



Loose Id

# A Neighbor's Ultimatum

QWILLIA RAIN

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## About this Title

**Genre:** BDSM Contemporary Ménage

**Previous Title:** *Meeting a Neighbor's Needs*

It seems like Gina has everything a woman could want. A job with summers off, a nice house, and two husbands determined to keep her happy—in bed and out.

Even her dream of having children is on the verge of coming true. At least it was until George and Garrick begin showing signs that their happy family is beginning to pull apart at the seams.

After she confronts them about the problem, both of her men refuse to admit there is one. With their first anniversary just a few weeks away, Gina's growing concerned that their family won't celebrate a second.

If meeting a neighbor's needs brought the three of them together, perhaps a neighbor's ultimatum can get her men to face what is undermining the family they'd created.

***Publisher's Note:*** *This book contains explicit sexual content, graphic language, and situations that some readers may find objectionable: Anal play/intercourse, BDSM theme and content, ménage (m/m/f with homoerotic content).*

## Chapter One

Gina watched the first wash of pink lighten the sky beyond the French doors leading from the master bedroom onto the backyard patio. She moaned in gratification as Garrick coaxed the last inch of his cock into her ass. In the three years she'd been living with him and George, waking to an alarm clock had become unnecessary. Long before any device could ring, the slide of one or both of her husbands' lips or the caress of their hands on her body would draw her from sleep, just as it had this morning.

For the last twenty minutes, she'd quivered under their touch, trembled with each kiss, and with every teasing moment of preparation, she'd fought the need to beg for more. Beneath her, with his dick lodged equally deep in her pussy, George smiled up at her. That particular grin was all the reassurance Gina needed to know that neither of her husbands was worried about being late to work.

Her second moan was barely half stifled; she chewed on her bottom lip as she refused to repeat her pleas for satiation, the ones she'd spoken moments before Garrick had begun to work his way inside, the ones that had merely redoubled her husbands' efforts to test her ability to stave off climax.

Once both men synchronized their rhythm, she didn't have the breath to speak. When one advanced, the other retreated, with her body sandwiched between them in sexual bliss. She never tired of their lovemaking; whether it was a joint effort or individual, her husbands knew just which touches brought her the most pleasure. Garrick pressed closer, rubbing her back with his chest while the springy hairs on George's chest scraped her receptive nipples. She tightened her fingers on the bedding beside George's shoulders.

She woke every morning to similar sensations as her husbands seduced her to climax before the three of them left for school and the office. When Gina taught during the school year, they sufficed with a fast bout of sex and the promise of a more relaxed round when they were all

home from work. In the summer, however, Gina could count on one or both of them bringing her to orgasm at least twice before they left. Summer vacation had begun two weeks earlier, and she would definitely require a nap to recover this morning.

The pressure of her building climax ached in her lower belly. The flex and pull of her intimate muscles matched the cadence her husbands' penises set. The slide and heat of their chests against her back and breasts increased the sensitivity of her skin. The strokes of their callused fingers short-circuited her brain, so that her thoughts were centered on controlling the orgasm burning through her womb.

Her perspiration wet the sheets bunched in her grip. Her thighs quivered from the strain of straddling George's hips. The green of his eyes darkened with amusement and sexual need. Each of George's advancing thrusts was matched by Garrick's smooth retreat. Then the actions reversed. Their movements vibrated through her. She rocked in time with the motions. Her hair stuck to her sweat-slicked skin and dangled around her face with each roll and sway of her body. It acted like a golden curtain, enclosing her breath and George's as they watched each other.

"Oh God, yes." She moaned when Garrick's chest pressed her even closer to George, altering the angle of penetration of their bodies. Nerves that only they ever found were triggered; convulsing muscles, shortened breath, and shudders sent her thoughts spiraling.

Garrick pulled the damp blonde locks away from her right cheek and replaced them with the caress of his fingertips along her brow, cheekbone, chin, and throat. The sensual scrape of his morning beard and the damp press of his lips followed the path of his fingers. He paused occasionally to lap up the tiny beads of sweat trickling over her skin.

George's gaze followed Garrick's slow touch as it moved onto her throat and into the curve where her shoulder and neck melded. The grip of George's hands tightened on her waist before dropping to her thighs. She saw something change in her husband's face in that moment. A hardness sharpened his gaze, and the skin along his cheeks drew tight. Heat glittered in his emerald eyes as he scrutinized the man behind her.

The need to come pulsed inside her, pushing any thoughts out of her mind. "Please," she begged.

"No." George's voice was rough with arousal. His gaze moved from watching Garrick to her.

“Hold on,” Garrick added. He shifted his hands to grip her hips as he and George increased the speed of their thrusts.

She couldn't hold back the whimper that escaped her, but she nodded. Gina swallowed the urge to plead. Her husbands would tell her when she could come. The sensations of that climax would be worth every moment of denial. When she'd voiced her challenge to George after they first met, Gina had never expected the attraction she felt for her sexy neighbor to grow into this.

“That's it, baby.” George encouraged her. He cupped her cheek and drew her face down so he could sample the sighs slipping from her. His mouth rubbed against hers, coaxing her lips to part. The kiss was slow, heated, and she still wanted more when he pulled away to taste the sweat dewing the skin along her throat. George's lips and teeth teased the skin fluttering over her pulse point, nipping and licking along the same path Garrick's mouth had traveled moments earlier.

Behind her, Garrick's movements slowed; the clutch of his fingers tightened. His pace grew jerky, out of sync with George's motions. The altered position put more space between her back and his chest, stirring a whisper of unease inside Gina's chest. She could feel the shift in her second husband's attention, a distancing of his thoughts from what the three of them were doing. It was just for a moment, but Gina filed the awareness in her mind, tucking it away with memories of other similar incidents that had occurred sporadically over the last six months.

Before she could dwell on it further, Garrick thrust forward with a force heavier than he'd ever used with her. Gina gasped at the sting of pain. George cursed. The three of them held still, their breathing heavy.

After a moment, George began moving again, and Garrick matched him, but the disjointed beat was still there. She sensed the disquiet building in Garrick and concern growing in George. Their apprehension ignited hers.

Though Gina's body hummed with the need to come, the thoughts she'd been ignoring for the last six months floated to the surface, disrupting her passion. Was she doing something wrong? Why were they hesitating? Shaking away the distracting thoughts, Gina absorbed the sensations her men surrounded her with. The need, the passion, and the single-minded determination to show her how intense making love could be had motivated them the first time they'd engaged in a ménage over three years ago. And it was still the primary force behind the

love she shared with both men as their first wedding anniversary approached at the end of next month. Unable to keep quiet any longer, Gina gasped and cried out her need.

“Gare?” George's query was soft, scarcely audible over the pleas for release escaping Gina's lips. He gazed up at Garrick with dark green eyes and looked from him to their wife. The callused tips of George's fingers slid along Garrick's forearm.

Garrick's cock jerked inside Gina's ass. He read the concern in George's gaze. To avoid it, he lifted his head so the sight of the sun cresting the horizon filled his view instead of the man beneath his wife. Garrick worked to ignore the craving for George's fucking that stirred within him, but he couldn't ignore the images in his head. His mind replayed memories of the two brief past encounters with George's kiss. Nor could he ignore how the sight of George's callused fingers sliding over Gina's creamy skin stimulated sensations of those same hands sliding over Garrick's back, cupping his butt, spreading the firm cheeks apart, allowing George to press the head of his cock against the tight brown pucker of Garrick's ass.

Ignoring the emotions George's concern stirred, he kept his gaze on the view of the backyard and concentrated on Gina. Careful of his strength, he pumped his length into her with renewed power. Gina arched beneath him, her cries loud in the quiet bedroom. “Please!” she begged. “Oh God, please, may I come?” She sobbed, her voice hoarse with desperation and excitement.

“Yes, love, you may come now,” George responded with a hint of censure in his tone.

Garrick pulled his gaze from the sunrise outside the French doors when he heard the cool tone of his friend's voice. The stern line of George's lips and slight narrowing of his eyes were clear indicators of his irritation. Garrick knew the rebuke wasn't aimed at the woman they shared. Gina had done nothing to earn a criticism. He nodded to acknowledge George's warning at the same moment Gina's climax took over her body. The spasming muscles in her pussy and ass milked his and George's cocks, drawing out the pleasure as Garrick released the reins on his need and joined her.

The grim set of George's features shifted from annoyance to satisfaction. A flush darkened his cheeks, his head tilted back. Garrick recognized the expression of sexual culmination spread over George's face, and it made Garrick's orgasm that much sweeter. Coming at the same time as



Gina was satisfying, but for Garrick, the sensation intensified when all three of them came at once.

Long minutes later, he regained his composure enough to breathe almost normally. He felt damp sweat coating his wife's back when he leaned forward, braced his fists against the bed, and eased free of her trembling frame. The scrape of George's leg hair along his made Garrick freeze. Arousal stirred at the brief sensation, but he forced it away and worked on bringing his body under control. The mattress dipped as he shifted backward, careful to avoid coming into contact with George again.

He watched the other man's broad hands coast over Gina's ribs and noted the contrast between her pale gold skin and George's more darkly tanned flesh. The sight of his hands on her once again stirred the dreams Garrick had suppressed earlier.

*Christ, this isn't supposed to be happening. I'm not supposed to be feeling like this. Not now.* Poised on the edge of the bed, Garrick concentrated on slowing his breathing and remaining as still as possible. He could feel both George's and Gina's gazes follow him as he rolled from the bed and headed for the large master bathroom.

Once there, he pulled a washcloth from the linen cabinet, wet it with warm water, and wrung it out. After shedding the condom he wore, he cleaned himself off, tossed the cloth into the hamper, and then pulled another washcloth from the shelf. He repeated the soaking and wringing out before carrying the fresh cloth into the bedroom and settling onto the bed.

Gina remained draped over George's torso, her breathing slowly returning to normal, her cheek pillowed on George's chest, and her soft honey blonde hair tangled and mussed as it hung halfway down her back. Garrick evaded his friend's look, moved the sweaty locks away from Gina's neck, and slid the cloth along her nape and across her shoulders. He fought the temptation to bathe George's body as well.

He took his time wiping away the perspiration on Gina's back. Her breath rumbled in a near purr, her body arching beneath his touch as he worked the soft cotton down to her hips and onto her bottom. "You love the after as much as the during, don't you, kitten?" He chuckled. His lips lifted in a grin while he enjoyed her reactions and took his time cleaning away the lube and cum that had begun to dry on her skin.

"Yes." Gina sighed and squirmed on top of George, her eyes still shut.

Garrick bit his lip and cursed at the momentary disappointment that whispered through him at not being where Gina was now. He wanted to be the one touching and being touched by George: having his sole attention and knowing that at any moment George would resume making love to him. It was only one of the fantasies that had begun to sneak into Garrick's dreams at night. Gina wasn't to blame for the needs that seemed to plague him more and more often. In no way was she to blame for his desire to feel the rasp of hair-roughened skin against his legs or the clasp of callused fingers around his shaft, pumping every drop of seed boiling in his balls.

As much as he loved her and enjoyed making love with her, Gina's lush curves, long blonde hair, and smoky gray eyes had lately been supplanted by fantasies of George's green eyes darkening with need as Garrick captured his lips in a breath-stealing, tongue-tangling kiss. He wondered if George's mouth would still have the same feel and flavor he remembered from three years ago—the first time George had shared Gina with him. Garrick considered that initial kiss in the shower, when they'd held Gina pressed between them, as nothing more than a temporary need for George to assert command. To establish the dominant male in the interlude. But that hadn't stopped Garrick from wanting—hoping—for more.

Without George, the relationship the three of them shared would not have been possible. None of it would have lasted for the three years they had all been together. But the need to caress George, to be with George, was pushing Garrick's control to the breaking point. The need was so intense of late that the toys he used to satisfy the urges, the excuses he sometimes made to avoid being with both Gina and George, hovered between him and his family like a series of lies.

The memory of the look George had shot him earlier made Garrick swallow. A niggle of unease surfaced, and Garrick drew a deep breath, pulling in the heady scent of sweat and sex that permeated the room. *I don't want to hurt Gina, but it's getting harder to stay away from him. Could she understand? Would she even want to understand? What if George isn't even interested?*

Garrick returned his focus to Gina by sliding the cloth over her bottom one last time, determined to push the thoughts aside, if only temporarily.

It wasn't Gina's fault that he wondered what she felt every time he or George took her anally. Were the sensations as arousing as the imagined ones troubling his sleep? Did she ache like he did to know what it was like to have that part of her body filled by the thick length of

George's cock? Was it very different from the slide of a dildo or one of the vibrators or plugs he'd taken to playing with? Toys he'd reverted to using when need overcame caution.

Garrick could see the tension in George's body increase as he lay beneath Gina. The stiffening of his legs, the flex of his fingers against Gina's hips, and the rapidity of his breath were signs easily read. His reaction seemed to stir Gina. Lifting her head from George's chest, she watched him, her hips and belly rolling against the man beneath her. Garrick suppressed the urge to stroke the cloth along his friend's legs. Hell, from the way Gina still straddled George's hips, Garrick wouldn't be surprised if George was still semihard inside their woman. Between her spread thighs and in the dim illumination of the rising sun, Garrick had a clear view of George's balls, still wet with Gina's juices.

He clenched the damp rag in his hand. The desire to cradle the sensitive sac in his hand and lick it clean, savoring the combined flavors coating the heated flesh, made his mouth water, but Garrick forced himself to look away.

"Ready for more, baby?" George asked against Gina's lips.

Garrick's cock hardened as George rolled her onto her back. He moved off the bed as George propped himself over their wife. George's elbows supported his weight while his hands fondled her breasts, plucking her nipples. His short silver-threaded dark hair was curled from the sweat dampening it. His larger body dwarfed Gina's. Her soft hands looked pale and small against the width of his tanned shoulders.

"George, I...I can't... *Oh yes, there.*" Gina contradicted her own denial. Her hands moved upward, and she wrapped her arms around George's neck and her legs around his waist and lifted herself up to meet the thrust of his hips.

Garrick backed away from the bed, his attention torn between the ecstasy suffusing Gina's features, the glow that seemed to shimmer across her skin as she matched each advance and retreat of George's cock, and the sight of his friend's tight, muscled ass. Garrick's breath grew labored as he watched the flex and pull of the sinews along George's hips and thighs. He wrapped his hand, the one holding the cloth, around his cock and kept rhythm with George's strokes.

He couldn't see it, but he could imagine the puckered brown hole hidden between George's smooth flanks. The thought of pressing inside, fucking that ass, feeling the heated play of skin

and muscle against his chest, aroused Garrick until his balls drew up closer to his body. The sting of climax twined around his cock with a pressure heavier than his own grip.

As the fantasy played out in his mind, Garrick kept his gaze on the couple in front of him. After two years of living together and nearly a year of marriage, the three of them were happy with the arrangement of sharing a bed, Gina's body, and command of her. He should be content with that. Satisfied with what the three of them had built. But he wasn't—not entirely.

Garrick spun away from the sight in front of him. The sense of betrayal that speared through him was becoming familiar. It wasn't fair to Gina that he wanted things to change. She was their center, the purpose and reason for the family the three of them had created.

He tried to expunge the dream of riding George's ass, but it wouldn't be pushed aside. He worked the cloth over his cock with more vigor. His mind replaced the reality of the damp cotton with the imagined moist clasp of hot male flesh. He braced one hand on the door frame to the bathroom. The thought of fucking George and the wet sounds of bodies mating behind him aided in bringing Garrick to completion faster than he'd ever achieved before. His grip around his cock tightened, while the fingers of his other hand scratched at the plaster and wood of the wall and door frame. His body shuddered with wave after wave of orgasm.

In the bed, Gina cried out and George cursed, his words an echo of the silent profanities filling Garrick's mind. He released his hold on the door frame and stumbled into the bathroom, discarding the cum-soaked cloth in the laundry hamper. Garrick gripped the shower knob tightly enough that his knuckles went white when he wrenched it around to start the flow of water, then stepped beneath the cold spray and tilted his face up to the needle-sharp jets. "You're not going to fuck this up, Gare. You can't. Not for some stupid aberration that will pass. If George had ever been interested, he would have said something before now. He goes for what he wants; always has."

Inside, though, Garrick doubted his feelings would pass. They hadn't in the last six months—hell, the last seven years that he'd known George—and he didn't think any amount of fighting would change that.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dawn sent a wash of color into the bedroom through the sheer curtains on the French doors as Gina tried to catch her breath and figure out why she suddenly felt cold.

George rolled onto his side next to her. Propped on his bent arm, he smoothed the flyaway strands of hair from her sweaty cheeks. He hovered so close that there was little chance for her body to become chilled. But it was.

“Are you okay, baby?” he asked.

The sound of the shower filtered into the quiet room. She was sure she spotted a bit of irritation in his gaze. Was his annoyance for her or Garrick? *Does George sense Garrick's pulling away as much as I do?*

The warm caress of her husband's fingers drifted from her face to her breast, stirring her exhausted muscles once more. Her body protested further movement, but she loved the way George seemed to take pleasure in the feel of her skin. It wasn't a bad sensation for her either, Gina admitted to herself wryly. His fingertips smoothed over the slope of her breast to tease and pluck at the crinkled nipple.

“I'm fine,” she replied, hoping he didn't hear the disquiet in her voice.

“Are you sure?” he asked.

She settled her hand over his, caressing the coarse hair on the back of his hand. She didn't speak; instead she nodded. Her eyes remained closed, her fingers sliding over and around his as she began to relax. Despite the lassitude pulling her toward sleep, Gina couldn't silence the tiny voice in her head. *Why is Garrick pulling away? Am I the only one who feels there's something wrong?*

George's soft kisses peppered her cheeks, but they didn't dispel the unease that continued to grow at Garrick's absence from their bed. He continued to trace her puckered nipple and the areola before stroking over the soft curve in small, gentle circles. The pulsing sound of the shower accented the thoughts swirling in her mind. The feel of his callused fingertips was soothing, comforting, easing her body from the intensity of her last climax.

“Shall we join him?” George suggested, his green eyes following the path his fingers took from her right breast to the left.

Gina debated the question, unsure if she wanted to step into the shower with Garrick so soon after what she considered his rejection. Every time it happened, she worried that Garrick might be looking for a way out. She felt like a part of her was missing without him on the other side of her.

“In a minute,” she replied.

In the three years she'd been with George and Garrick, and since they'd made their relationship permanent nearly a year earlier, she'd grown used to being the filling in their sexual threesome. She grinned to herself at the thought of the nickname she'd made up—a triple-G sandwich. The thought of having one of her men walk away made her very uneasy. Garrick wasn't the only one acting strangely, though. She'd sensed George pulling away sometimes in the last few months. Especially considering what she'd asked of them several months before. Perhaps neither of them was comfortable with her desire to have a child, despite their claims to the contrary.

*Is George feeling trapped too?* She looked up at him, tracing the handsome features with her gaze, trying to see any hint that he too might be having second thoughts about their arrangement.

Her unease must have communicated itself to George. He stopped tracing the firm tip of her breast. “What's wrong?”

In their time together, Gina had learned that beating around the bush wasn't the most efficient way to deal with her men. They liked their problems stated clearly and with as few words as possible. Unfortunately, when she didn't know what was wrong, there was no easy way to say it. “Just wondering?”

“About what?”

It would be useless to tell him what she worried about regarding Garrick, at least until she figured out just what the problem could be. It would be easier to just avoid that discussion until she was ready for it. “What I'm going to do until I meet Olive for lunch this afternoon at the Downtown Bistro,” Gina replied, deciding to ignore the real issue until later.

“The one across from my office?”

She nodded. “Yes. While I have the time during summer vacation, I've been seeing her there or the little Thai place that's closer to the university. We catch up on things and just chat.”

“You're getting bored.” George grinned.

“I just don't like having time on my hands.” If he didn't want to delve into what was really bothering her, she'd let him get away with it. At least until she was ready with questions she wanted him and Garrick to answer.

George slid his hand from beneath hers and shifted it lower to cover the bare mound between her thighs. "Garrick and I would be more than happy to give you a little afternoon entertainment if you came to visit us at the firm."

She appreciated his attempt at distracting her from the troubling thoughts Garrick's desertion had stirred. She shook her head, rolled toward him, and pressed a soft kiss against his lips. "Tempting as your offer is, I'll pass. I don't think the senior partners would condone an afternoon quickie just to give me something to do."

"I'm sure I could talk them into it at the party tomorrow night."

Gina groaned. "I forgot about that."

"It's only four times a year." George reminded her, his lips settling over the sensitive point just behind her left ear.

She reconsidered her refusal for an afternoon of play at the feel of his fingers teasing her clit, stirring the bud back to life. "But the parties are so boring."

"They need to schmooze the clients by letting them mix and mingle and brag about what new project they need our work on." George shrugged.

He slipped two thick fingers inside her, and Gina moaned at the stretching sensation they created. The light from the rising sun grew brighter in the room, and she stifled the urge to ride his fingers to climax. Her hand covered his, stilling his movements between her legs. He gazed down at her, laughter deepening his eyes to a darker shade of green.

"Stop. Save it for later, big boy. Right now I need a shower, and you need to get ready for work." Determined to leave George aching like her, Gina slid her body along his when she climbed over him, and then padded naked to the bathroom.

Steam hovered near the ceiling as she entered, and Garrick froze behind the frosted glass. She held on to the disappointment she'd felt at his desertion, slid back the glass door of the shower, and stepped inside.

Garrick stayed silent, his golden eyes cautious. She moved against him to gain access to the spray. The water saturating his dark brown hair made it look almost black, but his curls were still present and covered his brow and clung to his neck, the ends just touching his shoulders. The length of flesh between his thighs twitched to life with each accidental contact of her body against his.

To say anything was pointless; Gina knew he would never tell her the reason he left. She closed her eyes and moved her face into the streams of water. Her body ached, but no more than it ever had after making love for hours with her husbands. No, the pain she wished she could sluice off and send down the drain was the doubt building in her heart that one or even both of the men she loved and reveled in sharing her body with held a part of themselves separate from her. Separate from each other.

“Sore?” Garrick finally spoke, stepping close to massage shampoo through her long hair.

“A little.” She tried not to relax, wanting him to sense her irritation and disappointment.

Her body battled her mind, frustrated at Garrick's desertion from her bed but reacting to his presence with the same heat and longing she'd experienced the first time he touched her. Long fingers kneaded the lather through her hair, caressing her scalp, easing the tension in her shoulders and neck.

The slide of the glass door stilled the stroke of Garrick's hands as they rinsed the soap from her hair. The unease building inside him filtered into her through his fingertips, undoing all the work he'd done to relax her. Gina stifled the urge to curse. Or worse yet, hit the stubborn ass.

His hands pushed her hair back from her face before he pressed his lips to hers.

Gina sensed disquiet in Garrick's demeanor. An edgy restlessness that hadn't been there before. He was so careful not to touch George when he moved out of the shower, leaving her alone with her other husband. Suspicion tickled the back of her mind, but worry and despair drowned it out.

