors here so I thought I’d find out more about your likes and dislikes before I finish up the instructor’s schedule and coordinate activities. Oh, and by the way, you’re an adult here. The paperwork your father filled out is invalid. I’ll need your signature and information again.”

“You knew that all along,” she said.

“Yes, ma’am, I did. But I was afraid you’d bolt if you knew you had the option as an adult. You aren’t the first daddy’s little girl we’ve torn away from the bottle, and you won’t be the last.”

She narrowed her gaze. She’d show him a daddy’s little girl.

“You’re sure you don’t want to come in?” she asked again, grinning. Her invitation teetered along the lines of enticing him with great persistence and a little spicy temptation. She tucked her hands behind her back and struck a pose complete with her chest out and quick turn of head so her hair tousled over her shoulders.

Mitch held his tongue to his upper lip and he considered the invitation. She easily saw the reels turning. Oh sure, he pondered the offer. He, in fact, appeared damn tempted. “I have a rule about fraternizing with the other counselors, particularly those of the opposite sex. Can you step outside please?”

“Sure,” she agreed, tiptoeing to the porch and refusing to believe the lie that fell from his lips.

“You might as well get comfortable. I have a few items on the checklist I want to go over.”

Trixie propped up on the log rail surrounding her summer cabin. Her legs draped over the side. She swayed them back and forth. Mitch took a seat on the stoop, but his gaze fell to her lower half.

Trixie smirked. Possessing the girl-next-door good looks, she always upped her game when she put on a pair of short-shorts and a tank. She wore clothes to flaunt her boobs. Maybe Mitch would even consider them impressive. Men always stared at her chest. “So, shoot. What do you want to ask me?”

Bada-bing. His gaze caught hers and then he slipped again. He returned his focus to her tits. He might as well wipe the slobber from his chin.

Clearing his throat, Mitch said, “You didn’t want to spend your summer here, I take it.”

“Nope, but I think I’m going to like Cow Camp. I’m having a fine time already.”

“Really?” he mused. “How come?”

“I like the fellows I’ve met so far.”

“And who have you met?”

“You and Rory,” she said without missing a beat. “If the rest of the staff looks like you two, I’m in for quite a summer.”

He shook his finger in a mocking effort to make light of the situation. “I’m going to keep my eye on you.”

“So you’ve said. Am I supposed to take your words as a threat or a promise?”

“Both,” he assured her.

“Then you’d better watch with both eyes. I’m sure to keep you entertained.”

“I don’t doubt it,” he groaned, flipping the first few pages on his clipboard and drawing his pen from the metal clip attached at the top. “So, Trixie, outside of flirting, what are you good at?”

She giggled. “You really want to know?”

“Keep it decent,” he warned. “I’d hate to get the wrong idea.”

“Ah, now, and here I wanted to like the hell out of you.”

“Let me make this easy for you.” He pulled a bright orange sheet of paper from the back of his documents and handed it to her. “Take a look at those activities and tell me which ones you can teach, which classes you’d enjoy as an assistant, and those you don’t know anything about whatsoever.”

Trixie took the paper and resisted the urge to let their fingertips touch. She glanced over the long list of camp activities. With Mitch watching her a

little too intently, she jerked and looked up in time to see him staring at her breasts again. Men were so predictable.

She jumped off the rail and knew what kind of bounce he witnessed. “What do you teach, Mitch?”

His gaze darted away and back again, but his skin turned red all the same. Perspiration marked his forehead with a few moist spots. “I organize a lot of extra-curricular activities.”

“I bet,” she cooed, smiling.

He hurriedly continued. “And fill in where I’m needed. I help with the water sports and some of the riding events.”

“I’m an excellent rider.”

“Your dad told me.”

“Which one?” she asked, challenging him for a truer reaction than the one he showed earlier.

He swallowed tightly. She watched his Adam’s apple move and thought he might choke out a response, whatever came to mind. Instead, he shook his clipboard. Then, unexpectedly, he tossed the paper infested item to the side. It landed with a thud on the hard planks of the porch flooring.

Now she possessed good reason to tremble in her flip-flops.

“You like giving men a little something to think about, don’t you, Trixie?”

“You’d better believe it,” she answered, resting her palm on the curve of her waist. “I live for any kind of thrill I can find.”

“All right then, tell you what. I’m gonna give you a chance to shock me. Tell me about your dads and your mom.”

“What do you want to know?”

“What do you want to tell me? Obviously there is something. You want the idea of three fathers to wow me, and so far I haven’t fallen for your games. Is there something particular you’re itching to tell me about your family life?”

“What are you, a psychologist or something?”

“No, I’m just an average guy interested in hearing your story.”

She fidgeted and then with both hands, snapped the piece of paper a couple of times as if she tried to get rid of a wrinkle in the center. “Let’s keep things simple,” she suggested. “From your list of choices here, I see Cow Camp offers a lot of activities I know nothing about.”

“You know about Domination and submission?”

She froze.

“Is that what you want me to know about your life? Your mother is a submissive woman and your fathers—”

“Are none of your business,” she said, reaching for the door. “Tell you what, I’ll look over my options and give it some thought.” She started to scoot back inside, but he stood up and caught her arm before she made a clean escape.

Gripping her forearm, he held it close to his belly. She bet on more man than she knew how to handle just by the way he refused to let go when she tried to break free.

“You’re hurting me.”

“No, I’m not,” he said, relaxing his grip.

“Let me go.”

“Or what? You’ll scream for one of your dads?”

“You have no idea what you’re messing with here.”

“Ditto,” he countered. “We’re going to spend a whole lot of time together, so I’ll give you one warning. Just one, and it’s one more than I should.”

“Okay,” she drawled, tightly.

His gaze dropped to her lips. “Don’t toy with me unless you’re ready to play. See, I have a lot to lose here. I don’t believe in beating around the wrong bush, if you know what I mean.

“Now, when you’re ready to give me your list of activity choices, I’ll be in the lodge. I’ll do what I can to meet your requests. When you’re ready to hear all about mine—every last one of them—then you let me know. I can’t wait to entertain what you have in mind.”

Chapter Two

Mitch walked into the main office and slammed the door. He stomped over to the intercom and hit the on-button. He needed to make an announcement but couldn't find the words, so he hit the off-button and slammed his fist beside the microphone.

"She got to you."

Mitch quickly turned around to face a very amused Rory. "Who?"

Rory laughed. "Shit, man, how many years have we worked together out here?"

"Apparently, one too many," he growled.

"She's the hottest thing to ever trot on this property, and you know it."

"I'm assuming you're talking about Trixie Cartwell."

"Big boobs, tight ass, spunky as all hell? God, yeah, who else?" Rory flopped down on the leather sofa. "To think I almost got a real job this summer. I would've missed out on one heck of a good time, huh?"

"She's gonna give us nothing but trouble."

"You think she might?" Crossing his ankles and then his arms, Rory added, "Damn, I hope so."

Mitch hit the box on the lower shelf and pulled the microphone forward. "Counselors, our campers will arrive tomorrow afternoon beginning at one o'clock. Tonight, dinner is served fireside at six p.m. with a mandatory meeting immediately following.

"Dress tonight is..." he stopped mid-sentence, waggled his brows and moved the microphone away from his lips. "Too bad I can't say come nude." He hit the button again and cleared his throat. "Tonight, dress is casual. If you don't have your camp shirts, please run by The Canteen Gift Shop and pick one up. Everyone is required to dress in Cow Camp shirts and white shorts tomorrow."

He flipped the switch and sat down on the edge of the large wooden desk. “Darn it, I’ve got a worry or two now, huh?”

Rory laughed. “Oh, you sure do. See, in your new authoritative position, she’s off limits. In mine? She’s fair game.”

“My position doesn’t change things. Just because I’m the boss now doesn’t mean I can’t pursue a woman, or at least that woman.”

Rory took a deep breath. “I thought you might feel that way. I may have to go see old man Colony myself and tell him you’re fraternizing with the counselors again.”

Mitch raised a brow and shrugged. “I’m not staying away from her, but I’m not asking you to back off, either.”

“It wouldn’t do you a bit of good if you did.”

“Didn’t think so,” Mitch said, chuckling. “I don’t have to worry about you, anyway. When Brock Sheldon sees the likes of her, he’s gonna pitch a fucking fit.”

“Yeah, but then he’ll lure her straight into his bed.”

* * * *

Trixie filled out her activity assignment requests and placed the sheet of paper on her bunk. She’d take the blasted form with her when she headed to dinner. She had better things to do right then than deal with an egotistical ass.

She wasn’t sure what she said to set Mitch off, but whatever impression she gave him, he made it into the wrong one. She studied her reflection in the small mirror above the sink. No, on second thought—she straightened her spaghetti straps—she gave him too much to ponder. In retaliation, he gave her more than enough reasons to take her insinuations and her intentions somewhere else.

Maybe she’d try and find the friendly one. She tapped her fingernails on the porcelain bowl. A girl might lose her virginity in Rory’s bedroom eyes. The man behind those eyes had a way with the ladies. No doubts there.

Grabbing a book and her sunglasses, she walked out on the porch. Taking a seat on the stoop, she stretched her legs out in time to trip a guy who had his arms loaded down with luggage.

“Watch yourself!” he yelled, though too late. Barely able to keep his footing, the bags swung around wildly and a large duffle bag knocked Trixie in the head.

“Ouch!” she cried out, immediately slapping her hand to her head. “Pay attention to where you sling your rig, buddy!”

“You okay?” he asked, catching his balance and shifting the weight of his bags between two large hands.

“Sure, for a woman who almost lost her head, I’m feeling no pain. Trust me.” She watched him walk to the cabin three doors down. He discarded his loot and then glared down the narrow path.

He marched back over and stopped short of plowing over her again. “Look, you need to watch where you stick your feet. We have all sorts of traffic through here, especially when the brats arrive.” He stopped scolding her and his gaze traveled up her legs. “Super. Just what I needed,” he growled.

For some reason, his tone told a tale she didn’t feel like hearing, so maybe he wasn’t easily impressed by big boobs and shapely calves. Sure, he looked better than anything she’d ever met in real life, but first impressions left quite a warning.

She should run downhill screaming bloody hell with her arms waving wildly. The man in front of her was rough stock, the kind of fellow who didn’t put up with her kind of games. She arrived at the decision as soon as the thud sounded out from his porch and he stomped back to scold her. Good heavens, he made most bad-asses look like newborn pups with their eyes still closed.

“You tripped over me,” she pointed out, leaning back and placing her palms flat against her hips. She braced for the best of word wars.

Grumbling, he returned to his meager hut and didn’t ask if she needed medical attention. Instead, from what Trixie translated, he blamed her because he *almost* lost his balance.

She picked up her book and then immediately tossed the paperback to the wayside again. Standing, she debated trotting off to give the guy a real piece of her mind. That’s when she saw the only friendly native on the place. Holding her hand to her forehead, she groaned when she almost found the ground again. Swaying, she grabbed the nearby post and took her seat once more.

Rory rushed to her side. “Hey, are you okay?”

“I have a hard head.”

“I’d say. I saw Brock wallop you. What did you do to him, anyway?”

“Tripped him.”

“On purpose?” He smiled, pulling her hand away from her forehead. “If so, you should pick your victims more carefully. You’ll have a shiner there.”

“Great,” she moaned, glaring at Mr. Personality three doors down. “You know him?”

He looked down the trail. Brock pointed in his direction with his thumb, index finger and pinky extended in a cool-kind-of-gesture, as if to say, “hello” in a bad boy’s unspoken lingo.

“Let me go see what his problem is,” he said. “Want me to rush over to the infirmary and get you some ice first?”

“No, I’m fine. Thanks.”

Rory ran off to greet the rude one as if he couldn’t wait to congratulate him for swatting the new chick with a bag of bricks, since that’s what she assumed he carried in his swinging bag. She decided Rory wasn’t an ally after all. He was one of *them*.

The way he grabbed the newcomer’s hand in a street-ghetto kind of handshake and pulled him in for a tight hug made her cringe. *Shit*, she thought as she watched them chat it up a few porches over. One thing for sure, Cow Camp’s staff consisted of several pretty boys and attitudes to warn off the smartest of women.

She shrugged. What did she care? She was still wet behind the ears and too young to worry about the consequences men like these guys brought in the wake of their troubles.

* * * *

“Who’s the broad?” Brock asked.

“Trixie Cartwell. She’s new this summer.”

Brock stared at him in disbelief. “I got that part. We’ve never had one like her out here.”

“That’s for sure,” Rory said laughing. “You made quite an impression on her, too.”

“She tripped me. If she wanted my attention, a ‘hello’ works for me.”

"I saw what happened. She never saw you coming."

"Your story," he said. "When did you get in town?"

"Last night."

He glanced toward Trixie's cabin again. "How about her? Did she come in early, too?"

"Just got here a few hours ago."

"Mitch seen her yet?"

"Yep, he said you'd like her."

"He should know," Brock replied. "It's the same song every summer and has been since we started here as counselors-in-training. We rush right into June hoping to meet the right gal for a good romp or two and every August ends up the same. We find one we both like, use her up pretty good, and then run like hell."

"Ah, you poor old chap, you."

Brock arched a brow. "Chap?"

"Yeah," Rory began, "I keep up with you. Someone spent the winter overseas. Say something. I wanna hear your new dialect. Do you have a British accent now?"

"Yeah, I have the accent pat when I'm picking up British women. Rory, I'm telling you what now, we need to go backpacking there when this summer is behind us. The women there are smart and sassy, super in bed, and willing to teach an American boy all sorts of things."

"Boy?"

"I ran with an older crowd, and the women loved teaching the young American about the finer things in life."

"I bet," Rory said, eyeing Trixie. "Hey neighbor! You okay down there?"

She smiled and waved before propping her head against the wooden post and holding a book in front of her face.

"She's a fox. I'm telling you what. She has spunk and fire like nobody's business. Get Mitch to tell you all about his run-in with her. You'll crack up."

"You tell me," he encouraged, curious.

"No can do, buddy. It's funnier if you hear it from him. He basically told her not to toy with him unless she wanted to get up close and personal."

“Speak of the devil,” Brock pointed. “Looks like he’s already sniffing around the unsuspecting kitten.”

“Oh, trust me, she might look innocent and sweet from a distance, but from first impressions, she’s not your virginal counselor looking for a first gig.”

“She’s baiting him then?” Brock asked, folding his arms over his chest, studying the new junior counselor too.

“Oh yeah, and he’s liking it a whole lot from what I can tell.”

* * * *

“Dinner bell will sound out in a few minutes, right before supper,” Mitch said, glaring at her forehead. “Do you want to get with me on those activity requests?”

Trixie tossed aside her book and strolled inside. When she turned around, he walked toward her. He deliberately left the door open, thank God.

“Here,” she said handing him the sheet he wanted. He took it from her and snatched her wrist at the same time.

Licking his lips, he took a deep breath and then released her.

“Smart move,” she cooed.

“Definitely,” he said in a guttural tone designed to make her knees weak and her heart race. He studied the pictures on her wall. “Tell me about your family.”

Nervously, she rubbed her wrist. It felt like a hot ring of fire blazed around the very place he touched.

When she didn’t answer, he said, “Okay, then tell me why you’ve been here less than three hours and already have a shiner on your head.”

“I’m a klutz.”

“So I’ve heard.”

She raised her eyebrow suspiciously. “Let me guess. Dad told you.”

He laughed. “Which one?”

The deafening quiet overtook the cabin and rocked them both into a certain level of discomfort. At least, she felt it. She cleared her throat and pointed at the wall. “That’s my mom.”

“She’s very beautiful.”

“Yeah,” Trixie said proudly. “She is.”

“I can see why she landed three men. A woman like her doesn’t have to choose.”

Trixie grinned. “No, she didn’t, and it’s a good thing. I can’t imagine my life without three dads, even though they drive me nuts sometimes.”

“You look like her,” he said.

“Oh?” She felt exposed, stripped down to a naked bundle of nerves, but she went with it anyway. She couldn’t help herself. “So you think I’m beautiful?”

Rory cleared his throat. He gripped the thin three-panel door and shot Mitch a quick wink and nod. “Hey, Trixie, wanna have supper with me and Brock?”

“Are you paying?” she teased glancing over Rory’s shoulder at the newcomer.

Rory stepped inside and explained, “You don’t pay for meals here, woman. Are you out of your mind? Staff members eat free, and the campers have all their meals included with registration fees.”

She pointed at Brock. “If I’m eating with him, somebody has to pay me a deposit first. He’s a hazard to my health.”

Mitch moved by them. “From what I understand, we should put out a high level alert on you.”

“Which one of my smart ass fathers told you I trip over two left feet?”

“Probably the smart ass father who would love to spank your butt for calling him names behind his back,” Mitch said, frowning. He slapped Brock between the shoulder blades when he passed him. “Hey there, you good lookin’ thing, you. Since you have such a way with this one, why not explain the rules we have here about bad language.”

“Sure.” He smirked. “I’ll be happy to teach her some manners.”

“You wish,” Trixie said wrinkling her nose. “Come on Rory, I need to find the infirmary after all. I’m getting a headache.”

Brock followed them out, and when she turned around to make sure he secured the door behind him, his gaze fixated on her ass. She shook her hips for fun and then bit her forefinger, resting her hand on her shoulder when she peered back. “If you’re gonna look, big guy, you might as well show a little appreciation.”

He chuckled and then released an ear-piercing whistle.

Rory winked. “Careful there, Trixie. You may get what you’re wishing for and a whole lot more.”

“That’s what I’m talking about!” she exclaimed and she gave her strut another two wiggles, and this time caught another few whistles.

Chapter Three

The junior and senior staff members gathered around the roaring campfire. A few of the senior counselors handed out the staff booklets. Rory held up two fingers so Trixie didn't have to lean over his back to reach for her own. He passed her pamphlet over his shoulder, and Brock watched as Rory offered it and then snatched it away before repeating the process.

Mitch stopped speaking long enough to glare. Rory finally let Trixie have her copy. "All right children," Mitch began. "We have four new staff members this year. A couple of them had late high school graduations and they should arrive with the campers tomorrow. You'll have the opportunity to meet them later. The other two, I'll introduce now. Trixie and Stephen, come on up and say hello to everyone."

Trixie practically jumped over Rory and Brock. All smiles and waves, she rushed to the front of the crowd.

"She's a shy little thing, huh?" Brock asked.

"Yeah, she's all about me, too, for the record," Rory said. "I noticed it during dinner. Can't keep her hands off me, right?"

Brock chuckled. "You think so? Then do you mind telling me why she can't keep her eyes off *my ass*?"

"She's looking at the hole in your pants. I meant to tell you she liked those red boxers you're wearing." Rory caught a glimpse of Brock's red shorts when he bent over to pick up his luggage earlier.

He grunted and then patted his behind. "Bullshit, man. A hole and you didn't say anything?"

"Don't worry about showing your ass. Pay attention," he said pointing straight ahead.

"Trixie, since you're obviously anxiety-ridden over a public introduction," Mitch ribbed her, "I'll let Stephen go first."

“Stephen’s the new stable manager,” Rory whispered. “He’s got it bad for Trixie, too. He touched her three times during dinner. Did you notice?”

“Be quiet.” Somebody behind them whispered.

“Something about that guy gives me the creeps,” Rory added.

Brock grunted, still twisting around feeling his backside, checking out his denim jeans for a larger-than-life rip.

“Quit playing with your butt,” Rory said. “Someone’s going to get some strange ideas about you.”

Rory returned his attention to Stephen. His flushed skin made him appear nervous. “Bet he’s never been that close to a woman like her. Look at him.”

“I’ve never been that close to a woman who looks like her,” Brock admitted.

“Me, neither. That’s why I’m claiming her right now. She’s hands-off, understand?”

Brock closed his eyes and shook his head. “Dream on, little man. Dream on.”

Mitch shot them another stern look of warning, and Rory whispered, “He knows what we’re discussing over here. Watch him.”

Mitch leaned back and casually checked out Trixie’s ass. He waggled his eyebrows.

“He always has the best vantage point,” Brock stated flatly. “Now he even has the owner’s suite, too. He’ll call her down to the office, tell her to follow him to the stock room, and next thing you know? He’ll have her stripped and penetrated before she realizes a hard dick is at her folds.”

“Nice theory, as always,” Rory snapped. “But in case you didn’t pay attention during dinner, she’s not as dumb as she acts.”

The circle of women started a ridiculous shushing effort again. A few of them placed their fingers over their lips to drive home the point. Brock stared at a woman Rory recognized from a previous summer. They snickered when she took her long index finger and stuck it in between her lips and slowly sucked. The girls around her laughed.

* * * *

The meeting was well underway by the time Brock looked back to the fire. He had a hard time concentrating since Trixie held his undivided attention. His balls felt like heavy lemons, and he knew whose hand he wanted squeezing away the discomfort.

A slow burn whipped around his cock, and he cursed under his breath, checking out the familiar gal sucking on her fingers. He couldn't remember her name. She had full, pretty lips, but the mouth he wanted to stroke wasn't attached to the female providing amusement. Oh no, his thoughts centered around one blonde-haired, blue-eyed babe. And by God, she must've been thinking about him, too, if the heated gazes they exchanged provided proof.

"I'm Stephen, the new stable manager," a monotone voice rose above the chattering crowd. "This is my first summer at Cow Camp, and I'm glad to join you. If you have a problem with any of the horses or you hear a complaint about the lessons the kids receive, come see me. Naturally, my goal is always safety first."

Clearing his throat, he continued. "From what I understand, some of you like to party after hours in the barn. We'll probably limit the social occasions out there this year."

Moans filled the crowd, and Trixie immediately tapped his arm and formed a dramatic pout. "I'm a fun party. You're missing out," she drawled, batting her eyelashes and winking at nearby onlookers. "If you'll reconsider, I'll clean stalls for you."

"She can clean my plow any day," Brock whispered.

"Mine, too," Rory agreed. "I like a girl who loves to get dirty."

Some of the gals rolled their eyes, and few comments flew around the crowd. Mitch held up his hand when he'd heard enough. "Guys, keep it cool. We haven't even heard from Trixie yet and here you are scaring her off."

She objected. "Oh, I'm not frightened. I can take any one of them, and the comments add extra ammunition."

"She's a hot little number, huh?" Rory asked.

Brock shook his head. "Dang, boy. You're so impressed, you might as well propose now."

"I'll make an honest something out of her, all right. With those legs and ass? Man oh man, what I'd give to slide under her sheets tonight."

“She’ll do,” Brock said. “But I’m starting to see what you mean about the stable boy. Where’d Mitch find this guy?”

“Dunno,” Rory replied.

Stephen said something out of the corner of his mouth. Trixie blushed and then blurted out with a saucy little plea, “Let us party in the barn? Pretty, pretty please, Mr. Cowboy.”

“Good grief,” Brock snarled. “She might as well bend the hell over and spread those pretty little flavorsome lips like all the rest of ‘em here.”

Rory hooked his arm around Brock’s neck and scratched the top of his head. “Like her, do ya?”

Brock noticed how Trixie paid a little closer attention to them. Looking at her square in the eye, he distinctly formed his words. “I like her well enough to fuck her and find out.”

Trixie smirked. Oh yeah, she heard him or made his words out verbatim. Good, he thought, a young woman acting like her needed to know she couldn’t mix with men and get away with bad behavior. Formed assumptions and soon a man had expectations, undeniable needs. Brock came up with several delicious possibilities.

Stephen rambled on about the horses and barn. Trixie continued to goad him, occasionally interrupting.

Stephen finally said, “How old are you?”

“Old enough to know if we have an afterhours place to party, I don’t want you to ruin a good thing. Nice looking man like yourself might miss out on a good time.”

Mitch stepped up and called a truce. “Okay,” he held up his hands. “Stephen isn’t the reason for this new rule,” he began. “Things can get out of hand. A few times the campers have caught wind of what goes on after the lights dim around here. We don’t want them sneaking out and running around the property trying to catch counselors in some kind of forbidden acts.

“We’ll plan a few shindigs later on, but for the most part, you know the rules. If I find your wine or beer, it’s mine. If you drink on my time, you’re fired. If you bring drugs here, you’re reported. Any questions?” Mitch made his superior summer speech and waited for inquiries.

“Yeah,” Stephen said. “What about underage drinking?” he smirked, eyeing Trixie. “You don’t allow kids to drink, do you?”

Trixie set her jaw and stamped her foot. Brock slapped Rory. “Well, what do you know? Your gal has a temper.”

Rory snickered. “I’m not surprised.”

Mitch placed his hand on her right shoulder and said, “Before this issue gets out of hand, Trixie, go ahead and introduce yourself.”

She pushed by the new stable manager and held her head high. Clearly ready for a thirty-minute monologue, by and large, her introduction went well. She used every second of her ten minutes of fame and glared at Stephen the whole time. If Brock cared to guess, the poor guy wasn’t sure if she offered him a good come-and-get-it stare or a not-in-your-lifetime kind of glare.

Either way, Brock wished he stood on the receiving end of her fiery gaze. Trixie possessed the most beautiful royal blue eyes he’d ever seen, and the woman behind the glare intrigued him.

Brock wanted to find out about that woman, if she was in fact, a woman. She maintained too much child-like enthusiasm to convince him of any level of maturity, and her energy held his attention as much as anything else. Oh yes, the new junior counselor came as packaged trouble, deliciously delivered, and staying three doors down from him all summer long.

* * * *

Rory and Brock walked her back to her cabin. She noticed the set up, the layout of the camp landscape, when all the counselors returned to their private quarters. The junior counselors and those with seniority occupied the small huts on the hill. She counted about twenty of them. On the main part of the property, ten large, lodge-style cabins showcased duplex floor plans. Each side accommodated fifteen campers and two counselors. Thank God she didn’t have a bunch of kids to report to every night. She might lose her mind.

The cabins on the hill clustered around a knoll. They were built in a zigzag pattern, which made it possible to see every other cabin without obstruction. The first seven units housed the females and the male housing began where those huts stopped, without any barriers to separate the two.

She caught an evil-eye from one or two of the female staff members. She wasn’t going to make close girlfriends and rarely ran around with gals

back home, so the observation didn't bother her. She didn't understand women and fit in better with the guys. She thought of little reason to put forth the effort. She'd never see them again, anyway, after the summer ended.

Trixie skipped over the rocks leading to her accommodations and stood on the porch. With her arms held wide, she said beaming, "Looks like I made it back in one piece."

The words barely escaped her mouth when a volleyball struck her. As luck would have it, the flying object hit her squarely in the face, knocking her back against the screen door.

Rory rushed forward. "Oh shit, Trixie!"

Brock shook his head. "I'm scared to stand next to her."

Stephen ran over immediately and apologized. "I'm so sorry. Are you all right?"

She pursed her lips and then backed away from them. "I'm going to bed. I think I've survived enough hard knocks for one night."

"Listen, I'll make it up to you," he promised. "I'll see if we can't have a party in the barn later tonight. What do you say?"

Brock raised an eyebrow and Rory shook his head. "If you can pull that off, then you'll become the go-to man. Mitch doesn't let us party before the parents arrive with their precious cargo. They wouldn't leave their kids here if they smelled booze at every corner. It won't fly, but nice try."

Stephen studied her with a tense expression, and she noticed, for the first time, his handsome features. She failed to pay attention when they first met. She'd been so interested in finding a good place to party, she didn't notice the man who most likely knew how to offer a girl a really good time.

Built like a tank, the stable guy looked a little older than the other counselors. Trixie guessed him at around thirty. Then again, she sucked at guessing ages.

Grabbing the volleyball from her porch, he said, "Do you play?"

"Volleyball?" she asked.

"No, darts," he shot back with a smile.

She thought about the appropriate answer. She earned numerous awards as an outside hitter in high school, but for some reason, she wanted to avoid mentioning her talent. She might use it against these boys later. "I've played around with a ball or two," she replied.

Brock grunted and Rory's jaw dropped. Stephen took the bait. "So you're pretty good with balls, are you?"

"I said I've played around with them. I didn't say I've mastered the sport," she replied turning her back and walking inside her cabin. "Good night boys!" she called out. Then, she moved the latch-hook into the hole and secured her door with its shabby lock. "Sweet dreams!"

* * * *

After a hot shower, Trixie slipped into her silk pajamas. She started reading one of the earlier works from Janet Dailey, one of her favorite all-time romance authors. She enjoyed her novellas and the wholesome way she described love and romance.

Trixie, forever the dreamer, remained committed to the pursuit of something substantial, something real. She decided a long time ago true love breezed in and out of a person's life relatively fast. An enduring relationship was the kind of experience that not only surrounded a person but swallowed them so fast and so hard that two people found themselves completely submerged in affection by the time they figured out their feelings.

On very rare occasions, she questioned whether or not love existed as a fantasy. If not, was it pure and sweet, tender and gentle, or more like what she saw with her parents—hot and sensual, yet obsessive, and one with specific allowances—and somewhat ahead of the times?

One thing about her mom and dads, they experienced an unusual relationship. They shared a commitment no one else had—outside of her mom's best friend—and it worked better than the more conventional marriages. Her parents never discussed a break-up or a divorce. Most of her friends came from split families. Trixie and her sisters grew up in a loving family, and they never fought for parental advice or attention. They always found a willing parent ready to offer a bent ear.

Trixie, even though she admired her parents for making their situation work, wanted the typical one-on-one relationship. Sometimes, she even daydreamed about walking down the aisle, complete with a long wedding train and a minister to marry her.

She sighed after she pondered her happily ever after. She also longed to experience, just once, the kind of romp her mother and fathers apparently

enjoyed. She wasn't naïve. She knew what went on behind their bedroom doors.

Maybe before she met Mr. Right, she could savor a few Mr. Right-Now-in-the-Moment kinds of guys, men who wanted to love her hard and leave her the next morning. "Who knows," she sighed dreamily, "maybe a few of those cowboys are within my reach."

Turning out the dim overhead light, she swatted the switch and heard, "Trixie, are you up?"

Her bed, located right under the window, squeaked when she flipped over. She reached behind her and hit the small lamp nearby. She tapped it twice and the yellow light beamed bright. "Who's asking?"

"I saw your light on."

Mitch.

"I turned it off."

"You turned it back on, too. Can I come in?"

"No," she replied. "Remember, you warned me not to approach you unless I can keep up with you. I can't." She crossed her arms and rested her chin on her hands, then bent her knees and locked her ankles. She wiggled her feet back and forth.

This was going to be great fun.

"That's not exactly what I said," Mitch grated out. He must've pressed his mouth against the screen. It sounded like he sat perched right above her.

She reached up and yanked the plaid—also known as the ugliest curtains in the world—out of the way. She stared into a longing gaze she feared. Those knowing chocolate eyes might ruin her for another lover in the future if she ever lost herself in them.

Oh jeez, she needed help. Now she reacted like a character in one of those books she liked to read. "What do you want, Mitch?"

He smiled. "I'd like to come in."

"You can't fraternize with your employees," she reminded.

"Want me to fire you?"

"Funny. If you did, my dad would have your job."

"Really?" he asked, apparently amused.

"Yes," she said.

"Which one?" he teased.

"Back to this, huh?"

“Tell you what, you let me in, and I’ll tell you why your dads can’t take my job, deal?”

“Nope, it’s a no-go. I don’t know you. How do I know you won’t come in here and take advantage of me?”

“Is that what you want?” he asked in a husky voice.

She swallowed tightly and stared back at him. Even through the web screening, he looked handsome. “I need some sleep. I’m not used to working, you know.”

“No, I would’ve never guessed.”

“Did you get the scheduling finished?”

“Yeah, but I have to rearrange it,” he admitted. “There are one or two adjustments to make.”

“How come?”

He rolled his head and scratched his neck. It sounded like it popped. “I’m just readjusting a few things.”

“So you can’t tell me what I’m supposed to do for a living?”

“Not yet,” he said. “There are a few complications. I’m working around them so everyone is happy.”

Trixie thought about the way Brock treated her. He acted like it pained him to look at her, like he wanted her quarantined in an area of the camp he wasn’t permitted to visit. She wasn’t dumb. After she read his naughty little lips at the campfire, she could only guess what happened. He planned on a little self-preservation.

“Everyone else received their schedules, didn’t they?”

“Some, why?”

“You’re moving *me* around.”

“I wish,” he replied, a raspy flare to his response.

“Seriously, are you making these changes to my schedule? I mean, only mine? If you are, that’s nuts. You know this, right?”

Mitch laughed. “Can’t pull the blindfold over your eyes, huh?”

She didn’t respond.

“Okay, so you’re one of the schedules. There’s another one, too. I’ll fix yours and bring it to you in the morning.”

“Who’s the other?”

“You’re on to me aren’t you?”

“Yeah, but it’s not you who requested a move, is it? Who made the big deal over class arrangements? Rory or Brock? My money is on Brock.”

“He doesn’t think you two would make a very good team. Don’t take it personally. With a few minor changes, I’ll have a new schedule for both of you by tomorrow afternoon.”

“So he doesn’t like me?” she asked, watching as Mitch’s jaw twitched and his eyes lit up like hot milk chocolate.

“He’s not against you at all. In fact, he does like you, Trixie. He’s just a smart man. He’s spent a lot of summers with us. He knows who he can and cannot work with, you know?”

“He’s afraid he can’t keep his hands off me,” she stated flatly.

Mitch grinned. “You must believe you have some kind of effect on men.”

“I know I do,” she said confidently.

“Somebody lied to your ass.”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes,” he said.

“Then why is it that you’re sitting outside my cabin at eleven o’clock at night instead of chasing last summer’s good time?”

“Who are you referring to as—”

Trixie released a deep sigh. “Oh, you know the one, the flat-chested Brenda person all the guys eye around camp. She’s the ordinary gal who hung all over you at dinner.”

“Brenda and I are friends. She’s been coming here to camp for as long as I have.”

“Bet you’ve slept with her,” she blurted out.

He licked his bottom lip. “Let me in,” he pleaded.

“No way,” she said laughing. “Did you?”

“You ask a lot of questions, you know that?”

“I look for informative answers and generally know exactly what to do in order to get them.”

“Do you now?” Mitch asked.

“Sure, most women do, don’t they?”

“Whatever you say, Trixie.”

“See, we’re making progress already.”

“Not much,” he growled. “I’m still out here and you’re still in there.”

“Yeah, that kind of sucks for you, too, doesn’t it?”

“It’s a killer for both of us.”

“Not really,” she said, reaching under her bed. She slapped a box against the screen window and said, “Read it and weep.”

He stared at the box for a long time. “The complete seven-piece sex kit for naughty days and never-ending nights.”

“You got it,” she chirped, reaching up and pulling the plaid over the screen again.

“Wait!”

“I can’t, Mitch. I have a few toys to rev up, if you know what I mean.”

“Trixie, you can’t have those here,” he snipped. “I have to confiscate anything like that.”

She yanked the curtain open again and sat up, fully aware he’d see her nipples protruding through her thin tank top. “Do you?”

“I don’t allow the staff to engage in extra-curricular activities unless they plan for them in advance.”

“Fine, then schedule this in,” she suggested, retrieving the largest dildo from the box. She waved it in front of his face and then pointed the tip toward him. “Every night my toys come out to play and I like to hum in private, if you know what I mean.”

She held the toy up to the light and searched for the switch again. When she found it, she flipped it to the on-position.

“You won’t use your little friend while I’m perched on your porch,” he pointed out.

“Wanna bet?”

Chapter Four

Trixie looked around the expansive dining room. *Great*, she thought, *everyone here pays attention when the new tramp in camp enters the building.*

“Good morning, Trixie,” Rory chimed, eyeing Brock. Trixie carried her plastic tray through the breaking crowd. Glad to see them, she didn’t even mind when Brock couldn’t manage a simple hello. She’d already been snubbed by Brenda and the other girls when she tried to make a little small talk in the breakfast line.

“Can I join you?”

“Sure,” Rory replied.

Brock sneered. “Everything around here is open for negotiation, from what I understand.”

Rory kicked out the chair next to him. “Don’t mind him. He’s not a morning person.”

“Me, either,” she said blowing over the rim of her hot chocolate as soon as she sat down. “I’m actually glad I bumped into you this morning. The gals aren’t too eager to have me sit at their table for some reason.”

“I guess not,” Rory said lowering his voice. “Brenda overheard your little private conversation with Mitch last night.”

“What?” Trixie asked setting her mug back on the overcrowded tray.

Brock yawned and acted uninterested, but when he stretched, he busted out with a laugh. “Tell us about these sex toys you packed. I hear you have an assortment.”

“Bitch,” Trixie whispered the word but looked down so Brenda didn’t read her lips.

“Don’t blame her,” Rory said pointing toward Mitch. “He’s the one who knew better than to come to your cabin in the first place. Since he didn’t

lock down the main office, Brenda gained full access to the PA. She overheard everything.”

“Shit,” Trixie mumbled. The toys weren’t the only topic on deck. She’d made some sort of snide remark about Brenda, too. She should’ve put one of those dildos in her jaw. An orgasmic mouth offered more benefits than a damning one, or so she’d been told.

Rory wiped his lips on the paper napkin and tossed it on his tray. “Don’t worry about her, Trixie. Everyone here knows everyone here is thinking about doing somebody new.”

“Isn’t that a song?”

“No, but I’ve got a few songs if you ever wanna hear them. They’re back in my cabin,” Brock said, snickering. “And I bet I can find a better tune than Mitch.”

She was starting to think so, too. On second thought, she was a firm believer.

“Yeah, right,” she scoffed. “From what I understand, you won’t even share a class with me, much less anything else.”

Brock rubbed his jaw. “Are you inviting me over to check out your playthings, little lady?”

“She’d better not be,” Mitch said, joining them. He patted Trixie between the shoulders. Actually, it felt more like a caress. Brenda’s gaze all but branded Mitch the second he touched Trixie’s back. “How’s everyone this morning?”

“Pissed,” she said snatching her tray and heading to another table several feet away.

Brock and Mitch shared a laugh, but Rory joined her at her table around the same time the stable guy sat down. Stephen stared at her like he wanted to drool all over his pancakes. Fitting enough, Rory couldn’t eat at all because he had to keep adjusting his sausage.

She released a troubled sigh and then glared at her meal. She lost her appetite, anyway.

“Did you sleep well?” Stephen asked.

“Yes,” she stated flatly.

“From what I’ve heard around here this morning, you had company last night.”

"I had a visitor who," she gawked at Mitch. "Didn't have the first excuse to stop by my hut last night."

Stephen slowly cut his pancakes with a fork and knife. "According to the buzz, you gave him a few good reasons to come back and visit again tonight."

Rory laughed and evidently Mitch and Brock heard Stephen, too. They shared a few chuckles, joining in like a timed orchestra.

Trixie grabbed her breakfast tray and took off to empty the remains in the appropriate bins, tossing the silverware one way and the paper trash another. When she returned, she grabbed her mug and headed toward the coffee pot. She needed something stronger than hot chocolate. If she planned on acting like a grown woman with toys she didn't know how to use, she might as well drink a woman's drink. A little Folgers in her cup might do the trick.

* * * *

She scrubbed her teeth until they looked whiter than natural pearls. Minutes before, she gagged on the coffee. She'd have to remember that she didn't like the stuff, so if she ever had a need for something stout in the morning, she'd head for something like OJ and vodka instead of black grit with a bitter taste. The stuff must've been made the day before. *Besides*, she thought, smiling wide in the mirror, *the gunk stained her teeth*.

When she tucked her toothpaste and toothbrush back in the medicine cabinet, she looked up to find Mitch in the doorway. She wondered how long he'd been there.

"I don't want to talk to you," she stated flatly.

"Oh, that's true. I know what you want to do with me, and forming syllables together isn't quite what you have in mind."

"You're a jerk."

"Yep, I can be."

"What time are the campers going to be here?"

"We have time," he said grinning from ear to ear.

"I don't *need time*," she replied, keeping her distance.

He hooked the latch, and she watched him move toward her. She wanted to stop him and at the same time she also had the sudden urge to grab him

by the collar and yank him forward. Instead, she ran for the bathroom and slammed the door in his face.

"Nice," he said, slapping something against the wood, presumably both hands.

"Mitch, this is inappropriate. I need to get ready for my first official day on the job. I want to appear well when the campers and their parents arrive."

"Trust me, you'll stand out. Plus, I have good news. We have at least three hours before the first group arrives."

"Oh, yeah? And how long before Rory or Brock start this way?"

"Who do you think is standing guard outside your hut right now darlin'?"

"You're bluffing." And she was pissed. What the hell did the guys around there do, bang the females and then compare notes? Probably.

"Nope, I'm stating facts."

"Sure you are," she said loudly against the door. "Those two look at me like I'm their favorite vanilla cream pie. I don't think they'd move aside as easily as you'd like to believe." At least she hoped not.

"You wanna look outside?"

"No, get out of my room," she called out.

"Technically, doll, this is my room."

She opened the door and glared at him. "What do you mean this is your room?"

He pushed her inside the bathroom and pinned her to the wall, his hands gripping her wrists tightly against her sides. "My family owns Cow Camp, and you know this. I can do whatever the hell I want here within certain parameters. Right now, unless you give me one good reason to stop, I'm doing this."

He lowered his luscious mouth to hers, and she blurted out, "I'm on my period."

His eyes sparkled, and he held a funny little grin for a minute before he said, "You can't possibly think I came in here for a slow screw when I have the whole camp depending on me to take care of last minute details."

"Didn't you?"

He lowered his head to hers and parted his lips. "No."

Feeling a surge of excitement when his mouth crashed against hers, she savored the way his tongue invaded her mouth in pursuit of an unadulterated

mission. Undoubtedly, Mitch wanted to make a point, and she tried to keep up, learn fast. Mentally, she cursed herself. *I'm on my period?* What a confession to a man she'd only recently met.

He backed away, and she gauged the look of lust in his eyes. The ripe tension soared between them. She needed to slam on the brakes and mash on them fast. Instead, when he took her lips again, she pressed her tongue to his, and licked her way into the whole of his mouth, sipping on his tongue and lips like they were sugar coated in strawberry wine.

Pressing harder against their clasped hands, he shoved her arms high above her head and melded his body against hers. Oh, God, she was coming undone. The harder he kissed her, the faster she softened under his touch until she felt dizzy, captured and imprisoned under one remarkable lover's spell.

She needed to get away from him and move fast. Otherwise, she'd do something really stupid. Then, she would regret it in the morning, or later that same afternoon.

Why try to fool herself? She couldn't keep a man like Mitch Colony satisfied. She wasn't even in the same league with him. Her youthful inexperience guaranteed one thing. He'd know what he had if he ever took her to his bed.

She was a freakin' virgin kissing a man like she knew where to lead him, devouring his mouth like she understood where she wanted him to go with his kisses. What she once protected and coveted could now go out with the next wind as far as she was concerned. Being pure and untouched was so overrated, right?

"Raise your shirt," he growled, releasing one of her hands and holding her face firmly right under the jawbone while he continued to shower kisses across her lips and cheek with a deliberate eroticism.

"Mitch," she whimpered. "Uh, you probably need to wait, slow down some."

* * * *

Taking a deep breath, he opened his eyes and waited for further protest. Her liquid blue eyes, now wild with lust, tempted him to form a sweet physical connection. He longed to hold her, turn on the heat, find those

sensual hot buttons every woman he'd ever had possessed. Most of the time, he manipulated his women and their sensitive spots better than most, but he'd never held a woman quite like Trixie.

When her lips quivered, he thinned his lips and moved away all at one time. "I couldn't help myself. From the first time I saw you, this is what I've thought about."

Trixie stood a little straighter. "I have to give you props for going after what you want. I've been here less than twenty-four hours, and you've pursued me straight out of the gate. Guess you thought Rory or Brock would steal the first kiss."

"They didn't." And if he knew Brock, he wasn't going to. Brock didn't need a woman like Trixie. In fact, it wouldn't surprise him if Brock decided he wasn't going to give Mitch's family another full summer. He might up and leave.

"They didn't have time to kiss me, or the freedom to do it if they wanted to. You've watched me like a buzzard."

"You mean a hawk," he corrected.

"No, a buzzard, waiting to reap the rewards after the final kill."

Mitch forced a cough to keep from laughing. She had a point.

"Should I commend you for handing me the most overused lie known to mankind?" He hoped Mother Nature wasn't paying Trixie a visit.

"Oh, no," she said shaking her head and stepping to the side. "I would never fib about something so important, in case there ever comes a time when you and I decide to, well, you know."

Mitch grabbed her around the waist, delaying her escape, and ran his fingers up her shirt, stopping right below her full breasts and what felt like a lace bra. "Oh, you can bank on another time, Trixie. In fact, you might as well start counting down the hours. I plan to do all sorts of things to you while you're working here. In fact, I'm thinking of moving you off the equestrian schedule altogether."

"Oh? Why's that?"

Mitch lowered his lips and when they met hers again, he whispered, "Because, sweet Trixie, I'm the only stud you'll find the time to ride."

Chapter Five

Assigned to the main lodge, Trixie's opening day job entailed checking the campers and their parents in. As luck would have it, she found herself seated right next to Brenda. During down times, they sat there quietly, staring out at the beautiful lake surrounding the camp. They did their best to avoid eye contact, each facing the opposite direction.

At one point, Brenda snipped out a reply to a fellow counselor and quickly added something about the bad company Mitch forced her to keep. Trixie let the comment slide. She imagined their current predicament presented challenges for Brenda, now thought of as nothing more than used merchandise on last summer's sale rack.

The final set of campers wandered off to find their counselors and with everyone accounted for on the roster, Trixie finally faced off with Brenda. "Okay, here's the thing. Mitch came on to me. I'm not opposed to his advances, but—"

"But what?" Brenda barked.

Oh boy, she failed to sum up her opponent. Trixie shrugged. "Well, you know, Mitch is—"

Brenda laughed and it sounded downright evil. "Mitch is what, deary? Do you really think you're ready for Mitch Colony behind closed doors?" She spat her question in the form of an unacceptable accusation and then turned away.

Trixie watched her storm across the room and decided she felt sorry for her. A big-boned gal, Brenda was pretty, but her bitter expressions ruined her beauty. She had high cheekbones and a lot going for her in the looks department. Still, Mitch probably didn't plan to revisit last summer, or her bed, anytime in the near future. Apparently, Brenda already understood the why behind whatever reason he gave her. If he'd even given one. Men like Mitch usually didn't bother.

Trixie sighed. A girl like Brenda probably showed up at camp with flavored lubricants in hand. Given the fact that Mitch was absolutely one of the hottest men she'd ever seen in her life, Trixie understood her frustration, but she wasn't ready to step aside and let Brenda have him. Oh no, she possessed a few delicious plans of her own.

Reaching under the table, she pulled out her slingshot purse and tossed it over her back without looking behind her. She almost reached the door when Brenda placed her hand on her shoulder and with applied pressure, gave her a whirl. They stood nose to nose.

Trixie shrugged away from her grip. "What do you think you're doing?"

"I know all about you, Trixie Cartwell. I listened to your intimate conversation with Mitch."

"Considering every counselor in the camp knows about our bedtime stories, this isn't news to me, Brenda." She started to walk off again.

"Then I might as well tell you, Trixie. Mitch likes it rough. He's a little more man than the average gal around these parts can manage. Don't take my word, ask around. Ask him about Jordie Anne, too, while you're at it.

"If you think you can pull out a vibrator with fresh batteries and keep him entertained, then you're way off base. Want to know what a real man plays with in his spare time, doll? I'll show you if you'd like." She slowly traced her lips with one of the longest tongues Trixie had ever seen. "He used to keep a nearby hide-a-away equipped with all kinds of goodies, toys for women who know what to do with real men after dark."

Trixie stared outside. "Brenda." She said her name breathlessly, like she mumbled the last word she'd ever speak in her lifetime. "I really don't want you to worry your pretty little head over what Mitch and I do after hours.

"It's unbecoming to sulk. Besides, I know what to do with Mitch after the sun sets. Of course we both understand Mitch probably has a few ideas of his own. What can I say," she paused, wrinkled her nose and then continued, "I love surprises."

"No, you like taking what belongs to someone else. You're a man thief!"

"Really?" she asked, dumfounded. She tried not to laugh. Making fun of the woman-brute staring back at her might entice the chick to throw a left hook and Trixie wasn't a fighter. Besides, she wanted to lead Brenda in nice

and slow, since they planned to become fast enemies. She'd save her verbal attack and strike from the side when she barely had time to see her coming.

Brenda placed her large hands on her hips—and she definitely possessed those. “You think every man here is ready to grovel just because of your outer appearances.”

Yeah, well, pretty much.

She saved the taunting for another day. She had all summer. Brenda wasn't going anywhere.

Brenda glared at her like she might have viewed a carton of rotten eggs discovered the week after Easter. A few parents strolled their way, and since Trixie didn't want to have the conversation in the first place, she decided to say her parting words and run like hell.

“Brenda,” she paused for a melodramatic effect. “Between me and you, and your gal pals, I don't *think* anything. I'm a pretty sensible person. I go on facts. You know, what's in front of me. What I know is this. Mitch considers you *so* last summer. I would call you yesterday's trash, but hey, we don't know one another well enough to start name calling yet, do we?”

“Bitch!”

I guess so. “Slut.”

“Girls!” Mitch rushed out of his office and arrived in time to give Brenda a gentle push toward Rory, who didn't look eager to take her out of the love triangle equation. Then Mitch yanked Trixie straight into his office and slammed the door.

“What the hell was that about?” He pointed toward the wall.

Trixie set her jaw, took a minute to gather her thoughts and then said, “I don't care who you've had in your bed out here. I really don't, but let me make sure we're very clear on one thing.”

Mitch drew his arms tight across his chest. “Go ahead.”

“I do not take a lot of bullshit lying down. If you *think* it bothers me because Brenda announced to the whole staff that I have sex toys tucked under my pillow—even though they've never been used—think again.

“I won't put up with her, or anyone else. I'd like to find a solution to the problem, but there are some differences that can't be ironed out. This may be one of them.”

Mitch scratched his cheek. “You don't think you and Brenda can work together?”

“No.”

“Okay,” he said. “I’ll fire her.”

“What?” Trixie’s jaw dropped.

“She’s out of here as soon as the parents leave tonight.”

“That’s a little drastic, don’t you think? I mean, you just met me yesterday and this will pass, I’m sure.”

“You said we can’t resolve this, so if you can’t work here comfortably, then I’ll get rid of her.”

Trixie stared at him thoughtfully. “Telling Brenda to take a hike would actually make things easier for you, huh?”

“Truthfully? Yes.”

“You’d haul off and fire her because you think it would help you get in my pants faster?”

Mitch laughed. “You don’t know me very well yet, Trixie, but you will soon enough.” He paused, took her jaw in his cupped hand, and stared into her eyes. “You see, darlin’, those pretty little white pants you have on are all but around your ankles. You just don’t feel ’em there yet.” He moved his palm to the nape of her neck and dropped his lips to hers, leaving her with a light peck and nothing more. “Any day now, you’ll know what it’s like to have my hand on your hip, my body next to yours and those unused sex toys you speak of?”

She gulped. She really screwed up when she mentioned her neat little sex pack, much less showed him the box!

“Don’t worry, sweetheart. You won’t need to pull out the instructions for those neat little gadgets. I’ll show you how to use each and every one of them. And I’m ready to put them precisely where they belong whenever you are.”

* * * *

Trixie marched back to her cabin. She hurried inside right before a thrashing storm hit, and thank God she didn’t have a den full of campers. She’d heard the squeals coming from the main campus when she dashed back to her single shack. She always hated storms and couldn’t imagine a room full of squealing youngsters during a power outage, which potentially loomed.

Rory rushed in without knocking. “Thank God you’re undressed,” he stated loudly, smiling and pointing to the porch, the location of the cabin intercom speakers.

“Brenda?” she whispered.

“Worse,” he whispered and then said, “Damn, woman, cover those tits up before someone sees you!” He shouted loud enough to draw out the guilty party. He quickly looked at his watch and then hurriedly locked the door.

Trixie rolled with laughter. “You gotta be kidding. Mitch is eavesdropping when he knows I’m here in this cabin alone?”

“You’re not alone now. Besides, you made quite an impression on him this morning. He’ll keep tabs on you now, darlin’.” His carefully chosen words let her know Mitch ran his mouth and told the others, or at least Rory, about their groping session.

“Hurry and turn on the shower,” he instructed.

“Are you crazy? In this storm? I’m not going anywhere near water.”

“Fine, get in the bathroom now,” he whispered pointing toward the door.

A loud boom made the short hairs on her arms stand up. Thunder sounded out with a nerve shattering crash and a bolt of lightning lit up the area in front of her hut.

“Okay, fine. I’ll play your little game,” she said, conceding.

A few seconds later, they heard him. They hunkered down against the far wall right next to the bathroom.

Mitch jiggled the door. “Trixie, are you in there?”

She looked at Rory, and he pressed his finger to his lips insisting on keeping things quiet. Silence proved nearly impossible. They both covered their mouths to keep from laughing.

“Trixie? Everything all right in there?”

She heard heavy footsteps across her porch and realized Mitch most likely searched for a small opening through the thin curtains. She knew where he’d find one or two holes, and by the time he walked to the other side, she’d devised a fail-proof plan.

“Trixie, open up. There’s a major tornado watch for this area. You need to come on down to the lodge so I can keep an eye on you. Are you okay in there?”

Two more steps to the left and he stopped. Now or never, she thought. She grabbed Rory by the hand and gave him a hard yank, wrapping her arms around his neck at the same time. And she kissed him like she meant it, and he kissed her like he'd waited for just the right time to hold her in his arms.

This wasn't it.

Chapter Six

“You can’t be serious,” Rory complained following Mitch into his office. “You’re writing me up for this?”

Brock entered the area at his own risk. Rory only acknowledged him with a slight tilt of the head. Brock heard the earlier commotion Mitch caused when he tried his hand at multi-tasking. He acted out as a pesky camp administrator and somewhat of a peeping Tom.

Earlier, Brock stepped out onto his porch during the worst of rains. He didn’t want to miss the ruckus three doors down. The need to watch proved worth the effort. He wouldn’t have missed the good, old-fashioned male temper tantrum for anything in the world.

Brock couldn’t recall another time in all the years he’d known Mitch Colony when his face took on a bright red glow. Oh yes, the little blonde living close in proximity already had Colony by the cock, and she yanked him around every chance he gave her.

Rory would be the next to fall. After he watched Rory step out of Trixie’s cabin with the little bombshell on his heels, Brock reached a decision. The new little-hot-thing at camp brought more trouble than any of them bargained for, and he planned to stay the hell away. She was the kind of woman a man knew to avoid, the type of gal who could string a man up by the balls and leave him tied real tight-like for the rest of his natural life.

“You’ve left me no other choice,” Mitch explained somewhat calmly at first. “You put me in immediate danger,” he continued, shuffling some papers on his desk. Then his collective tone went to hell. “I dodged lightning bolts out there while you two snuggled up on the floor, and then you kissed Trixie!”

Brock chuckled. Damn, Mitch was good. A falling star, Mitch wasn’t the kind of guy Trixie needed to wish upon. Conceivably, Rory intervened for a good reason.

Rory grabbed the corners of Mitch's desk and leaned over. "So the truth comes out. I'm reprimanded because I kissed your girl?"

Brock pulled up a chair. "Hell no, it's not the kiss that fried your ass." He sat down and stretched his legs out in front of him, folding his arms. "Oh no, Rory, there's more to this write-up BS. See, now that you've kissed the little vixen, Mitch is forced to do what he can to keep you busy. With the first kiss behind you, he wants to make sure you don't find time to fuck her."

