

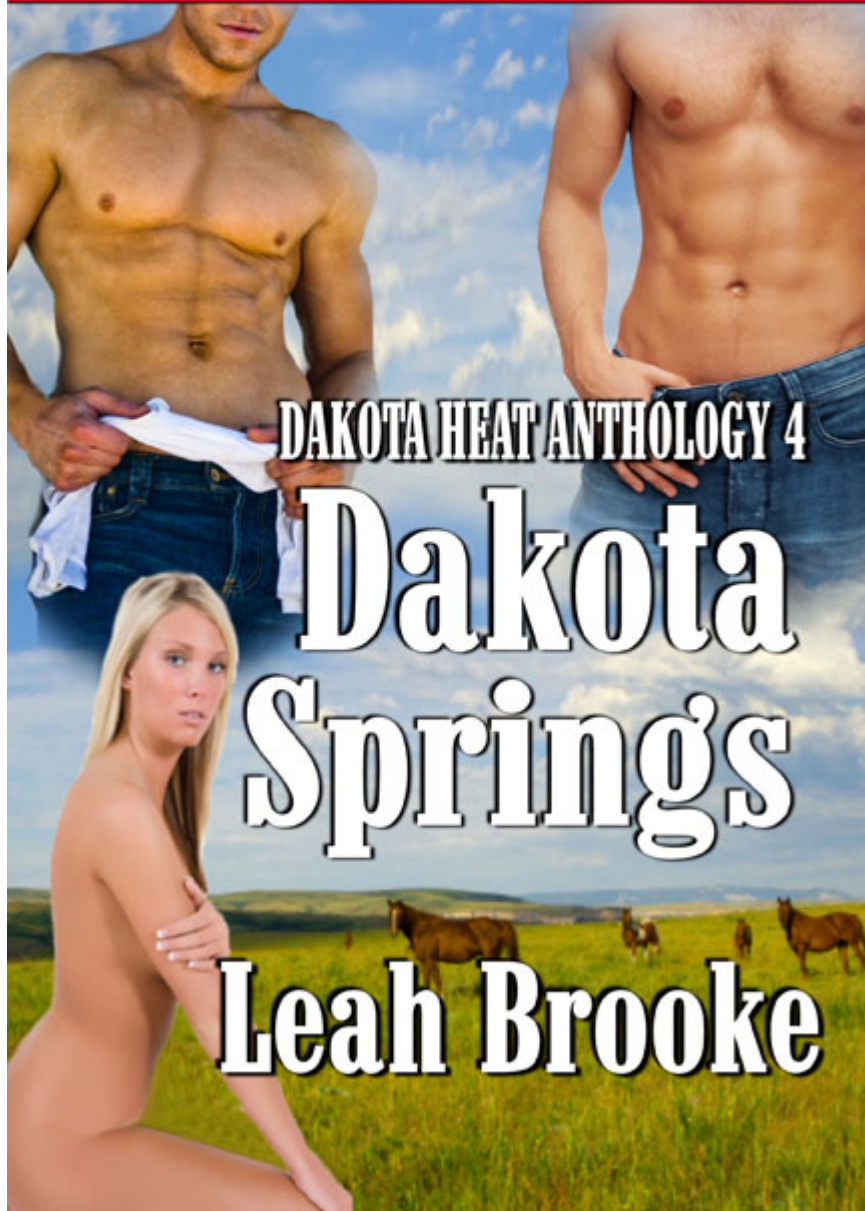
Siren Publishing

*Ménage Amour*

DAKOTA HEAT ANTHOLOGY 4

# Dakota Springs

Leah Brooke



# DAKOTA SPRINGS

## *Dakota Heat 4*

**Leah Brooke**

**MENAGE AMOUR**



**Siren Publishing, Inc.**  
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**A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK**

IMPRINT: Ménage Amour

DAKOTA SPRINGS

Copyright © 2010 by Leah Brooke

E-book ISBN: 1-60601-731-4

First E-book Publication: January 2010

Cover design by Jinger Heaston

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# DAKOTA SPRINGS

*Dakota Heat 4*

**LEAH BROOKE**

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## Chapter One

Elizabeth Reed gripped the receiver tightly, her gaze automatically flying to where her daughter played on the floor. “Hayden?”

“Of course it’s me! Your mother just told us that your divorce is final. Pack your things. I’m coming to get you.”

Holding the receiver away from her ear, she stared at it, dumbfounded.

After all these years, why the hell would Hayden call her now? Not wanting Angie to hear, she moved to the kitchen.

His icy tone finally broke through as she warily lifted the receiver again. “—get there I’m going to beat the hell out of him and beat your ass raw.”

With her heart beating frantically, her legs wobbled, forcing her to grip the kitchen counter for support. She kept her tone firm, not about to let him hear any kind of weakness. “This is none of your business, Hayden, and I certainly don’t need you to come and get me. I’ve grown up, just like you wanted, and I can get home all by myself.”

“Push me on this, Lizzy, and you’ll be sorry. You never should have married him. If I had known about it beforehand, I would have stopped you.”

Shock and anger rendered her nearly speechless. He'd always been arrogant, but she'd never really had it directed at her before. If he thought she would just take it like one of his ranch hands, he was in for a surprise. "Listen, you son of a bitch—"

"No! You listen! Get your shit packed. I'll be there in the morning."

"I won't be here!" Elizabeth pushed the button to end the call and hurriedly tossed the phone onto the kitchen table as if it burned her. Backing away on legs that felt like jelly, she jolted when the phone rang again. And again. She took a step back with each ring, her heart racing. She had to get out of there. She couldn't deal with him right now.

Why the hell had he called?

Each ring grated on her nerves until the answering machine finally picked up.

"Lizzy, honey, it's Chandler. Pick up the phone and talk to me, baby. Come on." After a few seconds of silence, his voice took on an edge. "I know you're there. If you don't pick up the phone right now, we're getting the next flight and coming up there. And we won't be happy. If you pick up and let me know you're okay, we'll wait for you to come home, if that's what you want."

"Mommy, the phone ringed. A man's talkin' in the 'chine."

Spinning, Elizabeth took a deep breath and forced a smile for her three-year-old daughter. "I know, sweetheart. I'm going to talk to him now. Go back to your dolls, darling."

Watching her daughter walk back into the living room, Elizabeth picked up the phone, taking a deep breath before she pushed the button to talk. "Chandler, I have no idea why you and Hayden are calling, but I don't want to talk to either one of you. We have absolutely nothing to say to each other. Promise me you won't come here."

"Calm down, darlin'. I don't want you takin' off. We just wanted to come up and help you."

Elizabeth winced as Hayden yelled something in the background. “Chandler, I haven’t talked to either you or Hayden since...”

“Since we called you when we heard you got married.”

Elizabeth still wanted to cry every time she thought about that call and the defeat in their voices. But they’d already turned her away. “Look, I don’t know what’s gotten into either one of you. I’m coming home at the end of the week. I want to start over. I want Angie to be raised in the same small town that I was raised in. Don’t worry, I’m not coming back to bother either one of you again.”

Chandler sighed. “You’ve never been a bother to either one of us.”

“I remember it differently.”

There was a long silence, followed by a muffled sound as if Chandler had his hand over the receiver. When he came back on the phone, his frustration came through loud and clear. “We won’t come up there. But this isn’t over. We’ll talk to you when you get home.”

“We have nothing to talk about. You’ll really stay away? Both of you?”

“Yes.”

Elizabeth had trouble believing that. “You’re lying.”

Chandler’s voice dropped so low she had to struggle to hear him. “I’ve only lied to you once in my life, Lizzy, and my life has been hell ever since. We’ll wait. But you’re supposed to come home this weekend. If you don’t, we’re coming to get you. By force, if necessary.”

Tears rolled down her face, but she fought to keep them out of her voice. “Goodbye, Chandler.” She hung up and reached for a tissue to wipe away her tears before Angie saw them.

Eight years ago, Hayden and Chandler had wanted her to leave them alone. What the hell did they want from her now?

\* \* \* \*



Elizabeth drew a deep breath, wiping her hands on her skirt as the airport came into view. In just a few minutes, they would be on the ground. In an hour they would be back in Dakota Springs.

Home.

She found it hard to believe that it had been almost eight years since she left Dakota Springs and everything she'd ever loved. Her life had changed so much since then.

"Mommy? Will Grandma and Grandpa be at the 'port?"

Elizabeth smiled down at the biggest change in her life. "Airport, sweetie. And yes, they'll be there."

Angie had been excited about this move ever since Elizabeth had told her that they would be living in the same town as her grandparents.

Unfortunately, Hayden and Chandler Scott lived there, too.

The last time she'd seen either one of them had been the night of her eighteenth birthday, a night she wanted to forget. She'd been in love with them forever and that night she'd been happier than she'd ever been in her life, believing that they'd just been waiting for her to turn eighteen to tell her that they loved her.

She could still remember their sardonic laughter and her own mortification as her dreams of a future with them shattered.

"Mommy? Will I like 'Kota Springs?"

Elizabeth smiled and took her daughter's tiny hand in hers. "Dakota Springs, sweetie. You'll love Dakota Springs. I did when I was a little girl. You'll start school there soon and make lots of friends. And there's a park right down the street from Grandma and Grandpa's house."

"You said there's horses. I telled Becky."

"You *told* Becky," she corrected absently. Memories of Hayden and Chandler teaching her to ride flashed through her mind. It had been the happiest time in her life, and she'd fallen a little more in love with them every day. In her naiveté she'd seen nothing wrong with it

and wanted them both, dreaming that they would all live happily ever after.

Even now her face burned when she remembered how incredibly stupid she'd been.

She had no idea why the hell Hayden and Chandler suddenly seemed interested in what she did, but if either one of them thought they could try to run her life, they could think again. She'd mistaken their interest in her life before for caring. She wouldn't make that mistake again.

She'd grown up, and she'd be damned if she'd let them treat her like a child.

Until the other night, she hadn't spoken to either one of them since she got married, but she'd kept up with their lives through her parents. Anxious for any bit of news, she'd casually questioned her parents when she spoke to them, carefully keeping her feelings hidden.

For some reason, Hayden and Chandler had started fighting with each other several years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Scott had apparently had enough of it and sold the ranch to their sons and started travelling the way they'd always wanted to.

Since then, the Double S had become even more successful.

Angie bounced in her seat as the plane rolled to a stop at the gate, more animated than she'd been in a long time. She hadn't slept on the flight, as Elizabeth had hoped. She was too excited to start a new adventure.

Just watching her made Elizabeth even more tired. She hadn't slept much in the last several weeks. She'd been busy selling off the furniture Richard didn't want and packing and sending their belongings home.

The last of their belongings had been stuffed into the carry-on she now slung over her shoulder and, with them, the information that had been her ticket to freedom.

With Angie in her arms, she stood, anxious to see her parents again and start a new chapter in their lives.

A chapter that started with getting over Hayden and Chandler.

\* \* \* \*

With his stomach tied in knots that felt more like boulders, Hayden Scott stared at the gate, willing Elizabeth to appear. He could hardly believe that their Lizzy had finally come home.

It was about fucking time.

He'd spent the last four years believing that this day would never come and the last three months marking days off of his calendar. The last twenty-four hours had been spent watching the clock.

He felt alive in a way he hadn't in years.

They'd made the biggest mistake of their lives on Elizabeth's eighteenth birthday, and not a day had gone by since then that he hadn't regretted it. Every single day since she'd gone had only reinforced his conviction that he would never love anyone else.

They had a second chance with her and were determined that nothing get in the way of them having her.

Chandler stopped pacing to look back out the window, a tense stillness coming over him as the plane rolled to a stop. "I've never been so scared in my entire life. What if she can't handle what we want from her?"

Hayden drew a breath, fear tightening his own gut. "That's Lizzy you're talking about. That hard-headed brat can handle anything. I swear I'm never letting that woman out of my sight again." He tightened his hold, crushing the stuffed bear they'd bought for Angelina, unsurprised that his hands trembled. Carefully loosening his grip, he fluffed out the fur where he'd smashed it, wanting it to look perfect.

Would they be able to convince her to give them another chance?

They had to. He couldn't bear to think of the alternative. They'd done all they could to ease the way. They'd spent the last six months letting everyone know just what they felt for her and making sure her parents and the town accepted it.

He could still remember his panic and frustration when the letter he sent to her college dorm shortly before graduation came back unopened.

He and Chandler had purposely not contacted her while she attended school. They'd wanted to give her a chance to be on her own until they told her how they felt.

Her father had been furious, and it had taken months to get him to accept that they both loved Lizzy. They'd explained how they'd arrived at their decision to share her and answered all of his concerns.

They'd been stunned to learn of her marriage and even more so to learn that she carried her husband's child. They'd both spent the next several months growling at anyone who spoke to them, drinking too much, and going through women at an alarming rate in their hope of forgetting her.

Nothing had worked. They hadn't even made love to her yet and she'd ruined them for anyone else.

They'd tried to go on with their lives, but there was a hole where Lizzy should have been. Once they learned that she was getting divorced, they'd started living again, making plans, and setting things in motion for her return.

The waiting had finally ended, and the slippery minx would be with them again in a matter of minutes. Hayden kept his eyes glued to where she would appear. He and Chandler had every intention of spoiling both her and her daughter rotten and giving them all the love they could handle.

They'd tie Lizzy to them so tightly she would never be able to escape them again.

\* \* \* \*

Holding her daughter close, Elizabeth slowly made her way out of the plane, following the line of people moving into the airport. Shifting Angie to her other hip, she adjusted the carry-on that had started to dig into her shoulder.

“Mommy, my shoe!”

With a sigh, Elizabeth stopped, moved to the side, and looked down at her daughter’s tiny, bare foot, automatically reaching down to cradle it in her hand. “Where did you—never mind. I see it.” The small pink sandal lay on the floor several feet back. By the time Elizabeth got through the crowd of passengers, picked it up, and checked to make sure Angie still wore the other one, she found herself at the end of the line.

Slipping the sandal onto Angie’s foot, she tightened her grip on her and hurried into the airport. “Let’s go find Grandma and Grandpa, sweetie.” Searching the crowd for her parents, she stopped dead, her eyes going wide at the sight that greeted her.

Hayden and Chandler strode toward her, head and shoulders above the people around them, both looking more than a little anxious. They’d both matured in the years since she’d last seen them, looking colder and more formidable than ever. Their eyes glittered fiercely as their long legs quickly covered the distance between them.

They’d always been good-looking, but the years had added a few lines and honed the sharp edge of power and authority they’d always carried so easily. It turned them from handsome to striking.

Panic had her heart pounding furiously and kept her frozen in place as realization hit her. The men she’d loved for years had been replaced by two men who possessed an aura of danger that had never been there before and a desperate look in their eyes that she didn’t remember.

Why had they come? Had something happened to her parents?

Hayden reached her first, his long strides eating up the ground, reaching out to grab her arm when she would have stepped back. “It’s about damned time.”

Elizabeth barely had time to blink before he pulled her against him and bent his head to take her mouth with his. Her senses soared as he deepened the kiss, his lips moving over hers hungrily, his big arms wrapped around both her and Angie. She never knew coffee and mint could taste so darkly erotic. She automatically met his ardor with heat of her own.

Everything around her faded away. She heard nothing but his breathing and her own heartbeat, felt nothing but the heat of his body surrounding hers as he took her mouth repeatedly, one long drugging kiss moving into another.

Home.

He tasted like home and heaven, need and strength, the very essence of what a kiss with a lover should be. The sharp edge of danger in his kiss made it even more powerful and compelling, weakening her knees.

Liquid heat flowed through her like honey, thick and sweet, intoxicating her and stripping away all of her defenses in a heartbeat.

She’s always known it would be good, but nothing in her life had prepared her for this.

Holding her as though he would never let her go, Hayden explored her mouth, taking it thoroughly as though starving for the taste of her.

Her own hunger fueled the fire, making it burn even hotter. The stroke of his tongue led her on an erotic dance that stirred to life the need inside her that had lain dormant for years.

Her nipples beaded as they brushed against his hard chest, the sharp pinpricks of pleasure stoking the fire.

He swallowed her moan, his lips warm and firm as he tightened his hold, preventing her instinctive retreat. His kiss made demands, demands she couldn’t refuse.

Her head spun and a kaleidoscope of colors whirled behind her eyes. Grabbing his shirt front, she pressed even closer, close to weeping in delight. Leaning into his solidness and warmth, she absorbed as much of it as she could.

Had she ever felt so safe and warm?

“Mommy!”

The sound of her daughter’s frantic cry startled her. It apparently had the same effect on Hayden as he hurriedly broke off the kiss, his breathing uneven. Lifting his head, he kept an arm around both of them, his eyes nearly black.

Angie frowned and pushed at him, wrapping her arms around Elizabeth’s neck possessively.

His lips twitched as he stared down at Angie, his eyes twinkling with amusement. “I can’t blame her for being possessive of you, especially when I feel the same way. She’s beautiful, just like her momma.”

Elizabeth rubbed Angie’s back when her daughter buried her face in her neck. “It’s okay, sweetheart. They’re friends.”

Chandler stepped forward. “Much more than that, I hope. We’ve missed you very much, Lizzy. It’s good to have you home.” The intent in his eyes as he stared at her lips, still warm and swollen from Hayden’s kiss, made them tingle with anticipation. He picked up the bag at her feet that she hadn’t even remembered dropping.

Elizabeth stepped back, anxious now. “Are my parents okay? Did something happen to them?”

Chandler shook his head, his lips curving as he winked at Angie. “No. They’re fine. We asked if it would be all right if we came to pick you up.”

Angie lifted her head. “Mommy? Where’s Grandma and Grandpa?”

Chandler smiled tenderly and bent to Angie’s level. “Hello. My name’s Chandler. You must be Angelina. You’re even prettier than your pictures.”

Angie hid her face again, tightening her arms around Elizabeth's neck.

Elizabeth smiled apologetically. "I'm sorry. She's shy with strangers."

Hayden's eyes hardened briefly, before warming again. "Don't apologize for her. She doesn't know us yet, and she's skittish." He shot her a pointed glance. "Just like her momma. Don't worry, we won't be strangers for long."

Chandler moved to her other side. "Do you have any other baggage?"

Elizabeth adjusted Angie to hold her more comfortably. She was so tired, and her arms wouldn't be able to hold her daughter for much longer. "No. I sent everything else ahead. All we have is that bag."

Hayden nodded, his arm heavy on her shoulder as he steered her toward the exit. "Good. Then we can get the hell out of here. You look like you're about to collapse."

Angie lifted her head, her eyes wide as she whispered, "Mommy, that man said a bad word."

Hayden stopped short, keeping Elizabeth beside him. Bending, he looked into Angie's face. "You're right. I did and I'm not supposed to. With you around, it's a habit I'm going to have to break. My name is Hayden. Whenever you hear me say a bad word, you tell me. It's not nice, and I'll try not to do it again. Okay?"