Not willing to deal with her hurt, Gina allowed George to pull her close. She sank into his hold and closed her eyes.

It seemed best to take the Scarlett O'Hara approach to her problem. Gina reassured herself she'd think about it tomorrow.



## Chapter Two

The restaurant was doing a brisk business as Gina waited for Olive Dexter to finish giving her order to the waitress. Gina had always liked the earthy feel of the bistro. The stone floor, granite counters, and mixture of tables and booths gave the place a homey feel. The minimal use of wall decorations and simple black or white T-shirt and black slacks of the waitstaff added to the clean, uncluttered appeal of the place.

When she first became involved with George, he'd met her here a few times for lunch. She wondered if anyone had ever found the pair of panties he'd torn off her in the ladies' room. Even as she smiled at the amusing thought of a customer discovering evidence of one of George's and her trysts, Gina's mood shifted to disquiet due to Garrick's abandonment that morning.

No matter what she'd tried to do around the house after George and Garrick left for work, her mind continued to chew over the incident in their bed. Again and again she found herself remembering other similar incidents over the last six months, but she could dredge up nothing before that.

What could be causing it? Were Garrick and George growing tired of the relationship? Perhaps it had taken them this long to regret marrying her. A kind of tension had seeped into their lovemaking, leaching away the fire that had connected the three of them since the beginning. What should she do about it? What did her husbands want to do about it?

"Okay, spill." Olive urged.

Gina looked up from her mangled dinner roll. "What?"

The other woman grinned at her. "You've been torturing that poor piece of bread since the waitress put it on the table in front of you."

Brushing the crumbs from her fingers, Gina shrugged. "I've had some things on my mind."

"Like?" Olive prompted, her brown eyes avid with curiosity.

She ignored Olive's question. "Nothing important."

“Nothing? Come on, there has to be something.” Olive didn't wait for a reply. Instead she jumped in with her own ideas of what might be bothering Gina. “Did you do it? Are you finally pregnant? Wow, that was fast! Who's the proud papa?”

Gina waved off her friend's enthusiastic questions. “No. I'm not pregnant. And I'm not so sure getting pregnant is a good idea right now.”

“What do you mean? Is there something wrong? Did you see a doctor?” Olive was just as intense in her concern as she was in her excitement.

Gina shook her head and explained. “I'm fine. There's nothing wrong with me or Garrick or George. I'm just not so sure now is the time to start a family.”

“What do you mean?” This time Olive waited for an answer. Perhaps as a means of curbing her need to ask more questions, the other woman stuffed a chunk of roll into her mouth and began chewing.

Gina took a sip of water, then set the glass down. Condensation beaded the surface. She drew lines with her thumbs through the thin layer of moisture. “It's nothing, Olive. Don't worry about it.”

“But—”

“You were going to tell me about the new play at the school. Didn't you say you'd offered sketches for the costumes?” The problems she was dealing with weren't something she wanted to discuss with her friend.

The waitress returned with their lunches, then moved away, but Olive picked up her sandwich and continued to watch Gina. “You're avoiding,” Olive accused.

“Tell me about the play.”

Olive stuck her tongue out at Gina. Both of them grinned, but Gina wondered if the chuckle she gave sounded as false to Olive as it did to her. It must have been convincing, because Olive began describing the play that the university's drama department was producing.

A nod and an occasional “oh” or “uh-huh” were sufficient to keep her friend talking, allowing Gina a few more moments to ignore the issue plaguing her. She trusted and loved Olive, but she didn't think the woman would understand the fear that had been building inside her for the last few weeks. *How do I tell her, “Hey, I think one or even both of my husbands want out of our marriage”? I can hardly believe it myself, and I'm the one with the suspicions.*

“What do you think?” Olive's question drew Gina's attention back to her friend and away from her own thoughts.

“What do I think of what, Olive?”

Olive grimaced, finishing off her sandwich. She rolled her eyes at Gina. “You didn't hear a word I said. Did you?”

“Sorry, my mind was somewhere else.”

“Well, I was suggesting that since your anniversary is coming up and I was selected to design the costumes for the next show at the university's theater...” Olive waggled her eyebrows during her dramatic pause.

“Congratulations.” Gina smiled and laughed at the proud but comically exasperated look on Olive's face. “I'm sure your designs will be fabulous.”

“Of course.” Olive laughed. “Anyway. I was going to say, if you don't mind a delayed anniversary gift, perhaps you and George and Garrick will be my guests on opening night.”

“We'd be delighted.” Gina assured her. *If we're still together.*

Olive watched her so carefully, Gina made every effort to keep her unease from showing on her face. At least she hoped so. Gina relaxed when Olive launched into a description of the set design, the play itself, and the ideas she had begun to develop about the costumes.

Gina finished her sandwich and chips. She kept her responses general and noncommittal, her awareness divided between her friend's conversation and the thoughts ping-ponging through her mind.

\* \* \* \* \*

The following night, as the dinner party for George and Garrick's company moved into the entertainment section of the evening, Gina glanced around the room, sipped her white wine, and smiled at one of the partners' wives. She'd grown used to the boring get-togethers. Tonight was no different, although the thoughts going through her mind were centered more on the concerns pestering her about her husbands than the not-so-subtle flirting taking place between the different employees as the alcohol continued to flow. She hid her smile at the cat-and-mouse games playing out as men and women, both married and single, teased each other with sexy glances, subtle touches, whispered suggestions.

That was one thing she never had to worry about. When she or her husbands wanted to play, they asked. After discussing it, George and Garrick defined the rules and explained her role, like they had last night when Garrick suggested a little role-playing after dinner. If she closed her eyes, she could feel the warm brush of his breath over her shoulder, his firm arms hugging her close. His hand sliding beneath the waistband of her jeans to tease the cheeks of her ass, his whispered, *"How about a round or two of 'bad little slave girl gets punished and fucked by her wicked masters'?"*

Both Garrick's and George's attention had extended their play well beyond dawn that morning. Her bottom was still sore from the spanking she'd received for climaxing without permission before her men left for work. Not to mention the fact that the nap she'd tried to take earlier in the afternoon had been disrupted by the surprise visit from Garrick at lunch. Her panties grew damp at the reminder of the toys they'd played with before he had to leave.

If she weren't afraid George's and Garrick's jobs might be impacted, Gina would have found her way to the sofa in the ladies' restroom and taken a nap. Holding her fingertips over her mouth, she covered the yawn that sneaked out.

As she scanned the room, Gina spotted Garrick standing in a corner, surrounded by several people, opposite the hallway leading to the lavatories. He didn't appear to be listening to anyone near him—most of the other people close by had their backs to him—but the intent look on his face stilled the glass she raised to her lips. Even at a distance, she could see the glitter of arousal in his golden gaze. The intent concentration, tension in the way he stood, the sexual aura surrounding him might only be visible to her, but she had no problem recognizing them. It was something she'd seen before. Ripples formed across the surface of her drink, betraying the tremor in her hand as she lowered the glass without taking a sip. In fact, she'd watched that particular expression on her husband's face just prior to making love with him that afternoon. He wanted someone—and he wasn't looking at *her*.

A shiver skated down Gina's spine. The expensive dinner became an uncomfortable lump in her stomach, and her heart climbed into her throat. Her breath grew shallow as she followed the path of his gaze, praying that the object of his attraction was anything but another woman. Her heart settled back into her chest, its beat slowing when she realized Garrick seemed to be looking at George and two other engineers—Beck Sterns and John Ellis. Beck and John had exchanged vows almost nine months ago, when the law regarding same-sex marriages had

passed. Garrick, George, and Gina had attended the ceremony and the reception afterward. Even after the ten years they'd been together before they married, the two men still acted like newlyweds.

Why Garrick would have that intent expression, the heat of arousal flushing his face, while watching...?

"Every time I see you, you just get prettier and prettier."

The warm breath and voice, thick with provocation, drifted over Gina's shoulder, distracting her and causing her to glance back and smile absently at the man behind her. "You are a tease, Vince."

"Not as much as George and Garrick." He grinned. Dark hair framed his boyish face in waves, the long length pulled back into a ponytail at his nape.

"How so?" She turned to face her husbands' coworker. She raised the glass of wine she'd been nursing for the last half hour to her lips and waited for his answer.

A hint of mischief glinted in his gaze when he scanned the room beyond her shoulder. "They parade you in front of us poor, deprived mortals whenever the company puts on one of these gatherings. All the time knowing we'd give our left nuts to be the ones going home with you." Vince's wide blue eyes danced with amusement. He took a swig of his drink, gaze locked on her, the beginnings of a hangdog expression altering his handsome features to comic.

Gina couldn't help but laugh at his attempt at pouting. "I doubt that very much, Vince," she replied, shaking her head.

The amusement in his bright blue eyes gave her pause. His gaze lingered on her mouth, eased down her body, and returned to her face. "Oh no, love. You can bet I've spent nights just waiting for the phone to ring with an invitation to join you three for a weekend of play."

Gina hesitated at the serious tone of his voice. In his eyes she could see that more than humor fueled his comments. A second pause was necessary when her body tingled in reaction, something that tended to only happen with George and Garrick.

Memories of those two days three years earlier had the heat pooling in her center. Of the five men George had invited over that weekend, two had affected her as much as George could. One was Garrick. The other, to a lesser degree, was the man in front of her.

In the time since that weekend, she'd enjoyed the ménage arrangement she shared with the men she loved. Later, when she'd exchanged vows with George, Garrick had stood as best man. In a second, more private, ceremony that same day, the men had switched places and Gina had voiced her commitment to Garrick as well. She'd never doubted her feelings for her husbands, or George's and Garrick's feelings for her.

Until recently.

The warm slide of an arm around her waist caused her body to hum with arousal. She glanced over her shoulder.

"You're just going to have to keep waiting, Vince." Garrick's smile held more than just amusement. A warning glinted in his golden eyes.

A warning Vince seemed determined to ignore. "I've been known for my patience, Gare."

Another arm eased around Gina's waist, and the tingles in her body spread—George. The sudden tensing of Garrick's frame on her right, the movement of his arm from her waist to her shoulder, and his slight shift away from her and George set Gina on edge. She could tell by Vince's expression that he noted the subtle movements. It was all she could do to keep from kicking her husband. It was one thing to have Garrick pull away when he was in bed with them, but when others were witness to Garrick's withdrawal, it was unacceptable.

*This is ridiculous. He better have a damned good reason for pulling back.* Gina made a mental note to talk to him about his behavior.

"What is Vince babbling about now?" George brushed a soft kiss over Gina's cheek. His gaze touched on Garrick before returning to Vince.

"Nothing important," Gina assured him.

"Uhn." Vince placed his hand over his heart and assumed a wounded expression. "I'm devastated you take my pain so lightly, Gina."

She leaned forward and pressed a kiss to his cheek. "I'm sure you'll survive." A frisson of interest sizzled through her when her lips contacted his skin, but Gina chose to ignore it, again.

"I guess I'll have to." Vince shook his head. "You don't seem inclined to help me out."

"Watch it," Garrick warned, his hand flexing and then relaxing on Gina's shoulder.

She was tempted to slap it away after the stunt he'd just pulled by stepping back from her and George. Practice controlling her impulses was the only thing keeping her from acting on the temptation.

"Excuse me." Gina smiled up at George and handed him her wineglass. "I need to talk to Adra about the barbecue she's planning next month." *Before I smack a stubborn ass.* She was careful to keep her expression from revealing her dissatisfaction. The smile Gina gave Vince wasn't her best effort, but she doubted he'd noticed, and right at that moment she didn't really care. She refused to look at Garrick before she moved away from the men and headed toward Adra, the wife of one of the firm's engineers standing across the banquet hall.

Garrick watched Gina move away. The sway of her hips, unconsciously sensual, drew the notice of several other men, both single and married, in the room. He stifled a chuckle, discerning a few of the women watching her with the heat of interest in their eyes.

"See, I told you it's not just me," Vince pointed out, his gaze on Gina as well.

George popped Vince on the back of the head. "Knock it off."

Vince grinned, rubbing at the abused part of his head. "I'll try."

Garrick grew suspicious. "You haven't been talking, have you?" Irritation shortened his already strained temper, transforming his words into a growl.

Vince glared at him. "No." Despite the three inches Garrick had on him in height, the younger man showed no hint of being intimidated.

George spoke at the same time. "He knows how to keep his mouth shut, Gare. You know that."

"He's supposed to, but—"

"I'd never insult Gina like that," Vince snapped, glowering at both George and Garrick.

"Then why do you always flirt with her?" Garrick demanded. "It's not like she flirts back."

Vince shrugged, his interest drifting to where Gina stood chatting with an attractive redhead. "You can't blame a guy for trying. I keep hoping she'll come to her senses one day."

George laughed. "She already did, Vince. That's why she's married to us." He motioned to Garrick and himself.

Vince eyed Garrick carefully. “Hmmm, she can always change her mind. It's been known to happen.” He didn't give either man an opportunity to respond before walking away.

Garrick watched Vince move to another group of guests. “I'm not sure if I trust him,” he muttered.

George finished the last of Gina's wine and set the empty glass on a nearby table. “You don't have to trust him.”

Garrick slowly spun to meet George's steady gaze. “What do you mean?”

“Like he said, Gina's the one who can change her mind.”

He pushed his hands into his pockets and fixed his eyes on the path Vince had taken and away from George, and then voiced his agreement. “Yeah, but I wouldn't put it past Vince to try to 'help' her change her mind.”

George stayed quiet, but Garrick could feel his gaze. Garrick hesitated for as long as possible before meeting his friend's stare.

“If you're that unsure of Gina, maybe you need to take some time to examine your own commitment to her.”

Garrick felt his hands clench into fists involuntarily. “What the hell are you trying to say?” Guilt burned through his chest. Did George think he wanted out? Did Gina? He knew they'd sensed his drawing away when George's arm had pressed over his minutes ago. Did they equate his pulling away as wanting out of the marriage? How could he assure them he didn't want to leave without ruining it all by explaining why he stepped back?

“I didn't try to say anything, Garrick. I stated it plain and simple.”

“Do you think I'm looking to leave?” His heart tripped over itself at the idea that the two people he loved could imagine he didn't want to be with them. *Have I really fucked things up that badly?*

George shrugged and glanced to the hallway across the room. Gina had been stopped by one of the other engineers in the firm. “All I'm suggesting is you look to yourself before you start thinking our wife might be the one searching for a way out of this family.”



Garrick watched George move across the room to Gina's side, not sure if George's comments were a command or a warning. All he did know was something was changing between Gina, George, and him, and Garrick wasn't sure he liked it.

## Chapter Three

Garrick found Gina avoiding him for the next thirty minutes. Every time he moved to the group she chatted with, his wife would excuse herself and slip away. He didn't bother looking for help from George. His friend had made it very clear Garrick was on his own when it came to placating their wife.

The moment she moved down the hallway toward the ladies' room, Garrick followed her. He pushed open the door, smiled at one of the party guests when she blinked at him in surprise before hurrying out, and asked, "So how long are you going to stay pissed at me, Gina?"

Gina settled onto one of the small sofas arranged in the lounge area of the restroom. "Until I'm ready not to be." She smoothed the silk of her dress and ignored him as he dropped onto the cushion beside her.

"At least tell me what I did." But Garrick didn't need the explanation; he was aware of what he'd done to earn her ire. A small part of him hoped that her description would be different from what he thought she'd say.

"Are you tired of being with me?" she asked.

She made an effort to hide the hurt and confusion she was feeling, but he could still see it. "No." He leaned closer and cupped the back of her neck, his thumb caressing the soft skin along her jaw. "Being with you is the best thing that's happened to me in a long time."

"Then why do you keep pulling away? I feel like I've done something wrong, but you won't tell me what it is, you just step back. Distance yourself." She seemed to think it over before asking, "Do you think it's too soon to want a baby?"

He latched onto that concern, grateful that she hadn't clued in to his secret. "If you want a baby, I'm more than happy to help, but..." Garrick let his voice trail off.

"But?"

Garrick was silent a moment, then asked, "Who do you want to be the father?" His conscience cursed him for manipulating her feelings about what she wanted most in order to distract her, but surely it was better to lie now than to destroy three lives with the truth. When she'd first come to him and George about wanting a baby, they'd asked each other that question, but they'd never asked Gina. While neither he nor George had concerns with who fathered their wife's baby, a part of Garrick continued to wonder, even though it had no bearing on what bothered him now, if Gina had a preference.

Her hand caressed his cheek. The wary look was gone from her gaze, replaced with understanding and reassurance. For him. His guilt prodded him again.

"Is that what you've been worried about? That I'd want only one of you?"

He scooped her off the sofa and into his lap and then shrugged. "It had crossed my mind. I mean, hell, you were with George for over six months before I came into the picture. It makes sense that you'd want him to be the daddy."

The warm weight of her breasts and the tight hold of her arms around his shoulders eased his conscience, if simply a little. His body stirred at the way she nuzzled her nose against his throat before tilting back her head.

"It doesn't matter who gets to be Daddy first. I want at least two kids, Garrick." She grinned up at him.

"Then I guess we'd better get to work, huh?" The look on her face and the easy way she snuggled close in his arms assured him his subterfuge had settled her qualms. For now at least. The tightness in his chest contradicted the relief he knew he should be feeling. Every sidestep he made around the truth put more distance between the two people he loved most.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Tired?" George asked Gina later that evening, working to release the zipper on her gown.

"A little." Gina smiled, knowing sleep wasn't of paramount importance to her husbands. The talk with Garrick had soothed the worries she'd carried around since the day before. It also reminded her of the fact that just as she needed to be convinced of their feelings for her, Gina was equally responsible to remind her husbands how much she cared for them.

Garrick tossed his suit jacket over a nearby chair and moved in front of her to ease the straps of her dress from her shoulders. "Too tired?" He grinned.

She met him halfway for a kiss. “Mmm, never too tired.” The heat of his kiss, the stroke of his tongue over and around hers, drew a moan of anticipation from Gina's lips. Her fingers slid buttons through buttonholes, removing the barrier of his shirt even as George helped her step out of her gown without disturbing her connection to Garrick.

Pulling back, she looked up at Garrick. “You know I should be angry at you,” she teased. His fingers moved to the front clasp on her strapless bra.

“Really? Why?” Garrick released the catch, discarded the bit of silk and lace, and cupped her breasts in his hands, lowering his mouth to a soft pink crest.

“That whole 'warning Vince off' act.” Gina gasped as George stripped the matching lace thong from her hips and pressed a kiss to the base of her spine.

The rumble of George's laughter against her skin set her pussy to aching. “If you got upset every time we warned someone away from you, baby, you'd be a very pissed-off lady.”

Garrick nodded. He eased onto his knees in front of her, his dark hair tickling her belly, his tongue dipping into her navel before going lower. Gina's hands gripped his wrists as Garrick held her hips still. The stroke of his tongue through the bare folds between her thighs scattered the argument she'd been trying to make about his and George's possessive behavior.

The feel of bare flesh against her back signaled George had shed his shirt. His lips played along her neck; the warm clasp of his hands covered her breasts, caressing the burgeoning nipples. Gina arched into his hold and the wet suction of Garrick's mouth, her eyes drifting closed, her head tilting back. She could feel the shift of Garrick's body and the slide of fabric over flesh with the removal of his shirt, but his mouth never left her pussy, lapping at the crease, nipping at her clit, teasing her opening with tentative forays around the edge but nothing deeper.

Her fingers tangled in the dark waves, tugging him closer. “More,” she demanded, her voice breathless with need.

Garrick ignored her, keeping his touch just deep enough to taunt but never satisfy.

Again she arched toward him. He deflected her move by tightening his grip on her hips.

“George.” Gina moaned, hoping he would aid her in achieving what she needed.

Instead George surprised her and stepped away from them. “Take her to the bed.” His command was quiet but unrelenting. Her body trembled at the tone of his voice. The heat between her thighs increased, the coil of need warmed her belly, her breasts felt swollen and

sensitive, responding to the rasp of Garrick's tongue between her thighs when he stilled against her.

Garrick tensed at George's words. He withdrew his teasing tongue, pulling a whimper from her throat. Her whimper quickly became a moan when he rose to his feet and swept her into his arms. Her head swam at the dip and whirl from being lifted. Flesh already susceptible to temperature and touch erupted in gooseflesh as the cool air of the room brushed over her skin. He took the few steps necessary to make it to the bed and settled her on the silk comforter. The chill of the fabric had her arching up, keeping hold of Garrick's shoulders, needing the heat of his body against her, but he pulled away.

He didn't wait for George's instructions before shedding his pants and underwear. The length of his cock was thick and powerful. He moved onto the mattress and settled between her thighs. Garrick eased her legs farther apart, opening her to his gaze. Her hips canted upward so the head of his penis rubbed against her clit, Gina gripped his forearms to stabilize her position.

"Not yet," George instructed. The bed dipped, shifting Gina's and Garrick's bodies, drawing moans from both. George moved to sit near the top of the mattress, one hand wrapped around his dick, the other smoothing stray hairs from Gina's cheeks.

Her body hummed with need, and her mouth watered at the sight of both men above her. "I need you." Gina prompted. She held Garrick's gaze, wanting to reaffirm her earlier comments at the dinner party. "I need both of you." And she did, she realized. Three years ago it may have been playacting. A lark of sexual experimentation, but now they were a part of her. Necessary to her very being. She couldn't imagine being with just one of them, and the thought of not having either of them sent a chill through her soul.

One of her hands released Garrick's arm to slide up George's thigh. He didn't stop her touch as she drew close to his genitals. She took her time, stroking the backs of her fingers over his balls, teasing the hard stones inside before cupping the sac in her hand. With the slightest bit of pressure, she tugged him forward so the base of his staff hovered over her mouth.

Gina pressed a kiss to the sensitive spot between his shaft and balls by lifting her head from the bed. She fought the smile that rose to her lips as both her husbands groaned. She hadn't spent inordinate hours under their command without learning the things that most aroused them.

Garrick pressed forward, filling her empty depths, pulling a gasp from Gina at his slow advance. She lapped at the column of flesh above her. The strain in her neck began to grow painful, drawing a whimper from her lips, but she didn't want to stop. The smell of George's body, his musky arousal, the salty drops of precum that slid over his fingers and onto her lips, left her wanting more. Needing more.

George slipped one hand under her head and rose up over her while supporting her neck. The damp tip of his cock painted her lips with his seed before he pressed it inside.

Gina took it with ease. She loved his taste. The flavor of his body. She swirled her tongue over the head and down the shaft, suckling the flesh in time to the rhythm Garrick kept between her thighs. She squeezed and released George's balls in the same slow pace Garrick set, making George shudder. Based on past experience, she suspected he was working to control his escalating need to come. He wouldn't succeed if Gina could help it.