Rory narrowed his gaze. "Is that what you're thinking?" He glared down at the employee action form and back up again. "You're serious? You'll write me up for kissing a gal you've known for two days?"

"Like hell he will," Trixie said marching in and grabbing their attention when she slipped out of her poncho and slapped it on the end of the leather couch. Water beads splattered across the cushions, and her hair stuck to her face in adorable ringlets a man's hand just itched to pull away. Her mascara caked under her eyes and even with a few imperfections nature inflicted, she looked absolutely perfect. She wrung her shirt out right in the middle of Mitch's floor. They all stared at the puddle.

Rory and Brock shared a laugh, but then they both abruptly stopped. That's when they saw the best a woman had to give. They should've been shot for looking.

"Oh, dear Lord," Brock said, obediently gaping at the tight white, wet T-shirt she wore underneath the poncho, which served little purpose. Rain gear didn't serve its function when the one wearing it forgot to zip up.

Rory's mouth formed an O, but he looked away faster than the other two. Brock gaped and never bothered to cover up his interest. Mitch hurried out of the office, returning with a large beach towel to drape over her shoulders.

"You're going to catch pneumonia," he said excusing his peculiar acts by shifting his focus to health concerns.

"I'll sit by her bedside and spoon feed her soup and medication," Brock offered, refusing to look the other way.

"You can't run around here in short shorts and a T-shirt when night falls. This mountain air will make a person sick, Trixie."

She dropped the towel, and Brock raised a brow. "That's not your slickest move, sugar," he said, standing to leave.

Mitch gritted his teeth. “Got something against keeping a little something for the imagination?”

“My momma always said if you got the goods, flaunt ‘em.” She placed her palm to her stomach and the maneuver only showcased those luscious mounds all the more. The curves from her breasts nearly fell from the scoop neckline of a T-shirt without a better cause. Snug clothing never looked so enticing.

“You must’ve forgotten our little chit chat yesterday,” Mitch snipped. “Want me to remind you?”

Brock and Rory were past salivating. They foamed at the mouth. Brock eyed Mitch, then Trixie. Her cheeks swelled with hot air, and when she stamped her foot once, he knew Mitch should prepare for a good bit of the woman’s fire.

“Mitch, I am not your property just because you own this camp. I work for you, but I’m not bound to you. I don’t know how else to explain my position except to put everything out in the open. You overheard my conversation with Rory earlier, and since you eavesdropped, you should’ve realized something. I’m the one who kissed him, not the other way around.”

“He asked for it,” Mitch retorted.

“Like hell he did,” Trixie said, stamping both feet this time.

Amused, Brock ran his fingernails back and forth over his bottom lip, studying those tiny feet tapping out a fit. Then, he slowly raised his gaze, taking in the curves of a gal with too much to offer a hot-blooded male. He stopped at her chest, her neck, and then good God help him, those lips. Rory and Mitch once sipped on those lips and damn it all, he couldn’t help but think along the lines of marking them as his, too.

“Pick up that towel and put it around you,” Mitch barked. “You have chill bumps all over you.”

“The bumps on her arms aren’t the ones I’m concerned about,” Brock said, staring at her nipples.

Rory snickered. Brock raised a brow and shrugged. What he’d give to nip at those tight little beads, tear her shirt over her head, and then suck on those sweet pearls until daybreak.

“Who do you think you are?” she snapped.

Brock jerked. For a second, he thought she addressed him, but when she slapped her hands on Mitch’s desk, there wasn’t any doubt. Mitch still held

her undivided attention. He'd pissed her off enough to capture and keep her complete focus. "If this is how you treat all of your summer employees, give it a few years. You won't have anyone left around here to help you run the place."

"I'll have Rory and Brock. Don't you worry about Cow Camp," Mitch replied, bending over and tossing the towel her way.

"Oh, really? I doubt Rory is your biggest fan right now. You're going to give him three kitchen duty details every day for the next week?"

"You wanna join him?"

Brock rubbed his chin. Her reply would tell a lot about her. He wagered on a woman who would take the offer and consider it a dare.

"Sure, I'd love to. I can do kitchen counters with the best of them, and with any luck, we'll get locked in the cooler."

He was right. Damn, what a woman. With her spunk and looks, she could drive a man mad. He shot Mitch a knowing grin. Oh yeah, exhibit A: Mitch Colony. She started at the top and worked her way on down.

"I'll keep you warm, Trixie," Rory said. "No worries there."

Trixie grabbed her raincoat. She couldn't just walk away. Oh no, she wanted to pour a little salt and lime in the wound. "A week of kitchen detail? Wow, you must have an awful lot of confidence, Mr. Colony."

"What's that supposed to mean?" he asked.

"If you think you only needed a week, you must have some kind of batting average with whatever you have tucked away in your pants, but I've got a newsflash for you. I've sat on my virginity for nineteen years, so you need to keep that in mind. Every single time you step up to bat, you will strike out. I'm not easily tempted by a smooth-talking fellow with a big penis and bigger lies falling from his lips. I've never been tempted in the past and I'm not now." She gave Brock a quick glance.

He studied her, too. What a crock! Now she earned his attention. *Huh*, he thought, *you're all but screwed, little girl. You just gave a man motive*. He smirked and watched her come alive with recognition. Oh yeah, she knew to watch for him now.

She stomped away, and Rory leaned out of his chair to check out her sweet ass. Brock stretched, too. Shaking his head, he said, "Damn, did I hear a challenge or an invitation? I don't know about you two, but she just said the kind of words that would tempt the devil straight out of hell."

Mitch grabbed the damp towel she barely used. He held it to his nose and inhaled. Yep, he was a goner.

Rory picked up a frame and studied the photograph. The frame encased an older picture of Mitch and a younger woman, a gal Brock remembered well. “Mitch, buddy, I hate to tell you this, but Trixie has a little more class than those you’ve taken to your bed in the past.”

“Class my ass,” Mitch grumbled. “Did you hear her right, then? In all the years I’ve been here, I’ve never heard one of my staff members say ‘penis’ and glare at mine like it was the enemy.”

Brock rolled his eyes and gnawed on the inside of his jaw. Then he said, “Yours may be the opposition, but Rory’s here may be considered friendly fire by the time this summer is over. You’d better change your game plan, buddy. Otherwise, you’ll need to kiss and make up with Brenda. It can get awful lonesome out here at night, remember?”

“Trixie Cartwell is one hot firecracker, but she’s no different than any of the other women I’ve had in my bed. Outside of those tits and apple bottom of hers, she’s like all the rest.”

“Is that right?” Rory asked, probably still irritated Mitch pulled rank on him earlier.

“Shew,” Brock said, shaking his head. “She’s one hell of a woman, if you ask me.”

“Thought you didn’t want your horse in this race,” Mitch stated abruptly.

“I don’t, but sometimes a man can’t think with the right head, and you, of all people, know what I’m talking about. Mitch, buddy, you better make sure Trixie isn’t scheduled to work my classes. I don’t need to get all tangled up in her web of purity—”

“Hey, no problem here,” Rory interrupted, chuckling. “If she’s not your type, I’m glad to hear the news straight from you.”

Brock scoffed. “It doesn’t have anything to do with my lack of interest. It’s more about saving my own hide. Hell, she just spanked Mitch’s ass all over the place, and he let her. You think I want more of the same?”

Rory and Mitch looked at each other and then Rory said, “Yeah, you do. If you don’t yet, you will.”

Brock laughed. Maybe they were right. “I’ll tell you one thing, if I ever get the chance to trap her in between my sheets, I won’t worry about either of you. She just hummed out the sweetest words I’ve ever heard in my life.

“I don’t know if I’ve even had dinner with a virgin, much less had one who looks like her, sleeping three doors down.” He started out and quickly added, “And for the record, if I can help her out with her purity problem, doing a few dirty dishes or even mucking stalls won’t scare me away. If she decides it’s time for a deflowering, I hear she has the perfect tools tucked away under her mattress.”

Mitch frowned. “Yeah, and that’s not the worst part. She claims she doesn’t know how to use them.”

Rory gulped. “Then I can see the appeal in virgins. I never liked chopping weeds where a bunch of fellows have already mowed.”

Brock could certainly relate. It was the only reason he hadn’t stuck with a few girls he’d liked in the past. He wanted the prize. Now, he had to decide whether or not he was man enough to claim it.

Trixie Cartwell was trouble, and Brock knew better than to look her way. She possessed the potential to destroy a single man’s freedom. Damn it all! She was a disaster waiting to happen. And he couldn’t do one thing about it now.

He saw his future flash before him and understood what he faced as sure as he was standing. He was going to do whatever it took to have Trixie arching for him, bending over his lap and stretching up, begging for his cock.

Oh yeah, there wasn’t any way to deny himself now. He had a desperate need to sate his curiosity, and he’d only known the woman for a couple of days. Maybe he’d try a different approach than he had with other women and take some time to get to know her.

Then, when she let down her guard, he’d seize the first opportunity. He planned to tame a siren, ride the little vixen until she knew who’d visited between her legs first. After summer ended, he’d walk the hell away and never look back, or at least he’d try.

* * * *

Trixie hung up her long yellow outerwear on a hook right next to the door. The lightning and thunder had long since stopped, but the rain continued to pepper down on the tin roof. She would sleep like a baby if she could get her nerves under control.

She shouldn't have kissed Rory. She used him and she liked Rory too much to drag him into her fun and games.

From the moment she first met Mitch, she'd known it would be like this between them. The warning lingered in the air, and after he kissed her once, his lips only made her hungrier. Apparently, she had the same effect on him.

Then to stir things up a little, she grabbed Rory and kissed him straight into a little hardcore punishment. Mopping floors and scraping scraps from messy trays never did a lot for her. Rory didn't exactly sprint for the kitchen.

Staring at the floor, she looked at the mess she made when she tracked in the mud. Cursing, she kicked the door open and stormed outside. She meant to discard her muddy boots and leave them on the porch. She picked the wrong time.

"Trixie," Brock said in passing. He only glanced her way, and his indifference didn't bother her in the least. Dealing with another man and his testosterone produced too many challenges she didn't want until she sorted out her emotions. She held onto the rail and pulled the first boot off and then the second. By the time she slipped out of both, Brock stood behind her.

Startled, she held her hand to her chest. "You scared me to death. I thought you'd already walked down to your place."

"I could've if I hadn't stopped long enough to see you bent over with your precious little bottom practically hanging out of those shorts."

She swallowed tightly, and his mouth slowly formed a smile. He placed his hand on the side of her waist and then gave her a quick push inside.

Trixie studied the brute in front of her. His damp hair parted naturally to the side and his wet face illuminated the man's sex appeal. There was only one way to describe his eyes—determined.

"What the hell are you doing?"

"Come on, Trixie. Wearing bend-me-over-and-fuck-me-right shorts guarantees a woman like you of several things."

"Don't do this, Brock. It's only going to complicate your life," she warned, but damn it to the moon and back, his mouth already earned her full

attention. She craved the taste of him, certain that if he allowed her one kiss, the butterflies she felt whenever she saw him, would fly off and bother another swooning woman.

“For once, I have to agree with you. It will complicate the hell out of my life. It’s going to make me kick my ass all the way back to my hut, but I’m still going to take my turn, have your kiss,” he growled.

His manly-man tone aroused her. Brock wasn’t like a pocket full of sunshine. Oh no, he didn’t approach a woman nice and easy. Instead, he fought to protect himself, put up barriers and false pretenses. She still saw through him. She heard the dull ache in his voice, and the need. Oh heaven help her, the thick agony of desire when he spoke, tightly formed words barely slipping from his lips.

He reached around her and yanked the door forward, placing his hands on her shoulders. He stared right passed her eyes and went for her heart and soul. She didn’t know what to make of the Cow Camp men but Rory, Mitch, and Brock had their own sexy-hot way of seducing a woman.

“I’m going to kiss you right out of my system. Do you understand?”

She swallowed again and again. She didn’t think it would be that easy, but at least she imagined nodding in agreement.

“Why bother with a kiss then?” she finally managed. “Best thing to do in these situations is avoid the effort altogether.”

“Yeah and go through life wondering if I might have liked kissing you as much as I’ve imagined. Not a chance.” His lips crashed down on hers, and he immediately cupped the base of her neck, pushing a handful of hair upward as he held her tight against his mouth.

His lips felt soft and moist, but the way he took them wasn’t gentle. His mouth came down on hers hot and hard, his tongue pushing her lips for division as his kiss tore through her senses and left her in a pool of wet desire.

She moaned right into their kiss and felt her cheeks flame hot before his hands caressed over her shoulders, then her arms. Her heart thumped louder, determined to get his attention or steer hers in another direction. She felt his thick erection mashing against her leg, and she sighed once more, heavier than before, as his mouth laid claim to hers again.

Oh God, his hard length pressed against her. He swayed forward and back, letting her feel him. “Brock,” she whispered. “Don’t stop now,” she

said softly, kissing him still harder, dueling for the tip of his tongue and then sipping on the soft texture like French kissing him ranked highest among the world's finest pleasures.

"I'm not going anywhere yet," he told her, cupping her breast. Brock kissed across her face, and she felt his lips curve wider when he whispered in her ear, "You feel so good, baby. Let me taste you, sugar. Just one taste, and if you don't like what I do to you, I'll walk out of here and never bother you again."

His thumb worked over her nipple. He nipped at her lobe, dipping his head and stroking the point, applying pressure and adding more when she arched from the sensation. Her nipple demanded exposure regardless of what material covered her. He nuzzled her breast, licking through her shirt with a powerful tongue, one long, slow swipe made her brace for another.

Her body reacted, and she couldn't halt the grinding or stop herself from reaching out. She bit her forefinger and nearly begged for more. A moan escaped her lips.

Brock jerked her to him and angled his lips over hers again. "Feels good, doesn't it, baby? That's it, let me touch you." His hands propelled over her curves, and one palm found her bottom. He pressed his length against her and he watched. God help her, he watched her respond.

The dampness between her thighs drove her wild, and she bumped against him. One of his hands held her close while the other caressed her face, his thumb stroking the lip he just nipped.

"You need to stop," she said, placing all the blame on him.

He moved away long enough to study and translate her expression. "Damn it, this is going to get real ugly isn't it?"

Trembling, she closed her eyes. "No, it won't," she whispered. "I don't want to be tossed around between you, Mitch, and Rory. I don't want any of this."

"One time, just once," he said, holding up his index finger. "I gotta know how wet you are sugar, smell your arousal, *taste it*. Then, I'll slip out of here."

No, if anything, he'd slip somewhere else. "You're a perv," she said pushing him away.

"I can be," he admitted, snaking his arm around her hips and dragging her to the floor at the same time.

He refused to let her make a clean break without his permission. Right there on top of the muddy surface, he yanked her shorts over her hips and stared at her bare pussy. “Holy shit,” he growled, his voice cracking when he saw her exposed skin.

She sank into the well of trouble, drowning in damp heat. Her senses came alive and she found herself more responsive, more aware of a man than she’d ever been in her ever-lovin’ life. She couldn’t keep her knees from knocking together. If he bothered to pay closer attention, he would’ve surely noticed her fear and her excitement. If he’d only look up!

Trixie snapped her knees together. “I’m not ready for this.”

Brock kissed her thigh and then her hip, pausing only once to mumble reassurance. “You’re ready, Trixie. God help you, if you’re really a virgin and you’re this excited, you’re long overdue, sugar.” He stared down at her vagina, rolled his luscious tongue over his bottom lip and then released a carnal, guttural sound.

He was right. God help her, he was right. She was ready, as ready as she’d ever been.

She’d purchased sex toys because she walked around in a constant state of arousal. Ever since her eighteenth birthday when her longtime friend and nearby neighbor dry humped her in her bedroom closet, she’d known curiosity. Her guy pal came in his pants and didn’t try to get in hers again, but the experience left her hungry, eager. But did it leave her stupid?

Brock kissed her inner thighs, and his mouth closed around the flesh, sucking as he moved forward, inching up. Halting his pursuit was unthinkable, but necessary.

She pursed her lips, slapped her palms to the floor, and squeezed her legs together. “I said, no!”

“Shit,” he muttered. But he stopped, mere inches from sinking his tongue right in between her folds. She felt his breath against her labia and chills ran up her spine when he kissed her leg one last time.

Towering over her, his hard cock bulged in his pants and his expression made her doubt the decision to stop. He looked hungry, like a man who needed sex in order to survive.

He scraped his lips over hers and said, “Let me taste your pussy, Trixie. Let me swipe that pretty little snatch until you’re screaming out my name.”

She gasped. Oh God, how she wanted him to make her cry out. Her juices spilled from her opening, and she arched, rubbing her vagina against his leg.

His upper lip curled. "Want me to finger you?" he asked, his hand resting on her hip. "Want me to make you come?"

Her head rolled from side to side. Then she looked him straight in the eyes. "Yes," she whispered.

And that's when the door slammed and nearly shook off the frame.

"Damn it, Brock!" Mitch exclaimed, storming into the cabin and ruining their moment. Brock pulled her forward, yanking her shorts over her hips and helping her to her feet again at the same time.

Mitch glowered. "You're such a fucking liar, man."

Brock shook his head. "No, but I'm a man who was seduced by a little seductress," he accused, snapping her shorts at the waistband. "You need to move her to the main camp with one of the senior counselors. Give her a cabin full of kids to watch this summer," he said, standing from his squatted position. Trixie noticed how he refused to meet her gaze while he basically cursed her existence. "Because, by damn, if you don't, one of us will get her in a whole lot of trouble. And yeah, Mitch, it might be me."

Trembling from the recent excitement as much as from Brock's enticing threat, Trixie wanted to run and hide. She had too many sensations spiraling through her body and far too many emotions to sort through. "Would it be too much to ask for and gain a little privacy?"

Mitch and Brock locked eyes, a silent exchange finding two determined men ready to fight for every minute of her attention. "Mitch, listen to me. Move her."

Trixie placed her hands on her hips. She couldn't believe Brock groped her to the brink of orgasm and now stood there acting like he couldn't stand the mere sight of her.

"He can't do it. It's not in our contract," she snipped. "And just who do you think you are, anyway? You don't have a right to make such a request."

"What contract?" Brock barked, determined to get his way and chauvinistic enough to ignore her altogether by directing his question to Mitch.

“Her fathers had an addendum drawn up,” Mitch began with his lame explanation. “Seems Trixie isn’t kid friendly. She has a habit of forgetting what she’s supposed to be doing and moving on to something else.”

“So she’s ADD or something. Big fucking deal.”

“I’m not ADD,” she informed. “I’m just forgetful.”

Brock sneered. “A likely story for a woman who wants three different men. Convenient, too, isn’t it, doll?”

“Oh, please,” Trixie said, tossing her head back. “If you think I want three different men just because I’ve kissed three since I’ve been here, then you really are full of yourself.”

Brock grabbed her around the waist and pulled her against him. “Darlin’, in case you weren’t able to wrap your little brain around the concept or—as you’ve suggested, perhaps you’ve already forgotten—we enjoyed a little more than kissing right then.” He slid her hand in his and cupped his cock. “There’s your sign.”

Trixie quickly tugged her arm away. “You’ve got nerve and—”

“What I have is a hard on,” he pointed out. Then he faced Mitch. “Kid friendly or not, she’s going to the hill with the youngest campers up there.”

Mitch stared at the ceiling. “Damn if I wouldn’t put her there if I could.”

“If she can’t be around children, why the hell did you hire her?” He restructured the question and asked Trixie, “What were *you* thinking? Couldn’t you remember how to get to your local McDonalds? I hear they’re always hiring.”

Trixie felt a stabbing sensation. Brock was an ass. She felt like a ridiculous girl who let him use her up and spit her out.

No, she thought, forcing herself to stand taller. Her vagina remained wet enough to guarantee one thing if nothing else. He may have wanted to use her, but he failed.

“I’m here as a form of punishment, if you have to know,” she spat before adding, “but that doesn’t mean every single man in this place can take advantage of me.”

“They all may try,” Mitch grated out. He pointed to Brock. “Why the fuck did you have your hands all over her?”

“Buddy, if you’d been another two minutes out, my hands wouldn’t have been the only thing on her bare little pussy.”

Trixie was red-hot mad. “You’re one sorry son-of-a-bitch.” She stood in front of him with her arms tight, her fists clenched.

“Oh, you’ve got that part right. I told you before we started playing around what I had in mind. Maybe you should’ve listened. I appreciate the active participation, by the way,” he said curtly.

“Don’t, Brock. This isn’t necessary,” Mitch said, giving him an obvious escape before he hung himself out to dry after a damning rain.

“Stay away from me, Trixie. Don’t bend your cute little ass over where I can see your dimples, and don’t prance around in a wet T-shirt again if I’m even close in proximity. If you’re a smart gal, you’ll run like hell and then you’ll hide, from all of us.”

* * * *

After Brock left, Mitch allowed Trixie the opportunity to place a little distance between them. He wanted to hold her, but it wasn’t exactly the right time. “Wanna talk about anything?” he asked.

“No, please leave,” she choked out.

He looked around and decided there was only one place to sit in her cabin, on the bottom bunk. Taking a seat, he folded his arms over his chest. “Thought Mother Nature had you hell bent on keeping your pants up today.”

“He yanked ‘em down pretty fast.”

“Give it a rest, Trixie. You’re not the first woman to holler red river when she doesn’t want to screw. You won’t be the last.”

“Eww,” she said wrinkling her nose. She paced back and forth. Then she stopped in front of him. “Do you mind giving me a little space tonight?” Her hand rose and fell, smacking against her leg. “I mean, you guys—Rory, Brock, and you—are coming on so strong, I just want a little peace and quiet. Ya know?”

No, he really didn’t translate that memo as effectively as he should have. Brock mastered translation better, but then again, Brock almost found everything he wanted right between Trixie’s shapely legs.

“I’m going for a ride later. I want you to come with me.”

“No, I can’t,” she replied. “Thanks for the offer.”

“Why?”

“Because I need a large portion of me-time every evening or else I’m unable to work the next day.”

“That’s a crock. Besides, how would you know what you need? This is your first job, remember?”

Trixie glared at him. She was so damned cute, and after seeing her pretty little pussy, she might as well consider herself fucked, too, especially with Brock out of the way.

“Mitch, look, I—”

“You don’t have to explain. We’ve only known each other a few days. What can I say? I expected some reluctance. You think you’re the first woman we’ve all had the hots for at the same time?”

“I’m sure it’s a different one every summer.”

“Pretty much,” he admitted, but then he felt an undeniable stab in the gut again. The same sensation he experienced the first time he saw her. He went with it. “Only, there’s something different about this summer.”

“What’s that?”

“I can’t explain it, but what I can do,” he jumped up from her bed and took her hand, “is ask you to join me for a long ride later. There’s a gorgeous meadow down by the lake, and I want you to see it.”

“In the rain and mud?”

“The weather will clear up.”

“And if it doesn’t?”

“If not, I have another surprise. Come on now, live on the edge.”

“In a few days, I might. I haven’t had the opportunity to review my schedule since someone—I’m assuming you—placed it on my bunk earlier today. Plus, I need to get settled. I’m still decorating my room here. How about a rain check?”

Postponing what he wanted to do didn’t sit well. Brock slept too close for Mitch’s comfort, and Rory, well Rory would end up closer to her than anyone. He had a way about him. He became the best friend before he wormed his way into a woman’s bed. Mitch wanted to pull out all the stops while he still could.

Trixie patted the back of her hair nervously. “Mitch, maybe I need to go home. This summer gig isn’t working out like I thought it might and—”

“Your dads aren’t coming back here for you. Trust me, I’ve been well informed on what to expect out of you. They told me they have some special

plans for your mother while you're away. Take it from me, little lady. They won't throw a big homecoming in your honor if you abandon ship."

"Then I want you to back off."

"No you don't," he said snapping his wrist and grabbing hers at the same time. "What you want is for me to slow things down. After your little confession earlier today, I can drop it down a few notches. Even though after finding you here with Brock, I'm not totally convinced you aren't playing some sort of game."

God help him, if she toyed with him now, he intended to spank her ass raw, right after he buried his dick to the root deep inside of her hot little twat. After seeing her spread out on the floor, bare and waiting, he had one goal. Maybe two or three would follow, but he'd start with the first one and work real slow from there.

Trixie kept licking her lips, and he took it as an offer. He pulled her closer, dropped one arm around her waist and took her hand in his before pressing his other palm to her lower back. "Dance with me."

"What?" she asked, her brow wrinkling in sudden surprise, dimples claiming her cheeks.

"You know how, don't you?"

"Sure I do," she said, their bodies moving into a natural sway. "I find dancing is usually inspired with a little music."

"Then you haven't lived," he whispered, lowering his cheek to hers.

And he knew he was right. The woman in his arms hadn't lived. She needed to toss away the swords, the ones she kept arrogantly crossed in front of her body, on the chance someone tried to move in too close.

Mitch twirled her around the small cabin. They waltzed to a lover's tune, a new one he realized she'd never heard before, the melody of silence encouraging a dancer's song. With their bodies mashed together, his heart beat with hers, and the precise timing proved symbolic.

Trixie Cartwell was a woman of many layers. When he first gathered her in his arms, she felt like a limp ragdoll, one he could maneuver any old way he wanted. Now, she danced with confidence, allowing him to lead the way.

His fingertips lingered at her wrist while they moved. Gauging how fast her pulse raced, he pulled her closer. He planned to sway away her fears and anxiety, but he fought to conceal darker desires. A man who knew what he

wanted, Mitch understood how to take the things he needed and what he longed for, Trixie wouldn't give. At least not yet.

Pulling her still closer, he relaxed his grip but held her hand in a loose clasp at his side. She could go either way, drop it all together, or take a chance on a more intimate excursion.

His erection strained against his clothes, and he lost the self control he tried to maintain. He felt her tight little nipples bead against his shirt, pressing through her material. Moving his hands underneath, he propelled them over her flat belly until he couldn't withstand the magnetism, the way her body deliberately drew his fingers.

They stopped moving to their non-existent music, and he kissed her, carefully orchestrating the way he claimed her lips, sipping on them as they parted in acceptance. Hungry for the kiss they stopped too soon when they kissed before, there wasn't a halting factor now.

She responded to his touch, and he lapped at her lips, kept her stretching for his mouth as he nipped here and there. Holding himself away from her, he backed up a step and then inched a few more, knowing they would eventually find the bed behind them.

Roughly, he brought her shirt over her head. He dropped his jaw and caught his breath when he saw her full mounds pushed up and away from the expensive lace. "I pray you don't make me quit this time," he growled, licking across the material and finding the gem he couldn't wait to tighten under his lips.

Working his way from one breast to the next, he finally reached behind her and unhooked her bra. He fell against the mattress, yanking her on top of him, his hands falling to her sides and her breasts bouncing loose with the freedom.

"Mitch," she whimpered.

He didn't look up. God help him, if he did, he knew she'd call it quits. So he suckled her nipple, working to free himself, and that's where things ended abruptly.

* * * *

Caught up in the moment, she hadn't listened when his zipper first fell. She didn't even feel his hand under her when he worked to free his cock, but

by heaven and earth, she knew what she felt pressed against her thigh. The firm mushroom head gave her more than enough warning.

With a loud screech, she leapt from the bed, snatched her shirt from the floor and stuffed her arms in the sleeves. Wiggling her head through the large hole, she pulled the tight tee over her chest. She refused to look at him and thankfully, rather than stroking his length and antagonizing her curious nature, he stuffed his dick back in his pants.

“You’re going to have every inch of me, Trixie,” he said smugly. “It’s going to get so fucking hot between us. One night, when you can’t resist anymore, you’ll press your sexy little body against mine, and then you’ll beg.”

“Don’t kid yourself, Mitch. I have more self control than you think.” Sure she did. She felt confident she left him with that very impression.

Actually, maybe Mitch was right. If so, for self preservation, she had to get away from him. “I want you to leave, and this time I’m not asking you again. If you don’t, I’ll turn in my resignation and call my parents to pick me up.”

“On what grounds? I mean, really, what are you going to tell your dads, huh? That I sucked on your nipples, and when I finally had more than any other man could’ve withstood, I pulled out my cock hoping to slide right under your shorts? I mean come on, Trixie. Grow up!”

“Me? You’re the one with...with...” she couldn’t think. He made her so freakin’ mad that she couldn’t form words, let alone find a thought.

“With what? A hard on? An erection so painful I can’t think straight?”

God, he made her crazy. They all did. “What’s the big hurry?” She glared at his cock. A man’s dick, when hard, presented countless obstacles rather than satisfying solutions, especially when the damn thing remained unused.

Someone should’ve warned her of this. Sure, she was aware of its potential, now more than ever, but good grief, did every man in Cow Camp have significant issues with their damned penises?

“I mean, what’s your problem anyway?” she snapped, glaring.

Mitch stormed outside. He responded there, probably in an effort to make sure her neighbors overheard. “I don’t know, Trixie. Apparently, I have one and I think it’s gonna get a lot worse. It wouldn’t take much for you to make everything better for the both of us, and I’m waiting for that

day.” He eyed her and then continued. “So don’t take all summer long to give me what I want. A hungry man can be hazardous to a woman’s body when he finally gets to dine for the first time.”

Chapter Seven

Two Weeks Later

The other counselors called Trixie a floater. She didn't have a set schedule. Brock screwed up her chances for a normal summer agenda. As far as she knew, she was the lone junior counselor with an undetermined work detail plan. The only other person in the camp filling in here or there was Mitch, and he often showed up and worked wherever he placed her. How convenient.

Trixie was changing out the targets in the shooting range when she heard heavy footsteps behind her one late afternoon. The crunching sound of gravel overpowered a gruff, "What the fuck are you doing here?"

Wheeling around, she stared straight into the eyes of an aphrodisiac, a bad habit just waiting to form. Brock Sheldon was a prick. Born and bred that way, if she spared a guess, but it didn't change one primary fact. She found him attractive. Even when he complained about her, he was sexy as all hell.

Pulling at the clip holding the last target, she quickly changed out the thick paper and marched by him. With his tongue rolled over his bottom lip, a gesture with too many irresistible implications, he gave her a complete assessment. Thank God she wore short-shorts and a bright red tank top. She probably earned an A if he graded her by appearance.

"So we aren't on speaking terms today?"

She'd barely uttered a word in his presence since their little floor roll and for good reason. He still looked at her like he did when he positioned himself between her wide spread legs.

She was the only virgin-whore she knew. The fact irked the hell out of her. If she had the title, she could at least earn it and reap the rewards.

The campers filed into the open range and took their positions on the mats. Designated an advance shooting class, Trixie and Brock didn't have a lot to do other than change out the paper targets and make sure the campers didn't fire the guns when someone switched them.

She gave the signal for the campers to load and a few seconds later, she gave the firing order. She turned to face Brock. "So how come I'm the lucky one today? Where's Joe? I always teach this class with him."

Brock smirked. "Puking his guts up, from what I understand. He took off last night. Brenda treated him to drinks and got him drunk."

"Nice," one of the campers said over his shoulder. "Brenda, huh? Damn, what I'd give to tap that."

"Shut up," Brock said, nudging him with his foot.

The youngster twisted his butt and repositioned his arms, firing another shot. "She's seriously wicked, man," he added.

Trixie tucked her hands behind her back and studied the teenager with too many hormones kicking his backside. "Brenda is old enough to be your big sister," she said, laughing.

The hot shot fired his gun once again and missed the target. "Shit!"

"Hey now," Trixie said. "Watch the language here."

The youngster put down his gun and stood up. Before Trixie counted on an approach, the young man had her forearm held tight in a closed fist grasp. "Age doesn't matter to me, princess."

Shocked, Trixie squirmed in an effort to get away. Brock had just started for the clothesline to make a few target adjustments when he stalked back. "Let her go, Phillip."

Phillip puckered his lips. "She yours, Brock?"

Brock looked her up and down. "I said let her go."

The kid laughed. "And I asked a question. You tapping this?"

Brock swatted the kid on the back of his head. "Yeah, about like you and Brenda. Leave her alone."

Phillip released Trixie and then bit his bottom lip. "My oh my. I'd stand in line and wait for you, darlin'."

Trixie felt her face heat. Brock laughed, stepping off the porch. "You'd have a little more than you can handle, kid, I'll promise you."

Mad enough to take up arms and lead a fight straight into hell, Trixie knelt down to the closest blue floor mat and assumed the shooter's position. She aimed and she fired.

"What the hell are you doing?" Brock ducked his head and ran off the shooting range.

"What's it look like?" she retorted, placing the gun on the hardwood plank beside her. "I'm aiming for your ass, the kind of bulls-eye even a beginner can't miss."

The whole area filled with laughter, and Brock rushed forward. Phillip observed. The little shit probably thought of Brock as some kind of hero, the kind of counselor a parent didn't want their kid looking up to and yet Phillip probably did it for pure spite.

Before she could stop him, Brock grabbed her by the wrist and pulled her up. "I need to talk to you."

"It'll have to wait. I have a class to teach," she replied with a saucy little shake of her arm. Aware of where his eyes settled, she felt the movement in her weighted breasts when she tried to wiggle free again.

"Not now you don't," he advised, nodding toward Mitch who quickly made his way toward them. By the color in his cheeks and the stomping of his feet, she assumed Mitch saw her trigger-friendly finger when she fired the shot. The bullet didn't come close to touching her intended target. Sure, Brock was rattled, as intended, but nothing more.

Brock held his hand up. "I've got this."

"I just bet you do," Mitch grated out.

"I tried to hit the *ass*," she informed while the campers laughed.

"This is not the time or the place," Mitch barked.

Brock pulled her to the edge of the range. "You asked for this, sugar. All of it." Then he pushed her in the shed where they stored the guns.

"Brock, really, now?"

"I can't think of a better time," he called over his back.

"You heard Mitch," she said. "Boss says no-go." She pulled the string in the center of the ceiling and the small area lit right up with a soft glow from a bright yellow bulb. The gun cases lined the walls and the stench of recently fired ammunition filled the air.

Brock sneered. "You're dangerous and I don't like it."

“Is that right?” she asked, looking around nervously. “Then do you mind telling me why I’m locked down in a shack with you.” She glared at his shorts, the stout evidence of a dominant male pressing its way forward. Good grief, he had a hard on? Right then and there?

Brock took a step closer. “You took a shot at my ass.”

“I did,” she admitted, smiling. She caught a glimpse of a pack of cigarettes out of the corner of her eye and went for them even though she didn’t smoke. Lighting up, she coughed with the first puff.

Brock smirked. “Mitch will spank both of us for that,” he said, removing it from her mouth. “There’s no smoking out here.”

“Well,” she said striking a pose. “Someone smokes here.”

Brock watched her like he wanted to show her the floor all over again. She’d thought of nothing else sense he ravaged her body and stole her mind, possibly even a small portion of her heart.

“What’s wrong, baby. Are you scared?”

Very.

He grinned. “Nervous?”

An understatement.

“What are you doing?” she asked, grabbing for the cigarette.

“You don’t smoke.”

“Yes, I do,” she chirped. “I can. The law says I’m of age. I can do whatever I want.”

“Classic.” He grinned, taking a puff and inhaling long and hard. He opened the door to the shed and tossed out the cancer stick, the one that would’ve made her gag if she tried puffing again.

When he turned around, his eyes changed. They looked darker, filled to the brim with liquid lust. His lips curved in a beautiful, but definitely wicked smile. With one hand, he fingered the button on his shorts and then released the zipper.

“What do you think you’re doing?” she squealed.

“Hell, honey, I’m surprised you’d ask,” he said, wiggling out of his shorts and letting her see what he’d kept neatly tucked away. “If it’s legal to smoke, then you’re damn sure old enough to fuck.”

Trixie blinked. “Dear God,” she said, glaring at the swollen mushroom head he presented with pride. Her tongue swiped at her moist lips. She

couldn't control anything at all right then. She damned sure couldn't stop the flood between her thighs, the heat radiating between them.

Snatching her wrist, he drew her close.

"Stop this," she whispered, but she looked down while making the request. She should've looked up.

"You wanted my ass," he taunted, gripping his girth and rubbing it over her leg. "And now, sweet thing, you can have every inch of what's right in front of you." He dipped his head and kissed her, trying his best to maneuver her hand to his crotch.

Biting back sudden need, she turned her cheek. His lips met her ear and he sucked on her lobe, breathing heavily as he ground his cock against her center. "Touch me, Trixie. I dare you."

The door swung open and Mitch marched in. "Do it, and you're both out of a job."

* * * *

Rory looked like a man designed with a woman's libido in mind. He could easily become Trixie's very own personal sex toy, but he didn't push things, which made it easier to spend time with him.

He'd made a habit of waiting for her every day after her arts and crafts class. Dressed in a muscle-man tee and snug shorts he wore a little longer than she liked, he still made the tan, cargo style mighty damn appealing.

After two hours of close quarters in the hot craft cabin, she craved sunshine and good company. More athletic than creative, she preferred the water sports, but all of the junior counselors pulled their time in the crafts hut. She wasn't exempt.

Trixie didn't mind teaching art since she wasn't the lead counselor. She enjoyed working with the younger children and viewed their clay designs as masterpieces, taking the time to brag on each one. From the bunny with no ears to the horse without a tail, every camper designed a magnificent creative art form, and she showed them her undivided attention when they asked for her approval.

The class times helped occupy her thoughts. She stayed busy, and as long as she had a child in her sight or within earshot, she wasn't thinking about three sexy-hot counselors, or worse, fantasizing about all of them together.

The daydreams worsened, especially after Brock dropped his boxers right in front of her the day before. She resigned herself to all sorts of possibilities, and Brock remained at the center of her nighttime fantasies. In fact, after a sleepless night, she might have to break open the intimate toy box in his honor.

Then she thought about Rory. Trixie liked Rory. He was easy going and two weeks into the summer, she discovered he didn't place unnecessary expectations.

Walking toward the dining room, their arms swayed together and he took the opportunity, latching his hand around hers.

"I heard you and Brock worked together yesterday," he said.

"Why, yes," she said with forced enthusiasm. "We did."

"How'd that work out for ya?" he asked, biting back a grin.

"About as good as tripping him without an introduction," she retorted.

"Fantastic then, huh?"

Trixie stopped all at once. "Tell me something," she stated flatly. "Will I ever have one private moment with any of you?"

"Probably not," he answered. "I heard you tried to shoot Brock." He started walking again. "I had to go to the source and find out why you chose to do it in front of witnesses."

"Trust me," Trixie said, stepping beside him again. "If I'd wanted to fire up his ass, I could've."

Rory winked. "No doubt."

They walked in silence for a few minutes. "But you know you can't do that again in front of the campers, right?"

"What? Shoot a gun or fire it at the wrong target?"

Rory smiled. "You can aim that thing this way anytime," he said, glancing down.

"Funny."

"That's me," Rory exclaimed. "Just a barrel of laughs."

"I hope so," she teased.

"You know," he said, rounding the corner for the mess hall. "We never had the opportunity to talk about pursuing a you-and-me kind of gig."

Trixie snickered. "Ah now, Rory, come on. I didn't take you for the kind of guy who likes to talk about the serious stuff."

“And I’m not now but...” he stopped right before they reached the main dining room and gave her a quick push inside a broom closet adding, “If you ask me, our kiss was too short for my liking, and since it’s been two weeks to the day, I thought I’d give you a little reminder.”

Giggling, because everything with Rory somehow ended up fun, she teased him by leading him on. “Then refresh away.”

Rory slanted his mouth right over hers and reached up above them with one hand and flipped a switch of some sort with the other. He pulled a long rope a few times and smiled as he rang the old-time dinner bell. “And here you thought I planned to kiss you into a few good senses.” His mouth hovered over hers. If either one dared a move they would’ve sealed the deal and owned blame for initiating the kiss.

“So this is how you go about romancing your women?” she asked glancing up.

“No,” he admitted. “This is how one man drives another guy insane.”

“What are you talking about?”

After he gave the long rope another tug and the hum of the bell subsided, Rory pulled a nice gold watch from his pocket. Slipping the thick band over his wrist, he explained, “Give Brock another five minutes. He’s probably teaching on the water and Mitch? We’ll give him six. He’s always the last one to show. Then, we’ll push the door open and rush out into the dining room all smiles and tousled hair.”

“Rory! There are kids out there.”

Ignoring her, he ran a playful hand through her golden locks and then placed both hands on his head, disheveling his own hair. “The campers don’t have a clue what’s in this room, because if they did, this dinner bell wouldn’t stop ringing. Trust me, the only folks who know what’s in here are those deserving the kind of impression you want them to have.”

“Are we talking me here, or you?”

“Okay, so I need the bad boy reputation.”

She laughed. “I bet. What you need is a way to one-up Brock and Mitch.” She quickly grabbed the back of her shirt and tugged it from her shorts. “If we’re going to do this, then we might as well make it look good.”

Rory winked. “You’re all right for a newcomer.”

“Yeah? Well, you’re all right for a guy who wants to destroy a gal’s chances of getting along with the other women here.”

“Yeah, I know,” he said shrugging, a serious expression covering his face. “You know, Trixie, they’re never gonna like you anyway.”

She took a deep breath and said, “I didn’t think so. I’ve never had a lot of luck with women. It’s a shame, too. In high school they all thought I wanted to fuck their boyfriends, and I missed out on a few good revenge screws.”

Rory tilted her chin, and that’s when she realized she’d bowed her head, deliberately looking away from him when she spewed her lies. Sometimes it really bothered her that women didn’t give her a fair chance, but she tried her best to play it off.

“Can I ask you a question that’s really none of my business?”

Trixie grabbed the door knob at the same time she blurted out, “No! If it’s none of your business, then you shouldn’t ask.” Giving the door a good push, she realized too late her timing couldn’t have been worse.

“So you are a virgin?” The inquiry came at the same time the door jarred open.

Brock and Mitch, as fate arranged, stood within two steps of the bell closet. They both turned around and glared at Rory.

Brock dropped his gaze to her waist. “Tuck your shirt in, Trixie. Good Lord knows we all want to keep your good reputation rock solid while you’re here.”

Mitch sneered. “She obviously doesn’t give a shit about what others think. Why should we?”

“Good point,” Brock agreed lowering his lips to her ear. “After lunch, it’s rest hour. Wanna take a nap in my cabin?”

Trixie thought fast on her feet and turned around with a ready response. “No, Brock, I’m afraid I don’t. Rory and I have a little unfinished business.” Shooting him a wink, she headed off to stand in the lunch line all by herself. She didn’t stand there long.

* * * *

“What the hell are you doing?” she cried out after Mitch dragged her away from the dining hall. “You have no right to embarrass me in front of the campers and other counselors!”

“I have every right. I’m your boss.”

“Ah, now, come on Mitch, you can do better than that, can’t you?” she sang, wiggling her body one way and then the other, trying to free herself. She took short, quick steps in an effort to keep up with the lunatic leading the way. “Boss is so yesterday. What you really want is to hear me call you master, isn’t that right?”

Mitch quit leading her along only after he reached the row of cabins. He stopped short of forcing her inside of hers. “You gotta quit this,” he said.

“Why? Because you told me so?” she snapped, looking over his shoulder. “Great! All the boys are here now.”

Rory and Brock approached quickly. Concern stamped its impression on their faces.

“Mitch, man, you can’t just pull her out of the cafeteria,” Rory advised.

“Why the hell not?” he replied. “You didn’t have a hard time romping with her behind closed doors.”

Brock narrowed his gaze. His hungry eyes sliced her right in two. It was the most intense stare she’d ever been the recipient of, like he couldn’t figure out what to make of her. If he did, perhaps he wasn’t sure if he liked, loved, or even despised what he saw.

“Have you seen enough?” she finally challenged.

“Oh, I saw plenty,” Brock promised. “I just didn’t get that taste I wanted, and now,” he eyed Mitch, “I’m a hungry man, Trixie. I think someone once told you what happens when a woman teases a man dying to eat.”

She wheeled around and asked Rory for a favor. “Would you mind bringing me a sandwich? Anything will do. I can’t walk back in there after this moron dragged me out like he planned to spank me or something.”

“You want a spanking?” Mitch growled. “Because another stunt with Rory and I swear I’ll pull you in my office and tan your hide.”

Trixie put her hands on her hips and turned his threat into open season. “You so much as lay another hand on me, especially on my ass, and I will—so help me, God—call my fathers and tell them to come and pick me up!”

Brock laughed, addressing Mitch. “Do you think she’ll ever grow up enough so any man will even want to bang her?”

Mitch shook his head. “Daddy’s girl or not, I’m pretty certain we’ll get our turns.”

Oh, she was stark-raving mad now. She marched inside her cabin and locked the door. Yanking the curtains back, she stared into the eyes of lust, three pairs of them. And that's when her current predicament really hit her.

Torn between three sexy-hot fellows, Trixie noted each man's physical attributes. To make matters worse, she wasn't sure which guy she wanted more.

Now she understood how her mother once felt. Facing the truth terrified her, so she did what any other woman in her shoes would do. She closed the curtains. Then she marched into the bathroom and faked a good hearty cry.

* * * *

Ten minutes later, she came out of hiding when she heard a light knock.

"Trixie," Rory said. "Mitch and Brock aren't out here. I'll leave your lunch at the door. You still have about forty-five minutes left of the midday break. Do you need anything?"

Trixie sniffed, playing it to the hilt. "No, I'm fine. Thank you, Rory."

"Sure," he began. "Trixie, I'm sorry if I did anything to make you uncomfortable."

"You didn't." Sniff. Sniff. Sniff. "I'll catch up with you later, okay?"

"Sure, hon. See you this afternoon."

When he left, Trixie retrieved her sack lunch, grabbed her laptop and flopped down on the bed with her meatloaf sandwich and diet soda. She glanced at the can. How funny. Rory had taken the time to notice she drank diet drinks. She popped the top and took a gulp. Rory was the best of the bunch. A really good guy, the kind of fellow a girl settled down with and thanked her lucky stars she met such a man.

She took a bite of her sandwich, crossed her ankles and surfed the net. Maybe she'd look for informative articles on forming relationships with stubborn men.

She gasped. Did she want a relationship with a man? Or worse? Oh, God no, did she want a relationship with three men? No not at all, she decided. The decision came at a really good time.

Chapter Eight

“Trixie? It’s Stephen from the barn.” He tapped on the wire screen instead of the door.

She reached over, jiggled the hook and invited him in. “Hey, what’s up?”

He walked inside and took a good look around. “You’ve done wonders for your cabin. Think you might come over and decorate mine?”

“Is that a saucy kind of proposition or do you really need a little help decorating your apartment?”

“Both,” he answered, grinning. “What do you think? Are you up for it?”

Definitely. “Sure,” she said with a lot of satisfaction. “How about tonight?”

“Okay,” he said, shrugging. “Sounds a lot better than tomorrow night.”

Yeah, she thought. *Why not?* She knew three men who would search high and low to find her. “Did you take the position year round?” she asked, curious.

“As a matter of fact, I did.”

“That’s pretty cool. I heard Mitch wanted to hire someone long-term. If you’re staying on then I bet you have a lot of unpacking left to do.”

“Not really, just a few boxes.”

“Don’t worry,” she said. “Leave it to me. I can whip your place into a very neat bachelor’s pad so when the campers are gone, the party can begin.”

“I don’t want a bachelor’s pad.”

“No? How come?”

He shrugged. “I just want a nice place to call home, somebody to share it with, and that’s pretty much it.”

“Ah, Stephen, you’re a romantic, aren’t you?”

He blushed. "I'm a simple man who leads a very complicated life."

That's what they all say. "Well then, you'll have to tell me all about it tonight," she said taking another bite of her sandwich. "By the way, did you need something?"

"No," he replied. "I wanted to come by and make sure everything is all right. I saw Mitch drag you out of the lunch line and thought something might be wrong back home. I figured whatever he had on his mind must have been urgent."

Right, urgent. "No, everything is fine."

"Not a lover's quarrel, I hope."

"Are you kidding me?" she exclaimed. "I just met Mitch a few weeks ago, same time I met you and everyone else."

"Then me, Mitch, Rory, and what's his name—Brock—are all on the same playing field, huh?"

"Meaning?" she laughed enjoying Stephen's careful way of pursuing her.

"I mean, if I expressed an interest in you, would I have a chance?"

So much for cautious pursuit. "Stephen, I'd go as far as to say you're already in the lead."

* * * *

Trixie studied herself in the mirror. She was too curvy for her own good. The Cow Camp kitchen staff didn't help matters. They made gourmet meals and delicious desserts. She'd bet a good amount of money she'd gained ten or fifteen pounds.

She sent her mom an email and asked her to ship a few one-piece bathing suits. She should've listened when she suggested them in the first place. The two-piece bikini, while revealing, hardly qualified as skimpy until the extra weight settled in her chest.

Wearing a solid, candy-apple-red bathing suit, she decided it was too provocative. The top pushed up the soft contour of her boobs and she looked like a woman ready to spill into the hands of an excited man.

Grabbing her mesh cover-up, she tossed it over her head and let it fall. She returned to the mirror. The snow-white cover-up concealed nothing.

Checking her schedule again, she tossed her sunglasses on and headed for the lake. A four-minute walk and she was on the dock and good to go.

She heard a few of the campers chatting as she lined up the lifejackets on the dock. According to the posted schedule, this was the intermediate ski class, and ten children registered for the time slot. When she backed away from the vests, she caught Brock in her peripheral vision. He stood on the hill with three of the boys and they apparently waited for some kind of answer.

“Do you know her?” one of them said.

“She’s a counselor,” the cute kid with red hair and adorable scattered freckles replied. She remembered him from the first two-week class she taught in roping. He was pretty good at roping in steers, and girls. The counselors had to keep a sharp eye on him.

“She looks like a movie star,” the third boy said.

They walked down the hill toward her, leaving Brock behind. He stared her way and then slumped into the boat shack grabbing a large ring. The brass circle carried the keys for the speed boats.

Another male counselor arrived in time to walk toward the water with Brock. She heard him say, “I’m not riding in the boat with you. It’s on her, man. I don’t have the stomach for your kind of driving.”

A few minutes later, Brock jumped in the speed boat. He tossed a pair of skis in the water and then stood up and held his hand out. “Do you ski or drive?”

“I have my boating license, if that’s what you want to know.”

“Have you pulled many skiers?”

“I grew up spending my summers on the lake. I can drive a boat,” she said.

“I bet that’s not all you can drive,” he growled yanking her onboard so fast she lost her balance. The boys left behind on the dock started laughing and the girls looked dumbfounded, thank goodness. She didn’t want to explain things.

He pointed to the captain’s chair next to his. “You have to let me know when the skier is down or if you see problems whatsoever. You’re the spotter. In other words, you watch everything going on behind and around the boat. Do you think you can manage the spotter position or not?”

She gritted back bad words. “I’ll manage.”

“Good,” he said returning his focus to the line of waiting skiers. “Who’s up first?”

“Me!” one of the boys said, waving his hand wildly.

“In the water, then,” he chanted, grinning. “You know the drill, skiers,” he addressed all of them, shoving off in the process and floating away from shore. “Fifty strokes away from the dock and I’ll toss the rope and pick you up. No dock starts in this class. If you have to try those starts, join the ski club, or see Mitch and ask him to move you to the advanced class.”

“Be right back,” he said sliding behind the wheel of the boat. He cranked the motor right up and, making headway, he steered the vessel about two hundred feet from the shore. “We’ll give our first camper a minute to swim out and put his skis on.”

“Sure,” she said grinning. “Nice day,” she added.

“Take off the top,” he growled.

“Excuse me?”

“The cover-up,” he clarified. “I can already see whatcha got. Might as well get a tan while we’re out here. You aren’t the only gal running around in a bikini.”

“No, but I’m the only woman you want to see in one, right?”

He smirked, leaned back and gave sex-appeal a real effort. He placed his hands flat against the back of his head and allowed his legs to splay open. “You’re too much, aren’t you Trixie?” He shifted forward and rubbed the pad of his thumb over his bottom lip adding, “Come here and let me help you.”

On second thought, sexy came easy for Brock Sheldon.

She stood up, crossed her arms in front of her and slowly removed the mesh cover. “I can undress all on my own, with or without a little persuasion.”

Once she dropped the cover-up over a leather chair draped with a large beach towel, she felt exposed. In order to play off any level of modesty, she held her palms up next to her ribcage, turned around in a complete circle and said, “See? I manage just fine on my own.”

“Fuck me,” he hissed under his breath, moistening his lips. Then he grabbed the wheel, revved up the motorboat and sped toward the camper anxiously waiting for the tow rope.

Parallel to the young boy, Brock leaned over the boat, but somehow managed to keep one hand on the wheel. “You doing okay there, little buddy?”

“Sure,” he rolled his eyes. “I know how to ski. We have a boat, man.”

“Cool,” he said, obviously unimpressed. “You know the hand signals here, then?”

“Yep,” he replied. “Thumbs up, faster. Thumbs down, slower. Slice across the neck and you drop my ass back in the water.”

“Watch your language out here,” Brock warned. “We have a lady present, and she gets bent out of shape over bad words. Trixie, toss this expert his rope.”

Trixie stood up, watching the kid bob up and down with the gentle waves. She realized where Brock’s gaze settled, almost feeling his eyes strip her bikini bottoms right off of her behind. She gave the rope a whirl and nodded when the handle splashed against the water.

“He has the bar.”

“Hit it!” the young skier yelled.

Brock punched the gas. The youngster on his skis rose from the water. Within seconds, he skimmed across the lake, cutting waves one minute and jumping them the next.

Trixie sat down, ready to relax, but unable to find true comfort. Brock grabbed the hem of his shirt and stripped it off, his biceps flexing and his abs almost drawing her fingertips.

“You thirsty?” he asked.

“Sure, if you have a beer.”

He chuckled. “I don’t contribute to the delinquency.”

“You won’t have to. Where’s the beer?”

“Really, Trixie, we don’t drink and drive boats,” he said setting his jaw. “There’s some water and a few diet sodas in the cooler. It’s in the side compartment up front. Bend over and help yourself.”

“You’d like that, huh?”

He shrugged. “Probably not as much as you would if you tried it out in private.”

She watched the little guy behind them cross another few waves. Then, she saw an odd splash off to the left. “He kicked a ski,” she said.

Brock laughed and nodded. "That kid is a show-off. The slalom course is straight ahead. I'll take him through it. His name is Frankie. He's been coming here for the last five or six summers. He knows the drill around the docks, and as you can see, he can ski like a wild man." As if he understood he held their undivided attention, he gave a thumbs-up signal. Brock sped up a little before hitting the slalom course.

"How long do you take your skiers out?" she asked.

"Depends on the class. This one allows each kid two seven-minute runs. We stay on schedule unless we have to chase down skis. We try to encourage the kids to drop them near the cove so we don't lose too many."

They continued to talk about the class and campers until they dropped Frankie at the dock. "Grab the rope. Let's go fetch a ski."

A few seconds later, they spotted the slender wooden runner. Brock turned the motor off, and they floated toward the shiny object. Trixie leaned over and grabbed it, and when she turned around, Brock snatched the ski from her hand, tossed it to the leather seat behind them and snaked his thick arm around her waist.

Before he had the opportunity to move first, she stood on her tip-toes and gently kissed his lips. "You like me a lot, don't you?"

"Uh-huh. What gave me away? The fact that I don't want to work with your cute little ass or the way I knelt next to you begging for a taste of your sweet pussy a few weeks ago?"

She swallowed hard and her body responded. She bumped her lower half against his cock and convinced herself, after she felt the full rise under his shorts, that the boat rocked and forced her to misbehave. "Actually, the way you brought your little Tommy-Tom out to play implied a lot."