Angie nodded warily, biting her bottom lip and tucking her head beneath Elizabeth's chin. "'Kay."

Hayden smiled and handed her the big stuffed bear he carried. "This is for you. He's really soft so you can cuddle with him. He can be your friend until you make friends here. You have to give him a good name, okay?"

Angie lifted her head and reached out to touch the bear, her eyes wide as she looked at her mother.

Elizabeth smiled and nodded. "Go ahead, sweetie. You may have it. What do you say?"



Angie accepted the bear, wrapping her arms around it as she leaned back against Elizabeth. “Tank you.”

Hayden’s eyes twinkled. “You’re very welcome. Now, let’s get out of here.”

Both men stayed close, flanking her as they walked through the airport. Their size and the aura of power they exuded so effortlessly had people moving out of the way as if by magic.

Although they’d slowed their steps for her, Elizabeth struggled to keep up. The sleepless nights had finally caught up with her, making it difficult just to put one foot in front of the other. She shifted Angie’s weight again as her hold weakened.

Hayden took her arm to pull her aside. “Angelina? Would it be okay if I carry you and your bear to the truck? Your momma’s getting tired.”

Angie buried her face in Elizabeth’s neck again and shook her head.

Elizabeth rubbed her back. “It’s okay, sweetie.” She looked up at Hayden. “I’m sorry, she’s just not used to—Hayden!”

Hayden bent and lifted them both, holding them securely against his chest as he started for the door.

Surprised at his move, Elizabeth gripped Angie tighter. “Hayden, you can’t carry us through the airport.”

People around them stared, smiling indulgently.

Angie giggled. “Mommy, the big man’s carrying us.”

Hayden smiled down at Angie. “You two don’t weigh anything. And what’s this ‘big man’? Don’t you remember my name?”

Angie giggled again, turning pink and looking up at him through her lashes. “Hayden.”

Chandler chuckled and bent to whisper in Elizabeth’s ear. “Your daughter’s a flirt.”

Elizabeth’s face burned at the attention they drew. Trembling at being held against Hayden this way, especially after the kiss they’d

just shared, she avoided his gaze. “Hayden, please put us down. People are staring.”

Hayden never broke his stride. “Who cares? You’re nothing but skin and bones, and you have dark circles under your eyes. You’re having a hard time carrying her. She’s not willing to let me carry her yet, so this is the only alternative. We’re almost there anyway, so just relax.”

Resigned to being carried, Elizabeth couldn’t help but smile at Angie as Hayden carried them out to the parking lot. Safe in her mother’s arms, Angie giggled, obviously enjoying this immensely.

Once they got to the truck, Hayden carefully set her on her feet, lifting Angie against him as Chandler opened the door for her.

Surprised to see a seat for Angie, Elizabeth looked up at Hayden. “Is that the seat my mother has for her?”

Hayden settled Angie into the child seat before she had a chance to object, and began buckling her in. “No. Since you’ll both be spending time with us, we wanted our own. The lady at the store assured us that this was the best.”

Elizabeth kept her tone cool. “I really don’t think we’ll be seeing that much of each other.” She started to walk away to get into the other side, only making it as far as the back of the truck before Chandler grabbed her, pinning her against it.

With an arm on either side of her, caging her in, he leaned over her until their noses nearly touched. “Oh, darlin’, we’ll be seeing a lot of each other. We’ve finally got you back, and we’re not letting you get away from us again.” His eyes darkened becoming the color of dark chocolate. “You’re ours, Lizzy. Get used to it.” His gaze held hers as he slowly lowered his head.

Mesmerized, she watched him move closer, knowing she should push him away. She also knew she couldn’t. Her eyes fluttered closed as need swirled inside her.

Where Hayden demanded, Chandler coerced, gently seducing her into the heat. His hands moved to her waist, squeezing gently and sending need racing through her.

Her breath caught as his hands moved higher. Her breasts swelled, her nipples tightening almost painfully in anticipation. Moaning into his mouth, she grabbed fistfuls of his dark, silky hair to pull him closer. When his hands stopped right below her breasts, she groaned in frustration and leaned into him, needing more. Shifting restlessly as the heat from his hands burned the underside of her breast, she gasped against his lips as the evidence of his desire pressed insistently against her stomach.

Lifting his head, he stared down at her hungrily. "You've put us through hell."

Dazed, it took Elizabeth a few seconds to make sense of his words. When she did, she pushed him away furiously. "*I* put *you* through hell? Listen, you son of a bitch, I left because of you and that Neanderthal you call a brother." Damn it, she hadn't meant to say that. Even she'd heard the bitterness and hurt in her tone, something she hadn't wanted to reveal to either one of them. Taking a calming breath, she tried to ignore his knowing smile and carefully kept her tone cool. "But all that's in the past. I'm a different person now. I've grown up."

Chandler's smile turned cold. "Don't kid yourself, Lizzy. It'll never be finished between us. Let's go. Angie is calling for you."

Turning away, Elizabeth hurried to get into the truck, where she immediately began to settle a tired and cranky Angie, almost glad for the distraction.

Five minutes into the ride, Angie fell asleep.

No longer having Angie as a buffer, Elizabeth stared out the window as the tense silence lengthened. Searching frantically for a safe topic to break it, she cleared her throat. "How are your parents? I understand they're travelling."

Chandler turned in his seat to face her. “Mom and Dad are having a great time. They’re on a cruise right now. They can’t wait to see you again, and they’re dying to meet Angie.”

Elizabeth blinked. “They know I’m home?”

Chandler frowned. “Of course they know. They know we’ve been waiting for you. We’ve had some changes made at the ranch as soon as we heard about the divorce.”

Elizabeth gaped at him, aware of Hayden’s rapt attention to the conversation. “I don’t understand either one of you at all. Before I left, you made it clear what you thought of my feelings for both of you.” Just thinking about it made her face burn. “You were right. I was childish and selfish. I’ve grown up since then. All I care about now is what’s best for Angie.”

In the rear view mirror, Hayden shot a glance at Angie, before looking at her. “We were young and confused then, too, Lizzy. If you hadn’t taken off in a huff, things would have worked out differently. But make no mistake, sweetheart, your fate has already been sealed.”

Gritting her teeth, she tamped down her anger, not wanting to yell and wake Angie. “I know you’ve always felt obligated to take care of me because our parents are friends.” It had taken her several months after she’d started college to realize the truth. “But I came home to raise my daughter close to my parents. I’m a big girl now and have been taking care of myself and Angie for a long time. Just butt out of my life. You have no right to plan my future.”

Hayden’s cold smile made her more than a little apprehensive. “Your future, Lizzy, is already set in stone. Believe me, you don’t want to talk to me about our *rights* concerning you right now.”

Before she could formulate a response, Hayden came to a red light and turned in his seat to face her and gestured toward Angie. “She should have been ours. Make no mistake, the next one will be.”

## Chapter Two

After finally getting her daughter to sleep, Elizabeth tiptoed out of Angie's bedroom, quietly closing the door behind her. Her movements were lethargic as she walked out to the living room. She wanted nothing more than to go to bed, but she needed to talk to her parents while Angie slept.

Her mother greeted her with a cup of chamomile tea. "Drink this and go to bed, sweetheart. I told you we shouldn't have unpacked all of those boxes today."

Elizabeth accepted the mug and sat on the sofa, tucking her legs under her. "I want to talk to both of you while Angie's asleep."

"What's wrong?"

Elizabeth smiled as her father came into the room. "I know both of you were upset that I didn't want you to come to see me in New Jersey when I was going through the divorce, and I owe you an explanation."

Jeb Reed narrowed his eyes. "What have you been keepin' from us? Spill it, girl."

Wincing at his tone, Elizabeth took a sip of her tea. "I handled it, Dad. I just didn't want you and Mom in the middle." Setting her tea aside, she faced them both. "Richard's been cheating on me from the beginning. I found out about it within the first six months."

Paula Reed shot to her feet. "What? He's been cheating the whole time? I thought you divorced him because you'd just learned he was having an affair."

Elizabeth shook her head. “No. Our marriage was over before Angie was born, but we had to put on a show because of Richard’s father.”

Jeb scowled. “The senator? Did he know about it?”

Elizabeth laughed humorlessly. “Oh, he knew about it. He and his son sometimes saw the same women. But Richard wouldn’t agree to a divorce because it would hurt his father’s image. Richard Sr. told me that if I tried to divorce his son, he would see to it that I lost Angie.”

Jeb plunked his coffee mug on the coffee table, some of the contents sloshing over the sides. “That bastard! And you kept all of this from us?”

Picking up her own mug, she sighed. “There was nothing you could do. The senator’s a powerful man. They would have taken Angie. Richard and I have had separate rooms for years. When you came to stay with us, he slept on the floor.”

Her mother and father looked at each other before turning back to her. Her mother’s lips firmed. “I can’t believe you kept this from us.”

Even though Elizabeth had long since reached the age of consent, her stomach knotted at the look on her father’s face. “I didn’t want you to worry.”

Her father jumped up from his chair, his tone furious. “Didn’t want us to worry?” Glancing toward the direction Angie slept, he scrubbed a hand over his face and lowered his voice. “We’re your parents. We should have known. I can’t believe you didn’t come to us with this. At least Hayden and Chandler had the courage to talk to us when they figured out how they felt about you.”

Elizabeth felt all the blood drain from her face. “Hayden and Chandler *told* you?”

Jeb frowned at her. “Of course they told us. As soon as they found out you were getting a divorce, they came to us and told us how they felt about you and that they both wanted you.”

Speechless, Elizabeth looked down into her tea, her face burning. “I can’t believe they told you that.” Shaking her head, she set her tea

aside again. "It doesn't matter what they said. You don't have to worry. I would never do something like that to you or Mom. I had a crush on both of them when I was younger, but I see now that it's totally unrealistic. I just want to get a job and make a life for myself and Angie."

Her mother sat back, smiling, and shot a glance at her husband. "You didn't even ask what your father said when they approached him."

More than a little uncomfortable with this topic, Elizabeth grimaced. "I can only imagine."

Her father picked up his coffee again. "I was furious, as they knew I would be, but they still had the guts to come and talk to me. Over time I had a change of heart."

Elizabeth gaped at him. "You did?"

Her mother laughed softly. "Did you think we didn't know how crazy you were about them? Did you think we didn't see how you were always so careful when you talked about them when we came to visit? Didn't you think I figured out that you only married Richard because you were pregnant?"

Elizabeth shrugged, trying to cover her embarrassment. "The senator insisted. Richard's mother, Vivian, was furious. She said she didn't want the scandal of the senator having an illegitimate grandchild."

Her mother's lips thinned. "And they didn't want you to divorce him because of the senator's career either, right? What would have happened if the senator and his son got caught cheating on their wives? I guess that wouldn't have hurt his career either, right?"

Elizabeth smiled bitterly. "I don't think they thought they'd ever get caught."

Her mother got up and moved to sit with her on the sofa. "So what made them finally agree to a divorce?"

"They didn't have any choice. Richard had been giving me extra money, thinking that would keep me satisfied. I used the money to

hire a private investigator and to get proof of his affairs and the senator's. Once I had that, they had to agree."

Her father shook his head. "And to think I kept Hayden and Chandler from going up there. If I'd have known, I would have turned them both loose on Richard and his father."

Elizabeth shifted uncomfortably. "About Hayden and Chandler—"

Her father lifted a brow. "What about them?"

"What did you say to them?"

Her father regarded her steadily before answering. "I told you I was mad as hell at first. But then when I saw how unhappy you were, I started to listen. I knew they'd always watched over you when you were growing up, but I didn't figure they felt that way about you. They made me see that they would do a better job of making you happy than Richard had."

Elizabeth started to get an uneasy feeling about this, making her almost afraid to ask. But she had to know. "Did Hayden and Chandler know that I wasn't happy before they came to you?"

Her mother shrugged and looked away. "I didn't say anything to them, but I told Beverly."

Elizabeth finished her tea and stood. "And Beverly Scott told her sons." Smiling sadly, she stared down into her empty cup. "Hayden and Chandler don't really want me. They're just trying to take care of me like they always have. They probably figured that it would be easier and give them both more free time if they shared the responsibility."

Her mother stood. "No, they really—"

Elizabeth waved a hand. "If you don't mind listening for Angie, I think I'll go outside for a bit before I go to bed."

Her mother sighed. "Of course we don't mind, but I think you're wrong."

Ignoring the look that passed between her parents, she smiled sadly. "I won't be long."



She headed to the kitchen and placed her empty mug in the sink before heading out the back door as her father turned on the news. Her mind racing, she walked down the steps to stand in the backyard and stared thoughtfully out into the darkness.

Memories of the night of her eighteenth birthday assailed her, refusing to be held at bay any longer. Although it had been years ago, the events of that night had been branded into her mind, and she could remember every detail as though it happened yesterday.

It had been a warm, humid night, much like tonight. She could still remember the butterflies that fluttered in her stomach and the smell of burgers grilling and mingling with the scent of her mother's honeysuckle.

Her father had painstakingly hung hundreds and hundreds of Christmas lights which turned their backyard into a magical wonderland.

She'd deliberated over what to wear for days. She had finally gone shopping with her friends and bought a red tank top and the shortest white shorts she could find. Both had earned disapproving looks from her father, but she hadn't cared.

All that had mattered was that she looked good for Hayden and Chandler and showed them that she was no longer a child. If she dressed like the girls they dated, they had to notice her. They'd resisted all of her attempts to make them see her as something more than the daughter of a friend they felt obligated to look out for.

She'd flirted outrageously, started wearing make-up, and did her best to spend as much time at the ranch as possible.

They'd continued to treat her like a child, but they'd both started paying more attention to her, giving her advice, and acting possessive. They'd monitored her dates and tried to keep the boys in town away from her.

She'd been so excited, thinking they finally saw her as a woman and had been jealous.

When they'd arrived late to her birthday party, she'd done her best to look only mildly interested, while inside she'd become a bundle of nerves. Watching them mingle with the others, she'd been so excited she could hardly stay still. No one else had existed for her that night. She'd waited impatiently for them to separate themselves from the crowd before approaching them.

She'd given them her brightest smile and sauntered up to them in a practiced move. "Hi, Hayden. Hi, Chandler. Thanks for coming to my party."

Hayden's smile had sent her heart racing. "We wouldn't miss your birthday party for the world." His smile quickly disappeared as his eyes raked her figure. "Don't you think those shorts are a little short?"

Elated that he'd noticed, she cocked her hip, smiling flirtatiously and using her eyes the way she'd practiced in the mirror. "Do you like them?"

Chandler's scowl had made her feel even better. "What the hell are you doing dressing like that? Every guy here is imagining you naked."

"Including you?"

Chandler, then twenty-eight, had kept looking at the way her nipples poked at the front of her tank top. He looked away suddenly as though embarrassed, his jaw clenched. "No. I prefer grown-ups."

She'd walked up to Hayden, putting her hands on his chest. "I'm eighteen now. You don't have to push me away any more."

Hayden's eyes had gone cold. "You're a spoiled brat who can't even decide which one of us she wants. What kind of girl throws herself at two men?"

Even now, thinking about it made her eyes sting.

She'd tried again, breathing through the indescribable pain and unable to believe he would say such a thing to her and really mean it. "Hayden, it's not like that. I'm not playing games. I love both of you so much. I really do."

As long as she lived, she'd never forget the look of disgust on their faces.

Opening her eyes, she ruthlessly pushed the image away.

The question that Hayden had asked her that night had gone through her mind a thousand times since then.

What kind of woman could love two men so completely?

She couldn't believe how incredibly naïve she'd been. She'd grown up in a hurry that night and clung to her dignity by a thread for the rest of the party.

Hearing laughter, she came back to the present and turned her head toward the street. Saturday night had always been the night that everyone came out in Dakota Springs. Her parents' house sat right on Main Street, enabling her to easily see and hear the couples as they strolled by. The sounds of their laughter and low conversation as they walked by in pairs only made her more aware of her own loneliness.

After the couples passed and silence reigned again, even the sounds of the crickets singing sounded sad to her and made her feel even more isolated.

She wasn't alone. She had her daughter and her parents, but she wanted more. She ached to have a man who would hold her in the night, one who would love her and would speak softly to her in the dark. They would plan their future and talk about their dreams and their love for each other.

A slight breeze, like a warm breath, blew the tendrils of hair at her nape but did nothing to relieve the oppressive heaviness of the warm, humid night. She really should go back inside and into the air conditioned house, but she couldn't. Not yet. Tired, but still too unsettled to sleep, she couldn't stop thinking about what had happened at the airport.

And ask herself yet again the question that had plagued her for years.

*What kind of woman could love two men the way she loved Hayden and Chandler?*

It didn't seem to matter how much time had passed. She'd known at eighteen that she'd always love them and in the eight years since she'd last seen them, nothing had changed. If anything, she loved them even more, and the last eight years proved to her just how rare her feelings for them were.

Why the hell couldn't she get over them? If she did, maybe she could fall in love with *one* man and have a chance for some happiness.

Looking back over the dark yard again, she wondered what Hayden and Chandler had tried to prove at the airport. If it had been a test to see if she wanted one of them over the other she'd failed miserably. Again.

Hard arms slid around her from behind, surprising a gasp from her as they pulled her back against a wall of heat. Warm lips grazed her ear. "You look so sad, baby. What are you thinking about?"

The dark timber of Hayden's voice washed over her, making her yearn for things she'd been trying to forget for eight years. He'd never used an endearment with her before.

She'd never heard that silky cadence in his voice directed at her before.

Together they combined into something totally irresistible.

She tried to pull away, but he didn't let her. "I was thinking about how selfish and naïve I was at eighteen. I'm glad I finally grew out of it."

Chandler moved to stand in front of her, his eyes gentle in the dim light. "We were just as naïve." Reaching out, he caressed her cheek. "We made a huge mistake with you, but at the time we couldn't handle what you offered so sweetly."

She blinked back the tears that threatened, swallowing the lump in her throat. There hadn't been a day in the last eight years she hadn't thought about them, missed them, or loved them. Hearing him say that now both saddened and angered her. "Neither one of you ever even called me. I know I disgusted you. I saw it on your faces."

Hayden's hand covered her stomach, gently caressing. "Never. It was an act. You've never disgusted us. If anything we were disgusted with ourselves." With his other hand, he cupped her jaw, turning her to face him. "We promised ourselves we wouldn't contact you until you came home from school. When you didn't come home, we came to see your dad and ask him what the hell was taking you so long." His voice lowered. "Your father told us that you were married and had a baby on the way." His hand tightened on her waist. "I could have cheerfully strangled you that day, Lizzy. Why the hell did you marry him? Why didn't you come home where you belong?"

Elizabeth laughed humorlessly. "Where I belong? I didn't belong here, Hayden. Not then. I was young and stupid and acted recklessly. What was I supposed to do, come home pregnant so you could think even worse of me?"