She could feel the sac in her hands draw tight against his body, the throbbing of his length in her mouth increased. Before she could pull him over the edge, George removed his cock from her mouth and drew her hand from between his legs, ignoring her protest.

"Faster, Gare," George ordered, running his hands beneath her shoulders. He lifted her so she straddled Garrick's lap and then knelt behind her, his legs straddling hers.

Once she was fully upright, George slid his hold from her shoulders to her waist, covering Garrick's hands, setting a faster, deeper penetration that Gina responded to with excited gasps.

Garrick was torn in what he wanted. He loved Gina riding his cock, but his body rioted at the tingling shooting from his fingertips and through his arms when George's hands slid over his as he tucked Gina between their bodies. The smell of his friend's arousal mingled with the intoxicating scent emanating from Gina's flesh and the musk of Garrick's own sexual state. This was supposed to be about Gina. He couldn't forget that. Determined to refocus his thoughts on his wife and not the heat and motion of the man his body craved, Garrick dipped his head to nip at Gina's throat, only to rub against George's beard-stubbed cheek as the other man moved close, his chest against Gina's back and his lips nuzzling the special spot behind her ear.

He pulled back, but the connection of his body and Gina's cemented him in place. There was no fucking way was he leaving her unsatisfied. His gaze followed George as his friend eased

away from Gina. The tension in Garrick's body mounted with the growing pressure of his climax as George moved to kneel beside him and captured the hard tip of one of Gina's breasts in his mouth.

The brush of George's silver-sprinkled black hair against his chest panicked Garrick. He couldn't draw away. Gina was on the cusp of climax; he couldn't leave her. But he shuddered with the desire to cradle George's head against his own chest. To feel the draw of George's mouth on his turgid nipples. To experience the pressure and fullness of George's cock up his ass.

Fuck getting off. He increased his pace, hoping to shoot Gina over the edge so he could pull out and retreat to the shower. Fuck coming inside his wife. He needed to get away before he ruined Gina's satisfaction by reaching for George. There was no way he was going to have Gina thinking her needs were inconsequential to him.

George cursed and rose up beside him. "No coming yet," the older man growled. He gripped Garrick's hair. His green gaze burned into Garrick's.

*Fucking bastard!* But Garrick didn't disobey. He fought the excitement that exploded through him at George's dominance. Garrick's need to resume control hovered beneath the zing of arousal twisting in his balls as George moved behind him. George's callused fingers covered his on Gina's hips. The press of a wet cock at the base of Garrick's spine created a pulsing reaction throughout his body.

Garrick rocked forward, fighting the need to lean back against George by thrusting hard and high inside Gina. Whisker stubble rubbed like fine-grain sandpaper against his evening beard, and George whispered in his ear, "Slow down."

Garrick cursed and swallowed. He trembled, fighting the need to push his ass against the thick shaft touching his back, and clutched Gina closer. His breathing raspy, body tense, Garrick slowed his pace, praying George would move away, and then battled the urge to call him back when he did. *This is for Gina, not me. It can't be for me.*

Head tilted back and eyes focused on the ceiling, he waited, repeating his resolution to put Gina's satisfaction first. As the bed shifted beneath George's weight, Gina's body swayed with Garrick's, skin sliding against skin, each damp with sweat, heated with arousal. He teetered on the edge of climax, and he could feel the muscles surrounding his dick flutter and pulse with Gina's growing excitement. Garrick's chin came down at the first glide of George's fingertips

along his arms. He could see George kneeling on the bed behind Gina. His expression was inscrutable, the glitter of arousal filled his eyes, and his thick, muscular thighs spread so his calves were parallel to Gina's on the mattress.

Garrick gritted his teeth at the continued drift of George's touch from his wrist to his elbow, and then back. He stifled the moan rumbling from his chest to his lips and squeezed his eyes shut when George shifted his grip from Garrick's arms to his back. In the same stroking, massaging manner Garrick had seen him use on their wife's delicate frame, George worked his hands lower. The sensations were more than he'd imagined. No matter how many times he had dreamed of George caressing him, Garrick now knew those fantasies had never come close to the feelings coursing through his body. He lowered his head to press his lips against Gina's throat, but he hesitated, eyes going wide when George gripped his ass and tugged him forward, slamming Garrick's erection deeper inside the woman sandwiched between them. Gina responded, sobbing with need, her body vibrating, throbbing around his.

George's face was so close that Garrick could feel the prick of whiskers on his own mouth, feel the wash of each breath as it left the other man's lips, almost taste the bite of fine whiskey George had sipped at the party.

George nipped Gina's throat as Garrick watched. *Can he see how much I want him? How much I want his lips against mine?*

Garrick swallowed hard as George's face tilted up, his deep green eyes daring him to come without permission. Guilt slithered through Garrick as he battled the ache to touch the man he wanted. He leaned forward, head tipped at just the right angle to optimize contact with the other man's mouth. *So fucking close I can almost*—Garrick froze, his lips a breath away from George's. The tight hold Garrick struggled to maintain on his orgasm slipped, severing the thread keeping it at bay. He could feel Gina's gaze as she tensed against him. Stunned disappointment and confusion filled her wide gray eyes. She trembled, her need apparent in the cries slipping through her lips. The wash of heat filled his cheeks. Embarrassed at his loss of control, his failure to see to his wife's needs first, Garrick swore silently at himself.

Unable to stop, he pulled free of his wife's body. His cum splashed onto her belly and the sheets. He stumbled from the bed—one hand fisted around his dick—and hurried into the bathroom.



“Fuck, fuck, fuck.” He slammed the door behind him, cranked the lock, and barely made it into the shower and under the cold stream of water before ejaculating again.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sound of the door meeting the frame echoed in the room. George silently cursed his friend's abandonment of their wife. Gina trembled in his hold, her breath ragged, her body taut. In front of him, he could feel the tension and anxiety in Gina, her need to come overwhelmed by the cold departure of her lover. The way she shook in his arms, the rasp of her irregular breathing, and the determined effort she made to keep from looking at him warned George that this incident wouldn't be easily ignored. He pressed soft kisses against her throat, curling her into his arms, hoping to soothe away the anxiety he felt growing inside her.

When he'd first taken up her sexual challenge, he'd never expected their relationship to go beyond fuck buddies. That his emotions somehow became engaged had surprised him at the time. But now he broke out in a cold sweat at the thought of spending the rest of his life without this woman. After Garrick had become part of the arrangement, it'd made matters sublime.

He couldn't think of a better situation for himself. A woman both he and his best friend loved and the opportunity to spend close personal time with a man he'd been attracted to for years, without making Garrick uneasy about that closeness. At least that was how it seemed prior to the last six months or so. George was beginning to think Garrick was having second thoughts. And those second thoughts were causing strain between the three of them.

George wondered if the other man experienced the same jealousy George did when he was away. Did Garrick ache to return home so he could take hours making love to Gina and share the same bed with him? If Garrick did, George doubted it was for the same reason. He had long ago recognized his attraction for Garrick as both friendship and something more. Before Gina had arrived, George had wondered what Garrick would be like as a lover. Not until George had seen the interest in the younger man's eyes when Gina became his neighbor did he consider voicing his offer to participate in some very adult games.

George had been very careful to keep his attraction to his best friend hidden, and he maintained strict control over his needs. Aware Garrick's interests didn't include men, George had only allowed himself two mistakes, and he'd been careful not to repeat them in the three years since Gina had become their lover.

The first slip had occurred the weekend he'd brought Garrick and four other men over. He'd first tasted Garrick as they made love to Gina in the shower. It had been well worth the cautious avoidance exercised by Garrick in the two weeks following that weekend. The second error had come weeks later on the heels of Gina's first attempt at playing a dominatrix. The toys she'd used on them while he and Garrick were cuffed to her bed had strained his control. Stretched it enough for him to forget to avoid close contact with the other man until after he'd kissed him.

Even as he pushed the memories of that caress away, he realized the stiff way Gina held herself against him communicated her disappointment. He didn't have to wonder if the lovemaking was over. Three years with her in bed gave him adequate training in knowing when and when not to approach his wife. Now was not the time to try to finish what Garrick had interrupted. He couldn't ignore the voice in his head telling him he was equally responsible for his wife's condition. Any effort to make love to her now would only make matters worse.

The desire to taste Garrick's kiss, to fondle his friend's tight ass, to pull him close *without* Gina between them had precipitated his lack of restraint earlier. *He was so close, just there. There for the taking, and I had to fuck it up.*

Guilt had stayed his hand from reaching for the man he longed for just as much as reason had. The emotion didn't sit well on his shoulders. George rarely regretted his actions or his thoughts, but the single moment of resentment he'd harbored toward Gina, that millisecond of irritation that she was a living barrier between himself and the man he wanted, stuck like a sliver of wood under a fingernail. It reminded him that his feelings, his needs, weren't the only ones affected by Garrick's desertion.

He tightened his hold on Gina, resting his cheek on her crown, the stubble from his evening beard catching on the mussed strands of hair, the stiff bristles a sharp contrast to the soft waves. Much like her lush curves were vastly different from the muscled form he wished he could have pressed against him.

Six fucking years of being careful and he'd pushed the envelope because of something he thought he'd glimpsed in Garrick's eyes. Never once had his friend voiced an interest in men. Why did George keep forgetting that? Was he so desperate to experience fucking Garrick that he'd sacrifice their marriage? Gina's happiness and satisfaction? Garrick's friendship and trust?

He put aside the self-flagellation and waited for Gina to stop shaking, for the tension to ease from her limbs. He'd left her trembling with the need to climax before, but that had been part of showing her the satisfaction to be found in controlling her needs. This wasn't a test of her submission. Garrick had deserted her, possibly because of George. George would find a way to make it up to her. As her husband, that's what he was supposed to do—protect and care for her, keep her happy.

## Chapter Four

A week later, even the soothing surroundings of the Downtown Bistro couldn't dispel the irritation and disquiet Gina had been feeling for several days. Garrick and George had tried to smooth over the debacle of the night of the dinner party, but their idea of reassurance was directly linked to their dicks. "Like making love with a couple of men who tense up the second things begin to heat up is my idea of fun," she grumbled. "I like a little pain with my pleasure, but I sure didn't sign up for terminal sexual frustration. It is a sure bet something is bugging both my boys, and my wanting a baby isn't part of it. I should never have believed that bull Garrick tried to sell me at the dinner party."

At least Olive had canceled on her at the last minute, leaving her to eat lunch by herself. With the way she was feeling, a minor inquisition from her friend would have pushed her over the edge into a full-blown hissy fit. "That wouldn't be pretty." She snorted.

Gina picked up the menu the hostess had set in front of her and pretended to look over the selection. "I know she knows something is wrong, but I just can't talk to her about it. Which really sucks. It's a damn good thing school is out for the summer, or I'd never make it through the day without going crazy." Gina glared without truly seeing the menu.

"I'm sure talking to yourself in public might be construed as slightly crazy."

The warning came from behind her, making Gina twist in her seat. She couldn't help but smile at Vince's amused expression. "True, but it could be considered justifiable if you knew what I was griping about." She stood up and gave the man a friendly hug.

"May I join you?" He eased away and motioned to one of the empty spots at the table, then held her chair for her when she returned to her seat.

"Sure. My friend had to cancel." Gina picked up her tea for a quick sip.

"Lucky for me." Vince pulled out a chair and sat down. It only took him a moment to scan the menu, then set it aside. "So what has you talking to yourself?"

“Men.”

“In general, or two in specific?” Vince smiled at the approaching waitress.

“Two in specific,” Gina grumped just before the waitress arrived to take their orders. After she left, Gina added, “I’m this close”—she held her hand up with her thumb and forefinger barely an inch apart—“to walking away from the whole thing.”

Vince teased. “Is there trouble in paradise? Should I take this opportunity to remind you I’m still available?”

Gina wasn’t in any mood to be teased. “Damn it, Vince, will you stop?” She could feel the burn of tears in her eyes, which simply made her angrier. “Don’t you guys ever take the time to think with what’s between your ears and not what’s between your legs?”

The amusement dimmed in his face. “You’re really serious?” He moved from the seat facing her to the one beside her. “You’d really leave George and Gare?”

“I don’t want to, but I may have no choice.” She took the extra linen napkin he held out to her and twisted it between her fingers before using it to stem the tears welling in her eyes.

Vince’s voice was quiet, determined. “What did they do?”

Gina took a moment to think about it before shaking her head. “I don’t want to discuss it.”

He settled his hand over her wrist, stroking softly over her skin. “Gina, if you’re seriously thinking about leaving them, you need to discuss this.” He tensed, his blues eyes going cold. “They didn’t hurt you, did they?”

Her hand covered the one he had over her wrist. “No, you know neither of them would ever harm me. Not physically.”

“Then why?”

She eyed the man carefully. “How well do you know George and Garrick?”

“Pretty well. Why?” He pulled back and smiled as their waitress approached with their lunches.

Again Gina waited until the girl had left before she began. “George says you’re good at your job. That you don’t cut corners and refuse to knuckle under to pressure when safety issues are involved.”

Vince nodded but stayed quiet, seeming willing to wait for her to reason things out on her own.

“Garrick says he'd trust you with anything but me.”

His only response was, “Smart man.”

“You've never told anyone about that weekend, have you?” Gina asked before taking a bite of her salad.

“This is the second time I've been asked that question.” Vince shook his head. “No, I've never told anyone about it.”

“Why not?” Gina wasn't surprised, but she was curious. Other men, if given the opportunity to spend the weekend sharing a woman sexually with five other men, would have been bragging about the experience.

“Because it was special, Gina.” He moved his hand to cover hers again. “*You* are special. I'm not about to ruin it by engaging in locker-room gossip.”

The slightest tingle skittered up her arm from where his hand touched hers. Gina remained still, her mind spinning with thoughts, fears she didn't dare voice.

Vince smiled at her and returned his hand to his fork. “I can tell you don't want to talk about what has you upset. So why don't you tell me about your plans for the summer? George mentioned a few weeks back that the three of you were going to take a cruise to the Bahamas. Are you still going?”

“As far as I know, yes,” Gina replied hesitantly.

The cruise Vince mentioned was George's idea. A “baby-making” holiday, he'd called it. But if he and Garrick were going to pretend like the problems between them didn't exist, it wasn't likely they'd make that cruise. If she couldn't figure out why Garrick pulled away while they made love and George grew distant in the evenings, it could mean the end of their relationship.

Again Vince seemed to sense her reluctance to discuss the cruise. He changed the subject. “You said your friend canceled lunch at the last minute. Did she say why?”

“Problems with a play she is designing the costumes for.” She regaled him with the minor melodrama Olive had described as the reason for canceling. Vince laughed at the appropriate spots, but Gina gave only cursory notice to the stories he tried to engage her in.

She was surprised at how easy it was to carry on a meaningless conversation while her mind attempted to process information that could easily mean the end of her marriage.

Her appetite gone, Gina pushed the contents of her plate around, any efforts at conversation drying up at the emergence of her disquieting thoughts.

“Gina?”

She looked up at Vince, distracted. “Hmm?”

“Do you want me to call George or Garrick?”

Gina shuddered at the idea of speaking to either of her men with her mind in such chaos. “No, no. You don't have to call them.”

“Is this 'something' you're worrying about related to them?” Vince asked.

“You've known them for several years, right?”

Vince nodded. “I interned at the firm when I was finishing my degree. They were the ones who suggested I be kept on after I completed my time there.”

“I know they're both very opinionated, but they don't really talk a lot about things.” Gina nibbled on the salad to give herself something to do.

“True, they don't talk much about feelings and such, but hon, that's most guys.”

“What about when they're asked directly?”

He shrugged. “Depends what you're asking and what's at stake.”

“What could get George and Garrick to tell me why—” She stopped herself before she could go into any detail.

Vince waited for her to continue. When she didn't, he leaned close. His expression was serious; no amusement lit his blue eyes. “If they haven't told you in a while that they love you, you don't have to worry about their feelings.”

“Why? How can you be so sure?”

Vince's hand covered hers. “Because there isn't anything George and Garrick wouldn't do to make you happy.”

“What makes you so positive?” Gina rolled her hand over and squeezed his fingers. A zing of warmth shivered through her. The heat his touch stirred was a soothing combination of consolation and sexual interest.

“Do you know how much finagling George went through to get that time off?”

“He just said he and Garrick had vacation time.” Gina leaned back in her seat.

“He and Garrick had to finalize designs on two projects, then convince two of the senior partners that neither one of them was needed to hold the client's hands at the groundbreaking of the construction phases the weekend your cruise starts.”

Gina was surprised at the information. “They never told me that.”

Vince sipped his iced tea. “They will do just about anything to make you happy, love.”

“Anything?”

Vince leaned forward, gaze intent. “Anytime you've mentioned something you've been interested in, they've discussed how to get it for you at work.”

“They care that much about pleasing me?” Gina was incredulous.

Vince nodded. “You mentioned the weekend when I first met you.” He waited for her to nod before continuing. “When George originally approached me, he made sure I had my doctor give me a clean bill of health. Then he made me very aware that your pleasure was his primary concern. He made it clear that it would be for those two days and that none of us were ever to contact you unless he gave permission.” His smile wry, he finished. “Even now, that determination to make sure you're happy is all that matters to George and Garrick. No matter what.”

“Like the time they went with me to my friend's play last October but they had tickets to a ball game?”

“Box seats to the first game of the World Series are pricey, Gina. Do you know how many guys at the office were begging to buy those tickets from them before you told them about the play?”

“And they just gave them away?”

Vince laughed. “No, they sold them. Where do you think the money for the flat-screen TV came from?”

“Opening night of the ballet?”

“Stanley Cup Playoffs.”

“But they never said—”



He shrugged. "The guys at the office have been appreciative every time the phrase 'Gina wants' starts a sentence during a sports season."

"But what about what they want? What makes them happy?"

"Doesn't matter." Vince shook his head. "If what they want won't make you happy or will hurt you or your feelings in any way, then they don't do it."

It began to make sense to her. The gifts they'd given her and trips they'd gone on had been things she'd mentioned or said she'd like. Even her desire for a baby was more important to them than what they wanted. It could be that neither one of them wanted a baby. Could she be wrong, and her asking for a child may have precipitated the changes happening between George and Garrick? Were they doing it to make her happy? Her needs in bed had always been their top priority. Why not out of it as well?

The memory of Garrick's expression when he watched George at the party slipped into her mind. The need, the desire that had imbued his features, had been wiped away the instant Garrick thought he was being watched. The same look had been there later that night, when his lips had brushed George's, right before he realized she was aware of the kiss, and pulled away.

Maybe she'd been right to think that her wanting a baby had nothing to do with what bothered George and Garrick.

"Even if it meant denying something they wanted for themselves?" she asked, quickly fitting the rest of the clues together.

"I don't think they see it as denying themselves anything. They love you, Gina. That's not going to change anytime soon." He glanced at his watch and muttered a curse. "I really think you need to have someone with you right now, hon, and I have to run. I have a meeting with a client in a few minutes."

She pressed her other hand over the one he had on hers for a moment, and then released him. "I'm okay. I promise. Talking to you has helped."

Vince pulled a business card from his wallet and scribbled something on the back. "Here, this is my number. Call me if you need to talk." He tucked the card into her hand and closed her fingers over it.

Gina shook her head, but he wouldn't let her release the card.

"I won't take no for an answer, Gina. Even if you won't admit it, you need to talk to someone. I can see that. Even if it isn't me." Vince waited until she agreed, and he watched her put his card into the address book in her purse before he stood up. He cupped her cheek in his hand and brushed his thumb over her lips. "Take care of yourself."

Still holding her gaze, he bent down and pressed a kiss to her cheek. Then he left, taking the check the waitress had set on the table with him.

Another tingle of awareness shivered through her. A memory from that weekend flashed through her mind, and her body responded to it. Gina cursed beneath her breath at the heat between her thighs and the firm jut of her nipples scraping against the lace of her bra. She didn't have the energy to wrangle with the issue of her attraction to Vince now. Not with her marriage on the line.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gina didn't bother going home after lunch. She was too distracted to sit and contemplate curriculum the way she'd originally planned. School might have been out, but a teacher's work was never ending. With her purse locked in the trunk of her car, Gina headed toward a small greenbelt down the street from the restaurant.

At an empty bench she found just off the running path winding through the park, she wiped away the few dried pine needles and fallen leaves left by a recent storm and sat down. Situated at a diagonal to the bench, the nearby playground was crowded with kids but far enough away that the sounds weren't too jarring. She smoothed her hands across her stomach before she forced her thoughts back to her problem.

The way Garrick had looked at George at the party and remembering the heat in George's gaze while they made love the other morning and again after the party had her wondering.

Twice they'd reached for each other before the three of them had moved in together. Had she not put enough thought into what those kisses between the two men presaged? She'd fantasized about seeing them make love to one another, but was it possible that their determination to keep her satisfied was impeding the natural growth of the affection between her husbands?

*Am I getting in the way of what they feel for each other? Is my presence keeping them from really falling in love? Should I leave?*

The choice to walk away from George and Garrick was the last thing she wanted to contemplate, but she also didn't want to force them to be with her if they weren't happy. At least they didn't seem as content with their family as they had been when the three of them had first hooked up.

Gina leaned forward, braced her elbows on her knees, and cupped her chin in her hands. She allowed her hair to shield her face from the joggers on the path. Public histrionics had never been her thing, but the burn of tears behind her eyes was a warning she didn't ignore. She wanted to talk to someone, but there wasn't anyone. As close a friend as Olive was, the younger woman had always seemed somewhat confused about the relationship Gina had with her husbands. Her relatives were scattered all over the country, and though they were close, she wasn't sure how to broach the subject to her mom or brother. If she really thought about it, Gina had to admit that in the last three years she'd drifted away from many of her friends. For all intents and purposes, she counted her husbands as both best friends and confidants. Since her issues lay with them, it left them off the list of people she could talk to.

*What if I am in the way of their relationship? Do I just ask them? Can I trust them to tell me the truth?*

"I'm going to have to talk to them." Gina groaned at the prospect of facing her husbands and asking them if they felt she was in the way. She surreptitiously wiped the tears from her cheeks before she dug in her jeans pocket for a tissue, and blew her nose. Then she sat up and pushed her loose hair behind her ears. To have any hope of figuring out the problem, she needed to find out where Garrick and George stood in regard to the relationship the three of them shared.

"I could be worrying about this for no reason." She tried to reassure herself, but the attempt at an upbeat tone failed. As much as she loved her husbands, their contentment was just as important to her as hers was to them. She could never find peace if she knew her presence was keeping the men she loved from each other.

One deep breath followed another, slow and steady. She shifted her focus to what disturbed her most. They'd always been honest with each other, no matter what the subject. Now they seemed to be avoiding any kind of discussion. Three years ago she'd teased George into showing her how exciting a lover he could be. His challenges manifested an awareness of her own needs and desires that no other man had brought out before. In ways she'd never considered

possible, George completed her and made her feel whole. When he'd introduced Garrick to her, the same stirrings permeated her senses. She'd been frightened that her attraction to Garrick would diminish what she had with George, but it hadn't. It merely solidified their connection and brought all three of them full circle.