"My *little* what?" he asked, insulted.

"You heard me."

"Baby, I can promise you there's nothing little about this," he said, patting the front of his shorts.

"Uh-huh, that's what they all say."

"Wanna do something tonight?" he asked grinning, confident she wouldn't deny him.

"I have plans."

"Yeah," he said. "With me."

"No, I'm helping a friend."

“You don’t have friends here, remember?”

“I have friends everywhere,” she said. “Only, they’re always male companions, or haven’t you noticed?”

“So who’s the lucky guy tonight? Rory or Mitch?”

“Neither.”

Trixie snickered. Now he should feel his balls tighten.

He glared up the hill and stared at the barn. He glanced back at Trixie and released a hearty laugh. “If you’re thinking about Stephen, then you gotta be kidding. That old fella?”

“He’s not much older than you.”

“Thanks, I appreciate the slam,” he said, releasing her. “I don’t like him much,” he admitted, returning to the wheel. “I think he has some serious issues if the best job he can get is at a co-ed camp for spoiled children.”

“What about you? I don’t see anyone around judging you.”

“I grew up at this camp. I belong here.”

“Belong, you say?”

With a cocksure attitude, he said, “About as much as you do, only I’m not sure my family money matches up with Cartwell cash, but we ain’t far off,” he drawled.

Trixie rolled her eyes and sat down. “You’re so sure of yourself, aren’t you?”

“Cancel your plans with the stable boy. I’ll show you where I get my confidence.”

Brock drove her crazy with lust. Her mind churned and immediately she considered ditching Stephen for Brock, and his *Tommy-Tom*. She didn’t make another comment until she tossed the rope toward a new skier and they sped toward the other side of the lake. Then she said, “How about I see Stephen for a few hours and then you meet me here?”

He nodded toward the cove. “There’s a place I want to show you. I’ll meet you at the docks tonight at ten. We’ll take one of the canoes. Mitch keeps a close eye on the speed boats.”

“Ten it is,” she cooed.

“Ten, for sure,” he said, giving her body another thorough inspection. “A ten without one single flaw.”

Chapter Nine

Stephen paced the length of the barn. Walking in between two rows of horse stalls, he wondered what was keeping the little whore. She should've arrived thirty minutes ago.

He planned to take things slow with Trixie, make the summer last for as long as possible. He hoped he possessed the kind of self control he once thought he had. Earlier, when he invited her to decorate his apartment, he'd watched her devour her sandwich. He often thought about how good he'd feel once he shoved his dick in between her cheeks and let her munch on him.

He spent wasted years thinking about her mother, and when he finally received pictures of Trixie, his goals changed. He latched on to one focus, a sole objective.

He might fall in love with Trixie Cartwell but he'd make sure she fell in love right back. If things didn't go according to his plan, he might consider killing her.

"Stephen?" He heard her in the nick of time. He was about to trot on down to her cabin and check out the fucking hold up, but she must've known how long to keep a guy waiting. She didn't push for a minute more.

"Trixie?" He turned around and spotted her at the far end of the barn.

"Sorry I'm late. A kid fell down coming out of the dining hall tonight. I had to fill out a report over at the infirmary. I figured if you got too impatient, you'd come and look for me."

"I started to send out a search party," he said smiling. "Hope the little one is okay." He really didn't give a shit. After a full day of spoiled youngsters, Stephen decided his biggest issue with the campers revolved around their smart mouths. He imagined Trixie possessed one as well, since she was her mother's daughter.

“Glad you waited,” she chirped. “So, let’s see this apartment. From what I hear, you have the best housing on the place.”

“I think so,” he said, opening a large wooden slider that led to twenty narrow steps. When he slammed the door behind them, she never flinched. *Huh*, he thought, *the little vixen trusts me*.

When she topped the steps, she gasped. “Oh, wow, look at this place,” she turned all the way around and then squeezed his arm. “Are you really going to let me decorate?” she asked excitedly. “I can have my mom send all sorts of stuff from the ranch. Please tell me I can!”

Stephen resisted the urge to snarl at the mention of her mother. “I wouldn’t want to impose,” he said politely.

“Are you kidding me? It’s not an imposition. I have so much stuff stored away in boxes. I’ll never have any place for all of it. Decorating is my favorite pastime.”

With a body like hers, sex should’ve been a mastered hobby. “Where’d you accumulate so much *junk*?” he asked curiously.

“Some of it came from my grandma’s old house. My sisters never showed an interest in keeping doo-dads from mom’s birthplace. She acted like discarding anything from there would hurt her feelings, so I have quite the collection of old paintings and figurines. Trust me, I can make this place into a doll house. We have gold in those boxes, Stephen.” She clapped her hands and turned around. “Okay, show me the rest.”

He pointed toward the bedroom and watched her. Trixie was right. He’d find treasures in those boxes if she stayed this worked up over decorating his place. “There are two bedrooms. From what Mitch told me, the last fellow who ran the place had a girlfriend with a kid. There’s some kind of farm mural on the wall. I’d love to paint over it.”

“You mean, you’re going to allow your personal interior decorator to take care of it, right?”

“Uh, Trixie, I really don’t think you’ll have time to do all this work by yourself.”

“Why not?” she asked peering inside the first bedroom while gripping the door frame.

“Mitch won’t let you,” he suggested, adding, “Remember, you’re a junior counselor, so you have a pretty full schedule.”

“For you,” she said patting his cheek, “I’ll make the time.”

He led her into his bedroom. The area had a double bed in the center of the room, an old dresser, and a closet. It was dark, the way Stephen liked his rooms, but at one time, a large bay window allowed plenty of sunlight to brighten up the place. He purchased a few blankets and nailed them into the sheetrock in order to completely cover the windows.

Stephen wanted to keep the light out. He also didn't want witnesses when he finally strapped Trixie to his bed and had his way with her. Blocking the windows seemed imperative since he planned to introduce Trixie to what he considered extreme sporting events.

She walked over to the window and tried to move the heavy blankets to either side. "What did you do, nail these up?"

"All the windows were covered when I moved in," he said. Blaming the previous tenant made more sense after he saw the way she wrinkled her nose.

"I don't like it," she said. "This comes down first after we get some blinds in here."

She started out of the bedroom and he stopped her. Placing his hands above the doorframe, he blocked her from leaving. "Why are you doing this?"

After a deep breath, she winked. "Because I think you're cute and decorating will keep me busy and out of trouble. Besides, my mother threatens to send my boxes to storage all the time. I might as well give everything to you, someone who will appreciate it."

"How do you think you're going to get in trouble?" he asked.

She darted under his arm and laughed. "Well, I'm not sure. See, I could probably get in more trouble here than on the hill," she said suggestively. "Then again, for some reason I trust you."

He wanted to laugh out loud. Trixie Cartwell trusted the one man behind her mother's never-ending nightmares. He knew Peyton Cartwell still woke up in a cold sweat when he pushed his way into her dreams.

Every time he came up for parole, Peyton made her plea to the parole board basing her request around her endless fear. He read her statements. Thanks to her long fight to keep him in prison, they remained forever connected. She couldn't let go of the past. Now, with Trixie in the picture, she wouldn't have to.

Trixie's entire hometown hated him. He shot up the local high school for sport more than twenty years ago and, from what his probation officer told him, the townsfolk never forgot his horrific crime or the massive loss of life.

Stephen probed for more. "You trust me more than those three other guys, do you?"

"I think I do," she replied, grinning.

"Now why is that, Trixie?" he asked, taking a step forward. "I'm the one who has the private apartment here. If anything, you could get in a lot of mischief up here, alone and vulnerable." His voice darkened and then he smiled, trying to cover up the diabolical edge in his voice. "Of course, I'm seldom here. You'll be up here by your lonesome a lot. I have to work with the riding team three nights a week."

"Oh," she said, pouting. "There goes my main reason for wanting to decorate your place."

"Come again?" he said, unclear on her meaning.

Giggling, Trixie tossed her hair over her shoulder and started downstairs again. "Thanks for showing me the apartment. I'm not much for creativity as far as designing things, but everyone says I have a knack for placement. You're gonna love your loft when I'm done. I'll have Mom send the first box before the weekend. We'll get started in a few days, how's that sound?"

"Trixie," he stopped her with his hand on her wrist. "Why are you really doing this?" He wanted her *main* reason, since she mentioned having one.

"I told you. I wanna spend some time with you."

"But why?" he asked, leery now if she had a truer motive.

"Because, Stephen," she drawled. "I know there's more to you than that stiff neck I saw the night we introduced ourselves by the campfire. You have to loosen up and I'm just the one to help you out."

Before he could stop her, she walked away. By the time he looked out the kitchen window, he saw her skipping down to the docks, and in the moonlight he could see the lovely shadow of her golden hair flowing right behind her. All he could think about was the slender neck hidden under her natural cape. Oh, how he wanted to wrap his hands around it and squeeze her until she screamed out his name in fear, or perhaps even pleasure.

* * * *

Brock rowed toward the camp, leaving the romantic tent behind long enough to meet Trixie. He hoped she appreciated a man who knew how to plan because he'd thought of everything.

He saw her sitting on the docks with her feet in the water. She showed up early. A good fifteen minutes, so he took it as a sign. The little woman was eager.

"Hey," he said combing the lake with a crazy eight formation. "You doing okay over there all by yourself?"

"Not bad," she eyed the canoe. "After the way you've chased my ass, I am a little disappointed, though. I imagined something along the lines of a great white stallion or considering we're on water, a romantic barge complete with candlelight and a southern rock band. Ah well, the man still holds my interest, so the canoe will do," she said hopping in the boat so carelessly, they almost capsized.

"Watch it," he groaned. "You don't jump in these things without a care in the world or you'll be overboard before you know you're wet." And she would know wet. God help him, he planned to keep her saturated.

Trixie already made mistake number one. She let him know right off the bat why she accepted the invitation. She found the man as intriguing as the evening straight ahead.

"That's okay," she said. "You like me in wet shirts, remember?"

He rolled his tongue over his lip. "I like the thought of wet panties better."

"Now, now," she said. "You can't start off the night racing for the finish."

"You're the one going all soft on me talking about horses and candlelight dinners. Is that what you found with the stable boy?"

"Ah, how sweet. You're jealous!" She sat perfectly still on the small plank seat and batted her long eyelashes.

"Hardly."

"You are," she further noted. "You call Stephen an old man when we spoke earlier today and now he's a mere boy?"

"Old man describes the guy when we're talking about his ability to keep up with a woman like you," he said, winking. "You know, Viagra for old men, hard ons wasted for stable guys who can't keep a woman in the

haystack for a sweet southern minute.” He leaned into the paddles, rowing forward and pulling back. “You nearly sprinted away from the fellow, too. Couldn’t wait to see me?”

“Tell me you didn’t spy on me.”

“Guilty as charged.” He tossed the binoculars in the tent before he rowed across the lake to fetch her little ass.

He steered the boat across the water, noting the lights of a much larger vessel about a half mile away. “We need to hurry,” he told her. Sometimes we see a few drunks out here late at night. I prefer to find our way to the other side in one piece. We’re hard to spot in this canoe.”

“Here,” she said reaching down and picking up another paddle. “I’ll help. We’ll get there faster.”

“You’re in a big hurry, huh?” he teased. “Remember, you can’t start a good story in search of an explosive climax.”

“You like to twist up my words, don’t you?” she drawled.

“I’d like to twist a lot of things, Trixie,” he retorted, his gaze roaming over her. “None of which have anything to do with talking or words. I promise.”

“My only motive is to add a little arm power and move us out of harm’s way.”

“I like that about you,” he said pushing the paddles harder as he struck out at the water. They inched closer and closer to shore. Only, he should’ve warned her. If Trixie thought she paddled toward safety, she was mistaken. What he planned to do to her when the clothes came off was deplorable, naughty as all hell.

She dipped the wooden tip into the water. He wasn’t sure if her strokes earned a mention since the little thing didn’t have a lot of strength in her thin arms. At least she demonstrated a willingness to learn. Maybe her efforts weren’t in vain since two speed boats swooshed by them right as they washed up on dry land. The waves lapped against the large rocks on the bank. If their boat floated any closer to the traffic, they would’ve tipped over.

With a final hard stroke, he forced the canoe right toward the embankment and hopped ankle-deep in the lukewarm lake. “Don’t move,” he said pulling the canoe all the way up the small incline, then offering her a hand. “My lady,” he said with a thick accent. “Welcome to *my camp*.”

Chapter Ten

Trixie saw delicious enticement when she spotted the large tent softly aglow with candles. She smelled the thick aroma of vanilla and felt a fluttering sensation in her stomach, the butterflies taking flight in her gut just in time to send out a real good warning.

“Brock,” she said hesitantly. “I think I’ve given you the wrong idea.”

He winked. “Who knows, maybe it works the other way around.” Taking her hand in his, he pulled her toward the tent. “Come on, at least see what I set up for you.”

“For a man who didn’t even want to teach a class with me, you switched gears pretty fast here, didn’t you?”

“I don’t know. Fourteen days doesn’t fly by when you have to eat breakfast with the source of your fantasies every morning.”

She frowned. “Does Rory know?”

He chuckled. “Rory ain’t no daydream, doll. Imagining your bare little pussy, on the other hand, has been the driving source behind many cold showers.”

She started to ask which hand he used when he enjoyed those icy showers. She let it slide. “You know, Brock, I’ve been meaning to ask you something. Do you have to refer to *it* as...well, I’m not spelling this out for you.”

“What do you want me to call it?”

She slapped the back of his head. “How about you don’t reference my *vajayjay* at all.”

“No promises,” he said laughing and unzipping the tent at the same time.

She gasped the second she saw the effort behind the tarp. The perfect display of awaiting romance set her nerve endings on fire and made her

womb clench. Now she expected to act on lust even before he initiated a slow hand to entice her. Brock knew how to ‘wow’ a woman.

If she planned to lose her virginity while working at Cow Camp, Brock undoubtedly set the perfect stage for the right time. *But it wasn't the best time*, she reminded. Summer would come and go. She'd only have her memories and didn't she want more than one romantic recollection?

“It's hard to imagine anything more perfect,” she said softly.

“For?”

Her eyes met his. Rather than answer him, she carefully considered the effort applied. The man thought of everything.

Votive candles lined one side of the thick canvas. In the far corner, an ordinary plastic grain bucket contained a large bottle of wine surrounded by square ice chips. Around the edge of a silky black sleeping bag, daisies framed the make-shift love nest.

“I don't know what to say,” she whispered stepping inside.

“How about, ‘I like this a lot’ or ‘I see that you went to a lot of trouble and I can't wait to lick the wine off your belly,’ and that one will get you everywhere, I promise.”

“I'm sure,” she said. “You really went to a lot of trouble didn't you?”

“Yes, I did, but I happen to think you're worth it.” Reaching in his pocket, he pulled out a small radio and immediately changed the subject. “I prefer a nice selection of music, but since I forgot my iPod, I found this in the lost and found at the docks. I swiped it for a few hours. I'll put it back in the morning.”

“We're not spending the night out here,” she informed.

“Uh, yeah, Trixie, we are.” He didn't blink or turn away. He spoke with assurance, and determination set his jaw.

“Brock, I can't,” she said, her voice sounding more like a screech than one oozing with excuses. “Mitch or Rory will check in and see I'm not in my cabin. I'll get fired.”

“By whom?” he asked reaching for a paper cup. “Sorry I didn't have wine goblets. I went with what I could find for a last minute date.”

“Is that what you call this?” she asked. “A date?”

“What would you call it?”

“Kidnapping,” she teased. “You have to take me back.”

“Trixie, Rory knows you're here.”

“What?”

“I told him in case Mitch went off the deep-end.”

“Perfect,” she grated out. “I guess we’re expecting company then, huh?”

“Rory sort of liked the idea, but I didn’t invite him.”

“Super,” she said.

Brock handed her a cup of wine and tilted the rim of his toward hers.

“To a long, romantic summer.”

“Who would’ve thought. You certainly know how to surprise a girl,” she said picking up a daisy and holding it to her nose.

He cupped the side of her face. “If I could’ve found rose petals in time, they would’ve been here.” Tossing a pillow to the back of the tent, he stretched his legs out in front of him. “So, Trixie Cartwell, tell me about you.”

“You brought me out here so I can tell you about myself?”

“That’s right,” he grinned sipping his wine. “It’s a good place to start anyway.”

“Until you get me drunk?”

“That’s sort of the idea.”

“And then you plan to take advantage of me?” she asked.

“I won’t do anything you don’t want me to do.”

“Promise?”

“You have my word and my hand,” he reached for her and tugged her forward, a splash of wine spilling over the rim of her Styrofoam cup.

Giggling, she swiped the wet spot away from the sleeping bag. “Your word is enough for now.”

“Give me an hour. You’ll beg. I’m sure of it.”

She sank beside him, still as a rock. “So what do you want to know about me?”

“Well,” he said. “We already know you’re a virgin.”

“We?”

“You announced it to me, Mitch, and Rory, remember?”

“I did, didn’t I?”

“Is it true?” he asked turning to face her. The deliberate expression on his handsome face seduced her, and his eyes, God in heaven above knew what kind of man lingered behind those beautiful, lust-filled eyes. But she didn’t know Brock Sheldon. She wanted to understand him, know him better

than she'd ever known anyone else, but her clammy palms reminded her of her own limitations. Maybe she wasn't ready for this. She damn sure wasn't ready for a man like Brock.

She looked around the close quarters of the tent, still marveling in the perfection. "Brock," she said softly. "If we make... I mean if we have sex, will you promise to take me slow and easy?"

He draped his arm over her shoulder and kissed the top of her head when he drew her to his side. "I'm going to do all sorts of things to you, but I'm not going to make love to you tonight," he said. "Unless, of course," he added, tilting her chin so she faced him again. He took a deep breath and narrowed his gaze. "That's what you want and only if you're absolutely sure you can wake up tomorrow and feel good about whatever it is you choose to do."

* * * *

Mitch stormed into Rory's cabin. "Where the hell is she?"

"I assume you mean Trixie," Rory replied, grinning. "Try Brock's cabin."

"Where do you think I went first?"

"Then try the stables. One of her dads mentioned we'd have to watch her around the horses. Maybe she went for a midnight ride."

"Stephen saw her earlier, said something about Trixie decorating his apartment. He said she wants to fix it up since he's staying on full time. He hasn't seen her since about nine-thirty."

Rory tossed a magazine to the side and yawned. "Man, it's late. Can't you find something better to do other than chase a little blonde-haired, blue-eyed hellion around all summer?"

"No, I can't. He's with her."

"Who? The barn guy?"

"No, damn you! Brock!"

"I thought you said you checked his cabin first," Rory said resisting a grin.

"You know where he is. Tell me."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Rory said.

"Bullshit. Where is he? Is he with her?"

“You have a hard time saying her name, don’t you?” Rory teased. “We could practice it together, only you seem to get hard every time you see her, think about her, or...” he pointed at the rise in Mitch’s pants, “even contemplate saying her name.”

Mitch pursed his lips. “Brock is with her, isn’t he?”

“Yes, he is. Now you can go to bed knowing your worst fears are realized. It only took him a few weeks, but Brock managed to move right on in, just like he always does.”

“Where are they?” Every syllable formed precisely at the flip of his tongue.

“Off camp, I guess. Is his motorcycle here?”

“I haven’t looked,” Mitch grated out. “Just tell me he’s not spending the night with her.”

“I wish I could,” Rory admitted.

“So you know where he is?” Mitch persisted.

Rory slapped his palm against his mattress and glared at Mitch. He wasn’t going to let him sleep until they found her. Reluctantly, he said, “Sort of, not exactly.”

“Come on,” Mitch grabbed his arm. “We’re gonna find them before he gets the one thing I want.”

“And what would that be, huh, Mitch? The girl or her purity? Which one is holding more of your attention?”

“It’s a tie, but I damn sure want both.”

* * * *

Brock’s lips traveled over hers like soft velvet and his tongue moved swift and sweet. He kissed her gently, but the true longing existed, and right above the surface, too.

His thick erection pressed against her leg as his hands worked through her hair making a mess out of the hairdo she secured before meeting him. A metal clip held her natural curls away from her face. He tossed it aside and bunched her hair in between his rough hands, kissing away her next thought. She didn’t need thoughts or memories, just this. She longed for experience, but she didn’t have any to rely upon. Brock didn’t seem to mind.

The music seeped through the tiny speaker, setting the mood with soft tunes, romantic love songs. He cradled her body next to his and sank against the pillows behind them. The sudden shift granted her plenty of freedom to take the lead. She wanted the control.

Her hands rested on his chest, and he held her chin with his forefinger, kissing her mouth like he planned on doing it for the next couple of hours. Slow and easy, he stroked her face with his free hand and grinned into their kiss. "I told you," he whispered. "It's all about you and what you want."

"I," she whispered nervously, "want you to touch me."

His kiss deepened and he rolled over her, placing his palms on either side of her head. She framed his face and drew him closer. Arching away from her, he forced her to stretch her neck and entice him back with her lips and tongue. Her body shifted under his and she begged, "Touch me." God help her, he was right all along. She would grovel, beg for things she didn't even know how to experience.

"Where do you want me to touch, Trixie?" He nipped at her lips before his hand trailed under her shirt. "How hard do you want me to pinch?" He caressed her belly, stroking right beneath her breast. "How many ways do you want me to find to set your pretty little pussy on fire?"

"Brock," she muttered. "Slow down. I said touch me, nothing else."

"Oh, sugar, you know I'll go very, very slow." Brock possessed Matt Damon good looks, but the rasp he held naturally in his voice made her heart tick a little faster, reminding her of the hard alpha male waiting for his first prey. Women probably followed him around all day on the chance he might have something sexy to say. If so, she'd join them. She pictured herself as a Brock groupie.

His fingers drew tight circles in her skin, moving across her flat stomach, dipping into her belly button and then caressing her sides. He cupped her right breast, and his thumb rotated clockwise around the point drawing her gasp. A silent scream embedded in her head.

"Heaven?" he asked, staring down.

"Yes, it's close, right there," she sighed, enjoying the feel of his palm caressing her skin.

"Your heart sped up when my hand landed on your belly. Doesn't seem fair that your sweet little ticker can race forward and yet you ask me to pull back."

His hot breath lingered over her lips. “You take the lead then,” he whispered.

“I don’t know what to do,” she said, embarrassed. Should she tell him how she’d been raised by overprotective fathers, or did he need to know the particulars behind her innocence?

“Follow your instincts,” he said, kissing her knuckles after he brought her hand to his mouth. His tongue parted her fingers, and he sucked on her middle one, slowly moving his mouth up and down over the bone.

“You want me to give you a blow job, don’t you?”

He gasped. “Naw, I’m afraid you wouldn’t do it right the first time.”

She giggled, throwing her head back when the amusement shook her all the more.

“You think that’s funny, huh?” he said running his hands up and down her torso. He held on tight and squeezed the fullness at the sides of her breasts.

She stopped laughing, realizing her hand settled on his belt during the foreplay. She dropped her hand, cupped his stout length and gently squeezed and released. He moaned and she added pressure, making certain he felt her caresses through his clothing.

“Now that’s nice,” he drawled, “even if you made your move as a last minute decision. See, I like spontaneity.”

Her gaze met his and she worked to loosen his belt. “Promise me, you did promise, right?”

“Trixie,” he covered her hand, “are you sure this is what you want?”

She nodded. “I want you to be my first.”

“Your first?”

“Yes,” she whispered.

“And what if you like it so much you want me to be your last, what then?”

Trixie felt a little tingle on her neck. She’d thought of those very consequences but never imagined Brock considered something so serious, so soon. After all, he’d avoided her like a pandemic, the blackest of plagues.

“Well, you know,” she began, working with his difficult belt, “I’m really not the keeping kind, if you want to know the truth.”

Understandably amused, he said, “You’re not?”

“Oh, no,” she retorted. “Not at all.”

“Whatever you say,” he replied, wrinkling his brow. “I can see where nineteen-year-old virgins would have a difficult time settling down.”

“Yes,” she said, “especially those gals with fathers who want their daughters to stay untouched until their sixty.”

“Your dads are going to be disappointed,” Brock said, eyeing her breasts.

“Yes,” she agreed. “I think so. Brock?”

“Yeah?” he said, kissing her nose and stroking her hair.

“I’m ready. I don’t want to be a virgin anymore.”

“Ah, Trixie,” he began. She looked away, but he held fast to her chin. Lightly, he pressed his lips to her forehead and said, “Are you sure? I mean darlin’ what you’re hanging onto can only be taken by one man.”

“I know,” she said. “I’m ready because you’re the one I can’t resist. I’m gonna go crazy if I don’t know what it’s like to have you, not just because I don’t want to be a virgin. Don’t you see? I can’t stand to be around you anymore if I don’t know what it feels like to belong to you, just once.”

His eyes softened and he moved his hand over hers. Then he kissed her again, sucking her lips between his and licking his way around her mouth like one kiss forever linked them together.

“I’m ready, Brock,” she reassured him.

Tugging at his belt, he said, “Then if you’re sure, I’ll take it from here.”

“I think that’s a really good idea,” she replied. But her hands didn’t stop moving until she helped him out of his pants and tugged his length from his shorts.

When she felt him swell in her palm, she finally relaxed, succumbing to the idea of losing her virginity. The hours ahead guaranteed she’d become an experienced woman, and one hell of a man would guide her straight into the night.

Chapter Eleven

Damp heat pooled between her thighs. She squeezed her legs together, but it didn't help. The gush of her excitement gave her away, and he smiled wider, like he understood the embarrassment she felt, her uncertainty turning him on as much as anything else.

"If you think you're wet now," he said, "wait until I'm done with you."

He covered her closed fist and worked himself through her tight grip. Pumping his cock up and down, together they performed a pretty good hand job if the rapid increase in his length told the tale.

Trixie considered herself well read. She justified her recent sex kit purchase by blaming blazing-hot romance novels. A lot of heroines in ménage romances played with sex toys, why couldn't she? Too bad she didn't think to bring along her playthings. Undoubtedly, Brock would put them to good use.

He'd have to show her how they worked first.

The more she stroked him, the harder he pressed into her hand until he had to jerk away from her all at one time. "It's your turn," he growled.

"I don't know," she said flirting. "I think I'm pretty good at this."

Her breath hitched when she lowered her head. Uncertainty consumed her.

What did he prefer? How did he like a woman to take him? She crawled back up his stomach and kissed him hard on the mouth, buying time in search of reaching new decisions.

"Do what feels right," he told her.

He felt right. Without giving a reply, she made a little headway drifting down his belly in pursuit of his cock, dying to take him in her mouth, feel him scraping across her tongue and tapping at her tonsils. And hoping like hell she did it perfectly the first time.

She'd read enough in erotic novels to know how to give good head, or so she believed, but when she pulled him into her mouth, she didn't open wide enough. She clamped down once she locked his dick between her jaws.

He jack-knifed into a seated position. "Holy shit!"

She forgot about the teeth thing.

"Easy girl," he said in a soothing voice. After he relaxed again, she presumed he still wanted her to give it a go, so she slowly sipped, sucking him closer and closer to her throat. She tried her best to keep her bite out of the equation.

"You're not going to hurt me," he reassured, stroking her head and holding her hair off her shoulders. "Try not to clamp down. Just suck. Let me do the rest."

She hummed against his thick, meaty penis and enjoyed the way he felt swelling inside her mouth. Surprised, Trixie loved the way her senses came alive with a man's cock stuffed between her jaws. Savoring his taste, her nostrils flared with his scent, the spicy rich cologne he strategically placed drove her out of her mind. When he started to thrust inside her mouth, her body responded. Her pussy clenched and her gag reflexes outperformed her expectations. She liked giving head.

Then panic struck.

With the lack of experience, she never thought to ask questions. Oh heaven help her. Surely, Brock was disease free. She spent all of eleven and a half seconds trying to decide how to proceed.

The bead at the top of his dick, crystallizing as it seeped, drew her tongue. She dipped her head again and decided she waited too late to inquire about necessary precautions. She'd scold herself in the morning.

Maybe with another glass of wine, she could do something else extraordinarily stupid, like fuck him without a condom. *Hardly*, she thought. Then she quit sucking and started searching for the kind of answers a man probably doesn't want to give right smack dab in the middle of a blow job.

* * * *

All at once, she stopped sucking and gawked. She pulled him through her hand and stared at the way he worked through her fingers, his pre-cum leaked onto her knuckles. She studied the moist and sticky substance until

his skin felt hot and every nerve ending in his body came alive with whipping sensations. No one had ever looked at him like Trixie did.

God in heaven help him. He realized what came next. She needed to ask and he would tell her the truth if it killed him. Trixie deserved the truth about everything.

"I'm not thinking rationally here," she whispered. "I should've asked you to put a condom on for this, huh?"

"Yeah, you should've, and you shouldn't have to ask but..." he released a troubled sigh. "I've never had unprotected sex in my life. A few blow jobs like this, but never intercourse without full protection."

"Have you been with a lot of women?"

"Right out of high school, yeah, Trixie. A lot of them."

"Oh," she whispered her blue eyes sparkling. He didn't see disgust there, which he feared. "I guess I make them all look like pros, then, huh?"

"No," he said truthfully. "So far, you've made all the others look like a complete waste of time."

He pulled her to him and slammed into their next kiss as if he needed another one for survival. This time, his hands worked all the way up her shirt. Kissing her, plunging his tongue deep into her mouth, he tried to find her bra clasp. After he released it, he fisted the material and yanked the material away from her breasts. He lapped at them, nibbling at her perfect little nipples until they formed beautiful beads.

"Brock," she whimpered.

He took her throaty cry as a request for more and inched down her body, fingering the band of her shorts and then discarding them like they didn't matter. She didn't need to concern herself with them again.

Kissing across her flat stomach, he couldn't get between her legs fast enough. His arousal left behind evidence and his excitement slowly oozed from the tip of his dick.

Damn it to hell! He longed for something more than a quick roll in a sleeping bag. He needed to pull an all-nighter, fuck her until dawn. Maybe then he wouldn't act like a first-timer in dire straights.

Mashing his hand against his cock, he hovered over her mound and nuzzled her pussy with his cheek. Her arousal held him to a challenge. If he took her now, God help her.

A thin, transparent film covered her opening, and he dragged his finger through the proof of her desire, pressing into her cunt with two fingers and twirling them high. “Has anyone ever touched you here before?”

He wanted her to tell him no, but realized he couldn’t be the first for everything. She was nineteen for crying out loud. Some lucky bastard somewhere had definitely taken her this far.

She quickly nodded. “I don’t remember much about it. I drank too much—oh God that feels good—and made bad decisions.” She moaned, and he stopped fingering her all at once.

“Is he anyone you care about?”

“No,” she hummed. “Just a guy and...”

“And what?” He probed his fingers higher again, added another one.

“And he didn’t go....ah gods,” she snapped her legs closed, her knees knocking together. “Deep.”

“I’m going deep, Trixie,” he promised. “And I’m going to stay buried inside of you for as long as you’ll let me.”

Her breathing changed and she splayed her legs. Opening herself up for exposure, she rolled her hips forward.

Removing his fingers, he dropped his lips to hers and sucked in her flavor, the warm juices spilling from her vagina and straight into his mouth. He lapped and ate, sucked and licked, his lips smacking against her folds on a search for her pleasure and hungry for the taste of her orgasm, the climax he wanted her to go ahead and ride.

She spread her legs still wider and then quickly braced herself with an arm behind her back. The little seductress wanted to watch, and he enjoyed having her eyes fixated on him.

His fingers spread. He held her folds apart and then dipped his tongue inside her walls, enjoying the way she wiggled under his suction.

“Easy,” he said mumbling against her body before he slapped her pussy and felt the hot gush of promising heat fill his mouth.

“Oh God, Brock,” she muttered.

He slapped again, and she started her first ride. Her body jerked and her cries sounded like an orchestra, beautiful and timed.

“Brock, help me, wait. Please, don’t do this. You have to stop.” She said one thing and did another. Her hands, not one but both, pressing down on his head assured him she wanted exactly what he gave.

She muttered something again, an objection perhaps, but then she started humping against his face and chin, her body like a limp rag moving with him as he devoured her, thrusting his tongue deeper and deeper while feasting on the creamy juices her body provided. *No, sugar*, he thought, reaching down between his own legs and holding himself at the base. *There's no way to stop me now.*

After her labored breathing subsided, he licked her clean. Another wet pool of desire formed all over again when he pressed his cock against her leg.

He rose over her and stared into her lovely eyes. "You're perfect, beautiful." He kissed her then and watched the way she squirmed away from the way he tasted, the evidence of her passion still clinging to his lips.

Tears gathered in the corner of her eyes and she started to say something. The agony of a man's defeat rode in faster than Trixie's first orgasm.

Brock shook his head and then tucked her under his arm, holding her close to his side. "Not today?" He knew what he risked from the beginning. Brock knew how to wear out a woman's pussy with his tongue.

She shook her head.

"I don't mind," he assured her, giving her a quick peck and then leaving her long enough to blow out all the candles. When he cuddled up to her once more, he realized it didn't take much for a woman to change her mind.

* * * *

With the darkness engulfing them, Trixie felt more comfortable than she did with the soft candlelight providing too much opportunity for intimacy. She'd never enjoyed such a satisfying experience. Now, she wanted to give Brock something in return.

Sprawled between her legs, Brock had watched her. She wondered if all men kept a watchful eye on their lust-filled victims? No, she thought. Most of them probably went at a woman greedily without the need to look at them while they sipped on their pussy.

Brock had satisfied her in a hot and sexy way, and his gaze pierced through hers while he feasted on her body. The whole event made her come alive when it should have been too much for a virgin to handle.

Then he kissed her. With the same lips that invaded her most intimate space, he latched onto her mouth forcing her to taste what he tasted and claim the entire experience as theirs to share.

Without the light to interfere, she straddled him, her pussy at his belly and his length, or at least the tip of it, at her ass. She swallowed hard and stared down. "Do you have a condom?"

"I do," he admitted and she saw the outline of his wicked smile. "Are you sure you want to try this?"

"Yes," she whispered, taking his lips again. "And don't ask me again."

"Trixie, I'm not promising I can stop once I get inside you. I'm a gentleman, but I'm a man, too." He stroked her hair. "I never want to hurt you."

"You talk too much," she teased.

He reached inside one of the pillow cases and brought out a rubber. Bringing it to his mouth he gently pushed her to the side and sheathed himself, pulling her back on top of him. "Wanna do the honors?"

"No," she said.

He dipped his head and captured a breast in between his lips, and at the same time his tongue rolled over her nipple, his cock slid beyond her folds. He stopped only once, but then further inched his way into the fitted canal. A heartfelt grunt followed a masculine growl. "Dear God, woman."

"Wait," she whispered. "Please."

* * * *

His self-control was shot to fucking hell once he sank into her tight little snatch, and he muttered in his guttural tone, "Just take me one inch at a time."

"I hope you don't have too many of them then," she choked out.

"Ten," he said proudly, moving another inch inside. "Maybe eleven."

"Super," she groaned.

"You're okay, baby." He gave her a few good thrusts, offering a little at a time only prolonged the inevitable. The first time supposedly hurt, and he hated it for her, but believed it was a necessary evil. Many women had experienced the pain and lived to tell about it. Of course he didn't know how.

This virgin thing had just about killed him. With Trixie's innocence came something more, and maybe that's where he had a problem because with every stroke, a stronger sensation consumed him. He couldn't deny his feelings, so he tried to bury them deep inside her.

She whimpered his name, and he slowly stroked, in and out, in and out. God help him, he never wanted this night to end.

Trixie Cartwell would become his woman. They were going to coexist in one of those committed relationships that ended with an "I do" and a house filled with a whole bunch of little Trixie-friendly kids.

* * * *

Stephen Pratchert stood on the bank with his binoculars. He couldn't see anything now, the shadows disappeared. He cursed the man who took her across the water.

Trixie could've been in his arms as easily as she was in Brock's sorry tent. He'd treated her like a lady when he should've tossed her on his bed and rode her like a tramp.

The glimmer of the candles had long since lost their glow, and he headed back for the barn, resigning himself to the fact that Trixie would spend the night in Brock's sorry arms. He'd started to turn the corner around the bend of large oak trees when he ran smack dab into Mitch and Rory.

"Stephen?" Mitch questioned. "What are you doing out here?"

"I heard something down by the docks a little while ago. There's a lot of racket coming from across the lake. Guess there are a few kids out partying tonight. I didn't mean to startle you."

Poor Mitch had a thing for Trixie. Stephen almost felt sorry for him. A big guy like Mitch probably didn't hear the word *no* often. It must've hurt his pride some. His woman, the one he wanted to claim, anyway, had a little thing for his best friend.

Rory narrowed his gaze. "You haven't seen Brock around have you?"

"No. I'd say all the good counselors are in their beds by now. In fact, there's an idea. I'm headed that way now. Sleep well, boys." He tossed up his hand and left them to their own hell.

If they stood where he'd been a few moments earlier, the full moon would allow them to see the camp canoe. They'd spot the tent, too.

Unfortunately, unless the two occupants started getting it on again, they wouldn't hear them, but if they looked real close, they'd see enough to spark their curiosity. Brock's little party with Trixie was over.

* * * *

Brock clasped her hands and held on tight, dipping his head and taking another mind-blowing kiss. His hot mouth claimed hers, made love to her in ways his body imitated.

His dick, wild and untamed, hammered into her slick walls while her cunt milked him. She felt her body's response and agonized over the pain he brought each time he pounded inside her. His cock tore through barriers a woman didn't want a man to find for fear no one else could meet up to the high bar set with first sexual practices.

She gritted her teeth and took the pain until a gush of pleasure washed over her. She felt wetter than before. Her body reacted to the thrusts, bucking against them and practically encouraging more.

"Harder," she muttered. "Please, Brock. Don't make me beg."

"You'll never beg for very long. I'll always give you what you want," he said, nipping and smiling. "Hang on." He withdrew and rolled over. Dragging her on top of him, he pressed the tip at her entrance, and she took him again, this time in the lead, guiding the pace, finding the right timing.

"You're beautiful," he told her for the second time. "That's it, sugar. Ride me, let me feel you, Trixie. Let me have you just like this."

She gripped with her legs and ground her mound against his cock. Beads of sweat poured from his brow, and he rose up, snaking his arm around her back while bracing his other arm behind him. Full throttle, he pumped harder, held her closer, and bit down on her nipple as their pace changed.

When his mouth opened he muttered something sweet and sexy, something she didn't make out, but it sounded inviting all the same. The guttural tone he kept, the groans and moans, and then his heavy cock...heaven and stars, she'd never imagined sex as delicious as this. If she'd only known, oh, Lord, if she'd only had a clue.

"Oh God, Brock. I'm...I'm....falling for you."

* * * *

He watched her with a tense expression and it softened with the verbal declaration he heard the second she shouted it. Harder and harder, he slammed his cock into her, his cum trapped inside of him, buried deep somewhere, but there, oh yeah, right there. The sensation ripped through his groin. He was going to come and his release was long overdue.

“Finally,” he sighed.

Somewhere along the way, he’d always known with the right woman, he’d find his release. But as his excitement built, as her pussy clenched around him, he was afraid it would end like all the other times when he’d been with a woman.

With her sacred words, he’d temporarily lost it, unable to ejaculate when he needed to come more than he needed air. He needed to find his release more now than ever before.

He tweaked her nipples, and she jerked, falling against him as she found another orgasm. He rocked the hell on, pushing his dick higher as he held onto her hips and watched his cock enter her.

He hooked his fingers around her calves and yanked her legs forward, rolling his shoulders up at the same time. The way his cock separated her pussy lips and the gleam of her pleasure clinging to his dick made him pound harder. Oh God, he couldn’t look away from the eroticism as he pulled out and entered her body again, fighting his crazy need for release. “That’s it. Ah yeah,” he moaned. “Sit up and ride, baby. I’m coming, ah yeah, that’s it. I’m there, sugar. I’m there!”

And he’d never been “there” like this before, and only one man knew all of his secrets. Thank God he had the decency to wait until he finished. But he didn’t dally long.

* * * *

Mitch unzipped the tent and stepped inside. Rory came in right behind him.

“You don’t waste any time, do you?” Rory said, a smirk crawling over his face.

Brock rolled over her, covering her with his own body when he couldn't find the blanket fast enough. "You guys care to give us a minute," he called over his back, hoping they only saw his bare ass.

"We're interrupting one hell of an event," Mitch stated flatly.

"Damn it to hell, I still have a fucking rubber on my prick. A minute, if you don't mind!"

"Shit," Rory groaned walking outside once again. Mitch reluctantly followed him.

Trixie glared at him once they left. "Thanks a lot."

"You're welcome," he said grinning into another soft kiss.

"I mean for running your trap!" she exclaimed, pulling away from him. "Telling them you still had a rubber on was lame, really lame."

"Ah hell, Trixie. You think those two don't know what went on here? I still had my dick inside you when they unzipped the tent."

"I don't care," she said reaching for her shirt and shorts. "You could've said anything else but what you blurted out."

"Sure I could. Something along the lines of, 'do you mind, I was in the middle of the best fuck of my life when the two of you interrupted us,' and I'm sure you would've appreciated me all the more, huh?"

"They didn't have to know! You could've said we didn't or I couldn't or how about you couldn't get it up!"

He snickered. "Considering how well those two know me, that wouldn't fly. Honey, surely you don't think they thought we settled for comparing body parts or just noting we each had our significant differences, do you?"

"No, but you could've said something else."

"I could've told them that I made love to the most beautiful woman in the world."

"Three times. You've said the b-word three times."

He'd say it a thousand more just to see her smile. "I didn't know they'd show up here," he said. "Honest to God, I didn't."

"I know," she said. "Guess we'll head back now, huh?"

"I wouldn't get in any hurry," Mitch said slapping his hand against the tent. "Brock, why don't you step out here a minute? I need to talk to you."

Brock pinched her thigh. "Don't worry, this is a man to man kind of talk, and what he has to say doesn't concern you. Mitch will reprimand me for sneaking off camp and taking the sexiest counselor I could find."

Trixie curled up in the sleeping bag. “One thing about it, you have the smooth-talking down to a science. I might keep you around long enough to let you charm me out of my pants again.”

“Is that a promise?”

“I don’t know,” she said, motioning for him. When he moved closer, she cupped her hand over his ear and whispered, “Considering I’m still wet, you might want to take it as a threat. I don’t think you can keep up. Remember, I need a lot of practice if I hope to find perfection.”

He’d let her practice on him all summer long. “I’d better see what they want first,” he said, giving her a light peck on the lips.

“Hurry back,” she cooed. “I’m not a woman you want to keep waiting.”

Truer words had never been spoken.

Chapter Twelve

“What the hell were you thinking?” Mitch yelled wheeling around all at once in the middle of a large clearing. “You assured me you didn’t want anything to do with her, remember?”

“I changed my mind,” he said somberly.

Rory narrowed his gaze. “For a man who just got his rocks off, you don’t sound too glad you switched gears. Got something against her now?”

“No, not a chance,” he said kicking up a few pebbles and dust. “But I gotta tell ya, I’m not too keen on the two of you chasing her now that I’ve had her.”

Mitch gritted his teeth. “Brock, she’s not like any of the other women we’ve shared before.”

“I agree,” he said. “So you’ll understand why I’m hell bent on keeping her to myself, right?”

“No,” Rory said. “Trixie and I are friends, maybe even more than friends. There’s something between us, man. And just because you weaseled your way into her sleeping bag first doesn’t mean I won’t try to get her in mine tomorrow.”

“Same for me over here,” Mitch said. “Man, this was low, even for you.”

Brock shrugged. “Can’t help it. I saw an opportunity and grabbed it.”

“More like fucked it,” Rory corrected.

Mitch shook his head. “So you brought her all the way out here because you wanted to tap *that* first.”

“Damn straight.”

Mitch paced. “Well, you’ve taken your turn, so you can step aside without a problem.”

“I don’t know how many ways I can tell you this, but I’m not moving over for you or anyone else. I plan to marry her.”

“What the fuck?” Mitch hollered. “You sex her up once and now you think she’s the marrying kind. The girl is nineteen for God’s sake. And you’ve known her for maybe a minute.”

“She could be sixty and with her body and the way she looks at me, I wouldn’t give a shit. There’s something special about her, and I’m holding onto it.”

Rory snickered. “You know, I’m beginning to see why women can go through a lifetime of uneventful sexual experiences and then have one orgasm and walk away from their family and friends. They’ve been known to give it up for the guy who can ring their bell. You’re talking shit, Brock. So you finally had an orgasm. Congratulations. I realize it’s been a while, but believe me, it was a mental thing or something. The physical problem you had has nothing to do with Trixie.”

“The hell it doesn’t. Besides, I don’t have to explain anything to you guys. She’s mine and she’s hands off. Got it?”

Mitch’s eyes gleamed with anger, fury reddening his dark, sun-kissed cheeks. “Cow Camp has a longstanding reputation, Brock.”

“Yep, it does.”

“There’s never been a gal to leave here yet without more than one summer relationship.”

“There’s a first time for everything,” Brock said confidently.

“Maybe, but it doesn’t start with her,” Rory informed.

“She’ll be in my bed tomorrow,” Mitch promised.

“I’ll go third, then,” Rory said, grinning.

Brock seethed. Resigned to the fact that he couldn’t stop them from trying, he said, “Then the two of you give it your best shot. She’s gonna tell you no and come crawling right back to me.”

“Think so?” Rory asked.

“You’ll see,” Brock said grinning. “And when she does? I’m going to scoot my ass over and welcome her back to the only bed where she’ll ever belong—mine.”

“Wanna place a bet on that?” Mitch asked.

“There’s no reason to waste your money, Mitch. I’m not betting on me and Trixie. We’re a sealed deal. I got in there first. There’s not much room for another hard dick in her tight little pussy, and I can guarantee you something else, too. If anybody taps her ass, it’s gonna be me and only me.”

He stormed back down the path and headed for the tent but when he got there, Trixie was gone.

* * * *

Trixie was so freakin' mad she couldn't see the trail in front of her. She wished like the devil she hadn't been curious enough to follow behind the trio of egos. When she found them in the clearing, they stood there discussing her like she was some kind of loose trash they couldn't wait to spread around.

The tears and the rage swept over her. She started hiking, crawling over a few logs and passing through one clearing and then another. She moved deeper into the forest, glancing up at the dark canopy the trees provided, wondering what her fathers must have been thinking when they sent her to a camp run solely by the perverted. Then again, considering their own lifestyles, maybe they did it on purpose. Perhaps all women destined for shared partners spent a summer at Cow Camp.

She sobbed as she climbed the rocks in front of her. She wanted to get as far away from them as possible. She planned to sit there until they broke up their little open discussion of her, clear her head and then she'd confront them.

The first thing she planned to do was tell Brock he didn't own her. The second thing? She hadn't decided yet.

She'd work on her ideas for Rory and Mitch in a little bit. Right now, she wanted to sit down on a flat rock and sulk.

She felt so sick. They'd played her from the beginning. Those three shared their women, no wonder they were so interested in her family. Evidently, each of them had similar ideas for her.

She slapped her hand against the cool surface of the natural stone and leaned back. What had she done? Her fathers always made it impossible, almost, for her to find any time alone with a man. The second she found it, she abused it. She gave up her virginity in less than two weeks. Talk about foolish.

Talk about luxurious.

She closed her eyes and imagined Brock there with her. No, she thought, shut him out. *Don't think about him.* Putting recent memories aside

bordered along the impossible when she could still smell him on her skin, taste him on her lips, craved him with profound need.

“I have to get out of here,” she said aloud. But as she tried to wait out their little boy talk, she fell into a deep, satisfying sleep. Soon, her dreams came to call. She saw three men with outstretched hands promising her more than any girl could ever imagine, let alone enjoy.

* * * *

“Any luck?” Mitch asked nervously when Brock rounded the corner.

“I thought maybe she would come back here,” he said. “Where’s Rory?”

“He went to get Stephen. He seems to have an interest in Trixie. They became fast friends, and with the sun rising in another hour or so, we need to get it together. He’ll help us search for her. I have a camp to run, and we have a counselor missing. If I call the Cartwells and the call is placed prematurely, then we’re all answering to her dads.”

“What about her safety?” Brock barked pointing toward the woods. “You know how deep those woods are and God only knows what’s out there.”

“I can’t help it. Unless she’s missing for twenty-four to forty-eight hours, I can’t do a whole lot. Damn it, if she was under the age of eighteen, we’d find a lot of help from the locals. Right now, the best we’d get is a call to her hometown to check her out—and Lord knows what they’d turn up—three rough and tough fathers ready to point fingers and place blame.”

Brock peeked back in the tent. “Let me clean this stuff up and I’ll look for her until I find her. You head back to the main camp. I’ll find her, Mitch. I swear it. And if I don’t, I’ll call the Cartwells myself.”

“I’ll cover you in the AM classes and then send Rory to relieve you. There’s enough help at the stables. Stephen should be able to stay out here with you and search, too.”

“What if he wants to call the authorities?”

“*He* won’t,” Stephen said, approaching fast. He grabbed Brock by the collar when he reached them.

“Where the hell is she?” Stephen snapped.

Brock squirmed free and drew his fist back. “Keep your fucking hands off me, prick!”

Stephen turned his cheek. “Throw the first one. Come on. Give it your best shot. I want it so I have an excuse to rip into you.”

“Here now!” Mitch screamed, stepping in between them. “Where’s this hostility coming from?”

“He brought Trixie Cartwell out here and now she’s missing? You don’t find that a little peculiar?”

“I saw Trixie last night,” Mitch said. “Rory and I came out here and I made Brock leave her here in the tent so I could talk to him.”

Stephen pointed his finger at Mitch and said, “So you mean because Brock got in Trixie’s pants first you had a real problem with it, right? Did your jealousy get the best of you? I bet you just couldn’t wait to leave her by herself so you could clean his plow.” He turned to Rory. “I suspect you left her by herself, too, then, huh?” He shook his head. “Hell, you all ought to stand before a firing squad.”

“That’s drastic,” Rory said calmly. “I think she probably wandered off and just got lost. If so, she’s a survivor. She’ll get to the shoreline and find her way back, or at least find someone who will help her.”

Stephen bared his teeth. “And if she doesn’t?”

“If she doesn’t, we’ll call the police,” Rory said sensibly.

“Then the best thing we can do is try to find her first. If I cared to guess, you boys don’t want the trouble.”

Brock reluctantly agreed. “The camp doesn’t need the negative publicity after what happened here five years ago and you know it, Mitch.”

“What about five years ago?” Stephen asked.

No one answered him. Rory shot Brock a warning glare before he said, “Let’s go, Mitch. Let’s get the day started at camp. We’ll come back after the first classes. Come on, Brock, you need to get one of the speed boats. Stephen, when he gets back, you two take turns looking for her. Leave someone here with the tent at all times in case she finds her way back.”

“Five years ago?” Stephen persisted.

“Look it up on the Internet or drop it,” Mitch growled. “I’m not discussing it. And if I were you, I wouldn’t believe everything I read.”

Chapter Thirteen

Trixie woke up to the hot morning sun. She felt grungy and a few pebbles of perspiration gathered at her armpits. Those didn't bother her. The pool of warmth in between her legs gained her attention right off the bat.

She craved a little more of what she experienced the night before. Brock's hands roaming over her, his mouth taunting her lips while his cock stroked in pure bliss.

She rolled to her left and when she did, she tumbled over a few rocks in the process. "Ouch!" she screeched, grabbing her ribs. "Damn!"

She lifted up her cotton shirt and stared down at the scratches, the blood marking their place on her skin. Grimacing, she looked around for something familiar. Apparently, she didn't know where she was going the night before. She landed smack dab in the middle of a heavy thicket with a lot a weeds, trees, and bushes leading to more of the same.

"Brock?" she yelled. "Mitch? Rory? Anyone out here?"

No one responded because no one was around. She cursed herself and her inquiring mind. She'd followed Mitch, Brock, and Rory into some kind of island forest. Curiosity drove her and she wanted to hear what they had to say about her in private. She was nosey and her urgent need to listen to things she didn't need to hear, cost her.

After she'd eavesdropped, she'd headed away from them, deciding—for whatever stupid reason—they could discuss her and all of their other flavors of past summers while she stormed off to plot and plan her revenge. She couldn't remember if she reached any kind of decision. She undoubtedly fell asleep before she followed through on any life-changing resolutions.

She saw a few deer scatter in the distance and took a short breath. Deeper ones proved difficult to gasp with a gaping wound in her side. Suddenly, she panicked. What if her blood led a wild animal to her trail? What if she didn't find her way out of the drooping trees and tall weeds?

What if she was already living in some kind of real-life horror movie and she didn't know it?

Lord only knew what kind of varmints lived there in the wild. While most people considered Trixie an outdoorsy kind of person, she liked the comforts of home, too. The cabin at Cow Camp was a real stretch. Sleeping under the stars did not appeal to her in the least. With noon approaching soon, she needed to get moving and follow the trail she found into nature's hell, right back out again.

She needed to shake a leg, bust a move and keep a strong pace. Otherwise a tiger or lion might find her and make her its prey. She gulped. Maybe even a bear or a rattlesnake. She looked down on the ground and immediately remembered her fathers mentioning the river rats they ran into once while hiking in Middle Tennessee.

Squealing loudly, she ran east. Hell, it might have been west. It didn't matter. She just ran and ran and ran. Forrest Gump had nothing on her. She wasn't going to stop running until she found her way back to the lake. She turned around and ran in the other direction and then collapsed a few moments later.

Did she hear noise in the distance? Maybe a herd of wild elephants, or perhaps something worse. That lion she dreaded came to mind again. Did such critters live nearby?

Oh God, she didn't know which way to turn. Where was she? How did she get back to the water when nothing looked familiar? She was dizzy and scared. The only comfort she found, she discovered in the daylight. She could at least see what was in front of her.

Jumping to her feet, she gave herself a pep talk. She needed to get out of there and walking anywhere proved more productive than remaining in one spot. She shuffled her feet and started moving. She hoped she was walking in the right direction.

* * * *

Brock rushed up from the water. "Did you hear that?" He bent an ear and paid closer attention. God help him, he thought he heard Trixie cry out his name.

Stephen glared at him. "What?"

"I heard it when I killed the motor on the boat. It sounded like a frightened scream."

"No," Stephen drawled. "I didn't."

"What the hell is your problem, man?"

"I don't have one. You, apparently, are another story. You think I didn't check out this camp before I applied here? I know what the three of you were discussing earlier. I read about five years ago. You were one of the fellas involved, weren't you?"

"I don't know what you're rambling about," Brock said glancing beyond the tent and into the trees. "We need to devise a plan. One of us can stay here and the other one can search the trails. There are three cleared paths behind the tent. If you stay on them and just holler every few seconds, she should be able to hear you." He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. "Assuming she's not hurt."

Stephen studied him. "Yeah, a gal can get hurt out here, can't she?"

"I imagine a man can, too," Brock said.

Stephen's tone changed. "From what I've heard, the private hide-a-ways around here were built with a woman in mind. A man like me shouldn't have cause to worry."

"You're grasping at straws."

"Let me show you what I mean," Stephen said, squatting down. He picked up a twig and drew a circle in the dirt and glanced up long enough to point the end of a thin stick at Brock. "Here," he pointed to the center of the circle, "is Cow Camp." He drew two lines on either side of the circle. "Here's the island, the main part of the camp, and here's the hill." He tapped the straight indentation in the ground as a few ants invaded it.