Chandler took both of her hands in his, and she cursed the fact that shivers went up her arm at the contact. His eyes glittered now. "We regret everything we said to you that night, Lizzy. We've regretted it every day since then." He sighed heavily and bent to kiss her forehead. "You scared the hell out of us, and we didn't know what the hell to do with you. We didn't figure it out for a long time."

Elizabeth pushed him away. "What to *do* with me? You don't have to worry about what to do with me, either one of you. I'm not the same child that left here eight years ago. I won't put you in any uncomfortable situations like that ever again." She wouldn't start the next chapter of her life making the same mistake she'd made in the past. "Let go of me."

Grateful that they released her, she moved away, glancing over her shoulder to find both of them staring at her. Turning her back, she took several more shaky steps away from them and looked out into the faintly-lit yard, stiffening when Hayden moved in behind her.

He leaned close, his lips brushing her shoulder. "We both wanted you. Badly. But we didn't know what to do about it. We knew you

wanted both of us. A child's want. What we need from you now is a woman's love."

Having no idea what had come over them, or what kind of game they were playing with her now, she struggled to hide the urge to turn and throw herself in his arms. "You can't have it. Like I said, I was young and stupid. You were right in what you both said back then. I was a little girl playing at being a grown-up. I was confused about what I felt. I'm not that little girl anymore."

Hayden turned her in his arms, lifting her chin. "No, you're not. You're a woman now, and we're not about to let you slip through our fingers again."

More than anything, Elizabeth wanted to believe him, but the last time she'd thought they'd cared for her, she'd been wrong. She wouldn't be able to survive it if she was wrong again, and now she had a daughter to think of. Over the last eight years she'd finally come to realize just how impossible such a relationship would be. Taking a deep breath, she kept her voice cool, not looking at either one of them. "It's impossible. Please go away. And don't ever come back again. Excuse me, I have to check on Angie."

Chandler grabbed her arm when she would have walked away. "What's wrong with you? Angie's fine. She's sound asleep and your mom and dad are watching a movie. They can hear her. Stop trying to avoid us. Talk to us, Lizzy. I don't want any more misunderstandings between us. They've cost us too much already."

Elizabeth snapped at him. "Do you even hear what you're saying? I have a daughter to think about now, and what you're proposing is impossible. I won't have her ridiculed. Plus, I don't believe you. A long time ago, I mistook your caring for something more. You took it upon yourselves to watch out for me because our parents are friends. I won't make that mistake again."

Hayden gripped her other arm and pulled her against him, the anger in his eyes unmistakable even in the faint light. "Do you really

think I would ever let anyone hurt you or Angie? We've spent a long time figuring out all of this. Just trust us."

Elizabeth smiled bitterly. "Now that I'm a single parent with a failed marriage behind me, I suppose you think I need to be taken care of. That's what all of this is about, Hayden. Don't try to pretend otherwise. I've got news for you. I know how to take care of myself and Angie just fine."

Hayden ran a hand over her hair. "Of course we want to take care of both you and Angie. If we have our way, we'll spoil both of you rotten. But that's not what this is all about and you know it."

With her hands on her hips, Elizabeth shook her head. "Nope. Not buying it. Did your mother put you up to this? Small town, divorced woman...no, she would have known that the town would never accept me being with both of you—"

Chandler swore under his breath. "You are the most exasperating woman on God's green earth! Our parents have nothing to do with this. You know damned well what this is about. You love us. *Both of us*. Stop playing these damned games. We want you to live with us. Bear our children. We'll be good fathers to Angie and to any other children who come along. We'll be good husbands to you."

Elizabeth shook her head, wondering if either one of them noticed that neither claimed to love her. "Husbands? I'm supposed to have two husbands in a town like Dakota Springs?" God, if it could happen, she would be the happiest woman alive. But not with men who considered her little more than an obligation.

Chandler laid a hand on her back, gently caressing. "We've already taken care of everything, Lizzy. The town already accepts it."

Incredulous, she gaped at him. "You told everybody? Of course you did. Well, I don't accept it. What's gotten into you? We've never even dated. We've kissed once."

Hayden grabbed her shoulders and pulled her against him, his mouth hovering just above hers. "We'll just have to fix that then,

won't we? Give me another taste of what I had at the airport. I've been hungry for you for too long."

Her arm lifted of its own volition to Hayden's shoulder, kneading the thick muscle there as his mouth covered hers. In this, she could never fight either one of them.

Hayden wrapped his hand around her ponytail and tilted her head back as his tongue pushed inside. Sweeping her mouth with his, he devoured her, setting off wild sparks throughout her body. He nipped her lips gently, making them sting, before sweeping her mouth again.

Her lips felt swollen and ultra-sensitive as she tangled her tongue with his, reveling in the erotic taste of him.

When he finally lifted his head his eyes appeared lit from within as he stared down at her. "You're beautiful. You're passionate. You're ours."

Elizabeth swallowed heavily, trying to fight the arousal he'd ignited with so little effort. "No."

Chandler's hands came around from behind to her to cover her breasts, pulling her back against him. He bent his head to nibble at her neck as Hayden watched, his eyes hooded.

Her head fell back against Chandler's shoulder as need clawed its way to the surface. She couldn't tear her gaze away from Hayden as he watched her every reaction.

Chandler massaged her breasts gently, cupping them and moving his thumbs over her nipples, each flick over them causing her pussy to clench.

Her stomach tightened, the muscles quivering as Hayden's hand covered it. Tightening her thighs against the throbbing of her clit, she arched, pushing her breasts more firmly into Chandler's hands.

Hayden's lips twitched as he touched her, his hand moving in slow circles over her abdomen. "Your lips say one thing, but your body says another. You like having both of us touch you this way, don't you, baby?"



A moan ripped from her throat as he began to gather the material of her dress, raising it, inch by torturous inch. "It's just chemistry. Lust. It can't work."

Chandler lightly bit her earlobe as punishment. "Bullshit. You're not the kind of woman who can react this way with someone you don't care about." He lightly pinched a nipple through the material, making her cry out. "And it can work. You like that. Let's see what else you like. Hayden and I have a lot to explore, don't we, darlin'?"

Chandler tugged her nipples again, surprising another cry from her and making her ache to feel his hands on her bare flesh.

Gripping Chandler's sinewy forearms, she squeezed her eyes closed. God, she'd never imagined anything could ever feel as good as having both of them touch her this way. Liquid heat pooled between her thighs as her clit throbbed steadily. Her body, hypersensitive to every touch, shimmered with need. She could no longer tell the difference between their warm breath caressing her or the warm breeze. Blending together, they surrounded her, touching her everywhere. Dazed and weakened by the little burst of pleasure wherever they touched, Elizabeth arched into their hands, needing more.

Never in her life had she felt so needy, so desired.

Having both of the men she'd loved forever touching her this way was something out of her wildest fantasies. Her eyes flew open when Hayden's callused hand skimmed her bare thigh. Alarmed that he'd been able to raise the front of her dress completely out of the way without her even realizing it, she shuddered.

His big body stood between her and the street, blocking hers from anyone who might be walking by. Somehow they'd maneuvered her closer to the house so that she couldn't be seen from the windows. She could see Hayden's eyes more clearly as he slipped his hand inside her panties. "Nice and wet, huh, baby?" He bent, covering her mouth with his and swallowing her gasp as his finger slid over her clit.

Chandler released her breasts to grab her around the waist when her knees buckled. Holding her up, he buried his face in her neck. “That’s it, darlin’. Let go. I’ve got you.”

Elizabeth’s body gathered as Hayden stroked her clit insistently, his mouth moving over hers to muffle her cries.

There was nothing teasing about his touch. He stroked her steadily, driving her relentlessly to the peak, and she’d been hungry for them too long to resist.

Her body sizzled, every nerve ending screaming with ecstasy as she came, trembling helplessly at the strength of her orgasm. Her body tightened and jerked as her pussy clenched desperately, her juices coating Hayden’s fingers. Her clit burned where he stroked her, pulsing in time to her rapid heartbeat.

He swallowed her whimpered cries, his touch gentle now as he raised his head, raw possession glittering in his eyes. “So beautiful.” Removing his hand from her panties, he allowed her dress to fall back into place.

Chandler turned her in his arms. “I can’t wait to get you naked and explore every delicious inch of you.”

She closed her eyes against the wave of longing, only to snap them back open again. Pushing against them, she moved several feet away, wrapping her arms around herself as a chill went through her. “I can’t do this. Don’t do this to me. I know you both well enough to know this won’t work.”

Both regarded her steadily for several long seconds before sharing a look. Hayden nodded, reaching out a hand to her, only to flinch when she took a step back. “You’re tired. We’ll leave you alone tonight. Get some sleep. We’ll be back tomorrow.”

Elizabeth took another step back. “Don’t bother.”

Chandler grabbed her arm before she could avoid him. Leaning close, he brushed his lips against hers. “Oh, it’s no bother, darlin’. You’ll be seeing us quite a bit.”

Hayden ran a finger over a still pebbled nipple. "If you're trying to get rid of us, you've got a hell of a fight on your hands, baby."

Eight years ago, Elizabeth would have given anything to hear those words. Now they filled her with sadness. She could never be that woman again. "You're wasting your time."

Chandler cupped her jaw. "The last eight years of our lives have been a waste of time, Lizzy. It's time to start living again. We want you and Angie in our lives."

Hayden ran a hand over her hair. "We'll do whatever it takes to get you back."

Surrounded by all that raw masculinity, Elizabeth struggled to keep her voice cool, while inside she wanted nothing more than to believe them. Raising a brow, she backed away from them for her own sanity. "Get me back? You never had me."

Hayden's eyes hardened. "Don't kid yourself, Lizzy. You've always been ours."

## Chapter Three

Elizabeth sighed, rubbing her head where an ache had settled right between her eyes. Angie's grouchiness made it throb even worse.

"I don't wannum!"

Elizabeth shared a look with her mother and tried again. "Angie, you have to eat something. You like scrambled eggs. Finish them and we'll go for a walk."

She wanted to walk around Dakota Springs today, to familiarize herself with all the changes that had been made since she'd gone. She also wanted to check for help wanted signs, and she needed to pick up a few things.

It appeared Angie had other ideas.

Crossing her arms over her chest, Angie pouted belligerently, sticking her bottom lip out as far as she could. "No. Wanna see the horses."

Her mother hid a smile as she shook out two aspirin. "She sure does love horses, doesn't she?"

Elizabeth sighed again, smiling her thanks as she accepted the tablets. "She's never even seen one in person, but all of a sudden she's obsessed with them."

Angie glared at Elizabeth before turning to her grandmother. "Becky told me that I have to ride a horse or nobody's gonna like me."

Elizabeth sighed tiredly. She'd slept very little the night before and found herself struggling for patience. "Becky's wrong. People will like you if you don't ride. Not everyone in Dakota Springs rides horses. Look at Grandma and Grandpa. They don't ride, and everyone

loves them.” Spotting the local paper her father had pushed aside, she picked it up and began searching the help wanted ads. Grabbing a pen, she started reading, hoping that Angie would eat her breakfast.

“I wanna ride a horse now!”

Elizabeth went back to the paper and downed two aspirin with her coffee. A few of the jobs listed were within walking distance. “Not today, Angie. We’ll see the horses another day.”

Several families kept horses, but none on the scale of Hayden and Chandler’s spread. They bred and trained horses and were considered the best.

Angie would love the ranch, but after what happened last night, Elizabeth couldn’t go near it. Or them.

“You pwomised.”

Elizabeth sighed again. “I said that we would see the horses one day but not today. Come on, sweetie. Mommy has a lot of things to do today. Wouldn’t you like to go see the park?”

“Is there horses there?”

Scooping up a forkful of eggs, she offered them to her daughter. “No, baby. The park doesn’t have any horses. But if you’re not going to be a good girl, we’re not going to go see any at all.”

Petulantly, Angie pushed the fork away and turned her face.

Grateful that a knock at the door interrupted what might have turned into a full-fledged temper tantrum, Elizabeth went back to the paper as her father went to answer it.

“Hayden, Chandler. Good morning. What a surprise.” Her father’s tone implied it was anything but.

Elizabeth stiffened, her insides fluttering. Her face burned as memories of what they’d done to her last night made her clit tingle even now.

Her father grinned and gestured toward the table. “I’m having breakfast with my girls. Would you like to join us?”

Hayden’s pained smile made Elizabeth’s heart lurch. “You’re a lucky man.”

Both Hayden and Chandler wore faded denims, white t-shirts lovingly molded to their muscular frames, and their good cowboy boots. The strenuous work they did on a daily basis showed. Not an ounce of fat could be seen anywhere. Those bodies didn't come from a gym, like her ex-husband's had. Roped with hard muscle, Hayden and Chandler's bodies had been sculpted over time by years of backbreaking work and were built for strength.

Hayden lifted a brow at her continued silence, making her face burn as she realized she'd been staring. "Good morning, Lizzy."

Elizabeth looked away. "Good morning. What brings the two of you by this morning?"

Chandler looked down at Angie, frowning at her belligerent pose.

Angie put her head down, not meeting his eyes, and crossing her arms over her chest again.

Kneeling beside her, Chandler tapped a finger under her chin. "What's wrong, Angel?"

Angie lifted her eyes. "My name's not Angel. It's Angie."

Chandler lifted a brow and took a seat next to her, accepting a cup of coffee from her mother. "I know, but you look like an angel to me."

Elizabeth grimaced. "She may look like an angel, but she's not being very angelic this morning. Have you two eaten?" Good manners dictated that she ask, but she couldn't imagine sitting with them long enough for them to eat. The kitchen felt much smaller since they'd entered. Their presence was overwhelming, making it feel as though they'd sucked all of the air out of the room.

Hayden accepted his own cup with a smile and sat down next to Elizabeth, smiling at Angie who sat on Elizabeth's other side. "Hours ago. What's the problem?"

Elizabeth picked up her own coffee. "Angie doesn't want to finish her breakfast unless I agree to take her to see horses today."

Paula looked at the clock. "You father and I have to get to the garage. We'll see you at dinner."

Hayden smiled up at her, a warmer smile than usual. “We wanted to invite Lizzy and Angie to the ranch for dinner if that’s all right with you.”

Elizabeth’s head shot up. “But I—”

“I think that’s a wonderful idea.” Her mother quickly gathered her things, kissing Angie on the cheek before turning to Elizabeth. “If you can’t get your errands done today, give me a call, and I’ll pick up what you need.”

Elizabeth jumped out of her chair as soon as the door closed behind them. Sitting so close to Hayden played hell with her nerves. “Angie, please eat your breakfast so we can go.”

Chandler sipped his coffee, eyeing Angie. “Why don’t you want your breakfast? Don’t you like eggs?”

Angie pushed the eggs around on her plate but wouldn’t answer.

Elizabeth went to the kitchen sink and began washing the breakfast dishes. “She loves scrambled eggs, but she’s mad at me because she wants to see horses. Now. Her friend back home, Becky, told her that when she moved here she would have to learn to ride or no one would like her. She refuses to do anything until she gets to ride a horse.”

Chandler hid a smile and nodded. “Oh. Well, I guess we should be going then. We just came out to see if Angie wanted to see the puppies, but if she won’t mind her momma—”

“Puppies?”

With her back to the table, Elizabeth couldn’t see her daughter’s face, but heard the excitement in her voice. “Maybe another time. Angie’s grouchy today and we have a lot of errands to do.”

“Mommy! I wanna see the puppies.”

Elizabeth turned around to tell her ‘no’, automatically snapping her mouth shut when Hayden lifted a hand. Irritated that she’d reacted automatically to his authority, she glared at him.

Ignoring her, Hayden sat back, shaking his head at Angie. “Only good girls get to see the puppies. Maybe if you finish your breakfast

and be a good girl while your momma does what she needs to do, we can go see the puppies and horses later.”

Angie’s eyes went wide. “You have puppies *and* horses?”

Chandler’s soft chuckle sent a wave of longing through Elizabeth, and she turned back to her chore to hide it. “Yes. We have a *lot* of horses. Your momma used to ride them all the time. Eat your breakfast so we can get going.”

Elizabeth turned slightly, determined to keep them from planning her day. “We don’t have the time to go out to your ranch today. Maybe another time.”

Angie stopped shoveling in eggs to protest. “Mommy, I wanna see the puppies and the horses. I’ll be good.”

With a tender smile, Hayden wiped away the egg that dribbled out of her mouth.

Trying to harden her heart against that smile, Elizabeth shook her head. She needed to come to grips with her feelings before she spent any more time with them. “Angie—”

Chandler interrupted her. “Your momma’s the boss. Why don’t you finish your breakfast and get your shoes? Maybe if you’re a good girl while we do what your momma has to do, we can go to the ranch later. The puppies and horses will still be there.”

“Kay.”

Angry now that he’d more or less promised Angie a trip to the ranch, Elizabeth started to turn to tell him ‘no’ when Chandler’s hard body pressed against her back, pinning her to the sink. She automatically started to lean back against him before she caught herself. Her nipples beaded, pushing against her lacy bra as an ache settled low in her abdomen. Accepting the empty cup from him, she shuddered, hoping he hadn’t noticed. “You can’t promise her things like that without asking me. I have no intention of going out to the Double S today.”

Chandler’s lips brushed her ear, sending a shiver racing through her. It brought to mind the havoc they’d created in her so effortlessly



the night before. A pool of lust swam languorously through her system, melting everything in its path. His hands settled on her waist, pulling her more firmly back against him. "All's fair, darlin'."

Elizabeth smothered a moan, frantically trying to maintain her composure. "I didn't realize we were at war." She absently heard Hayden speaking softly to Angie but couldn't focus on their conversation.

Chandler's hands slid up to cover her breasts, startling a gasp from her and making her nipples tingle. "It's not war, darlin'."

"Mommy, I'm done!"

Elizabeth jolted in Chandler's arms, grateful that he released her. She went to gather her daughter's dishes, unsurprised that her hands shook as she fought to regulate her breathing.

Out of Angie's view, Chandler slid a hand over Elizabeth's hip. "Come on, Angie. Let's go find your shoes."

With her face burning, Elizabeth turned back to the sink to wash the rest of the dishes, stiffening when she heard the scrape of Hayden's chair.

He moved in close behind her as Chandler had done, dropping his cup into the dishwater and sliding his arms around her. "Do you have any idea what it does to me to be anywhere near you?" His hands moved up to cover her breasts and began to massage gently. "Why the hell did you have to get married? You were supposed to come back here after you graduated. Christ, I've missed you like hell." Burying his face in her neck, he breathed deeply. "No one else smells like you."

Fighting the urge to lean back against him, Elizabeth grabbed his hands with her wet, soapy ones and pushed them away. Unnerved at the ache that settled low in her abdomen, she snapped at him. "Why the hell would I have come back here? You and Chandler both made your feelings for me plain enough. I've already made enough mistakes. I'm not about to make any more."