They were a family. Committed to one another. She couldn't see finding that same feeling with another man. But maybe that wasn't how George and Garrick viewed their marriage. Perhaps her husbands were chafing at the restrictions being married to her presented. Were they worried that she wouldn't tolerate their attraction to each other? If they were to look outside their household for a lover, there'd be hell to pay, but within it?

After the incident with Garrick leaving the bed and the information she'd learned during her discussion with Vince, Gina was no longer willing to let her husbands pussyfoot around the issue.

"They need to talk to me." Best-case scenario, she'd finally get to satisfy the fantasy rolling around in her mind for the last three years. Worst case, she'd have to walk away from the only two men she'd ever love.

## Chapter Five

Gina was quiet during dinner. But that had been her state of being most of the time for the last week. George could tell by her expression that she was thinking things over. Even when he or Garrick tried to draw her into conversation, she kept her responses minimal—four, maybe five, words at most. Considering what she was likely mulling through what happened last week, George wasn't sure he would be comfortable with the conclusions she'd come to.

Garrick hadn't been any better as a dinner companion. His determination to act as if nothing was wrong and he was unaffected was obvious every time the younger man avoided touching him or Gina. But until either of them said something, worrying about it was useless.

As he and Garrick cleaned up the kitchen following their meal, George waited, knowing their wife would have to say something eventually. He tossed casual glances over his shoulder as he spooned the remainders of their dinner into containers and handed the dirty pots and pans to Garrick for washing. George pulled open the refrigerator with one hand, while holding the stack of sealed dishes in the other.

“Do you love me?”

Gina's words silenced the quiet *clink* of silverware against china as Garrick settled the last of the dinner dishes into the sink. After he set the leftovers on the shelf, George let the refrigerator door close.

“What?”

“Excuse me?”

Their gruff responses sounded at the same time, and each of them shifted to stare at Gina. George was sure the expression on his face was one of bafflement. It was clear that his wife was done thinking and intent on getting answers. Shoulders braced against the brushed steel door of the appliance, he waited.

“Do you love me?” Gina repeated her question. Her gray eyes challenged him to argue, just as they had the first time she'd taunted him into acting upon his attraction to her.

“Yes.” He had no problem voicing his feelings. Gina's presence in his life had put paid to the rootless sensation he'd carried for so long. After Garrick had joined them, it'd solidified his feelings of having found his home.

She looked from him to Garrick. There was one thing he'd trained Gina well in, and that was patience. The stubbornness she'd had all along. It was taming that impulsive streak of hers, not completely but enough to have her understand the rewards to be found in waiting, that made their life together so spicy. He didn't envy his friend her focused attention.

Despite knowing Garrick's feelings about Gina, George could still feel his stomach knot in apprehension at Garrick's prolonged silence. When the other man nodded, George felt the muscles in his shoulders and belly relax.

“Yes.” Garrick's gruff reply whispered across the space between the dining room and the kitchen.

“Do you want me?”

They both responded positively. Garrick's expression was wary. He seemed to share George's unease about what her line of thought could be.

“What's bothering you that you both keep pulling away from me?”

That brought him upright. “What?” Meeting Garrick's gaze, he wondered at the closed expression on the other man's face. Not a flicker of surprise appeared in Garrick's eyes. Maybe this wasn't the first time he'd heard this question from their wife.

She knew George hadn't expected her challenge, and she didn't trust Garrick to come clean. She'd wasted a week already trying to get them to talk. It wasn't going to continue; not if she could help it.

“Pulling away?” George asked.

Gina nodded. “Yes. Is there something you both want that I'm not giving you?”

“That we want?” Garrick leaned against the counter, his arms crossed over his chest.

"Is there something bothering you, Gina?" George stepped closer to the table, and gripped the back of one of the chairs.

"That's what I'm asking you two."

She waited. The clock ticked in the living room, filling the silence as she watched her husbands. Noises from outside drifted through the room. The slam of a car door, the hum of tires on the road, a dog barking somewhere in the neighborhood. All of it registered, but Gina kept her eyes focused on the two men in front of her.

Neither seemed interested in answering her question. They were more determined to avoid looking at each other rather than respond, which simply exacerbated her frustration. Before either of them could reply, she reiterated, "I want to know why you're pulling away when we make love. I would like for both of you to explain to me what you think our relationship is about." She glanced first at Garrick, then George.

"What?"

"I'm not sure—"

The confusion on their faces was easy to read. Gina pushed her chair away from the table and stood up. "I've spent the last few weeks with that same phrase running through my head. It pops up every time one of you pulls away or avoids being close. 'I'm not sure that's what he wanted.' 'I'm not sure this is working the way it should.' 'I'm not sure he wants me anymore.'" Pent-up energy dictated she move. While they watched her, Gina paced near the doorway leading into the hallway and living room beyond. She could feel their gazes on her, and every time she turned her head, she saw them looking at her.

"Where would you come up with the idea that we don't want you?" George asked, his expression incredulous.

"The way the two of you have been drawing back when we make love. The fact that sometimes you don't come to bed until well after I've fallen asleep. As if you're reluctant to share the same space with me." She halted close to the table. Gina's heart hammered in her chest as she remembered the various behaviors of her husbands in the last six months.

"Hon—" Garrick moved away from the counter, one hand held out to her.

George stepped closer, reaching out as if to pull her against him. Gina avoided both of them. She motioned them to keep their distance with a shake of her head. "No. Don't try to tell

me I'm imagining things. That I'm wrong." She rubbed her damp palms along her jeans before she tucked her fingertips into the hip pockets and began walking the path from table to doorway again. "In the last few weeks I've begun to feel like I don't belong. Like maybe I shouldn't be with the two of you."

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?" George growled, halting her pacing with his harsh green gaze.

Garrick was equally annoyed. "Where the fuck did you get that idea?" His hands balled into fists at his sides.

"What else am I supposed to think?" Gina glowered at them. "You won't talk to me about it. All I want to know is why you're pulling away." She moved back to the table and sat down.

Neither of them came nearer. Instead they took seats on the chairs, one on her left, the other on her right. They didn't speak, simply waited for her. She propped her elbows on the table and hid her mouth behind steeped fingers, formulating her thoughts, trying to figure out how to explain. "Talk to me."

Garrick relaxed into his chair, his golden eyes probing while he waited for her to continue. Opposite him, George did the same, although Gina could sense the tension vibrating through both of them while she gathered her thoughts.

"What do you want us to say, Gina?" George was the first to speak.

"Something. Anything." She laced her fingers together, thumbs sliding against each other. "Tell me that our marriage is about more than sex. That the bondage play isn't just some fun, kinky fucking. Let me know our roles in this family have deepened along with the trust we have in our Dominant/submissive partnership."

"Are you suggesting we don't want you?" George asked, disbelief clear in his tone.

She held her hands out, palms up. "What else am I supposed to think? Especially after what happened last week."

Beside her, Garrick stiffened. He crossed his arms over his chest, then asked, "Why are you so worried? It hasn't happened since."

Gina didn't have to take long to come up with an answer. "I want a family." George took her hand in his, the warm, callused grip reassuring.



The grin on Garrick's lips was a blend of seduction and arrogance. "We're working on that, baby."

The temptation to kick the chair out from under him was hard to resist. Gina asked, "At what price?" She pulled her hand from George's and shoved her chair away from the table. "Vince was right. I should have paid more attention," she muttered, more to herself than to them.

"Where did Vince come into this?" George rose from his seat and faced her. Garrick stood up as well, his eyes narrowed.

"He told me over lunch this afternoon just how determined the two of you are about making me happy." Gina was only vaguely aware of the irritation suffusing both her husbands' faces.

George moved away from the table, his green eyes icy. "You had lunch with Vince?"

Gina could have smacked him. "Aren't you listening to me?"

Fists on his hips, Garrick scowled at her. "Yeah, we are, and you're ignoring the question. Why did you have lunch with Vince?"

"Because at least he talks to me," Gina snapped. "He listens to what I say, and when I ask him a question, he responds. He doesn't go all caveman, pounding his chest over some stupid lunch I shared with another man in order to steer the conversation away from what I want to discuss."

"He isn't your husband," Garrick snarled.

She could feel him glowering at her with each step she took across the tiled floor toward the central island, then back to the table. "He doesn't lie to me."

George frowned, stepping close, invading her space as if he expected her to back down. Gina stood her ground. When Garrick moved to stand beside her, she defiantly met their gazes.

"We've never lied to you, Gina." George assured her, his voice steady but slightly remote.

"Every time you've pulled away or delayed coming to bed, you've lied." Gina shook her head and pushed shaky fingers through her hair. "Why can't the two of you just admit that you want something I can't give you?"

"There's nothing you can't give us," Garrick returned determinedly.

"What is it you think we want?" George asked.

“Each other.”

There was no way Garrick wanted to look at George's face. The sound of Gina saying what he'd denied for the last seven years sent his heart slamming against his ribs. At the mere thought of admitting to his attraction to George, his blood rushed in his veins; the *whoosh* of every drop echoed in his ears. Worse yet, he wanted to know what George's reaction to Gina's words was, but fear kept him from looking.

The very thought of seeing revulsion or disgust on his friend's countenance had the well-prepared dinner churning in his gut. He wasn't about to confess to the pull George stirred within him, no matter how long or hard Gina demanded it. He just knew that vocalizing those feelings would alter the dynamics of the relationship, and he didn't want that. Hell, he'd worked hard over the last six months to make up for disappointing Gina. He had calculated every touch, every kiss, to make sure the needs growing inside him couldn't be teased to life by an accidental touch while the three of them made love. Not once had he allowed himself to climax before his wife.

Until the night of the party...

“Gina,” he tried to placate her. “Baby, I don't think you quite...”

“Don't tell me I've been reading you wrong, Gare. I haven't imagined the way the two of you have been retreating.”

Her gaze held his for the longest moment before breaking contact to capture George's. “If you both say you love me, then my thinking that it was me and something I've done wrong...”

Garrick caressed her cheek with one hand and covered her hand with the other as he moved closer. “No, Gina, you haven't done anything.”

Tears floated in her eyes, unnerving him. Gina didn't cry, not easily at least. Yes, he and George had brought her to tears in the past, both together and by themselves, but those were tears shed as a result of sexual gratification. These tears he gently wiped from her cheeks were nothing like the others. These were a result of hurt and confusion.

“Then what's wrong?” Her gaze moved to George, then back to him.

Garrick could see the wheels in Gina's mind churning away. His stomach knotted at the look on her face. He was unsure just how long he could deny her suspicions.

“Let's go sit down in the living room and discuss this,” George declared, stepping closer to Gina and resting his hand on Garrick's shoulder. With one hand at her elbow, George turned Gina toward the living room. Garrick stifled the moan when his body responded against his will. Not just because Gina's lush frame brushed his as they moved away. The press of Garrick's cock against his jeans increased with the firm clasp of George's hand on his shoulder. It took a moment for him to bring his arousal under control before he could follow his wife and friend from the kitchen.

With Gina tucked between them on the thick cushions of the sofa, Garrick waited to see how George proceeded.

“Okay, babe. Explain what's going through that wicked mind of yours.” George kept his attention on Gina.

Gina leaned back and stroked her hands along the thighs they had closest to her. “It seems like every time we've been in bed together you both have created some line of demarcation neither of you will cross.” She shook her head and seemed to choose her words carefully to make them understand. “I feel as if you've decided, without my input, that each of you will only touch specific parts of me based on where either of you are along the line.” Turning from George, Gina threaded her fingers through Garrick's. “It isn't like it used to be. There's no more real touching or snuggling when we're together. Sometimes I feel like I have two statues in bed with me.”

Garrick waited a heartbeat before replying. “I don't think...”

“Don't lie to me, hon.” Gina shook her head. The soft waves of her hair settled around her face in a blend of honey, gold, and cinnamon. A wispy strand caught in the corner of her mouth, but she pulled it free and tucked it behind her ear, then returned her hold to his fingers. “When we first got together, the two of you had no problems if your hands strayed or your uglies bumped against each other when you were sharing me.” She tugged their hands into her lap, forcing Garrick's fingers to slide over George's.

The electric tingle intensified, making Garrick draw his hand back. George's hand retreated to his own lap at the same time.

“See!” Gina bounded off the sofa and frowned down at them. Garrick refused to look at George. Tension emanated from the older man.

“You can't tell me I'm imagining that.” She fisted her hands on her well-rounded hips. “I can't figure you two out.” Her exasperation was apparent in the way she stalked away from them.

“What's there to figure out?” Garrick knew his attempt at evasion was lame, but he wasn't about to ruin what the three of them had, simply to satisfy a curiosity he'd kept under control for seven years.

Gina moved back to the sofa, and sat down on the coffee table facing them, her knees brushing against theirs in the confined space. “What's there to figure out? How about what you both really want? How about the needs you both seem to be ignoring in order to keep me happy?”

“And what needs are those?” George asked.

“I don't know. That's what I'm asking you guys.”

George shook his head and leaned forward, his forearms resting on his thighs, his gaze focused on Gina. Garrick stifled the groan rising in his chest. His skin prickled with heat, the beat of his heart tripled in pace, need swirled in his groin, building inside, triggered by the sight of his friend's intensity. *Ignore it. Focus on something else. Someone else.*

George dared their wife. “You seem to have been thinking about all of this, Gina. You tell me what you think I've been denying myself when I have you in my arms at night.”

The smile on her face became wry as Gina matched her husband's pose, their foreheads almost touching, and met his stare without flinching. “Leave the Dom in the bedroom, babe. Right now, I'm an equal partner in this relationship, and I'm not going to let you direct where my interest should go.”

The rise of his eyebrow was George's only response. He waited, watching Gina closely. Garrick waited as well. He could see by her expression and her refusal to allow distractions that Gina was determined to have her say. Whether the outcome would be to her liking, or even George's and his, was still up for debate.

“It took me a while, but I finally see it. You want each other. ” There was no disgust or condemnation in Gina's voice, but the knots in his stomach kept Garrick from answering. He didn't have to respond, since Gina had more to add.

"I don't begrudge you your feelings. And I don't resent them. I just have to wonder if you both feel like you have to ignore your attraction because you think I'll suddenly get pissed off and jealous if I have to share your lovemaking?"

Garrick sensed this was only the beginning. He was also sure he and George weren't going to like the results.

Her sharp pewter stare lasered through them before she continued. "It's not like I'm suddenly going to get all nasty and mean just because one of you would like to make love to the other instead of me." She shook her head, crossed her arms over her breasts, stood up, and began pacing the area in front of the sofa, the carpet beneath her bare feet muffling her strides. "I mean, sheesh, when one of you has to go out of town to oversee a project, you don't get all bent out of shape that I'm having sex with the other one. Do you?"

From the corner of his eye, Garrick could see George shake his head and relax back into the sofa cushions. "No, but that's different." Garrick cringed the second the words left his friend's lips. That would just piss her off more.

He wasn't wrong.

The fire in her eyes focused on him. "How? How is it different?"

Garrick breathed a sigh of relief when George spoke up. "Because you love us both and we love you. There's no question of you denying yourself one or the other of us because one is absent from the mix."

Garrick nodded his agreement. George had always been better at vocalizing his thoughts than he was.

"Besides," George continued, a knowing smile on his lips, "we all know how much you love sex, hon. I can't see you depriving yourself because one or the other of us has to be out of town."

Again, Garrick could feel himself wincing, sure Gina was not going to be happy with *that* observation.

Again, he was right.

"So I'm just some horny bitch you think needs to be kept satisfied?" There was more curiosity than anger in her query.

"I never said that," George snapped.

"That isn't what he means." Garrick spoke up at the same time.

"It sure sounded like it to me." Gina just looked at them. "Have I had it wrong this whole time? Is there nothing but sex between us?"

"Damn it, Gina, don't even go there." Garrick growled. "You know that isn't true."

"But that seems to be the only thing concerning you two," Gina responded coolly, as if she was determined not to react to anything they said.

"Recognizing and acknowledging your needs is just as important to maintaining our relationship as knowing how to satisfy those desires," George replied.

That seemed to irritate her a bit, Garrick decided after seeing Gina's lips thin and her eyes narrow.

"As long as we're only talking about *my* needs, right?" Gina tapped her fingers against her hips and glared at them both.

"You're the one who's most important to us." Garrick tried to explain.

"So, you wouldn't mind if I, say, called up Vince to come scratch my 'itch' if both of you were away on business. Seeing as how I shouldn't deprive myself? Right?"

"No!"

"Hell no!"

Garrick was glad he wasn't the only one whose protest echoed off the walls of the living room. Yeah, George had screwed up by trying to focus on assuring Gina that her needs were paramount in the relationship, but damn, there was no way he was sharing her with any other man except George. It may have been how their relationship started, but they were beyond that now.

"You just said—"

Once more, George leaned forward on the sofa, his green eyes bright.

Heat stirred in Garrick's balls. The flesh behind the fly of his jeans thickened and pressed against the zipper. He itched to feel the short silver-threaded black waves of George's hair between his fingers. Even the sight of Gina's nipples, hard and visible through her blouse, turned Garrick on.

The soft musk associated with her excitement reached his nose, increasing his stimulation with the knowledge that he wasn't the only one aroused by George's dominant nature.

"You belong to us, Gina. No sharing. When we put our rings on your finger, you gave your oath, just as we gave ours. We love you. Your needs are our needs. And our needs are yours."

"Not to sound like that annoying purple dinosaur, but I love you both, and both of you love me, but you're both denying that you love each other."

Garrick needed to move. There was no way he could stay close to George while Gina was churning up his emotions. Sure as shit he'd do something stupid to jeopardize his relationship with the man he loved if he stayed seated next to him one minute longer. Garrick rose from the sofa and paced to the kitchen doorway and then back. "Why are you pushing this? You know George and I are friends. We've been friends for years. Long before you came into the picture."

"Then why can't you say how you really feel?" Gina asked.

He thrust his fingers through his hair and stifled the urge to shake her into seeing how close she was coming to ruining everything.

"I mean, how hard can it be to say you love George?" Her hands slapped against her thighs. "Hell, I say it all the time and you don't freak out about it."

"Because I'm not—we're not gay, Gina." Garrick swallowed heavily and pressed his fingers to his forehead, hoping to ease the steady ache that began to throb there. "Much as I love you, babe, and as much as I care about George, I'm not going to admit to something I'm not."

"Who said anything about being gay?"

Gina's perplexed expression only frustrated Garrick more. Didn't she see the implications attached to what she was demanding of them? Yes, he loved George. And yes, he was sexually attracted to the man, but that was something he'd keep suppressed. Hell, it hadn't happened with anyone other than George, so he considered it some kind of aberration connected to the relationship the three of them shared.

But she wasn't finished. "I didn't suggest you change your orientation. I just want you to realize that you can have just as intense a relationship with George as you do with me, and him with you. Whom you love and desire has no bearing on the person you are, Garrick. Surely you know that? If I can love you and George, want your bodies, how is that any different than either of you loving me or each other and wanting our bodies as well?"

George spoke up, his voice calm, quiet. "Gina, think about what you're asking from us."

"I have, George. At least a hundred, maybe a thousand, times in the last six hours. I've thought about it, and I could only come to one conclusion. You both are denying what you feel for each other because you think my needs are the most important ones in this relationship. They aren't, and I need you both to see how ignoring what you want for yourselves is damaging the family we have.

"If I'm wrong about this, I'll be the first to apologize, but I don't think I am. I know you want me as much as I want both of you, but when you pull back, when you retreat while we're making love, there's something missing." Gina's gaze met each of theirs for the longest of moments. "I'm tired of feeling cheated. Tired of feeling guilty because you aren't happy. And don't say you are, because I can see the dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction will turn into resentment, and then things will just get worse."

Garrick needed this conversation closed. With Gina, there was one way to do that—get her to say exactly what she wanted. So he asked, "How can we prove to you that you're wrong? What do you need from us?"

Gina was sure he'd voiced the command as if he expected her to back down.

*Wrong time to push me.*

Despite their denials, despite their assurances that the relationship between the three of them was strong, Gina could see the cracks starting to form. She loved George and Garrick. She wanted to build a life, a family, a future, with both of them, but the more they pulled away from one another, the more they refused to see, to admit to the feelings they had for each other, the weaker the foundation of their family was becoming.

*He wants to prove I'm wrong.*

"What do I need from you?" She shrugged and answered, "I need the truth."

In the burning gold depths of Garrick's eyes, she could see the need, the attraction he harbored for George. But she could also see the fear. And it was the fear she wanted to eliminate. "I need you both to seriously think about what you want for yourselves and for our family."

Neither one of them moved. She didn't expect them to.



“And if we're happy with the status quo?” George asked.

“How can you be?” Gina couldn't understand why they had to be so stubborn.

“You keep us content, babe. Why would we need anything else?” Garrick shifted in his seat.

She wanted to scream, to yell, to hit something, to smash something, anything to get these men to really look at what they were throwing away. But acting out would do nothing but make George and Garrick withdraw. Several deep breaths later, she waited, carefully relaxing the muscles in her neck, shoulders, even her back, before she heaved a quiet sigh and shook her head. “I can't be the only one satisfied in this relationship.”

“You aren't.” George reassured her.

“I don't believe you.” Gina watched both of them closely, making sure they understood just how serious she was. Her throat flexed with a hard swallow; she was careful not to let her voice wobble even the slightest bit. *Damn it, they need to see what they are denying our family.* After a significant pause and a step back, she added, “You need to decide if lying to yourselves is worth losing our family.”

“Losing our family?”

“How probable is it for our marriage to last if none of us are happy? What kind of life would we have?”

“Gina—”

“I can't stay with people who aren't as committed to working out our problems as I am. Let me rephrase. I *won't* stay. If you two aren't willing to face what's bothering you, I'll leave.”

“You can't—” Garrick started.

Gina interrupted. “Plain and simple, guys. You either talk this out, or I'm gone. Permanently.”

## Chapter Six

George waited until Gina had left the room before meeting Garrick's gaze.

"Do you think she means it?" Garrick's voice was quiet, nothing mocking in it.

"Yes."

The instant the ultimatum left Gina's lips, George had known they were in trouble. Stubbornness was a solid part of their woman, and when she made a decision, she stuck with it, no matter what.

"Well, hell," Garrick grumbled, dropping into the oversize chair that sat at a right angle to the sofa.

"You know that gay comment wasn't necessary."

The laughter was harsh, nowhere close to a sound of amusement, as Garrick shook his head. "I thought it was. I mean, what the hell is she thinking?"

"She's thinking that there's something bothering us and we need to face it. To talk it out so it doesn't destroy our family."

"Is there something wrong?" Garrick didn't seem open to hearing anything that might butt up against the wall he'd built. No way was he going to be willing to discuss what was eating at him. George knew him well enough to determine that. Garrick wasn't ready to talk. At least not yet.