"According to one beautiful young woman, and correct me if I'm wrong but I believe her name is Jordie Anne, the folks on the hill and the island counselors seldom meet in the middle after seven o'clock in the evening. When Jordie Anne talked to the media five years ago, she mentioned something about the *group sports* played out here after the sun goes down." He drew a much larger circle around the first one. "To hear her story, these underground parties were located on private property."

Stephen tapped his stick. According to his dirt map, his accuracy in pinpointing where those parties were once held hit mighty close to the actual whereabouts of the property Mitch's family once owned.

Stephen knew too much. Why did he care? Brock didn't like someone snooping into the past, especially now when they needed to concentrate on finding Trixie.

"The Jordie Anne situation happened a long time ago," Brock muttered, conceding.

Stephen continued, "Five years ago and probably not long enough for that frightened little girl to forget what happened here."

"A twenty-one year old young woman hardly passes for a child. She was a willing participant in a game that turned nasty because she wanted it that way."

"Uh-huh, I'm sure she did," he said. "Is Trixie dead?"

Brock shook his head. "No, damn it! You think we had something to do with her disappearance?"

"I'm asking you," Stephen said, his tone nearly diabolical. "Come on, Brock. Give me something here. You brought her out here by herself. She said no and you couldn't accept it, could you? So what? Did you strap her down and watch her squirm? Did you shove your cock inside her and gag her so you wouldn't have to listen to her scream? What did you do with her dead body when you finished with her? Tell me."

"I'm telling you," he said firmly, "Trixie is out here and I'm sure she's fine. She must've wandered off and can't find her way back. Take a hike down those trails and you'll see for yourself. It's tough to find your way out here, especially for a gal with few survival skills."

"I'd say her survival skills are better than most," he said pointing into the tent. "She survived a romp with you, didn't she?"

Brock gulped. "If..." he gritted his teeth and hissed before he finished. "If you think I did anything to Trixie that she didn't want me to do, you're way off base. We had a conventional date. That's it. Anything we did we consented to as adults. Whatever you think happened here, you're wrong."

"I'd better be. Or else I'm going to make you hurt, real bad. I'll do something to you fellows that will make up for the wrongdoing you did to that gal five years ago. And I'll find your underground playpen and take you there to do it."

* * * *

Mitch arrived around the same time Brock checked back in with Stephen again. “Nothing?” Mitch asked.

Brock shook his head, the stab in his gut wrenching, the thumping in his heart, raging more than racing. Every beat felt like a knock, and each breath of air he took became more difficult than the previous one.

“Brock, I’ll have to ask you to stay until Rory gets back.”

“Ask me hell. I’m not leaving until we find her,” Brock said.

“Stephen, if you can take care of your afternoon classes, we’ll get with you tonight and regroup.”

“Sounds good,” he said catching the boat keys Mitch tossed him. “I’ll be here.”

“If we’re not back, choose one or two of those guys you’re working with at the barn and bring them, too. We’ll need a lot of help if she doesn’t turn up by nightfall.”

“Sure thing,” Stephen said heading for the lake.

“You look like shit,” Mitch said, turning to Brock. “Want me to take a quick hike and you hold up here and take a nap? The main reason we don’t want this tent left unattended is on the chance she comes back. There’s no reason you can’t get a little shut-eye.”

“I won’t rest until Trixie is safe,” he said pointing at the water and added, “I don’t like that guy. Keep him at the stables as much as possible. He creeps me out.”

Mitch glowered. “Right now, I don’t give a damn if we all hate one another. We’ve gotta find Trixie within the next few hours, or I’m calling the cops and her dads.”

“You need to leave him out of this thing with Trixie as much as possible,” he said watching Stephen move closer to the other side of the lake.

“We need all the help we can get,” Mitch reminded.

“You’re going to wish we didn’t involve him,” he said taking off down the trail in the middle.

“What do you have against him?” Mitch called out after him.

“He thinks we killed Trixie,” he said stopping long enough to explain. “But I’ve got a real bad feeling that he may have done something with her, Mitch.”

“That’s insane. Why would he do something to a woman he just met?”

Brock shook his head. "I don't know, but he knew about our underground pad, and I think he knows something about Jordie Anne, too."

"He said something about her?"

Brock walked forward and pointed to the sand. "He drew a ridiculous drawing and mentioned the fact that the camp was located in the middle of private properties where we once took our women. He even referred to it as a private hide-a-way."

"Shit," Mitch said staring at the ground. "Jordie Anne always called those dilapidated boat houses private hide-a-ways, remember?"

"He said he read up on the camp before he came here. Now let's be honest, Mitch. Only the wealthy still patronize this camp because we were cleared of all charges. Our folks ripped into Jordie Anne's past to tear her credibility to shreds. Outside of the wealthy and old families that have sent their kids here for generations, newcomers rarely sign up for a summer here. Come to think of it, adults don't apply for employment here unless they have a good ulterior reason."

Mitch paced. "You think Stephen's running from the law or something?"

Brock shrugged. "I don't know. But if he's running, he ran the wrong damn way."

Chapter Fourteen

Trixie finally fought through a large wall of vines. She'd never seen more beautiful, murky water in all of her life. It took everything she had to resist drinking from the lake. On the brink of dehydration, she sat down for a minute, only one minute, to rest.

Holding her palm to her waist, the pain felt like whips had curled around her torso and snapped out a few pieces of flesh for the cruelty of it, maybe the sport. She moaned out as she pressed her hand to her side and the tears came.

Sure, she latched on to hope again, but everything looked foreign. On the other side of the lake, she noticed a few large homes, nothing to indicate there were people there, though. Even their docks were deserted. Since Cow Camp opened early in the summer season, she imagined a lot of the area remained desolate until mid-June when the heat often drove folks closer to the water.

"Trixie!" she heard her name loud and plain. "Trixie! Can you hear me!"

Mitch? She turned around, but didn't see him. Mitch? Her heart raced, and she twisted around in a circle, confused and exhausted.

"Here!" she yelped, but it came out as a whisper. "I'm right here!" she tried again. "Help!"

"Trixie Cartwell! Can you hear me?"

"I'm here! By the water!" she screamed.

A few minutes later, she saw him. He rounded the bend and sprinted toward her. Seconds later she collapsed in his arms, but she tried to flash a smile before he carried her away.

* * * *

“Look what I found,” Mitch said beaming as he hauled her into the tent. “She’s a little beat up, but she’s alive and a pretty sight for sore eyes.”

“Oh my God, is she hurt?” Rory jumped to his feet and immediately yanked her shirt up. “Damn, that’s a nasty looking cut.”

Trixie grinned. “If you wanted to look at my boobs, you could’ve picked a better time.”

Rory couldn’t hide his worry. “Mitch, she may have a cracked rib. What the hell happened, Trixie?” he asked stripping his own much cleaner shirt off so he could work on the blood saturated area.

She didn’t cry out when he touched her, but the gash in her flesh hurt like hell. “I rolled off a rock and landed on a pile of them this morning. Don’t worry, I had a tetanus shot before camp. It’s not as bad as it looks, by the way. Just hurts when I laugh.”

“Did you giggle a lot while you were out there lost?” Mitch inquired, snarling.

“Not much,” she admitted. “A few times when I thought of one certain...”

Brock walked in and she zipped her lip.

“Oh, thank God,” he exclaimed, grabbing her cradled form from Mitch’s arms.

“Ow! Watch it, please,” she muttered before he showered a few kisses across her cheeks.

Mitch sneered and Rory tossed his shirt their way. “Dip that in the cooler and let me get her cleaned up.”

Trixie asked, “What are you, some kind of medical student or something?”

“Something,” he said smiling. “I can take a look at you and see if you need additional medical attention. How’s that sound?”

“Right now? I’d love some of that ice in your cooler, or if there’s a beer in there, I’ll take one of those.”

Mitch stepped outside and a few minutes later reappeared with the damp cloth and a cold bottle of water. “Let’s stick to non-alcoholic substances for now. If Brock hadn’t gotten you drunk, maybe you wouldn’t have disappeared into the most dangerous woods known to this area.”

Brock’s brow furrowed. “Dangerous, huh?”

“To hear some folks say all sorts of things can happen to a young, sexy woman if she wanders too far off camp, remember?” Mitch probed.

“Sure, but Trixie won’t leave camp again unless she’s with me,” he stated flatly.

Rory shook his head. “All right, Brock. Give the gal some space. Put her down here on the sleeping bag. You and Mitch step out a second.”

Brock squared his shoulders. “I’m not going anywhere.” He knelt down and kept Trixie close. “Are you hurt anywhere?”

“She’s bleeding,” Rory said as if he couldn’t see the blood for himself. “And I need to take a look at her without your arms to shield her, if you don’t mind. Unless, of course, you’ve had enough training to trump a nurse’s.”

“You’re a nurse?” Trixie asked.

“I dropped out of a nursing program but still have the education under my belt,” he snapped and then quickly added, “along with a little experience.”

“You wish,” Brock retorted.

“My mom is a nurse,” Trixie stated proudly. “I’m sure I didn’t break anything. I just bleed a lot for some reason. Don’t worry, I’m not anemic or anything and there’s no way I could have hepatitis or HIV,” she gulped and then stared at Brock before bowing her head. Clearing her throat, she said. “I wouldn’t be at high risk for HIV unless he is,” she said pointing.

“I’m not,” he snapped and then walked out of the tent. Mitch followed right behind him.

Rory raised her shirt. “You might need stitches, Trixie.”

“No,” she said her fingertips brushing across his knuckles. “But really, Rory, let me do this.”

With his free hand, he covered her closed fist. “Trixie, since your mom is a nurse, I’m sure you’ve been taught to take precautions around blood, but I’m not afraid of yours. Only scared I might pass out before I clean your wound.”

“Pass out?”

“Sometimes I hit the ground when I see blood, particularly my own, but I’m having a hard time looking at yours, too,” he said trying to dab at the open flesh. “It’s the reason I changed career paths.”

“So you aren’t going into the medical field?”

“No,” he stated flatly. “Not in this lifetime, and given my distaste for red fluids, I don’t think it will happen in the lifetimes following this one, either.”

She nodded. “I’m so tired, Rory,” she said, falling back against the sleeping bag she’d shared the night before with Brock.

Rory stared down at her dirty face and grinned. “Want me to clean the dirt off your cheeks?”

“No, I can do it when I get back to camp,” she replied. “Do the other counselors know what’s going on?”

“A select few,” he said continuing to work at cleaning her side. “You want Mitch to take you into town to see if you need stitches?”

“No, I want a hot shower, a few large bandages, and a nice warm bed to sleep in tonight.”

“We can arrange that,” Rory said. Then, raising his voice, he called out, “All right guys, you can come in!”

Mitch rushed through the opening and stooped down to collect Trixie. “Brock, get your little love nest cleaned up, and, Rory, come with me. You’ll have to stay with Trixie until I notify Stephen and the others that we’ve found her.”

“I can manage on my own from here if you want to set me down.”

Mitch shot her a lopsided smile. “I know you probably could, but I prefer to carry you. Besides, it’s driving Brock crazy, isn’t it Brock?”

“More than you know,” he said, gazing at Trixie. “But a little madness is good for a man’s soul.”

* * * *

Mitch walked Rory and Trixie back to the cabin. She’d wobbled more than she cared to admit, but somehow made it back without landing face forward.

“Are you hungry?” Mitch asked. “I could order pizzas for everyone here on the hill.”

Rory laughed. “It’s going to get expensive at Cow Camp trying to please everyone when you really only have one goal—taking care of Trixie.”

She patted Mitch’s arms. “Really, Mitch, a PB and J will do.”

“No, I’ll call the Pizza Shack and order a bunch of single topping pizzas for the junior counselors. If I drop off a pizza to every few cabins, I’m not accused of playing favorites, even though the shoes fit—and I wear them proudly.”

“Pizza sounds great, then,” she said rubbing her belly. “Let me get cleaned up and then I’ll meet you in the lodge.” As soon as she said the words, she felt faint. She reached out to grab something before she collapsed, but only caught Rory’s hand. He looped his arm around her waist and saved her from the floor.

“Tell you what, G.I. Jane, how about I bring the pizza to you?” Mitch asked. Concern drew his brow and he added, “I’ll even tell Brock to join us if it will make you feel better.”

“Ah, now we’re talking,” she teased. “I can’t resist finding trouble in threes.”

“Careful, Trixie. Your sex toys haven’t been used yet, I see.” Mitch pointed to the box under her bed. “After pizza, I may tuck you in bed with one of those.”

Rory groaned. “Can you go order take-out already? Does she look like a woman who can’t wait to pull out a dildo and give you a private show?”

“No,” he said, flashing Trixie a smile. “She looks like a gal who can handle all three of us, and whether it’s tonight or next week, that’s exactly what I plan to see her do. When she thinks she’s ready for us, I’m willing and waiting.”

Chapter Fifteen

Trixie stood under the showerhead and watched the thin stream of red dwindle from one of the cuts. The bleeding had subsided, but she probably needed a little antiseptic and something other than soap and water to clean the wound. She held onto the slick wall when the air around her started to close in and the beads of water scattered in all different directions against the backdrop of spinning tile.

“Rory!” she called out and hoped she yelled loud enough. She slumped down to a crouched position. Good Lord, she felt sick. She couldn’t wait to crawl into her nice warm bed and snuggle close to a large body.

Yeah, she was a pansy. The biggest baby Cow Camp had ever seen, if she cared to guess.

“This shower thing not working out like you thought?” Rory asked from the other side of the plastic curtain.

“No,” she admitted. “I’m weak. I think I should’ve eaten something before showering.”

“Can I do something for you?”

She scanned the small area and thought about how silly she must’ve looked squatted down like a hurt puppy in the corner of the shower stall. “Rory,” she said swallowing hard. “Can you lock the bathroom door and help me, please?”

The room was quiet. She took a deep breath after she didn’t receive a response. She closed her eyes and thought about Brock. As possessive as he’d become after she’d slept with him, he might beat poor Rory’s ass if he took her up on the proposition, regardless of her true need for help right then.

She quickly reminded herself that she wasn’t seducing Rory but in serious need of his help. She watched the streams of water roll off of her thighs and whirl toward the large drain in the center of the floor.

“Rory? Are you there?”

He pulled back the curtain and stepped inside. And God love his heart, he even kept his boxers on, even though the shorts didn’t do him a lot of good after he saw her nude body.

* * * *

Rory stared at Trixie because he couldn’t help but gawk. He reached down and pulled her forward, catching his breath when she landed against him. Her tight nipples touched his chest before the rest of her body mashed against his.

Lord help him, he didn’t give a damn what Brock told him to do. He’d backed away from one of their shared girls once. Brock and Mitch eventually turned her world inside-out. He didn’t plan on giving them the chance to do the same with Trixie. There was something special about her. One moment, she seemed too fragile, in need of great comfort, and the very next second, she was a blazing fire drawing everyone closer to her flame.

She was dangerous. That’s exactly what she was, but better men couldn’t resist her. Why should he?

“Rory,” she pressed her head on his shoulder and closed her eyes. “Will you, I mean do you mind to clean me up?” Her soft voice maintained a low pitch, a sing-song tone.

He took the soap and washrag from the shower organizer and lathered up the cloth. Tilting her chin upward, he stared into her eyes. “Let me get this gorgeous face wiped off first,” he said smiling.

She only opened her eyes for a minute. He started washing her, and she latched onto his neck swaying as his hands moved over her, the soap gliding from one hand and the washrag dangling from the other.

“That’s nice,” she said dreamily. “Thank you, Rory.”

After he removed the black, soot-like dirt from her cheeks, he washed her arms. He didn’t have to move her much in order to maneuver her upper limbs, but when he’d scrubbed them a few times, he realized what body parts remained untouched, and his cock throbbed with the excitement.

Trixie wasn’t unaware of his hard length pressing against her upper thigh. A few times when he accidentally tapped her with his lower half, she jerked, smiled and pressed against him. The teasing vixen didn’t have to try

for sex appeal. Seduction existed in her veins and, God help him, it ran damn deep.

"I know you're looking at me," she purred. "Just hurry up," she pleaded. "I need to lie down."

"You need to quit enticing me or else I may not care whether or not you're injured," he said kissing the tip of her nose.

"Rory," she said softly. "Please."

Nervously, Rory pursed his lips and moved the cloth over her neck area and then her breasts. He heard her breath hitch when she took a deep intake of air.

Tossing the washrag over his wrists, he ran his soapy hands over her full mounds. The temptation proved bigger than he had the will to resist. He wanted her breasts pressing into his palms, not some sort of cloth separating the true feeling of a voluptuous woman.

"That's really nice," she whispered, smiling but then she swayed again, losing her balance. When Rory looked down, her head rolled to the side.

"Okay, I'll behave," he promised, taking the cloth back in his hand and caressing her belly. He looped his arm around her middle and turned her around to wash her back and legs.

When he knelt down behind her, he quickly bathed her hips and thighs before he rubbed the washcloth down her inner calves. Now or never, he thought. He hurriedly brushed his fingertips up her leg, twirled her around to face him and dropped his lips over hers as he washed her pussy.

"I'm sorry," he said as if he expected her to feel invaded.

"I'm not," she promised, grasping his shoulders. She spread her legs and allowed him the room he needed to clean her, moaning out when he dropped the cloth in exchange for full access for his soapy fingers.

"Rory," she muttered against his lips. "Promise me you'll do this later, sometime soon."

Taking the hint, he turned off the water and reached out of the shower in search of a towel. Grabbing one off the back of the bathroom door, he placed the terrycloth material around her shoulders. "Hold this for a second."

He hopped out of the shower and found another one to secure around his waist cursing his manhood for reacting to a woman who'd trusted him to

take care of her. Pressing his palm to his cock, as if that would work in the first place, he gritted his teeth.

He looked up at the ceiling, but when he didn't find any solutions there, he turned back to the shower and took Trixie in his arms. "Let's get you into bed."

"Only if you'll stay with me," she said.

"Honey, in case you forgot, you're in for a lot of bedside company tonight."

"Oh, right. We're having a pizza party."

"And if I had to guess, since you're injured and all, we'll have plenty of ice cold beer, too."

* * * *

Rory told her Mitch would return in a few minutes. He also said Brock had returned to the main camp. Everyone planned to meet in her cabin soon.

She felt much better than she had a few hours earlier and decided part of her problem was similar to the issues Rory expressed. She hated the sight of blood, particularly her own.

A loud knock against the wood panels guaranteed the arrival of her first dinner guest. She hoped Mitch showed up first. She was ready for a monster slice of pepperoni pizza and anything icy cold.

Stephen walked in with his hat dangling from his fingers. "Are you feeling all right, Trixie?"

She smiled. "Thanks for checking on me, Stephen. I'm fine. A little groggy, but I'll be good as new in a few days."

"I hope so," he replied sitting on the edge of her bed. "I was worried about you."

She tilted her head and watched him. Stephen acted older than the rest of the counselors at Cow Camp, but he didn't lack for good looks. She wondered if Mitch liked to surround himself with beautiful people. The gals there were very pretty and the guys, most of them anyway, were built sexy tough. The majority of them sported bronze tans and flawless skin. Cow Camp was more like a gathering of the earthly gods than a camp for wealthy children.

"I guess our redecorating may have to wait a couple of days. I didn't get in touch with Mom today since I had a few other things on my mind."

"Like what?" he teased and then he said, "Were you frightened?"

"No, not so much scared as concerned. Once I had a gash in my side, I—"

"A what?" he asked excitedly, brushing her hands to the wayside and raising her camisole out of the way.

"It's not as bad as it looks," she said.

He still lowered his head and studied the wound. "You should've gone to the infirmary, maybe even the hospital."

"Mitch is bringing some bandages."

"Of course," he groaned. "Mitch would think of everything, I'm sure."

She smiled. "You don't like him?"

"Oh, sure I do," he said with the kind of enthusiasm she had trouble believing. "He's my boss."

"And the only reason you tolerate him?"

He winked and then ran his palm over her belly. "You're sure you aren't hurt?"

She flinched when he touched her. His clammy skin felt strange against her flesh. She wasn't opposed to his touch but not quite certain what to make of it, either. He looked at her with a little too much passion, like to see through his eyes brought burdens and joys.

"Stephen, are you okay?"

"Sure," he said flippantly. "I didn't sleep much last night after the guys alerted me of the problem out on the island. I worried about you, Trixie. I'd hate to see something happen to you."

He stroked her skin again. This time, with a firm hand, he pressed as he caressed. "You're sure you're not hurt internally?"

Trixie breathed a sigh of relief. Maybe Stephen wasn't a weirdo but instead genuinely concerned about her condition. She relaxed then and touched his cheek. "I'm good. I'm making a great start here at Cow Camp, meeting friends I already treasure and, of course, doing what I can to grab the attention of every good looking cowboy in camp. I'd say I'm pretty close to perfect."

Slowly, Stephen turned his head and kissed the inside of her palm. He pressed down on her belly one final time and then stood up abruptly. "I just

wanted to make sure everything was okay here. Women have to watch themselves more than men, Trixie. Later in life, you never know what you might want. If you plan to have children someday, you can't afford internal injuries."

Trixie studied him. *What a strange thing to say*, she thought. She finally shrugged when she gave her response. "I'm not worried about having kids anytime soon. I may come back here a few summers and spend more time around kids first. I mean, I'd hate to have a bunch of rugrats and then discover I'm never going to particularly care for kids, you know?"

"No," he spat. "I don't. Not at all."

Chapter Sixteen

Trixie devoured her third slice of pizza and second beer. The guys swore her to secrecy about the underage drinking until she explained her family's position on alcohol anyway. She tried to convince them that since she'd legally be able to consume alcohol in other countries, her dads didn't object.

Mitch stared at her dumbfounded. "That's bullshit and you know it. Hell, I'm willing to bet your Mom can't even have a glass of wine without asking for permission."

The silence ripped through the cozy room where laughter once existed. She watched Brock and Mitch exchange a peculiar glance. Brock's upper cheek twitched with his hidden discomfort. Trixie turned her attention to Rory, who looked a little uncomfortable, as well as confused.

"What do you think, Rory," she finally asked shoving another bite of pizza crust in between her lips. "Do you think my mother is the kind of woman who would ask a man for any kind of permission?" She pointed to the collage of photographs on her wall.

Rory took a swig of beer from the can and mashed it against the floor. "I don't know your mother, Trixie. She looks a lot like you, though, and I don't see a man telling you what to do. Are you and your mother as much alike as you look?"

"Smart man," she noted pinching his cheeks. "And a good question."

"Well?" Mitch probed. "Are you?"

"What you want to know is will I ever submit as a submissive woman to the right Dom," she looked at each of them independently before she added, "or Doms."

"Something like that," Mitch replied.

"Let's change the subject," Brock suggested tossing his paper plate into a nearby wastebasket.

“Let’s don’t,” Mitch stated flatly, scooting his back against the wall opposite of the bed where Trixie sat. “Are you a submissive, Trixie?”

She’d often thought about it, and her delayed answer worked wonders since she lowered her eyes, much like a true submissive might do, and much like she’d watched her mother do after days alone with her fathers. She knew how their bedroom games often carried over into their day-to-day lives. Even though she pretended not to notice, some aspects of her parents’ relationship proved unavoidable.

“Do you like submissive women, Mitch?”

“I do,” he readily admitted. “Brock does, too.”

He snarled. “Don’t speak for me.”

Trixie winked. “He doesn’t have to speak for you. I already gathered as much.”

“How?” He wrinkled his brow. “It wasn’t by the way I made love to you.”

“Is nothing private with you guys?” she asked, standing up. Crossing the room, she disposed of her napkin, plate, and empty beer can.

“Not much,” Rory said. “Come on, Trixie, Mitch and I saw everything, anyway.”

“I told her,” Brock began. “But she didn’t believe me.”

“Hell, you still had your damn dick inside her pussy when we walked in!” Mitch exclaimed.

Trixie gulped. “That’s all I need to hear.”

“Why?” Mitch asked grinning. “Mine’s going to be there, too, so you might as well get used to open discussions about all sorts of positions and possibilities.”

“I don’t think so,” she said, holding Brock’s intent gaze.

Mitch released a heavy sigh. “Oh, that’s perfect.”

Brock shot him a lopsided smile and then turned his head and winked. “Come here, Trixie.”

Catching on, she strode over to Brock and stood in front of him. She assumed a presenting position, one she’d seen Vicky, her mother’s best friend, take countless times when she played around in the barn with Aspen McKay. Crossing her arms behind the small of her back and turning around at the same time, she spread her legs a few feet apart and leaned forward.

Grinning, she winked at Mitch. “Does this answer your question?”

Brock bit her hip playfully and growled. “You’re as bad as I need you to be, aren’t you, baby?”

The guttural way he said her name or called her baby made her nipples sharp and pointed. Hell fire, his touch made her skin burn. She knew he realized how much he aroused her without so much as touching her, and that alone frightened her.

“No,” she stated, falling into his lap and looping her arm around his neck. “Right now, I’m tired and restless, but I’m not ready to be a really bad girl.”

Mitch stood. “Let me change your mind.”

Rory started for her, as if to guard and protect her from two dangerous Doms. “Not tonight, Mitch.”

“Then when?” he asked, stalking forward. Brock held her tighter against his chest, crossing his arms in front of her. When she winced at the pain his heavy arm brought by tapping against her wound, he shook his head in adamant refusal.

“She’s hurt, damn it,” Brock said.

Mitch knelt in front of her and pulled her away from Brock. “And I’m going to take care of her. The two of you can join in or watch. I don’t care which.”

Claiming her mouth, Mitch whispered against her lips. “Admit it, Trixie, you want to know what it feels like to have three men take you, don’t you?”

She stared at Brock and saw his disapproval. She glanced at Rory and saw his reluctant excitement. The erection he’d kept when he’d helped her shower gave her the impression he wanted her one on one, without the fanfare and audience. Would Rory consider a ménage situation?

“Brock?” she asked.

“Answer his question,” Brock said. “I want to hear this. Do you want to know what it’s like to take several men to your bed? Are you curious enough to try it?”

“Are you, Rory?” She turned her attention to him. His deep blue eyes softer than she recalled, calm waters settled over them and made her doubt any desire for a ménage experience.

He walked over to the photographs and studied them. “Your mom has this sort of relationship with your dads?”

Brock sat upright, his curiosity in her upcoming answer stirring a dark excitement visible in his eyes and his body. His thick cock pressed against his blue jeans, and she longed to see it again, caress him while she fisted his stiff erection and sucked hard.

* * * *

Trixie fell against her mattress. Rory brought over another foam shell to cover the thin layer. On the chance she had a cracked rib, he said she might need the extra support. She wiggled around, smiling. "I like the feel of this bed now, Rory. Thank you."

"Don't mention it," he replied, returning to the photographs. "Who's this chick with the collar?"

"That's my Mom's best friend, Vicky."

"She's a submissive," Mitch stated.

"Ya think?" Trixie chirped. There really wasn't any question about her lifestyle choice. One photograph showed her kneeling in between Joshua and Aspen with her hands in cuffs. Trixie studied the picture now. She remembered Vicky's response when she originally asked her about the handcuffs. *I've been into a little mischief.*

Rory's brow furrowed. "Trixie, I gotta ask you something. Why do you have these odd pictures up here?"

She shrugged. "I don't know, I guess because in my world, this kind of thing is typical."

"In my world, it isn't," Rory said. "Aren't you afraid someone might see these and judge you? I mean these photographs don't exactly scream cover-shot for *Wholesome Family* magazine."

Trixie sighed. "Rory, you've known me long enough to know I don't care what other people think. Sure, my family is different, but who cares? They're mine to love and I'm proud of them, all of them, regardless of their sexual orientation or the neck ornaments they choose to wear."

Brock stood behind Rory and Mitch, returning his focus to the collage as well. Trixie watched them as they familiarized themselves with her life through the pictures that unfolded her story.

"I grew up on a large ranch. Vicky's married to the McKays, whose property borders ours. Yes, I have three dads, a little unconventional, but

who cares? How many women these days can claim they've only been to bed with three guys? My mom is head over heels in love. My sisters and I live a pretty normal life."

Mitch grinned. "Are you suggesting that all of your fathers take this beauty to bed at the same time?"

"Please remember she is my mom. Now, I agree with you. She's very beautiful. I'm proud of her, but I really don't like to think of any of them like *that*."

"Of course you don't," Rory said evenly. "No one wants to think of their parents having sex."

"No one wants to think of their Mom with three cocks in her body at one time," Brock pointed out.

"See what I mean," Trixie said. "It always leads to this kind of thing. Guys can't get in enough jabs about it, believe me. It's one reason I stayed a virgin in high school. I did it out of spite."

Brock chuckled. "I'm glad you're a hateful little thing."

"I'm sure you are," she replied, crooking her finger back and forth.

He was the only one who saw the gesture, and he joined her on the bed, pulling her into the hook of his arm. "Mitch, with the beer and pizza party you started here on the hill, Trixie won't get much sleep here. What do you say we take her to your place at the lodge?"

Trixie swallowed tightly. "Really?" she whispered.

"Isn't that what you want?" he asked.

They locked in a knowing gaze, and she didn't reply. She feared if she admitted certain curiosities, she would hurt Brock's feelings. In truth, he was more man than she needed, but she'd always wonder if he didn't give her the opportunity to explore.

"You think you can handle being moved?" Mitch asked grinning.

"I can even walk there myself! It's amazing what a little hydration will do for a woman. Never mind a few carbs. I'm good as new. Promise."

Mitch pinched her thigh. "You eat like that all the time, and I'll have to spend my summer working you out."

Trixie smacked his hand away. "Spoken like a true Dom."

Mitch glanced at her bedside clock. "We'll head down to the lodge in a few minutes. No sense in giving Trixie a reputation around here."

"I think I already have one."

“Not yet,” Mitch said. “But you will if Brenda catches you with us.”

“Not if Trixie’s with me,” Rory said.

“He has a point,” Brock agreed.

“And let him run his hands all over you for show,” Mitch suggested.

“Sure, why not knock yourselves out?” Brock grated out. “Ah hell, you two are bound and determined to have her aren’t you?”

Trixie winked and then leaned into him. She whispered, “You said anything I want,” she reminded. “If it’ll make you feel any better, I’m glad you were my first, but I gotta tell you something.” She raised her voice and continued, “Even though I always wanted a traditional relationship down the road, I have certain fantasies and curiosities, too.”

“You mean being with a few guys at one time?” Rory questioned, obviously interested in the possibilities.

Trixie glanced back and forth from Brock to Mitch. “I’m not looking for a lifetime commitment here, boys. I wanna play around. I had a few hours to consider all the things I haven’t done in my life. You know, when a woman is lost, she has time to ponder the things she’s missed. Until Brock, I didn’t know much about sex. Now, I’m game for just about anything.”

“Well, then, take her to our playing field, Rory,” Mitch said excitedly. “I have a feeling we’re all about to score.”

Chapter Seventeen

Rory unlocked Mitch's unit. Trixie had never noticed his separate quarters before. Located behind the lodge, the only thing visible from Mitch's office was a long, narrow hallway leading to a solid metal door. A few boxes lined the paneled side, and she squeezed by them as Rory led her through the maze of clutter. She first assumed the door blocked off more storage space or opened up to another office. She found a posh, well appointed bachelor's pad.

Leather sofas and earth-tone colors drew the naked eye. The stench of beer filled the room and she noticed the scattered beer cans—presumably empty—and a few shot glasses on each of the four end tables. Evidently, Mitch wasn't much for cleaning up after himself or his guests.

"So this is it," she whispered. "This is where I get the chance to see if riding three works for me as well as it has for other women." She instantly regretted opening her mouth. When she stopped her nervous chatter, her heart didn't follow any particular beat, but instead thumped against her chest like even her main organs wanted to grab her attention. Maybe if she listened closely, she'd understand what she was supposed to do. And this was definitely *not* it.

"Rory," she whispered when he pulled her into his arms. "What if I want to stop? I mean, you know I might not be able to handle all of you, right?"

"Why are you afraid all of a sudden?" he asked. "We'll take care of you, Trixie. So help me, I wouldn't let you do this if I thought we'd hurt you."

"Yes, you would."

"Then you don't know me at all," he said brushing her bangs away from her face.

"No," she said softly. "I guess not."

"It's not too late to back out. You still have time to turn tail and run."

“Are you hoping I will?” She searched his eyes for a sincere answer.

“You know what I want. You know what all of us want.”

“You’re different than they are, though, aren’t you?”

“Well, I would hope so,” he said laughing. “But, yes, to answer your question. I’m not into binding and gagging a woman.”

She gasped. “And they are?”

“You’ll have to ask them. I don’t know what they’re like when they’re with you, but I imagine Brock will have a hard time accepting whatever it is Mitch wants to do with you. Brock believes in love at first sight, or he does now that he’s head over heels for you.”

“Brock is in love with me?” Her pulse increased and she suddenly felt like she walked on air. *Brock Sheldon is in love with me?*

Rory took a deep breath and reluctantly said, “Yes, I believe he is.”

“Do you believe in love at first sight?”

“Why?” he muttered, nipping at her lips. “Are you falling in love with me?”

“I could,” she said. “If I do, would you promise to always take care of me?” She toyed with him. She couldn’t resist. Trixie wanted to know where she stood with all of them, and the tease deep inside of her came alive.

“I’ll always take care of you when you’re in my arms,” he said giving her his sincere oath. “But I’ll never expect anything more than what you’re willing to give me at the time. People change, Trixie. Their commitments shift, and their goals and desires often find a better objective. I want you right now. Who knows, maybe a few years down the road, I may decide I can’t live without you. If that happens, I’m still a man looking for a good time and at any given moment, I might change directions. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

She looped her arms around his neck and gave him a hearty kiss. When she released him, she said, “You’re already afraid you might fall in love with me.”

“I won’t fall as hard as Brock, but yeah, I guess I’m a little worried about what I feel when I’m with you.”

“Then why don’t you follow your heart and see where it leads?” she asked, jumping into his arms and pressing her center against his belt. Heaven help her, she had a full night of pleasure ahead and she was restless, ready to begin.

In the shower, Rory sent her body into flames. Earlier, she was too weak to act on the sensations, but after a little nourishment and a brief chat in her cabin, she wanted him to finish what he'd started. This was, for the time being, all about pleasing Rory and indulging in new discoveries.

Working at his belt, she locked her ankles behind his back and he fed her his sweet, moist lips, slanting them over hers and allowing her to lead the kiss, take what she wanted from it or feed it more with her own desires. He grunted when she pulled his cock from his pants and then his shorts. She then pushed away from him and landed on the floor, kneeling in front of him.

She looked up and he nodded, as if she thought he'd stop her. She lowered her mouth over his penis, sucking in his size and marveling in the sweet taste of cherries. She grinned and twirled her tongue around the shape of his tip. He must have flavored himself with some sort of lube after he showered. She inhaled the delicious scent, the way his fragrance settled in her nostrils alerted her senses, and she pressed her legs tightly together.

When she shifted her weight, he noticed. "Like cherries, do you?"

She sipped at his cock and smacked her lips. "Yes," she purred. "You taste so sweet."

"You like me sweet, don't cha?" He placed his hand on the top of her head and ground against her mouth. His cock parted her lips and strummed across her tongue, tapping the back of her throat. He withdrew, his stance changed, and he dodged the possibility of withdrawing completely, falling into a sweet rhythm.

Trixie sucked at his cock like there wasn't an audience joining them within a matter of minutes. She took her time and ran her tongue over the ridges as his speed changed, his breathing increased, and his eyes watered.

"Good God, Trixie. This is so fucking good." He kept his cock swelling between her cheeks until he hammered forward. "I'm coming. That's it. Just take it. Let me do the work. Ah yes, that's right. Uh-huh, you got it baby. Ah hell, woman."

She knew what to expect. She'd read about it and she wanted every drop. She swallowed over and over again as he filled her mouth with his cum. The hot and salty fluid jetted across her tongue and filled the back of her throat, coating her tonsils with a thick cream. When she felt the choking sensation, it halted her aggressive behavior. She slid his shaft back, but he

kept coming when she kissed the tip, his excitement leaking onto her lips and staining them with the presence of his pleasure.

“Hell yeah, don’t stop,” he whispered, eyeing her.

“Shit, that’s sexy,” Mitch said, entering the room. She swiped at Rory’s dick one last time, licking him clean, pausing only long enough to look at the man who took her virginity and the other man who’d wanted it.

Brock sat down on the sofa and motioned for her. “Come over here and let me do you dirty.”

She locked eyes with Rory, and he winked as he stuffed his dick back in his pants. He didn’t bother zipping them. He reached under her arms and tugged her forward drawing her into a heated kiss while squeezing her breasts at the same time. “You’re okay, right?” he muttered.

“Never better,” she grinned. “Who knows, maybe I’m cut out for this.”

Brock spread his legs and she saw the thick length of his erection pressing against his pants. She also saw the jealousy, the green mark of envy settling deep in his eyes.

Mitch stepped out of his shorts, and his erection sprang forward. In a matter of minutes, he had all of his clothes tossed over a wide plush chair dividing the kitchen from the living area.

Brock glanced Mitch’s way, then crooked his finger and barked a new order. Brock said, “I want you out of those pajamas and presenting your sweet ass to me like you did in your cabin.”

She gulped. She was so excited when she left her place that she never noticed she’d trotted down the hill in her pajamas. Oh, this wasn’t good. These three made her lose her mind. She wasn’t even aware of what she wore when she stepped beyond her front porch. Then again, she’d had a few beers after an exhausting day. She was drunk on lust and alcohol, intoxicated by three cowboys with large egos and cocksure charm, never mind experience. The experience she didn’t have but planned to find in each of their bodies.

Mitch threaded his dick leisurely. She stared. She couldn’t help it. “Good grief, you need to name that thing hanging between your legs.”

Brock groaned. “Trust me, it ain’t the size that matters here.”

“He’s got you and me both by an inch or two,” Rory said flopping down in a chair opposite Brock.

Brock watched her closer now. His hungry eyes burned her flesh, and he withheld the first touch, as if he waited for the right time to send her cunt up in flames. “Turn around, Trixie.”

This was it. He was going to spank her. She knew he’d bend her over because his feelings were hurt. She hadn’t waited for them. He also had to know by the way she greedily drank in Rory’s release that she experienced something with Rory she hadn’t with anyone else.

Brock wanted to become her go-to man, her first-fellow. In many ways, she wanted the same thing, only she couldn’t stop the uncontrollable lust she felt every time she looked at Mitch or felt Rory’s touch.

Brock’s large hands cupped her hips. She presented her bottom, spreading her legs apart and rolling her shoulders forward. “Do you know why Doms like this position?” he asked, pressing his hand to the small of her back right above where her hands locked a little lower.

She shook her head.

Brock bit her ass cheek. Licking over her fingers, he muttered something perverse, strongly suggestive. “Bend over. I want to see your sweet pussy drip when I spank you.”

She leaned forward and Mitch stood in front of her. Holding onto her forearms, he didn’t touch her breasts. Instead, he studied her reactions, staring so hard at her facial expressions, that she feared what he might say, how he might translate each one.

Brock gripped the sides of her waist and gave her another push, encouraging her to fall against Mitch’s chest. Her head fell to Mitch’s cock instead and the beaded pebble of pre-cum drew her tongue.

In one life-changing moment, she felt like she was born and bred specifically for them. As if her instincts were already in tune with their desires, her tongue swiped over the tip of Mitch’s dick. God help her, she found new life, a spurt of energy spurring her forward.

Brock swatted her bottom. “Did I tell you to lick Mitch’s dick?”

“No,” she replied, knowing full well what to say to draw his hand again. “But I sure like the way he tastes.”

“Ah, Trixie, you’re gonna need a straw, darlin’,” Mitch promised. “I plan to keep your head in my lap a lot.”

Brock spanked her again. This time, he raised his arm back and gave her three hard strikes. She jerked with the first two and cried out after the third.

Rory grunted. “Damn it, Brock. You said after what she’d been through, you’d let her decide what she wanted.”

Brock ignored Rory. “Do you know about safe words, Trixie?”

She nodded. Her mother overused them to a fault from what she’d heard her mother confide to Vicky.

“Then we can do whatever we want. You’ll let us know if something isn’t comfortable for you, right?” Brock asked, running his finger down the crack of her ass.

She flinched and then moaned. “Brock, give me a minute. I’ve never been penetrated there.”

“Of course not, sugar,” he drawled. “I’m your first. I know more about you now than you understand about yourself.”

Brock was different than the night before. She knew he hadn’t had a lot of sleep and he’d had plenty to drink, but this was a darker side of him, the man she met the first day of camp when she accidentally tripped him.

Brock typically looked at her differently than the other two. In a strange way, it was like he had to restrain himself from grabbing her hard and sheltering her from the others, perhaps even from the world. He wanted more than sex. He wanted to claim her as his, mark her as his woman.

Mitch backed away from her mouth and then pulled her forward, dragging her arms around his waist. He said, “I want a submissive that will suck my dick and enjoy my cock in her mouth. Sometimes you’ll even go down on me in public.”

“I don’t think so,” she said crisply. “I’m old enough to know better than to let you take me into public and make me into act one of a sex show.”

“You’ll do it and you’ll like it,” Mitch promised.

“I can dig a little public action,” Rory confessed. “I’ll never have a problem with a girl who can go down on me in a theater.”

“If we’re the only two there, it’s not a problem, but—”

Brock spanked her. It wasn’t a petty spanking, either.

“Ow!”

“You won’t back-talk us, Trixie.” His hand came down across her globes and set her flesh on fire, but she wasn’t worried about her skin. With every smack she bucked against, her vagina ached for another one. It was all she could do to keep from twisting over and begging him to smack her pussy, too.

Rory raised an eyebrow and clenched his fist. “You didn’t ask for her safe word,” he gritted out.

“What is it?” Mitch said, pressing his cock to her puckered lips. “Tell us what your safe word is now.”

“Pudding,” she mumbled.

“Why pudding?” Brock asked massaging her bottom, rolling the balls of his hands over her rump for a deep tissue type massage.

“Because I love butterscotch pudding.”

Brock pushed her forward and stood behind her. He added pressure to the back of her head, encouraging her to take Mitch’s cock.

With his other hand, he reached under her. The heat she had waiting for him must’ve surprised him. The throaty call he released sounded like an alpha wolf releasing a true song to the lost wild. Then he moved away and gave her the freedom to explore Mitch all on her own.

* * * *

Brock endured an extraordinary new feeling. He wanted to own Trixie, as if she were a woman any man could claim.

He wanted to spank her until she restlessly begged for more, perhaps even suggested an equal paddling on her pretty little pussy. He also wanted to guard her, shield her from Mitch and hide her from Rory.

Brock wanted Trixie for himself.

He realized his feelings for her would develop into something substantial since he’d tripped over her tiny feet. She belonged to him, and regardless of the men who ended up in their bed, one fact would forever remain. Trixie was his girl. Why the hell he had to stand by and agree to any of this fell back to a memory he couldn’t outrun, a haunting experience none of them would ever escape.

Five years ago, Mitch harbored similar feelings for Jordie Anne. Brock tried to back off when Mitch told him, but it was too late. He’d already fucked her, and Rory was in her bed every time he had the chance. Then Mitch became obsessed with the lifestyle. Domination and submission struck his fancy. He was determined to force his new practices on a girl just coming into her own sexual experiences. Things went downhill from there,

and Brock didn't want to repeat history. He wanted Trixie to follow her heart and her own desires.

Since they'd started their thing with Trixie—another young woman—Brock had to keep a firm hand on her, pay attention to her wants and desires. History couldn't repeat itself, especially through Trixie.

Jordie Anne was a mistake, at least he viewed her as one. How they handled the consequences thereafter proved they all made horrible errors in judgment. Women had their limitations, especially in the lifestyle. Brock understood the BDSM culture more now. He wasn't sure if Mitch ever would, especially since he couldn't accept responsibility for how they tore apart one young woman's life.

Rory walked over and stood next to Brock. "I don't like where this is headed," he said softly as the sucking sound of Mitch's blow job filled the room.

"It's fine," Mitch barked. "Fucking fantastic," he quickly added. "Look at her. She acts like she's been blowing cock all of her life."

"Remember, she's not a stranger to this sort of thing. She grew up around the lifestyle," Brock hissed, nearly under his breath. At the same time, he reached under a cushion and retrieved a pair of handcuffs.

"No, but she's limited to exposure. She's never participated first-handed," Rory reminded, snatching the cuffs from Brock.

"And you're hoping she doesn't like it so we're at a crossroads again, aren't we?" Brock asked glaring down at Rory when he took a seat next to Trixie on the floor. He held her hair off her shoulders and took a deep breath. "She sure is sexy."

She grinned, as much as she could with a cock in her cheek, but then released Mitch long enough to acknowledge the truth. "This is driving them wild and you love it," she hummed against his shaft, kissing up and down his length.

"Damn straight, but I like it better when I finish what I start. Don't stop until my cum hits your chin or your throat." He moved faster this time and grabbed onto her nape, weaving his fingers into her locks and pulling the strands tight around his knuckles, securing a good grip. His thighs bunched and he gyrated forward, faster and faster.

She muttered a soft cry and Rory looked away. "See?"

Brock made a quick move. By the time he stood behind Trixie, Mitch's balls bumped against her chin. He came as she lapped at him like the vixen she was born to become. Brock rubbernecked it enough to look at her pussy. "I'll be damned if she doesn't love giving head."

Mitch's twisted expression showcased his pleasure, and his pace changed. Trixie's head bobbed up and down so fast that Brock couldn't watch. Mitch's thick sac slapped at her chin repeatedly until he felt certain Mitch fought against, rather than for, his release.

Mitch always loved power. He got off on the control and the freedom, something Brock understood well. There wasn't any other feeling in the world like dominating a willing submissive. Sex didn't get any better or burn any hotter.

Dropping to his knees, Brock couldn't take much more. He pulled his cock from his pants and sheathed himself, rolling a condom over his erection. Retrieving a tube of lube, he squirted the clear lubricant down the center of her bottom, and slipped inside her tight and ready cheeks.

He earned a few bucks in between muffled, pleasure-filled cries. After he let her twist and turn a few seconds, he started one hell of a satisfying fuck.

* * * *

"Brock!" she spat out Mitch's cock at the same time she yelled his name. A smart girl, she kept touching Mitch, but her body bucked against his. "Oh hell, this hurts," she whined.

"Sure, baby," Brock cooed. "It hurts good, doesn't it?" He took her slower, inching in deep, but pausing until she gained better balance on her knees, understanding how he wanted her prepared to take them.

Trixie was in pain, but she was dying from the pleasure. In some ways, the impalement invaded. In others, it forced her to surrender.

She wanted to trust Brock. The way he took control over her body only made her realize how much she relied on him to make the right decisions for her.

He stretched her, but he used gentle motions. Taking one stroke at a time, he squirted more lube, distracting her with the fluid before he pressed forward, giving her a moment to adjust to another inch.

Mitch sat in front of her. His hands cupped her breasts, and he held them like weights in his palms, playing with them, lifting them to his mouth and pressing his lips to one beaded morsel and then another. His tongue darted in and out before he flattened it on one nipple and licked nice and slow.

“Will you let me take a picture?” Rory asked fiddling around with his phone.

“No,” Brock barked. “We do this my way, this time, Rory.”

Mitch and Rory exchanged a satisfied glance. Rory disrobed completely and joined them, tossing the handcuffs to the floor. It was now or never.

Never won out when Brock glared at the wristlets and slowly withdrew. “We don’t have to make any decisions tonight, you know?”

Trixie focused on what she wanted, realizing almost immediately that she had so many desires that she couldn’t possibly find all of her wish list in one person.

At the moment, she felt positive Brock knew how to fulfill all of her fantasies, but she also understood he was holding back. When he withdrew without finding a release, she felt his pain. He most likely found it difficult to share her with Mitch. For some reason, she didn’t think he felt the same about Rory, only Mitch.

Brock moved her to the sofa. Nipping at her lips, he said, “We brought your toys, Trixie.” It sounded like a warning.

“I don’t need them,” she pointed out.

Mitch chuckled. “Oh, yes you do,” he assured her. “We’re going to teach you how to control your desires starting tonight. You’ll know what it is to want a man’s cock, and you’ll damn sure know how to control your need to orgasm. You’re here tonight for our pleasure. We’ll help you find yours, but you’ll only climax when we allow you.”

Rory frowned. “They like using vibrators, nipple clamps, and all sorts of goodies for punishment.” He looked like a defeated man all at once.

Mitch studied him. “Don’t pout, Rory.”

“You’re starting it all over again, and I won’t join in this time.”

Mitch shrugged. “Hell, I sure won’t beg you.”

“I expect you to respect her and her wishes,” Rory said, jerking his pants on.

“I don’t want you to go,” Trixie whispered, reaching for him. “I want you to be a part of whatever we do here tonight.”

"I know you do, but see, I know what happens when these two get together. I'm not going to stand by and watch them take away your choices, your freedom to choose, and that's what Mitch does," he paused and then addressed Brock. "I'm a little surprised you're going to allow this."

Brock shrugged. "We all have our quirks, hang-ups if you will."

"That's what you call Domination and submission?" Rory asked, shaking his head. "No, man, this is something else."

Planting a kiss on Trixie's cheek, Rory said, "I don't want any part of this, Trixie. These two know what they're doing. They'll take care of you. If you're into kink, you'll probably get off on it."

"I am into kink," she admitted. "Or at least, I think I am."

He shrugged. "Then you're with the right guys." Both men looked like they'd just heard the most beautiful confession of their natural lives. "I hope you're still into it as much tomorrow as you think you are tonight. Some gals are cut out for a submissive lifestyle, but not you, Trixie. I'll never believe it's what you truly want."

"That's bullshit, Rory," Mitch called out behind him as he walked out into the dark hallway. "How the hell would you know?"

"Because I pay attention when Trixie talks, Mitch. I don't see her as a good lay and nothing more. That's all you want from her right now. And one thing about it, you'll make someone a good Master. It's your way or the highway. Thing is, Trixie has a dad or two just like you. I don't know if they'll like the games you're playing with their daughter."

Mitch grated back visible anger. "What do you mean by that, man?"

"Damn it, we agreed that this wouldn't happen again. Not now, not here, not with her or anyone else. If things get out of hand this time, you are on your own! Do you hear me? You're on your own!"

Brock rubbed his chin. A thoughtful expression covered his face, and he tossed aside the few scattered toys Mitch had retrieved.

Mitch slammed the door and started for his bedroom. "You talk to Trixie. Make sure she understands what we expect and be damn sure she understands this thing with us isn't just for smiles and giggles. I don't want another Jordie Anne."

That was exactly what he wanted. He wanted to recapture memories. Brock took a deep breath and touched Trixie's cheek. "Have we done anything you didn't want us to do?"

“No,” she stated dryly. “What’s up with Rory?”

“He’s worried about you.”

“Because of this Jordie Anne person? What does she have to do with me?”

He draped his arm over her shoulders. “Someday I’ll tell you,” he promised and then motioned down the hall, tilting his head. “Mitch wouldn’t want this topic discussed.”

“I see,” she said. “Are you sure it’s Mitch?”

He caressed her cheek and dragged her over him. Holding her face in his hands, he said, “Later, okay?”

Smiling as sweetly as she could, she grabbed her nearby pajama pants and her top, too, since she bothered to reach in the first place. “Pudding,” she said quietly. “I’m using my safe word and hope you’ll respect my wishes.”

“Trixie, tonight is about you and new experiences. Trust me, you don’t want to walk out on this,” he advised, reaching for the nipple clamps.

She snatched the box from him and said, “Tell you what, why don’t we have *this talk* another time. That way, I’ll know what I’m getting myself into before I spread my legs for two men who obviously have a few too many secrets and not enough balls to tell me all about them.”

Brock made a sudden leap when she jumped off his lap, but he missed. She put her hand up to block him, and when she did, he immediately retaliated. “You should’ve thought about those sexy legs when I was between them, sugar. Now, the only thing I care about is how quickly I can find myself there again. If you can’t live with that, then call your daddy. Call any of them and tell them you’re coming home.”

Trixie seethed. “You want me to go home?”

“Sure, might as well,” Brock said. “Either go back to that safe ranch of yours or accept that you’re a taken woman because I swear I’m going to get in between those shapely thighs as much as I can. I don’t give a damn how many times you toss out your safe word or cry wolf. It’s where I belong. It’s where you want me. Hell, I might as well have Mitch move me into your cabin because, sweetheart, that’s where I plan to sleep all summer long.”

Chapter Eighteen

Trixie ran up the hill and, as luck would have it, passed a few senior counselors on the way. “Hey, Trixie, what’s in the box?” one of them asked.

“Did Mitch show you how to use your toys?” The tallest, and most handsome of the group, inquired.

Instead of bothering to stop for an argument, she ran faster toward her cabin. She was tired of men. Tired of sex, even though she’d technically only had a good go of it twice, and she was so over the guys at Cow Camp.

Frustrated and not really paying attention, she lost her balance and slid in the mud. She somehow managed to trip onto the porch and stay on her feet. She ran inside, locked the door and fell against it bawling her eyes out like a little baby.

She slapped her hands against the hard floor and groaned. “Look at me! I’m crying like a teenager who gave her cherry to the wrong son-of-a-bitch!” She kept her eyes closed and wiped her cheeks.

Planning to wallow in self-pity, she really had one hell of a sorrowful party going on. Hell, she could at least serve alcohol. Speaking of which, she thought all at once, she’d bet on a few beers still smothered in ice. She swiped another tear away, walked in the bathroom and slammed the door.

“To hell with men!”

Reaching for the bathroom light switch, a large hand covered hers and she gasped. “What the—”

“It’s me, Trixie,” he whispered. “And you did give it to the wrong man. Then again, any of us standing in line for it wouldn’t have been worthy of what you have.”

Rory’s mouth covered hers at once and his tongue parted her lips. “I forgot my watch,” he said moving her hand under his so he could turn the light on long enough to nod toward the nearby towel rack. “I hooked it there earlier when I helped you in the shower. I came back to get it. Never

expected to bump into you.” He rolled his hips forward and bump he did, with his hard cock leading the way. “Figured you were kind of busy by now.”

Her thin pajamas served no real purpose. She noticed it earlier. Rory confirmed it now.

“Rory,” she breathed, her hands locking in his hair. “I’m not ready for them.”

“No,” he confirmed. “And you may not be ready for me, either,” he said picking her up and hooking her legs around his waist. “But you’re going to get me, aren’t you, Trixie?”

“Yes,” she purred, unable to fight what she felt when he groped her, when he held her pinned against his cock and ripped apart her self-control while destroying any possibility of hearing the word “no.” *At Cow Camp*, she decided, *the word didn’t exist*. If it did, she outlawed it whenever she found herself in the arms of one of her hard and rugged cowboys.

Rory didn’t kiss her like he wanted to fall for her. He kissed her like he wanted to have a good time with a one night stand. In the movies, those kind of guys had a ball in bed. They still left the next morning, promising they’d call as they made off like bandits who stole away moments that never belonged to them. They snatched them anyway.

Rory pressed her back to the wall and pushed down her skimpy pants. Her top was discarded like he never even saw it. He pulled his cock out and positioned it at her entrance, immediately cursing like a sailor.

Her heart fluttered and her vagina pulsed. Oh heaven help her, surely he didn’t plan on stopping now.

“Condom?” she asked hopeful. She’d stormed away from Mitch and Brock when she’d really wanted what they were offering. Too frightened to take it, too inexperienced to handle the two of them together, she wasn’t going to let Rory slip away, too. She still had unexplainable urges, and Rory could satisfy them.