Hayden massaged her shoulders. "When we get some time alone, Chandler and I are going to explain what happened eight years ago." He froze, tightening his grip and spun her around to face him. "Mistakes? Why does it sound like you're talking about more than just marrying the wrong man?"

Cursing herself for lowering her guard, Elizabeth reached for a towel. "It doesn't matter. Get out of my way." Drying her hands, she started past him, but Hayden pulled her up short.

"Explain."

Elizabeth shoved at him, wondering why she even bothered when he didn't move so much as an inch. "No. Look, I came back here to start over. I want Angie to be raised in a small town and for both of us to live close to my parents. The people in this town are old-fashioned. You know as well as I do they'd never accept what you're proposing." Gritting her teeth, she glared up at him. "Damn it, you've got me talking about it as if it could happen. It won't, Hayden. Ever. After what you and Chandler did to me and what I put up with from that jerk I married, I'm never tying myself to a man again."

Hayden pulled her close in an unbreakable grip, his eyes hooded. "We're not going to allow you to stick your head in the sand and ignore this thing between us. You can't throw away the rest of your life just because your marriage didn't work out."

Elizabeth wanted nothing more than to lean into him, to feel his arms come around her as she cried for all the lost years. Instead she shoved him, her bitterness spewing. "I'm not throwing my life away. I'm living it without a man. Richard cheated on me from the start. You and Chandler only feel obligated to take care of me. How long do you think we'd be together before you two did the same thing?" Just the thought of it filled her with dread. She'd never survive it.

Hayden's jaw clenched. "Never. Why didn't you leave your husband when you found out he was cheating?"

Careful to keep her voice low, she glanced at the doorway, not wanting Angie to overhear. Maybe if he understood her bitterness he

would back off. “Because of his father, the senator. Richard Sr. said a divorce would hurt his career. The senator, his wife, Vivian, and Richard threatened to take Angie away if I tried to get a divorce. I never slept with my husband again. My marriage was over from the beginning. If you and Chandler think I’m going to make the same mistake again, you’re crazy.”

A muscle worked in Hayden’s jaw. “That son of a bitch.” Grabbing her shoulders, he shook her once. “Why didn’t you call me? I would have taken care of it.”

Elizabeth pushed at his chest and broke free, but she knew it was only because he allowed it. “I grew up, remember? I wouldn’t have called anyone for help, least of all you and your brother. Contrary to what both of you think, I can take care of myself.” Lifting a brow, she smiled mockingly. “See? I don’t need either one of you.”

Hayden grabbed her, lifting her to her toes, his eyes hard and furious. “You’re ours, Lizzy. Both of you. You might as well get that through that hard head of yours right now.”

“You son of a—”

“Mommy! I putted my shoes.”

Shaken, Elizabeth shoved at Hayden and moved to her daughter, not bothering to correct her. “Great, darling. Let me get my purse and we’ll go. Say goodbye to Mr. Hayden and Mr. Chandler.”

Hayden ignored her glare and smiled smugly. “That won’t be necessary. We’ll go with you to do your errands before we take you back to the ranch. That way you can see how the entire town has already accepted us.” Looking at Angie, he grinned. “Then we can go see the puppies and the horses.”

“Yay!”

Elizabeth glared at him again, having to raise her voice over Angie’s excited squeals. “You haven’t won, Hayden.”

“We will. That’s all that matters. Get your shoes and your purse so we can go.”

\* \* \* \*

Hayden wanted to throttle her.

Watching her walk stiffly down the street a few feet in front of him, he couldn't keep his eyes away from her delectable ass in those skin tight jeans.

He knew it would take some time, but it pissed him off that she didn't even want to listen to them. She didn't believe they loved her even after all of the fights he and Chandler had had over her.

It had taken a lot of soul searching, the kind that was best accomplished when drunk, before he and Chandler had decided that the only way they could all be happy would be for *both* of them to have her. It seemed like a good idea, especially after several straight whiskeys.

To their immense surprise, the next day it had still made sense.

Sure, it was unconventional, but if they could be happy, he didn't give a damn what other people thought.

But he knew Lizzy would, and he cared for her parents very much.

So they'd ironed out rules and gathered all the information they could find on ménage relationships. He'd been surprised to learn that they were more prevalent than either one of them had ever suspected. They'd learned a hell of a lot, especially about themselves.

What they'd heard and read about taking a woman together kept him awake at night, hard as hell, aching for Lizzy.

All that had been put on hold when they'd learned she'd gotten married.

As soon as her parents had told them about the divorce, they'd immediately let it be known that they wanted her and that both of them loved her. At first there had been a lot of awkward silences but as the folks of Dakota Springs got used to it and saw how anxiously they both waited for her the awkwardness ended. Glad now that

they'd done it in time for the shock to wear off, he watched Elizabeth now as old friends greeted her.

Watching her smile and laugh, he nearly burst with pride. His little Lizzy had grown up, and he was falling in love with her all over again.

## Chapter Four

Elizabeth wanted to scream.

Walking around town with Hayden and Chandler proved to be more nerve-wracking than she could have imagined. By staying close, they gave the image that the four of them had already become a family.

She was stopped often by people she'd known her entire life but hadn't seen in years. She did her best to ignore Hayden and Chandler as they stood by waiting patiently for her to finish her conversations. Sometimes they would join in, but often they just greeted the other person and stood next to her with a hand on her arm or shoulder and talked with Angie.

They made sure that everyone they came across, from the teller at the bank to the butcher, knew that she and Angie were with them.

Their possessive attitudes had her grinding her teeth.

She cut her errands short and headed toward the pharmacy to get a few items she would need and let the rest wait for another time.

Trying to concentrate on her purchases and not on Hayden trailing slightly behind her, she listened, reluctantly amused as Angie tried to convince Chandler to buy her some candy in the next aisle. She couldn't see either one of them, but from the tone of her daughter's voice, she knew the expression on Angie's face.

"But I been good. I like this kind. Mommy lets me have it. If you get it for me, I'll be good."

Hayden's lips touched Elizabeth's neck. "Angie's quite the little negotiator, isn't she? I'm going to put her in charge of sales."

Fighting her body's response to having him so close, Elizabeth turned away to reach for a bottle of baby shampoo to add to her basket. "Chandler's going to fall for it. I just hope he doesn't let her eat too much."

Hayden chuckled next to her ear. "Of course he's going to fall for it. We're both going to do our best to spoil both of you rotten. Don't worry. He won't let her have more than a piece or two. We have to take care of our girls. Speaking of taking care of you, are you on the pill?"

Looking around frantically to make sure no one had overheard him, she smacked him in the stomach. "Hayden!"

He rubbed his stomach absently as he reached for another bottle of the same baby shampoo. "Chandler and I have both had physicals. The doc has our permission to show the results to you whenever you want to see them. Do you or Angie have any health problems?"

Knowing what he was asking regarding her, her face burned. "No, we're both fine. I had myself checked regularly since the beginning of my marriage and one of the reasons I never slept with him again. I didn't want to catch anything. And Angie's always been healthy as a horse, thank God."

Turning, she continued down the aisle, a jolt of heat going through her when Hayden wrapped an arm around her from behind and bent to whisper in her ear. "Are you on the pill, baby?"

Elizabeth tried to pull away, but Hayden wouldn't let her. Already her nipples beaded, desperate for his touch, the underside of her breasts tingling where they rested on his forearms. "No. Okay. I'm not. Now let go of me."

"Be still. One more question. Do you want to get pregnant right away or would you rather wait a few months?"

Her stomach clenched as his hand covered her abdomen. Closing her eyes, she imagined what it would be like to be carrying their child. Her panties grew damper just picturing them in bed together, their heat wrapped around her, inside her. Oh, God. Pushing out of his

arms, she took several shaky steps, needing to put some distance between them. Swallowing heavily, she struggled to keep her tone cool. "I have no intention of getting pregnant again."

Hayden inclined his head in that arrogant way he had of implying that he'd granted permission even though she hadn't asked for it. "All right, baby. We'll wait a few months, but Chandler and I are anxious to have more children and we're not getting any younger. It'll be better for Angie if the children are close in age. We'll take care of it."

Elizabeth opened her mouth to deliver a scathing comment she hadn't quite thought up yet, but Hayden had already walked away.

She went back to her shopping, wishing with all of her heart that she could truly believe she could have both of them. Even now they treated her like the girl she'd once been instead of the woman she'd become.

Hayden came back around the corner, smiling as he listened to Angie's chatter in the next aisle. He dropped several boxes of condoms in her basket before taking it from her. "What else do you need?"

Ignoring him, she dropped a children's pain reliever into the basket, frowning when he added another. "Hayden, why the hell are you adding another of every single thing I put in the basket? One is enough. I can always come back when I need more."

"One for your parent's house and one for the ranch. That way you and Angie will have what you need while you're there."

"Hayden—"

Come and get the rest of what you need. Martha will have lunch ready by now."

"Hayden, I still have something to do. I never agreed to have lunch with you today."

Chandler met them at the end of the aisle with Angie in his arms. "We'll do whatever you have to do and then we'll go out to the ranch. Right, Angie?"



Elizabeth watched in amazement as Angie giggled, tucking her head against Chandler's neck. "She doesn't let anyone but me or my parents hold her."

Chandler grinned, kissing Angie's hair. "And me. Are you about done? Angie's getting hungry."

Elizabeth gestured toward the pharmacist. "Mr. Wilbur has a 'Help Wanted' sign in the window. I need to talk to him about a job."

Chandler frowned. "Who the h—" He shot a glance at Angie. "Who's going to watch Angie while you're working?"

Hayden gripped her elbow and headed toward the counter. "You already have a job, taking care of Angie."

"Taking care of Angie doesn't pay the bills. Would you two mind watching her for a few minutes so I can talk to Mr. Wilbur?"

Hayden led her to the counter and started to unpack their purchases from the basket. "There's no need. We have a job for you at the ranch." He lifted a hand when she opened her mouth to speak. "We'll tell you all about it over lunch."

Elizabeth's face burned when he pulled out the boxes of condoms. Shooting a glance at Mr. Wilbur, she leaned close, whispering to Hayden. "Do you have to buy those now?"

Hayden's lips twitched. "We're gonna need 'em soon. Besides, it wouldn't matter if I bought them now or later. Mr. Wilbur's gonna know who they're for."

"Mommy, can I have a choc'late?"

Elizabeth smiled at her daughter who was held securely in Chandler's arms and wearing a smear of chocolate on her mouth. "It looks like you already have. Oops. I forgot to buy wipes." She went to get them and came back just as Mr. Wilbur had begun bagging their purchases. Opening the package, she pulled one out, setting the package on the counter. "Let's get you cleaned up."

"Hello, Elizabeth. Your daughter's a real beauty. She looks a lot like you did at that age."

Smiling, Elizabeth finished and turned to the pharmacist, who also happened to own the drugstore. "Thank you, Mr. Wilbur. It's nice to see you again. I see you have a sign in the window. I wanted to talk to you about—"

Hayden nudged her aside. "No. He's not hiring you. Nobody in town's going to hire you. Chandler, grab some more of those wipes."

Mr. Wilbur's hair had turned mostly gray in the years since she'd gone, but his eyes still twinkled. He smiled broadly as he finished ringing up their purchases. "How does it feel to be back home? These two have been bears since you left. When's the wedding?"

Elizabeth clenched her jaw. "There's not going to be—"

Hayden held out the money, putting a hand over hers to prevent her from opening her purse. "As soon as we can rope her in. She doesn't believe that we're both in love with her."

Chandler snuck Angie another small piece of chocolate that Elizabeth guessed she wasn't supposed to notice. "She doesn't believe the people in Dakota Springs will accept it. We're just going to have to convince her."

Mr. Wilbur chuckled. "She's giving you a hard time then?"

Hayden accepted the change, smiling down at her. "Sure is."

Elizabeth glared at Hayden. "She's standing right here, you know?"

Chandler grabbed another wipe to erase traces of the last piece of chocolate. "Grouchy, too. She must be hungry."

"I wanna see the horse and the puppies!"

Chandler lifted Angie high above his head. "You betcha, baby. Let's go."

Walking back to her parent's house, Elizabeth tried to pick Angie up, but she wanted to walk holding Chandler's hand.

Chandler's smug smile made her want to hit something.

She and Hayden strolled behind them. "Hayden, I don't have time to go to the ranch. I need to look for a job."

Hayden's wrapped an arm around her shoulders, pulling her close. "You're in luck. We're hiring."

"Damn it, Hayden."

Hayden put a finger over her lips, gesturing toward Angie. "Watch your language. She's a tattletale."

Angie skipped ahead, not at all interested in the park they came to. "I wanna see the puppies and the horses."

Everyone they passed smiled indulgently at seeing the four of them together. Elizabeth found herself watching closely for any sign of disgust or censure. To her amazement, she saw none.

Hearing a squeal, Elizabeth turned and found herself nearly strangled by a very pregnant woman. "Patty?" Hugging her back, they both started talking at once. Patty Fisher, Patty Conner now, had been her best friend from kindergarten until Elizabeth left town eight years ago. They hadn't been in touch since right after Angie was born. They talked for several minutes, making arrangements to meet later in the week for lunch to catch up.

Patty sobered. "Elizabeth, we were all sorry to hear about your divorce, but I'm so glad that you decided to come home." She smiled, showing her dimples. "These two grouches have been driving everyone crazy waiting for you."

Chandler chuckled. "Lizzy doesn't believe that. You look beautiful, Patty. Only a few more weeks, huh? Give me your bags. I'll put them in the car for you."

Patty grinned and turned over her shopping bags. "Yes. I can't wait and neither can Brian." She turned to Elizabeth. "We had such a hard time getting pregnant. I had two miscarriages. We'll have trouble believing it until we have her in our arms."

Elizabeth jolted at Angie's frightened cry. She spun and started toward her, but Hayden got there faster. To Elizabeth's astonishment, her daughter flung herself at Hayden, wrapping her arms tightly around his neck as he straightened.

"He's gonna get me!"

Hayden lifted her high in his arms as a big dog ran up to them, his leash trailing behind. "It's okay, baby. He won't get you. I've got you. Shh."

Chandler raced up, placing himself between the dog and the women. "Hey, Buster. It's okay, Angie. Buster gets loose from Charlie all the time." He bent to pet the large dog, grabbing his leash.

A little boy about ten years old came running up. "I'm sorry, Mr. Scott. Buster got away from me again." He looked up at Angie, who'd plastered herself to Hayden. "It's okay. He won't hurt you. I promise. You wanna pet him?"

Angie didn't answer. Instead, she tucked her face back into Hayden's neck.

Hayden rubbed her back, crooning softly to her as he held her securely against his chest. The play of emotion on his face as he held Angie close brought a lump to Elizabeth's throat.

Chandler handed Charlie the leash. "It's okay, Charlie. Angie isn't used to dogs. We're taking her out to the ranch to see the new puppies."

Charlie grinned. "I'll bet she's happy she gets the pick of the litter, huh?"

Bending, Chandler whispered. "She doesn't know."

The little boy turned red, shuffling his feet. "Sorry, Mr. Scott."

Chandler ruffled his hair. "No harm done. You'd better start eating more if you're going to be strong enough to hang on to Buster."

"Momma says I'm eating her out of house and home. Are you and Mr. Scott both really gonna be her daddies?"

Elizabeth's face burned, but none of the others seemed to see anything wrong with the question.

Chandler glanced at her and nodded. "Yes."

"Wow! Cool. Two dads. I have to go. My mom's waiting for me."

Elizabeth looked up to see a woman waving in the distance. She waved back as Hayden and Chandler each lifted a hand in acknowledgement.

Patty touched Elizabeth's arm. "There are times I wish I had another man around the house and times I want to kill the one I have. You're a braver woman than I am to take on these two. Don't forget our lunch date."

Elizabeth answered her, not quite sure what she said, but it must have been the right thing because Patty just smiled, nodded and walked away. She turned back to find both Hayden and Chandler watching her intently. "Are the two of you out of your minds?"

Chandler put an arm around her shoulder, nudging her along. "Come on. We're all hungry. We can talk all you want back at the ranch." Sobering, he slowed, allowing a little more distance between them, Hayden and Angie. "Did you have any problems when you were pregnant with Angie?"

"No, everything went perfectly."

Chandler smiled and picked up the pace. "She sure is a sweetheart. Was she close to your husband?"

Averting her eyes, she shook her head. "No." Smiling as Angie attempted to talk Hayden out of another piece of candy, she lowered her voice. "Don't believe that angelic face. She has her moments."

Chandler chuckled and bent to brush her lips with his, sending her heart racing. "All females do. That's what makes them so irresistible. We're already wrapped around her little finger and the stinker knows it. Didn't your husband feel the same way?"

"No." Not wanting to talk about it, she hurriedly changed the subject. "A good father has to learn to say no." Horrified at what she'd said, she looked away from his questioning look. "I meant in general, not you specifically." Damn, she hated when they made her so nervous her tongue ran away with her. She scrambled to find something else to talk about, but he had her too flustered to think. The hand caressing her waist moved to her hip, pulling her even closer.

“Hayden and I will be good fathers to Angie, Lizzy.”

Elizabeth shook her head. “I told you I wouldn’t get married again.”

Chandler led her up the driveway to her parent’s house to put her things away while Hayden took Angie and the other bag to the car. Once inside, Chandler pinned her against the wall and bent to kiss her deeply. “Of course you’ll marry us. We’ve just got to convince you. Let’s get to the ranch. I’m starving.” Pressing against her mound, he nibbled at her lips. “And not just for lunch.”

Uncomfortable and more than a little aroused, she pulled away and went to her bedroom. Something felt wrong and it took her a few minutes to discover what had happened. “That bastard!”

Chandler came rushing in, scanning the room. “What is it, Lizzy?”

Elizabeth looked around, opening the closet to look inside but she knew she wouldn’t find it. Pointing to the window, she answered before she thought about the consequences. “That window was closed when I left. The air conditioner is on. And my bag is missing.”

She knew damned well she’d left it on the chair beside the window, but continued to look for it until Chandler grabbed her arm. “Someone broke in here and stole your bag? Is anything else missing?”

After searching the house, they ended up back in the kitchen. “I don’t think anything else is missing, but I’ll have my mother check.” Plopping into the kitchen chair, she ran a hand tiredly over her face. “I doubt if they would take anything else. They thought they had what they wanted.”

What the hell could she do now? She couldn’t very well allow anyone to break into her parents’ home, but if she called the sheriff, she’d have to tell him the truth. How would she keep Angie safe when they discovered they hadn’t gotten what they were after and come back?

She should have known better.

“Damn it, Lizzy. What’s this all about? What was in the bag?”

Chandler's harsh tone finally penetrated.

Trying to remember what she hadn't yet put away, she frowned. "Uh, just a couple of sweaters and some toiletries."