Still, George had to ask. "Do you want to talk about it?"

The younger man shook his head and stood up. "No." Without meeting his eyes, Garrick moved back into the kitchen.

George leaned back against the sofa cushions. He wasn't going to deny Gina's accusations, but he wasn't going to force Garrick into a discussion neither of them was ready to face. Later, he

assured himself, he'd look at the problem with a clearer head and more rational solution in mind, but not right now.

Garrick buried his hands in the hot, soapy water. The sponge squeaked over the plates before he transferred them to the dishwasher. He worked on autopilot; he wasn't ready to think about what Gina had proposed.

*Hell, I thought I had it under control.* Shaking his head, he put the last of the silverware in the tray and shut the appliance door. He collected the pans from the counter beside him and focused on scouring them clean.

But his mind drifted. He should have known she was beginning to suspect. She had watched him every time he'd escaped the bed or slipped out of the shower when there was a chance he'd end up close to George.

"Doesn't take a genius to figure out who I'm trying to avoid," he muttered, rinsing the last pot and setting it beside the others in the drain rack.

He ached to hold the other man against his body. To feel the rasp of his evening beard, taste the heady flavor of his kiss again. The near miss last week merely heightened his need. But no fucking way was he ruining his and George's friendship by giving in to a temporary desire.

Garrick ignored the part of himself that reminded him he'd had the feelings for George long before Gina had entered their lives. "Still doesn't mean he won't walk away if I make a move."

He pulled the plug to drain the sink before rinsing and drying his hands. "Damn woman just doesn't realize she could drive George away from both of us if I do what she wants."

His own words made him hesitate. *Which am I most worried about? Losing George or hurting Gina? Who am I really worried about here? Her or me?*

He cursed his own indecision. *It's supposed to be about her. That's what George told me the first time he shared her with me. What I want isn't as important as what she wants.*

It wasn't like he didn't know what he wanted. He'd always known; he just refused to act on it. Which meant he didn't need to think about what he wanted. Not right now. Not if getting what he wanted would mean the end of his family. "Yeah, she might say it doesn't bother her if I turn to George instead of her, but she will. She'll be hurt if we exclude her. Hell, she already has

been. And she doesn't deserve to be hurt. Not after last week and the way she's been feeling since. Not if I can help it.”

He ignored the voice in his head reminding him that what she wanted was already taking a backseat to his own desires. No matter which way he rationalized it, someone was going to be hurt.

\* \* \* \* \*

Later that night Gina made no effort to pretend to be asleep when George entered their bedroom. Garrick followed him a few minutes later. She crossed her arms behind her head and took pleasure in dividing her concentration between the two men as they undressed. Even when she was pissed off at them about something, they could still turn her on.

Each was meticulous in the steps of his evening routine. Garrick removed his watch and set it on the nightstand. His shirt and shoes came off next. Slacks and socks followed. Before he hung his trousers over the back of a chair, he removed his wallet, loose change, and any other items and piled them in a dish on the nightstand.

George emptied his pockets before shedding his clothes, but he tossed his socks and underwear into the laundry hamper in the bathroom before climbing into bed.

The sight of their muscular frames and semiaroused cocks dampened her panties, a reaction she experienced every time she saw her husbands. Although she'd pulled on pajamas as an extra barricade between her and her men to help make her point, Gina wasn't sure if they would prove a successful enough barrier to hold off her husbands.

To be completely honest, she knew it was her own body she'd have a harder time controlling than worrying about George or Garrick. If she said no to them, they'd listen. Saying no to her own body—that's where the challenge lay.

Garrick slipped into bed and reached for her. The second he touched the cotton football jersey she'd confiscated from George the year before, he cursed. “Why the hell are you bothering with that?”

“I'm going to sleep in it,” she informed him coolly.

Garrick rolled away, keeping his back to her, grumbling beneath his breath the entire time.

George looked at her. "Is this another way to make sure we think about what you were telling us earlier?"

"Yes." Gina held his gaze. She could see the doubt in his eyes.

"Do you think we'll be able to concentrate with all of us in the same bed?" he asked.

"You think I'll be too much of a distraction for you?" she challenged.

George grinned, and Garrick's chuckle vibrated against her back. "Honey." George leaned over her, his lips touching hers, his hand smoothing the hem of the jersey higher until he encountered the smooth silk of her panties. "I don't think any of us will be able to string a coherent sentence together if we're sharing the same bed."

Gina returned his soft kiss and arched against the press of his fingers between her thighs, letting him feel the moist response of her body to his and Garrick's proximity. Steeling herself to make the first move in the battle beginning between them and her, she nodded. "You're probably right." Gina pushed the bedding aside and climbed over George and out of the bed. "I guess I'll just have to take temptation away."

Garrick sat up and cursed, reaching for her, but she evaded him. George didn't try to stop her, but the look in his eyes tightened the knot in her chest. She'd disappointed him. A kernel of frustration reminded her that he'd disappointed her as well. *So I guess that makes us even.*

"Where the hell are you going?" Garrick demanded.

"The guest room. I wouldn't want my uncontrollable needs to interfere with your concentration."

Garrick fumed watching the door close behind Gina. A sharp yank drew the sheets back up to his waist, and he glared at George. "You just couldn't keep your mouth shut, could you?"

George didn't appear too disturbed by their wife's desertion. "I was only stating the obvious."

"If she'd stayed, we could have convinced her to stop her crazy plan. Did you think of that when you were 'stating the obvious'?" Garrick pounded the pillow behind him.

"She isn't going to change her mind." George shook his head. "And seducing her will just piss her off more."

“We can get around that.” Garrick tried to sound convincing, but knowing Gina the way he did, he knew his suggestion was more likely to fail than succeed.

“What has you more frustrated? The fact that she's left or the fact that she could be right?”

“I don't want to discuss it.” Garrick rolled over onto his side, hugging the edge of the bed, and tried to relax enough to fall asleep.

“Stubborn bastard,” George accused as the light was extinguished and the bed shifted beneath his weight.

Garrick refused to let him have the last word. “Asshole.”

## Chapter Seven

A week later, Gina relaxed into the sofa cushions. Her concentration was drawn away from the movie she'd switched on by the careful way Garrick and George avoided even the most casual of contact as they finished cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. With a roll of her eyes and a quick grimace, she returned her gaze to the television. There hadn't been any progress made between her men since she'd voiced her concerns. The fact that neither one seemed interested in acknowledging that there was a problem, let alone attempting to resolve it like she'd requested, didn't surprise her. Both of their images could fit neatly beside the definition of *stubborn* in any dictionary.

Lost in thought and paying minimal attention to the movie, Gina became cognizant of George's and Garrick's presence when the cushions on either side of her depressed beneath their weight.

"Haven't you watched this show at least a dozen times?" Garrick asked.

She knew he recognized the scene playing on the screen and wondered if he understood that the violence of the film was satisfying her need for stimulation.

"More like five dozen," George interjected.

"So? I like a good action film now and then. You both used to like that at one time." Gina contributed to the teasing, but she found it hard to dredge up the energy to make her tone perkier.

Garrick studied her face for a moment before asking, "Long day?"

She shrugged. "Not really."

"Something else bothering you?" George queried.

"Nothing either of you haven't heard before," she offered, meeting his direct gaze without flinching.

Garrick's hand slid along her arm and sent tingles through her body. For the last seven days she'd missed being touched and held by her husbands. George's caress along her thigh increased her respiration.

"Maybe you just need to stop thinking about anything," Garrick suggested, his lips a soft caress against her ear, the stroke of his fingers moving to her shoulders in a steady massaging motion.

"Umm hmm," George agreed. "I'm sure we can come up with a way to ease the tension." His fingers coasted along the inseam of her slacks, inciting the sensitive flesh of her inner thigh beneath and then stopping just short of the apex and her aching mound.

After denying their pursuit for the last week, it tested her control to have them so close. Their hands had her body heating, growing wet, readying itself for satisfaction she'd barely sated since moving into the guest bedroom. No matter how often or which toy she used, the orgasms she achieved were mild compared to the ones gained from the feel of her husbands' cocks filling her.

Gina allowed them to caress and arouse her body. She'd craved the passion and fire of their lovemaking despite her refusal to return to the bed they all shared. The flex and press of Garrick's fingers relaxed Gina backward into his hold. The warmth of George's hand made her squirm in her seat. The heel of his palm rubbed over the center seam of her slacks while his fingers traced the teeth of the zipper before moving to slip the button free.

One of Garrick's hands crested her shoulder and eased downward over the slope of her breast. Her distended nipple was visible through the lace of her bra and the light cotton of her blouse. Gina moaned when dexterous fingertips circled the bud, causing it to harden further.

Her own hands weren't idle. Thick curls teased her palm as she cupped Garrick's head. The heat of his breath against her throat, the nip of his teeth, creamed her already damp panties. George's ministrations couldn't be ignored either. She burrowed her fingers through his short salt-and-pepper strands before sliding them beneath the collar of his shirt and gripping his bare shoulder.

Needs left banked for days spurred her body toward climax. Gina sighed as the buttons on her blouse were freed and Garrick pushed the barriers of cotton and lace away to cup and caress her breast.



George's hand smoothed over her bare belly, rising to fondle the second mound Garrick had left alone. Her hands pulled free of his shirt when he shifted his body closer. Both George's and Garrick's hands began to work their way lower. Their fingers tangled on the metal tab of her zipper and became immobile.

On either side of her, their bodies froze. All sensations halted. With a jerk, Garrick moved his hand back to her breast, the smooth motions from earlier gone. His breath came out in short, harsh bursts as he tried to regain the rhythm he'd lost.

At her waist, George seemed torn between lowering the zipper and abandoning it to tease the dip of her navel. They shifted on the cushions, distancing themselves from one another. And from her.

The heat couldn't have left her body any faster if she'd been plunged into a vat of ice water. She shoved their hands off her. Both men eased farther away from her on the sofa, Garrick more quickly than George.

Gina shifted her bra back into place before she left the sofa and settled onto the chair perpendicular to the couch. The tremor in her fingers made it difficult to push the buttons through holes without multiple attempts. She concentrated on the television for several seconds in a concerted effort to ignore the men striving to avoid meeting each other's gaze and hers.

Garrick cursed under his breath and stood up. Face set in a look halfway between frustration and irritation, he headed down the hall to the bedroom.

George remained silent, his gaze steady as Gina tried to focus on the movie. Just when he seemed about to say something, Garrick reappeared dressed in running shorts and a sweatshirt. Without looking at either of them, he yanked open the front door and slammed it shut behind him.

"It's been a week." George started the conversation after the vibrations from the door settled.

Gina shrugged before looking at him. There wasn't much she could say in response. "Have you two talked at all about what I told you?"

Remote in hand, George switched the movie off and silenced the television as he shook his head. "Nothing specific, no."

"Ignoring it won't make it go away."

“Pushing the issue won't resolve it either.”

Gina stood up. “I've done all I can do, George. The rest is up to you guys. I can't make you do anything.”

“Do you think staying out of our bed is going to make us think any faster?”

She shook her head. “I don't think so, but it's helping me put things in perspective.”

George watched her move down the hall and enter the master bedroom. Despite the buzz of anticipation that tried to surface at the thought she might have changed her mind and was returning to their bed, he wasn't surprised when she exited the suite with a stack of clothing. The sofa springs creaked as he pushed to his feet and followed her down the hall.

He decided his comments the night she'd first asked Garrick and him to think about their feelings might have been a mistake. He followed her movements around the guest bedroom directly across the hall from the master suite. With every item she tucked away, George wondered if she'd ever return to the room the three of them had shared since moving into the house. It appeared not only would there be no frolicking, but there wouldn't even be any cuddling. If there was one thing he knew could get Gina to weaken her resolve, it was a slow bout of foreplay. By moving into one of the guest bedrooms, she'd eliminated that strategy. That his teasing had precipitated the move only made him more frustrated.

“It hasn't been very long. Is he back yet?” She leaned in the doorway, arms crossed over her breasts, and waited for him to approach.

“No.” He shrugged, his hand cupping her full hips and pulling her close.

“George.” Her voice was firm, cautioning him against trying to coerce her into changing her mind.

“I promise I'll talk to him.”

Her cool hands smoothed over his jaw, the rasp of his evening beard against her delicate palms loud in the quiet hallway. “You need to make him see...”

“See what? Baby, are you even sure...?”

Her quiet chuckle whispered across his lips; she settled a soft kiss there before stepping out of his hold. “You haven't seen the way he watches you, hon.” She met his gaze, and the heat of

arousal darkened her gray eyes to pewter. "When he thinks no one is watching, he gets that hot, needy gleam in his eyes."

"That doesn't mean he wants me, it could be he's thinking about your sweet little pussy and all the wicked ways you like to play," George teased, though a part of him didn't doubt Gina's intuition. There could be some truth to her suggestions about Garrick's interest in him.

"He isn't looking at me when he gets that look. At least not all the time," Gina assured him.

Shoulder propped against the door frame, George watched Gina step into the room and strip out of her blouse, slacks, and underwear. The ease with which she shed her clothes and slipped into the oversize football jersey she'd confiscated from him spoke of how comfortable she still was in their relationship. It worried him that admitting to his attraction to Garrick, giving in to that desire, could damage her trust in them, her comfort level.

"Okay, I'll concede you may be right, but have you really thought this through all the way, Gina?" George admitted.

Gina carefully folded her discarded clothing and set it on the seat of the chair beside the bed.

"Have you considered just how abandoned you'll feel if, during the night, instead of taking you, Gare and I roll over and start making love to one another?"

"Do you feel abandoned or ignored when I go to him at night?" Gina asked. She moved to put some of her lingerie into the bureau. Another pile of her clothes on the bed waited to be tucked into the drawers.

"No." He didn't stop and think about the question before voicing his reply. Instinct had him responding in the negative, not because he wanted to placate his lover, but because it was true. When she sought out Garrick to make love, it didn't bother him. In many respects it actually excited him. The passion in both hers and Garrick's faces as they held and caressed each other was just as arousing for him as being the one doing the holding and touching.

Gina transferred the last of her clothing to the dresser and faced him. "You're always telling me that you love to watch Garrick loving me."

"It's that damn glow of yours, baby." George chuckled gruffly, the fit of his slacks growing tighter with the image of his woman and his best friend in the throes of climax filling his mind. "When you come, you shimmer like fireworks exploding." He settled onto the edge of the bed.

“But only with you and Garrick,” she reminded him.

He nodded.

“I want to see that glow too, George.” She stepped closer. Naked thighs straddled his lap, and she draped her wrists over his shoulders. “I’ve seen it. Just a glimpse here and there when we first began living together as a family. Before you two started pulling away from each other.”

That surprised him enough to keep his hands fixed at her waist instead of slipping beneath her hiked-up jersey. “Really?” She studiously ignored the hard edge of his cock as it pushed against the placket of his slacks.

Gina nodded, the soft waves of gold and honey whispering over her shoulders and down her back. He enjoyed the way they curled over the hard little peaks her nipples made against the soft cotton covering her. “I got so hot the first time you kissed Garrick in the shower, I almost came. But when you joined us that first time, after that weekend...”

“You mean when he brought his toys?” George queried. The events of the night she mentioned had led to the three of them living together.

“Mmm. Yeah. I had fantasies for weeks after watching the two of you kiss a second time while you were making love to me in bed. Then, for three years, nothing.”

George chuckled at the pout on her sexy lips and the dejected look in her eyes. “Did we disappoint you that badly, baby?”

“Oh yeah. But now, George, it isn’t even that you’re blowing my whole male/male voyeur fantasy by shying away from each other. It’s our whole family dynamic that’s shifting and starting to crumble.”

George could see she believed every word she said. He could also see the logic behind her thoughts. Her fingers drifted down his chest and moved to pluck at the fabric stretched tight over his growing erection. “Don’t tease,” he warned, his fingers sliding under the jersey to cup her bare bottom.

“I’m not teasing.” She released his belt and unfastened the button on his slacks before lowering the zipper. Her fingers stroked over the heated length of his cock hidden behind the boxer briefs he wore.

The soft brush of her lips over his made him draw her close, the damp evidence of her own arousal wetting the soft cotton knit underwear holding his need at bay. Then she removed that barrier, and the clasp of her silky hands drew a groan from his lips.

“Have you missed this?” she whispered against his lips. Her hands kept up the pressure around his penis.

“Oh yes.” George kissed her back. He pulled her closer, moaning at the warm glide of her naked mound against him.

“You do know I love you, right?” Gina leaned back enough to hold his gaze.

He expected her to pull away, so George loosened the grip he had on her hips. “Yeah, sweetheart, I do.”

“But I don't think you truly understand how I feel every time one or both of you pulls away.”

Ready to deal with the disappointment of her walking away again, George was stunned when, instead of standing up, Gina settled over him, surrounding his cock in her soft, wet sheath.

The pace she set was fast, her hips pumping up and down, relentlessly drawing his body toward climax despite his efforts to slow her down. He gripped her waist and pulled her close with the intent of controlling her speed, but there was no way he could halt her use of the internal muscles surrounding him. “Gina, no.” He shook his head.

Determination glittered in her gaze. She flexed and relaxed her inner muscles and shifted her hips as much as his hold would allow. “Let me, George.”

“Let you—*Oh fuck*—” He gritted his teeth to fight the burn of orgasm as it twisted in his groin. The base of his spine felt on fire. She rippled around him again and again. Through stifled curses and moans, he finally stammered out his question. “Let you what?”

“Show you what it feels like.”

She worked her hands down his ribs and under the waistband at the back of his slacks. When her hand stroked over the upper part of his ass, George realized the tension in her body was wrong. It was different than any of the other times they made love. He had a split second of clarity before climax slammed through him. In that moment, he comprehended the fact that Gina had made no effort to reach her own satisfaction before him. And based on the way she held herself absolutely still, she wasn't going to attempt to come after him either.

George knew her body ached for release—just like it had the night following the company dinner party—but Gina rose up and moved off the bed, separating her body from his. Without the heat of her pussy surrounding him, his cock softened faster, leaving him irritated and feeling off center. When he would have reached for her, she moved into the guest bathroom. The splash of water in the sink ran for a while, then it shut off and his wife reappeared, a damp washcloth in her hand.

“Why?” He didn't bother asking for details.

Gina cleaned the residue of sex from his cock, then stood back and watched him rearrange his clothing and zip his pants before she answered. “It isn't as satisfying when just one person comes, is it?”

She could tell George was mulling over not only her words but also the sensations he'd felt when he recognized she hadn't allowed herself to orgasm. If she could get him to understand just how empty she'd begun to feel when he and Garrick made love to her, she was pretty sure he could convince Garrick to talk to him about her concerns.

“Does it feel like this every time?” George held his hand out to her.

Gina took it and allowed him to draw her back to the bed. “Tell me how it felt.” She stood in front of him, holding his gaze.

“Empty.” George offered a wry grin. “It sucks, babe.”

Gina nodded and allowed herself to smile. “Yes. It truly does.”

“How do we fix it?”

She moved between his splayed thighs and lowered her brow to his. Eyes closed, she sighed. “Get Garrick to talk to you.”

“And if he doesn't want to talk?”

She held his gaze as she pulled back. “I want my family, George.”

“Have you considered that sleeping in here isn't getting you the baby you want?”

The rasp of his evening beard abraded her palms as Gina cupped his chin in her hands. “We're falling apart at the seams, George. If I can't have a strong, whole family, I don't want a baby.”

“Hon—”

Gina moved away from the bed and crossed her arms over her chest. “We need to fix what's wrong with us. If we don't, we won't have a family worth bringing a child into.”

“Are you sure about this?” George stepped close. It was his turn to caress her cheeks with his callused palms, his green gaze intent.

“I'm sure.”

His arms wrapped around her, folding her against his chest, he nodded his agreement. Pressing a kiss against her crown, he assured her. “I'll try to get him to talk, baby. I promise.”

“Thank you.”

George left the room. From his expression, she knew he understood exactly what she was saying. She also knew he was disappointed in her refusal to climax. She wondered, though, if his own warning might hold more than just a hint that the consequences of her challenge could result in more than not conceiving the baby she wanted. Did he think she wasn't serious about leaving him and Garrick? She'd voiced the threat in a moment of pique, but this was the first inkling she had that they didn't believe her.

Gina settled onto the bed. Her breath shaky, she thought hard about what she would do if George and Garrick decided that what she was asking of them was too much. Was it possible her threat to end the relationship didn't seem like a threat to them? Did her husbands want out of their marriage?

The pain of those thoughts almost doubled her over. Her breath caught and tears clogged her throat. She loved them both. More than she had ever considered possible. *Inhale. Exhale.* A steady stream of air entered and exited her lungs as Gina tried to calm her whirling mind.

She didn't think she was wrong about her suspicions concerning George and Garrick's feelings for one another. Gina was also sure that her own feelings for both men wouldn't diminish or change if they should admit how they felt about each other.

In the same serious vein, she also admitted her desire to have a child was still as powerful as it had been when she broached the subject several months ago. What she wasn't willing to compromise on was bringing that child into a stable, strong, and loving family.

“If they can't decide what's making them draw away, it will mean I'll have to make a choice,” she told herself. She squeezed her eyes shut, trying to hold back the tears. It took a few

minutes of slow, careful breathing to allow her to face the next question. "Can I walk away from them?" Her heart hurt at the thought of not being with George and Garrick.

The prospect of her staying if they didn't face the problem before them was equally murky. To stay would mean she'd have to give up her desire to have children. "No child should be raised in a divided home. And how long would I be satisfied if that were to happen?" She shook her head, pushing herself off the bed and moving toward the door. Gina switched out the overhead light, leaving the bedside lamp's softer glow as her only illumination. She squeezed her eyes shut, fighting the burn of tears as she moved back to the bed. It wouldn't be easy to find someone who stirred her emotions the way George and Garrick did.

The awareness and attraction she'd felt for both of them was unique. She hadn't felt it with anyone else. Except for Vince, a small voice in her head reminded her.

She climbed into bed, dragged the bedding up to her chin, and debated the idea taking shape in her mind. Loving anyone else as much as she did George and Garrick seemed impossible, but caring for someone else? Maybe Vince. The idea of building a life and family with him wasn't so far-fetched. Especially when he wanted her enough to be concerned with the way her husbands were treating her.

Gina tried to push the thought aside, but considering the fact that a week had passed and neither George nor Garrick had made any effort to solve the problem facing their family, the possibility of separation wasn't implausible. Perhaps she should take an opportunity to see if another man might be able to take the place of her husbands. If nothing else, she'd learn if she could be attracted to someone other than George or Garrick.

"It's worth investigating," she muttered.

She choked back a sob and rolled over to shut off the lamp on the nightstand. "I didn't enter this marriage with the idea that it wouldn't last. But that doesn't mean it won't end."

She ignored the voice in her head telling her that she wasn't going to find what she had with George and Garrick with anyone else. "I can't be the only one trying to keep us together. The only one willing to fight for what we have. If they don't want it to be forever, I have to accept that and move on." Gina forced the tears away, determined not to give in until there was no hope left of salvaging what she had.