“Tell me you have one,” she pleaded against his lips as he held back his cock. He kissed her the precise way she wanted him to fuck her, his tongue moving in and out of her mouth in a hungry hurry.

He shook his head.

She lost count how many times she’d almost gotten laid in one night. She might as well chalk this up as the third time. By the look on his face, he

didn't have personal ponchos tucked away in his luggage, and he wasn't about to trot off to Mitch or Brock and ask for rubbers.

"You could pull out," she suggested, taking the time to press her breasts against his chest and run one finger over the length of his erection.

"I could get you pregnant, too, Trixie. I don't take the plunge without a jumpsuit, sugar."

"Rory," she whined. "You can't deny me. I know you want this as badly as I do."

* * * *

He kissed her hard on the mouth while his hands cruised. He touched her everywhere and he saw the lingering fires he left in his wake. "Trixie, I..."

She lapped at his lips. "I don't care. It's the wrong time of the month. You can pull out. You can stop. I trust you."

"I don't and it's irresponsible."

"I'm young," she whined. "I don't have to act responsibly, not when I need to be reckless. I'm itching for it, Rory."

She thought *she* had a scratch? He physically hurt, a true pain throbbed in between his legs, and a blow job wouldn't cut it this time. He wanted inside her. He needed to bury his cock deep inside her before Mitch and Brock corrupted her by pulling her into a world where he never wanted to go.

He framed her face.

She grabbed his cock.

"Trixie," he breathed. "I can't put you at risk."

Massaging him with both hands, she looked at him through bedroom eyes, the wanton urges burned bright. It wasn't like an ordinary hand job but instead, an extraordinary talent, a cock massage she should've been licensed to perform.

He pushed her away. "Trixie, baby, you have to stop."

"I can't," she purred, stroking him. Both hands worked over him like the woman knew lust, understood how to handle and work a man. "I'm hungry for you," she said looking down.

He believed her and damn if his cock didn't take a little stock in what she had to say, too. Maybe it was the booze. Maybe like most women, she couldn't drink without feeling a little frisky.

Damn, what hot hands. He groaned and tried to ease away from her. Deserting her was a no-can-do.

She gripped his shoulders and looked him square in the eye. "Make love to me, Rory. I trust you."

"Ah, Trixie," he said bringing her hands to his lips. "Don't you see? I don't trust myself. I really could hurt you."

"So you might hurt me. Do it anyway."

"I may not pull out," he whispered, kissing a path straight to her ear knowing once he reached his spot, if he gained the reaction he wanted, he'd eagerly give in and doom them to a month or two of worries.

"I don't care, Rory. Take me anyway."

He nipped and pulled her lobe in between his lips, tapping his tongue against her ear and whispering all sorts of promises. "If I do, I could end up falling for you."

"Fall," she said positioning his cock at her entrance. "Anyway."

"Ah, damn, Trix," he yanked her legs around his waist and sank into her pussy. Her back arched and she clawed at his shoulders. Her body invited, her lips claimed, and her small hands propelled over him. Her touch only speared him forward.

"Darlin', this ain't gonna work." He swallowed hard and breathing seemed like a sin. He should be punished for even living after having his dick buried inside of an angel.

"Fuck me, Rory. Worry about tomorrow later."

"Ah, shit," he said pushing himself higher into her channel. "Come here," he slapped one hand on her ass and another on her thigh. He then made his way to her bunk bed, where he planned to stay for a very long time.

* * * *

Rory had a way about him, a way of kissing her, a way of touching her, a way of inhaling her. Everything about the way he made love to her changed the way she felt in an instant. She felt sexy and more beautiful than

she'd ever imagined. He mashed his hands into her palms and stroked her walls while lapping at her mouth. It was as if he wanted to make sure his lips met hers as a solid match.

His body melded to hers, and he stretched her with quick strokes. Occasionally, he looked down, a smile widened his etched dimples and he'd groan or grunt. When he growled, she came unglued. Her hips thrust forward, matching a grind like something out of a movie, the kind clipped to keep the actors and actresses descent but heavy enough to make the bed shake and the sheets ripple.

Dropping his head, he kept their hands locked, their fingers entwined in a lover's link while he sipped at her nipples. "Good God, woman, you have the most beautiful breasts I've ever seen."

"Rory," she whispered.

"Shh..." he mumbled. "Let me feel you, baby. Take me. Work your legs for me."

She raised her knees and he did the rest. His cock sealed her opening, but he never stayed inside her walls long. He pressed inside of her and then withdrew. Each time he left her, he made her body ache for more. She didn't want him to leave her. Oh, hell no. She wanted everything he had to give.

"Trixie, I'm..."

"Don't pull out," she begged, digging her claws into his back and rolling her hips forward, taking the first climax he gave her like a present, one she ripped open with glee, shouting out as she came, greedy because she got what she wanted and still longed for more.

"Trixie," he groaned, rolling off of her. "Damn it, I have to stop!"

Through her short breaths, she said, "No you don't. I'm on the pill."

"A virgin on the pill. I doubt it. I don't believe you." He tried to catch his breath. After a few useless tries, he said, "Let me guess. You pulled a stunt on Brock, didn't you? He wasn't your first?"

"You were in the bathroom when I first came home tonight. You know Brock was my first. You heard my temper tantrum." She straddled his middle and reached up on the tiny shelf above her bed. She retrieved the round plastic container and tossed it on his chest.

He held it up, glanced at it, and then tossed the pills aside. "Damn if that's not the best-looking prescription of birth control I've ever seen in my life."

“I thought you might think so,” she said lowering herself over his cock again.

This time, he wasn’t gentle. He latched onto her hips before he muttered something about the bed. Then he sat up with his cock hidden deep inside her body, and he pushed her back before immediately yanking her forward again.

In a matter of seconds, they rocked in sync, the erotic see-saw effect guiding their every movement. Her climax came forward again, building and building. “Rory...coming. God, yeah, I’m coming.”

“That’s it, sweetheart. Use me, baby. Take what you want and ride me wild,” he whispered.

He brought on her pleasure. She rode his dick like an untamed animal, unbridled and free, until he thrashed around under her, biting back a smile, a curse, and all sorts of explicit sounds. That’s when she knew Rory was doomed, too.

Life as he’d once enjoyed it was over. He was no longer a single, available man. Trixie wanted him, and she was used to getting what she wanted.

Chapter Nineteen

“Son of a bitch!” Mitch screamed across the room. “Do you think you could’ve waited? We had to.”

Rory grinned. “Oh yeah,” he pointed in Brock’s direction. “He showed us how a patient man deals with blue balls. It almost cost Trixie her life, too.”

“That’s a little drastic, don’t you think?” Brock asked. After a moment of silence, just a second or so, he shrugged. “I don’t know, I guess some women might think I could fuck the life out of ’em. Evidently, I failed to tell Trixie if she let either one of you in between her legs without me around to supervise, I’d have a problem with it.”

“Give me a break,” Mitch groaned.

“I’m dead serious, man.”

Rory folded his arms over his chest and glanced outside. “She wasn’t too happy about taking the day off today. She says she’s not tired and she’s working. She wanted to save her days off to go to one of the shopping malls or something.”

“I’ll talk to her,” Mitch said picking up one of the camp schedules and tossing it aside after only a glance.

“So Brock says she’s tighter than a man’s ass.”

Rory snickered. “I haven’t been in a man’s ass so I couldn’t tell you.”

Brock narrowed his gaze. “It’s an expression.” He then pointed and said, “Looks like Trixie doesn’t mind you too well, Mitch. Did she have water ballet classes to teach today?”

“First class,” Mitch said glancing at the clock on the wall. “You two are supposed to be over at the rifle range. Get there before I fire you.” He swatted Rory on the back of his head. “I don’t need a reason to get rid of you now, you know.”

Rory closed his eyes and dramatically licked his lips. “Damn, I can still taste her.”

Mitch grunted. “Then you better cling tight to the flavor because it may be the last time. I’ve had enough of you. This thing with Trixie is going to ruin friendships before it’s over.”

“Only if you let it,” Brock stated without a smile and then added, “And you’re going to have to learn how to share a little better than you have in the past, Mitch.”

“You’re the one who’s gone all ape-shit over her. You don’t want her anywhere near us unless you give her permission.”

“I don’t want to approve anything. I only want to watch whenever she’s involved with either of you in sexual situations.”

“I hate to disappoint you,” Rory taunted. “You missed out last night.” Adding a jab, Rory said, “There’s something about a woman who can butterfly those legs. You know what I’m talking about. She rolls her hips and milks a man’s cock like she’s been doing it for years. Best of all, it’s a fresh fuck, the kind you don’t have to worry about.”

“A fresh fuck?” Mitch said staring outside in quiet observation. Trixie flirted her ass off with two of the older counselors. He’d have a talk with her about them. Those two were trouble. He turned around and addressed Brock and Rory. “I’m taking her out to supper tonight. Don’t wait up.”

“I’ll be in her bed,” Brock stated before leaving Mitch’s office. “And she’s gonna know I’m waiting for her so the two of you will have to skip dessert.”

* * * *

Mitch pressed the button on the intercom microphone. “Trixie Cartwell, please report to the lodge area now. Trixie Cartwell, report to the lodge.”

Mitch walked outside his office and looked through the screened area. He wondered what she was thinking as she strolled up the hill, taking her time but headed his way. She smiled and acted as if the whole day amused her, then again Mitch couldn’t remember seeing her with a frown. Thank God he didn’t see it the night before.

According to Brock, Trixie wasn't exactly happy when she left but she felt too uncomfortable to stay. Rory screwed everything up and then things worked out pretty good for him. Maybe he orchestrated the whole thing.

She tossed her hand up in the air and waved to Brenda. She didn't wave back. Mitch wished he hadn't hired Brenda again for another summer, but her father was an important investment banker. He feared if he didn't let her return, he'd hear from her daddy. He might still get a phone call. She acted like a scorned woman.

Looking at Trixie, he suddenly didn't feel too sorry for Brenda. Trixie had a perfect shape. She smiled easy, like happiness followed her around and made her feel at ease with herself and her choices. She'd made a few bad ones since arriving at Cow Camp, two that he knew about. God help him, he was bound and determined to make it three.

Trixie opened the rickety door and it slammed with a creak. It sounded like chalk scraped over a short blackboard.

She turned around and stared at it. "You need to fix that," she said.

"I need to fix a lot of things," he growled, grabbing her hand and leading her into his office, which they bypassed and then headed straight for his apartment.

"Oh, this is serious," she teased. "I'm being dragged away to your compound."

"Don't tempt me any more than you have, Trixie," he warned. "I'm here to talk, but if you push me, just say the right thing to the wrong camp coordinator and I'll move schedules around and then tie you to my bed for the day."

* * * *

Trixie shook where she stood. She probably added a few too many quakes and shivers because Mitch started to offer her something, probably a drink or a chair but took a double take and changed his mind. "Damn it. You were warned."

He picked her up and slung her over his right shoulder like she was a gal who needed a good spanking. After the last two days, she did, but she also needed a few hours without a man, too.

She kicked and squirmed. "Put me down, Mitch."

“No,” he said stomping toward his bedroom. Once there, he tossed her on the bed and pointed his finger. “First of all, you work for me. You’ll do what I tell you to do.”

“Yes, Master,” she drawled, grinning.

“Trixie,” he began.

“Mitch.” She didn’t let him finish.

“What I meant by that didn’t have a thing to do with Domination and Submission.”

“The hell it didn’t,” she said. “Ever since you found out I have three fathers, you put two and two together and realized I’m not exactly sheltered.”

Mitch chuckled. He backed away from the bed, and she crossed her ankles, bracing her palms behind her.

“Since Brock was your first, I’m betting that’s precisely what you are. Three overprotective daddies who don’t want their little girl to walk the same path they’ve taken, I’d say you aren’t only sheltered but you’re so inexperienced that you don’t know what to do with a cock when you have one.”

“Is that a dare, Mitch?”

“I told you, Trixie. Don’t tempt me.”

“You want it?” she taunted, fingering the top of her shirt. “Do you?”

“I think we both understand what it is I want. It’s the reason Rory didn’t stick around last night and the only excuse you had to run flying into his arms. You’re afraid of what I need, what I want, and what I think I can have when I’m with you.”

“What makes you any different than Brock?” she asked, curious.

Mitch strolled across the room and down the hall. She could see him in the kitchen. He reached in the refrigerator and pulled out two sodas. When he came back, he handed off one of the ice-cold cans, almost deliberately making sure their hands didn’t touch, their fingers didn’t meet.

“Trixie, Brock has some kind of romantic notion about you. I’m not sure you’re ready to handle what he has in store.”

“Really?” she asked. “And you’re trying to save me, I take it.”

“No, you don’t need saving. But what I want is different than what Brock expects.”

“And you’re different how?” With her ankles crossed and one hand to the bed, her body twisted back and forth like she wanted to provoke him for pure amusement.

“Brock is already possessive of you. He wants to spend the night with you tonight.”

“So?”

“And the one after that. He wants to have couple housing or something!”

She laughed. “Rory wouldn’t go for it so don’t worry.”

Mitch looked confused. “What does Rory have to do with this?”

“I like Rory.”

“I know about last night.”

“I like you and Brock.”

“Brock will be the one in your bed every night. You can count on that much, unless...”

“Unless what?” she probed.

“Unless we’re all together.”

“Here?”

“Sometimes,” he said.

“Exactly like I thought. You’re more like Brock than you care to admit.”

Mitch sat down. He reached over her shapely legs and set the can on the nightstand. “We’re a lot alike, but we’re not without our significant differences.”

“Like what?”

Mitch took the can from her hand and laced her fingers through his. “For starters, I want to fuck you. He wants to love you.”

“No point in dancing around the subject, huh?”

“You’ve known it since we met.”

“I have,” she admitted.

“And I want it on my terms.”

“I imagine so,” she said.

“You knew that, too, from the beginning and I wonder why.”

“Why I recognized you as a Dom with certain fetishes?”

“Fetishes,” he deadpanned. What a beautiful word to fall from sensual lips. He took a deep breath. “Trixie, when you first met me, what did you think?”

Zeus. She didn't bother telling him. His ego was large enough. "I thought you looked like a whole lot of fun."

He tossed his head back, and his laughter filled the room. "I'm sure it was the first thing that came to mind."

"It is," she purred. "What did you think about me?"

Dropping her hand, he pressed his palm to her gut. Bracing himself over her, his body didn't fall on top of hers as he placed distance between them.

Uh-oh, she thought. *Here we go.*

"Well?" she asked.

His jaw set and his eyes darkened. "I thought about how much I wanted you in my bed, bound by thin restraints, furry handcuffs, and crossties across your body. I thought about seeing you arch for me, your nipples pointed and hard, your pussy weeping and yet stuffed with a toy vibrating so loud that the hum of it by itself filled the room with a delicious sloshing noise. Slurping sounds later filling the room, too, my mouth covering your opening, my tongue pushing high inside your pussy, and there's more, too, Trixie."

She gulped. "I think that's plenty."

She started to move, and he quickly lowered his body, striking her with his covered cock. She felt the strength of his erection pressing against her crotch.

"I thought about my dick stuffed in your mouth, your fingers twirling high inside your twat, and your moans and cries leading me to the edge without pushing me over. I want you Trixie Cartwell. I don't give a damn what Brock wants for you or what Rory doesn't want you to have. And your parents? I don't even care what they want for you, or you may even want for yourself. Right now, none of it concerns me. What I need to do is take you and mold you into the kind of person I want you to become for my pleasure."

The excitement washed over her and she shivered. The perverse and twisted nature of the dominant male living so deep within him, made her senses come alive. She couldn't wait to see if he bound and gagged her, tied her up, and made her beg. She was wet, even in the aftermath of some pretty intense loving the previous night. She was filled with curiosity, even though Brock and then Rory, left her sated.

“So, now you know precisely what I thought when I formed first impressions.”

“Yeah,” she whispered. “Now, I know.”

Chapter Twenty

Trixie glanced around the dimly-lit restaurant. An older woman with a suspicious smile led her to a small corner table. They didn't exchange words, and the lack of polite conversation didn't bother Trixie. Her mind wandered somewhere else.

Mitch asked her to meet him there and for what—to stand her up? Per his request, she had to log their dinner as time-off so she could sign out at the gate. As far as she knew, Mitch left a few hours ahead of her. No one would know what was going on between them, except maybe Brock and Rory, and they wouldn't have to guess where she was. The first place they'd look would be Mitch's quarters, and if she had to guess, one of them would wait there for her and the other would pace the porch of her cabin.

Yeah, right, she thought. *Get over yourself!*

A petite brunette approached her with a menu in hand. "Is someone joining you or are you dining alone?"

Trixie scanned the crowded dining room. "I'm meeting a friend, but I'm late. Maybe he's already left."

She smiled. "What's his name?"

"Mitch Colony."

"Is he the kind of man who makes a woman swoon the second she sees him?"

Trixie sighed. "Yes, unfortunately, he is."

"Tall, dark and handsome doesn't even start to cover it?"

"Yep, you got him. I guess he left, huh?"

"Nope, he went to the men's room. He asked for a private booth. He's behind the divider wall over there," she pointed.

"Thank you," Trixie said.

When she rounded the corner, she spotted him. She walked toward him but she wanted to run, fall right into his arms and ask him to deliver on all

the sweet threats he told her about earlier. It was a tad premature so she took her own sweet time going to him.

It wasn't every day she found this kind of man waiting for her. He looked so sexy in his khaki pants and tight-fitting pink Polo. Sure enough, the cowboy cleaned up nice.

"You're late." He leaned in and kissed her cheek. Then, in front of God and all the patrons of the restaurant, he caressed her ass.

"Mitch, please, we're in public." She slid around the booth and cupped her hands under her chin. "I didn't want to raise too much suspicion by taking the night off, and I couldn't get by the stables unnoticed. I think Stephen saw me leave."

"I really don't care who sees us, Trixie."

"You don't?"

"Hell no," he shook his head. "The only reason we left separately was so we could make it out without questions. Once we have some time together, I don't care if the whole camp staff sees us return."

That was a relief. Sneaking around didn't do a lot for her self-esteem.

He placed his hand on her inner thigh and changed the subject without much effort. "Did you wear it?" He nipped at her ear and she felt the heat pool in between her legs when he mentioned *it*. Earlier, he'd given her specific instructions. She'd planned on following them but chickened out.

"No," she whispered behind her clasped hands. "Surely you didn't expect me to walk in here, buzzing as I walked by every table. Besides, in this mini-skirt, what if the thing fell out?"

"That plug wasn't going anywhere in your tight ass," he muttered before he dragged his lips across hers in a seductive public show of affection.

She closed her eyes, and he moved his hand inches from her vagina. "Good girl," he whispered against her lips. "You didn't wear panties."

"It was a trade, a good compromise, I decided."

Mitch set his jaw, worked his expression into one possessed by a very dominant-looking creature. He reached around her neck, drawing her closer. Lowering his lips to her ear, he nipped. "Trixie, you make deals with Brock, compromise with Rory, but with me it's different."

His fingers twirled at her entrance. "Do we understand one another?"

"Oh, God, Mitch please don't, not here." All he had to do right then was dip inside and she'd explode around his fingers.

Even though all the tables were covered with long, dark tablecloths, Trixie felt like every man in the place watched them with too much curiosity. Most of them had enough lust in their eyes to prove they knew what they witnessed. Trixie tried to swat his hand away and he pressed his thumb to her clit.

“No, Trixie.”

“Mitch, this is ridiculous. We’re in public.”

Ridiculous? Then why mash down on his hand? She should’ve just yanked him around the wrist and held him to her vagina.

“I noticed.” he declared. “I’ve also noticed something else about you. What you say with your lips doesn’t always jibe with what you do with those sweet hips. You pressed down on my fingertips, Trixie.”

“Uh-huh, then if you don’t mind, can you keep your hands to yourself?” Her knees closed and trapped his forearm.

“I do, actually.” His middle and ring finger plunged into her core with a scooping motion. “And I think you need to learn *who to mind and when*.”

Her excitement ran over his fingertips. Embarrassment washed over her. “Mitch...”

He whispered in her ear. “You’re going to come for me, Trixie.” He withdrew his fingers and then shifted his weight. To her horror, he brought his glistening fingers to his lips and licked them clean before he slid his hand under the table once more.

“Yum, you taste like honey and vanilla tonight.”

More moisture pooled at her opening. “Mitch, men are looking over here. Their women are stretching their necks so they can see what we’re doing. Look at the couple over there, they look like they just ate—oh, God, stop—their last meal while watching an adult show. I mean—”

He tapped her clit, and her pussy pulsed with an indescribable sensation, burning for more manual stimulation. She focused on him then. He moved his lips over the rim of his champagne glass, and his delicious tongue swiped the top. With one hand still lodged in between her thighs, he set his flute down and brushed her cheek with his knuckles.

“You have my permission to come whenever you feel like it tonight, Trixie. It’s my gift to you, but if you don’t come before we leave here tonight, I’ll punish you, and you won’t like the punishment I choose.”

His threat sounded like a challenge.

“Maybe I’ll love it. You never know.”

He grabbed her hand and pushed her palm against his pants. “Trust me, you won’t. Because Trixie, I don’t care who sees or hears me. Care to guess where I want to come most?”

She swallowed a few too many times, and he took it as an answer.

“Exactly, and I wouldn’t mind having your head in my lap right now, so be very careful when you decide to dance with the devil, lover.”

Their waitress returned a few minutes later, and Mitch swiped Trixie’s open menu from her hands. “We’ll have two shrimp cocktails, a steak and chicken combo to share, two salads with dressing on the side. What kind of salad dressing would you like, Trixie?”

“You mean I get to make a decision, here?”

Mitch gripped her knee and said, “No, now you don’t. Bring us both your house dressing on the side, please.”

The waitress acted like she’d either waited on Mitch in the past and knew his tactics or worse, expected this kind of behavior from the patrons. After she was gone, Trixie scoured the room and came to the right conclusion.

“What kind of restaurant is this?”

Mitch smirked. “It took you longer than I expected. You *were sheltered*, weren’t you, pretty sub?”

“I haven’t agreed to be your sub, and until we reach some kind of understanding or agreement, I’d appreciate it if you’d...oh, Mitch stop.” She gasped as his finger moved in and out of her pussy. “Please, Mitch. Listen to me. You have to quit or I’ll embarrass us both.”

“I told you. You’ll come, and since a lot of the women here will do the same thing, you might as well go first. Why not? You stole the show when you walked in here. Take center stage now.”

Mitch’s hand cupped under her while his fingers moved like he specifically trained them to manipulate and control a submissive woman, or at least one who needed to train as *his* submissive woman. He took her to the brink of an orgasm, and Trixie slapped her hands against the leather booth right next to her bottom. “I have to go to the bathroom,” she said sliding away from him.

"I'll walk you," he suggested, sliding to the other side of the booth. They passed their waitress on the way, and she acknowledged them with a nod.

Mitch pointed. "Couple restrooms are on the right."

Trixie stopped outside the door. "Mitch, I need to go. You know, really go tinkle."

"Tinkle?" he asked amused. "What are you, a kid?"

"No, but I am a woman, and the men's room is down there."

"You aren't a couple all by yourself," he said pointing to the sign. He quickly entered the restroom lounge area and pulled her with him.

She noticed four stalls. Fortunately, Trixie thought, they were closed areas completely sealed by doors and walls, kind of like those found in the truck stops. Mitch knocked on the first two and discovered they were occupied. He tapped on the third door, and when no one responded, he led her to the most immaculate bathroom stall Trixie had ever visited. It had a sink and a toilet, brass fixtures, thick towels piled high on the vanity and a large bench covered in velvet, right in front of the potty.

"You have got to be kidding me," she said glaring at the arrangement. There was a mirror directly behind the bench. She stared in it and wondered what kind of woman enjoyed going to the bathroom in front of her lover.

He sat down on the long bench and said, "Don't mind me."

Mitch's size increased as he sat perfectly still watching her. "I'll enjoy seeing you. It turns me on, Trixie."

"It turns you on to watch your lovers use the bathroom?"

"I thought I made it clear to you today, but apparently not. I'm going to train you as my submissive."

"Oh goodies, I guess this means you'll give me a collar to wear and everything, huh? Do you know what my father Kane will do to you?"

Mitch chuckled. "Nice try. I'm not afraid of him, Trixie. I'm not scared of any of them. They'll learn to accept your decision and accept me if we stay together after you're schooled appropriately."

"And you're just the guy to do that, huh?" she asked, dodging for the door. He slapped his hand against the hard surface and stopped her departure.

"Sit down, Trixie. If you don't need to go to the bathroom, then take a seat on the bench and finger yourself. I want to watch."

“You’d get off on that, huh?”

“Damn right, I would.”

Trixie couldn’t believe her ears. Oh Lord have mercy, she knew one man who would go the hell off if she decided to share this experience with him. No, she decided, she couldn’t tattle to Brock just because Mitch made her uncomfortable. She was, after all, attracted to him and sort of jumped into her current situation all by herself. “Mitch, could we take this somewhere a little more private?”

“Honey, it doesn’t get any better than this. We’re alone and no one can hear us. The members of this club are protected, and the walls are soundproof. I’m on the board.”

“I thought we came here to eat,” she said. “I thought this was a restaurant.”

“It is,” he said. “And a bar. A kink club. Something you probably don’t have back home.”

She rolled her eyes. “Yeah, right. I think my mom was one of the founding members of a club back home.”

Mitch raised his eyebrows. “Don’t knock these clubs until you enjoy the benefits of them. This is just our first date. If you’re a good girl and mind me, I’ll take you dancing the next time we have a night out.”

“If I *mind* you?” God, she hated that word.

“Finger your *cunt*.”

And that one.

“What will you do for me if I do?”

“Nothing,” he said.

“Then forget it,” she hummed. “I don’t do anything without a reason, and if you can’t give me a few good ones to finger myself—especially when I have a hard cock here in front of me—then you may have to enjoy your dinner alone.”

“Suit yourself,” he said, placing his hand on the doorknob.

“Mitch!”

He locked the door and wheeled around to face her. “Trixie?”

“Damn you.”

He snarled. “What’s wrong? Are you afraid?”

Terrified.

“Are you?” he grated out.

“Yes,” she said softly.

“Good, we’ll start with overcoming your fear, your apprehension and move forward from there.”

“What if I don’t want to be any man’s submissive?”

Mitch took a deep breath and pointed impatiently to the bench. “Hike your skirt up, lay down, and finger yourself.”

Reluctantly, Trixie stretched out on the bench. This wasn’t easy like her experience with Rory, or even Brock. It was embarrassing to an extent. Degrading in a sense and exciting in another.

“Mitch? I don’t like this side of you.”

His expression softened and he approached her. He knelt, spread her knees and caressed his way right into her pussy. His fingers parted her lips and the middle one slipped inside her vagina.

She closed her eyes and released a deep breath. Conquering Mitch and his ideas wasn’t an easy task.

“I feel your heat, Trixie,” he stated flatly. “I want to taste you, but I have more control than you’ll ever want to see in a man. Do you understand?”

She nodded. “And so do I, Mitch. I’m the one who waited for over eighteen years to give up my virginity.”

He removed his fingers and slapped her bare pussy. “And you had so much self control that you gave it up within a few weeks of arriving at my place with your birth control pills and box full of unopened toys,” he growled. “Why is that?”

“I...”

He slapped her pussy again. “Answer me with the truth.”

“I wouldn’t dream of giving you anything else,” she whispered.

“Do it now, and I’ll reward you,” he said.

“I’ve been on birth control for a long time. My mom made me go on the pill early when twenty percent of the girls in my senior class ended up pregnant.”

“And the toys?”

“The toys were my way of bringing along some summer entertainment. I figured at night when I’m alone I could learn more about my sexuality. You know, read up on some things while I’m away from home, and maybe even practice.”

“With the toys?” he asked, amusement lighting his eyes, shading his cheeks.

“Yes,” she said squirming. The heat between her legs had gotten hotter with the mention of her artificial playthings.

Mitch pulled her skirt over her hips. He sat down on the edge of the bench and worked at his zipper. “Come here and give me a blow job, lover. After seeing your pussy glisten and those pretty little pink lips pucker when my hand came down across your mound, I need to come. I want your mouth opening and closing around my cock when I do.”

A few minutes later, Trixie’s hands gripped Mitch’s knees and his cock thrust between her jaws. He locked gazes with her and spoke to her as she sucked him. “That’s the way I like it, sub. You’ll never learn how to please a man without me or Brock to show you, ah yeah...that’s it. Go down on me, subbie. Suck it, darlin’.”

She mumbled against his skin and nodded her head. The mere mention of Brock brought her into a realm of unmatched excitement. Even with Mitch’s cock in between her cheeks, her mouth watered when she thought of Brock.

“Good girl,” he said.

Trixie slid her hand up her skirt, and Mitch sat upright when he noticed. “What are you doing?”

She released him and lowered her eyes, stating, “I’m pleasuring you and myself, too.”

“Place your hands on my knees where I can see them,” he said growling.

“So you get off in my mouth, but if I finger myself now, it’s against your rules?”

“That’s right,” he said, fisting his cock and rubbing it over her bottom lip.

“This doesn’t work for me,” she said standing. “At all.”

“I know what will,” he countered, grabbing for her wrist.

“Apparently not,” she replied, wiping her mouth and grabbing a tissue from the nearby dispenser. “If you did then I’d probably be coming about right now with your cock stroking me right past the first orgasm and straight into the second. But it’s your loss as much as mine.” She winked, picked up

her handbag, and marched out. Then she hit the emergency door exit with one arm and she ran like hell.

Chapter Twenty-One

“What do you mean you don’t know where she is?” Brock demanded. “What the fuck did you do with her?”

“What did I do with her?” Mitch pursed his lips and turned to walk away. His clenched fists didn’t need to meet the underside of Brock’s jaw, but damn if they wouldn’t fit there without too much effort.

Rory walked in and shook his head. “She’s still not in her cabin. I left a note on her bed in case she comes back. Where did you take her, anyway?”

Brock glanced up and then back down. He shook his head. “You have to ask? Where does he always take them?”

Rory scratched his cheek, in deep thought. “I guess Trixie doesn’t like public exhibition, huh?”

“That’s not what she had a problem with,” Mitch stated flatly.

Brock frowned. “Please tell me you didn’t push so hard that you pushed her away altogether.”

“I wish I could,” Mitch said.

“I hope he did,” Rory said. “In which case,” he added smugly, “both of you would be SOL, huh?”

Brock paced a few steps before he reluctantly said, “She’s not going to submit, Mitch. Not for me, you, or anyone else. The only reason she seemed receptive at first was because she had a few drinks in her.”

Rory released a heavy sigh. “This is a problem for you boys, and I understand, but for me, it’s like soft country music to my ears.”

Mitch sneered. “Yeah, well, you may be singing the blues if you don’t put your thinking cap on quick.”

Brock grunted. “Damn you, Mitch, there’s something you aren’t telling us. What is it?”

Mitch picked up the phone book and then slammed it down against his desk. Rory’s head jerked to attention.

“Do we need to call the cops this time?” Brock asked.

“I don’t know,” Mitch said wearily.

“Damn it! Start talking!” Brock stormed across the room, leaned over the wide desk and glared at Mitch.

Mitch realized he held all the answers, except the most important one. He had no idea where Trixie ran when she left him. “She’s been missing a few hours.”

“How long?” Brock demanded, his voice louder than before.

“Five, maybe six,” Mitch said following Rory and Brock out of the office. “She should have her ass spanked for this kind of stunt.”

Brock turned around fast and grabbed Mitch by the shirt. “You mean the last time you saw her she was running out of the restaurant?”

“Yeah,” Mitch admitted glancing at the clock. “She should’ve been here by now if she’s coming back to camp.”

Rory stared at the open sky the second they stepped out of the lodge and Brock looked too. “You think you’ll find your answers in the stars?”

“No,” Rory snapped. “I’m saying a prayer that she’s all right and hoping she’ll find her way back tonight. If Mitch romped her in public, it’s hard to say who might have picked her up.”

“I didn’t ‘romp her in public’ like you think.”

“Oh, excuse me,” Rory drawled. “What I meant to say is, since you had your fingers stuffed inside her twat in the middle of a very public place, she’s probably been exposed to all sorts of ugly characters. You know the type, don’t you Mitch? Don’t you remember what kind of attention you have a habit of drawing?”

“Don’t,” Brock warned with thick sarcasm. “We’d hate to push Mitch over the edge.”

Rory continued, “I’m going to say what should’ve been said a long time ago. I’m not afraid of you, Mitch. I never approved of the games you played or the way you pushed young women into the lifestyle. You drove one out of her mind. Wasn’t it enough for you to push Jordie Anne to her limits?”

Mitch looked away. His eyes watered, and he had to blink in order to see clearly. He stormed off in the other direction and headed for the lake rather than the hill.

“Don’t walk away now!” Rory exclaimed. “Hell, if you’re such a man, you might want to consider throwing a punch or two, beating up on a man when there’s not a good looking woman around to torture.”

“That’s it,” Brock muttered. “Let’s go.” He took Rory by the arm and tried to pull him out of a brewing fight, the kind of brawl that started once five years earlier but was never quite finished.

Mitch would finish it, by God, if Rory decided to take his swing.

“Let me go.” He snapped his arm away and started toward Mitch.

“If you come one step closer, Rory,” Mitch said evenly. “I will break both your arms. I know what I’ve done in my past, but I am not going to stand here and let you place all blame on me. I’ve had a few drinks and I’m not the man to fight tonight. Walk the fuck away.”

Brock patted Rory’s shoulder. “Listen to him, Rory. Let’s go do some good here. You can check around town, and I’ll search some of the local dives, see if I can find anything open after-hours.”

Rory took a step but then turned back around. Mitch didn’t look up. Instead, he kept right on walking.

* * * *

Stephen couldn’t believe how much luck he’d had since joining the staff at Cow Camp. He’d started out as the outsider but soon discovered the women on the place loved a good romp with the stable guy, especially since he had the booze and the perfect place to party.

Prison didn’t offer much in the way of sex with the opposite sex, and he’d been a horny bastard without a place to aim. Now, he had plenty of pussy offered. Occasionally, he even turned it down, though rarely.

He hit the lamp and stared at the clock when he heard a light knock on his door. His guest was probably another one of the junior counselors looking for a little private party. He’d fucked so much in the last few days that he really needed to give his pecker a rest. *Then again*, he thought as he made his way to the door scratching his three-day old beard, *he had early-morning wood*.

“Are you there, Stephen?”

He stopped short of welcoming his visitor and stared down at his proud erection. “Trixie? Is that you?”

“Yes,” she said softly, knocking once more. “Hurry, can you open up?”

“Sure,” he replied. “But excuse the indecent exposure.”

Trixie rushed by him and stood in the middle of the tiny living room. “I’m so mad I could bite a dick off.”

Stephen immediately put his hands in front of his diminishing size. “Well, uh, let me grab some clothes and you can tell me which cock it is you’re ready to chew.” He hoped it wasn’t his.

“Don’t get dressed,” she snapped.

Oh no, he thought. She knew who he was and more importantly, she’d connected the dots and understood the role he once played in her sweet little momma’s life.

Cautiously, he sat down on the edge of his chair. “You caught me in the middle of dreams,” he confessed still careful to keep his cock and balls well covered by not only his boxers but also his folded hands.

Trixie paced. “I am not into whips, chains, binds, or handcuffs,” she announced.

Stephen wasn’t sure what this had to do with anything, but he finally said, “Okay.”

“And I don’t like to be publicly groped in front of old men and old women. If groping needs to be done, it should be done behind closed doors.”

“I agree?”

She continued her walk across his living area. “And if I’m going to fuck, I’ll be damned if I want to do it in the bathroom.”

Stephen felt his cock twitch. “Uh, Trixie?”

“And,” she said with a finger held high in the air. “If I want to fuck myself, I know precisely how to do it and can do so without instructions!”

Shit. He stared at her chest, the easy rise, the full swell of perfect mounds with each and every deep breath she took and then released before drawing in again. God, she was more beautiful than her mother. She possessed, if it were remotely possible, more spunk, too.

“Trixie,” he cleared his throat. “Have I made you think I wanted public sex from you or something?”

“Don’t you? Every man here seems to want to fuck me and then either tell about it later or have an audience when he finally scores.”

Stephen reached for her. His heart pounded against his chest. This wasn’t at all what he had planned for the daughter of Peyton Storm

Cartwell. Oh no, he had a lot of ideas, daydreams and fantasies to fulfill, but this moment changed him. The way she looked at him, the way she studied his expressions, and seemed to turn to him in her time of need, ready to expose herself without worrying about the consequences.

Trixie buried her face in her hands and released something that sounded like a muffled animalistic cry. “What am I doing? I’ve lost my ever-lovin’ mind coming in here like this and spouting off like a mad woman.”

“You’re an angry woman, apparently.”

“You’re damn straight,” she exclaimed, dropping her hands. “I’m mad enough to bite a...”

Stephen automatically blocked the front of his shorts again and smiled.

Trixie squinted her eyes and then moved toward him. “I’m not going to bite a dick, for the record. It’s just an expression.”

“Yes, well, I prefer suck to bite.”

“Are you asking me to suck your dick?” she asked smoothly.

“Trixie, I think there are other things you can do well without propositioning the men around here.”

“Do you think that’s what I’ve been doing?” she asked, her cheeks turning red all at once.

“No, but I think you’re promiscuous, don’t you?”

Her mouth dropped. “You what?”

“First Brock, then Rory, and I’m assuming since you’re here tonight that Mitch had his turn, too. Is it me now?”

Trixie blinked. “I was a virgin when I came here. Thank you very much.”

“Yeah, right,” he said walking away from her and heading to the fridge for a beer. “I’m sure all the other counselors up on the hill tell the same tall tale. Thanks to Cow Camp, you can now kiss your white wedding gown goodbye, right?”

Trixie flopped down on his sofa. “I never wanted a white wedding gown.”

“You probably don’t want a marriage bed either, huh Trixie?”

“I wanted to play the field first.”

“Think you’ve played around enough?” he asked tossing his beer cap at her playfully.

“No,” she admitted. “See, that’s the problem. There’s something wrong with me.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah,” she whispered.

“Tell me.”

* * * *

She looked at him so hard, she saw double. It wouldn’t be a hardship to see a few Stephens. He was good looking and, good grief, a woman who wanted a little something below the belt wouldn’t have to search long. His cock stood proud and he showed it off.

Stephen must’ve been perfectly aware of the assessment. He leaned back on the kitchen counter and braced himself against his elbows. “Tell me why you think something is wrong with you, Trixie.”

She swallowed tightly and tried to look away from his dick. “Why are you standing like that?” She couldn’t concentrate on anything else except the way his thick penis demanded attention protruding almost straight through his shorts. Maybe he wanted to draw a curious eye or an eager hand...hers.

He grinned. The dimples he exposed were almost as cute as his cock was dangerous. Both had more appeal than she wanted to find at two in the morning. “Does it bother you?” he glanced down and back up. “Does it?”

“Yes,” she whispered unable to move even though she wanted to go to him.

“Want something to drink?” he asked softly.

“Yes,” she said.

He walked back in the kitchen and opened the refrigerator. “Beer, wine cooler?”

“Beer.”

He set the bottle on the counter, opened the tiny drawer next to the fridge, and retrieved a bottle opener. Trixie thought it looked like he pulled something out of the drawer and slipped it into the top of the bottle, but she shook off her paranoia. Why would Stephen put something in her beer?

He walked over and handed her the bottle. “Bottoms up.”

She stared at his beer and then her own. “Did you put something in this?”

“Here sugar,” he said, extending his arm and tilting his own beer in her direction. “Want mine instead?”

“No,” she told him. “I want to get drunk. Forget.”

“Then you came to the right place, sweetheart. I’ll make sure you don’t remember a thing.”

Chapter Twenty-Two

“Kane Cartwell.” He snapped the phone up on the second ring when the caller ID showed Cow Camp.

“Hello, Mr. Cartwell?”

“Yes, it’s Kane.”

“It’s Mitch Colony.”

“Hello, Mitch. Everything all right out there? How’s Trixie?” Kane clutched the phone and listened, eyeing Braden, Evan, and Peyton as he spoke. “Has she created any trouble for you yet?”

“Mr. Cartwell,” Mitch began. “Trixie is missing and we think we know who she’s with but we—”

“What do you mean, she’s missing?”

“She’s gone, sir.”

“Gone? She just vanished?” Kane asked motioning for Braden to pick up another extension.

“No, sir, she’s apparently decided she has a thing for our stable manager. She ran off with him to...to...”

“Spit it out!” Kane exclaimed.

“They supposedly went to Gatlinburg, Tennessee to get married. I thought you should know.”

“Oh, dear God in heaven above,” Kane said evenly, the tip of anger edging its way into the conversation. “This fellow she’s run off with. You’re sure she went willingly?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What’s his name?”

“Mr. Cartwell, she left a note. Your daughter also left a trail of broken hearts, too, so I’m pretty sure she knew what she was doing. She took the time to address each one of us independently.”

“You have the note?”

“Yes,” Mitch said.

“Fax it to me. Now who is she with and where did they go?”

“I told you, Gatlinburg.”

“Where in Gatlinburg? There are probably a dozen or more chapels there, never mind how many honeymoon resorts.”

“I don’t know.”

Braden interrupted, “Mitch, It’s Braden Cartwell. What’s this guy’s name? What do you know about him?”

“He’s our stable manager. It’s his first summer with us. He’s all right, as far as we can tell.”

“His name, damn it,” Kane pressed.

“Stephen Pratchert,” Mitch said.

“Oh my God,” Braden said.

“You know him?” Mitch asked. “He hasn’t been in the area long. Said he just moved here from...”

“A state prison,” Kane’s anger roared through the phone. “He’s a damn murderer who slipped through the cracks and walked out of prison nearly a month ago. Apparently, he knew exactly where he was headed.”

“Mr. Cartwell, I’ll put the local authorities all over this. There are a few of us here that will help you in any way we can.”

“Help us?” Braden yelled. “I think you’ve helped us right into burying our daughter!”

Kane pursed his lips and stared at Peyton before he glared at Braden. Both men slammed their phones down simultaneously.

“Kane?” Peyton gripped the table. “Braden?”

“It’s going to be all right, Peyton,” Kane said. “I give you my word. We’re going to get her back.”

“How the hell can you promise me anything when you don’t even know where she is!”

* * * *

Mitch slowly returned the phone to the cradle. He stared at the computer monitor. How had he missed this? He glanced up at Brock and Rory when they entered his office. Their expressions told the sorrowful tale.

“You both listened in?”

Brock narrowed his gaze. "You didn't check him out, did you?"

Mitch shook his head, and Brock barreled over the desk. He only took one step on the top before he jumped Mitch and they rolled to the floor.

"You sorry son-of-a-bitch!" Brock yelled, drawing his fist back.

When Brock's arm went up in the air, Mitch never struggled. If he'd tried to stop the blow, block the punch, the strike he wanted to receive would've been easier for Brock to deliver.

Instead, he just looked at him, waiting for it. He deserved the best a man in love had to give. Mitch knew Brock fell head over heels for Trixie, and he risked her life when he cut corners and didn't check out references. Yeah, he deserved Brock's punch.

"This isn't going to solve anything," Rory said taking a seat behind Mitch's desk and immediately tugging the keyboard closer. "How does the loser spell his last name?"

"It's Pratchert, P-r-a-t-c-h-e-r-t. The way it sounds."

Brock jerked Mitch up by his collar. "You've never cared what kind of people you put out there with these kids, have you?"

"Of course I care," Mitch replied.

"No, you don't," Rory said, taking Brock's side, and why wouldn't he? Mitch never expected Rory to side with him.

Rory continued, "You look for cheap labor, someone who cares more about room and board than the money you put in their hand at the end of the summer. The rest of us are from wealthy families, typically sent here for some kind of good service deed our families want to see us perform before stepping into the real world."

"Rory," Brock said staring at the computer. "That's him."

They focused on the article Rory easily found online. Brock slapped his hand against the desk and continued to glare at Mitch. He felt his sorrow and his pain, but most of all Mitch saw the fury, the anger building by the second.

"Of course it's him. See how easy it is to find a person's past when you have a minute to spare? If a man has a record, a past he wants to hide, it's not real easy to do with the Internet." He slapped his forehead. "Damn, why didn't Mitch think of this?"

Mitch tucked his arms behind him and leaned against the wall. "You were right about Jordie, you know."

Brock and Rory kept reading what they could find on the computer. He realized they were only half paying attention to him, but he developed an unexplainable and urgent need to clear his conscience.

“I loved her so much that I wanted her to do things my way. She asked me to take things slow and I couldn’t. I was afraid she’d leave, you know?”

“She did leave,” Rory reminded, pointing out something of interest so Brock could continue reading at the same time.

“I drove her away,” Mitch muttered.

“Did the same thing to Trixie, too, didn’t you?” Brock grated out. “Look, I don’t intend to revisit the past right now. The only thing I have time for is to find out more about this sorry bastard you hired.”

Rory stood up, pushing his chair back at the same time. “Oh, my God look,” he pointed out the reason why Trixie Cartwell was a person of interest to Stephen Pratchert.

“What is it?” Mitch asked.

Brock read it and then translated. “He was involved in some kind of shooting the year Peyton Cartwell graduated from high school. He blames Trixie’s mother and her dads for the time he spent in prison.”

The three men cursed aloud, and Brock ran for the door, yelling behind him, “I’ve got to talk to the local guys. Pratchert is going to kill Trixie if we don’t find him.”

Chapter Twenty-Three

Trixie was awake. She didn't have her eyes open, but she was conscious. The throbbing headache worsened when her head wobbled against the pillow under her. Everything seemed like a dream, like she lurked around the parameters of a nightmare. With her palm flat against her spinning head, she rolled over and bumped into someone.

"Brock?" she called out when she opened her eyes. She focused on the face in front of her. She felt like a dog. It wasn't Brock. Of course not, she thought. She'd ran for Stephen's place when Mitch pissed her off. Now, she was in bed with him. Made sense, right?

She gulped. No, none of this seemed logical.

Stephen moved over her. "Is that any way to address your husband first thing in the morning? Call him another man's name?" He rolled over her, bracing himself with the headboard behind them.

"Stephen, I'm sorry," she muttered. Did he say husband? Wait. Stop. Turn back time. "Wait a minute." She pushed him off of her and glared straight ahead.

"What's wrong, sweetheart?" he asked, brushing the stray hair out of her eyes.

Trixie tried to focus. "Why is my head exploding?"

"You drank everyone under the table last night," he said. "Don't you remember?"

Trixie searched recent memories and came up short. No, she didn't come up short. She came up empty all the way around. "Where did we go?"

Stephen took her left hand and kissed her knuckles. When he released it, she gasped. She stared down at the ring on her hand. On her third finger, she wore a tiny rock. An itty-bitsy one, not the kind of diamond she once imagined when she'd thought of marriage. She also noticed something else. She was most definitely not at The Ritz.

She focused on her surroundings. It looked like a dingy hotel room. One found in a horror movie complete with flashing yellow lights and chain-link locks that popped when the killer stormed inside the room, killing the hotel guests staying there.

“Stephen, I don’t remember what happened. What day is it?”

“Let’s see,” he began. “It’s Sunday, I think.”

“You think?”

He glanced at the digital clock on the bedside table. “It’s three o’clock, and I hope it’s Sunday. I’d hate to think we’re going to get kicked out of here. I paid for a stay through Monday morning.”

“What about Cow Camp?” *Married?* She was married and still worried about Cow Camp? What the hell had she done and why? She grabbed her head again and moaned.

“I’ve talked to Mitch,” he said. “As long as we get back there by Tuesday, we’re good with the boss.”

Trixie stared at her finger and then looked back at Stephen. “Did we have sex?”

“Make love?” he suggested sweetly. “You don’t remember?”

“No,” she stated flatly. “I don’t recall much of anything.” Especially the I-do part and why didn’t she remember such a life-destroying event?

She wasn’t going back to Cow Camp. If he thought for one second she would go face Brock or Rory or even Mitch after taking vows with the stable guy she barely knew, then he—the stable guy—was a lunatic. Besides, she couldn’t go back there or even back home after pulling this kind of caper.

Her parents were probably frantic by now. Oh, Lord help her. She trashed all of her mother’s dreams, and her own, too, in a blink of an enraged eye. What kind of mad fit had she pitch? What lured her into a chapel with a man she barely knew?

“I was afraid you might forget a lot of our time together so no, we haven’t made love yet. I want you, Trixie. God help me, I’ve wanted you so bad I can’t stand to lie in the same bed with you, but you drink so much. It’s hard to keep you coherent. I want my wife attentive when she’s in bed with me.”

“I’ve been drinking a lot?” she asked, ignoring the way his fingers crawled over her skin, trailing up and down her inner thigh. “I mean, this

doesn't make sense. I drink some, but I don't typically lose my mind, marry men I barely know, or forget entire days, or even a few hours!"

Maybe Cow Camp and the occurrences there marked the beginnings of a nervous breakdown. *Why sure*, a temporary mental health issue explained everything.

"Trixie," he said softly. "Do you love me?"

She stared at him in disbelief. Did she what? Love him? Was he strangely mad or madly strange? She clutched the thin sheet to her body. "Stephen, I need to go to the bathroom."

"You can go, my love. I'm not keeping you bound to the bed. I remembered what you said. I won't cuff you or hold you against your will."

She giggled uncomfortably. What a peculiar thing to say, she thought. She took the sheet with her as she traipsed across the room to the bathroom. Once she stepped inside, she knew she was living inside a dark horror movie. The small window over the shower had bars over it, as if anyone could squeeze through the tiny opening in the first place. The tile, stained with a greenish-yellow substance all the way around the edges, appeared filthy. The sink—she held her hand to her mouth and gagged—quite possibly had never been cleaned before.

Gasping, she glared into the mirror. She barely recognized the woman staring back. Her hair looked like a train wreck. Under her eyes, dark circles shadowed a very odd ashen discoloration in her skin. What the hell happened? Who was she and who had she married? Oh God, her parents were going to die, just die.

"Trixie?"

"One minute," she called out.

"I know it's not the best of conditions in there, but we'll have some money soon, and then you and I can live like we want."

How the hell did he know what she wanted? Besides, *save money*? Humph! She was money with a capital M.

She gave the door a quick yank and when it flew opened, the knob remained in her palm. "Stephen," she began, tossing the tarnished brass to the wayside. "You and I both know we're not going to keep this arrangement, right?"

He smiled. God, he was a handsome thing but obviously a bit unstable. She held her breath and waited for his reply. He didn't seem too angry over

the fact that she wanted an annulment. Then again, maybe he wanted her to crash their wedding party. Maybe he'd been on a three or four day drunken spree, too. Maybe this was a dream, a very bad one at that. She pinched herself.

He pinched, too. Only, he grabbed her nipple, and before the squeal left her lips, his mouth covered hers. He swept her into his arms and hauled her back to bed.

* * * *

"It's like a dream, don't you think?" he asked, realizing he needed to move quickly or else she would start asking too many questions. He didn't want to provide answers until he'd had one shot at being with her, one time when she wasn't repulsed by his touch, turned off by his hand.

"Stephen," she whispered, trying to push him away. "Can't we talk about a few things first?"

He rubbed his cock up and down her leg. "Does it feel like I want to talk?"

"No."

"Then we'll talk later," he muttered.

When she resisted a little, he gave it a better shot. He framed her face between his rough hands and worked a sensual kiss right into her lips. His tongue darted into her mouth, and he gave her the kind of French kiss Casanova or Don Juan could've learned from.

Her arms eventually looped around his neck, and he felt her body meld to his. She felt softer than he imagined. She was a ready woman, warm and smooth, arching for him and breathing him in like she inhaled him for a greater purpose, to cling onto their moment.

"Stephen," she breathed parting her lips. "We should wait."

Penetration, he thought. He had to get inside her. He pressed his hand to her hot pussy and spread her pussy lips with his finger. First, he had one inside her, then two. After he realized she responded to his touch, he became greedy. He shoved all three fingers inside of her, twirling them high inside her channel until she moaned and panted, begging for him to screw her. Only his imagination ran wild and the squeal she released brought him back into reality.

She abruptly stopped him by pushing him back with all the strength of a raging woman. "I said 'no' and I meant 'no'!" she exclaimed.

He should've fucked his way right inside her tight, wet walls. Instead, he pulled away, locking his bottom lip under his top teeth. He glared at her.

She wasn't so special, not like he'd thought. She was tight around his fingers and fairly good at working her legs when he fingered her. He liked that, he really did, but the truth he expected to find in her wasn't there. She behaved like any other woman who wanted a hard fuck.

"Let's talk," she mouthed, her eyes focused on their lower halves. The little slut liked what she saw, and he was dying to screw her. Only, not yet, they still had time.

"Will you be my whore, Trixie?"

"You want a whore?" she asked, confused. The drug he'd slipped into her drink had long since worn off or else he might have fucked her. Now she was playing stupid? Didn't she know what a man wanted in a woman they took to bed?

Grinning, she looked at him like she could eat him up. "I am attracted to you, Stephen." And playing him like a fiddler's choice.

Oh, how he hated to burst her sweet little bubble. The rules were going to change after they enjoyed their first time together, and she'd cry, bawl her little blue eyes out. His pecker throbbed thinking about how he'd share the news. He couldn't wait to see her expression when she realized he was the man who wanted her momma a whole lot more than he ever wanted her.

Oh yeah, once he reeled her in, he'd give it to her hard and fast, rough her up during sex and punish her for being with those cowboys at Cow Camp. Their time together was important because afterward, she'd always long for a repeat performance of their first time together. He'd make sure the first time was perfect because then the subsequent love making would serve only one purpose...to impregnate. He wanted the bitch carrying his child.

He pinned her under him and tried to help her change her mind, convince her to give in to the moment. He fastened his lips to hers and took one last sensual kiss. Only, it wasn't her mind he was after. Oh no, the true prize promised something sweeter. He wanted Cartwell money and Cartwell blood. He was well on his way.

* * * *

She allowed him one kiss. And strange as it seemed, enjoyed it.

“We need to consummate the marriage,” he stated flatly.

“We’re getting an annulment,” she said firmly. “Come on Stephen, we both know what this is.”

Damn if she wasn’t tempted to let him fuck her crazy. Stephen had a great body and he could kiss a woman right. He was almost as easy on the eyes as Brock and Rory. Then again, few men held their own in comparison.

Brock had been so intense when they’d fucked, but Rory, good grief, he was a blast in bed. They were different in their own ways and excellent lovers, the kind a woman would never tire of finding under her covers.

Thanks to them, she wondered about Stephen. They never liked him. Maybe they had good reason.

“Stephen,” she began. “I think we rushed a relationship, if you want to know the truth. I’m not sure how we got from point A to point Z, but somehow we managed to move along rather rapidly, don’t you think?”

“No, I don’t. I have everything I want right now. Your case of cold feet and wedding jitters are too late, doll. This marriage sticks like Bondo.” His smile spread then, like he had toothpicks forcing his expansive grin a mile wider.

His varied expressions grated on her nerves. One minute he looked at her with sincerity in his eyes, the next minute, a cold glare raked over her body. Toss his twisted mouth into the equation, and as time ticked on, Trixie was beginning to think she had a real nutcase on her hands.

Okay, she thought, so Brock and Rory had been right on. The guy had some serious issues. And to think she wanted to consider a romp with the deranged!