"What did you mean, they thought they had what they wanted? What did they think was in the bag? Who the hell are *they* anyway?"

Seeing Hayden approach the back door, she stood. "I have to go shut the window and call my mother."

"To hell with that. We're calling the sheriff."

"I can't, Chandler."

Hayden looked in before opening the back door, keeping Angie from seeing inside. "What's taking so long? You two better not have started something—"

Chandler opened the door. Smiling at Angie, he took her from Hayden's arms. "We have a minor situation here." He quickly explained everything to Hayden, keeping his voice low as he occupied Angie with a cookie.

Hayden kept glancing at her, his face becoming more granite-like with each passing minute. Finally he nodded, approaching Lizzy. "Let's go into the other room for a minute."

Resigned, she allowed him to lead her into the living room. Chandler followed, picking up one of Angie's dolls to keep her entertained while they talked.

Shooting a glance at her daughter, Elizabeth leaned forward. "Look, I don't want you involved in this. Just trust me that I can't call the sheriff."

Hayden sat back, his expression cold. "Tell us everything right now or I'm calling your parents and the sheriff and I'll paddle your ass in front of both of them until you tell me the truth."

Damn. He meant it.

Sighing, she glanced at Angie meaningfully. "In order to escape the situation I found myself in, I used funds meant to keep me silent to hire someone to document certain immoral actions. I needed this proof to get out of my situation. I got proof of more than one person

conducting immoral activities. A powerful man had to let me have my way, knowing I would use this material to gain my freedom.”

Hayden groaned. “So you still have the potential to use it and it’s making him nervous.”

“Apparently. I can’t think of any other reason for someone to break in here and take the bag I’d been keeping it in.”

Hayden and Chandler exchanged a troubled look.

Chandler adjusted Angie on his lap. “And where is this information now?”

Glancing at her purse, she smiled. “I keep it with me at all times.”

Neither man looked impressed with what she’d managed to do. In fact they both looked downright furious. Hayden stood and picked up her purse and began to rummage through it.

Jumping up, she tried to reach around him for it, but he kept her away until he found a thick manila envelope and pulled it out. “We’ll hold onto this. Call your mother and tell her what happened. I want her to check to see if anything else is missing as soon as she gets home. Tell your dad we’ll bring you back in time to check the house out more thoroughly and with something to rig the windows.”

Elizabeth nodded, watching as Chandler left the room with Angie. When the back door closed, Hayden grabbed her arm.

“I can’t believe you would do something like this. Do you have any idea how much danger you could be in?”

Tugging her arm, she slapped at him. “Damn you. I did what I had to do. I told you the senator only cared about his career.”

“Well when we go outside, I’m keeping this in plain view. I want everyone to know that I have it now. Hurry up and call your mother so we can go.”

Eyeing him, she reached for the phone. She glanced up at him several times while dialing, disconcerted by his anger. “Hayden, I told you that I can handle this.”



“Yeah, you’re doing a good job of it. What would have happened if you and Angie would have been here alone while this asshole broke in? *We’ll* handle this from now on. You just do as you’re told.”

“Damn it, Hayden. I’m not a child.” Her mother answered just then, keeping her from arguing further. As she told her mother what happened, she watched Hayden leave the room.

Damn it. The last thing she wanted was for Hayden and Chandler to think they had to solve all of her problems for her.

She heard her bedroom window close and lock again before he reappeared just as she hung up the phone.

“Let’s get to the ranch. I’m going to put this envelope in my safe. Then we’ll talk about the job you insist on having. You’ll work at the ranch or you’ll work nowhere.”

“Damn it, Hayden—”

“Shut up, Lizzy. I’m so furious right now, you’re lucky I don’t turn you over my knee. Get your stuff and let’s go.” Pulling out his cell phone, he punched in numbers as he walked outside, glaring at her through the screen.

Elizabeth gathered her purse and keys and started outside, feeling like a child who’d been admonished, and she didn’t like it one bit.

## Chapter Five

At the ranch, Elizabeth met Martha, the older woman who took care of the house for them. Sally, the woman who'd worked for their parents had retired a few years ago.

Her face wreathed in smiles, Martha greeted them warmly. "Well now, you were right. She is a beauty. And the little one! My, my, she does look like an angel, doesn't she?" After putting out cold cuts and fresh potato salad, Martha gathered her purse and keys. "I'll be going now. I'll see you tomorrow morning." She paused at Elizabeth's chair. "Everything's ready. If there's anything that needs to be changed, you just let me know."

Elizabeth blinked, turning to Chandler when Martha left. "Ready? Changed? What's she talking about?"

Chandler handed her two slices of bread and started making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for Angie. "I'll show you after we eat."

Hayden excused himself to put the envelope in the safe, glaring at her when he came back. "I still can't believe you kept that from us." His lips twitching, he took his seat. "But it's just like you. I'm sure neither one of them knew what hit him."

Beaming, Elizabeth warmed inside. "Yeah, the senator looked a little surprised."

Thankfully Angie talked through lunch, basking in Hayden and Chandler's attention. She chatted happily as she told them all about her best friend, Becky.

Elizabeth's eyes stung, her heart melting at the way Hayden and Chandler appeared to be completely enthralled by everything Angie did or said.

Richard had never given Angie any attention at all.

"I wanna see the puppies!"

Hayden finished his second sandwich and smiled. "Of course you do. Come on then, angel. Let's go see the puppies and the horses while Chandler shows some things to your momma." He stood, lifting Angie from her seat and turned toward the door. Halfway there, he looked over his shoulder to stare at Elizabeth. His eyes darkened as they moved over her, settling on her breasts. "I'm sure you surprised the heck out of them."

Elizabeth, who'd already come to her feet to clear up the remains of their lunch, froze, her nipples warming and pebbling under his stare as if he'd actually stroked them.

When he lifted his gaze to hers, the heat in his eyes sent a wave of longing through her, tightening her insides and making her ache with need for him.

She took a step toward him before she could stop herself, coming to a halt as his eyes flared, the promise of future satisfaction gleaming in them. Staring at his back as he walked out the door, she jumped as Chandler touched her arm.

He grabbed the bag from the drugstore and, holding her hand with his other, led her back through the foyer and up the stairs. "Let me show you some of the changes we've made."

Elizabeth found herself pulled up the stairs and down a hallway. "Damn it, Chandler. I'm not letting you pressure me into moving in here."

Chandler took her past several rooms until he got to the one at the end. Pushing the door open, he hauled her inside before closing and locking it behind him. Opening the bag, he tossed one of the boxes of condoms toward the headboard and dropped the bag on the floor.

“I’m not trying to pressure you, Lizzy, but I’ll be damned if I’ll let you put up road blocks where there are none.”

Seeing the intention in his eyes, Elizabeth took a step back, fighting the urge to leap at him. “We’re different people now, Chandler. We don’t even know each other anymore.”

Chandler’s grin flashed. “Then let’s get reacquainted, darlin’.” Moving in quickly, he wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her close, his lips hovering over hers. “We know each other, Lizzy. Some things never change and this thing between us is never gonna go away. You know that as well as I do.”

At the touch of his lips on hers, she melted. Plastered against him, her curves fitted against his hard muscular frame, Elizabeth felt alive, desired as only Chandler and Hayden could make her feel.

His kiss sent her soaring, her lust for him quickly burning out of control. Panicked, she pushed at him, instinctively trying to keep him from taking more of her than she was ready to give.

Chandler surprised her by raising his head, his eyes glittering as he smiled down at her. “I won’t do anything you don’t want me to do, Lizzy, but I’m not gonna let you hold back from me.”

Gulping in air, she curled her hands in his shirt, not letting him pull away. She needed him. She’d needed him too long to deny it any longer. “Damn you, Chandler.” Grabbing fistfuls of his thick hair, she pulled his head back down.

Moaning into his mouth, she pushed herself closer, trembling when his arms tightened around her. She’d dreamed of being in his arms this way thousands of times but hadn’t been prepared for the reality of it, especially when she knew where it would lead. Her nipples tingled where they rubbed against his chest, making her desperate to feel his naked flesh against hers.

As though reading her mind, he began to undress her. After tossing her shirt aside, he quickly divested her of her bra. Breaking off his kiss, he held her slightly away from him, his thumbs brushing back and forth over her nipples. “Look at you. You are the most

beautiful thing I've ever seen in my life." He lifted his gaze, no longer smiling. "I've got to see the rest of you, darlin'."

Holding onto his shoulders for support, she arched her breasts in offering. She would die if he didn't touch them soon. Her breath hitched as he reached for the fastening of her jeans.

He knelt in front of her, lowering them slowly, his fingers tracing over every inch of skin he revealed.

When they hit the floor, she quickly stepped out of them, gasping as Chandler licked her belly. Holding him against her, she shuddered as he started to lower her damp panties.

"I gotta taste you, darlin'."

His lips scorched her stomach, his hands firm as he stripped her of her last remaining item of clothing. When she hurriedly stepped out of her panties, he nudged her to keep going as his mouth moved lower. Her mind reeling, she obediently took another step back and felt the edge of the mattress against her thighs. Another nudge toppled her onto it.

Chandler took immediate advantage, edging her thighs apart and shouldering his way between them. Holding them high and wide, he draped them over his shoulders.

Elizabeth grabbed fistfuls of the thick quilt beneath her, her mind going blank as Chandler swiped his tongue through her slit. She bit her lip to silence her cries as he slid his tongue repeatedly over her folds and into her. It felt too intimate and too intense as he used his mouth on her and held her spread wide. Her clit burned, throbbing for attention, feeling as though it had doubled in size.

She fought his hold, the pleasure too intense to remain still. It aroused her even more when he held firm. Something about being held this way, forced to endure the incredible pleasure excited the hell out of her. No longer able to hold back her cries, she twisted as much as Chandler's hold allowed, moaning and crying out as he took her higher and higher.

Lifting his head, his warm breath wafted over her folds. “Come for me.”

Elizabeth couldn’t have done anything else as Chandler focused his attention on her clit, sucking it into his mouth and stroking it with his tongue. Her body stiffened in shock as bursts of electricity burst from her clit and spread outward. “Chandler! Oh God, Chandler.” Her throat wouldn’t work right making her voice came out as a series of harsh croaks.

Swallowing heavily, she gulped in air as the bed dipped. Hearing the rustle of clothing, she looked down, getting her first look at his naked body. Sitting up on her elbows, she smiled her appreciation. “Holy hell, Chandler.”

His cocky smile sent her heart racing again. “All for you, darlin’.” He wrapped a fist around his thick cock and began stroking.

She couldn’t look away from it, her hands itching to touch him. Sitting up, she pushed Chandler’s hands away to take him into her own. Kneeling in front of him, she began running her hands over him, touching her lips to a chest corded with muscle. Working her way down his body, she bent and touched the tip of his cock with her tongue, closing her eyes as she savored his taste.

A groan rumbled deep in his chest, the raw sound of it adding to the erotic atmosphere. His hands tightened in her hair as she took his cock into her mouth. “Jesus, Lizzy.” The sounds he made told her she must be doing something right.

Sucking gently, scared to death of hurting him, she slid her hands around him to knead his tight buns. Stroking the underside of his cock with her tongue, she smiled inwardly as the hands in her hair tightened even more.

“Damn, Lizzy. Stop. No more. No more.” He pulled her away from his cock and tumbled her back onto the mattress before grabbing the box of condoms. He ripped the box open, sending condoms flying everywhere.

Elizabeth laughed as he cursed and finally managed to rip the foil and don one of them.

Chandler poised the tip of his cock at her slick opening. "So you think this is funny?" Pressing just the head of his cock inside, he paused. "Let's see how long you're laughing."

Elizabeth's laughter died as he began to fill her.

Chandler worked his length into her, an inch at a time. "You're not laughing now, are you, darlin'?"

Amazed that this was finally really happening, Elizabeth wrapped her legs around him as he pressed deep, filling her completely. She trembled with excitement as he surrounded her with his heat, both inside and out.

His big hand tangled in her hair, tilting her head back to nuzzle her jaw as his other hand slid under her, lifting her into his slow, smooth, strokes. "Nothing in my life has ever felt as good as being inside you." His voice, raw and needy, rumbled in her ear, exciting her even more.

Digging her heels into his tight buttocks, she lifted into his thrusts, her pussy clenching desperately at his cock as it slid over delicate tissue. She couldn't believe how good it felt to have him finally inside her after all the years of wanting. Her body gathered and sparks of pleasure shot from her slit outward with each deliberate stroke. Grabbing his shoulders, she arched her neck as he nibbled at a particularly sensitive spot. "Chandler. Oh, God. It's so good." Tears leaked from the corners of her eyes as the tingles grew stronger. "No, Chandler. Don't let it end."

Chandler moved faster, his strokes taking his cock impossibly deep. He nibbled his way to her lips. "It's only the beginning, darlin'. We've got a life full of lovin' ahead of us."

She tightened on him as his strokes came faster, the pleasure of his thick cock rubbing against too sensitive tissue sent her quickly into another orgasm. Holding onto him tightly, she cried out, aware

that he stiffened above her, his low groan against her neck telling her he'd found his own release.

Holding himself deep, his leanly muscled body shuddered in her arms as his own arms tightened around her. After several long minutes of caresses and dizzying kisses, Chandler lifted his head and stared down at her, his eyes searching hers. Apparently pleased with what he saw, he smiled. "Welcome home, darlin'."

Elizabeth smiled back, still shaken by their lovemaking. Even with her inexperience she knew what had just happened had been extraordinary. Limp as a wet noodle, she reached up to smooth a lock of hair from his forehead. A sense of vulnerability had her blurting out her thoughts before she could censor them. "Chandler, you do know how much I care for you, don't you?"

Chandler smiled tenderly, kissing her deeply before lifting his head to stare at her again. "Yes, but do you?"

"Chandler—"

"Come on, darlin'. Angie and Hayden are probably waiting for us." Withdrawing, he dropped another hard kiss on her lips before standing and reaching for her.

"Damn." The reminder had Elizabeth scrambling from the bed and into her clothes. "Damn it, Chandler. I have to get back to Angie. What's Hayden going to think about this? He's going to know what we just did."

Chandler chuckled and pulled her against him, nuzzling her jaw again. Laughing softly, he held her despite her struggles. "Of course he knows what we've been doing. He's going to be anxious to be alone with you." Pulling the panties she'd just slipped on back down again, he slapped her ass lightly. "You'll get used to it, Lizzy."

Elizabeth glared at his back as he went into the adjoining bathroom to rid himself of the condom. She had no intention of getting used to it. She knew if she did, they'd break her heart for sure. Scrambling into her clothes, she hurried to get back to Angie.



\* \* \* \*

Hayden sat at the table to hide the fact that his cock had gotten hard again.

He couldn't take his eyes from Lizzy as she moved around the kitchen, pouring milk and getting Angie some of the cookies Martha had made earlier.

Elizabeth moved gracefully around the kitchen, pouring coffee for the three of them, her face an adorable pink. Her swollen lips and tousled hair added to the appearance that she'd just been well-fucked.

He couldn't wait to wake up to that tousled, dazed look every day.

Her gaze slid to his several times before she looked guiltily away, her face coloring even more.

He didn't care for that part a bit. Every time she did it, it made him even angrier and made his cock jump with the need to take her.

He'd expected that there would be times when jealousy would rear its ugly head, but there'd be no place for it in a relationship like the one they wanted with her.

That didn't keep it from happening.

He couldn't wait to spend some time alone with her. Intimate time. Only then would she look at both of them that way. He waited until she finally sat down, facing him. "How did you like the master bedroom?"

If possible, Elizabeth's face got even redder. "It's nice."

"Nice? Is there something you don't like about it?"

Staring down into her coffee, Elizabeth shook her head. "No, it's fine."

"Do you like the bed?" He hid a smile at her sharp intake of breath.

"Yes, it's nice."

"Do you like the color of the room?"

Sipping her coffee, Elizabeth wouldn't meet his eyes. "The color's fine."

Sitting back, he shared a smile with Chandler and took a sip of his coffee. Putting the cup down, he leaned forward. "What color is it, Lizzy?"

Her eyes flew to his, before she hurriedly looked away again. "White."

Hayden smiled. "Nope."

Jumping to her feet, Elizabeth wiped Angie's mouth and started to gather the remnants of her snack. "We should get home. It's time for Angie's nap."

"Mommy! I wanna ride da horses."

Elizabeth put her daughter's glass in the sink and turned back. "Another day, Angie. You're too tired today."

"No, I not!"

Chandler shared a look with Hayden, not even bothering to hide his grin. "Why don't you let me take her out to see the horses and then she can take a nap here? When she wakes up, we can take her for a ride."

Angie stuck her bottom lip out and kicked her feet. "I wanna ride now."

Hayden shook his head. "After you take a nap you can go for a ride. No nap. No ride." He smothered a grin when Angie looked up at him through her lashes, her bottom lip pushed out even more. "But, Mr. Hayden, I wanna ride. I been good. I take a nap after I ride."

Chandler coughed and stood, moving to the sink to stare out the window, his shoulders shaking.

Hayden somehow managed to keep his expression stern, but it wasn't easy. He wanted to be a good father to Angie. To do that, he would have to learn to put his foot down. With her, he could see that would be a difficult thing to do. She would prove to be just as hard to resist as her mother. Shaking his head, he pushed his coffee aside. "No deal, angel. You can go see the horses, but you can't ride until

after your nap. If you don't want to do that, we can take you back to your grandma and grandpa's house and forget the whole thing."

Angie's lip went back in, and she appeared to mull it over. But the little negotiator hadn't finished. "After I take a nap, can I have a puppy?"

Hayden coughed to cover his own laugh and stood to refill his cup. "The puppy is up to your momma. But you can't have one yet. They have to stay with their momma a little bit longer. They're just babies and need their momma."

Angie looked at Elizabeth before turning back and nodding. "'Kay. Where's da puppy's daddy?"

Hayden took his seat again, enjoying her immensely. "Their daddy's name is Sam, and he's out there somewhere."

Angie's face fell and she nodded sadly. "He don't like 'em. My daddy don't like me, too."

Elizabeth gasped, her face draining of all color. "Angie, that's not true. Your father loves you very much."

Angie shrugged and yawned. "My puppy's name's Fluffy."

Elizabeth's shaky smile twisted his gut as she knelt down beside Angie's chair. "Is it? We'll have to talk about a puppy later. Honey, you know how much Mommy loves you, don't you?"

Angie wrapped her arms around Elizabeth's neck and yawned. "I yuv you, too, Mommy. I like 'Kota Springs."

Hayden could see that Angie had just about run out of steam and how upset Elizabeth had become. He shot a glance at his brother, wanting to spend some time alone with Elizabeth and find out more about her ex-husband.

Chandler nodded and lifted a very sleepy Angie from her chair. "Come on, Angie. I'll show you some horses." He bent and kissed Elizabeth's forehead, looking at her worriedly.