\* \* \* \* \*



With every strike of his feet against the pavement, Garrick tried to pound out the need and arousal building in his loins. It was bad enough his body was betraying him more and more often, but that Gina was aware of that betrayal made Garrick curse.

As sweat beaded on his body, soaking the collar of his sweatshirt, his armpits, and the small of his back, he fought away the images trying to take shape in his mind. Images of George naked beneath him, knees folded up toward his chest, ass bare and open to the thrust of Garrick's cock.

Garrick increased his speed, needing the burn in his quads, his calves, the soughing of his breath heavy and loud in his ears, to drive away the need, the heat, the ache between his thighs.

Self-derision and desperation were poor companions to the thoughts Garrick couldn't help but shake his head at. The denial he'd thrown at Gina, the angry refusal of being gay, taunted him. Hell, his own brother was gay and fiercely loyal to the man he'd met while serving in the air force. They later married after retiring from the military. No, it wasn't fear of being labeled a homosexual that sent him running like a mad fool at eight in the evening. It was knowing that in all his life, he'd never been sexually attracted to a man until he'd met George, and it scared the shit out of him. He couldn't even blame George's relationship with Gina as the trigger. Nope. He'd lusted after George's fine, tight ass within days of meeting the man after joining the same engineering firm.

The first stirrings had come as a definite surprise to him. Before then he'd enjoyed fantasizing about the many different women he'd been with or was going to be with. The firm but soft globes of their breasts, the sweet scent of their skin, the tight clasp of a wet pussy—they all worked to make him hard. But every once in a while, after he was introduced to George, a tiny frisson of arousal would shudder through him when he considered the possibility that George's ass would be tighter than any woman he'd ever experienced.

Garrick shoved back the memories and followed the path around the last corner. Home was two blocks away. That would give him enough time to soothe the raging hard-on making its presence felt between his thighs before he faced George and Gina. He could postpone the inevitable discussion if he jumped in the shower and then waited in the library that doubled as an office until his wife and friend fell asleep. It would mean not getting to participate in the nightly ritual of fast, hard sex followed by a more sedate sharing, but he could miss another night. Not

that there'd been any lovemaking since her ultimatum. Unless Gina had returned to their bed and wasn't still using the guest bedroom, it would be another cold shower and another unrelieved boner until dawn. Like every night this week.

After switching from jog to a trot, then to a walk, Garrick strode up the front steps and onto the porch. He avoided the front door and moved around to the back, easing into the kitchen and down the hall without turning on any lights. The silence in the house was unnerving. The low noise of the television came from the living room as he slipped through the master suite and into the adjoining bathroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

George heard the *click* of the back door shutting, the baseball game on the screen more of a distraction than actual entertainment. The explanation Gina had given him after he'd climaxed and she hadn't rang in his head, along with her admission about not having a baby.

It was a few steps further down that thought path that George came to the conclusion that if Gina denied herself a child, and he and Garrick couldn't resolve the situation between them, then the simplest recourse for the three of them was to go their separate ways.

George grimaced at the knot that formed in his chest at the thought of never having Gina or Garrick in his bed, let alone his life. Much as Gina loved Garrick and him, George knew she could use that stubborn determination of hers to fall *out* of love with them.

Once she took that step, it would be logical that she look for another man to love. Gina's nature wouldn't allow her to stay alone for long.

Hell, even committed to Garrick and him, Gina had men buzzing around her like bees to honey. Hadn't Vince voiced his willingness to step in if she ever decided to leave them? The look in the younger man's blue eyes had assured George that Vince wasn't joking when he made the offer.

And Gina might find happiness with Vince, George thought. An elusive memory tickled the back of his mind. After rising from the sofa, George moved to a cabinet and crouched down to shuffle through several videotapes. After finding the one he was looking for, George stepped to the entertainment center and slid it into the player.

Settled into his seat on the couch, George followed the images of Gina as they flickered across the screen. He hadn't watched the tape since just after the weekend he'd recorded Gina making love with him, Garrick, and the men he'd invited over.

As he watched, he examined every nuance of Gina's expression. He carefully scrutinized the reactions of her body to the other men touching her, loving her. When he realized what he was seeing, he cursed and rewound the tape.

## Chapter Eight

The shower did little more than cleanse the sweat from his body. It would take far more than soap and water to extinguish the need that racked his body with every fantasy of lying with George as both lover and friend. Without Gina between them. Without the soft cushioning of her frame diffusing the touch and smell of George against him. Even as he imagined being with his friend, he admitted to missing the feel of her body in bed at night.

Garrick was acutely aware of the absence of Gina's shampoo and conditioner from the built-in shelf. There were also the body wash and fluffy net pouf she used missing from their regular spots on the shower's shelves. He'd noticed the special body lotion she kept on the vanity was gone as well. What would it be like if those items never returned to the spots where they belonged?

Hair damp and with a towel wrapped around his waist, Garrick padded across the hall to the guest bedroom. With the light off and the curtains closed, he could just make out Gina's form in the bed. She was alone, covers pulled to her chin; he wondered if she was awake or asleep. Was she dreaming about making love with him and George? Did she miss their heat surrounding her as much as he missed feeling her against him? He didn't have to ask George how he felt. In the week she'd been out of their bed, neither of them had bothered coming to bed until exhaustion drove them to it.

Garrick moved closer and settled onto the mattress beside her. Beneath the covers, her shoulders tensed, giving away her pretense of slumber. "You can't already be asleep, kitten." He nuzzled the back of her neck through the soft strands of her hair. *God, she smells sweet.* He could detect the faintest hint of sweat and sex clinging to her skin. *Has George been with her?*

"Go away, Garrick," she muttered.

"Mmm, no. You never gave me my good-night kiss," he teased, lifting his hand to smooth the hair from her nape, exposing the sensitive skin to another caress from his lips.

After a quick roll onto her back, she pressed a swift kiss to his lips. "There. Good night." She tried to return to her side, facing away from him, but Garrick halted her. To see her better, he reached out and switched on the lamp beside the bed. Gina blinked, one hand shading her eyes as she tried to adjust to the light.

He tugged the sheets down. "Nope, not good enough, love," he informed her, glaring down at the soft cotton jersey covering her breasts.

"It's all you're getting," Gina snapped, again trying to roll away from Garrick but failing.

"Still mad, I see," Garrick teased, pressing a soft kiss against the curve of her mouth.

He could feel her body tense, as if she wanted to squirm away, but her pride wouldn't let her. Garrick grinned at that. She'd learned from him and George how to control her body's needs. Maybe Garrick should remind her just how fun it was to try to fight her desires.

"No." She returned his kiss but with a minimal response. "I'm not mad anymore. Merely disappointed."

Garrick paused, meeting her gaze, trying to read the truth in her eyes. Time seemed immaterial as he stroked the curve of her breast through her nightshirt, drawing his touch closer to the firm peak pressing against the soft cotton. "I'm sure we can find a way to make you feel better," he suggested. Maybe a little reminder of the heat their lovemaking generated would convince Gina that she was the only one with doubts about their family. He ignored the taunting voice in his head calling him a liar.

Bent over her, he pressed his lips to hers, caressing the seam between the plump curves apart with his tongue before dipping inside. Gina gasped when his fingers pinched the hardened nipple crowning her breast. She arched toward him and returned his kiss, tongue twining with his, hands drawing him closer. He lay half on her, the sheets a negligible barrier between their bodies.

With her arms free of the covers, he felt Gina make easy work of removing the towel around his waist.

Garrick propped himself on his bent arm beside her. "Change your mind?" he asked with a grin.

The cool slide of her fingers was sublime as she gripped the hard jut of his hot cock. Up, then down, she kept the clasp of her hand firm, just the way he preferred. Slowly inching down

the mattress, she didn't bother responding to his teasing query with words. When she was level with his hips, Garrick tensed. He remembered the pissed-off fire in her gaze before he'd gone out for his run, and residual flames winked at him when she tilted her face to look up at him, the tip of her tongue peeking out between wet her lips. It wouldn't be any surprise to him if she were tempted to take a bite out of a particularly sensitive part of his anatomy, but damaging his prick was tantamount to biting the hand that fed her. At least he hoped she'd see it that way.

A pearl of precum bubbled from the tip of his penis. He waited for her next move.

With a dip of her head, she tipped forward to lap it up. Based on the hum of appreciation vibrating against his glans, she seemed to savor the taste. She treated the head of his cock and sensitive ridge underneath to a slow, sensual tongue bath. He groaned and slid his fingers through her hair, holding her close. The grip of his hands grew tighter, and she opened her mouth and swallowed as much of his length as she could.

She worked hard and fast. Her hand stroked and squeezed the few inches she couldn't take into her mouth. The tug of his fingers countered the thrust of his hips with each shift forward, encouraging her to take more of his cock inside, trying to slow her rhythm so her own arousal could build along with his.

The sac between his legs drew her interest. Her careful fingers massaged the heated flesh, tugging on it slightly, drawing curses from Garrick's lips as the tension mounted inside him. The pulse of his climax built, hovering close, as she suckled and tongued his dick with increasing urgency.

The pull of her mouth, the glide of one hand on his cock, the other fondling his balls, pushed him over the edge. He couldn't control the need to come. He was sure her own arousal was nowhere near what his was when the first spurt filled her mouth. Gina sucked harder. Garrick cursed quietly at his temporary loss of discipline, not wanting to distract his wife.

As their breathing slowed, Gina used the damp towel she'd removed from him earlier to wipe her mouth and dry his cock before scooting up to the pillows.

"Your turn." Garrick smiled, his hands on the covers, ready to draw them away.

Gina stilled him.

"No."

Garrick didn't question what she was saying no to. He focused his interest on the reason she refused to let him bring her to climax. "Why?"

"Because you need to understand just how it feels to be the one doing all the getting and none of the giving." Her voice was quiet, resolute.

He could see the need, the arousal in her eyes, but he also saw the weary resignation as well.

"Let me help," he coaxed.

She watched him, her gray eyes disappointed. "I've already told you how you can help. You haven't done anything about it all week. Why should it be any different now?"

For the first time since he'd lost his virginity, Garrick felt uneasy with his nudity. He reached for the discarded towel as he slid off the bed. Once he had it wrapped around his waist, he searched for something to say. A way to reassure his wife that her concerns were unfounded. Another convincing lie. But nothing came to mind.

The disappointment in her gaze loosed the jeering voice in his head. The one that warned him everything was slipping away because of the need he'd denied for too long.

After a heavy sigh, she tugged the sheet up to her shoulders. "Good night."

Gina rolled over, her back toward him. His heart pounded in his chest, and a chuckle of reluctant admiration slipped from his lips. He planted his hands on the mattress on either side of her hips and leaned over to press a kiss to her cheek. "Good night, kitten."

The door closed quietly behind him before he returned to the master bedroom. Garrick tossed the towel into the laundry basket and tugged on sweatpants and a T-shirt. Immobile, one shoulder against a thick bedpost, he stared at the bed and debated the sanity of continuing to sleep with George when the barrier of Gina's body wouldn't be between them.

Every night for the past week he'd been too tired and frustrated to think about the fact that the man he loved was on the other side of the mattress. He wouldn't have the luxury of that condition tonight. Already his cock began to twitch, despite the relief Gina had given him. Swallowing hard, he forced himself to relax. Maybe George had come up with a plan to convince Gina she wasn't correct. He ignored the voice in his head. But she is, it taunted. Why can't you have the balls to admit it?

Desperate to get out of the room and away from his thoughts, he headed to the living room, the sound of the television drawing him.

“Was it worth it?” George didn't move his concentration from the videotape he was watching.

“No.” Garrick recalled the scent that clung to Gina's skin and asked, “She do the same thing to you?”

George nodded. “Yeah. Talk about getting your point across.”

Garrick watched the video rewind, and then the same scene started over. Dropping onto the sofa, he waited as the scene replayed again. His body responded to the images playing out on the screen. Gina had looked so damned sexy that weekend. On the screen, her body rocked over Vince's. Her expression, transcendent in the arousal and satisfaction she was gaining as she worked toward climax, renewed Garrick's need. His cock grew hard beneath the loose fleece. He groaned, sliding his hand down to cup his aching cock. “You keep playing that and neither one of us is going to get any sleep tonight.”

“I'm not watching it to get a hard-on, Gare.” George leaned forward in his seat, his gaze focused on the wide-screen in front of him. “Watch.” George nodded toward the television.

Garrick paid closer attention to the images playing out. The content, the sexual nature of the tape faded when he noticed just what George had been seeing. “Stop.” He scooted to the edge of his seat, his gaze intent on the screen. “Go back a few frames.”

George reversed the tape frame by frame.

“Fuck.” Garrick squeezed his eyes shut, pressing his fingers against the lids before shaking his head and returning his gaze to the television.

“Exactly.” George stopped the tape and leaned back against the sofa.

“Do you think she knows?” Garrick asked.

“I'm not sure.” George pushed his fingers through his hair.

“Why didn't we see it before?”

“Because compared to how she shines with us, her reaction to Vince is barely visible,” George suggested.



"But she loves us, and we love her. She'd never throw that away." Garrick tried to reassure himself as much as George.

"Are you sure about that?" George rose from the sofa and dropped the remote into his friend's lap. "If we don't figure out this mess soon, she may just do exactly that. Walk away. She's already talking about not wanting a baby."

"What? She didn't say anything about that to me." Garrick pointed the remote at the television and switched it and the video player off.

"She mentioned it to me earlier, while you were out running."

Garrick set the remote on the coffee table but avoided looking at George. "She didn't really mean it. I'm sure of that."

"And if she did? What then?" George shook his head. "You know her as well as I do, Gare. If she's talking about not having a baby, she means it. Add that to her ultimatum about not staying if we don't talk about what's going on, and you've got a pretty good set up for her to walk right out the door. And where would that leave us?"

Garrick didn't know how to respond. He didn't have to, since George strode out of the room before he could say anything.

\* \* \* \* \*

Gina wondered what she'd have done if she hadn't overheard her husbands. When she headed for the living room to see what they were doing because she couldn't get to sleep, she hadn't expected to walk in and find images of her fucking Vince rolling across the screen of their television.

After hearing both men's reactions and seeing what they'd seen, Gina slipped back to her room to put the new knowledge into perspective. In the dark, she bumped into a chair, tumbling her purse onto the floor.

She switched on the light and began picking up the spilled contents. With her cell phone in one hand, she used the other to grab her address book and other items. A small white business card fell out of her address book before she could tuck it back into her purse.

The bold black print seemed to taunt her with Vince's name, as if it had been conjured up as a result of the scene George and Garrick had replayed over and over on the videotape.

Kneeling on the floor, she wondered about Vince's concern when she'd run into him at lunch last week. She knew it was genuine. It was one of the reasons she'd pondered the idea of turning to him should her relationship with George and Garrick fail. Even after tonight, neither George nor Garrick seemed interested in heeding her warning. If they were that determined to avoid talking about what they needed in this relationship, perhaps she should start thinking of a future without them.

Was it time to take a chance? She flipped open her phone and punched in the number scrawled on the back of the card. If she pressed Send, she could be creating a whole new set of problems for herself.

From what she'd seen, it looked like George and Garrick were more inclined to examine what she was reacting to rather than what was disturbing them. It could be dangerous to drag Vince into the mix. Her husbands could be pissed as hell and determined to fight for the family she was struggling to keep together. But it might also drive them further away from her.

The blue-green glow from the phone lit the display. She looked down at it. Her finger hovered over the Send button.

"I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't," Gina muttered.

One push and an ocean of problems could be waiting to swallow her up. Just as it had the day she teased George, the wild child inside jumped headfirst into the water and pressed the button. The more sane half of her couldn't be convinced to hit the End key.

"Hello?"

*Time to make a choice.* Gina cleared her throat. "Hi, Vince. It's Gina."

## Chapter Nine

"Thanks for meeting me." Gina smiled as Vince held the chair for her the following afternoon. Subdued conversation and the bustle of the waitstaff at the Downtown Bistro soothed her jagged nerves a bit.

"I have to admit, I'm both curious and pleased that you called me." Vince settled into the seat facing her and flipped open the menu.

"Curious and pleased?" Gina glanced at her menu, then set it aside. She doubted she'd be able to keep anything heavier than a salad down. The voice in her head was berating her for even thinking what she was thinking, while the more resigned part of her applauded her ability to look toward a future without her husbands.

"Yes." Vince set his own menu aside. "I'm pleased because you look and sound better than you did last week. And curious because I figured out you didn't tell George or Garrick you were having lunch with me."

"How do you know I didn't tell them?" Gina stifled the urge to look around.

Vince laughed. "Because if either one of them knew you were meeting me today, they'd be sitting right next to you. Staring holes through my liver."

"You're exaggerating."

Vance grinned, his blue eyes flashing. "You haven't been on the receiving end."

Gina laughed and nodded. "True."

The waitress arrived to take their orders. After she left, Vince leaned forward. "So did you decide to fill me in on what had you so upset?"

"Yes and no."

He nodded. "Okay. That's clear as mud. How much are you going to tell me?"

"You asked me if there was any chance I'd consider being with you if I left George and Garrick."

"Yes."

She could see a wary look enter his gaze and wondered if it was because he had never been serious about his teasing. "What if I were to say yes? Would you still be interested?"

The waitress appeared with their drinks, delaying Vince's response, but the startled expression on his face hinted at what he was thinking. He grinned up at the girl. "Scotch, neat. Double, please." The woman nodded and moved away from the table, leaving a heavy silence behind.

Gina didn't speak for the next few minutes. She unfolded her napkin and draped it over her lap, then meticulously arranged and rearranged the silverware beside her plate to avoid meeting Vince's stunned gaze. The cutlery was cool beneath her touch. Heart thudding in her chest, Gina tried to shake off the disquiet and sneaking suspicion that perhaps her offer didn't appeal to him.

Vince used a similar delaying tactic. He shifted the plate, silver, water glass, and napkin, rearranged them, and then shifted them a third time. He glanced over her shoulder when the waitress returned with his drink. "Thank you." He nodded, taking the rocks glass from the woman. He took a sip, grimaced, and swallowed.

Gina tried to laugh. It sounded choked. "I didn't realize the thought of being with me was enough to drive a person to drink."

"No, it isn't that," he replied. "I need to make sure I'm hearing this correctly. Are you saying you're thinking of leaving George and Garrick?"

Gina sipped her iced tea, wetting her suddenly dry mouth. *Am I really saying that?* "Yes, I am."

"Christ." Vince gulped the rest of his drink and stared at her. "I'm a dead man. You do realize that, right?"

"This was a mistake—" Gina reached for her purse.

Vince put his hand over hers and held her in place. "No. Just give me a second to get this straight."

“All your comments for the last few years, those have just been teasing, right? You were never serious, were you?” Gina asked, not sure if she was hurt or embarrassed. Had she read things so wrong that she mistook Vince's flirting for real interest? And if so, could she have also misjudged her husbands' behaviors as well?

“Hell no I wasn't joking, Gina. If the opportunity presented itself, I'd jump at the chance to have you in my life.” His assurance was intense. The sincerity of his words reflected in the vibrancy of his blue eyes. “But you're putting me on, right? There's no way you'd leave George and Gare. And they'd never let you go.”

“If I have to, I will. And neither of them will have anything to say about it.”

Gina stifled what she was tempted to add when the waitress returned and set their food in front of them. After they assured her they didn't need anything else, she moved away. Vince was the first to speak.

“What do you mean 'if you have to'? Has something happened?”

Gina poked at her salad, stirring the grilled chicken, vegetables, and greens to make sure the dressing coated as much as possible, as well as to delay answering Vince's question. “There are a few problems right now, but despite my asking them to talk about it, Garrick and George seem to be ignoring the issues.”

“And you think these issues are serious enough you'd end your marriage over them?” Vince took a bite of his grilled tuna and waited for her response.

“Yes.” She finished a bite of salad before adding, “But I seem to be alone in my opinion.”

“What do the guys say?”

She speared a piece of chicken and some greens with a vicious stab. “That I'm making more of things than they are.” Her teeth scraped the roughage from the tines, and she focused on chewing for several silent moments. “And before you ask if I am, let me assure you I am not.”

“Okay. If you've told Gare and George how you feel, and you've asked them to talk about it, how can you be sure they haven't discussed it yet?”

“Because they still act the way they did before I told them my concerns.” She wasn't about to go into the details. Vince didn't need to know about the way her husbands pulled away from each other every time they came close to touching. It was none of his business to know the bases of her suspicions, only that she had some and her men were discounting them.

Vince seemed to think over her reply before he nodded. "So, if they're not making an effort to figure out the problem, have you mentioned the fact that you're thinking of leaving them if they don't get their acts together?"

"I've mentioned it."

The snort he gave held both amusement and disbelief. "But they aren't buying it, are they?"

Gina munched on her salad and shook her head.

"Are you thinking if I hang around they'll pay a bit more notice?"

"Do you really think I'd resort to some silly high school machinations to try to make them jealous?"

Vince paused, and then met her irritated gaze. "No, Gina, I don't think you would."

"But?"

"But I also don't see you casually walking away from your marriage either." His hand settled over hers again. "You love them, hon."

"I do. But if they can't figure out how to fix our family I *will* walk away."

George was sure if he saw Vince touch Gina one more time, he'd have no problem storming into the bistro and yanking the younger man out of his chair.

He doubted either of them had spotted him on the sidewalk outside the eatery. The conversation seemed intense. When Vince moved to sit next to her, George stifled a curse. Ignoring the people hurrying past him, George drank the coffee he'd purchased at the shop next door to the restaurant and continued to watch his wife and Vince talk.

The sight of them together the morning after reviewing the videotape had him breathing deep to keep from crushing the cup in his hand. A confrontation wouldn't get him anywhere. The fact that he and Garrick hadn't done what she asked still hung between the three of them. It wouldn't go away until he could get Garrick to sit down and talk.

The scene he'd make barging into the restaurant would do little to help matters either. There was nothing overtly intimate in the way Gina responded to Vince. He could tell the younger man was attracted to Gina, but his wife didn't reciprocate those interests. At least she didn't appear to.

George tossed his empty cup into a nearby trash bin. He was wasting energy standing there glaring at the couple; it did no good. Neither knew he was there, and even if they did, Gina would tell him to mind his own damned business. She wouldn't care that he considered her his business.

Garrick was out at a site until late and wouldn't even return to the engineering firm where they both worked. Change jingled as George shoved his hands into his pockets and headed back to the office. He'd get answers from Gina tonight.

## Chapter Ten

That evening at dinner, the silence around the table didn't hold the comfortable quality it had in the past. Not that comfortable could describe the semiarmed truce the three of them had indulged in since Gina first voiced her ultimatum. Tonight the tension emanating from all three occupants as they settled into their seats was more intense than usual.

"Did you have a nice lunch?" George asked as Gina was preparing to take her first bite.