Like he may have read her mind, Stephen caught her off guard by grabbing her legs and dragging her body to the edge of the bed. As if things couldn’t get any worse, he brought out some furry handcuffs.

“Oh, I get it. I mentioned I’m not ready for marriage, and you’re going to lock me to the bedpost until I change my mind? I thought you didn’t bind your women.”

“Most of the time, I don’t,” he hissed.

“You’re hurting me,” she whined when he mashed her wrists together.

“Really?” he asked. “I’m sorry, wife. I’ll try to make it sting but refrain from hurting you, okay? I have to run out for a bit, and I want you to stay right where you are until I get back.”

“You can’t leave me cuffed to this bed,” she blurted out.

“Oh, yes I can, Miss Trixie Cartwell, and that’s precisely what I’m going to do.”

She gulped. She didn’t like the way he said her name. “Why did you just refer to me with my last name?”

“You like it so much, I’m going to let you keep it,” he said calmly.

She breathed a sigh of relief, but it was short-lived.

“Besides, I don’t think your fathers will like it very much if you take my last name. You know with all the publicity surrounding our marriage, it’s bound to cause problems.”

“What are you talking about?” Her pulse burned as it tapped against her wrist. She was in trouble. The air was thicker, the room darker. She’d taken up with the wrong man and it occurred to her then that he’d drugged her. “You know my family?”

“Oh, yes,” he assured her.

“Wanna tell me what this is about?”

“Pratchert and Cartwell marry in a shotgun wedding. Bride is three months pregnant with former inmate’s child. The blushing bride is the daughter of Peyton Storm Cartwell, the woman who single-handedly helped put Stephen Pratchert away for the murders of—”

“Oh my God,” Trixie cried, jerking her arms back and trying to wiggle free.

Stephen put his hands up in the air and fluttered his fingers in a waving fashion. “Oh no, Stevie! Tell me it ain’t so!”

Trixie gulped. “You’re who? No, you can’t be.”

He sneered. “Say it.”

She swallowed tightly and tried to fight her restraints.

“Who am I? I want to hear *you* say my name.”

Trying to keep her wits about her, Trixie grated out, “You’re Coach Pratchert’s step-son? You’re the man who killed or injured all those people at the volleyball game when Mom was a senior in high school.”

“Yes. Guilty as charged,” he said proudly.

Then she was a dead woman.

Chapter Twenty-Four

Stephen left her a couple of hours later. He said he'd be back after he enjoyed a good fuck and a stiff drink. She'd felt the bile rise in her throat.

Trixie fought with the cuffs and tried every way in the world to escape. Then it dawned on her. She spotted her purse near the bed. If she could make it to her handbag, she might be able to reach someone by phone.

She stretched across the bed, but realized she couldn't reach her purse as long as the cuffs stayed in place on the bed posts. Still, she couldn't budge the rings around her wrists. After a few more tries for her large handbag, she maneuvered the cuffs over the long rail in between the posts and much to her surprise, gained mobility. Stephen's cuffs attached to pulleys, otherwise, all of her efforts would have been in vain.

She went for the bag. *Thank God*, she thought. She stretched her legs again and caught the leather strap with her toes before she gave it a hard yank and watched it fall away from her, farther from the bed. "Damn it!"

She collapsed against the mattress, her arms forward. She had a hard time twisting her body, but with a lot of determination, she caught the bag again, jerked her body upward, and used the headboard to lift herself away from the floor. This time, she let out a sigh of relief.

Exhausted from the effort, she sank to the mattress. She kicked the purse toward her arms and clasped the bag like it was a lifeline. She looked inside, and there it was. Two bars on the facing indicated a low battery, and five bars indicated a lot of signal.

"Please answer," she whispered as she keyed in her home number and pressed send.

All of their phones rang—the home number, the cell numbers, and the barn number, but no one answered. She cried out as she left the last message. "Please, get this message. I am with Stephen Pratchert. I think he's going to kill me. I don't know where I am. It's a dark, dingy hotel room. It's

all I know. I have to turn the phone off to try and save the battery. Please find me. Mom. Dads. I love you.”

She had one other choice. Cow Camp. She looked up the number in her phone contact list. She touched the numbers slowly, wondering if Mitch even cared where she was or if he was still angry over the way she left him. She wondered if Brock or Rory knew what had happened to her. Did they suspect anything at all?

“Cow Camp.” A girl’s voice filled the phone.

Trixie gasped. Brenda. “May I speak to Mitch please?”

“Who’s calling?”

“It’s Trixie Cartwell.”

“He’s in a meeting, Trixie. Wait—”

It sounded like a scuffle. “Trixie? Is that you?”

“Brock,” she whispered. Her throat dried almost immediately, but a flood of tears fell from her eyes.

“Trixie listen to me, is Stephen with you?”

“No, he’s got me handcuffed to a bed in a...” Her voice broke, and she couldn’t do anything more than cry.

“Trixie, baby, listen to me. Stephen is dangerous. His name is Stephen Pratchert.”

“I know who he is, Brock. I know what he is.”

“Where are you, Trixie?” Mitch’s voice came on the line. He sounded so distraught and she had to hold the phone away from her ear.

“I don’t know. Listen to me please. You have to tell my parents. I think he’s going to kill me.”

“Trixie,” Mitch started, but Brock instantly cut him off.

“Honey, listen to me, this isn’t helping us. You have to describe what you see. Can you get to a window?” Brock’s voice soothed her nerves.

“No, you don’t understand. He has me cuffed to some kind of old bed. I’m in a hotel room.”

“Did you see anything when you were outside of the room? Anything you can remember at all? Scents? Noises? Anything?”

“A train,” she whispered. “I remember a train coming through around three o’clock because the whistle woke me up.”

“Anything else?” Brock asked.

“Brock, I’m scared.”

“Anything else,” he demanded. “You don’t have time to be scared. Tell me everything you see around you.”

“You don’t get it! I’m in a dark hotel room with green shag carpet. Gold curtains and a bathroom that has fucking bars on the window! I’m going to die here! He’s going to have a drink and a whore and then he’s coming back to kill me!”

“Trixie,” Mitch said. “Calm down.”

“I know the place,” Brock interrupted. “Rory! He didn’t take her to Gatlinburg. Get the cops out to Mountain Meadow. She’s in one of those rooms!”

“Trixie, can you stay on the phone with us?”

“No,” she sobbed. “My battery is dying. Please tell my mom and dads that I love them and I’m so sorry.”

“Trixie, has he raped you?”

She didn’t know. She really couldn’t say for sure. She hit the end button and slid the phone back in her purse. She then kicked her purse to the floor again and curled up in a ball, sobbing until she couldn’t cry another tear. No, he hadn’t raped her. If he’d had sex with her, she’d given it to him freely and he was getting off on the fact she couldn’t remember the details of the last couple of days.

Thanks to her stupidity and Mitch’s ability to provoke her, she’d given Stephen Pratchert the easiest kill he’d ever have in his life.

* * * *

Brock watched the Cartwells pull up in front of the lodge. He could only imagine what kind of hell they were going through. Actually, he understood their pain well. He was living every minute of it.

Kane Cartwell looked mean when he stepped out of his SUV. “Mitch,” he said, nodding before he acknowledged Rory and introduced himself to Brock.

“We’ve been told to wait here,” Mitch began. “We think she’s at Mountain Meadows.”

“How do I get there?” Kane asked.

Mitch shook his head. “You can’t go down there. The local authorities will have to handle this.”

"I'm her father, damn it. How do I get there?"

Brock pushed by Mitch and Rory stayed right behind him. "Follow us. We're headed there anyway."

"Brock! You might put her at risk!" Mitch warned.

"And I might help save her, too. I'm going, Mitch. Are you coming?"

"Damn it!" he said when he caught up with them. "Why are you doing this?"

Rory shot Kane a sideways glance and then lowered his voice. "He's in love with her."

Kane Cartwell must've had some radar ears. He gripped the handle of his car door and glared in their direction. "If any of you put her in danger, you'll answer to me."

Brock nodded. "Same here."

The automobile doors slammed, and Brock sped in front of the Cartwell vehicle.

"What the hell are they doing taking Trixie's mom down there?" Mitch asked, pointing.

"If she's anything like Trixie," Brock suggested, "I imagine she isn't the kind of woman they could leave behind."

"I'm glad she's here," Rory said. "If she's the one Pratchert wanted in the first place, then maybe she can lure him away from Trixie."

Brock gripped the steering wheel. "If he's laid one hand on her, so help me."

Mitch frowned. "He's touched her, Brock. Think about it. Why else wouldn't she give you a direct answer?"

Brock glared at the road. "If he has, I'll kill him."

"If he did, I'm willing to bet he used their friendship to lure her into bed. It may have been consensual sex," Mitch continued. "We don't know."

"I know, damn it!" Brock yelled. "Trixie wouldn't go for Pratchert. No way, not now."

"You don't know," Rory said. "Guys lure women into their beds all the time without telling them the truth. It doesn't make it rape. Doesn't make it right, but it's done and enjoyed by both parties. He could've had sex with her while she was still a little curious about him. You know, interested."

Brock sped up. "She didn't find him interesting."

“She didn’t?” Rory shook his head, and his eyes darted back and forth from the left side of the road to the right. “Believe whatever you want to believe. I guess she didn’t find me attractive either, huh?”

“No,” he said without a smile, glancing in his rearview mirror. “And she fucking thought you were ugly.” Brock locked knowing gazes with Rory in the rearview mirror. “What?”

“You always do that,” Rory said. “Your best defense mechanism when you’re uptight is to joke around. I swear you don’t possess one ounce of good humor unless you’re a nervous wreck. She’s going to be okay, Brock. We have to believe she’ll come out of this without a scratch.”

They traveled down a two-lane highway for several minutes in complete silence. Rory was right. He never joked around unless he felt threatened. When he had Trixie back in his arms again, he was going to lighten up. When he saved her, he’d make it his mission to become a better man. Her man.

They pulled right up to Mountain Meadows. A young rookie officer rushed over to them. “Get these vehicles behind the owner’s garage. The motel manager owns the Car Jiffy. They’re open for business for oil changes and whatnot. Pratchert may not pay attention to the extra cars over there. “Now hurry up, move!”

“Which room are they in?” Kane asked leaning out of his car window.

“Sir, who are you?” The guys from Cow Camp knew the young deputy, but he obviously didn’t recognize any of the Cartwell clan.

Kane extended his hand. “I’m Kane Cartwell, Trixie’s father. This is her mother, Peyton, and these are my brothers. Can we speak to you in private?”

“Pull your car around to the side. We’ll talk there. Move!”

By the time everyone parked their cars, the meeting in the small office area of the garage was underway. Brock noticed immediately that they had a good view of the hotel rooms from the office, but if he could see the rooms, Pratchert could see them. He didn’t like being at this kind of disadvantage. If he spotted them, they could face a hostage situation and lose Trixie.

The others listened closely to the orders the local cops handed down. No one should leave the room, everyone needed to follow their advice, listen to them—the experts running a town that hadn’t had a murder in thirty years or a crime rate to speak of in decades. *They were so trained and equipped to*

handle a standoff. Brock wasn't leaving anything to chance or inexperienced cops.

"The owner of the motel had an appointment and the guest services office is locked until four o'clock. We're trying to locate him now. Once he gets here, we'll be able to zoom in on the room they're in."

"That's the best you can do?" Kane asked. "I have a better plan," he began. "Let's knock on each door."

The rookie shook his head. "Your daughter talked to Brock and Mitch earlier. She said her cell phone battery was dying and Pratchert had left her alone. She didn't confirm her location."

"Then how in the hell do we know she's even here?" Evan Cartwell asked. He had to be the youngest, if Brock wanted to guess. He acted like he gave Kane the lead, but when big brother didn't take care of things appropriately, he stepped in.

Kane put his hand up. "We don't know if she's in there for sure then, right?"

Brock cleared his throat. "Mr. Cartwell, with all due respect, sir, I think she's here. Call it a hunch, but—"

Kane took a step forward, and Peyton placed her palm on his chest. "Don't, Kane."

"You have a hunch, and that's it? We're going on a fucking hunch?" He glared outside and then back at Brock.

"With all due respect, sir, I've been inside those hotel rooms. She described the room when I talked to her. She mentioned the train. There's a train that comes by here mid-afternoon, and I remembered it from when I was a kid. This is the place. Trixie is here."

Kane pointed. "She'd better be because if we're at the wrong damn motel, my daughter may lose her life."

"I understand." He squared his shoulders and then listened to the small talk between the chief of police and the rookies. This was their ten minutes of fame. This was Trixie's life. *Let the Cartwells deal with the egos*, he thought. He'd deal with Pratchert.

Brock locked gazes with Mitch and then slipped out of the office before Mitch followed him. Rory would work from the outside if it came to that, but with Mitch at his side, they would get Trixie out before Pratchert came back, unless he'd already slipped by them. Wading through the high weeds

behind the hotel, Brock pushed his way through the thicket, peering into the rooms.

“Shit!”

“Can’t see anything?” Mitch asked, trailing behind and double checking the windows, too, for any sign of movement.

“We’re going to have to tap on the glass of each one and see if she can hear us,” Brock said softly. “Do you have any idea what the cops might have had on a response time out here after we figured out where to send them?”

“Fifteen minutes,” Mitch replied.

“Remember that watering hole we took a few counselors to a few years back?” Brock asked.

“Yeah,” Mitch said. “What about it?”

“How far is it from here?” he asked.

“Thirty, maybe forty minutes.”

“Is it the closest?” Brock asked standing on his tip toes and peering inside another window.

“Probably so. I haven’t been out here in a long time,” he admitted. “I haven’t heard of any new bars opening. We would’ve heard something with all the co-eds we’re known to employ in the summer.”

They started toward the fourth room, and Brock put up his hand. “Wait a minute,” he said, rushing back to the previous room. “I think I saw something on the floor in that last one.”

Hurriedly, Brock grabbed onto the ledge and used the concrete wall to climb a little higher. There, in the middle of the floor, right outside the bathroom, he spotted Trixie’s handbag.

“Trixie’s purse,” Brock said excitedly.

“Are you sure?”

“I’d know it anywhere,” he said, pressing his face to the glass. “It’s a designer bag with those funny emblems on it. I remember thinking why would a gal carry a thousand dollar purse to camp. Now I know why. I remembered it. I never notice a gal’s pocketbook.”

“So she’s in the third room over. Is Pratchert with her?”

“Can’t see anything. Wait. She’s reaching for her purse. He’s not in there. Go!”

Brock jumped down and both men ran hard, rushing through the tall grass again. They rounded the corner and one of the local guys stopped them. "Mitch, you're going to have to head back to the office where all the others are."

"She's in the third room. We saw her," Brock said, pressing his luck and trying to move by him.

"You saw her?" the cop inquired.

"Yes, move!" Brock shouted.

"There's no way you can see through those windows," the rookie said, his cheeks swelling about as much as his belly as he straightened his back and grinned. "I've brought me a woman or two out here, and I can tell you for sure. Ain't no way you can see in those bathroom windows."

Brock grimaced. "Get the hell out of my way, please. Pratchert isn't in there with her."

The cop stood firm. "Can't do it. There's too much riding on this. You know who that gal's daddy is?"

A car pulled up and parked directly in front of the room where they discovered Trixie. Mitch and Brock locked gazes. "Get ready," Brock warned.

Robo-dick, proud cop, whatever the hell he was only glanced at the vehicle, but he kept talking, just running his trap. Mitch tried to scoot by him again, and he placed his hand on his shoulder. "Boys, we don't want any trouble here."

A pop sounded out. The echo of a gun fired filled the hills behind the motel.

"Shit! He's gotta gun," Brock said grabbing the cop's weapon from his side and ducking behind a car in the process. Mitch crouched down, too, but the cop-in-training caught a bullet in the gut and doubled over.

"Why'd you do that for?" he asked, falling to his knees.

Stephen glared at the fallen officer and sprinted inside his rented space, taking the time to holler back, "We ain't friends, buddy!" Then, he disappeared into his room.

Chapter Twenty-Five

Rory watched the whole thing unfold from the office. Peyton Cartwell clutched Kane's arm and then ran into Braden's arms before she fell apart. Evan tried to comfort her. He pursed his lips, staring outside. Three cops prevented them from going anywhere.

"You're keeping your man power inside, and you're going to cost Trixie Cartwell her life!" Rory exclaimed. Kane locked gazes with him, and Rory understood the alliance they formed.

They weren't staying put. The Cartwells were fighters, no doubt, and they all had something worth fighting for.

What happened and what he expected were two entirely different things. He kept glancing outside, watching for a sign, some kind of movement and keeping a check in his peripheral vision, waiting for the go.

He felt sorry for the cop lying on the ground, but if he'd been less interested in detaining Brock and Mitch and more interested in the job at hand, things might have been different. Instead, one cop was down, three guarded them, two exchanged words with Brock and Mitch, and that was the extent of their stand-off. The only progress made was inside Pratchert's motel room and the possible events occurring behind closed doors drove Rory crazy.

"By the time we get in there, she could be dead or raped," he informed the officer who looked as uninterested in the task at hand as he might look at a spelling bee.

Kane set his jaw and Trixie's feisty little mom darted out the door before anyone could stop her. She ran straight into the middle of the parking lot with her arms waving over her head. "Pratchert! Stephen Pratchert!"

"Shit!" Kane exclaimed, rushing for the door.

One of the cops drew on him. "Move outside slow and tell your wife to get her tail back over this way. That man is a lunatic. He'll gun her down where she stands."

Kane stepped outside. "Peyton, please. Damn it to hell."

"Pratchert!" She ignored him. Her blonde hair clung to her cheek as she summonsed a killer, a man who had her daughter. "You don't want Trixie. You never wanted anyone to pay except me. Here I am mother fucker! Come and get me!"

Glass shattered and Stephen waved his gun in her direction. "You're very brave and very stupid, Peyton Cartwell."

"I'm a mother. I want to see my daughter."

"Well, sweetheart, I wish I could help you out, only I can't. She's dead," he said laughing. "You're too late."

* * * *

Brock saw the entrapment, and he was closer than Kane. Braden and Evan ran out behind Kane, but there was no way they'd make it.

"Get back," Brock put his hand up, but Peyton came toward him. She wasn't turning back. The killer inside that motel room just claimed to have murdered her daughter, and the woman wasn't going down without a fight.

Screeching, she ran fast. Tears poured from her eyes, and she pushed her way forward, trying her best to get to her daughter.

Brock glanced over his shoulder. He saw Mitch approach from the opposite direction. Peyton ran harder. "No!" she screamed out. "You sorry son of a bitch! Trixie!"

Trixie squealed, "Momma! Nooo!"

Gunfire. The shots fired rang out everywhere, and there wasn't any way to tell where they were coming from or where they were aimed. Another round and then another. Damn bullets crossed up everywhere.

Brock ducked, but he inched forward. Mitch somehow secured Peyton in his arms. He caught her before she reached Pratchert's door, tucked her under his body and rolled to the ground, out of Pratchert's line of fire.

Evan Cartwell made his way to the other side of the door. Brock stood to the left of the window. He pointed to Evan, indicating he thought

Pratchert would peek outside to see who he hit, who he missed, and who moved close enough to take the next bullet.

“Pratchert!” Braden called out. “How much do you want?”

“Is Peyton hurt?” He screamed. “Is the bitch dead?”

Brock stared at Evan and shook his head. Evan did the same so Braden could see him.

“No!”

“Let me see her,” Pratchert pleaded. “I want to get a good look at her.”

“We want to see Trixie!” Braden called back. “Let me see my daughter. If she’s all right, then you can see Peyton.”

“Daddy wants to see his girl,” Pratchert announced in pure mockery.

“No,” she said. “Please don’t do this. Please. Dress me first. Don’t make my dads see me like this. Don’t do this!” she screamed.

Brock winced when he heard him smack her. The sounds of a hard hit striking her made him sneer, and his lip curled. Abnormal instincts kicked in, and he wanted the man’s blood.

Brock shook his head firmly, and Evan backed away from the window and shouted out, “We don’t need to see her. Forget about it. We trust you. We just want you to trust us now, okay, Pratchert?”

“Trust a Cartwell? That’s funny.” It sounded like he smacked her again, and this time, Trixie cried out, and a thump allowed Brock to know she was on the ground. It was now or never.

He chose now.

* * * *

Mitch backed away from Peyton and stared at Brock. “He’s moving.”

“What?” Kane looked up in time to see Brock burst through the hotel room. A shot rang out. Peyton screamed. Everyone ran,

By the time Mitch rushed into the room, Evan had Trixie covered with a blanket and Brock was pounding the hell out of Pratchert. He kept hitting him.

Blood sprayed from the Stephen’s nose. Brock continued to strike. He didn’t stop until a gun was drawn and placed at his head, and even then, he kicked him in the ribs while they cuffed him. A few minutes later, the cops led Brock out of the room.

“Momma!” Trixie ran into her mother’s arms.

“Oh, baby, I’m so sorry,” Peyton tried to comfort her.

Trixie collapsed against her mother. “I was so scared,” she admitted.

Peyton said, “Oh, honey, we should’ve told you he was out. I never dreamed he’d come after you. I never dreamed he’d know where to look.”

Trixie rested her head on her mother’s shoulder. Her fathers patted her head or kissed her on the forehead before following the cops and Brock outside.

“Let’s get you dressed,” Peyton said, walking over to the barely breathing Stephen Pratchert.

Through blood-stained lips, he said, “Her little pussy was so tight, Peyton. I closed my eyes while I was fucking her and just sank right on into heaven.”

Trixie shut her eyes in an apparent attempt to block out the horrified expression on her mother’s face. Mitch hurriedly grabbed Trixie and kept her at his side. Rory held Peyton back as she tried to fight her way toward Stephen.

“He’s lying, Mom. He didn’t touch me.”

“She’s lying, Peyton,” Pratchert said. “If we’re lucky, she may even be pregnant.”

An enraged parent, Peyton kicked him in the gut and then knelt to the floor, clawing at him like a woman who’d lost her mind.

Rory stood behind her. Pulling her off of him, he said, “He’s not worth it, Mrs. Cartwell.”

Grinning, Stephen said, “I’ll just come back. I’ll keep coming back until I take everything you’ve ever had and all you ever wanted. Just like you took from me, I’ll strip it all away from you.”

“Kane!” she screamed. “Kane!”

Rushing inside, Kane glared down and then looked over his shoulder at the police officer that followed him inside the room. Peyton whispered something in Kane’s ear.

Mitch scooped Trixie up and carried her toward the bathroom. “Here, take her,” he said, quickly passing her off to Rory.

“My pleasure,” he whispered, planting a kiss on her forehead and disappearing into the bathroom.

Once they left the room, Mitch faced off with the vilest human he'd ever met. Standing over Pratchert with pure venom running through his veins, Mitch stared into the eyes of a cobra, but he was the one who prepared for the strike.

Chapter Twenty-Six

Mitch didn't like the cops swarming Cow Camp. It was bad for business and brought back memories he didn't want to revisit.

"A lot of suspicious deaths have followed you Cartwells around, haven't they?" Detective Boyle addressed Kane Cartwell, but nodded in Mitch's direction when he entered the room.

"Do I need my attorney present?" Kane asked.

"No, I don't imagine you will. We are going to ask your daughter a few questions since she was with the deceased before he...passed."

"The deceased?" Trixie pointed her finger. "You call that man what he is. He was a murderer, and he got what he asked for. If you want to pin it on me, then arrest me, but don't you dare act like what happened to Stephen Pratchert is my father's fault!"

"Trixie," Peyton warned. "That's enough."

Brock walked inside the lodge and even a father, or several of them, could pick up on the relationship Brock shared with Trixie. Her demeanor changed, and she gasped when she saw him.

Mitch chuckled. Poor old Brock was a goner.

"Brock!" she exclaimed, running into his arms like no one else existed there, and if they did, who the hell cared.

Leaping into his arms, she locked her legs behind his back and kissed his face from chin to brow. Peyton grinned. "Well, looks like the summer hasn't been a total waste."

Kane grunted. "Trixie!"

Brock tried to unhook her legs, but she resisted. "Daddy, look away just a minute. Count to ten." She lowered her lips to his, and Brock's lips parted.

"You know this can wait, don't you?" Brock teased, releasing her.

"No," she dragged him forward again. "No, this can't." Her lips crashed against his once more.

Peyton didn't turn away. A look of concern washed over her face, and Mitch wondered what she was thinking.

Detective Boyle questioned Peyton. "Did you see your husband kill your enemy? If so, did you turn the other cheek or did you hold the man down and threaten him as he took his last sip of air?"

"You're grasping, Detective," Kane warned.

"Maybe," he said. "But if I am then perhaps she witnessed something else entirely. Maybe Brock over there killed for Trixie."

"Detective," Peyton said. "Do you have anything solid here or do you simply enjoy taunting those who've been recently traumatized?"

The detective winked. "By the time I finish with your daughter, ma'am, I may stand on rock solid evidence."

Peyton flashed a beautiful smile. "Don't count on it, Detective Boyle."

When Brock let Trixie slide away from his body, he joined the detectives and the Cartwells. The open room, with vaulted ceilings and large logs, offered a welcoming ambiance, not a dark atmosphere where a woman wanted to be interrogated by detectives. It was too airy, too public, and there were too many folks around to hear her responses.

Mitch wasn't sure he could stand by and hear her story, much less watch her tell it in front of her family. He knew Brock wouldn't go for it, either.

Detective Boyle turned to Trixie. "Let's get started." He looked at his small notepad. "How did you end up with Stephen Pratchert?"

Mitch, Brock, and Rory shared a quiet exchange before Brock stood up and pointed toward the office. Mitch took the hint. "This is a public area for the campers," he said. "If you'd like to use my office, I think Trixie will be a little more comfortable there."

Peyton smiled. "Thank you," she said. "We'll go in there."

Brock lifted Trixie's arm and when he did, he laced her fingers through his. "If you don't mind, Mrs. Cartwell, this is something Trixie and I probably need to do alone."

Trixie shook her head and then stood on her tip-toes. "I don't want you to hear, either," she whispered, her little voice quivering.

Mitch closed his eyes. Their fears materialized. If Trixie didn't want to speak freely in front of them, something happened to forever change her life.

Brock faced her, framing her face, and said, “Trixie, I don’t care what I hear in there. You’re not going to be alone.”

Peyton started toward the office. “I want to be with my daughter.”

“Mom,” Trixie said stopping her. “I don’t want you to sit through this.” She squeezed his hand and then added, “And I do need Brock for this.”

Peyton took a deep breath and stared at Kane. Oh, Brock had a handful there, Mitch thought. If he believed Kane Cartwell was just going to turn his daughter over to him, he overestimated his charm.

Kane addressed his brothers. “You’re both all right with this?”

“I can’t listen,” Braden said. “I don’t want to know.”

Evan shook his head. “It’s over now. We move forward from here.”

Kane started to follow them into the office. “I’m her father, damn it. We’re all her fathers.”

Braden locked gazes with Brock. “Yeah, but she doesn’t need her fathers for this. She needs someone else. And we have to let go this time. Right now, I don’t think she needs anything more than she needs *him*.”

Trixie stopped right before she entered the office. She motioned for Mitch and Rory. They followed her and Brock inside.

Evan grunted and then called out, “I guess you meant to say *them*.”

* * * *

Detective Boyle wasn’t like the lame cops they’d encountered at the motel. He jotted down notes in his notepad and kept a pen in hand. He set a small tape recorder on the edge of the desk and sat in the executive chair behind the computer. “You don’t mind do you?”

Mitch glared at his target. “Do you mean about taping the conversation or taking my chair?”

The detective turned to Trixie. “Is there a particular reason you want all of these guys in here with you?”

Outside of the obvious? She took the time to look at the men who had occupied every conscious thought she’d had over the last few weeks. They’d invaded her dreams since she arrived at Cow Camp and now they’d saved her life. One of them, and she felt certain she knew which one, had even killed for her.

One of these men put down a man, a vile creature, like most men put down a rabid dog, like his life didn't matter anymore because of the dangerous animal he'd become. One of them put everything on the line for her.

The detective waited for her to answer. She forgot the question. Brock patted her hand, and Mitch stood behind her. Rory looked like a man in love, regardless of what he'd once told her, as he studied her with considerate eyes, a gentle smile.

"Miss Cartwell?"

She remembered what he asked. "I'm involved with them."

"Involved?" he questioned. "You mean romantically?"

Brock caressed her hand. Mitch squeezed her shoulders, and Rory answered for her. "Yes, we're all seeing Trixie and we're all good friends. We also know a lot about the Stephen Pratchert situation, and we believe she needs us here for support."

"I see," Detective Boyle said. "Then I'll get straight to it. Which one of you killed Trixie's attacker, Stephen Pratchert?"

"I beg your pardon?" Trixie asked.

Mitch's hand moved under her hair, and he applied pressure to the nape of her neck. "Does she need an attorney present?"

"It's up to you. If you ask me," the detective sneered, "one of you will, and I don't think the one in need is Miss Cartwell. See, I'm perceptive. I walked in the hotel room when Miss Cartwell was headed for the bathroom. I don't think she had time to shower, change, and kill Stephen Pratchert. She wouldn't have had the strength, anyway, because while he was wounded, he was very much alive when I left him lying on the floor. By the time I walked to the front desk and back again, Pratchert was dead."

"I think he choked on his own blood," Rory said. "He had a lot of blood dripping from his mouth."

"In which case, you're my man," he said directly to Brock.

"You think I killed him?"

"No," he said looking from Mitch to Rory. "I think one of you did it or..." He paused and studied Trixie. "Perhaps your father really is my man."

"Which one?" Not surprisingly, Mitch, Rory, and Trixie chimed out the question together.

Detective Boyle looked confused. “Is Kane Cartwell your father or not?”

“Kane, Evan, and Braden are my fathers,” she said in a matter of fact tone.

“I’ll make this easy. Which one is your biological father, or which one of them raised you?”

“Detective Boyle, my fathers all raised me. Maybe we’re not a traditional family to the outside world, but we are a family with values, and we stick together.” At this point, Trixie was one hundred percent certain that none of her fathers killed Stephen Pratchert. Her mother might have been a consideration, but as the detective pointed out, Pratchert was alive and her mother didn’t have any more strength in her arms than she did. She couldn’t have smothered the life out of him.

“So you stick together. Are you suggesting that one of your fathers killed your attacker?”

“No one killed Stephen Pratchert except Stephen Pratchert,” Trixie said with certainty. “The choices he made guided him to his death, and no one could have changed the path he was on or the direction he took. You can think whatever you like, but you can’t pin a murder on six men and two women when your detectives and your cops swarmed the place. How do we know one of them didn’t do it?”

Detective Boyle didn’t like her. She sensed it. After her short speech, Brock shifted his weight and leaned into her. He whispered, “Stop talking.” Then he adjusted his weight and stared the detective down, like he had a real distaste for the man and the conversation.

“Mr. Colony, is there anything you want to add?”

Mitch was well known in the area. The detective probably didn’t consider him a likely suspect. “I can’t think of anything yet.”

“All right,” he said. “Then let’s start at the beginning. Maybe one of you will think of something and if not, I’ve got all night.”

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Trixie walked up the hill with Rory and Mitch. She kept her arms crossed for fear she'd clasp both their hands and never let go. Her parents waited for her, and she could see them standing on the small porch. She'd had enough drama to last her for the rest of the summer, but she needed to stay at Cow Camp. She wanted to be surrounded by the men who cared about her.

"Mr. Cartwell," Mitch said, addressing Kane as he met them on the narrow path in front of the counselor cabins.

"Where's the other one?"

"Brock?" Rory asked. "He's under the most suspicion. The detectives needed to ask him a few more questions."

"Is that right?" her father said looking back at her mother.

Trixie watched her mom. She looked nervous and her mother never kept a stiff upper lip unless she was angry or scared. Maybe she had it wrong. *Surely not*, she thought. Her mom wasn't capable of murder, was she?

"Trixie," Kane began. "Go inside and get packed. You're coming home with us."

"Dad," she whined.

"Trixie, do it," Kane barked.

Evan and Braden walked off the porch and kept their focus straight ahead. Oh, this wasn't good. Three on three, they'd wait for Brock and then have a good old fashion threat war. Something she'd watched them do effectively in the past, only they typically ganged up on the subject of interest. Not this time, she thought. The odds were even.

She saw Brock marching their way. His firm jaw, tight lips, and calculated gait told quite a tale. He looked like a man who fought numerous wars just so he could find his way back to her again.

On second thought, her fathers were the underdogs.

Trixie stepped on the porch, and her mom immediately hugged her tight. “Oh, Trixie, I’ve never been so scared.”

“I’m okay,” she whispered into her shoulder, her eyes searching, gazing into Brock’s as he strutted toward them.

Brock didn’t change his pace, and he obviously knew they were waiting for him. A few junior counselors passed by and said hello. One of the girls smiled at Trixie and even said she was glad to see she made it back okay.

“Good to see you,” another one added.

“Brock,” Rory said. “The Cartwells want to talk to us.”

He nodded, but passed them anyway. “Give me a minute.” He sped across the porch then, took her hand and pulled her inside the cabin latching the tiny hook in the process.

“What are you doing?” Trixie whispered, hardly resisting when he led her to the bathroom and slammed the door.

“Brock!”

“Shut up,” he said slamming his mouth over hers and clutching her body to his like he thought he might die if he didn’t get his tongue down her throat, his cock positioned against her crotch. He didn’t grope or grind, but she felt his length, the strength of his bulging erection damn near tempting her to take him, ride him, regardless of who waited for them outside.

“They want me to pack,” she said when their kiss broke.

Brock mashed his forehead to hers and then opened the door and strode away.

“Brock!” she exclaimed. “Did you hear what I said?”

“Yes,” he replied. “I’ll talk to them. If I were you, I wouldn’t bring out the luggage just yet.”

* * * *

Peyton sat down on Trixie’s bottom bunk. “You need to start packing, hon,” she said.

“Brock told me to wait.”

“Brock did?”

“Yes,” Trixie said, studying the pictures on her wall. She wondered if Vicky had to put up with her mother’s double standards when she decided she wanted to make a life with the McKays. “Mom—”

“Trixie, don’t ask me to accept this.”

“I love him,” she said.

“Which one, Brock or Rory? I don’t get the feeling you have a deep connection with Mitch. Maybe you do, and I’m missing something.”

“I care about Mitch. And Rory.”

“But you’re in love with Brock?”

“I could be in love with all of them.”

“Oh, Trixie,” her mother began. “Honey, you’re walking down a difficult road if you choose to follow in my footsteps.”

“You haven’t had such a bad life, Mother.”

Peyton flinched.

Trixie decided her tone was a little harsh, so she cleared her throat and tried again. “Can’t you understand my feelings for once?”

“Honey, have you slept with these guys?”

“Mom, I don’t think I need to discuss my sex life with you.”

“Have you had sex with them?” she pressed.

“I haven’t had sex with Mitch,” she said. “Not like you think, anyway.”

Peyton looked away. “You’ve been in bed with all of them at the same time?”

“Mother!”

“Trixie, you have to listen to me.”

Trixie shook her head. “You have no right to do this. None whatsoever. I’ve gone through hell and back because of the relationship you and the dad company had going. From middle school forward, the gossip was unbearable at times, but do you know what made our situation worthwhile?”

Peyton shook her head.

“I had you and three wonderful dads to go home to every day after school. It didn’t matter what everyone said about me behind my back. I didn’t care if they called you a whore or me the slut’s daughter. I didn’t even mind when other kids told me about what their dads or moms told them about your club experiences all those years ago. I kind of figured if you had a public sex act, you wanted to do it. Your bad behavior was your decision.”

“Trixie,” she said. “I was young. Public sex acts often come back and bite a person several years later. I didn’t think about the consequences then.”

“And what about marrying three men? Did you think *that* through? Did it occur to you what kind of life you’d have? Did you stop to think about what kind of life your daughters would have?”

“You and your sisters are loved and wanted by all of us, Trixie. You always have been. You know this, and I don’t have to tell you how much your dads cherish you. You’re adored and spoiled.”

“Yes, I am. I have a wonderful life, better than most. I want to give my children the same thing you’ve given me, whether I find my future in three men or one or five, for that matter!”

“Oh, God, don’t say five.”

“Are you sure three is enough?” Trixie asked smiling.

“In more ways than one,” her mother said winking.

Trixie laughed. “Mother!”

“You asked,” she pointed out embracing her.

Trixie sat next to her mom and put her head on her shoulder. “I love Brock so much that it hurts,” she said. “I worried about dying because I was afraid of what it would do to him.”

Peyton stroked her hair, much like she used to do when she sang her lullabies. “Have you told him?”

“No,” Trixie said, sitting straight up. “I wouldn’t dare.”

“What?”

“Mom, he’s the kind of man who knows what he wants and goes after it, but he doesn’t want me to pursue him. I have to let him think he’s still chasing me all over the place, you know?”

She grinned. “Yes, I know.”

Only she didn’t, because Trixie had heard her story a hundred times. Her fathers had an unusual relationship with her mother from the very beginning. They were her guardians, and she had a different beginning with Brock, Mitch, and Rory. Plus, Brock, Mitch, and Rory weren’t brothers.

“Trixie, how do you feel about the other two?”

“I don’t know yet,” she answered truthfully. “I’m still working out my feelings.”

“Maybe once you get home, you’ll figure out everything.”

“Mom, I’m not going home.”

“Trixie, it’s for the best right now. There will be an ongoing investigation, and you don’t need to be here.”

Trixie sat quietly in deep thought before she said, “You didn’t kill him, did you Mom?”

“No, honey,” she promised. “I didn’t. I wanted to, but, um, I guess someone else wanted him dead more than I did.”

“Do you know who?”

She shook her head, but Trixie didn’t believe her. Her mother couldn’t look her in the eye.

“Trixie, I think there are some things in life we aren’t supposed to know, and as a woman, it’s okay to let my husbands handle things for me. It’s okay for you, too, you know. As a woman, you can let a man defend your honor, if it’s the only choice he has.”

“So you know who did it?”

“I know who did it and I’m not telling you, Trixie. At least not right now. Someday, maybe I will.”

“But Mom,” she began. “Wouldn’t you want to know?”

“Right now? With a pending investigation, no. I wouldn’t want to know, and I would ask Kane, Braden, and Evan to keep the secret. That’s what I would do if I were in your shoes, too.”

“So my dads didn’t have anything to do with Stephen’s death?”

“No, Trixie. They didn’t. Kane would’ve killed him if he could’ve gotten to him, but he couldn’t. Someone else did it for him.”

“It’s Brock, I know it’s Brock.”

“No, Trixie.”

“Then it’s Rory. He’s crazy about me, you know.”

“Not Rory either.”

“Then that leaves Mitch.”

“And it’s not Mitch.”

“Mom! You have to tell me.”

“I’ve already told you my position, Trixie. I’m not changing my mind.”

* * * *

Kane Cartwell stared at the lake. He watched the murky water lap at the shore, and his gaze wandered across the lake. He spotted a tent there and smirked. He wasn’t a stupid fellow. He knew Mitch’s family owned a lot of

land on South Holston Lake. If he cared to guess, his daughter had already paid a few visits to the inconspicuous tent.

Good grief, this was harder than he thought. He took a deep breath and faced Brock. He believed in meeting challenges head on, and he was the one who wouldn't go down without a fight.

"Trixie is going home with us."

"No," Brock said, folding his arms over his chest. "I can keep her safe, and she's staying here with us. We need her. The campers love her, and she has a job to finish."

"I don't give a damn about her job," Kane said.

"I know this is very hard for you," Brock replied looking at each of them independently. Then, he addressed Kane again. "But Trixie is a young woman with her own goals and ideas. She's old enough to make her own decisions. If you three make them for her, especially in this situation, all you're teaching her is that it's okay to run away from her troubles. She needs to stay here and face what we have coming our way. Trixie didn't do anything wrong."

"That's up for debate," Braden said. "She's our daughter, and I can tell you right now, we're used to her stunts. Maybe Pratchert would've gotten to her anyway—I know he would've—but he wasn't going to act without provocation."

Mitch grunted. "I drove her to it," he said standing up for her. "We had a disagreement."

Kane narrowed his gaze. "Are you sleeping with my daughter?"

"No, sir," he said. "Not yet, but as soon as I can convince her to crawl in bed with me, I plan to make her mine."

Kane winced. Braden walked away, and Evan clenched his fist.

"You're a brave one, aren't you?" Evan asked. "Just so you know, I don't have a problem knocking some sense into you."

Brock sneered. "I don't either, Mitch."

Kane watched him. There was something substantial in the relationship he formed with his daughter. Brock was the one Trixie leaned on, reached for, wanted. She ran to him first and didn't care who watched as she wrapped her body around him and kissed him all over his proud cheeks. Kane viewed him as an obstacle, and he planned to move him out of the way.

Kane inched closer to the water. “Brock, can I talk to you a minute, alone?”

“No,” he said. “With all due respect, Mr. Cartwell, your daughter needs me right now. She needs to feel safe and protected, loved and wanted. I need to get back up the hill if there’s not anything else going on here except your determination to take her home with you.”

“She is going home with us,” Braden said. “You,” he said, pointing at Mitch, “didn’t keep her safe.”

Brock looked toward the sky. *Here we go*, Kane thought. He saw Brock’s jaw tighten. He made a show out of taking a loud, exaggerated sigh. Then, he took a few steps back in the direction from which they’d walked. It was probably symbolic.

“You know, I can see where the three of you would think we didn’t do our job here. It’s always easy to point a few fingers in the wrong direction, at the other guy, rather than crook it back and shake it hard at one’s self. When Trixie disappeared, I did a lot of that. I researched Pratchert and I wanted to blame you, Trixie’s family, for being uninformed—or if you were informed, I wanted to ridicule the way you handled the situation. We should’ve known there was a definite danger looming.

“You guys knew her mother’s enemy walked out of prison, and if you’d thought about it, you might have known he’d head straight for your daughter. Anyone with good eyesight can see she looks a lot like her mother. I saw the photos on the Internet when I read the article about the high school shooting years ago. If you ask me, Trixie is a carbon copy of Peyton Storm Cartwell, your wife.

“So I blamed you, in the beginning, when I realized Stephen Pratchert infiltrated our lives and set us up. Then, I blamed Mitch. He was the last one to see her before Pratchert made his move. Ultimately, in the end, I blamed Rory, too, because Rory and Trixie were close, best friends almost from the beginning. She tells him everything. Then, the truth hit me with a good dose of one jagged little pill to swallow. It was my fault.”

Braden’s brow arched. “Yours?”

“Yes, sir,” he said. “If I had kept Trixie in my sights at all times, she wouldn’t have been a possible target for Pratchert and everything,” he said, glancing at Mitch, “would’ve turned out differently. We wouldn’t be here

now if I'd kept her close from the beginning. I'm sorry, but I can't take that chance again. Not with Trixie.

"Now, if you're bound and determined to take her home, then I'll pack my things, too, but you won't like what you get with me. I am in her bed. I am in her life and by damned, I plan to stay there."

Braden resisted a smile and Evan stood there with his jaw dropped. They'd been put in their place by some hot shot guy who looked more pretty boy perfect than Navy Seals tough, but by outer appearances, he was both. Braden wasn't sure he liked this fellow, but as much as he hated to admit it, he respected him.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Trixie heard voices and peered outside. “They’re back. Mom, please. Talk to them. I’m begging you.” She rushed out before her mother answered.

Brock stormed up the path, and Rory chatted with her fathers, pointing toward the water. Mitch stopped two senior counselors to tell them something.

Brock’s eyes remained dark, the desire behind them so thick it spilled onto his lashes. He looked like lust running over.

“He’s crazy about you,” Peyton said.

“Yes, he is,” she said, rushing to greet him along the pebble and dirt path. “Hey,” she whispered, taking his hand.

He laced her fingers through his and took a seat on the porch. He pulled her onto his lap, and her mother watched them. She probably wondered which one of the dads would yank her from his lap.

“You’re staying,” he said quietly.

“Really?” she asked, wrapping her arms around his neck. “Are you sure?”

“I haven’t decided,” Kane stated flatly, reluctant to join them.

“Daddy, I’m an adult now,” she reminded.

He glared at her mother. “This is all your fault.”

She took his hand. “Yes, I imagine it is. It’s always somebody else’s fault, Kane.”

“Where have I heard that before?” he grunted, staring at Brock.

Dropping her mother’s hand, Kane held his arms wide. Brock gave her a light, suggestive push, and she made a sudden leap into his arms.

He hugged her and she whispered, “I love you, Daddy.”

“Then love me enough to take care of yourself when I’m not around,” he said quietly. “We couldn’t stand it if something happened to you.”

Peyton strode over the steps and placed her hand on Brock's shoulder. "You have our whole world in the palm of your hand."

He patted her hand with his. "I won't let anything happen to her. You have my word."

She walked toward Braden and Kane. Brock stood. Mitch and Rory joined him. Everyone shook hands, and Trixie hugged her parents goodbye.

Before Evan walked away, he turned back. "Trixie, come here a second."

She rushed to her parents, and Peyton tapped his arm. "Evan, don't be too rough on her. It's not been that long ago when you looked at me the same way they're all looking at her now."

"I know, woman," he said playfully, smacking her bottom. "It was about ten minutes ago. Now, I need to have a few words with Trixie," he said and the others said another round of farewells. Evan draped his arm over Trixie's shoulders. They strolled up the path as father and daughter, concern etching its way into Evan's forehead.

"Did I ever tell you that your mother had a crush on me when I was still in high school?"

"No," Trixie said. "I didn't think any of you had 'your thing' going until she moved in with you."

"That's not exactly right," he said. "She had it bad for me. Ask her. She'll tell you about it sometime."

"Bet you wish you wouldn't have given her the opportunity to meet your brothers then, huh?" Trixie said laughing.

Evan stopped walking. He placed his palms on her shoulders, towering over her, a rock of strength and yet a man with soft eyes watering to tear-point. Trixie had never seen her fathers cry.

"No," he said softly. "If I had taken your mother up on her very aggressive pursuits early in life, I don't think she would've had the chance to get to know Braden and Kane. Then, we wouldn't have had you."

Trixie smiled. "You don't know that," she said.

"Sure I do. You're Kane's biological daughter."

"Daddy," she said hugging him once more. "I love you all the same."

He held her back and looked into her eyes. "Trixie, what I'm trying to say is...don't rush love. When you rush it, you don't find what you're supposed to have. You may have a good substitute, or maybe even a good

dose of something close to love, but not the kind of relationship you deserve.

“Lust often forms a very strong connection when two people share a strong chemistry. I wanted your mom when I first found out about her crush, but the time wasn’t right. It was wrong for us then. Your grandmother was sick and dying. I’d heard Braden mention her mother’s failing health, and I knew her situation. I didn’t think it was the time or the place to make her my high school girlfriend. I still had a lot of living to do and, unfortunately, she had a lot of dying to go through. Her mom needed her. Everything about our first potential encounter spelled out wrong timing.”

“They’re older than me, Daddy. They’ve already done a lot of living, as you put it.” She giggled, understanding what he meant even though she had trouble imagining her father, any of them for that matter, with anyone other than her mother.

“I’m not worried about them, Trixie.”

“I know,” she whispered watching Brock approach.

Evan shook his head. “He reminds me of Kane.”

“Daddy, please.”

“He does. He had a nice chat with him, too. Ask him about it,” he said grinning. “You’ll get a few laughs.”

“Everything good here?” Brock said grabbing onto her waist and tucking her against his side.

Evan extended his hand so Brock would have to release his daughter in order to shake it. When he did, Evan said, “Don’t you ever hurt her, or else the next time I shake your hand, I’ll break it.”

Trixie released a grunt. “Daddy, please stop acting like a bully.”

“I won’t,” Brock said looking at Trixie like he was afraid if he turned away it would force him to break his recent oath.

“I’ll see you in August?” Evan asked, hopeful.

“See you in August,” she said smiling.

Evan walked away, but he called out over his back. “Brock, I imagine I’ll see you then, too. We’ll get your room ready.”

* * * *

After her parents left, Brock took Trixie to the infirmary. He arranged for a physician's assistant to meet them there so Trixie could have a complete physical. He'd waited outside, praying and hoping that Pratchert hadn't forced himself on her.

When Trixie appeared in the lobby all smiles and giggles, he felt a surge of relief.

"All clear," she announced.

"Music to my heart," he replied. "You're sure?"

"There's no evidence to indicate anything happened, and Stephen told me he didn't want to have sex with me unless I stayed coherent."

"Never say that bastard's name again," Brock grated out the words. Tilting her chin forward, he gave her a quick peck. "I only want you to think about us. Me and you and well..." he pointed to the lodge and grinned. "We'll include them, too."

"You wanna?" Trixie asked, skipping toward the main building.

"Not really," he grumbled, allowing her to pull him along. He stopped all at once. "Trixie?"

"Yes?" she asked in her saucy little voice, dropping his hand.

"This is what you want, right?"

"It's what I want," she assured him.

He nodded. "I want you to always have everything you dream of, everything you need."

"I know," she said. "I believe you."

They walked the rest of the way hand in hand, their arms swinging comfortably at their sides. He wanted to tell her how much he loved her, but instead he enjoyed the moment, the time they had alone.

* * * *

Trixie was in love. She squeezed Brock's hand and held on tight, lacing her fingers through his. When they reached the lodge, she felt her heartbeat change. The opportunity waiting at the end of Mitch's private hall enticed her more and more with every step.

Mitch and Rory looked up when they walked into Mitch's apartment. Mitch rushed toward her first and wrapped his thick limbs around her waist. "Trixie, I never had the chance to tell you how sorry I am."

"It's not your fault," she assured him, gently placing her palm to his cheek. "I had to play with a little fire before I let the three of you place your own individual brand on me."

Mitch narrowed his gaze. "I don't understand."

"Yes, you do," she said, kicking off her sandals and crossing her arms over her torso. She grabbed the hem of her shirt and stripped it off. She pushed her shorts over her hips and stepped out of them.

"Dear God," Mitch said gawking.

"Trixie," Rory began. "Honey, you've been through quite an ordeal. This isn't a good idea right now."

"Oh, really?" she asked, arching a brow and eyeing his crotch. "Sure could've fooled me."

Rory smirked. "I'm serious, Trix. You don't need hard lovin' right now. You need time to rest, maybe even heal."

Brock made a snort of some sort and walked toward her. "Are you tired, baby?" he asked, placing his hand flat against her belly, caressing his way upward so he could stroke her nipple with his thumb.

To hell with tired. She felt wild and free, ready to run straight into the night with the three men she trusted to take care of her. She wanted to feel them surround her, and she wanted all of the sensations now. Not later, but right then, right there.

"I need a long shower," she said walking toward the bathroom. Looking over her shoulder, she gave her butt a good wiggle and then stopped to study the men staring at her ass. She saw beads of sweat on every forehead in the room.

Mitch gaped with pure lust. Brock gawked in raging need, the longing so thick in his eyes that she felt a twinge of nervousness. She recognized that look. God help her, she knew what he felt in that very instant. She'd felt it, too, when he dragged her off to the cabin and forced her inside to steal a kiss. He took the time to revisit her lips while her parents waited outside and she'd never needed a kiss more than then.

Now, another man needed her attention just as much. Mitch had never held her in his arms for more than a kiss and a blowjob. They were long overdue for some romp-time.

Mitch acted reluctant, and the worry settled in his wrinkled forehead. He said, "Trixie, I have to agree with Rory. It's not a good time. What do you say we rent a movie or something?"

"No," she replied, striking a pose in the doorway. "Mitch, you and I need a minute alone before these two join us. Come on. You promised to keep a good eye on me, so let's see how far you're willing to go to keep your word."

Mitch released a heavy sigh about the time Trixie grabbed his hand.

"No," Brock grunted. "I'm the one who promised your dads that you'd never be out of my sight again. I meant it." He trailed behind them, but stopped right outside the bathroom. Trixie slammed the door in his face.

He pecked on the door lightly at first. "Trixie?" Then, he pounded.

"You know how I feel about you," she called out. "Now be patient," she said eyeing the evident restraint in Mitch's expression. "I need to convince Mitch that none of this is his fault."

"Why?" Brock slammed his fist into the door.

Trixie looked at Mitch and shrugged. He stood next to the shower with his hand under the shower head. He turned the water on and felt for water temperature.

"Because, Brock. I do have feelings for him, too, you know," she called out again.

"Damn it, Trixie, open this door!" Brock yelled. He sounded frantic.

"Wait your turn," she teased.

"That won't work," Mitch warned. "You might as well let him in."

"You don't want me?" She formed a deliberate pout.

"You know I do," he said reluctantly, "but not as much as he *needs* you right now."

He moved away from the shower. "Come here, Trixie."

Trixie inched closer. "Mitch, I want to be with you."

"And you will be. Just not right this minute," he said, kissing her lightly on the lips.

Mitch surprised her when he walked out of the bathroom. Brock, of course, walked right on in. His face was red, and his hunger shone bright in his sun-kissed skin. But his love, good Lord, the man looked like he was starved for her affection, dying to touch her and burning for her slow hand.

“Trixie,” he said in a low voice, barely above a raspy whisper. “I don’t think I can survive without you.” Tears pooled in the corners of his eyes. “This isn’t normal.”

No, it wasn’t, and yet she understood precisely how he felt.

“I know,” she promised. She lifted his shirt and kissed his chest. “I’m yours, Brock. I’m always yours.”

He held his head away from her, arching his neck when she tried to kiss him, looking down on her with uncertainty. “For a minute there, I thought you were Mitch’s, only his. Change of heart?”

“No, it was his idea to let you in,” she said. “Brock, I am going to be with them, too, you know.”

“Why? Because your parents have their thing going and it works?”

“No,” she said thoughtfully. “Because I care about Rory and Mitch.”

“You love me, though,” he told her confidently as her fingers worked with his snap, then the zipper of his pants.

“Maybe,” she said, concentrating on the zipper with a deliberate focus.

His large, manly hand covered hers. He closed his fist and propped her chin up, forcing her to look him in the eye. “Trixie?”

“Brock, not right now,” she said. “Just let me have you.”

“Only if you can tell me you love me,” he said, staring into her eyes.

She was melting, dying right there, and he wanted more? He needed a verbal confession, and if she gave it, what then? Would he own her? Would he love her back and love her for a lifetime?

He fisted his cock and rubbed the tip of his dick over her hip. “Say it, baby. Tell me what I need to hear.”

Trixie gulped. She didn’t want to release her feelings. She knew Brock Sheldon, and understood the kind of relationship he needed in order to make his life work. She wasn’t ready for the lifestyle. Not yet, anyway. And like her dad told her, she had time. It was okay if they took things slow because in the end, things worked out like they were supposed to.

“Trixie, I love you,” Brock said, lowering his lips to hers. “And you love me like crazy. Say it. I need to hear you tell me.” Again, he rubbed against her leg. “Don’t you want me? This?” And again.

“No,” she whispered.

“I can’t hear you darlin’,” he muttered, nipping at her lips.

“No, I can live without it,” she teased.

He bit at her shoulder, licking and nipping. “Then what do you want, Trixie?”

“Oh, God, Brock, don’t you know?” she cried out. To hell with her self-discipline. “All I want is you! You don’t need anything more than the knowledge. I don’t have to say what you already know.”

Trixie loved him. She couldn’t deny it, but admitting it came with understanding. There was a little problem with the way they loved one another. She loved him the way she wanted to love him and for now, that meant hiding her fears from him, the fear he’d want her as a submissive lover, a woman she wasn’t sure she wanted to become just to meet his needs.