Once they'd gone, Hayden leaned forward. "What the hell did your husband do to her?"

She paled even more. “He did nothing to her except ignore her as much as possible. I didn’t think she even realized it. He never wanted either one of us, but I tried to keep her away from him as much as possible.”

Incredulous, Hayden wrapped his arms around her, pulling her close and tucking her head under his chin. “Then he’s an even bigger idiot than I gave him credit for.” Holding her slightly away, he wiped the tears on her cheeks. “All those years wasted on a man who didn’t deserve either one of you. If I had known, I would have dragged you back here years ago.” Pulling her close, he rubbed her back, burying his face in her hair. “I promise you, baby, from now on, both you and Angie will know how much you’re loved.”

She shook her head and pushed away, frustrating the hell out of him. “Hayden, I’m not risking Angie’s happiness, or mine, ever again. We both know the only reason you and Chandler are doing this is out of some sense of obligation. You care for me, but not the way I need, and I’m not going to pin Angie’s future on a relationship that’s doomed to fail.”

Irritated that she wouldn’t see what was right in front of her face, he grabbed her hand and tugged her out of the room. “Come here. I want to show you something.”

“Hayden, I don’t think this is a good idea.”

Not answering her, he hid a smile as he paused beside a door as she continued toward the master bedroom. “Here we are.”

She flushed again, looking so adorable he wanted to ravage her on the spot. “This isn’t the master bedroom.”

His cock swelled and hardened again, pushing uncomfortably against his zipper. “I never said we were going to the master bedroom. I want to see what you think of Angie’s room.”

“Angie’s room? Hayden, I told you we’re not moving in here.”

“Of course you are, but not until we get married. Not with Angie in the picture. Anyway, tell me what you think. We had it painted light pink, but when we went to buy furniture, we didn’t have any

idea what Angie would like or need. I never knew what a shitload of furniture was out there for little girls. We liked one with a canopy, but didn't know if she would like it. We need you to come with us to pick it out." He watched her face anxiously as she looked around the room. "She likes pink." Hell, almost everything she wore had pink on it somewhere.

Elizabeth's eyes went wide as she looked around the room. "I can't believe you did this. It's beautiful. You even had new carpet installed. The window seat is wonderful! It's the perfect place for a little girl to play with her dolls. Did you buy that dollhouse?"

A rush of pride warmed him as she watched her inspect it. "Actually, Chandler and I made it. We started it when we heard you were getting divorced and coming home. It kept us busy at night. Do you think Angie will like it?"

She looked up, and averted her eyes. "She would love it, and you know it. Damn it, Hayden. I'm not going to be pushed into this."

Crossing to her, he gripped her chin, tilting her head up until she met his eyes. "I know what we want from you is unconventional, but you've seen for yourself that the town already accepts it. If you marry me and live with us, we'll have a home filled with love. Isn't that what you want for Angie?"

Elizabeth pushed away. "Love? Hayden, you and Chandler may love me as a friend, but not the kind of love I need. I remember how you were with all those women you two used to sleep with. And don't try to make me feel guilty by throwing Angie in the middle. She's living in a home where everyone loves her right now."

Hayden's temper frayed around the edges. "You're the one who keeps throwing Angie in the middle as though Chandler and I would be bad for her. You're hiding behind her to deny yourself and us a future together. I get that you're afraid, Lizzy. But, we've already promised to be good fathers to her and good husbands to you. You know damned well that neither one of us would do anything to hurt either one of you."

Fire flashed in Elizabeth's eyes. "How the hell do I know that, Hayden? I haven't seen or heard from you in years. You wanted nothing to do with me before, how the hell can I believe that you do now?"

Hayden's temper snapped. "Damn it, Lizzy. We explained all of this. We were confused and fought over you constantly. We had no idea what to do about it, but we knew that neither one of us could have a relationship with you then, feeling the way we both felt about you. The jealousy would have ruined everything."

Elizabeth looked up at him and smirked, making his hand itch to paddle her tight ass. "So there's no longer any jealousy and because you say so, we'll all live happily ever after. That is, until one of you decides you want a woman all to yourself or you come to your fucking senses and see that you don't love me the way a man should love a woman. Just curious, how did you and Chandler make the decision to share me?"

His gut churned when he thought back to that time. "The night you left, Chandler and I got drunk, really drunk. We talked about nothing but you. Somehow the idea came up that we should share you. I have no idea which one of us said it, but we both thought it made sense. The next day, after we recovered from our hangovers, we talked some more. And we kept talking."

Reaching out, he cupped her jaw. "It was the first time we'd talked to each other without fighting in a long time. If you chose one of us now, it would destroy the other."

Narrowing her eyes, she crossed her arms over her chest, rubbing them as if she'd gotten chilled. "So you made this decision when you were drunk and decided to share me so you wouldn't fight anymore? Well, excuse me for not falling in with your plans, but you don't even know me anymore. And it looks like I don't know you either."

Hayden shook her. "You know us and we know you. The years we've been apart haven't changed that." Leaning close, he smirked, knowing damned well it would piss her off. "And you still want both

of us, baby. You wouldn't react the way you do with *both* of us if you didn't still want *both* of us."

"You son of a bitch!"

Smiling as she turned her back to him and moved to the window, Hayden came up behind her, covering her breasts with his palms. His cock jumped when she immediately leaned back against him, her nipples pebbling beneath his hands. "Your body doesn't lie even if you try to. You get aroused anytime either one of us touches you, and when we touch you together, you go up in flames."

She gripped his hands as if to push them away, but moaned as her head dropped against his shoulder. The mixed messages made him crazy to have her.

Sliding his hand under her shirt, he felt her shiver. Smiling against her neck, he undid her jeans and slid a hand inside, at the same time unsnapping the front closure of her bra. Her sharp intake of breath made his cock throb as he simultaneously slid a finger through her wet slit and stroked a nipple.

Although her hands covered his, she made no move to stop him. "Hayden, damn you."

"Shh, baby." He ran a finger through her slick folds, zeroing in on her clit. Closing his fingers over her nipple, he pinched lightly. "Your pussy's soaked. You gonna try to tell me again that I don't turn you on? You know you damned well that you love me."

"Bastard."

Holding her firmly, he chuckled against her neck as he doubled the speed of his strokes on her clit, groaning when she moaned and her body started jerking. "That's it, baby. See how fast I can get you hot? Think about spending the rest of your life with Chandler and me doing this to you all the time."

He pinched her nipple a little harder and almost came in his jeans at the sweet sounds she made as she stiffened in his arms and went over. Slowing his strokes, he drew out her orgasm, the rush of her juices over his fingers making him insane to have her.

Sliding his hand lower, he slid a finger into her hot, creamy cunt. The quiver of her inner muscles as she milked his finger almost had him coming in his jeans. “This is right for us, baby. And you know it.” Going for broke, he slid his slick finger from her cunt and poised it at her bottom hole, holding onto her as she jerked.

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Elizabeth shivered, gripping his forearms tightly. “Wh-what are you doing?”

Hayden scraped his teeth over her neck as he applied pressure, pushing his finger through the tight ring of muscle and about an inch into her ass. “You’re a smart girl. I’m sure you’ll figure it out.”

The pinch startled her as the most erotic sensations raced through her. She’d never felt such a thing! Never even imagined it. Hayden touched her more intimately than she’d ever been touched, making her mind go numb at the unbelievable naughtiness of it. Embarrassed because her bottom kept clenching on his finger, she struggled against his hold, only to freeze when it moved his finger in her ass.

He slid his foot between hers, pushing her jeans to the floor. “Step out of them and spread your legs.”

Stunned, she did it without thinking. “Hayden, I’ve never—Oh God.”

Applying more pressure, he stroked his finger in and out of her once, twice and then slid his finger deep into her anus.

Holding onto him when her knees buckled, Elizabeth gulped in air. Moisture coated her thighs as he began stroking her clit again with light, fleeting strokes that had her whimpering like a child. His finger in her ass felt huge, spearing her and making her anus burn. “Hayden, I can’t...what are you...I’m gonna come.”

“Not yet, you’re not.” Withdrawing his finger from her ass, he turned her to face him. Reaching into a pocket, he pulled out a condom, quickly lowering his jeans and putting it on. Wrapping an



arm around her, he lifted her against his chest, holding her ass in one of his big hands. Holding her gaze he slid that thick finger back into her anus as he lowered her onto his waiting cock. “Now you’re gonna come.”

Embarrassment at having Hayden’s finger in her ass had kept her from looking at him, but now she had no choice.

His features had hardened, a tortured look on his face that she’d never seen before. But his eyes...his eyes glittered, so dark and mesmerizing she couldn’t look away. The emotion in them had her sliding her hands from his shoulders to his neck and then into his hair.

Holding onto him, she lifted herself to touch her lips to his jaw. “Oh, God. Hayden, you’re inside me.” She wished she could have had him naked, but it had happened so fast neither one of them had even gotten undressed.

Bending, he touched his lips to hers, moving her on his cock and holding his finger inside her bottom. “That I am, baby. I plan on being inside you a lot from now on.”

The feeling of fullness amazed her, her pussy stretched as he moved her on his cock. Clenching on both his cock and his finger, she moaned as it intensified the sensation in both openings. Barely able to catch her breath, she held on as his strokes came faster. “I can’t believe you’re doing this to me.”

Hayden’s smile was pure evil, a look she expected from Chandler, but never from him. Already overwhelmed by having him inside her and the naughty, vulnerable feeling of having his finger stretching her anus, she couldn’t resist that evil grin.

Those amazing tingles began, but this time they also sizzled around the finger pressing deep inside her, sending her over the edge so quickly it stunned her. She clamped down on him, her inner muscles milking him.

Hayden groaned. “You feel so fucking good, baby. I don’t give a damn what you say. I’m never letting you go.”

## Chapter Six

Sitting in Hayden and Chandler's office three days later, Elizabeth sat back, folding her arms across her chest. "I've been looking for a job in town for two days now. Not a single person will hire me. They smile, apologize, and give me one of these." Wadding the paper she held into a ball, she tossed it at Chandler.

Smiling, he unfolded it and scanned it briefly before passing it to his brother. "Yeah, we passed those flyers around town so we could find someone to handle our correspondence and a few other things. Are you here to apply for the job?"

Torn between laughter and the urge to smack him, she glanced over to where Angie played with one of her dolls. "And no one else applied for this job?"

Hayden wadded the flyer into a ball again and tossed it into the garbage can. "No. They all know the job is yours."

Eyeing them hungrily, Elizabeth hid a smile. She hadn't seen either one of them since they'd taken her home the other night.

She and Hayden had come downstairs to find Angie sound asleep on Chandler's chest as he reclined on the sofa. When Angie woke up, they went riding, with Angie riding on Chandler's lap. Afterward they'd had dinner, thankfully keeping the conversation light. By the time Hayden and Chandler had taken them home, Angie had started to fall asleep again. Several people had already been at her parents' house, installing new locks and deadbolts.

Hayden and Chandler had jumped in to help and stayed until everyone else left.

Since they left that night, they'd called several times, but had kept the conversations light as though they'd tried to give her some space.

It appeared her space had run out.

They'd showed up at her parents' house about a half hour earlier, and had hustled her and Angie out to the ranch before she had a chance to object.

Now, both of them watched her hungrily, smiles playing at their lips.

Tapping her fingers on the arm of the chair, she narrowed her eyes. "What, exactly, would I be doing for you?"

Hayden looked away from where Angie played and waved a hand toward the massive desk he sat behind. "Chandler and I are hardly ever in the house during the day. We're either busy with the horses or meeting with someone who wants to buy them. Martha does a great job of taking care of the house, but she's no spring chick and doesn't know a thing about computers. She can't keep running out if there's a message to relay, and she doesn't have the time to keep stopping to answer the phone."

Elizabeth eyed him warily. "If you needed someone to do all of this, why haven't you already hired someone?"

Chandler looked up from where he sat on the sofa close to Angie. "We used to take care of it at night. Now we want to keep our nights free. You need a job, and this way you can bring Angie to work with you. I don't want her going to any babysitter, and I want both of you here as much as possible so we can keep an eye on you. It works out well for all of us."

Elizabeth couldn't find any flaws in his logic. It would be nice to be able to make a living and still keep Angie with her. Glancing at Angie, she cursed the fact that her face burned. "No strings?"

Hayden's face hardened. "The job is yours regardless, but don't think for a minute that we're not going to pursue the rest."

Seeing no other option, she nodded. "Okay. Thank you. When do you—shoot. My cell phone. I'm sorry, but it might be Mom or Dad."

Hayden leaned back as she rummaged through her purse. “Take it, Lizzy. We’re not going anywhere.”

Elizabeth finally found her phone and quickly answered, not even bothering to look at the display. “Hello.”

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Chandler couldn’t wipe the smile from his face as he watched Angie play with her doll. The fact that she talked to it, pretending to be its mother totally captivated him. When the doll’s shoe came off, she struggled to put it back on until Hayden reached out a hand for it.

“Richard?”

Chandler’s head shot up to see that Elizabeth’s face had drained of all color. With a glance at Angie, who’d also looked up, he jumped to his feet, sharing a look with Hayden before grabbing Elizabeth and leading her out of the room.

Elizabeth looked up at him, her eyes panic stricken. “It’s none of your business, Richard. You have no right to dictate how I live.”

Cursing, Chandler grabbed the phone from her. “This is Chandler Scott. What the fuck do you want?” He wanted so badly to reach through the phone and grab the other guy by the throat, he shook with it.

“Well, well, well, if it isn’t one of the men fucking my wife.”

Chandler had to force himself to loosen his grip on the phone before he smashed it. “What I do with Elizabeth is none of your business. And in case you’ve forgotten, she’s your *ex*-wife. You couldn’t keep your dick in your pants, remember?” He had to hold out a hand to keep Lizzy from grabbing the phone from him. Putting a hand over her mouth so he could hear what the other man said, he winced, glaring at her when she bit him.

“It looks like one man’s not enough for her. That’s not a good atmosphere for my daughter to be raised in.”

A cold knot of fear formed in his stomach, cooling the white-hot fury that raced through him. "Is that a threat?"

Elizabeth stilled beside him, her face pasty white.

Richard laughed coldly. "Not from me. I don't want the brat. But my mother's pissed off that I lost her only grandchild. She's causing a lot of trouble for my father and me. We don't need this. She's going to end up wrecking my father's career and she's threatening to cut me out of her will if I don't try to get Angie back for her."

Elizabeth must have heard him because her knees gave out.

Catching her around the waist, he led her to the kitchen and set her on the counter, standing between her legs. He held her gaze as he spoke to her ex-husband. "You think you're going to get Angie back?"

"No. I've done my research. I thought you and your brother were just poor ranchers, but I've checked you out. You're a lot more influential than I thought you'd be, which works out for me. I don't want Angie. I never wanted either one of them, but when Elizabeth got pregnant, I had to marry her or ruin my father's career. I couldn't even let her divorce me."

For the first time Chandler realized that the other man slurred his words. "But she did anyway."

Richard laughed, the sound grating on Chandler's nerves. "Only because I gave her the evidence she needed to get a divorce. She thought she was being so sneaky, using the money my father thought would appease her to hire a private investigator. But Elizabeth caught my father, too. He's worried. Now my mother's worried about what'll happen if word gets out that her grandchild's being raised in a house where her ex-daughter-in-law is fucking two men. But it's more than that. Both of them are scared of the information Elizabeth has. They're scared she'll use it."

Chandler stood close to Elizabeth, practically leaning over her, and Richard didn't even try to keep his voice low.

The frightened look in her eyes told Chandler she'd heard everything. Grabbing the phone from Chandler, Elizabeth sat up and snapped. "Richard, tell them I'll go to the newspapers with everything I have if they try to take Angie."

Chandler yanked the phone from her before she said anything else. "Richard, thanks for the warning. But someone already broke into her parents' house and tried to steal the proof. Tell them she no longer has it. We do. If there are any further attempts to take Angie, or do anything to either one of them, we'll go to the press in a heartbeat with everything. Believe me, we have quite a few reporters in our pockets."

Laughter rang loud through the receiver. "Damn if you don't deserve each other."

"Thanks for giving her the evidence she needed."

"It took her long enough. I knew what she'd done and let her catch me. But she caught my father, too. Elizabeth used that information to blackmail us into letting her have her divorce. Now, my father's scared she'll use it, and my mother does whatever she can to please my father. She wants Angie, but having a kid cramps my style. Why don't one of you marry her? That way the senator and my mother wouldn't be able to touch Angie."

Chandler's eyes never left Elizabeth. "We're planning to, just as soon as we can arrange it." Knowing he should have left it at that, he nevertheless kept going. "She's not being very cooperative. She's worried about Angie."

Richard's voice went low. "If she wants to keep her, she'll do it. Put her back on the phone."

Reluctantly, Chandler handed Lizzy the phone just as Hayden walked into the kitchen.

"Angie's asleep. Martha's watching over her. What the hell's going on?"

Chandler watched Elizabeth as he gave his brother a brief rundown.

When she finally disconnected, she looked up at both of them and jumped down from the counter. "I guess I'll be accepting your proposal after all. That is, if it's still open."

Hayden nodded once. "It is."

"I still want the job. I want to earn my own money."

Hayden inclined his head. "You can still have the job. I want my nights free."

Elizabeth colored. "I'll start tomorrow."

Chandler grinned. "I'll teach you the program as soon as we pick out the furniture for Angie's room."

Opening her mouth to say something, she apparently thought better of it and nodded. "I'd better check on Angie."

Chandler watched her go. "You'd better arrange it quick. I want both of them living out here where we can watch them as soon as possible."

Hayden went to the window. "When Angie wakes up, make sure they get home okay. I'm going to go talk to the judge and the sheriff. I want to print out a couple of pictures of Lizzy's ex, the senator, and his wife."

Chandler frowned. "It's not how I wanted this to happen."

Hayden whipped his head around. "I'll take her any way I can get her. We'll make sure she's and Angie are safe and worry about the rest later."

\* \* \* \*

This isn't how she'd wanted it to happen.

Waving goodbye to her parents and the Scotts, Elizabeth held Angie's hand in hers as they walked across the restaurant parking lot to the truck for the ride home.

She and Hayden had gotten married only a few hours earlier in a ceremony that seemed more like a dream than reality.

Once they'd taken their vows, Chandler had come forward in front of everyone to take her hand in his. Sliding another gold band on her ring finger to rest against the one Hayden had just placed there, he smiled tenderly. "You belong to both of us now. I promise to be a good husband and a good father. I adore you, baby." He'd kissed her softly, his eyes dark with promise.

That look had disappeared as they settled Angie in the truck for the ride back to the ranch. She'd thrown a tantrum, not wanting her mommy to go back to the ranch without her. They'd promised her that after the wedding, the 'pink room' would be hers, and she didn't want to miss a single night in it.