The fork hovered near her lips for a moment. She met his gaze and smiled. "Actually, I did." She stripped the steak from the fork and chewed, careful not to let her expression change as George continued to watch her.

"I've heard the bistro's chicken Caesar salad is excellent," George commented, slicing through the steak on his plate. He ignored the baffled look on Garrick's face and continued to watch her.

She shrugged. "I liked it."

Garrick spoke up. "You were in town for lunch?"

Gina nodded. "I had a few errands to run, and I met a friend for lunch."

"Just what did you and Vince have to discuss?" George asked, cutting another bite of steak.

"Vince?" Garrick stared at George, then moved his gaze to Gina. "What the hell are you doing having lunch with Vince again?"

"I needed to talk to someone, and he was the logical choice." Gina focused on the plate in front of her. She had no clue how George had discovered her lunch meeting or even what she ate. It was possible, with the bistro across the street from the offices that Garrick, George, and Vince worked in, that he might have seen her. "I take it you saw me in the restaurant?"

"Yes."



"You should have come inside and joined us. I'm sure Vince wouldn't have minded." She ignored the curses Garrick was spouting.

"You two seemed so intent on your discussion, I didn't feel I should intrude." George's tone implied the opposite.

Gina had to admit, the man knew how to keep his emotions under control. When they first became lovers, she'd appreciated that aspect of his nature. Now, with the problems disturbing her, she was beginning to resent his stoicism.

Garrick demanded, "What were you talking about that was so important?"

"The future. Families. That sort of thing." Gina was careful to keep her tone calm, neutral. The last thing she wanted to deal with was George or Garrick getting overly possessive. She loved them, but she'd be damned if she'd allow them to treat her like a favored pet or toy.

"Whose future?" Garrick spluttered, his fork clattering against his plate.

Gina motioned to both Garrick and George. "Yours and mine."

"And?" Gina suspected George had an idea of just what she and Vince had discussed, if his tight-lipped expression was anything to go by.

"How likely it is that we may or may not have a future together."

"What the hell?" Garrick snapped.

"Did you tell him what you think is the problem?" George remained cool, glaring Garrick into silence.

"No. At least not any specifics," Gina admitted.

"And?"

"And he thinks I should let you guys know just how serious I am about how I feel about this."

Garrick grumbled, "You've been pretty clear on just how serious you think this all is."

George could see there was more, but he waited, knowing Gina would explain it.

"Maybe. Maybe not."

"Separate beds is pretty damned clear, hon," Garrick snapped.

“So is a divorce.”

No one at the table moved. George could see the color fade from Garrick's face as the other man carefully set his silverware down beside his plate. Everything seemed to slow down around him. From the living room, the *tick* of the grandfather clock was a soft, rhythmic sound. First he heard one car, then minutes later a second car, drive past the house.

Just when George was sure she wasn't going to say anything else, Gina continued. “I love you both, but I also want a family.”

“You have a family.” George reminded her, but he could read the rebuke in her expression.

“Yes, but it's falling apart. I seem to be the only one concerned about that. And I shouldn't be. I deserve a family that wants to be together and will fight to stay together.” She met each of their gazes for several long seconds before continuing. “If you aren't willing to do what you can to fix the problem, I'll find someone else who is willing to try.”

“And you think Vince can do that?” It took every bit of self-control to keep his voice calm. Across the table, Garrick exerted a similar strength to stay in his seat.

“I don't know, but I'm willing to find out.”

“He can't give you what we do.” Garrick reminded her.

She looked at him. “Probably not. But I am attracted to him. If I give it time, I might be able to love him. I do know that he listens to me when I tell him what worries me, and he doesn't ignore me when I ask him to explain something to me.”

George saw Garrick flinch.

Gina held George's gaze. “He's picking me up tomorrow night at six, so you two will need to figure out what to do for dinner.”

“No fucking way.” Garrick exploded, bounding out of his seat and glaring down at her.

“Garrick.” George's voice was a harsh warning in the quiet room. Turning his attention to her, George added, “Do you think this is a wise choice, Gina?”

“Yes.”

“Don't you think your time would be better spent here at home discussing these issues, rather than out with another man?”

“Exactly.” Garrick agreed. He settled back into his seat.

“Why?” Gina looked from one husband to the other. “I’m not the one avoiding the important discussions; you two are.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Gina wasn't sure what she expected from George and Garrick. After her little bombshell about her dinner date with Vince and the comments about who was avoiding discussing things, their meal had been a silent event. She missed the bantering and fun they'd shared in the past.

Neither George nor Garrick seemed interested in talking. George went into the living room to watch a baseball game, while Garrick moved into the master bedroom to change into his running clothes. After he left, Gina moved into the master bedroom and hovered next to the bed. She'd intended to collect a few more clothing items, but once in the room, she was distracted. Garrick had left for his run, and the suit pants and shirt he'd worn at dinner lay discarded on the bed.

“Are you really going out with Vince tomorrow night?” George asked.

Gina turned to face the doorway. “Yes.”

“Is it to punish Garrick and me for not doing what you want?”

She sat on the end of the bed. “No.”

“Then why?” George moved to sit beside her.

“I already explained—”

“Explain it to me again.”

“No. You're beating a dead horse going over this again and again.” She leaned against his side, her hand stroking over his as it rested on his thigh, tracing the braided gold, platinum, and titanium ring he'd worn since they'd exchanged vows.

“I'm trying to understand,” he assured her.

“No, you're trying to wear me down, and it isn't going to happen. Our marriage isn't going to last another year, let alone twenty, at the rate you and Gare keep pulling away from one another.”

“And going out with Vince is going to help this how?” George demanded.

“I'm hoping you'll take the time to really talk.” Gina didn't back down from his glare.

“We've had plenty of time alone,” George pointed out.

“No, you've had plenty of time with a bed empty of me, but the two of you haven't had any real time alone to talk.” Gina corrected.

“We could have discussed this at work without you around,” he suggested.

Gina laughed. Stretching up, she kissed his lips. “I doubt that, my love.”

His arms pulled her close, his lips returning her soft caress until they were both breathless. “Why do you doubt it?” George concentrated on the buttons of her blouse, easing them free as he lowered her to the bed and leaned over her.

“Because if the two of you had had the discussion you need to have, you'd have ended up fucking each other.” She arched into the heat of his mouth. He pushed aside the cup of her bra and sucked the hardened nipple into his mouth. His hand spread over her stomach, warming her flesh before sliding down to separate the button of her slacks from its hole and ease the zipper down.

George released her breast. His green eyes glinting with arousal and humor, he smiled down at her. The fingers on his right hand slid beneath her panties, smoothed over her bare mound, and pressed against the sensitive nubbin hidden between the plump folds. “What makes you think Gare and I couldn't talk out the problem without having sex?”

Gina laughed and stopped his hand from going any farther. “You're joking, right?”

He pulled her up so they sat next to each other again. George conceded. “I admit the need to touch you interferes with conversations, but it might not be the same when it comes to Garrick and me talking.”

Gina shook her head and worked on fastening her slacks before moving on to her blouse. “No, you two would have the same problem keeping your hands off each other if you'd just admit to how you feel.”

George didn't respond.

Gina stopped working on the buttons and looked at him. “Truth.”

He seemed to debate it for a moment before offering a nod. “Okay, truth.”

“Are you sexually attracted to Garrick? Or am I reading you wrong?”

George nodded again, his green eyes meeting hers. “You aren't wrong. I do want him.”

“For how long?”

“About seven years.” He reclined on the bed, one arm beneath his head, the other occupied with pulling the tail of her blouse from the back of her slacks so his fingers could have access to her skin.

“So why haven't you said anything?” Gina eased onto her side to settle against him, soaking up the heat of his body next to her.

“Because in all the years I've known him, Gare has never expressed an interest in men.” George smoothed his hand across the base of her spine, the rasp of his callused fingers over the sensitive skin sending shivers through Gina's body.

She didn't try to pull away. She missed how comfortable being beside her husband felt. “Have you been interested in other men in the past?”

He shrugged. “A few when I was in college and still curious, but not in a long time.”

“Do you think I'm right that Garrick's attracted to you?” Gina propped herself up on her arm, her free hand smoothing over the collar of George's shirt.

“Can't say for sure, but do you think he'll be open to discussion if you throw another man into the mix?” George asked.

“I'm not throwing another man into the mix—”

George laughed and tugged her close, pulling her top leg over his hip. “You're waving Vince around like a flyswatter at a mosquito conference.”

Gina laughed at the imagery. “I'm giving you time to talk.”

“And what if he never feels like talking, hon? What then?”

She buried her face in his chest, hugging him close. “I don't want to lose you two.”

“And I sure as fuck don't want you leaving us either. But if Gare doesn't want to talk, I can't make him.” George held her tight.

She was sure he could feel the tension invade her body. She couldn't back down on this. “If he doesn't talk, then maybe the three of us need to come to a decision.”

“Like?”

“Our marriage.”

George held her away from him, watching her face. “You mean end it?”

Gina nodded. "It's the only thing I can see." Before he could voice the arguments she was sure he was thinking, she added, "I know you've heard me say it before, but it hasn't changed. I want us happy. I want a family that will last through both good and bad. If Garrick continues to deny how he feels, he'll be lying to himself and to us. He'll never be happy. And neither will we."

George listened to her reasoning. His hands flexed on her hip and back, pressing her against the firm jut of his cock beneath his trousers. The arguments were still there in his gaze, but he didn't voice them. Instead he told her, "No other man will ever love you as much as we do."

She didn't deny that. "No, he won't."

"And you could never love another man as much as you love us."

Again she didn't refute him. "No." But she made sure he understood something else about her determination to see this through to whichever conclusion was necessary. "I'll never love a man as much as I love you two, but I can love someone else enough to make a life with him. To build a home and raise children. All the things I'd rather share with you and Garrick, I can... I can find with someone else." She dropped her head onto his chest, her eyes closed as she listened to the beat of his heart increase. "Even if it breaks my heart to do it."

\* \* \* \* \*

In bed the next morning, Gina's words replayed through George's mind. Through the French doors, he could see the sun peeking over the horizon, and he knew his wife's suspicions were right. He remained still, enjoying the hard clasp of rough-skinned fingers around his cock. Against his lower back, the thick press of Garrick's erection taunted his senses. He wondered how long it would be before Garrick woke up and realized what he was doing. The dream had to be a particularly involved one to have his friend snuggled up to him the way they cuddled Gina when she was sandwiched between them.

All Gina's suggestions and protests had made him think about the changing nature of his and Garrick's relationship. Until she mentioned the way his friend looked at him, and now this, George thought for sure that his wife had been reading something that wasn't there.

"That'll teach me to ignore her instincts," he whispered. He fought the urge to cover Garrick's hand with his own. Instead he stayed still and silent.

With Garrick stroking his dick and pushing his hips closer, George began to believe there was a possibility for more with him. It was getting Garrick to admit to it when he was conscious that would be the difficult part.

Climax just moments away, he knew the instant Garrick woke. The other man froze, his curses soft, almost inaudible in the early-morning air. George kept still, controlling his breathing, maintaining the illusion that he'd slept through the interlude. He stifled the urge to curse as Garrick released his cock and eased from the bed. Through half-opened eyelids, George watched him enter the bathroom and shut the door. George grinned when he heard the sound of the shower. He wondered if the water Garrick was standing beneath was cold.

The moment he was sure Garrick was occupied in the bathroom, George rolled onto his back and drew a deep breath, trying to relax his excited body. With Gina out of the house this evening, maybe Garrick would be more receptive to discussing their wife's concerns. Perhaps even more receptive to acting on a few of the urges they'd both been denying.

\* \* \* \* \*

Garrick was far beyond pissed by the time he walked into Vince's office.

His run the night before had simply been a temporary fix. He was still recovering from the shock of waking up with his hand around George's cock and his erection pressed to his friend's ass. If there was one thing he didn't need to face today, it was knowing that Vince was taking his wife to dinner. George had been silent all morning, his green eyes focused on some problem he was chewing over. Gina continued to be firmly ensconced in the guest bedroom.

"She told you about the date, huh?" Vince leaned back in his chair and watched Garrick drop into the seat opposite the desk.

"You thought she wouldn't?"

Vince shook his head. "No, I knew she would. I just assumed she'd wait until later this afternoon."

"Before or after you meet her for lunch?" Garrick sneered.

Vince rolled his eyes. "Why are you so worried about Gina? Are you afraid she might consider leaving you and George?"

"Don't even go there," Garrick warned, rising from his seat to pace the room.

“Why? Am I the only one who sees just how much your wife is willing to risk in order to save your family?” Vince leaned forward but stayed seated.

“You have no idea what's going on in my home, Vince. So don't assume you know what Gina, George, and I are dealing with.”

“I know your damned stubborn pride is driving Gina out of your bed.”

“And you're aiming to get her into yours?” Garrick snapped.

“If I thought it were possible, you're damned right I'd do quite a lot to make her mine.”

“Bastard.”

“But the only way it'd happen is if you don't get your head out of your ass and do what she's asking you to do.”

“Just how much talking did you and Gina do yesterday?” Garrick wasn't sure how comfortable he felt about his coworker being privy to Gina's suspicions, no matter how little detail she'd given him.

“Enough to know that you and George need to do some serious talking, and you can't do that if you're both distracted by your wife,” Vince explained.

“She isn't a distraction, damn it.” He glared at the younger man, disturbed by the way Vince's blue eyes seemed to assess Garrick's every movement.

Vince's response showed just how keen his insight was. “When you get home, who's the first person you look for?”

“Gina.”

“And what's the first thing you think of when you get around her?” The soft tap of his pen against the desk blotter accompanied Vince's question.

Garrick knew where this was going, but he didn't have to like it. “Okay, so I'm preoccupied with trying to get her into our bed.”

“My point exactly. You're distracted.”

“How is your having dinner with my wife going to help that?” Garrick snapped, his arms crossed over his chest as he leaned against the credenza opposite Vince's desk.



“When I'm trying to talk some sense into her about rethinking this whole family-issues situation, you can start thinking of ways to sit down and have the conversation Gina wants you to have with George.”

“What if there's nothing to discuss?”

“Then you're a fucking liar and you deserve to lose Gina.”

The snap in the other man's voice gave Garrick pause. He took a harder look at Vince. “How so?”

“Because you can't seem to see just what your dancing around this issue is doing to her.”

It was Vince's turn to pace. He rose from his chair and worked his way from one side of the room to the other, his fists stuffed into the pockets of his slacks.

“She's certain you're unhappy, and part of her knows she isn't the reason for that, but another part of her is certain if she can just get you to talk to George, then everything will take care of itself.”

Garrick shoved his fingers through his hair and shook his head. “Damn it. Why can't she let it go?”

“Because she loves you, you moron.” Vince glared at him. “And because she loves you and wants what's best for you, she's tearing herself apart trying to figure out how to make you happy.”

“But I am—”

“No, damn it, you're not. And she can see it. And she feels it.” Vince stepped closer and continued. “I saw the way you pulled away at the dinner party a few weeks ago. The way she reacted, the look in her eyes. It wasn't difficult to see how you telegraph your unease to her every time you do that.” The censure was heavy in Vince's voice, along with a healthy dose of disgust.

“Every time?” Garrick sneered.

“The Christmas party, company picnic in May, and then the dinner party.”

“Who died and made you Dr. Phil?” Garrick grimaced, wanting to deny everything Vince said but knowing the other man wasn't far off in his assessment of the situation.

“If you don't do something now, Gina's going to leave. She's going to walk out of your lives and find someone who's willing to listen to her opinion. And who's capable of respecting

that opinion.” Vince stepped back and held Garrick's gaze without flinching. “And you can damned well bet I'll be the first one in line to take her up on it.”

“You bastard.”

“Damn straight, Gare. I know a woman worth fighting for, even if you don't.”

Garrick stood there, mulling over everything Vince had said. He was tempted to make a comment. Something biting and snide to dispel the unease stirring in the pit of his stomach. But he held his tongue at the expression in Vince's eyes.

He watched Vince return to the chair behind his desk.

“Was there anything else you wanted to discuss?” the younger man asked.

Garrick shook his head. “No.” His hand on the knob, he waited a moment, then queried, “You love her, don't you?”

Vince's lips quirked up in a half smile. “She loves you and George. That's all that matters.”

Garrick moved out of the office and down the hall, his mind spinning, trying to process just what he could do to keep from ruining the best relationship he'd ever had without sacrificing the man and woman he loved.

## Chapter Eleven

Later that night, with his eyes closed, head back as the warm shower rinsed the soap from his hair and skin, Garrick winced at the ache in his thighs and calves. Each night his evening runs got longer and longer. Tonight, knowing Gina was out with Vince and not wanting any more alone time with George than necessary, he'd added three more miles to his workout. He hoped it would tire him out enough to keep from reaching for George again.

His toothbrush hung from the corner of his lips, his teeth clenched to keep it in place. Even freshly scrubbed, his mouth watered for the taste of George's kiss. The wet slide of a tongue, the nip of teeth against lips, the remembered sensations stirred Garrick's body. A moan rumbled in his chest in response to the heat building in his groin.

He tugged the brush from his mouth and dropped it onto the built-in shelf. The urge to twist the faucet to cold was strong, but he ignored it. He'd spent enough time under the spray. After shutting off the water, he swung the shower door open and reached for a towel.

"We need to talk."

The words echoed in the steam-filled bathroom.

"Jesus!" Garrick jumped, the towel he'd grabbed from the rack slipping free so that he had to scramble to keep it in his hands. "Couldn't this wait until I get dressed?"

"I've seen your bare ass before, Gare."

He hoped the heat flushing his face would be considered a result of the surprise and the warmth of his shower. He'd just gotten his body under some semblance of control. He didn't need George conjuring up pictures in his mind again.

"Yeah, I know you have, buddy. But right now I'd rather you just let me have my space."

"If we don't talk, you may end up with more space than you'd like." George's warning hung in the air as he exited into the master bedroom.

One towel wrapped around his waist, another around his neck so he could rub at his hair, Garrick followed. He frowned after glancing at the clock on the nightstand on the far side of the mattress. "Where's Gina?"

"You saw her leave. Where do you think she is?"

"She should be back soon, right?"

"When was the last time we took our wife out on a date? Did we get home after just an hour?"

"No, but that's because she's supposed to go out with us on long, romantic dates. Not Vince. Do you even know where he was taking her?" Garrick tossed his towels back toward the bathroom. He pulled a pair of worn blue sweats up his legs as a temporary cover. When he tried to pass George and head toward the living room and the address book with Vince's number in it, firm fingers gripped his arm. The arousal coursing through his body, more than his friend's hold on his arm, stopped Garrick in his tracks.

"I didn't ask, and Gina didn't tell."

"Well, hell. Why don't you just invite him to take our place in her bed while you're at it, George?" Garrick glared at his friend.

"We need to talk, and she needs her breathing room." The intent was plain in George's green gaze.

He wasn't going to be allowed to avoid this conversation any longer. Tugging free of his friend's hold, Garrick dropped into the armchair in a corner of the room. Arms crossed over his chest, he waited.

"You're acting like an ass," George told him.

Garrick shrugged at the accusation, accepting it was the truth but not willing to change it. "So, you're the one who wanted to talk. Talk."

"Gina isn't the only one who's noticed the pulling back."

That pissed him off. He rose to stand in front of his friend. "Hey, I'm not the *only one* she accused of backing off. You've done it too. It isn't a big thing." Garrick's voice crackled with tension.

"To her it is."

“She'll get past it. If we convince her...”

“Do you actually believe she won't follow through on her threat?” George asked.

“She wouldn't leave us.”

“What's to keep her here? Neither of us has made an effort to do what she asked. If we can't bother talking to each other, why should she stay?”

“Fuck.”

“My thoughts exactly.”

Energy depleted, Garrick dropped onto the edge of their bed and leaned his elbows on his knees. “Are you sure *we* can survive this talk?”

George settled next to him. “Pretty sure, but we need to try—”

“Because if we don't”—Garrick finished—“our marriage won't survive.”

Neither one spoke for the longest time. Their eyes stayed focused on the cream carpet beneath their bare feet. He'd dreaded this moment for the last week. Hell, for the last seven years. Everything he'd done to avoid coming to this point had definitely backfired on him. There was no one to blame but himself. The denials he'd spewed and the way he'd hidden the truth from those closest to him had to be cleared up.

The fact that Vince had been aware of the damage his insecurity was inflicting on Gina just made it that much worse. Losing his best friend, the man he loved, was a heavy weight on his shoulders. The chance he could be losing his wife as well made the burden more unbearable. Garrick didn't want to be the one to break the silence, but he had a feeling since he'd been the one most determined to ignore the situation, he needed to be the one to speak up first.

“I like pussy.”

George laughed.

Garrick had to grin. Not the most auspicious of beginnings, but he could work with it. He continued. “I mean it, George. Until you brought Gina into my life, I couldn't get enough of the different women around me.”

“But?” George leaned back on the bed, his hands keeping his torso propped up. “I'm sensing a 'but' here.”

“Yeah, the kind with two *t*’s in it,” Garrick grumbled, rising to walk up and down the expanse of carpet in front of the bed. “It shocked the shit outta me the first time it happened.”

“Being attracted to a man?”

“Yeah.”

While he watched him, George seemed to ponder something. “Okay, I can see where that would freak a guy out. Especially one who’d been into women for so long.”

The expression of surprise and shock on Garrick’s face was just too funny. Even the way the other man froze in his tracks, like a deer stuck in the headlights of an oncoming semi, had George working to stifle the urge to laugh.

“Are you saying you’ve...?”

Garrick couldn’t seem to finish the thought, so George helped him. “Experimented?” He fought the urge to grab his friend when heat entered Garrick’s gaze. “I can honestly say I prefer making love with a woman more than a man, but I have had the opportunity to see what it’s like. Haven’t you?”

Garrick shook his head. Aware of Garrick’s disquiet, George moved slowly when he rose from the bed and settled himself in front of his friend. “Have you ever been curious?”

“Not until recently.”

Still careful not to move too quickly, George lifted his left hand to rest on Garrick’s shoulder. The fine tremor coursing through the younger man’s frame had George fighting the need to drag Garrick’s mouth to his for a devouring kiss. “How recently?”

Garrick edged closer, skimming his hands over George’s black silk shirt before halting at the waistband of his black slacks, both thumbs rubbing over the brass belt buckle. The weight of the other man’s hands on his waist stifled the purr building in George’s chest. “Christmas, seven years ago.”

George grinned. He remembered the scene Garrick meant. It was the same one that had stirred his attraction to Garrick. “Ahh, Sterns and Ellis under the mistletoe.”

“It blew my mind when I caught myself imagining it was me and you.”

His grin morphed into a low chuckle. “I had a few awkward moments myself.”

“You mean?”

“Hey.” He shifted his hand to squeeze the back of Garrick's neck. “I'm not about to blow a great friendship for a little sex.”