His kiss crashed against her mouth with a possessive force. As if he thought he had to fight for her affection, or maybe convince her how much she adored him, he grabbed her close, lifted her up until he secured her body around his bare waist. She felt her heat dripping onto his skin, and he moaned before he set her down again. He yanked two washcloths from the linen closet and tossed some towels on the nearby counter. One fell in the sink and the others tumbled over.

Already hanging free and exposed, he pushed his denim jeans down and stepped out of them and straight into the shower, tugging her right with him. There wasn’t foreplay with him. He took her hand and then he took her body.

The cold tile against her back was the only reminder of the hard man in front of her. His actions proved how he felt. His body translated. His cock stamped it inside of her, driving the point straight home.

Sliding in between her folds, his desires were real, the need to be with her more urgent than the first time when they’d been together. It was different and yet the same. His strokes were long and hard, but his longing eyes were significantly altered. She stared into the knowing eyes of true love.

He trembled with an early release taking her by surprise. “Trixie, oh God, Trixie.” Holding one palm to her forehead, he placed another hand to her hip, dropping his gaze to watch the way he entered her.

The brutality of an everlasting love, the kind that destroyed a man in one sense because it took him from the throes of being a bachelor and plunged him into the realms of a new beginning must have terrified him.

She detected his fear. He worked her body around his, going deep and staying there, filling her with his size and pumping his seed into her womb like he knew what he planned to do.

“Brock,” she hummed as her orgasm reached her. “Brock,” she said, trembling and riding, scratching and reaching. “Good Lord, Brock. Don’t stop.” Her body arched, her pussy clenched, and he drove harder. Heaven and earth moved, and outside the sky must’ve opened when she screamed. God help her, she felt dizzy, light-headed with crazy passion.

“Ride me, Trixie.” His hands moved again, and he gripped her ass while he plunged deeper, thrusting his cock deep inside her wet pussy. “That’s it, baby. Become mine. Tell me. Let me hear you say you’re mine already.”

Her mouth fell open, and a profession of love spilled from her lips, though it wasn’t verbal. She latched onto his mouth and kissed him. Her tongue met his tongue. Her nips matched his nips, and her body jerked once more, just as his jerked. They were one, and the encounter was like nothing she’d ever experienced.

This is love, she thought. I’m in love.

* * * *

“He’s not going to share her,” Mitch said. They listened to the fucking. The walls seemed to vibrate, and if Brock had his way, they’d probably fall the hell on down. Heck, Mitch couldn’t blame him.

“I’m not asking him to,” Rory said.

Mitch stared at him. “You care about her.”

“Yep, I do. And I’m not asking Brock Sheldon for permission,” he informed, stripping off his shirt and then discarding his pants and shoes. “You can sulk if you want to, but I love her.”

“You’re in love?” Mitch copped a smile. “Really?”

“Yep, I am,” he said honestly. “I don’t know how in the hell it happened, but I am.”

“Since when?” Mitch asked trying to ignore the fact that Rory stood in his boxers with a hard on meant to knock the hell out of some serious pussy if he didn’t get laid soon.

“I guess I realized it at the motel when I thought she was going to die. You and Mitch were doing everything to save her, and one of those sorry

deputies pulled a gun on us. He wouldn't let us leave the office. I thought, what if she dies and I did nothing. I'm never going to be in that position again, man."

"I thought you didn't fall in love."

"I don't," Rory said. "Maybe that fact alone will mean something to Trixie. I've never been in love before. I don't plan on falling again, but I'm in deep with her, and I hope Brock will understand."

"Brock?"

"Yep, Brock. Mitch, you gotta see this thing with Trixie for what it is and let Jordie go before you pursue her or anyone else. If you don't, then you'll never be able to move forward. I think Trixie cares a lot about you, too, but until you come to terms with Jordie, there isn't a woman around you can love completely."

"What do *you* know?"

"Mitch, I was there. I know how much you loved Jordie."

His eyes watered, and he stared at the door. "What if you're right?" he asked softly.

"You can't save Jordie now. Maybe you never could. What you and Brock did with her might have pushed her inward, but you guys weren't responsible for her inability to handle the kind of lifestyle you led her to. She could've said no. She didn't. The way she handled the fallout, while surprising, didn't place blame. Brock sure as hell didn't carry it."

"He didn't love her," Mitch blurted out.

"No," Rory replied thoughtfully. "He thought he might, but there's no question here with Trixie, is there?"

The door swung open at the end of the hall, and Brock walked out of the bathroom with Trixie in his arms. He had his left arm looped around her back and his right arm under her knees. She was in a terrycloth robe and looked as fresh as the start of a new day.

Rory winked. "Somebody is going to go nuts," he whispered. "Watch." Rory walked down the hall and straight into Mitch's room. He fell on the bed about the same time Brock lowered her to the mattress. Immediately, Rory loosened the tie around her waist and pushed back the robe.

Her legs opened and Rory positioned himself in between her thighs. Mitch stood behind him and couldn't help rubbernecking it so he could see her pretty little pussy.

Her clit was swollen, thanks to Brock, but the enticement called to Rory's lips, and his mouth covered her hot little button. Rory tormented him all the more by licking her clit like he meant to feast on her for the rest of the month.

Good Lord, Mitch thought, he should've gone first.

"What do you think you're doing?" Brock said, pressing against his shoulder.

"I'm loving on a woman," he reported, glancing at Trixie for more than a minute. "And she's going to love me back."

"I wouldn't bank that assumption yet, buddy," Brock snipped.

Rory winked. "It's counted cash," he retorted, placing a tender kiss on her mound. "In another ten minutes, she may even kick the two of you out of the room."

* * * *

Trixie gripped the sheets beneath her when Rory parted her intimate lips with his tongue. The way he slipped his tip through her folds wasn't like what she'd imagined. She thought he'd take her slow, swipe her center with an easy slide. Instead, he ate her. Heaven help her, he devoured her to the point of a climax.

Brock and Mitch stood back and watched as if they hoped to learn something, though she doubted they needed lessons in an oral sex fest. Rory made a slurping noise as he pushed her thighs apart.

"Good?" Mitch asked, leaning over her and kneeling to the bed. "Tell me, Trixie."

Trixie bit down on her forefinger and arched her back. Rory's tongue swept across her folds, and he pressed his mouth to her opening. Her walls claimed and welcomed his tongue. The moisture seeped from her body, leaving her wet with desire. He lapped evenly between her sensitive folds, sucking on the skin and drawing the heat, encouraging the greatest of oral pleasures, the onslaught of an orgasm sought by a controlled lover.

"Rory!" She mashed down on his head, and he withdrew his tongue, tracing the area around her pussy.

Brock stretched out beside her, draping his arm over her middle and dropping his mouth to her breast. Suckling her nipple, he lavished her with the hot feel of his tongue moving over her in a soft and even caress.

Trixie's hand went to Brock's head this time, and she heard his quick intake of air. "Ah, Trixie," he whispered, drawing her closer and pulling in the fullness of her breast.

Brock ran his flat palm across her belly and slapped her pussy until she whimpered. Mitch's eyes were soft, but when Brock cupped the side of her breast and mashed her nipple to his lips again, Mitch's expression changed and he choked out, "Damn boy, somebody is gonna have to wean you off of those."

Reluctantly, Brock moved aside, and Mitch gained a new position, smacking his lips over the first nipple and tweaking the other with his forefinger and thumb. Rory towered over her, and she felt him at her entrance, his long length ready for quick penetration.

She looked up at Brock, over at Rory, and down at Mitch. Good God, she'd never imagined anything so erotic.

"Rory," she whispered, rolling her hips upward.

He fisted his cock at her entrance. "Slow down, baby," Rory said. Back and forth he ran the tip over her mound. Once or twice he allowed his dick to linger at her folds but, with controlled skilled, backed away before she drew him inward.

Again, she tried to move her hips and capture him. This time, she caught his fingers, two of them.

"No! I don't want them. I need—"

"I know what you need, lover," he said thrusting his hand against her body.

"Rory, give me all of you."

With Mitch's face mashed to her chest, Brock raised his arm back, taunting her with the slap he'd inevitably deliver against her bare pussy. Pressing on the balls of her feet, she rolled upward once more, humping at thin air. Brock gave her the desired swat.

"Oh, shit," she cried. "One more."

Mitch stopped his form of entertainment and looked up. "You'll come when we allow it."

"You're in for a sweet surprise," she said, reaching down.

Brock snatched her hand. "Oh, no you don't."

Rory kissed her clit, flicking it with his tongue a few times, too.

Mitch's penis was what she might describe as beautiful. Long and hard, his cock stayed erect with an invitation she wanted to accept, explore, taste, and ride. He took her hand in his and moved her arm down, encouraging her to move her fingers around his length.

He pushed himself up, away from her breast and offered her the tip. Her mouth touched the crest, and her tongue slid across the slit, the taste of him driving her to roll her hips forward once more, this time with a hard push.

"Somebody, please."

"Don't beg," Mitch said. "Suck."

And she knew they were at the beginning, the start of something hot and intense, beautiful and sexy.

Latching her mouth around Mitch's cock, she heard Rory whisper something but couldn't make it out. "That's my girl," Brock said, granting his approval, something she never thought she'd receive.

Taking Mitch to the roof of her mouth, she smelled the manly scent of lust, and it drove her to spread her legs more, grind at the air above one more time. Brock moved. Rory shifted. Mitch thrust. God help her, he was going for tonsils, encouraging her to swallow.

"Lay down on top of me," Brock said, positioned at her right. He stroked himself, gripping himself with a man's hand, a determined squeeze. Up and down, he moved his hand over his thick cock watching Trixie perform oral sex on Mitch with nothing but pure heat, sweltering hot lust, pouring from his eyes.

Staring up at Mitch, she locked her jaws tighter. He gripped her shoulder. Rory claimed her pussy, licking his way straight into her channel and Mitch hammered harder. His balls slapped her chin, and Brock slapped her mound right as Rory's tongue went deeper, his fingers holding her open as he sucked out her juices, still keeping a full blown orgasm at bay.

Mitch moved faster. "That's it. Suck it, sub. Take my tip to your throat."

He called her sub. Oh, dear God, what had she agreed to when she took them to bed? An induction of some sort? Perhaps by being with all of them she agreed to the lifestyle. And if so, was it really all that bad? Was she signing on for something she didn't want or running toward something she was always destined to have?

That's when she saw the lubricant. Then she felt it. Brock bathed her bottom in a pool of the substance, and she felt it heat on contact. Mitch pounded toward a release, but then stopped short of taking one.

She sighed in relief once Mitch pulled out. He held himself at the base, and she grabbed a quick intake of air. Brock moved under her, slipping the tip of his cock right inside her ass.

His hands went to her waist. "Ah damn, Trixie."

"Brock," she moaned, opening her mouth for Mitch again and whispering against the head of his cock. "Slow, take me slow."

"Ah now sugar, you ought to know I'm ready to blow. Are you?" Mitch growled easing his way back into her mouth again, holding her chin so she looked toward him and not the man spreading her, waiting for her to adjust to the rear impalement.

Rory's intense eyes held her under a spell. She'd noticed all of them possessed their own unique way of looking at her, and right then, she couldn't get enough of them. Rory, in particular, had a tight jaw, eyes that saw through her and instilled the kind of thirst a woman never quite quenches for a man. He connected with her. She felt the change, the undeniable chemistry.

Brock slowly inched higher into her ass, taking her to full penetration.

She spit out the cock in her mouth. "Brock! Slow! Please."

"Not a chance," he said. But he continued to ease her into the flow of his thrusts. He helped her enjoy the slow strokes, even though it seemed like he struggled to make her loose, working her body like a small glove in hopes of stretching her into a perfect fit.

"You're okay, baby," Mitch promised, slipping his dick through her lips.

She mumbled, a vibration and then her tongue caressing Mitch's stalk and he winked. "Trust me, sugar. I've had a ménage or two in my lifetime. You're perfect." He nodded at Rory who then took his place.

Placing his palms on either side of her body, Rory slid his cock right inside her. The invasion was uncomfortable at first with Brock at the rear, but then the impalement became addictive.

She squirmed once. Brock thrust twice. Mitch and Rory pounded away, Mitch going for the tonsils, and Rory hitting the G-spot's *G-spot*. Soon they rocked together, and somehow formed an alliance guided by erotic

movement. Trixie had never felt sexier in her life. Until they all came together through an explosion of orgasms.

Afterward, no one moved away from her body. She watched them, really studied their expressions. Brock's eyes closed. Rory's remained open. Mitch looked away, not that it mattered. She truly felt what a woman in her position should feel. And in that one moment, the men inside of her made her feel more beautiful, more accepted, and more empowered than she ever imagined feeling in the wake of a ménage experience.

Trixie was loved. Yes indeed, she climbed in bed with men who cared about her and loved her. Best of all, they didn't have unnecessary expectations. They only wanted to take care of her, and she might just let them.

Chapter Twenty-Nine

Trixie woke up trapped inside of a dream and a nightmare. Locked in Brock's arms, Mitch's head rested against her back. She sensed Rory in the distance but she also felt the presence of another.

Stephen Pratchert still lurked in the shadows. Maybe he was a ghost or perhaps a memory, but he existed nonetheless. Her mind rationalized. *Stephen is dead.* Anxiety still consumed her.

Shaking off what she first translated as fear and then as loss, she slid away from her men, then their bed. Shivering, she took a quilt from a nearby chair and draped it over her back.

Eyeing Brock, she saw a future that she couldn't snatch for her own until she came to terms with her recent past. Brock looked like a man ready to love a woman. He'd probably enjoyed a fairly full life and never bargained for her. She couldn't face the future with Brock if she didn't know what she wanted for herself.

Trixie had evaded college and a job at every turn and a job. Her parents spoiled her into the rightful title of a rich brat, and she'd worn the Cartwell name proudly. She enjoyed what their money had allowed her. None of it mattered now. Cow Camp and all the experiences she survived changed her. Now she wanted to be someone, become the kind of person the men she cared about would proudly stand beside, love, and protect.

Trixie's eyes filled with tears and suddenly she felt a strange and sudden sensation. She was smothering. She couldn't breathe and she had to get out of there. And she needed to move fast.

* * * *

Brock stretched his arms high above his head and then curled them around a waiting body. He snuggled up to a warm, masculine form when Rory walked back in the room and Mitch shoved him away.

“What the fuck?” Brock asked, scratching his head.

“I don’t swing it your way,” Mitch assured, staring around the room. “Where’s Trixie?”

Growling, Brock said, “Me, either.” Then he looked at one very worrisome Rory. “Where’s our girl?”

Rory, already dressed, glared at them with great sadness in his eyes.

“Well?” Brock asked, jumping to his feet. Frantically, he searched for his clothes. He knew. God help him, he already realized what Rory was going to say. “Damn it to hell where are my clothes?”

“She’s gone, Brock,” Rory said.

Mitch frowned. “What do you mean she’s gone?”

Brock shook his head. “She couldn’t have gone far. What time is it?”

“Noon,” Rory informed after checking his wristwatch. “I called the Cartwells. Evan and Kane drove up this morning to pick her up and, according to what her mother said, I must’ve barely missed them.”

Brock stomped around the room after dressing in record time. Mitch stayed in bed with a sheet draped across his middle. Rory sat on the edge of the mattress.

“I’ll go get her and bring her back,” Brock said.

“Her mother says she wants some time, Brock. We’re going to give her what she needs.”

“Time?” Mitch questioned. “Time for what?”

“Mitch,” Rory began. “This isn’t another Jordie Anne situation. In fact,” he paused, “Trixie left something for you.” He handed Mitch a sealed envelope. Brock stared at it.

“What’s that?” Brock asked.

Rory shrugged. “She left a note for all of us and one addressed to Mitch. The one she left for us simply stated that she needed time, wanted space, and knew where she’d find it.”

“The hell she will. You two can stay here and give her all the distance you want. I’m going to the Cartwells, and I’m leaving this afternoon.”

Mitch tore open the envelope. He skimmed over the letter quickly and then folded it in half. “Well, I’ll be damned.”

“What?” Brock snipped. “Let me guess. That enormous cock of yours has her convinced she wants you and just you, huh?”

Mitch smiled. “Yeah, something like that.”

Brock snatched the stationary and quickly read it. His heart pounded against his chest until he saw the meaning behind the letter. Trixie wanted Mitch to go to Jordie Anne. She wanted him to know that while she was attracted to him, things between them wouldn’t work until he cut Jordie loose once and for all. Brock sighed and tossed the letter aside.

“She’s right,” Brock said. “You know she’s right, Mitch. You’ve always been in love with Jordie, and just because you have a fine replacement in Trixie doesn’t mean you’re over Jordie.”

Rory brushed his chin with the back of his hand. He acted like he was in deep thought or perhaps needed to shed some light on his views. Instead, he maintained his silence.

“So what are you going to do?” Mitch asked when Brock took a few strides toward the door.

“I told you where I’m headed. Question is, what are you going to do?”

* * * *

Trixie barreled out of the SUV and ran straight for the large sun porch where her mother waited on a swing. She slumped down next to her, and Peyton wrapped her arms around her, swaying with the furniture as they rocked back and forth.

They must’ve sat there for more than thirty minutes. Trixie sobbed. Her mom caressed her head and Kane studied them. Evan came and went since he never particularly cared for the sight of tears, especially when they fell from Trixie’s eyes. Braden didn’t stick around, which was probably for the best. Trixie typically sobbed harder when Braden was nearby to witness her broken heart, and she didn’t think she had any tears left once she quit crying.

She could feel her daddy’s eyes on her and turned to face him. “Promise me you won’t let them come here. Not right now.”

Kane nodded. “If that’s what you want.”

She quickly buried her face in her mother’s blouse. “I don’t know what I want!”

Evan sat down. He placed his hand on her shoulder. "Trixie, did one of them hurt you?"

Peyton took a deep breath and Trixie screeched, "No! Of course not. They'd never hurt me!"

"Then why are you acting like this?" Evan asked, dumbfounded.

Kane huffed and stormed away. "Why hell," he grumbled. "Anyone within a mile of this place can see what this little fit is about."

Peyton moved. Evan took a deep breath and Trixie switched parents. She fell against her dad and sobbed all over again. "I can't do this! I'm not like all of you!"

"I've never been one for self pity and don't allow those close to me to waddle around in it," Peyton said. "Young lady, if you really 'can't do this', then you should've considered keeping your legs closed."

Trixie glared at her mother, and wiggled free from her father's grasp. "How dare you?"

Evan shrugged. "She's right, Trixie. Your mother didn't slide into bed with any of us until she knew for certain what she wanted."

Trixie placed her hands over her ears. "I don't want to hear about your relationship. This isn't about you."

"Of course it isn't, darling," Peyton said, starting for the door. "It's always about you." With a bang, the front door closed behind her, and Trixie wheeled around to face Evan.

Evan shook his head. "I take your mother's position, Trixie. You, of all people, should've known you jumped straight into the fire when you hooked up with those boys. You aren't naïve, and while we may have hovered over you, we certainly didn't shelter you from this kind of thing. Your mom is absolutely right. If you didn't want to play with the big boys, you should've stayed off their turf. "

Trixie's legs were weak. Boys, hell. They were men, and that was the problem. The three of them together provided more manpower than she knew how to handle.

Sniffing, she said, "I can't believe you don't understand." She dabbed her eyes and started inside.

"Wait there a minute," Kane called out from the other side of the porch.

Turning, she stared back at the one father she didn't want weighing in too much on the subject of her wide-spread legs. "What?"

Kane set his jaw. "Sit down, Trixie."

Obediently, she backed up to the swing and took a seat next to Evan. Her heart raced. Kane only gave her those authoritative looks when he planned to scold the hell out of her and right now, she wasn't in the mood.

"Do you love them all?" he asked.

"What kind of question is that?" she retorted. "Haven't you heard a word I've said? I told you I don't want them here, and my not wanting them here has nothing to do with love."

"Then what is it?" Kane demanded.

"I need time," Trixie whined.

"Time?" Kane asked.

"Yes! For crying out loud, I've been through a traumatic event, and I want to be by myself to process it."

Evan and Kane shared a knowing glance. She hated when they did that. She felt so left out when her dads and mom gave one another their I-know-what-you're-thinking-I'm-thinking kind of stares.

"Kane isn't stupid and I'm not either, hon. You say one thing and mean another when it comes to boys. You always have."

Kane sat on the stoop and looked straight ahead. Trixie noticed the way he studied the ground in front of him. Her father's tense jaw and set eyes made him look more helpless than ready to defend his daughter's honor.

"Trixie," Kane said, "I want to know how you feel about them. I'm not happy about this—don't think I am—but I happen to believe one of those fellows, if not all of them, love you."

"It doesn't matter," she snapped. "I don't want to see any of them!"

Evan studied her. "Now listen here, Trixie, and listen well. You're getting ready to place us in a bad situation. See, we can and will tell those pricks to stay the hell away from you, but then what? Maybe you decide you've had your feel of acting like a spoiled child and you want your playmates back. What then?"

Trixie's jaw dropped. "My playmates? What am I, some kind of tramp?"

"I don't know," Kane said, rubbing his chin. "Are you?" he glanced over his shoulder.

"Kane," Evan warned.

"Daddy!" Trixie squealed, rushing for the door.

Kane let her go.

Evan stopped her. "Trixie, wait," he said.

"No!" she squealed out. "I don't want to be here with him right now. He thinks because I'm walking in momma's footsteps that I'm...I'm..." Resigned to the fact that she couldn't think of what she wanted to say, she blurted out, "I'm not mom!"

Kane stood. His jaw twitched and his eyes were dark, the anger brooding behind them obvious. "You're damn right you aren't your mother." He took a couple of steps toward her and stopped with his finger extended in her face. "Your mother knew what she wanted and she went the hell after it. She didn't play games, Trixie. She didn't hop in bed with a man—a murderer at that—in order to make us jealous. And if she had, I would've tanned her hide just like someone needs to tan yours."

"Daddy! You don't understand!" she wailed.

"Oh, no?" he sneered. "I understand perfectly. We've spoiled you rotten, and you're so rotten, Trixie Belle Cartwell, that you don't think you have to mind anyone. You holler for one of us when things don't go your way. Now, I'm your father and I love you, but I've had about enough.

"I'm ready for you to go and find your own way. If that means settling down, then so be it. If you want to go to college, I'll pay for it. If you find a job and start a career, praise the Lord. But you stand tall and proud. What you don't do is run away." He started by her and swiftly added, "You're a Cartwell. We not only go after what we want, but we have a little class when we do it."

"Class?" she snapped, rolling her eyes and then laughing with stark sarcasm. "Oh yeah, I'm sure that's what other folks around this town think about us. Tell me something," she screamed. "How much class did you have when you taught mother obedience? Huh?"

"Trixie," Evan warned.

"No really," she continued. "How does that discipline stuff work? When you were trying to train my mother's ass, I'm sure it was the first thing that came to mind. Wow oh wow, won't you look at what a classy broad we've brought to our beds!"

"That's enough!" Kane yelled, grabbing her arm.

"Kane." Peyton reappeared at the door. "Let her go."

Trixie twisted away from him and jumped off the porch, leaping over the banister and running for the fields, much like her mother used to do. Only Trixie wasn't her mother, and she wasn't sure she wanted anything close to what her mother had when she found herself smitten by her fathers.

Chapter Thirty

Brock drove through the Cartwell gates and headed straight for the house. Back at Cow Camp, Rory had retrieved the directions to Trixie's ranch while Brock packed his things.

Mitch loaned him one of the camp vehicles. After he loaded up his motorcycle in the back, he was packed and out of there within a couple of hours. He'd driven like mad, not because he feared Trixie wouldn't return to her North Carolina ranch but because he'd felt a tremendous void since she'd left without saying a word.

Thinking about her while he drove was torture. His cock became harder than it should've been without a woman's pussy nearby, or the delicate hand of the one woman he wanted to coax him out of his pants. Oh yeah, Trixie was in for a few surprises if she thought she'd go to bed alone tonight.

He stopped in front of the Cartwell place and pushed the gearshift into park. He leaned over the steering wheel and glared at the large brick home in front of him. He narrowed his gaze and studied the place, taking in everything about the property, right down to the old swing-set in the side yard.

While the Cartwells were loaded, their wealth wasn't necessarily in their home. It was extravagant for an older house, one he imagined the Cartwells most likely had passed to them from one generation to the next. The real value, no doubt, was in the rolling hills and flatlands of a completely fenced working cattle ranch. The breathtaking property backed up to the endless mountain range of western North Carolina.

Nature's beauty didn't provide a just comparison to Trixie. Although, he had to admit, if anyone deserved to live in this place, Trixie did. He imagined she only added to the beauty there. Her golden hair tangling in the wind came to mind. He'd love to ride with her, see her bouncing in the saddle, racing across the very fields she called home. God help him, he

faced nothing but trouble. And he was also procrastinating—postponing the knock at her front door—with wild fantasies he knew precisely how to tame.

Peering down at the sight between his legs, he cursed the erection that had played havoc on his zipper since he left Virginia chasing after a woman. Damn it to hell, he couldn't walk in there with his pride and glory all hard and stout.

He tried to think of something that wasn't as tempting as one blue-eyed babe in a pair of summer short-shorts who looked good enough to eat. Focusing on something other than his current and embarrassing predicament, he thought of Mitch and wondered if he'd follow Trixie's advice. Would he try to visit Jordie Anne, or would he finally leave the past where it belonged and move on with Trixie? Silently, Brock hoped he could make things right with Jordie, but for purely selfish reasons.

His phone lit up and he grabbed it from the leather seat. Rory sent him a text message. He asked him to let him know when he arrived at the Cartwells.

Rory had it bad for Trixie, and if Brock knew Rory, and he did, Rory wasn't going anywhere. Maybe he could share Trixie with him. *Maybe*.

Mitch was a different story. In fact, it was Mitch and his inability to let go of the lifestyle that undoubtedly scared Trixie away. Brock had to blame someone. No, he thought immediately, he should've been more cautious. He knew her better than Rory or Mitch, and what they all did to her was inexcusable after her ordeal with Pratchert.

Brock narrowed his gaze on a lower field. He thought he spotted something there, but when he slammed the vehicle door behind him and took a closer inspection, he couldn't refocus at all. Maybe he imagined things.

Brock ran his hands over his denim-clad thighs and decided to put the worst part behind him. He wanted to face the Cartwell men, and he sure hoped Trixie's mother was around to support him. He needed someone in his corner, and he was banking on the missus.

Clearing his throat, he walked toward the house. Kane, Braden, and Evan were there to greet him. They didn't look like the welcoming committee.

"Brock," Evan said, nodding, "what brings you all the way to North Carolina?"

Brock eyed them. Peyton joined them. "Hello, Brock."

He may have thought he'd find an ally in Trixie's mom, but the way she spoke to him changed his mind. "Mrs. Cartwell," he said, reaching for her hand. She snapped her wrist away when he tried to kiss the back of her hand.

"That's unnecessary," she snipped. "What can we do for you, Brock?"

Brock released a big gulp of air after it swelled his cheeks. "I came here to ask for Trixie's hand in marriage."

All four of the Cartwells looked amused. No, things weren't going all that well.

Kane said, "You did, huh?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why would you do something stupid like ask her to marry you?" Kane questioned. "She left you back at Cow Camp, didn't she?"

"Yes, sir, she certainly did. Only, don't ever think she left me. She left the camp and a complicated situation. Never me."

"Is that right?" Braden asked. "Why don't you explain yourself then? Come on inside. We'll give you the chance to say your peace."

"Sure," he said. "Thank you."

Kane stepped in front of him when he started up the steps. "Hold on there a second," he began. "Why should I let you in my house when my little girl is out there in those fields crying her eyes out over you?"

He knew it. When he first arrived, he sensed someone watching him, and the pair of eyes he couldn't find were the most beautiful he'd ever seen.

Damn her for running from him.

"Give me the opportunity to tell you why I'm worthy of loving your daughter, because I do love her. I plan to marry her, and I'd like it very much if you'd support us." He cautiously walked past him. "And just as soon as I find her, I'll convince her. See, I know she wants to marry me too."

Evan snickered. "That's where you're going to have a slight problem. Trixie doesn't want to see you. Since she doesn't, I'm not sure we should call in the preacher and order the flowers yet."

Kane crossed his arms over his chest and added, "No, I don't think she's hell bent on hearing wedding bells and picking out diamond rings."

“Then I’ll change her mind,” he promised. “After I first tell you why you should want me for a son-in-law.”

Braden pushed the door open and fanned his arm in front of it, guiding him inside. Brock extended his arm and said, “Mrs. Cartwell, after you.”

Peyton walked through the door and Kane smirked, following her inside. When the heavy door slammed behind them, Brock never felt the hairs standing on the back of his neck, but a smarter man would’ve been scared. In fact, facing off with the Cartwells should’ve terrified him. He wanted their daughter, the one they’d raised from a little girl into a feisty young woman. What he wanted to do with her wasn’t something a father wanted to imagine his daughter doing at all.

Yep, he’d lost his mind. He damn sure wasn’t going to lose his woman.

“Have a seat, Brock,” Peyton said. Her demeanor shifted and Brock saw a flash of smiles around the room. Maybe the Cartwells weren’t so opposed to him taking their daughter off their hands.

Brock felt at ease for all of four seconds when he saw her smile. “Thank you,” he said, taking a chair at the kitchen table.

“Can I get you something to drink?” Peyton asked.

Kane stormed passed her, opened the refrigerator, and retrieved several beers. “Here,” he said, twisting off the top and handing one to him. “If you’re thirsty, drink.”

“Thanks,” he said, eyeing the other two Cartwells as they accepted their bottles.

“Well, you’ve got about three minutes,” Kane informed, pointing toward the window. “She’s headed this way.”

Braden sat down across from him. “Start talking.”

Brock knew what he had to do. He needed to leave their kitchen with their support and their blessing. He glanced outside and watched as one hot-blooded female marched toward the house. Oh, she was pissed. She’d get over it. He’d fuck her through it if he had to, but he was going to make her see things his way. She already belonged to him, and there wasn’t a damn thing she could say or do to change it.

“I love your daughter.”

“So you’ve said. Maybe she doesn’t love you,” Kane said. “Then what?”

“She loves me,” he said confidently.

“Uh-huh,” Evan said, scratching his chin. “Did she give you that impression before she left Cow Camp, or are you getting it right now?” He extended his finger and shook it in her direction.

Brock’s memory played tricks on him, and his mind’s eye downright betrayed him. For a split second, he revisited a memory etched in his mind. He thought of her with her bare back against his chest. Good Lord, he couldn’t get her in his arms again fast enough, and he forced the image out of his mind. Thinking of her nude form curled up against his was hardly appropriate.

Clearing his throat, he said, “Actually, she did,” he assured them. “I think she feels the same way about me.”

Peyton shrugged. “We’re about to find out.”

Trixie approached the Cow Camp vehicle, looked inside, and stared at the house. She kicked the tire and screamed, but they couldn’t hear what she yelled out. They were only able to capture the good visual.

Brock grinned. “She’ll be glad to see me.”

“Hmm,” Peyton said. “I can see that. She looks ecstatic, really.”

Braden started out of the room. “Tell you what,” he began. “We have some space here. Our other daughters are out of town. You can sleep in one of their rooms,” he said. “Or we have a boathouse, and I wouldn’t mind if you wanted to spend the week out there, if Trixie doesn’t want you here. Either way, I’ll give you a few days.”

“Thank you,” Brock said, standing and shaking his hand.

Evan smiled. “Gratitude isn’t necessary yet. He said a few days.”

“You’ll need a week,” Kane said. “Maybe even a month.”

Trixie rushed into the kitchen before Braden made his escape. “What the hell do you think you’re doing here?” She glared at Brock.

Brock gasped when he saw her. She had that effect on him. He couldn’t help himself. She took his breath away and in her presence, he felt helpless.

Trixie looked at her parents, but focused on one. “You promised,” she exclaimed, glaring at Kane.

“You asked me to keep these fellas away from here, and I told you I would, if that’s what you wanted,” Kane began. “I’m not convinced that’s what you want.”

Evan said, “Braden invited Brock to stay here for a few days. We’d like to get to know him.”

Brock was getting his way. Her family's cooperation came easier than he'd thought. The Cartwells liked him, or at least they were fair men, fair enough to let him try and win their daughter's affection.

Brock reached for her. "Trixie, I have no idea what I did wrong. I came here to make things—"

"I want you out!" she screamed, smacking his hand away.

"Trixie," Braden hissed. All of the family looked on and none of them seemed surprised. She wasn't all love and lace when she saw him.

Brock felt a stab in the heart. "Trixie, we need some time to talk."

"Out!" she yelled, pointing.

"Trixie?" Peyton's brow wrinkled. "What's this about?"

Trixie stormed over to stand beside him. "You have some nerve following me home. Some nerve!"

"Trixie, baby, I just want to talk to you and find out what I did that made you run away from me, away from—"

"I want you to go, Brock. Now. I want you to leave and never come back. Do you hear me?"

"No, I don't. I hear some ranting and raving, but I don't hear *you*." Brock studied her. God help him, she was beautiful, but she was sad. If he broke her heart, he'd never forgive himself. He reached for her again and when he did, he noticed how Kane and Evan stood taller. Trixie studied his hand on her wrist and then flipped her hand and shook off the grip.

"I want you to go," she choked out.

"No," he stated flatly. "I'm going outside with your father and see what I can do to help out around here. But no, Trixie. I'm not leaving. It's not in my immediate plans, and I won't leave until you and I have a chance to sit down and talk."

Trixie glared at Peyton. "Do something!"

"Trixie," she started.

"Mom! Make him go!"

Peyton studied Brock and for a moment, he thought she might support her daughter. Instead, she pointed upstairs. "No, I won't. You aren't going to treat our guest like this. If you're going to act like a child, you'll be disciplined like one. Go to your room."

Trixie's mouth fell open, and Brock would've laughed, only he was deeply concerned about her. None of this made any sense. Had he done

something to hurt her? Did he put her at risk when he allowed Rory and Mitch to take her to bed, too? Or was she deeply traumatized by the events with Stephen and crying out for help?

“I can’t believe you’re letting him stay here,” she exclaimed, passing him. “This is fucking ridiculous. I live here!”

“Yeah,” Kane taunted. “And Brock is staying here. Get over it.”

Brock followed Braden, Kane, and Evan outside. Once there, he still heard the biggest damn fit Trixie could pitch. She was pissed and making no bones about it. Peyton Cartwell was probably well prepared to handle her.

Chapter Thirty-One

One Week Later

Trixie stood in the window watching him toss hay. She had to hand it to the man. He was stubborn as all hell, not to mention the sexiest man alive, besides Rory. Trixie turned away from the window and collapsed on her bed. She flipped over on her belly and opened her laptop computer.

She missed Rory. She emailed him a few times, and he promised to come and visit her whenever Mitch returned to Cow Camp.

Rory told her the good news. Mitch took a leave of absence to go up north and visit Jordie Anne. Trixie smiled whenever she thought of Mitch with Jordie. The one picture she'd seen of the young woman told a tale of a vibrant girl who was absolutely crazy about the man beside her. The camera captured the love they shared, and they shared a romantic relationship, regardless of what Mitch believed.

Trixie closed her eyes and thought about her time with Mitch. The way he'd pounded his dick inside her cheeks and watched her was one of the most erotic things she'd ever experienced in her life, but she'd realized then it was just sex. With her and Mitch it would always be just sex. She knew why. A woman existed behind his eyes, and their love remained deeply embedded in his heart.

Taking a deep breath, she clicked the mail icon on her desktop and opened a letter from Rory.

Hey Gorgeous,

How's your day? I'm just dropping by your inbox to tell you there's never been a sexier woman in my bed, and there's never been another woman in my heart. Why don't you call me? You can tell me all about

what's going on in your pretty little head or you can just listen to me breathe or maybe share a laugh.

*I'm in love with you,
Rory*

Rory signed each of his letters the same way. She knew he'd spoken to Brock, so Rory realized she wasn't talking to him. He'd asked her to call him several times. Rory probably knew she wasn't going to dial his number.

"What's wrong with me?" she blurted out, slamming her laptop closed and rolling over on her back.

"That's what I want to know," Brock said, leaning just inside the doorway.

Trixie sat upright. "Get out."

"No," he said, pressing his palm to her bedroom door. "I'm not going anywhere."

"I don't have anything to say to you," she exclaimed.

"Trixie, this stops today," he said, taking a seat in the far corner and allowing his legs to open so she could certainly see the bulge in his jeans.

"Mom! Dad!" she screamed.

"They're all gone. Your mother went to the mall, and your dads are at the livestock market. It's just you and me." He took a deep breath, stretched his arms over his head and shoulders and said, "What the hell are we going to do with all this time alone?"

Trixie stood up and darted for the door. He caught her there, pinning her arms to her sides. "It stops today. Right now. I have no idea what I've done to you, and I can't help you if you won't tell me what's going on in your head."

The first tear fell and she swiped it away.

"Honey, please," Brock begged.

"Get out of my room," she choked out.

"I can't leave you like this," he said. "Trixie, we were going someplace. We care about each other. You can't tell me you don't feel anything for me."

Trixie's heart was beating. Just a tick or two here or there made her realize she still stood among the living, but it wasn't that helpful since she

couldn't breathe. God help her, looking at him, feeling his arms gripping her, she wanted to collapse against him and just let him take care of her. But he couldn't. No, he hadn't. "I feel nothing for a man who couldn't save me," she blurted out. "You mean nothing to me!" Tears poured from her eyes then and Brock released her.

Staring at her blankly, he said, "You don't mean that."

"Yes, I do. Every word of it. You could've helped me. You didn't. You could've saved me. You wouldn't!"

"I did everything I knew how to do in order to get you out of a bad situation, Trixie. God in heaven knows I couldn't have predicted what was going to happen there. No one could."

"You should've been there," she wailed, pointing. "You weren't. I want you out!"

Brock placed his hand on the doorknob. "Fine, I'll go."

"Good!" she screamed.

"I'll go on one condition."

"No, you'll go without conditions!"

"The hell I will," he said, grabbing her and slamming her body against his. "I'll go when you convince me I don't have one fucking reason left to stay, and, sugar, it's not gonna be today."

His lips took hers then and he kissed her. It was a dry kiss, one where she adamantly refused to open her mouth and accept. His tongue worked forward, inching for space inside her mouth, and she defied the kiss, the man behind the lips.

"Trixie," he breathed, framing her face. "Let me love you. God, woman, let me make things right for you again."

With a tight upper lip, she shook her head and he stared into her eyes, holding her chin. "Please, baby. I'll never let you down again. I swear it."

She shook her head and turned away. Reluctantly, he released her. "Okay then. Have it your way. I'm still not leaving." He marched out, slamming the door so hard that it rattled the picture frames on the wall.

Trixie cursed him under her breath. Touching her lips, she longed for the way he'd taken her before, the way his mouth scraped over hers and claimed a kiss, then stole away her mind, body, and soul. But right now, she couldn't forgive him. Worse still, she couldn't forgive herself.

Brock Sheldon wasn't going to leave. She couldn't run him off. Fine, he could stay, but she planned to find a way to make him suffer for the choice he stubbornly made. If he wanted to stay on at the Cartwells, then he'd stay on her terms. He'd watch her from a distance and she'd give him an eyeful.

* * * *

Trixie bounced down the front steps and straight into the dining room. A good old country meal was spread across the table. Brock's plate was piled high with mashed potatoes, cornbread, and crispy, country-fried chicken. Her mouth watered and her stomach roared with hunger, but she ignored the feast and stared at her dad.

"Can I have some money?"

"No," Kane replied, chewing a mouthful.

"Okay," she drawled. "Dad?" she turned to Braden who immediately reached for his wallet.

Her mom cleared her throat and tossed her napkin on the table. "What do you need today, Trixie?"

"I'm going shopping."

"At eight o'clock?" Evan asked, arching a brow.

"Wal-Mart," she explained. "I need...things."

"Uh-huh," Kane said, shoving a scoop of potatoes in his mouth.

"Mom," she began. "It's that time of the month."

Brock groaned. "Lie much?"

"Shut up, Brock," she snipped.

Brock held up a fifty dollar bill over his shoulder. She stared at it. All of her fathers continued eating and her mother walked out of the room.

"Take it or leave it," Kane said finally, after a swallow of iced tea.

Trixie glared at them but snatched the bill. "You'll try anything once, huh?"

"Yeah, I will," Brock confirmed, pushing away from the table. "I'll drive you."

"I don't need anyone to drive me."

Brock looked her up and down, and she could've sworn she heard him growl. The hard way he looked at her stirred something deep inside of her,

and she had to turn away before she allowed herself the indulgence of revisited memories.

“I have a driver’s license,” she reminded.

“You don’t say?” Brock retorted, gathering his dishes.

“Leave them,” Kane said. “Trixie seems to be in a big hurry. You don’t want to keep her waiting, do you?”

Brock flashed a smile. “No,” he said with thick implications. “I’ll never keep your daughter waiting. It works the other way around. Right, Trixie?”

Trixie made a peculiar face and popped a kiss in the air toward her parents. “Love y’all. See you tonight.”

Brock followed her to the garage. Trixie snatched the keys to one of the pick-up trucks. Shaking her hips and moving as fast as she could toward the truck, Brock made a sudden leap when she tried to escape behind the wheel of the Ford. He snaked his arm behind her back and drew her close, her breasts landed against his hard chest. “You told a fairly good white lie, didn’t you?”

His green eyes filled with the kind of masculinity she’d once loved, but they were also dark, housing a forbidden kind of heat, a thicker lust she’d never noticed there before. He was wild with hunger, and she was unable to feed it.

“I didn’t lie, but nice try on your part, too.”

“How so?” he asked, grabbing for the keys.

She yanked her arm away, clutching the ring tightly as the jangle of metal clamped together. “You don’t think I’m going to Wal-Mart.”

“Looking like that? I know you aren’t.”

“I am,” she said, using his thick arms to push herself out of his grasp. She ran her fingertips over the skimpy material, nearly shaping the contour of her breasts, mashed tightly into the bodice of one too-short little black dress.

“Like hell you are,” he snapped angrily. “Where are you going?”

“I’ve already told you,” she said smugly. “I’m going shopping. Deal with it.” She slid into the truck and waved goodbye, reaching for the door handle. “And Brock? Do try to get your jealousy under control. If we’re going to live under the same roof here, we’re going to have to give one another space.”

Brock narrowed his gaze. "You leave here tonight and go out like that, I won't be here when you get back."

"Oh? Is that a promise?"

Brock glared straight ahead.

"I didn't think so."

"Trixie," he began, in a somewhat defeated tone. "I'm not leaving here until I'm good and damn ready, but if I leave, I won't come back."

"If you aren't leaving then don't threaten a speedy departure," she said. "I need to learn to take you at your word again. Dead promises are how we ended up at odds in the first place." She slammed the door, started the truck, and drove toward the gates. By the time she arrived there, the anger blinded her. The only thing she could see in her rearview mirror was a blurred image of a man she wanted to love but didn't dare.

* * * *

Trixie didn't come home. He waited up all night for her and she never pulled back through those gates. At one point, he started to wake up her fathers, but then he remembered something about a boathouse. Maybe she'd gone there. Reluctantly, he picked up the phone and tried her cell phone and was immediately sent to voicemail. Damn her for making him tired and impatient, and worse still, horny.

After one o'clock, he finally dialed Cow Camp. Expecting to hear Rory, Mitch surprised him when he picked up the phone.

"Well, I'll be damned," he grated out. "You're back?"

"Hey, man," Mitch said. "How's Trixie?"

Slumping against his pillows, Brock crossed his legs and said, "She's hurting, man."

"Yeah, I heard," Mitch said softly. "You're doing the right thing. Rory said he'll start your way in a couple of days. He'll help me close up the camp after the campers leave tomorrow and then he'll be North Carolina bound."

"How about you?" Brock asked, holding his breath.

A long silence separated men. Brock closed his eyes and waited for the gavel to fall, the one that could determine the kind of future he had with Trixie.

Mitch coughed. "I'm getting married."

"You're what?" Brock asked, jumping to his feet.

"Trixie was right, man. There's only one Jordie for me."

Brock smiled. "Well, I'll be damned."

"Yeah, I reckon I am," Mitch said, laughing.

"How's she doing?" Brock asked excitedly.

"She's better," Mitch said. "She asked about you," he added carefully. "I told her you fell in love, and she's happy for you."

Brock swallowed. He still remembered everything about Jordie. They were good friends before they were lovers. "Mitch, I—"

"Don't, man. We don't owe each other explanations, you know?"

"Yeah," he said. "We were young and dumb, huh?"

"Horny is more like it," Mitch admitted.

"Yeah, that, too."

"Which, speaking of," Mitch began, "I hear you're looking for some sort of cure for blue balls."

"Oh, don't worry about me," Brock cooed sarcastically. "I know exactly where to find the antidote."

"Uh-huh," he said. "Where is the little siren tonight?"

"Now there's the hundred million dollar question," Brock answered. "And if I knew, I'd be there, too."

"Well, buddy, go look. You and Trixie have something pretty special, man."

"Yeah, maybe."

"No," Mitch said. "You do. And I hate to tell you this, but there's another fellow headed your way who is so love-sick he's been running a fever."

"Yeah, I know," Brock groaned.

"How's that gonna work for you?" Mitch taunted.

"Better than it worked for you," Brock teased back.

"Yeah, but I'm marching down the aisle next month and I'm going stag."

Brock pressed his lips together. "Congratulations," he said tightly. "And don't count me out yet," he said. "I plan to meet you at the altar or at least, race ya there." First he had to capture the potential bride-to-be.

“Then you and Rory have your work cut out for you. Keep in touch, man.” Mitch said, “Oh, and tell Trixie I’ll never forget her. I owe her everything.”

“Uh, Mitch?”

“Yeah?”

“Tell Jordie I owe her, too.”

Mitch laughed. “We’ll call it even.”

Brock hung up the phone and relaxed against the pillow. Yeah, a draw worked for him, too.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Trixie sat at the kitchen table. Her mother had noticed the little band around her neck, but went out of her way not to mention her new jewelry. Trixie was a little perturbed. She'd chosen a cheap little number, but it was polished and pretty enough to notice. Her mother knew what it signified and yet chose to look away.

A few minutes after her mom set the bowl of scrambled eggs on the table, she walked in the other room. Trixie's fathers soon appeared at breakfast and all three of them ignored the band around her neck. What were the chances her dads wouldn't notice a Dom branded her as his sub?

Trixie picked up her glass of juice and sipped. She replaced the glass on her placemat and was about to say something when Kane walked out to the porch, saying rather loudly, "I remember a time when you pulled a similar stunt, Peyton. I'm not sticking around to see what Brock has to say about this. I'll be back later."

Trixie turned around in her chair. Evan and Braden each passed her, right on Kane's heels.

"Well, what do you think?" she asked, rubbing the pad of her thumb over the lock in place.

Her mother stared at her in apparent disbelief. Trixie shrugged and turned away, eyeing her breakfast again.

A few minutes later, Brock sat down for breakfast. "This looks good, Mrs. Cartwell," he said, tossing his napkin to his lap.

"Brock, really," she said, smiling. "You should call me Peyton."

"Okay," he said, "Peyton it is. And breakfast smells delicious. Thank you."

He only glanced at Trixie, but she saw his shoulders tense all at once. Maybe a quick peek served the purpose. He saw the collar.

“Good morning, Trixie,” he said tightly. “How’s your breakfast?” He reached for the bacon and tossed a few crisp pieces on his plate.

“Better than sex,” she purred.

Trixie’s mom moaned and left the room. Brock glared her way. “Is that right?” he asked, taking a bite of bacon.

“Yes,” she purred, chomping on dry toast smothered in strawberry jam.

“You must’ve had some bad sex in your time,” he said. His eyes hazed over with foggy lust.

“I have,” she admitted, fingering the collar secured around her neck. “Recently, too.”

Brock snapped a piece of bacon in half. One he shoved in between his cheeks and the other, he tossed on his plate. “Is that a fact?”

“It is,” she lied.

“I guess self-sex isn’t working out for ya like you thought, huh?” he asked dryly.

Trixie pushed away from the table but by the time she stood up, he was there. “That’s a beautiful collar. Did you buy it for yourself or borrow one from Momma?”

“I didn’t—”

“Save the fibs, baby,” he crooned.

Trixie pursed her lips. “So I’m a liar now?”

“The worst,” he said.

Trixie tried to escape, but he held her still tighter.

“Let me go, Brock.”

“Not until I know more about this neckband of yours.”

Trixie tossed her head back. “What do you want to know?”

“Who gave it to you?”

“A man.”

“A man?” he asked, grinning. “Yeah? Where is he?” He glanced over her shoulder. “I don’t see him.”

“He’s around,” she said, playing her game.

“Well, I hope so,” he said. “Cause I want to make sure he knows he’s fucking with the wrong woman, assuming that you have, in fact, screwed him.”

“Go ahead, make fun of me all you want,” she snapped.

“Oh, this isn’t a good time, baby. I’m not having a party here. It might turn into one, though, if you can start with a little honesty.”

“I’m telling the truth. He’s a Dom, by the way, a hard and excited man who happened to collar me.”

Brock sat on the edge of the table and crossed his arms. “Is that right?”

“Yes, it is. Of course, you don’t have to believe me. I don’t care if you do or not. At this point, if I deny anything, I’m a liar. If I admit to more, I’m a whore.”

* * * *

Amused, Brock had heard enough. He grabbed for her and he damn sure didn’t miss. Clutching her to him, he lowered his lips to hers and whispered, “Oh baby, you’re no man’s whore,” he released a throaty call, a masculine one he typically only mumbled during the heat of passion. “Except maybe mine.”

Fire was in her eyes, ice in her veins. “What don’t you understand? I already belong to a man.”

He bent his knees, scooped her up and stomped across the foyer with her wiggling every which way but loose. “You’re damn straight. You belong to someone all right, a hard and excited man,” he growled. “One who will certainly collar you if that’s what you want.” He strode across the steps adding, “But first he’s going to love the mischief right out of ya.”

“No! Put me down, damn you!” she squealed, throwing her fist against his muscular arms.

Peyton rounded the corner and stood in the foyer. “Brock!”

“Peyton, please...”

“Mom!”

“Trixie,” she said, “Kane!” she hollered over her shoulder.

Kane rushed inside and glared at the landing above them. Brock locked eyes with Trixie’s father, a man he respected, viewed as his equal. And he hoped like hell the feelings were mutual. Kane took a deep breath and stopped Peyton from climbing the steps.

“It’s a beautiful day outside,” he said. “Great day for the lake, too. Braden and Evan were just discussing it.”

Brock nodded. “Have a good time.”

“Daddy! No, you can’t!”

“Oh, and that Rory fella called, too. Just talked to him,” Kane said, smiling. “Says he’ll be here before eight tonight. We’re probably just gonna stay out at the lake tonight. You two can hold down the fort, can’t cha?”

Trixie went pale. Love her heart, her own daddy was giving him the permission he sought. “Yeah,” he growled, nipping her ear when he turned the corner. “We’ll either hold it down or tear it down. I’m just not sure which.”

Brock carried her to her room and kicked the door closed. She’d squirmed enough to break a man’s back.

“This is not amusing!” she squealed.

“I think it’s damn funny now, lover,” he said, chuckling. “You heard the man. We’re home alone. All alone. Rory will be here shortly, and he’s headed your way for a reason, Trixie. You’re not going to show him the kind of hospitality you’ve shown me. Understand?”

Trixie seethed. “I’m not having sex with you,” she reported.

Brock set her down on the bed. “Suits me. I’ll do all the work.” He yanked the hem of his shirt over his chest and neck, dropping it at her feet. “Get naked and do it now before I spank your ass for being defiant.”

Trixie slapped the bed. “You can’t rape me.”

“Nope, I can’t. But I’ll make you so willing, you’ll all but rape me.”

He licked his lips and stared at her. Good God the lust was thick.

“Stop this!” she screamed. “I don’t want you.”

Sweet hell, he was horny. He unzipped his pants, popped the button and stepped out of his blue jeans. His erection was forward, proud, and ready.

Trixie eyed him.

“Go ahead,” he said, fisting his cock. “Look at it. You know you want to. You’re dying to feel it up against those sweet, little, round cheeks.”

Kneeling, he grabbed her ankles, flipped her over on her stomach, and pulled her to the edge of the bed. “Don’t make me work you over before I get my cock inside your tight little pussy. If you make this tough, darlin’, I’ll fuck you right into the eighth hour tonight and then, God forbid, watch while Rory does the same thing.

Conceding, Trixie mumbled, “I don’t want this.”

“Really,” he said, flipping her over and working her pants over her hips.

“No...not...really,” she whined, but her legs spread. God help him, he could smell her arousal, the heat coating her pussy and pooling around her lips.

“I think you do,” he reassured. “In fact, I think you want it worse than you’ve ever wanted anything in your life.”

He shoved her camisole over her neck and shoulders and unhooked her bra, stretching above her and flipping the locked collar at the same time. “Wanna keep this on?” he taunted.

“Sure,” she said, flippantly. “It can’t come off, my Master is—”

“Right here, baby,” he said, pressing his erection to the crack of her ass and kissing a path up and down her spine. “Always right here,” he mumbled, licking across her back toward her shoulder blades.

Brock felt her relax. Placing his palm to the curve of her waist, he rolled her over and stared into those mesmerizing blue eyes. “God, you’re beautiful,” he whispered against her lips. “Kiss me, Trixie. Come on, lover. Show me what you’ve got.”

She narrowed her gaze and, heaven help him, she framed his face and finally took what she wanted, what he’d needed her to do since he’d arrived there. She nipped at his bottom lip, sucking it between her lips, biting him with those sharp little teeth and panting as she reached for his cock.

“Oh, no you don’t,” he said, “Not yet.”

“Yes,” she said, nipping. “Right now.”

Brock dipped his head and captured a nipple, his tongue toyed with the little bead, and it pointed forward, showcasing her arousal. Grinning, he muttered, “That’s my girl,” and he lowered his head more, going south and kissing a path straight for her pussy.

“Brock,” she breathed.

He pressed his palm to her belly and locked his lips over her cunt, sipping at her like he’d never tasted a better flavor in his life.

He hadn’t. Heaven help him, he hadn’t.

Her hands worked through his hair. She pulled at the strands, twirling them around her delicate fingers and then massaging his scalp.

Brock dipped his tongue, lapping at her like a kitten going after its first cup of milk. Grabbing her legs, he tossed them over his back, leaving her for a quick second and returning with eagerness, thrusting his tongue inside her

walls and licking her from the inside out. Good Lord, he couldn't get enough.

Her hands balled tighter. Her closed fists full of hair. "Brock, now!" she exclaimed, riding out the first climax. Her hips rolled forward, and he smacked her mound. The bare, damp flesh burned his palm, and her excitement seeped onto his tongue.

She tried to sit up. He pushed her back. She tried to back away, but he held fast to her thighs. She cried out loud and, damn it all, he cried right along with her.

He loved one woman. There wasn't any way to deny it and, by God, when he finished with her, she'd love him right back.

He was introducing her to an intoxicating way of life, a new drug, a natural high and a powerfully addictive substance. Yeah, he was all about making her a Brock-junkie. Keeping her in bed for a while would guarantee an instant addiction.