Elizabeth rode in the front with Hayden while Chandler sat in the back listening to Angie talk about Fluffy. Leaning toward Hayden, Elizabeth whispered. "I'm really sorry about this. I know you didn't plan to have a three-year-old on your honeymoon." She loved her daughter dearly but hadn't spent any time alone with either one of them since the afternoon Richard had called.

Hayden reached for her hand, lifting it to brush his lips across her knuckles, his expression somber. "I didn't want to leave her anyway. I feel better having her at the ranch, at least until things get a chance to settle. I don't trust your ex-husband any more than I trust his parents. I can't believe you didn't call us when they were trying to force you into marriage." His look hardened. "Don't worry. We'll take care of it."

Elizabeth's stomach dropped. Careful to keep her voice low enough not to be overheard by her daughter, she clenched her fists on her lap. "Hayden, it's bad enough that we had to get married to keep them from trying to get Angie, but I can deal with them. I want you and Chandler to stay out of it."

"Stay out of it? Are you crazy?" Looking over his shoulder, he smiled at Angie's look of surprise. "It's okay, sweetheart. Tell Chandler what you named your new doll." He waited until Angie resumed her monologue, before pulling Elizabeth close. Keeping his



voice low, he kept one eye on her and one on the road. “*You* will stay out of it and let us deal with it, which is what you should have done from the beginning.”

With a sinking heart, she remained silent the rest of the way home. She’d married them to keep Angie safe, but she wanted this marriage to work. Arguing with either one of them was a waste of time. She’d deal with anything as it came up, but in the meantime would do her best to get her husbands to see her as a grown woman instead of someone who needed to be looked after.

She couldn’t go through the rest of her life as an obligation.

## Chapter Seven

Elizabeth tiptoed out of Angie's room, her heart racing as she headed toward the master bedroom. The silk nightgown she'd bought for tonight slid sensuously over her legs as she walked, the friction of the lace bodice over her erect nipples sensitizing them even more. Wiping her palms on the matching robe, she reached for the doorknob, wondering which of them would be waiting inside for her.

Swinging the door open, she came to a halt, every erogenous zone tingling at the sight that greeted her.

Hayden, wearing nothing but unbuttoned jeans, rose from the chair by the window as Chandler, wearing jeans and a t-shirt reclined on the bed. Hayden quickly came forward, wrapping an arm around her waist and pulling her close. "Is Angie asleep?"

Elizabeth nodded. "Y—"

Hayden swooped before she finished, his mouth taking hers before she could even draw a breath. He released her long enough to slide the robe from her shoulders before pulling her against his body again and lifted her in his arms, his mouth not leaving hers until he placed her on the bed next to Chandler. Straightening, he shucked his jeans as Chandler began to undress her.

Chandler's fingers moved over every inch of skin he exposed, teasing her nipples as he slid the gown down her body.

Once naked, Hayden reclined on the bed next to her. "Keep going. I want to see all of her."

Trembling under their combined gazes, Elizabeth kept looking from one to the other. She should have expected this, but hadn't.

Both looked at her hungrily as they slid the gown from her, touching her everywhere at once. Propped on their elbows, they both leaned over her, the low lights from both nightstands illuminating her body for their perusal.

It also let her see them better.

She couldn't take her eyes from Hayden's naked form. His cock rose toward his stomach and its amazing thickness made her shiver in anticipation. Rolling slightly toward him, she ran a hand down his chest, touching him the way she'd always dreamed of.

Taking her hand in his, he kissed her fingers, his eyes fierce on hers. "Touch me." Lowering her hand to his cock, he drew a quick breath, his eyes closing when she wrapped her fingers around it. "Jesus."

Chandler's arm came around her from behind to caress her stomach.

Her stomach muscles quivered beneath his touch, her pussy clenching with need. Breathless now, she couldn't tear her eyes away from Hayden's as his fingers traced their way up her body. She gasped as they skimmed the sensitive skin on the underside of her breast, her nipples burning with the need to be touched.

Still he denied her, his eyes flaring when she moaned in frustration.

Chandler chuckled and kissed her shoulder before sliding off the bed.

Hayden looked over her shoulder at Chandler briefly, nodding once before turning back to her and kissing her again.

Elizabeth arched into Hayden, needing a firmer touch, but he continued to tease her with fleeting caresses. Her senses on overload from being with both of them this way, she kissed Hayden back hungrily, sinking into him. Teasing him, she ran her fingers up and down the length of his cock, thrilling at the velvety texture covering the steel beneath it.

Hayden rolled her to her back, lifting his head. "Enough." His eyes stayed on hers, dark and glittering as he lifted her hand over her head.

Naked now, Chandler slid into bed on her other side, his slow smile somehow evil and tender. "Now we've got you right where we want you."

Having both of the men she'd dreamed about like this, their hard bodies surrounding hers, had to be the most erotic moment of her life. Every inch of her skin warmed from the heat their bodies gave off, tingling where their gazes caressed her. "I didn't know it would be this way. I never imagined..."

Hayden watched her indulgently as he continued to run his fingers lightly up and down her body, from shoulder to hip and back again. Lowering his head, he nuzzled her jaw. "You never imagined what, baby?"

Elizabeth gasped as Chandler bent to take a nipple into his mouth, sucking gently. "I didn't realize you would take me together."

Hayden's lips hovered over hers, his warm breath gentle on her face. "We'll take you together, separately, and one at a time. You're not quite ready for together yet, though."

Twisting restlessly, Elizabeth panted as Hayden's fingers slid lightly over her mound. "I'm ready, Hayden. Don't make me wait." She cried out when he parted her folds and slid a finger through her slick juices, barely skimming her clit. Rocking her hips, she tried to get him to touch her there again.

Hayden chuckled softly, sliding his finger lower and into her pussy. "You *are* ready, aren't you, Lizzy?" Bending again, he nibbled at her bottom lip. "We'll have to work on getting you ready to take both of us together."

Elizabeth barely heard him as Chandler ran a big hand over her stomach and down to her thigh.

Pulling it toward him, he hooked it over his, spreading her wider. "After all these years you're finally ours."

Hayden added another finger, smiling when she moaned. “That’s it, baby.” Running his hand through her hair, he curled the fingers inside her, pressing at a spot that had her catching her breath and making her tremble even harder.

Rocking her hips, she moaned again as Chandler raked his teeth over her nipple. “Damn it. I wanted to seduce you.”

Hayden flicked a thumb over her clit. “You did that by walking into the room.”

Elizabeth twisted restlessly, grabbing onto their shoulders, her cries growing in intensity. She’d had every intention of seducing first one, then the other, wanting to make them desire her as much as she did them. Every time she tried to reach for their cocks, they stopped her, teasing her with the feel of their thick lengths on each of her hips.

Cupping her jaw, Chandler turned her face toward him, taking her lips with his. “You seduce me by walking past me. You make me crazy when you twitch that ass at me.” Smiling, he shot a glance at Hayden. “I want my mouth on her pussy when she comes.”

Elizabeth’s eyes went wide. “Oh, God. I can’t believe the way you talk.”

Chandler laughed softly. “I like to let the anticipation build. Isn’t your clit throbbing, knowing my mouth is going to be on it real soon?”

Hayden withdrew his fingers, bringing them to his mouth to lick them clean. “She’s sweet and juicy.” His hand moved to cover a breast as Chandler positioned himself between her thighs.

Elizabeth shook as Chandler settled himself between her thighs and grabbed her ankles to pull her legs high and wide, smiling at her.

“Ready, baby?”

Elizabeth closed her eyes, unable to process all of the sensations racing through her. She never would have believed how exciting it would be for one of them to do such erotic things to her while the other watched her reaction to it.

It made the intimacy even more intense.

Chandler couldn't see her face as he parted her folds and swiped his tongue through her slit, but Hayden could and wouldn't allow her to hide her face against his chest or look away. After several licks of Chandler's tongue, she no longer cared. He held her open and ate at her, flicking his tongue over her clit just often enough to keep her arousal growing.

She trembled uncontrollable, jerking in Hayden's arms every time Chandler touched her clit. "Please. I'm so close."

Chandler chuckled, easily holding her legs as she kicked at him, sliding his tongue inside her instead of giving the attention to her clit.

Hayden kissed her deeply, his tongue sweeping through her mouth repeatedly as his fingers moved over her breasts. An occasional flick of his thumb or a light pinch on her nipples had her crying out, the warning tingles of an approaching orgasm driving her mad.

With her nipples and clit throbbing, her pussy clenching frantically on Chandler's tongue each time he slid it into her, Elizabeth couldn't stand any more. This is not how she'd envisioned seducing them. They seduced her, taking over her body so completely, she could do nothing but hold onto them as her entire body went up in flames.

Hayden gripped a nipple, tugging it as he stared down at her. "Send her over."

Elizabeth's breath caught as Chandler closed his lips over her clit, his hands tightening on her thighs, holding her firmly as she bucked against such a raw sensation. Searing ribbons of bliss pulled her body taut, her scream of release muffled by Hayden's mouth as they drew out her orgasm. Layers upon layers of the most amazing pleasure washed over her until she lay spent and trembling.

Hayden lifted his head. "Beautiful." Running a possessive hand over her body, he kept her from closing her thighs as Chandler donned a condom.

Chandler lifted her ankles again, pushing them back to open her thighs wide. "Damn, if that ain't sexy as hell." Poising the blunt tip of

his cock at her opening, he slid deep with one smooth stroke, groaning as he filled her. "Damn, you feel incredible."

Incredulous that her body came alive again, Elizabeth held onto Hayden, gripping him tighter with each of Chandler's smooth strokes.

Chandler leaned over her, hooking her under the knees and holding her wide as he began to thrust harder. "Damn, you feel good. So fucking good."

Hayden's hands slid over her breasts, his jaw clenching as he watched Chandler take her. "Damn, watching her this way is driving me crazy."

"Chandler, it feels so good. No, don't stop."

Chandler clenched his jaw, leaning down to kiss her, the move lifting her legs even higher. "Come for me, darlin'."

Holding onto him for dear life, Elizabeth thrashed, her hoarse cries getting louder as Chandler began to thrust into her faster. "Chandler, my God!" Her pussy milked him, her inner muscles quivering as he stroked deep. All of a sudden it hit her and she tightened, involuntarily pushing against Chandler's arms as her body stiffened and bowed.

Chandler growled his release, throwing his head back, his strength holding her in place and keeping her from straightening her legs. "That's it, baby. So fucking good." After several long seconds he released her legs with a groan to gather her close.

Burying her face against his shoulder, Elizabeth breathed him in, the delicious scent of him helping her to settle. She still trembled, her emotions raging as she held him desperately. God, she needed this. She needed to feel him this way, as close as a man and woman could get.

She hadn't realized until this moment how much she'd needed to feel them both here with her, the level of intimacy unequal to anything she'd ever experienced. The love and happiness on their faces as they looked down at her gave her hope for the first time that they could all find happiness together.

Chandler lifted his head, his eyes hooded as he stared down at her. Sliding his hands under her neck, he tilted her head back to kiss her deeply, his mouth loving hers gently. When he lifted his head again, his eyes shone with tenderness. "I love you so damned much."

Elizabeth smiled shakily, still feeling vulnerable. "I love you, too." The words came out shaky and breathless, not as confident as she felt them. Turning her head, she included Hayden in her smile. "Both of you." After several minutes of low murmurs and soothing caresses, Elizabeth pushed at Chandler's shoulder. "Did you even see my nightgown? I bought it to seduce you, and you didn't give me the chance."

Laughing, he dropped another kiss on her lips before rolling off of her. "Next time, baby."

Elizabeth smiled seductively as Hayden took his place. "Maybe I'll seduce you." With the intention of getting Hayden on his back, she pushed at him.

Hayden lifted her hands over her head, pressing her into the mattress. "Not this time, Lizzy. I'm too fucking hot for you."

Glancing over she saw Chandler head toward the bathroom and took a moment to ogle his gorgeous ass. Lifting her eyes to Hayden, she rubbed her breasts against his chest playfully, inspired by the heat in his hooded gaze. Lifting herself slightly, she nuzzled his jaw. "How hot are you?"

Narrowing his eyes, he tightened his grip on her hands. "You're playing with fire, baby." Releasing her hands, he tangled one hand in her hair to pull her head back while the other went around her to cup her buttocks. Making a space for himself between her thighs, he pressed his cock against her opening. "You're not ready to play with that kind of fire yet."

Pulling his head down, she ran her tongue over his bottom lip before she bit it. "You have no idea what I'm ready for."



Hayden's eyes flared. Lifting himself slightly off of her, he scraped his teeth over a nipple, smiling mischievously when she cried out. "Let's find out."

Elizabeth gasped as he flipped her to her stomach, quickly covering her and pressing her into the mattress. "What are you doing?"

Hayden slid an arm under her hips as he kissed her shoulder and her neck before nibbling her earlobe. "Trust me." He moved so fast she didn't have time to react. Sliding off of her, he lifted her and placed pillows beneath her hips.

"Hayden?" Not sure what he would do, her voice came out shaky.

Running a hand over her hip, he bent and kissed the small of her back. "Shh. Trust me."

Elizabeth didn't trust that tone at all and got even more nervous when Chandler came back chuckling. She tried to lift up but Hayden's hand on her back held her in place as he spread her thighs wider and settled between them. With her bottom in the air, she felt exposed in a way she never had before, especially when she knew both of them were looking at her. She trembled, nervous even through the lust that raged inside her.

Hayden ran a hand over her bottom. "Do you remember what I did to you?"

Oh, God. How could she forget? "Hayden—"

Chandler reclined beside her, running a hand over her hair. "For both of us to take you together, Lizzy, one of us will take your pussy while the other's in that tight ass."

Elizabeth had never heard a more frightening or erotic statement in her life. Shaking, she met Chandler's eyes, lust and fear combining into something strong, powerful and...decadent. Oh God. Could she do this? What would happen if she couldn't? "Please. I don't know if I can."

Hayden ran his hands over her bottom and down to her slit. "We won't do anything you don't want, baby." Kissing her back, he slid a

finger into her. “We’ll have to stretch you first, honey. Don’t be scared. Neither one of would hurt you for the world.”

Chandler slid a hand under her to tug lightly at a nipple, grinning when she moaned. “We’re going to make you want it so bad, you’ll beg for it. Christ, I’m getting hard again just thinking about it.”

Hayden ran his hands over her bottom again, moving them closer and closer to her crease. “You loved it when I pressed a finger inside you. When we stretch you enough to take a cock, you’re going to come harder than ever.” The thick finger stroking her pussy shoved all thoughts of protesting aside.

Elizabeth squirmed restlessly as his fingers withdrew to move over her clit. Her body, already sensitized, came to life once again. Hearing the rip of foil, she shuddered in anticipation.

Chandler ran a hand over her hair. “You’re trembling. If you could see the look on Hayden’s face, you’d shake like hell. He looks really hungry.”

“Oh God.”

Hayden poised the head of his cock at her opening, holding her hips tightly to control her squirming. He slid into her pussy slightly and froze, tightening his hold as the thick head of his cock stretched her opening. “Jesus.” He groaned as he slid slowly into her, leaning over her and burying his face in her neck. “I don’t know how I lived without you.”

Chandler held her hands in his as Hayden began stroking, slow, smooth strokes that took her quickly to the edge again. The reality of being touched intimately by both of them at once while their low voices washed over her added yet another layer to the intimacy and erotic atmosphere.

Three voices whispering endearments. Three voices moaning with pleasure.

She couldn’t imagine anything more decadent than being surrounded this way by the two men she’d always loved.

Hayden's thick cock stretched her, each sure stroke taking her higher, his firm grip on her hips holding her for the best penetration. In this position, his cock went deep, the feeling of vulnerability building inside her stronger than before. She arched her bottom higher as her orgasm loomed close, those warm, delicious tingles waking every nerve ending.

Hayden stopped moving, holding her in place when she began to struggle in frustration. His voice, sandpaper rough, washed over her. "She's fucking clenching. Damn it, stay still, Lizzy."

Elizabeth couldn't have stayed still if her life depended on it. So close she could actually feel the warning tingles begin to spread, she tried to rock her hips.

With a muffled curse, Chandler held her firmly, his lips moving over her shoulder. "Easy, baby. You can't come until Hayden works a finger into that ass."

Groaning, Elizabeth fought his hold. "I want to come. Now. Oh God, I'm so close." Kicking her feet, she moaned her pleasure as it moved Hayden's cock inside her. When something cold touched her bottom hole, she froze.

Hayden pushed against her vulnerable opening, the lube easing his way as he slowly pushed his thumb into her, his hand splayed over her bottom.

A whimpered cry escaped before she could prevent it. The pinch of his invasion quickly gave way to the burn and forbidden sensation of having her anus breached. The cold lube and the intimate burn made her lose all control. Her body took over, pushing back against him, demanding satisfaction as her orgasm rapidly approached. She was already on the edge, and it only took a few of Hayden's deep thrusts for her to go over.

Her cries drowned out whatever Chandler said. Only Hayden's deep groan of completion cut through the fog as she spread her thighs wider, arching into him even more. She came hard. Waves of release

burned her pussy and anus and spread throughout her body, forcing her to clamp down on Hayden's dual invasion.

She arched, whimpering as Chandler touched her nipples again. The thumb in her bottom moved, sending her over again, the long swell of pleasure leaving her limp and breathless.

Collapsing on the bed, it registered that her hands hurt, forcing her to loosen her grip on the covers she hadn't known she'd been holding on to. Feeling hands move over her hair, she opened her eyes to find Chandler watching her, an indulgent smile curving his lips.

Smiling down at her, he smoothed a hand down her back. "I love watching you come."

Now that she'd settled some, she started to feel a little self-conscious about the thumb Hayden moved in her anus. Shivering, she moaned, burying her face in the covers.

Hayden chuckled. "You come hard when you have your ass filled. Once we get you loosened up a little, I think we can do better, don't you, Chandler?"

Chandler laughed, turning her to face him. "We'll just have to keep opening up her ass until she's ready."

When she groaned, Hayden took pity on her and withdrew from both openings, patting her bottom before covering her body with his. He nuzzled her neck and bit gently. "Let's get you cleaned up. Martha left us some snacks. You're going to need your energy when Chandler and I switch places and do this all over again."

## Chapter Eight

Elizabeth kissed Angie's head, tucking the light blanket around her shoulders against the chill of the air-conditioning. Sound asleep on the sofa in Hayden and Chandler's office, her daughter did indeed look like an angel.

With a last look at her, Elizabeth started for the kitchen. She smiled at Martha, who looked up from her meatloaf. "Martha, I hate to ask this, but I have to run to the post office, and Angie's asleep. Would you mind watching out for her until I get back? I should be back before she wakes up."

Martha smiled. "Absolutely. As soon as she wakes up, we're going to make cupcakes anyway. Go. Do what you need to do. There's no hurry."