“Is that all it is? A passing need?”

George wondered if the mix of pleasure and disappointment he thought he heard in Garrick's voice was real or just his imagination looking for a reason to act on long-buried desires. “Not for me. But I wasn't about to force you into a decision you weren't interested in making.” He waited a moment, then asked, “Was that what it felt like this morning? A passing need, I mean.”

Garrick's breath stopped for a second. “No.”

“Same here.” George assured him.

“Why didn't you say anything?”

George shrugged. “It had to be your decision to let me know if you were interested.”

“And if I am? Interested, I mean.”

“You can decide how much and how fast.” Leaning forward, George allowed his lips to hover over Garrick's while he searched his friend's whiskey-colored eyes for any hint of unease or retreat. There was none. The last scant millimeter between them disappeared. George settled his lips against Garrick's. The texture was soft but different from the feel of Gina's mouth: less pillowy, more firm. The stubble of their evening beards gritted against one another, adding another layer of sensation to savor.

Garrick dug his fingers into his sides, pulling George tighter against his frame and rubbing George's engorged cock, hidden behind the placket of his trousers, over one shrouded in a single layer of soft blue fleece. The scent of Garrick's soap and shampoo mingled with the musk of his arousal, drawing George deeper. Desperate to taste his friend, he slid his tongue over the seam of Garrick's lips, teasing them open.

The groan rumbled up from George's belly. The flavor of mint and Garrick's mouth piled the need higher in George's belly. Desperate for air, but even more desperate to maintain his connection to Garrick, George shifted his head. His fingers tangled in the other man's shoulder-length curls, making George grateful for the cool dampness against his heated flesh, while his other hand wrapped around Garrick's waist to hold him secure, tight against his body.

He could feel the desire beating through the younger man's frame. George wondered if the rush of blood through his veins made Garrick as light-headed as George he felt. The taste and texture of Garrick's mouth flooded his senses. Three years. It had been over three years since their first kiss, and it was even more arousing than it had been that first time with Gina sandwiched between them and the warm splash of the water beating down on their heads. No, better, his mind urged. This time there was nothing separating him from the man he'd fallen in love with. The man he'd lusted after for years. A single step backward allowed him just enough room to drag several huge gulps of air into his lungs. He held Garrick's gaze. Definitely superior to the memories he'd used to sustain himself for the last three years when the need came close to overriding his common sense.

"Shit." Garrick gasped.

"Too fast?" George eased his grip in Garrick's hair.

"Hell no. Not fast enough, George. Three fucking years, man. You teased me with those damn kisses when we first got Gina between us, then nothing." Garrick's touch dropped to the buttons on George's shirt.

"So, not afraid of what comes next?" The laughter in George's voice made Garrick's fingers move faster over the buttons.

"Not if you aren't." With the shirt finally open, Garrick tugged George close for a fast, brutal kiss. When the caress finished, George was sure Garrick could see the flare of arousal in his green gaze.

The grin on Garrick's lips tweaked George's libido. "Remember the first time Gina used my toys on us?"

George nodded, shrugging out of the black silk shirt and tossing it toward the chair.

"The reason I came so fast that first time"—Garrick dropped his hands to the fastenings on the black trousers, his fingers stroking over the thick, hard length pressing to get out—"was because every time she shoved it deeper, I imagined it was you. Your cock riding my ass, making me beg for just a little more. Just a little harder. Just a little rougher."

"Fuck, boy." George growled, shoving Garrick's hands away from his waist. "Get a move on, then, because I've had my eye on your ass about as long as you've had yours on mine."



Amid laughter, tangled fingers, and rough, arousing kisses, they stripped the clothes from each other. George took over, dragging the bedding back, shoving Garrick onto the mattress, and holding him there with his body. The urge to climax swelled within George at the sight and feel of his friend's frame beneath him. Grinding his hips against Garrick's, he loved the heat and damp evidence of his soon-to-be lover's arousal. The scrape of Garrick's fingers pushing through his silver-threaded black hair made his scalp tingle. George let him pull his face close.

"I'm sorry," Garrick whispered.

"Sorry for what?" George asked.

"Backing off, when all I wanted to do was join Gina every time she went down on you." Garrick pressed his lips to George's, rubbing his chest against his, seeming to love the rasp of chest hair over his nipples, the moisture of precum as it dribbled from his cock and Garrick's to aid in the glide of flesh over flesh.

"Later, I'll spend hours swallowing your dick." Garrick promised. "But right now—God, George—right now, I need to feel what it's like to have you in me."

There was plenty of time, George decided, to satisfy the craving to taste Garrick's thick length. Now wasn't that time. The need to claim this man as his rattled the chains he'd surrounded it with years ago. Knees straddling Garrick's legs, George gestured to the nightstand with his chin, the dominant within him slipping out. "Prepare yourself for me. Show me how much you want me."

The dark brow over Garrick's left eye rose in acknowledgment of George's role, but the gleam in his amber gaze signaled that the submission was merely temporary. And tentative at best, George admitted as he shifted off Garrick, and watched the younger man roll to his belly and scoot across the bed to open the drawer. Garrick collected the tube of lube and a condom and set them on the mattress at his hip before he shut the drawer and eased up onto his knees, still on his belly with George behind him.

"Spread your legs. Show me that fine ass." The words were guttural, George's voice heavy with yearning and desire. He allowed his own hand to smear the drops of precum at the tip of his cock down his thick shaft. The slow stroke of his hand did nothing to alleviate his arousal. Only going balls deep could ease the pain.

And Garrick was going to make him work for every inch, George determined, his gaze following the movements of the other man's fingers. He watched as they smoothed between the hard cheeks, exposing the dark rose-colored pucker of his ass. Slick and glistening with lube, he circled the entrance, first one way and then the other, before sinking one finger two knuckles deep. A second, then a third finger joined the first, rubbing and twisting, smearing the oil inside and out.

Between his splayed thighs, George could see Garrick's fingers squeezing and stroking his cock; his hips rocked against the invasion of his fingers.

The *crack* of George's hand against Garrick's butt was sharp and sudden in the bedroom, stilling the motions of the man's fingers. Garrick whipped his head up and around to glare at George over his shoulder.

"Get your hands off that cock." George didn't wait for a comment. He snatched up the condom, removed it from its wrapper, and deftly rolled it down his prick. "Ready?"

Garrick nodded, his fingers sliding free of his hole, hips canting upward, presenting himself to George. Both men tensed at the slide of cock against skin. Not in apprehension but anticipation. Each held his breath, desperate to take the next step.

The head of his penis penetrated, sliding in before resistance stopped him. Knowing it was temporary, George pushed onward. Words of praise whispered past his lips as Garrick relaxed into his possession, his back bowing, his ass lifting for more.

"Damn, this feels good, Gare." George groaned as the last of his shaft disappeared and his hips settled into place. He experimented with a hard, fast thrust and then drew back. "It's so tight," he muttered, forcing himself to set a slow pace, knowing Garrick would need a few moments to adjust to the new impressions. A dildo was one thing, but a real, live cock was something else.

Garrick ground his forehead into the pillow beneath him. George wondered if the reason his friend gasped for breath was because of the overfilled sensation or newness of the feeling, but Garrick didn't protest each slide of George's length in and then out. His own desire ratcheted tighter and tighter. "Hands on the bed, Garrick. No touching that cock." He watched his friend's fingers tear at the bedding beneath him as Garrick fought the urge to fist his erection in his hands. To yank and stroke it with the same tempo George used to ream his ass.

“Ah God, George”—Garrick moaned—“fuck me. Hard.”

George smoothed his hands over Garrick's back, massaging the curve of his butt, stroked the front of his thighs. He leaned over his friend's back, hands trailing up his chest, tangling his fingers in the hair surrounding the firm jut of Garrick's nipples. Each touch created a new awareness of the man beneath him that George absorbed into his consciousness, reveling in every nuance as he led Garrick toward orgasm.

“You sure, babe?” He could feel the younger man's heartbeat increase against him. George continued. “You've never done this before. I don't want to hurt you.”

“Do it. Please.”

George took him at his word, and Garrick hissed in reaction as the hard thrust of George's cock pounded deep inside. He held Garrick's hips and increased the pace of his ride. Short, hard strokes were mixed with long, deep thrusts. He could feel Garrick's body tense. George knew Garrick's arousal was at its breaking point.

“I'm not gonna last.” Garrick groaned.

“Wait for it,” George commanded.

George leaned his chest against Garrick's back again. He released Garrick's hip and wrapped his hand around the pulsing length of Garrick's cock, stroking and pulling it with the same hard pace he'd set with his hips.

“I need to come.” Garrick didn't seem to care that he pleaded for release.

George knew that in that moment he owned Garrick. His wants and desires were under George's direction. The euphoria bubbling through George now had only ever been present during Gina's submission. George didn't fight the smile, the satisfaction, the pride of knowing his command of the man beneath him satiated Garrick's needs as well as his own. The opportunity to show Garrick the desire he'd held in check for so many years alleviated bound emotions George was only now growing aware of.

His lips coasted along Garrick's throat, settling in the bend where shoulder met neck. He tightened the hand gripping Garrick's prick, squeezing hard, making Garrick arch into the thrust of George's cock. “Please.” His body shuddered with the desperate need to climax.

“Come,” George whispered. He opened his mouth and bit down on the straining tendon at the juncture of neck and shoulder.

Beneath him, George could feel the climax explode through Garrick. He allowed his own orgasm freedom as the snug channel surrounding him pulsed in time with the cock he still gripped in his fist. Tension eased from Garrick's frame, his body relaxed, satisfied for now.

George pulled Garrick with him and rolled onto his side. They both groaned when he carefully eased free of Garrick's ass and discarded the condom. "Was it what you expected?"

Garrick chuckled. "Better."

"Would you want to repeat it?"

Garrick shifted so he lay facing him. "Definitely."

George pressed his lips against Garrick's, a soft, quiet kiss, stroking his hands over Garrick's shoulders, enjoying the difference between the man he loved and the woman they loved. At the thought of their wife, he laughed. "Gina's gonna be a bear to live with when we tell her she was right."

Garrick nodded. "We'll never hear the end of her 'I told you sos.'" His lips investigated the stubble along George's jaw, the damp sweat at his temple, and the sensitive spot just behind his left ear.

A groan preceded the squeeze of George's arms. "Are you ready to face her and tell her she was right?"

Warm fingers wrapped around George's hardening cock as Garrick moved his attention downward. "As long as I can keep both of you, I have no problem letting Gina know she was correct and I was being an ass by running from this."

George pulled him up for a hard, tongue-tangling kiss. When they were breathless and the slide of their renewed arousals dampened both their bellies, he eased his hold. "Do you mean your feelings or this?" George asked, pressing his cock against Garrick's.

"Both." Garrick was the one to reach for another condom in the nightstand.

Garrick surprised George when he sheathed the older man's penis and not his own. "Don't you want to—"

Garrick shook his head. "Another time. Right now I'm enjoying the difference between the toys and your cock."

"Then show me your ass, Gare, and let's make this one last."

## Chapter Twelve

"You've been quiet tonight." Vince's voice seemed loud in the quiet confines of the car.

Gina shrugged. "Not really much to say."

"Garrick came to my office today. Did he tell you that?"

Not quite sure if she wanted to hear about her husband's behavior, Gina waited. She just watched Vince until he continued.

"He wanted to know my intentions."

"You mean he wanted to scare you into not coming out with me." She reached a hand over and squeezed Vince's hand where it rested Vince on his thigh. "Thanks for ignoring him."

"You needed someone to get you out of the house so they could talk." Vince seemed to wait a moment and then added, "Besides, I had my own motives."

"Oh really?" Gina grinned. "And what was that?"

"Are you sure you're doing the right thing?"

Gina pulled her hand back and crossed her arms over her chest. Looking out the passenger-door window, she stared through the reflection of her face at the darkness outside. "Did Garrick or George ask you to talk to me?"

Vince laughed. "No. I'm doing this on my own."

"Why?"

"Because I know how much you love them, and I want to know if you realize that."

Gina stared at him. Vince kept his gaze on the road in front of him. "I know just how much I love them."

Doubt colored Vince's voice. "I don't think you do, hon." He slowed the car to turn into Gina's neighborhood. "I think you're so focused on doing what you think is best for George and Garrick, you're not seeing just how hurt you'll be if they don't resolve this issue."

“I'm fully aware—”

Vince pulled the car up to the curb at her house and shut the engine off. The *click* of his released seat belt echoed in the vehicle. He faced her, one arm draped over the steering wheel, the other along the back of the seat. “And you think if they can't get it resolved and your family breaks apart, you can blithely find what you have with George and Gare with some other guy.”

Gina released her own seat belt and looked at him. “I don't think I can 'blithely' do anything, Vince.”

“But you're here with me as a way of seeing whether or not you can respond to another man.”

“That isn't—”

“It is,” Vince argued. “You resent them for ignoring the concerns you've voiced. George and Garrick resent each other because they see the other as the cause of your anger. It's all beginning to divide your loyalties.”

“And why do you care?”

“Because I care about the three of you.” Vince closed his eyes and shook his head. He pushed his door open and added, “You're my friends, and I want to see you happy.”

“I appreciate that, but—”

The shutting of the door interrupted her as Vince walked around the front of the car and opened her door. He held his hand out to her. “Come here. I want to show you something.”

Her small clutch purse dangled from its strap on her wrist as she took Vince's hand and stepped out of the car. Dim streetlights illuminated the road but left patches of shadows in front of various homes. The glow from the front porch light didn't reach into the pocket of darkness Vince had pulled the car into. “Show me what?” she asked. He closed the car door behind her.

With the car at her back and Vince in front of her, Gina wasn't sure what she was feeling. Vince didn't frighten her in any way, but the intent gleam in his deep blue eyes reminded her of the weekend she first met him.

Warm, callused hand cupped her cheeks as Vince moved closer, pressing his body against hers. The thick evidence of his arousal pushed against her pelvis as his mouth dipped toward hers. Against her lips, he whispered, “I wanted to show you this.”

The kiss was hot, sexual. She could feel his interest in the slide of his lips over hers, the slow, coaxing stroke of his tongue along the seam of her mouth. Her lips parted, allowing his tongue entry to twine around hers and tease it into play. Her body responded, breasts swelling, nipples peaking, even her pussy grew damp, but the burn wasn't as intense as the one Garrick or George could stir. The heat thrumming through her veins was comfortable, not all-encompassing. She could still think and analyze what was happening in her body—an ability that slipped away from her when she was tangled in bed with George or Garrick.

Vince pressed a soft kiss against her throat before releasing her. “See.”

Gina let her breath calm before responding. “See what?”

“It isn't there.” He moved to lean against the car beside her, hands tucked into his pockets.

“What isn't there?” She was getting confused and frustrated at his non sequiturs.

“When George or Garrick is in a room with you, you get this glow. When they touch you, it just gets brighter. But with me, you shimmer.” He held her gaze. “You deserve more than a shimmer, Gina.”

“But—”

A wry grin kicked up one side of his mouth as he leaned close and pressed a soft kiss to her lips, then her cheek. “No, hon. If they can't get their heads outta their asses enough to see what can make your relationship better, then they should be the ones to suffer. But you deserve to be happy, and any other man will never be able to make you feel the way they do.” He moved away from the car, tugged her along by the hand, and led her up to the front door of her house. “If you need help kicking their asses once in a while, give me a call. Just don't walk away from what you have, thinking you can be satisfied with second best.”

Gina waited while he unlocked the door for her and handed the keys back. “Thank you.” She smiled at him, wondering what could have happened if she'd met him before George.

Vince leaned down and pressed a kiss to her brow. “Night.” He walked back to his car with his hands tucked into his jeans, head up, and confidence in his stride.

She let her weight push the door closed, then twisted the dead bolt and set the chain in the slide before she leaned her forehead against the door. Vince was right. She didn't want to give up what she had with Garrick and George. If they weren't ready to discuss how they felt about each

other now, maybe there would be another time in the future. What she needed to figure out was how she was going to handle George and Garrick now.

She needed to make sure they understood what she'd done had been for their family's welfare. It was odd, she noted, how her husbands weren't around when both had been so vehemently opposed to her going out with Vince. Gina was surprised neither of them was hovering at the door, waiting for her to return.

Had they seen the kiss at the car? She stepped into the living room, expecting to be met with hostile glares as they watched a baseball game, but the room was dark. No lights came from the kitchen or dining room either.

That was when she noticed the sounds coming from the master bedroom. Toes aching in her heels, she kicked off her shoes and left her coat and purse near the door. She padded down the hall and eased open the bedroom door.

Her fingers clutched the doorknob. The beat of her heart slipped into overdrive, slamming against her ribs, vibrating through her body. Tears burned her eyes, and her throat closed around an involuntary sob at what she saw. Heat bloomed in her center, spreading through her belly and up to her breasts as she took in the scene before her.

From the doorway, Gina watched as George held Garrick's hips and rocked forward, then back with slow, steady thrusts. He leaned over the other man, his body surrounding, protecting Garrick in this most vulnerable moment. Unbelievably stimulated by the sight of the men she loved making love to each other, she slipped into the room and eased the door closed behind her, careful not to disturb them.

Similar images had been played for her, only with her being the receiver of George's possession, on the videos they'd made of their lovemaking. Gina knew just how safe Garrick must feel in these minutes when his body's responses were beyond his control. The smooth advance and retreat was similar to the motions both of her husbands had ever used on her, though the grunts and slap of flesh on flesh were evidence of more powerful thrusts. The words they shared, the cries and encouragement for more and harder penetration, reassured her that each was gaining pleasure in their mating.

Between her thighs she could feel moisture pooling. Not wanting to distract them, she slipped the zipper on her sundress down and shrugged the straps from her shoulders. She



discarded her panties and bra beside her and settled onto the floor just inside the doorway, never looking away from the intertwined pair on the bed. She loved them both so much, and she knew they cared just as deeply for her. The knowledge that they'd finally acknowledged the same intensity of feeling for each other loosened the knot of dread wrapped around her chest for the last few weeks.

Everything was going to be okay.

Hell—she stifled her laugh and dipped her fingers between the wet folds of her sex—things were going to be fan-fucking-tastic if the curses and groans coming from the men on their bed were any indication. Three fingers buried in her aching pussy, Gina observed as George reached beneath Garrick and took hold of his thick cock. Gina moved in tandem with the men. The syncopated slide of her fingers in and out of her wet sheath danced in time with each of his thrusts. George pounded against Garrick's hips while dragging his hand up and down the hard length of the other man's penis.

Four, maybe five, strokes and all three reached climax simultaneously. Gina's cries of release were drowned beneath the shouts of both men. Bodies slick with sweat, the men collapsed onto the sheets, Garrick cradled in George's arms, their breathing harsh and uneven. She closed her eyes to savor the quiet of the room and relaxed for the first time in weeks.

“Someone's been a very naughty girl.”

Her heavy lids blinked open to find both men watching her from the rumpled sheets of the bed. Suddenly aware of her spread legs and thighs damp with her orgasm, Gina didn't bother to apologize or try to hide her condition. She'd learned long ago they loved watching her come. Tonight was no exception. In the minutes she'd kept her eyes closed, both men had recovered enough to untangle the bedding and crawl beneath the covers. “Who's been naughty?” She grinned, rising on wobbly feet to face them.

Garrick crooked his finger at her. “Get over here.”

She didn't even hesitate. The clothes were left scattered on the floor where she'd dropped them. Gina climbed onto the bed and burrowed under the covers, trying out the empty space in front of Garrick. George watched her over Garrick's shoulder. “Are we good?” She looked first at George, waited for his smile and nod before focusing on Garrick.

“We're good, baby.” Garrick glanced over his shoulder to catch and hold George's gaze, before his smile broadened and he laughed—a relaxed, free laugh he'd not had in some months. “Better than good, Gina.”

From the living room, nine deep chimes drifted from the grandfather clock.

“Thank you,” she whispered, kissing first George and then Garrick.

Each propped himself up on an arm to look down at her. “For what?” George finally asked.

“You don't remember what tomorrow is?” She chided them both.

George looked at Garrick, and he returned the confused gaze. When understanding dawned, both men groaned and dropped back onto their pillows.

“Ah fuck,” Garrick muttered.

“Shit.” George dropped his forearm over his eyes.

Gina laughed. “It's okay, boys. You just gave me the best anniversary present ever.”

George rolled away from them, and Gina's heart stopped, until she realized he was merely reaching out to switch off the bedside lamp. Garrick tugged her close and wrapped her in his arms. One of George's arms draped over Garrick's waist, his hand settling on her hip. Together, both men whispered, “Happy anniversary, baby.”

“Umm, guys,” she murmured. Her hand slid down Garrick's flanks to squeeze his butt, and she cuddled closer. She grinned at the slow stiffening of his cock against her thigh.

“Aren't you tired?” George grumbled. His fingers wrapped around her wrist and tugged her touch away from Garrick's hip and toward his own thickening erection.

“Never too tired for you two,” she assured him. “And I've missed you.” Her breath ended on a gasp when Garrick nipped her breast with his teeth.

“We missed you too, hon,” Garrick whispered against her nipple. “Wanna play 'naughty voyeur caught peeking'?”

Gina rubbed her body against Garrick and purred. “Ohhh, yes, please.”

“Such a naughty peeping Thomasina,” George taunted. His hand skimmed up her hip to her breast, then pinched the taut nipple between his fingertips. “What punishment does she deserve, Gare?”

Garrick nipped her throat. “Hmmm, there's no telling just how bad she's been.” His hand moved from her belly to the bare mound between her thighs. “Tsk-tsk. Oh this isn't good. Her pussy is all swollen and wet. Maybe a few toys...?” he offered, his voice trailing off suggestively. He pressed his engorged cock against her thigh and pulled George's mouth to his own for a deep, passionate kiss.

She was sure he could feel the pounding of her pulse in the sensitive flesh Garrick's fingers stroked and teased. George's fingers tweaked and tugged the stiff peak of one of her breasts before he broke his and Garrick's kiss. He rose up behind Garrick and grinned down at her. “I'm thinking since she likes to watch us fuck each other, maybe she'd like to feel it too.”

Gina didn't protest. The thought of having one of her husbands loving her at the same he was being taken sent a rush of heat to her core. Her body responded, soaking the fingers Garrick used to tease her clit. She squirmed against the sheets, sliding onto her back, and waited for their next move.

It was definitely a very happy anniversary.

 THE END 

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## Qwillia Rain

Qwillia Rain grew up loving books. From an early age she was creating stories to go with the pictures. By high school she was penning romances for her friends and shocking them with the graphic nature of the love scenes. After leaving her home in Las Vegas, Nevada for Anchorage, Alaska, Qwillia discovered there were other authors who enjoyed throwing open the bedroom doors and exploring the darker side of human nature. She left Alaska for Billings, Montana, but the travel bug struck again. Currently, Qwillia resides in Raleigh, North Carolina, drawing inspiration from the history, scenery, and rich diversity of the South.