* * * *

She thought he may have tongued the life right out of her. Trixie was exhausted, and she lay in his arms barely breathing after ragged breaths shook her for nearly ten minutes past their explosive foreplay. She'd never known anything so personal could be so exquisite until Brock did things to her that should've been considered animalistic.

His fingers had dipped into her back hole while he snacked on her like a well-prepared meal. She'd tried to resist him, only she couldn't get away and now she wondered why she'd even tried in the first place.

"Happy now?" she asked, whispering against his chest.

"I'm getting there," he said, rolling over her. Both of his hands were at her waist. "Love me yet?"

"I'm getting there," she replied, eyeing his thick length. "You may have to do something more to convince me—ah gods, Brock!"

"You asked. And I promised to always give you what you want," he said, slipping inside her pussy and penetrating her with a long, leisurely thrust. The in and out movement of his cock dividing her, enticed her hand. She reached for him, and he sank deeper, this time refusing to withdraw. "How's..." he drawled, pressing tighter into her walls, "that feel?"

Trixie closed her eyes. “Like heaven,” she replied, wrapping her legs around his back and drawing him closer.

“You better believe it’s good,” he muttered. His thighs tightened against her legs and he hammered into her vagina. “Really hot.” He bent his head and claimed her lips.

“I’ll never get enough, Trixie,” he promised.

He pressed against her. His cock claiming what already belonged to him, what she decided would forever be his to control. The woman he made her into when she connected with him was empowered by his love, inspired by his sex. God help her, she loved him.

“Take me, Trixie. Ride me,” he urged, rolling over and dragging her on top. She leaned forward and back. He helped her move while thrusting deep inside of her. He withdrew slightly whenever she moved a certain way, and it made things hotter between them. She felt the sudden loss and the instant gratification when he returned.

She slid up and down his length, riding the waves of pleasure, waiting for the ripple and the crashing waves to break all around them. She wanted to succumb to the climax riding closer but she waited. God help her, she waited, watching as his jaw clenched, and she remembered what she’d learned. Brock’s release didn’t come easy.

Pumping her up and down over his shaft, he gripped her waist still tighter. He sat up and twisted her legs like a pretzel until her heels drove into his back. Then, he sucked on her breasts and her body came alive with new fire.

“Brock!” she screamed, clawing at his shoulders and holding on as he pressed his mouth to her nipple and licked over the bud, flicking it with the tip of his tongue.

“That’s it, sugar. Come to me. Give me what I want.”

Up and down, he moved her body over his cock until he pressed her flat against the mattress. “Damn, I’m glad you’re limber,” he said thrusting inside her. “God yeah, this is sweet.”

She closed her legs around him and he lost it. Damnation, did he lose it. She felt him pumping his seed higher and higher, his release so deep inside of her that she’d forever carry a piece of this moment.

* * * *

Trixie opened her eyes to a dark room. "Brock?"

"I'm here," he said, reaching for her. "I just threw on some clothes so I can greet Rory."

"Is he here?" she asked, blinking.

"Not yet. Should be in about twenty minutes or so. I just talked to him."

Trixie yawned, pretending not to care either way and then made the inquiry. "Is Mitch with him?"

"No," he said.

"That's good, I guess," she said, pausing to add, "Right?"

"Yeah, Trixie," he agreed. "I'm happy for him. He's where he needs to be, where he's belonged all along. He went back to Jordie."

In the moonlight, what little seeped through the curtains, he stared at her. His face was tense, but his eyes remained soft.

"What's going on in that mind of yours?" she asked.

Brock kissed her lightly on the lips and said, "Are you okay with Mitch and Jordie?"

She touched his cheek. "Why wouldn't I be? I have everything I want right here."

Smiling, he asked, "Do you?"

"You know I do," she responded. "Well, almost."

"Rory?" he asked, anxiously. "You're in love with Rory, too, aren't you?"

She nodded. "I don't want what I feel for Rory to hurt you, Brock."

"It doesn't. It's sort of odd though, you know?"

"How?"

"I always thought I'd end up sharing a woman, but I pictured Mitch on the other side of the bed more often than Rory."

"Why? Does Rory snore or something?" she asked, laughing.

"It's not that," he promised, chuckling. Brock stopped talking and touched her collar, fingering the small lock and tiny silver loops.

"I'm yours, Brock. If you want me to submit, I'm yours."

"Rory doesn't enjoy Domination and submission," he said. "And I don't want it for you, Trixie."

Uncertainty filled the air. "Is this about Stephen?"

“No,” he said firmly. “This has nothing to do with you and Pratchert. Domination and submission is fine in role play or bedroom games, but the lifestyle is a different story. I don’t want it for you.”

“So you won’t tie me to the bed and make me beg for a dildo?”

“Well,” he said, “since you put it that way.” He kissed her knee and slid his hand up her inner thigh.

“No punishment if I don’t come on command?”

“Not from this fella,” he assured. “I like surprises.”

“This *is* about Pratchert,” she stated flatly.

“No, Trixie. It’s about what will work for me and you. Rory, too, if that’s where we’re headed.”

Trixie cupped the side of his face. “You don’t have to share me together if it’s too difficult for you.”

Brock laughed. “You think I’m going to let that little shit take you off to bed without me?”

Trixie smiled. “Possessive somebody, aren’t you?”

“The worst you’ve ever seen,” he said, pinching her nipple.

“Ouch,” she whined. “Watch it. I’m sensitive now. Somebody licked these babies raw.”

Lowering his head, he swiped his tongue across her protruding nipple. “I wish Rory would get his ass moving. I can’t wait to get in between these soft thighs again.”

Trixie spread her legs and fingered her clit, taking the time to make it a real show. “Then do it now. Don’t wait. You said twenty minutes.”

Brock grabbed her hand and cupped it over his bulge. “I need more than twenty, honey.”

She crawled over him, draping her legs on either side of his body. “We’ll see,” she said, grinding her wet center against his pants. Once she straddled him, she unfastened his jeans, and he unzipped them, keeping his hand firmly against her heat, moving the ball of his hand in a clockwise fashion.

“Finger me,” she demanded, tossing her hair over her shoulder.

“No way,” he said. “You wanted this ride, darlin’. Now stroke it.” He bit at her lips and she grinned.

“Yes, as a matter of fact, I did,” she consented, pulling his cock through her palm, tapping the slick end of the swollen mushroom head.

“Do it, Trixie,” he breathed. “Ride me, baby.”

Trixie rose over him, her thighs opened, and she eased herself over his shaft. “Oh, summertime,” she drawled, finding her seat. “You’re so fucking hard.”

He pressed his dick deep, latching onto her breast and sucking, tweaking the opposite nipple as he pounded into her pussy. “Love me, Trixie. Love the hell right out of me.”

She started to grind. Gripping his shoulders, she bounced with his thrusts, finding and then matching the rhythm he set. She discovered her own little slice of heaven holding him in her arms.

And it was good, so good. Sex with Brock was hot, like coals burning over an open fire. She had something big here—outside of the flesh pounding into her body—they were riding toward something grand and very special. His lips parted and she stared into his loving eyes until he drenched her once more with a man’s kind of gratitude, the kind of appreciation she hoped to receive for the rest of her life.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Even after hard loving, Trixie's heart pounded faster than her feet could carry her to the front door. She topped the steps and flew down them, pausing at the landing long enough to look through the beveled glass panel located to the left of the front door.

Damn if he didn't look good enough to eat, too. What was it about her men? They were handsome, better looking than the average guy, and, best of all, they truly belonged to her. Or at least, one of the two did, and Rory didn't travel all the way to the mountains of North Carolina to tell her any different.

"Hey you," she said, opening the door and nearly knocking him over when she tugged at his shirt and yanked him forward.

"Hey yourself," he said right back, grabbing her neck and pulling her into a heated kiss. He tossed his luggage to the inside of the door and pushed her back, kissing her all the way into the foyer.

"I damn sure didn't get a welcome like that one," Brock stated from behind them.

Rory groaned, released her, and then said, "Maybe it's your approach. I'll try to help you work on it." They shook hands and embraced in one of those guy hugs—complete with the back slaps and chest-level hand clasp.

"We've ironed out the rough spots," Brock assured. "Damn, I've used her body like a nice warm blanket."

"Oh yeah?" Rory asked, looping his arm around Trixie's waist and lowering his lips to her neck. "What the fuck is this?" he asked abruptly, backing away and glaring at Brock.

"What can I say, man?" Brock teased. "I wanted her on lockdown."

Rory's eyes flashed with anger. "We agreed to discuss this sort of thing."

Brock laughed. "Then talk away. Trixie here collared herself. She can explain. I'm hitting the hay."

"You're what?" Trixie asked, looking up.

"You wore me out, sweetheart. I'm man enough to let you have time alone with Rory. Just include me when you come to bed."

"Always," she promised.

"Never," Rory taunted.

Brock winked. "The least she can do is tuck me in," he said, moving toward them, his cock hanging from his shorts.

"Dear God, Brock, where are her parents?" Rory exclaimed, looking away.

"Out," he replied. "All night long."

"Well, why didn't you say so?" he asked, grabbing for Trixie again. "I think we need to show this one what we have in mind, don't you?"

Brock stood on the last step, gripping the handrail. "Like I said, I need someone to tuck me in," he looked down at his cock and shrugged.

Trixie snickered. "I only have one free hand." She grabbed Rory's belt and tugged him forward, walking toward Brock. When she reached him, she took him in her hand and worked his dick up and down, working her way into a slow and easy hand-job.

Brock leaned against the wall, his hips tapped the handrail. She pulled him through her palm, caressing him with her fingers. "Good trip?" he asked, smiling.

"Yeah," Rory said, grabbing his suitcases again. The maneuver alone pulled Trixie right along with him since her hand caught between a leather belt and Brock's waistband. "I had this wicked idea that I was joining a sex party and had to pull over for a little man business once, but other than that, it was a smooth trip."

Trixie smiled. "Did you really?"

Brock snarled. "Why, hell no."

"Why, hell yeah," Rory said. "I wouldn't make up something like that. If I take my hand to my dick, I damn sure want the woman I thought about to know it."

Brock shot him a lopsided smile. "While you were jacking off, buddy, I had the real thing."

"Brock, stop making him think we had fun without him."

“Didn’t you?” Rory asked.

Trixie swallowed tightly. This was the kind of question she wasn’t sure how to handle. Even though she’d heard her parents tease about their romps, she’d always avoided paying too much attention to their flirtations. Grabbing Rory’s free hand and Brock’s free-hanging dick, she started upstairs.

“Well?” Brock asked, curiously. “Was it worth your time or not, darlin’?”

She stopped on the last step, knelt in front of him and licked the tip of his dick. “It was the best lay I’ve had all day.”

“Good answer,” Rory said. “Since I’m here, I’ll change your mind.” He winked at Brock. “Give her about two hours with me, and she’ll tell a different story.”

“Don’t count on it,” Brock said, stepping closer to the mouth encircling him. “I’ll give the girl credit, she thinks fast on her feet.”

“And her back.” Rory paused. “I remember.”

Brock thrust forward and Trixie swallowed a few times, the man swelling in between her cheeks tempting her to stay on her knees. She wanted to make him crazy, make him lose all control as she quenched her thirst with his taste.

“God, Trixie. I’m not going to stop if you don’t.” He pressed his hand to her head and Rory walked toward the rooms.

“Which one is our room?” he called out.

“Damn if I care,” Brock answered. “Thatta baby,” he whispered. “Let me come in your mouth.”

She slurped, and he pressed forward, his balls resting on her chin. He pushed his cock down her throat, tapping her tonsils with his tip.

“Damn baby, I’m gonna lose it if you keep this up.”

She hoped so. She didn’t stop in the middle of the hall for nothing. She cupped his sack and bobbed over him, her head bouncing up and down, up and down.

“Go for it, honey,” he said, grabbing her shoulder and hammering into her mouth. This time, she sucked harder, filling her cheeks with his size, swallowing over and over again as he found his release.

“God, yeah, that’s good. Don’t stop until you finish.” He moved quicker, pumped deeper. His balls slapping her chin drove him harder. Her

hot mouth enveloped him, and he kept coming, faster and hotter, the jet of his spray pouring from his tip. Relaxing at the end, he wiped the sweat beads pouring from his forehead and stared back at her.

Rory waited at the end of the hall. "Damn, I'd love one of those," Rory said.

Brock grinned. "If you just watched, you're probably ready to fuck for hours."

Trixie stood up and kissed him lightly on the lips. "I love you," she said.

"You do?" Brock asked playfully.

"Yeah, I do."

"I believe ya."

* * * *

Rory had just pushed her to the bed when the doorbell rang. "You expecting somebody?" Rory asked, eyeing Trixie and then Brock.

"No, no one," she responded, reaching for him.

A few heavy knocks ensured them someone was there and those on the other side of the front door didn't plan on leaving. Rory rubbed his cock against her leg. "Man, you're gonna have to go answer it," he said pointing at Brock.

"Trixie can get it," he told him, laughing. "Can't you baby?"

Trixie looked at her men. Both of them looked ready to fuck. She was wet, smelled of sex, and probably had cum staining her chin.

"Are you serious?" she whined.

"Very," Brock said, slapping her hip. "We don't live here, baby. Whoever is here probably wants something like an invitation inside. They may wonder why a guy with a hard on is answering your front door."

Trixie groaned out her complaints but she rolled out of bed and snatched a robe. "You both owe me for this," she said.

"I'll pay up when you get back," Rory called after her.

"Yeah," she grumbled. "I bet." She started down the steps and glared at the eyes staring back at her. Two sets of them waited, two identical girls who needed their asses beat for interrupting her moment.

"What the hell are you doing?" Trixie asked, swinging the door open.

“Trixie!” The girls rushed in with a large bundle of luggage following them. Joshua and Aspen McKay, her next door neighbors, looked like they’d had the vacation of a lifetime and now required a little R and R. The men tossed the bags on the floor.

“Hey, um. Wow, this is um,” she began, looking over her shoulder. “A surprise,” she quickly concluded. “Forget your keys, did ya?”

“You’d better be glad they did,” Joshua noted, staring at the stairs.

Aspen and Joshua locked gazes and then Joshua added, “Took you long enough to get to the door. Everything all right around here?”

“Why sure,” Trixie said, clearing her throat. “We...I mean...I, of course...I wasn’t expecting to see these two back so soon.”

“We’re only a day early,” Joshua snipped, continuing to glare at the stairs. “Where’s your momma?”

The McKays made themselves at home there, just as the Cartwells did over at their place. Joshua finally started upstairs.

“Wait!” Trixie exclaimed, tugging her robe tighter to her chest. “They’re not here. I mean, Dads and Mom aren’t here. That’s what I meant.” Damn if she couldn’t stumble over some words.

She silently prayed Brock and Rory would stay put, but she realized it was like praying to the wind. Brock was too damn protective and Rory was flat-out mischievous. He’d find a little humor in making an appearance.

Aspen narrowed his gaze. “Where are they?”

Joshua continued to gawk up the stairwell. He didn’t move beyond the third step.

“They’ve gone out to the lake,” she said. “Where you two are also going to head, by the way,” she added, staring at her sisters.

“In your dreams,” Ansley said, squeezing by her.

“Not today, I’m not,” Kimberly added, popping a kiss on Aspen’s cheek and then Joshua’s. “Thanks for everything,” she said, trying to brush them off and adding a fake yawn. “We’ll be seeing you soon.”

Ansley smiled at Trixie. “So the parents are away tonight, huh?”

Joshua studied the girls. “Are you sure everything is fine here, Trixie? I could take a look around if you—”

“No!” she exclaimed with far too much lung-power. “I mean,” she tried a softer approach. “It’s really not necessary.”

Aspen snickered. "I heard you've had some company this past week. Some fella giving you a run for your money, at least that's what your daddy said."

She didn't have to guess which one.

"Yep," Joshua said, concerned with the stairs again. "Vicky said she talked to your momma and she seems to like him."

"Right," Trixie said. "Well, I suppose everyone does. Now, it's awful late. If you two don't want to come on in the kitchen and have something to drink, then I'll just—"

"A beer sounds great, Trixie," Joshua cut her off, smiling at Aspen.

"Trying to devil her some, aren't you, Josh?" Aspen asked.

He winked. "Girls, run on upstairs and put your stuff in your rooms. Your sister might have company lingering around here. And tell that boy hiding out upstairs that your godfathers want to meet him."

Ansley gasped, and Trixie turned around to see what had her attention. Ansley said, "Oh. My. God."

Kimberly smirked. "Those fellows aren't what I'd call boys," she said, ribbing Trixie. "Damn, girl," she slapped Trixie's arm with the back of her hand. "How many of them do you have up there?"

Brock and Rory walked downstairs. Rory looked uptight, but Brock, considering how many ways he'd been sexed up and sexed down throughout the day, appeared calm and relaxed.

"How's it going?" Rory asked, extending his hand.

After quick introductions, Joshua McKay studied them, his focus primarily on Brock. "I hope you fellows are taking good care of Trixie here while her parents are out of the way."

"Yes, sir," Rory said.

"I have Kane's blessing," Brock informed.

"Really?" Joshua asked. "Kane must've lost his ever-lovin' mind then."

Brock smirked. Yeah, maybe he had. Brock wouldn't want a daughter of his with a man like him. Then again, he wasn't leaving. Kane Cartwell wasn't stupid. He knew Brock loved his daughter.

Aspen made light of his brother's attitude. "You two can't pay any attention to Joshua. He's protective over these three."

"*That beer*, Trixie," Joshua said from the corner of his mouth.

Aspen said, "Now, Josh, come on. We've got plenty to keep us busy over at the house. Besides, how much trouble can they get into now with the little sisters home?"

"You might be surprised," he said through gritted teeth.

"We'll take care of them," Brock confidently took the lead, smirking at the twins. "We can tuck them in bed before returning to *ours*."

"Not sure that was your best reply," Aspen pointed out.

Ansley blinked a couple of times. "I don't know, I'd kind of like a bedtime story from either one of them," she said playfully.

Trixie narrowed her gaze and Brock laughed.

"Ansley!" Joshua exclaimed. "Just for that, you girls are spending the night at our place."

"Vicky will kill us if she has to listen to girls giggling all night again," Aspen warned.

Trixie smiled, hopeful the McKays might remember what it was like to be young and in love, never mind drowning in lust. Not that she wanted to discuss particulars.

Joshua rubbed his chin. He considered it. Only, the thought must've been a passing one. Pointing to Ansley and then Kimberly, he said, "Girls, watch your sister. Don't let her have a minute without you. The three of you need bonding time since you haven't seen one another in a few weeks."

"Thanks," Trixie said, forcing a smile.

Aspen shook his head and walked back outside. "It was nice meeting you fellas. If you need anything, we're right next door."

Trixie followed them out and leaned into the SUV after they climbed inside. "Jeez, if you two were any more neighborly, I'd swear I was living on Sesame Street."

"Behave, Trixie," Joshua said. "Those guys look like trouble."

"Ah now, you can't be serious," she said, pushing away from the door when Aspen put a little weight on the petal.

When they pulled away from the curb, she called out, "You, of all people should know what it's like to enjoy a wild ride!"

"Brilliant," Ansley said from behind her. "Now we can all go stay at the McKays."

Aspen slammed on the brakes and Joshua leaned out of the window. "You, of all people, ought to know better," Joshua said. "Frankly, I'm surprised, Trixie."

"Disappointed?"

"No," he said, a smile tilting his lips. "I could never be disappointed."

"We're not exactly in a position to judge, you know," Aspen added.

"Nice necklace, by the way. Your dads will love it."

"They've seen it."

"Uh-huh," Joshua mumbled, staring.

"See you, kiddo," Aspen said. Joshua tossed up his hand, and they drove away.

Trixie took a deep breath and watched the McKays disappear into the night. Still looking down the long driveway, she said, "So what do you think?"

Ansley leaned over her shoulder first. "Wanna share?"

"Hell no," she said, brushing her away. "Please remember you're jail bait."

Kimberly laughed. "We'll get out of here for a few hours if you swear you won't tell."

"Deal," Trixie quickly agreed.

The girls laughed, but their giggling was short lived. When they turned around, they were greeted by two men. Brock had his arms crossed and took the position of authority. "I think pizza and a movie sounds like a fine plan," he said. "What do you think, Rory?"

"Huh?" Rory seemed completely dumbfounded. "I didn't drive all the way to North Carolina for dinner and television."

"Wouldn't you prefer pizza and a movie to these young ladies running loose without their parents knowing where they are?"

Rory's upper lip curled. "A little shut-eye for all of us sounds pretty darn appealing."

Ansley marched by him. "I'm sixteen, and I'm raised by three controlling fathers and a mother who does her best to please them. Do you really think we're that naïve?"

Brock smirked. Rory shrugged, stating, "It was worth a shot."

Trixie stared at Brock. “They do it all the time. They even sneak out sometimes. There’s no harm in letting them run around town for a couple of hours.”

“And just where would they go in this town for the next few hours?”

“There’s always a party going on a few miles down the road,” Kimberly informed. “We could go there, and you could call us when it’s safe to come home.”

“It’s safe now,” Brock barked.

“Oh, really, Brock, come on now,” Trixie exclaimed, waving her hands in the air.

“She’s desperate,” Ansley said, cupping her hand over her twin’s ear but stating it aloud for all to hear.

“Very,” Kimberly agreed, smiling wide.

Brock and Rory looked at the twins and then back at Trixie. “Good Lord, you three have given your dads a good run for their money, huh?”

“She has,” Ansley said, pointing. “We’re the angels. She’s the devil. Ask Daddy Braden. He’ll tell you all about it.”

“I’d say you have good old Braden fooled,” Brock said.

Rory released a deep sigh. “He’ll probably change his mind in a few years.”

Trixie stared at her sisters. “How about Pop-a-Pizza? It’s down the road, and you could run over there and *eat-in*. Then pick up a movie on your way back.”

Kimberly studied Ansley. They suddenly changed their devious little direction. Trixie could see their minds churning with possibilities.

“We have on-demand,” Ansley reminded. “Why spend the money in my wallet when the best show in town is taking place right upstairs?”

Trixie glared at Kimberly trying to send her an unspoken message of sorts. Ansley was too rotten for her own good. Right then, she found a way to become a downright nuisance.

“Okay,” Ansley drawled. “What’s it worth to you?” She glared at Brock like she thought he must’ve been the more physical of the two men. She was right-on, but she was also off-base, too. Brock had already enjoyed a good time.

“Tell you what,” Rory said, humor dancing in his eyes. “I’ll take you girls to get a pizza. I’m sort of hungry, too. Then,” he said, eyeing Brock,

“when we bring these two the leftovers, Brock will watch a movie with you. What do you say?”

“Spoken like a counselor from Cattle Camp,” Ansley said.

“It’s Cow Camp,” Trixie corrected.

“Whatever,” Ansley said, releasing an exaggerated, deep breath.

“I’m not interested in spending time with the twins,” Trixie said. “I think two teenagers can manage all by themselves down here by their lonesome.”

“We’ll have a party,” Ansley informed.

“A huge one,” Kimberly said, winking.

“I don’t believe you,” Trixie said. “And if you do, party at your own risk. The parents return bright and early tomorrow morning.”

* * * *

“I kind of liked the idea of ordering a pizza,” Rory said, closing the bedroom door. “We could have split it down the middle, served your sisters their half and then brought our portion up here. You know, take a bite here or there while nibbling on each other.”

Brock had a sexy little swagger. He walked toward the bed with Trixie cradled in his arms. “She likes the sounds of nipping on meat, don’t you sugar?”

Trixie sighed. “Personally, I planned on serving up a little pudding.”

“Really?” Rory asked, standing in front of her once Brock released her. He helped her wiggle her way out of sweatpants. “Tell me more, darlin’.” He yanked her shirt over her head before she realized he had the material bunched in his hands.

Brock watched. He said he planned to sit back and take it all in, but Trixie knew better. Brock Sheldon would lose all control.

Closing her eyes, Trixie heard a slamming door downstairs. She ignored it.

Rory undressed. She never noticed how fast.

He gripped her hips and pressed against her center. The music on the first floor was loud enough to make out lyrics.

“This is what I need,” she hummed.

Lots of footsteps underneath them assured Trixie's sisters had a party in motion, but only one celebration mattered to Trixie. It was a gala of loving and a ceremony of sorts. One she certainly didn't want to miss.

Rory traced the shape of his mouth with his tongue, eyeing her as he fingered her. Then he lowered his head and sipped. Then, heaven help her, he licked, but God help her when he thrust his tongue deep inside her. It was all over.

Yet it was only just the start of one delicious and very erotic beginning.

* * * *

She was sandwiched between two hard and ready males, the kind of men who snacked on women, feasted on every bounty a woman's body provided. She wrapped her arms around Rory's neck and kissed him.

Brock initially battled for the front, but Rory won out. He was horny and apparently wanted to take a woman the way a man in love should—staring into her eyes.

Brock's hand went to Trixie's shoulder. She felt the intensity of his heat seeping through his palm as his fingers caressed between her shoulder blades. The tip of his dick was moist, centered between her globes, and there wasn't any way to deny the length pressed against her flesh.

"Trixie," Rory breathed, tilting her chin toward him. "I've missed you," he whispered, lowering his lips to hers.

"I've missed you, too."

Brock nipped at her ear. "You've had more than you can handle right in front of you and turned it down."

"I know," she admitted. "I'll never do it again." She rolled her hips forward and caught Rory's tip when she parted her legs.

"Ah, Trixie," Rory said, kissing her.

Trixie's mouth opened all on its own when Rory's tongue darted in between her ready lips. Her heart belonged to him as much as Brock. Latching onto his neck, she pressed her full breasts against his chest, capturing Brock's hand in the process.

She tried to catch a breath, but it was no use. The scent of sex mixed with cologne made her open her eyes wide and choke on the lust spinning around her. "Please...take...me."

Rory grinned. "Ready?"

Brock placed his hands on her ass and spread her open. The penetration orchestrated. Rory nodded and Brock slid into place right after Rory pushed his tip against her folds.

"Good God," she whined. "I forgot how this felt."

Brock bit playfully at her shoulder. "Then we'll remind you often," he promised.

Hands locked on her hips and waist. The fucking began. A slow and leisurely screw brought them together as one, and Trixie cried out at once, opening her mouth and moistening her lips, reaching for the man in front of her and bracing for the climax already rolling over her.

"Kiss her," Brock ordered.

"Not on your life," Rory said. "You kiss me, Trixie. Give me some tongue, baby."

Framing his face, Trixie pressed her lips against his and shuddered. Brock rolled over on his back. Rory straddled her middle and she stretched her neck, trying to get at his mouth again.

"The kissing is overrated right now," he said. "Just relax, let me have you. Feel me." He pushed his cock inside her walls, and Brock thrust high into her ass. His large hands gripped her hard as he rose and fell behind her, sitting up in a jack-knife position and lying down flat against the mattress again.

"Good God, baby, you're tight," Brock muttered.

Rory stared at her breasts. She cupped her hands underneath the swell of them and rolled her thumbs over the pointed rise.

"That's it, Trix. Get 'em hard for me." Rory leaned forward, his strokes were uneven as he pushed halfway in and pulled all the way out. He wanted to taste her nipples, and his tongue darted in and out of his mouth while she enticed him.

Kissing her stomach, Rory's pace changed all at once. Brock pressed harder, screwed higher, and pounded away, fighting for his release. Rory took her breast, scraped his tongue over the hard point and fucked the daylight out of her, matching Brock stroke for stroke.

"Come now!" Brock growled.

"Already there," she whispered.

“Damn, don’t I know it!” Rory exclaimed. “That’s it, Trix. Let me feel that sweet heat.”

Trixie closed her eyes. She focused on the men pushing their dicks into her channels, the one at the front, the other invading her from behind.

“Now!” Brock said. A jet of his cum sprayed in between her cheeks and he groaned. Rory hammered into her, pulling her up and away from Brock’s body while allowing her to feel them both at different angles.

“Rory! Brock! Please!” She screamed, the second orgasm rocking her into their arms, regardless of whose were where.

One pushed her forward, the other pulled her back. One pressed higher. The other withdrew. One plunged deeper. The other withered away with the pulsating defeat of a climax well earned. And each man left a piece of himself buried high inside her well saturated walls.

Chapter Thirty-Four

Trixie staggered downstairs around nine the next morning. She was greeted by the smell of hot coffee and too many bodies on the floor to make her way to the pot. She stumbled over an arm and that's when she screeched, "What the hell?"

Brock appeared in the archway leading to the kitchen. "It's taken care of," he promised, motioning.

"No, you don't understand," Trixie said, tripping over a pizza box.

"I think I do," Brock stated. "We should've been more responsible."

"Have you seen Kimberly or Ansley?" Trixie snapped.

Brock looked toward the steps and pointed. Rory practically tugged the mini-Trixies with him as he made his way downstairs. He had Ansley on one side, Kimberly on the other, and he gripped their forearms as he walked. "The girls have agreed to get this mess cleaned up," he announced, staring around at the evidence of a party.

"How could you?" Trixie exclaimed.

"You wanted us out of sight and out of mind. We had a field party last night. Then everyone crashed here." Kimberly's nostrils flared. "Do I smell coffee?"

"You don't drink coffee," Ansley reminded.

"I'd drink just about anything this morning," she complained.

"I was informed by one of the boys that there are all sorts of things I could learn from these two," Ansley changed the subject, eyeing Brock and Rory. "One of them said you gave it to my sister pretty hard last night."

"Which one?" Rory asked, scanning the room of bodies. "They all look the same about right now."

Kimberly locked eyes with Ansley, and impishness danced across her face. Trixie didn't bother asking questions they were all too willing to openly discuss.

Ansley batted her eyelashes. "Truth is, we listened."

"You don't say?" Rory asked.

Brock wiggled his lips in an apparent effort to conceal a smile. Trixie didn't think it was funny. "You did what?"

"We listened," Ansley stated flatly. "I heard every 'ooh' and 'ah yes baby' the three of you screamed." The girls laughed out loud.

Trixie glared at her sisters. "You think this is funny, do you?"

"Hilarious, yes," Ansley said, looking Rory up and down. "You're kind of loud, by the way."

Rory turned bright red, and Ansley looked satisfied by her open declaration.

"Well, I hope you're happy now," Trixie began. "I'm telling Mom and Dads about your little get together."

Their expressions changed in an instant. "Why? Because we were curious?" Kimberly asked.

"Curious, hell," Trixie barked. "You have enough personal experience to teach French Kissing 101 to prostitutes."

"I resent the implication," Ansley said.

"I didn't imply anything. I shot straight from the hip."

"I'll say," Rory whispered in her ear.

Brock narrowed his gaze. "You have ten minutes to get these yahoos out of here. Then, we'll all pitch in and clean up the mess you and your friends made."

"I don't do housework," Ansley stated dryly, studying her manicured nails.

"We both try to avoid as much manual labor as possible," Kimberly added.

Brock shot Trixie a wink and then said, "Have it your way," he said. "Trixie, call your parents and tell Kane I need to talk to him about this little field party. I bet if I go out there right now, I'll find their keg and while I'm traipsing around, with any luck, I might find a good switch or two."

Ansley grunted and started toward the living room. "Looks like you're more like Mom than you ever thought. Spankings from controlling men and more than one to keep you entertained. I hope this is something that runs in the family."

* * * *

They tossed the last bags of trash into the back of one of the old farm trucks right before Kane's maroon and grey Jeep Cherokee pulled through the gate and stopped right beside them. Rory, Brock, and the young Cartwell women stood at the tailgate.

"Well, I'll be damned," Kane said eyeing the bags of evidence. "You two came home early from a theme park and threw one hell of a coming home party, I see."

Brock shrugged. "What can I say, we had our hands full with your daughter last night."

"You could've said anything but what you chose to say," Peyton assured. Kane's face turned blood red, and she gripped his forearm.

"Kane," she warned. "You weren't in the dark when you decided to spend time at the lake. You knew these three weren't baking cookies and drinking milk."

"I suppose," he said. "But I didn't want details."

Peyton studied them. "Rory, it's nice to see you again."

Forever the suck-up, Rory said, "The pleasure is all mine, Mrs. Cartwell."

The girls kissed their fathers and hugged their mother. Then they hurried out of harm's way. Brock couldn't blame them. The brute of the bunch didn't look too interested in hearing about Alice in Wonderland or their Disneyland adventure after their capers allowed Trixie the freedom she needed to fulfill her own kind of fantasies.

"Kane, look," Brock began once the girls were out of earshot. "You know how I feel about Trixie."

"Yeah," he admitted, "but that doesn't mean you have to act on any ridiculous notions the two of you may have. Trixie is nineteen, remember." Damn it, he already knew what Brock wanted to say.

Rory watched them. Brock realized he probably wasn't ready to assist whatsoever. "Well?" Brock asked, arching a brow.

"You're doing fine," Rory said, "but I think I can make this work a little better for all of us." He cleared his throat and glanced at Trixie. "With all due respect," he started, borrowing words Brock typically used, "you might

have guessed—and assumed correctly—we’ve already taken your daughter to bed.”

Trixie’s jaw dropped, and Rory quickly added, “Now we want to see if it’s all right with you if we perfect our technique over the next forty or fifty years. We want Trixie to spend her life with us, and if you’ll allow us to take her off your hands, I think we can make her one very happy woman.”

* * * *

“He had some nerve,” Kane said, pacing the floor of the elaborate study. “I never took Rory for the kind of man who left nothing for the imagination.”

“You gotta respect the guy,” Braden said calmly.

Kane stared at his brother. “Do you honestly believe I didn’t know what the fuck they were doing? I didn’t need them to spell it out.”

“We were doing the same damn thing.” Evan reminded.

Braden scratched his chin and Kane blurted out, “We have a license to fuck. They don’t!”

“Is that right?” Peyton asked, entering the room. “Why don’t you just say what you mean. The truth is, it’s okay for me—I’m your woman—but Trixie is a different story. She’s your daughter.”

Kane glared at his brothers. “This is your fault.”

“How’s that?” Evan asked.

Kane walked away, calling out over his shoulder, “They better plan on taking her on for a lifetime. And one of you should make sure to tell them that she comes with a stack of bills, too. One for every department store known to mankind, not to mention the American Express bill,” he paused and pulled a recent bill from his front pocket. “The latest one just arrived. I hope those two are ready to take on the responsibility of our daughter beginning on the twenty-eighth. This bill is due then. We might as well let Trixie break in her fellas the same way her mother did us.”

Evan winked and Braden said, “I have a little bit of a problem thinking about the way those boys want to break in our daughter.”

Peyton grinned. “Well, if they’re as good to her as the three of you have been to me, then I’m sure Trixie is in for a lifetime of good lovin’.”

Chapter Thirty-Five

One Week Later

There wasn't another sound like it anywhere. Trixie woke up to the screeching sound of police car sirens and quickly rushed to her window. "Oh my God," she whispered, staring outside. She watched her mother greet the familiar cop, the one Daddy Evan knew well. He handed her mom a paper of some sort while the other officers stepped out of their cars.

Peyton slowly turned and stared up at the window. Even with distance between them, Trixie could see her mother's sorrowful expression.

Her fathers Evan and Braden must've heard the racket, too. They approached the officers, and one of them waved a paper in front of their faces. This time, her dads looked toward the bedroom window. Now, there was cause to worry. Their expressions guaranteed she had plenty of reason to fret.

Trixie swallowed hard. Tears rolled over her cheeks, and she pursed her lips, waiting for the news. Waiting for her mother to motion for her or her fathers to demand their compliance, one of her men—Brock or Rory—was going to jail.

Clearing her throat, she turned around and tried to call out to them. Rory was in the bathroom shaving, and Brock was still sleeping, sprawled across her bed. The only noise she made sounded out as a crackling sound in a high-pitched tone. She tried to clear her throat but failed once again.

Kimberly ran into their room and slid across the recently polished floor in her white socks. Grabbing the doorframe, she exclaimed, "They're here for Rory! Daddy Kane said to hide him in the attic until he has time to take care of this."

Rory stepped out of the bathroom wiping his hands on a towel. He tried to force a smile, but he was unsuccessful.

Trixie started to shake. Her hands trembled, and her heart was breaking faster than anyone would ever be able to repair it. “Rory, please tell me you don’t have to go down there.”

Awakened by the commotion, Brock yawned and said, “What’s going on?”

“The police are downstairs,” Ansley said upon entering. She shook her head and stared at Rory.

He nodded with understanding. “Well, I guess I’d better get dressed, huh?”

The girls had become quite fond of Rory. He won them over with his quick wit and loveable personality. Ansley had tears in her eyes. “Daddy Kane said to hide, but there’s nowhere for you to run, Rory. They have a search warrant and a warrant for your arrest.”

Brock and Rory shared a knowing, and empty, stare. Trixie gasped. “Girls, can you give us a minute?”

Brock shook his head when the sounds of several men traipsing up the steps came closer and closer. Rory walked inside the large expansive closet and said, “I did the crime.” He admitted his guilt right in front of Ansley and Kimberly. “I need to go with them and see what I can do to fix this.”

Trixie stared in disbelief. God in heaven knew all along who killed Stephen Pratchert, but not Trixie. No, Rory wasn’t capable of murder, regardless of the reason. There really wasn’t any way to justify a cold-blooded killing. Pratchert was alive one minute and dead the next. And Rory was responsible. Rory!

No, she refused to buy into this. She glared at Brock. He was capable of killing for love. Wasn’t he the one with the strength and the guts to pull it off? Surely, it must have been Brock. He was the type that hid behind his family’s money and got away with murder, not Rory. She gulped. Of course not Rory, he wasn’t getting away with anything! *Oh gods*, she thought, *it must’ve been Rory*. He was caught with his hand in the trap.

“Rory, what do you mean?” Trixie choked out the words and rushed toward him. “What crime?” She touched his arm with her fingertips and then she clutched his wrist and pulled him into a tight embrace. With her small fists beating against his shoulder, she screamed out, “No! No! No!”

“Trixie,” Rory said calmly. “Trixie, listen to me.” He held her away from his body.

She shook her head again and again. “No! Don’t you say it!”

“Brock?” Rory required help. They were out of time.

Brock motioned for the girls to turn around and then quickly jumped up and snatched his pants. Stepping into them, he said. “Hurry, girls. Tell them I’ll be right there.”

“But they want Rory—” Ansley clarified.

“Do it!” Brock exclaimed.

Ansley and Kimberly looked stunned into obedience. They backed out of Trixie’s room and slammed the door. Brock immediately went to the window and pulled the shades. “You’re not going down for this,” he said.

Rory took a deep breath. “Yeah, Brock, I am. I did it.”

“The hell you did,” Brock said. “That’s like saying I did it when we both damn well know that’s not what happened.” He paced, “Let me remind you that you of all people could not have killed Pratchert. You were in the bathroom with Trixie when someone snuffed the life out of the deserving bastard.”

Trixie stared at both men blankly. “Would one of you please tell me what’s going on here?”

Kane rushed in the room about the time the men were ready to spill their truths to Trixie. “Not a word,” Kane said placing his finger over his lips. “They have Pete standing at the door. They’re giving you ten minutes to get your things together, pack light.”

“Daddy!” Trixie rushed into Kane’s arms, and he held her all of one or two seconds.

“Trixie, I need you to wait downstairs with your mother.”

“No! Absolutely not! One of you will tell me what’s going on, and you’ll start talking now!” she exclaimed staring at her men and avoiding her father.

Rory took a deep breath and turned to Brock. “I appreciate what you’re trying to do, but you can’t take credit for a crime I committed. I’m the only one who knows how Stephen Pratchert really died.”

“What are you talking about?” Brock asked.

“He wasn’t strangled like the papers said,” Rory began. “And only I know the truth,” he said.

Brock clenched his fists. “This is fucking bull shit and you know it! You’re not going down for this.”

“Yes, I am,” he stated flatly. “I’m the only one who knows how Pratchert died. Only the person who killed him would know the details.”

Kane narrowed his gaze and Rory flinched. Trixie caught the reaction. Oh yes, she was right all along. Her mother knew the truth, too, and her mom would’ve told her dads. She didn’t keep secrets from them.

Brock paced. “I hear they have a warrant.”

“I’m afraid so,” Kane said.

“Let me take the fall for this, man” Brock offered, concern shading his skin an ashen gray. “My family has more political pull than yours, Rory. I might do three to five years, at the most. You’ll be lucky if you ever see freedom again.”

Trixie looked at her dad. “Do something,” she mouthed.

His eyes watered and he turned away. He glared out the window, squared his shoulders and said, “There’s not a lot I can do. As much as I’d like to help, my hands may very well be tied.”

Brock pressed. “Rory, think smart here. I would’ve done the same thing in your shoes, but you must have had the chance I didn’t have. Let me go down for this, man.”

Rory said, “I can’t let you take the blame. Besides, I did this for Trixie. I wanted her safe and protected. I wanted our futures happy and secure. We wouldn’t have the chance if Pratchert had walked. He taunted Trixie and Peyton. Then, he taunted me, told me what he planned to do to Trixie. I killed the SOB, and I’d do it again tomorrow if I had the chance.”

He smiled at Trixie and added, “You’re safe now.” He turned to Brock and said, “No one protects those they love any better than you, Brock. You and I both know it. If I’m not here, Trixie will still have everything she needs because she has you.”

Trixie staggered and then sat down on the edge of the bed. “I can’t live without either of you,” she whispered. “You don’t understand.”

Rory knelt in front of her. “You’ll have to try. Promise me you’ll give it a good, fair shot for both of us.”

Rory’s hands gripped her middle, and he kissed her stomach as if he already knew the hidden truth of a greater existence between them. Trixie bowed her head. It wasn’t the time or the place. It wasn’t the best words to leave a man getting ready to face his fate, especially when there was an

element of despair circulating in the air and true uncertainty in what she needed to reveal.

“I’m pregnant,” she said, crying out.

Kane looked confused. “You’re what?”

Brock swallowed hard. “You’re sure? I thought you were on the—”

“Yes, I am but it apparently failed us.”

Kane grumbled. “Hell fire, you two depended on Trixie to take birth control?”

Trixie held her palm to her stomach. “I never took the pills regularly, but I always made up for it when I remembered, taking the missed doses all at once.”

“And obviously that doesn’t work,” Kane grated out.

Rory and Brock locked in a gaze so distant that the questions Trixie once wanted answered no longer seemed worth a mention. Undoubtedly, she was pregnant with Rory’s baby. And her baby’s father had a one-way ticket on a bus headed straight for prison.

Chapter Thirty-Six

Five Months Later

Trixie felt like a waddling penguin. She walked into the courtroom about the time the bailiff called out, “All rise. Court is now in session.”

Even though she quietly entered the large courtroom and practically tip-toed to a chair located right behind Rory, he must’ve felt her presence. His shoulders sagged somewhat and when he started to sit down, he said, “‘Bout time my woman drags her pretty little ass in here.”

Trixie giggled and reached for Brock’s hand. Placing her palm on Rory’s shoulder at the same time, she said, “I had a little morning sickness.”

Rory chuckled and then turned around and eyed Brock. “From what I understand, he’s been throwing up morning, noon, and night.”

She nodded. “You know how he always likes to steal the show.”

“Yeah,” he said, smiling. “He even tried to steal my limelight.”

Brock tensed. “By the time this trial is over, you may wish your stubborn ass had let me have the stage.”

“I doubt it,” Rory said. “Jail food is impeccable, and the service?” He placed three fingers to his lips and popped a kiss. “Better than five-star restaurants. Wouldn’t do much for your morning sickness, big boy.”

When the judge began flipping through paperwork, Rory winked and faced the court. The door behind them opened and closed. Trixie felt a light breeze, the kind of sudden gust of air a heating and cooling component often generates indoors. She heard some buzzing from the media.

Then she heard the prosecutor say, “The state calls Mitch Colony to the stand.”

Brock arched a brow, placed his arm around Trixie, and glanced over the top of her head. Mitch nodded as he passed them, and Trixie took the time to scan the courtroom. If Mitch was there, Jordie Anne must’ve been there, too.

Once Mitch was on the stand, Rory's shoulders dropped. He leaned over and whispered something to his attorney.

"Shh," Brock warned. "Not one word, Trixie."

The prosecutor wasted little time going for Mitch's throat. He wanted to ruin credibility. He mentioned the Jordie Anne incident at Cow Camp and then he told an elaborate tale of how three young men—criminals without a cause or a conscience—deliberately destroyed a young girl's life, much like they destroyed the life of Stephen Pratchert.

The prosecutor described the men from Cow Camp as heartless. He said, "The man on trial for murder has the ability to commit more crimes. He was one of three men who left a helpless young woman—Jordie Anne Linkous—to fend for herself in a halfway house for the mentally unstable."

The prosecutor strutted around the courtroom like he had a sealed case, a sentence pending, a crime solved, and a man justly accused. He apparently thought Mitch helped his case.

Brock flinched throughout the theatrics. Regardless of the times Rory's attorney objected due to the relevance of the story, the judge declined to side with the defense. Finally, Mitch spoke from his heart, requesting permission to do so before he answered any further questions.

Shockingly, the judge allowed it.

Trixie nervously twisted in her seat, but she listened. Mitch started with, "Rory—err, the defendant—and Brock Sheldon are like my brothers. We've all known one another for over eighteen years." He nodded his head in Brock's direction. Brock took a deep breath, bracing—like Trixie—for the untold story.

"You shouldn't have to hear this, Trixie," Brock warned.

Mitch began. "The incident at Cow Camp over five years ago involved a girl by the name of Jordie Anne Linkous. She now goes by the name of Jordie Anne Colony. She's my wife."

Brock grinned and Trixie turned to look at him. "You knew they were married?" she asked softly.

He squeezed her hand.

"Jordie Anne was a counselor at Cow Camp five years ago when all of us—Brock, Rory, and me—began seeing her. Back then, several of us experimented with drugs. One such drug we used as experimentation was Ketamine, commonly used at rave parties."

He didn't bother explaining Ketamine, commonly used in animals, specifically cats, had a tranquilizing effect. He also didn't acknowledge how similar it was to LSD. Trixie paid closer attention and wondered where he planned to lead the jury.

"Ketamine became an addiction for me, or maybe it was just my love drug since I primarily used it with the woman I was seeing—my wife now. Nonetheless, this drug was readily available, and I still keep it on hand today," Mitch admitted. "I became very familiar with the drugs I needed to avoid because I used it frequently."

The prosecutor stood up and objected.

The judge called out, "Overruled. Mr. Colony, I hope there's a point here and if so, please find it soon."

"Yes, sir," Mitch said, straightening his back and addressing the jury. "I still have unlimited access to the drug. Rory and Brock do not." He swallowed hard, paused, and then said, "The defendant on trial here today did not kill Stephen Pratchert. He didn't have the opportunity or the means. But he had the knowledge. I made the mistake of sharing with him what I knew killed Stephen Pratchert for, you see, I had this knowledge first-handed."

He pressed his hands together and dropped his head. Then he spoke directly into the microphone. "When Stephen Pratchert came to work for me, he filled out a medical history form. We ask our employees to list all of their medications. Stephen took a large quantity of Darvon-N, a pain medication I quickly discovered he abused.

"When Mr. Pratchert kidnapped Trixie Cartwell, I grabbed several syringes already filled with Ketamine..." His voice broke and the courtroom fell silent. "Then, when he taunted Trixie and her mother, promising he'd always come back, that he'd always be there waiting for her in the shadows, I knew what I had to do."

Trixie gasped and the jury seemed to respond in much the same way.

Mitch delivered his final words. "I killed Stephen Pratchert by injecting over seven grams of Ketamine into his neck. The lethal dose is somewhere around five. With the Darvon already in his blood stream and the Ketamine injected, he didn't stand a chance."

Rory quickly stood. "Sit down," Brock said from under his breath. Rory's attorney shared the same sentiments and quickly touched Rory's arm, encouraging him to take a seat.

"Brock?" Trixie looked at him. "Brock," she said again. "He can't do this. What about Jordie Anne?"

Brock shook his head. "Trust me, Mitch knows what he's doing."

* * * *

Five hours after the case was dismissed against Rory, Trixie walked into the local jail with her father. Evan had talked to Pete, his law-enforcement friend. He arranged for Trixie to talk to Mitch alone. Trixie needed some kind of closure, a truer understanding of what Mitch might have been thinking when he killed Stephen Pratchert.

Pete shook hands with Evan and then unlocked a door right off the public waiting room. He smiled and then said, "Take as long as you need, Trixie."

Evan thanked him and then they disappeared behind the door. Mitch was at a metal table with a glass of water. Trixie ran to him, and he stood up with his arms wide open.

"Why?" she asked, crying into his shirt. "Why would you do this?"

"Because I could make things right for you," he finally said. "I couldn't save Jordie Anne from the life I created for us, but you...ah, Trixie," he held her back and looked into her eyes. "I could help you and my best friends find the happiness you deserve."

Trixie dabbed at her eyes and she said, "But why didn't you just stay with Jordie and make things right for her this time?"

Mitch took a deep breath and pulled a chair out for her. "Sit for a bit?"

She sat down. Mitch folded his hands on the table and studied her. "I never would've loved you, not the way they do."

"I know," she said. "And I'm glad you're with Jordie now."

"Yes," he said. "Things are good right now."

"Then why would you do this for Rory?" she asked, dismissing the fact he did the crime.

"Jordie Anne isn't the same Jordie I loved five years ago, Trixie."

"We all change," Trixie said.

“Yes, but Jordie will never be the same.” He cleared his throat. In a choked-up voice, he said, “See, Jordie used to hallucinate when she took Ketamine. He paused and pursed his lips. “I don’t know if Brock told you all of the details of what happened five years ago, but back then, we had a few hide-a-ways near camp. They weren’t elaborate, boathouses and rental properties mostly, and my family owned them.

“Anyway, Jordie eventually stayed pretty messed up on the Ketamine and soon she believed we took her to dungeons—what she later referred to as private hide-a-ways—when we had sex with her.”

“So she made up stories?”

“Oh, no,” Mitch said defending her. “She didn’t make them up. She truly believed them because in her delirium—drug induced, of course—she believed we held her against her will in these remote underground dungeons.”

“Then why didn’t you stop her drug use?”

“We did, or at least we tried,” he continued. “Only, Jordie Anne still has continual flashbacks. She’s fairly normal for several days and then she revisits the past and often stays there for several hours. She has violent episodes too, and her volatile personality requires her extended stay in the mental facility near Marion, Virginia. It’s not too far from Cow Camp so I can visit her daily.”

“Mitch, does she even know she’s married to you?”

He smiled. “Two or three days a week, she does.”

“And the other days?” she carefully inquired.

“She bounces between reality and fantasy.”

“But she’s getting better?”

He nodded. “It’s slow progress. So you see, Trixie. It’s not a particular hardship for me to serve time for the crime I committed.”

“You must love her a lot,” Trixie said softly.

“She’s the reason behind everything I do. She’s even the reason I killed for you.”

Trixie arched a brow. “What do you mean?”

Mitch shrugged. “Those two handsome devils following you around wouldn’t have stood a chance at peace of mind if Pratchert lived long enough to make good on his promises and threats. They’re like my brothers, Trixie. I want them happy, and they’ll never be happy without you.”

“We want you happy, too,” Trixie said.

“I will be. I’m married to a woman I love, and by the time I get out of prison, she’ll be well again. She’s getting better all the time.”

Trixie clasped her hands around his and shook his hands hard. “And she’s going to be just fine as long as she has you looking out for her.”

“This I know,” he said with a gleam in his eyes. “And so will you.”

* * * *

Trixie rushed inside and ran smack dab into her sisters. Kimberly looked at her belly. “My, my, my, aren’t you just fat and sassy.”

Trixie laughed. “I would hope so,” she exclaimed, spotting Rory at the top of the steps.

Rory said, “What she means is bad and sexy.”

“Bad, maybe. Sexy, questionable,” she said running into his arms. Rory framed her face and kissed her like he planned to kiss her all day with the audience he had behind him. Finally, Ansley cleared her throat.

“Any chance the two of you can get a room?” she asked.

“As a matter of fact,” Trixie said, “we can.” She took him by the hand and started to lead him astray for the day.

“Not so fast, you two,” Trixie heard her mom call out from the kitchen and then she spotted her dads.

Brock appeared in the doorway, too, and winked. “Hey, gorgeous.”

She blushed. She felt her cheeks heat every time Brock addressed her. Whether he called her out as baby or hon or sugar, she always felt the same. The sappy way he made her feel even with a few extra pounds of baby never changed.

Rory took her hand and they walked toward the kitchen. Kane said, “What we want to show you isn’t in here. It’s outside.”

Trixie shook her head. “Okay? What is it?”

Kane said, “Well, you see, there seems to be a problem with the three of you staying on here since you seem hell bent on extending your family and doing it fast.”

“Oh?” Rory asked.

Peyton nodded. “Absolutely. In case you didn’t notice, our daughter is pregnant. Turns out,” she glanced at Brock and continued, “She’s pregnant

with your baby. In a few more months, she's going to give birth to a baby who really needs to bond with his or her parents, not necessarily the whole family, if you get our meaning. We think it's time for other housing arrangements."

Trixie arched a brow. "I thought you liked the idea of becoming grandparents."

"We do," Braden assured. "We're all for it. Have as many little ones as you want."

Kane scoffed. "I would've preferred a grandchild in a few years, but as long as the baby is healthy and living under a separate roof, we're fine with the idea of grandparenthood. Emphasis on grand as in we don't want to be surrogate parents and help you raise your family."

Peyton quickly said, "We think there's a season for everything and your season is in full bloom, little girl." She patted her daughter's belly.

"Don't I know it," Trixie said, smiling. "Well, as you know, I'm not in any hurry to move out."

Brock took her hand and led her around the corner of the house. There, in front of her very eyes, she spotted two moving vans.

"What the hell are those?" she exclaimed. She quickly realized how fast the tables had turned.

"Happy honeymoon," her mom said.

"I'm not getting married," Trixie informed quickly.

"That band around your pudgy little pregnant neck tells a different story," Ansley pointed out, laughing.

Kimberly joined in. "She put the ring around her own neck, remember?"

"It serves the purpose, though," Ansley reported flippantly. "All the Doms in town think she's taken."

Rory smirked. "Then that pretty necklace isn't coming off."

Trixie immediately touched the neckband she clasped around her neck nearly six months ago. "I haven't wanted to take it off, but that doesn't mean I can't. It's not like I'm in a committed relationship or anything," she teased.

"Oh, no," Brock growled, slapping her bottom. "Not at all."

She gulped when reality came to call. "You all really want me to move?"

"We bought a nice place a few miles up the road," Brock announced.

“A few miles?” Trixie asked.

Rory cleared his throat. “This is news to me, too, but I have to tell you, I’m not opposed to the idea. In fact, I really like it.” He licked his upper lip and then wrapped his arms around Trixie’s waist. “After the baby comes, we’ll need a lot of privacy, you know.”

Brock sneered. “I guess you’re ready to make up for months of lost time.”

Kane frowned. “I don’t want to hear about it.”

Everyone laughed and Trixie braced for goodbye. Her sisters seemed excited about converting her room into an upstairs den. Her parents were ecstatic and ready to send her out the door with her credit card bills in hand. Best of all, she was leaving home at a good time. It was time to get on with a little living. She would soon have a baby to raise, a few good men to love, and a life she planned to live to the very fullest.

THE END

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Natalie Acres is the author of several bestselling titles including Cowboy Boots and Untamed Hearts, Sex Party, Sex Games and Wanted by Outlaws. She writes western ménage romances, and in her spare time reads anything she can find on the historical towns of the Old West. She lives in the south with her family. For more information, visit her at www.myspace.com/natalieacres.

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