Smiling her thanks, she gathered her things and headed out, wanting to be back before Angie woke up. Pulling up to the post office, she got out, turning to wave at one of the ranch hands who'd just come out of the feed store.

The other man, she couldn't remember his name, looked surprised to see her and hurriedly looked away. Shrugging it off, she rushed into the post office. It took her longer than she'd meant it to because she'd been stopped by several people welcoming her home and congratulating her on her marriage. No one seemed the least bit surprised that she now lived with two men, but it still made her a little uncomfortable to openly talk about it.

But she wouldn't have changed the way she lived for the world.

Smiling to herself, she walked back out to Hayden's truck. She really needed to get her own car, but that would have to wait. She

came to a halt on the sidewalk, groaning when she saw that she had a flat tire.

Damn, had she run over a nail?

She pulled out her cell phone and paused. She didn't even want to begin trying to change the tire on Hayden's monstrosity. Hayden and Chandler were out and Martha was busy cooking and watching Angie.

She called her father.

Once she'd explained the situation to him, she saw the ranch hand she'd seen earlier stop his truck behind Hayden's. "Dad, never mind. One of the ranch hands is here. I'll talk to you later." Disconnecting, she dropped the phone in her purse and walked toward him. "Hi. I'm so glad to see you. Do you think you could give me a ride back to the ranch?"

He smiled nervously. "Sure. Hop in."

Knowing he had to be a little anxious at having his bosses' new wife riding with him, she smiled warmly as she got into the passenger's seat. "I appreciate this so much. I want to get back home to my daughter."

He nodded, looking straight ahead as he started to drive. "So your daughter's at the ranch?"

"Yes. She was sleeping, so Martha's watching her."

"It's a shame you don't have her with you."

A little confused by his tone, she turned to look at him when she saw movement in her peripheral vision. She started to turn just as a hand came around, holding a cloth to her face.

"You dumb son of a bitch! Couldn't you have just kept your mouth closed? Where's the envelope, bitch?"

She struggled, trying to push the other man's hand away, looking toward the ranch hand in fear and confusion as he grabbed her hand.

*Why didn't he help her?*

Her vision started to blur and her struggles became weaker. The last thing she saw was the apology in his eyes before everything went black.

\* \* \* \*

Hayden walked into the kitchen to the smell of cake and Angie's laughter.

"Do you think Mr. Hayden and Mr. Chandler will like 'em?"

Martha laughed softly. "Of course they will. All cupcakes should have chocolate chip smiley faces."

Hayden looked over his shoulder, grinning at his brother. "It looks like we're having cupcakes for dessert."

Chandler grinned back. "Later on I'm having Lizzy for dessert."

Hayden shook his head. "Nope. My turn." Walking into the kitchen, he came to a halt when Angie's smile fell. Shooting a look at Chandler, he knelt next to her. "What's the matter, sweetheart?"

Angie's bottom lip quivered. "I want my mommy."

Hayden picked her up, loving the way she wrapped her arms around his neck. "Well, let's go find her."

The look on Martha's face made him pause. "What is it?"

Chandler held out his arms for Angie. "Come here, angel. I want a kiss."

"Did you see the cupcakes I made for you?"

Worry darkened Chandler's eyes as he cradled Angie against him. "They're beautiful."

Hayden moved closer to Martha, leading her away from Chandler and Angie. "What is it?"

Martha wrung her hands. "Mrs. Scott left to go to the post office. She said she wanted to get back before Angie woke up. That was over two hours ago."

Looking up at Chandler, he saw the same fear in his eyes that knotted his own stomach. He started back for his boots, whipping out his cell phone just as the doorbell rang. Changing direction, he went back through the kitchen as Chandler said something to Martha under his breath and set Angie back on her feet.

Hayden didn't wait for him, racing down the hall to the front door and flinging it open.

Jeb Reed stood on the front porch. "Hey, Hayden. How are you? I brought your truck so you didn't have to run to town for it."

Paula Reed pushed him aside as Angie came running out. "There's my baby."

"Grandma!"

The knot in Hayden's stomach tightened. Something must have shown on his face because Jeb frowned at him and started to say something but Hayden shook his head. "Paula, why don't you take Angie out to the kitchen? Angie, show grandma the cupcakes you and Martha made."

Trying to smile reassuringly at Paula's worried frown, Hayden led Jeb into their study.

Chandler closed the door behind them. "What the hell's going on?"

Hayden's hand shook as he dialed Lizzy's cell phone number.

Jeb looked back and forth between them. "Where's Elizabeth?"

Hayden's fear grew with every unanswered ring of the phone. "Martha said Lizzy went to the post office." Another ring. "That was over two hours ago." Another ring. "What the hell happened with the truck?"

Jeb's face paled. "She called me. When she came out of the post office she had a flat tire. She called me to come fix it for her. She saw one of your ranch hands and said forget it. She was going to get a ride with him and tell you two about the truck when you came in."

Hayden cursed when Elizabeth's phone went to voice mail. He hung up and immediately punched the number in again. "We just got in. Martha said she hasn't come home."

Chandler cursed. "Okay. Let's go out and find out who the hell she ran into in town."

They questioned every one of the ranch hands in the yard, leaving instructions for them to question everyone else. "One of the trucks is



gone. I want to know who the hell is missing. Call my cell phone as soon as you find out. I want to get to the post office before they close.”

Chandler scrubbed a hand over his face. “Where the fuck can she be? She never would have left Angie for so long. Why the hell didn’t she call us?”

Hayden was already headed for one of the ranch trucks. All of them had the keys over the visor making it easy for anyone to use any one of them whenever they needed to. He wondered if he would come to regret that. His hands shook as he stuck the key in the ignition and took off toward town. “She’s in trouble, Chandler. You know it as well as I do.”

Chandler nodded grimly. “Someone took her. But who? The senator wouldn’t dirty his hands personally, would he?”

Hayden clenched his jaw. “I doubt it.”

Chandler hit the dashboard. “Damn it, where the fuck is she?”

Searching the sides of the road, Hayden tightened his hands on the wheel. “I don’t know. Look out for her.”

Chandler searched the landscape as they drove. “If someone did take her, we’ll have to assume it was a professional.”

Hayden had been thinking the same thing but hadn’t wanted to voice it. “And whoever it is has someone from the ranch in their pocket.”

“Fuck” Chandler pulled out his cell phone. “I’ll call Bill. We can trust our foreman. Agreed?”

“Agreed. Bill would never do something like this. Call Jeb, too. Tell him to keep Martha there and to lock the house up tight. No one in or out until we get back.”

Hayden pulled up to the post office and slammed on his brakes. God, he didn’t know what he’d do if something happened to Lizzy. Racing inside with Chandler on his heels, he prayed like never before.

\* \* \* \*

Elizabeth woke gradually, feeling slightly nauseous, some instinct warning her to be quiet and still.

“Shut up and keep digging.”

The unfamiliar voice brought everything back in a rush.

Carefully opening one eye, she saw the ranch hand digging a hole while another man held a gun on him.

The ranch hand wiped the back of his hand over his forehead. “You didn’t say anything about hurting anyone. You said the senator just wanted his granddaughter back.”

“Shut up. You told me the kid was always with her. You’re a fucking loser. Now dig the damned hole. I’ve got to get rid of her before I can do anything else.”

“You’re really gonna kill her?”

“Of course I’m going to kill her! What did you think, I’d just let her go? Hurry up. I’ve still got to get the kid and the envelope she had.” The man with the gun had obviously tried to blend in, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, but he had a city look about him.

Terrified for herself and Angie, Elizabeth looked around, relieved to see that she knew where she was. On the other side of the ridge lay a pond Hayden and Chandler used for fishing. When the man with the gun turned in her direction, Elizabeth hurriedly closed her eyes, pretending to still be unconscious. God, what had he given her? Her head spun dizzily as the sun nearly blinded her.

They’d left her in the passenger seat, leaning against the window. Opening her eyes to mere slits, she looked out again to see the man with the gun had looked away again, yelling at the ranch hand to hurry up.

She had to get out of here before they finished digging her grave. Turning her head slightly, she glanced at the ignition, her fear growing to find the keys gone. She had no idea how much longer they’d be, but when the ranch hand jumped down in the hole to finish digging, she knew she had to be running out of time.

She'd never be able to outrun them on foot, but she knew several hiding places. She'd used them more than once when she used to come out to spy on Hayden and Chandler as they fished.

Hayden and Chandler.

Oh God, they'd be worried sick. The thought of never seeing them again, never holding Angie again, never again being able to be with her parents again...

No, she couldn't think about that now. She had to concentrate on nothing more than escaping. Hayden and Chandler would know by now that something was wrong and they'd do everything in their power to keep Angie safe.

Impulsively, she reached over and pulled the visor down, tears of relief blurring her vision when the key fell to the seat.

God bless Hayden and Chandler's rules. Every one of their ranch hands had been trained for years to put the keys back above the visor before they got out of the truck. It had been ingrained in all of the men because of the number of times they'd lost keys on the ranch.

Moving quickly, she jumped into the other seat and started the truck, throwing it in gear.

Both men looked up and raced toward her as she hit the gas, kicking up dirt and grass as she floored it, turning the truck around. She easily corrected but fishtailed slightly. She hadn't driven on anything but asphalt roads in years, but she'd driven on dirt and grass often enough in the past that it came rushing back.

The back window shattered, startling a scream from her. Looking in side mirror, she blinked.

The man with the gun was shooting at her!

Crouching down, she headed toward the ranch. Hayden and Chandler would be worried sick, and she knew that she'd be safe once she got there.

Once she was far enough away that she could no longer see the two men in the mirror, she reached up to rub her shoulder where it

burned. Feeling a sticky wetness, she looked down at her blood-covered hand in horror.

She'd been shot!

Now that she knew that the searing pain made itself known.

Her purse lay on the floor, and she couldn't reach it to get her phone unless she pulled over which was something she didn't want to do. She had to get to the ranch as soon as possible.

\* \* \* \*

Chandler disconnected, turning to Hayden. "Doug Stamper's missing. Everyone else is accounted for. Apparently he got a call earlier and said he had something to do. Bill's pissed at himself because he didn't know he'd taken a ranch truck."

Hayden's grim expression hadn't changed much in the last hour. "Where the fuck are they?"

Chandler's gut churned, and his fear for Elizabeth felt like a rock in his stomach. "Every hand is out looking for them. We won't stop until we find them."

"Damn it. I want her back. It'll be getting dark soon."

Chandler had been thinking the same thing. "It doesn't matter. We won't stop looking until we find her."

"How's Angie?"

"She's upset, but Jeb and Paula are watching a movie with her. Mom and Dad are on their way over." Constantly scanning the area, he narrowed his eyes when he saw what looked like a truck kicking up dust in the distance. "Look over there. Is that them?"

Accelerating, Hayden raced ahead. "It looks like they're headed right for us."

Chandler reached behind him for the binoculars. "She's gotta be okay. We just got her. We can't lose her now."

"We won't."

As the truck got closer, Chandler sat forward. "Holy hell. That's Lizzy! She's driving like a bat out of hell, and she's alone."

Hayden slowed. "Thank God!"

Chandler threw the binoculars into the back seat. "Stop. She's probably scared. Who knows what the hell's happened to her? Let her see it's us." As soon as Hayden stopped the truck, Chandler jumped out, waving his hands. "Lizzy!"

Thankfully she slowed instead of breezing right past them. When she got close enough, he saw the relief on her face as she brought the truck to a halt only feet away.

Chandler ran up to her, his only thought getting to her as soon as possible. Yanking open the door, he jerked her into his arms, burying his face in her hair. "Thank God." When she flinched, he released her with a curse, horrified at the blood that covered her. "Lizzy!"

Elizabeth looked down, her eyes going wide as Hayden pulled her short sleeve higher. "That bastard shot at me."

Chandler caught her, his eyes flying to Hayden's. "Hell."

Hayden stripped off his t-shirt and held it to the wound. "Let's get her to the hospital. She's lost a lot of blood. It looks like the bullet just nicked her but she's got a lot of cuts from flying glass."

They hurried to the truck, relief making Chandler almost giddy. Using Hayden's t-shirt, he brushed shards of broken glass off of her skin and as much blood as he could.

Lizzy grabbed his arm. "The senator hired someone to take Angie. He's at the pond with one of your ranch hands. I don't know his name. They were digging a grave for me. I was in the truck. Your truck had a flat tire. The other guy was in the back of the ranch truck. He put a cloth over my face."

Hayden patted her thigh, searching the horizon as he turned the truck and started back toward town. "Calm down, baby. You're safe now. Let's get you to the hospital and get you checked out."

Chandler threw the bloody shirt to the floor and pulled off his own to wrap it around the worst of the wounds. Pulling out his cell phone, he called the sheriff.

Lizzy turned to Hayden. "Give me your cell phone. I want to call Martha and make sure Angie's okay."

Handing it to her, Hayden bent to kiss her, his eyes fierce. "We could have lost you. The senator is gonna pay big time for this."

Lizzy smiled for the first time. "I'm okay. I'm just worried about Angie."

Hayden nodded, holding onto her thigh as if he needed the contact. "Your parents are with her. Tell them to stay there until we get back. I don't want Angie to see you covered with all that blood. It'll only scare her."

Only then did Chandler realize that he held onto her, too. "I know it scares the hell out of me."

Lizzy leaned against him, holding Chandler's hand as she spoke into the phone.

Meeting Hayden's eyes over her head, seeing the relief and conviction on his brother's face that he knew had to be reflected on his own, Chandler nodded once, understanding completely.

They'd come far too close to losing her again, this time for good.

## Chapter Nine

They all sat around the kitchen table after finally getting Angie to sleep, each with a cup of coffee they barely touched. They all stared into them. Each person was preoccupied with his own thoughts. Her mom and dad's faces still looked a little pale to her, but having Hayden and Chandler's parents there seemed to help. The older Scotts had already been there when they got home from the hospital.

Elizabeth had spent the evening reassuring everyone that she was fine, and everyone else had spent the evening calming Angie. She'd also spoken to the sheriff and learned that the two men who'd taken her had been arrested.

Hayden and Chandler wore grim expressions all evening; their fury at the entire mess was obvious. They hid it pretty well until Angie went to bed, but now they made no attempt at all to do so.

Shortly after they'd arrived, she'd seen Hayden in what appeared to be a heated conversation with his foreman. Immediately afterward there'd been a lot of activity in the yard and since then men could be seen from every window.

"Are you sure you're all right?"

Elizabeth smiled reassuringly at Chandler to the question she'd answered at least a dozen times since this afternoon. "I'm fine. I'm just worried about Angie."

Wrapping an arm around her, Chandler pulled her chair closer. "We'll take care of it. The sheriff's trying to get the man who shot you to implicate the senator. In the meantime, neither one of you will be alone until this is settled."

Murmurs of approval sounded from the rest of them, but Hayden still looked grim.

Making a decision, Elizabeth looked back and forth between him and Chandler. “I’m calling the senator.” Holding up her hand to stop the sharp objections, she stood. “The evidence I have that the senator has had a string of affairs helped me get my divorce. I’ll use it again to keep Angie.”

Hayden narrowed his eyes at her. “I’ve already taken care of it.”

“Damn it, Hayden. I can handle this on my own.”

Hayden started toward her, his eyes flashing. The ringing of the doorbell made him pause. “I told you I already handled it.” He left to answer the door, fury in his long strides.

Elizabeth plopped back in her seat, glaring at Chandler. “What did he do?”

Chandler nodded grimly. “You’ll see soon enough.”

“Chandler, I want—” She broke off when Hayden appeared in the doorway, looking even more formidable than before.

“Lizzy, Chandler, come into the study.”

Exchanging a look with Chandler, Elizabeth held onto his arm as she slowly got to her feet, wary now. “Hayden, what is it?”

His jaw clenched. “Your ex-husband wants to talk to us.”

Elizabeth’s jaw dropped. “Richard’s here?”

Hayden nodded curtly. “He’s waiting for us in the study.”

Sharing a look with her parents, Elizabeth followed Hayden as he led the way back to his study, Chandler close behind her. She had no idea why Richard would ever show up here, but if he thought he could take Angie, she’d use those photos no matter what Hayden and Chandler said. Walking into the room, she glanced at Richard warily before taking a seat on the sofa.

He stood, coming forward. “Hello, Elizabeth. In spite of what happened today, you look wonderful.” Nodding at Chandler, he extended his hand. “You must be Chandler. I’m Richard Forrester.”



As usual, he was impeccably dressed, his pants pressed to a razor sharp crease.

In contrast, both Hayden and Chandler wore the jeans and t-shirts they'd changed into as soon as they'd come home, not wanting Angie to see any blood on any of them. Their hair was mussed from running their hands through it repeatedly and their faces had become lined with tension.

They'd never looked better to her.

After greeting Chandler, Richard took his seat again, his eyes widening when he saw the way Hayden and Chandler surrounded her protectively, Chandler on the sofa next to her and Hayden standing directly behind her.

Elizabeth automatically adopted the relaxed pose she'd used with Richard for years in an effort to show his actions meant nothing to her. "What are you doing here, Richard? Isn't Dakota Springs a little out of your element? Hasn't your father done enough?"

Richard's smile was one she'd learned to detest years earlier. "You'll never be able to prove my father did anything. That's why I'm here."

Hayden cursed, his hand on her good shoulder tightening. "You son of a bitch. You know damned well your father hired him." Coming around the sofa, he grabbed Richard by his designer shirt and lifted him to his feet. "Lizzy could have been killed today. But that was the senator's plan all along, wasn't it?"

"With the help of one of *your* men!"

Seeing Hayden's face, Elizabeth jumped up and hurried toward him, clutching his arm before he could hit Richard.

Glancing at her, Hayden pushed Richard back into his chair and wrapped an arm around her.

Elizabeth leaned into him for both his solidness and warmth and also to keep him from going after Richard. Automatically rubbing her hand soothingly over his stomach, she looked up at him. "Hayden, what are you saying?"

Hayden's arm around her waist tightened. "With you dead, the senator wouldn't have to worry about you exposing him. Without a mother, the courts would most likely award Richard custody of Angie. All of their problems would be solved."

Incredulous, she turned slowly to Richard, already seeing the truth in his eyes. "Is it true?"

Richard ran a hand over his face, suddenly looking tired and stressed. "It wouldn't surprise me." Leaning forward, he sighed. "My father's a very ambitious man. He wants to be re-elected and he doesn't like having the threat of exposure hanging over his head. You'll never be able to prove it, though. The senator's too smart for that. Even if the man the sheriff's questioning admitted it, it would be his word against my father's."

She could barely take it in. Moving out of Hayden's arms, she moved slowly to the sofa and sank into it. "I can't believe it. The senator actually hired someone to kill me?" She'd known he was serious about his career, but she never would have dreamed him capable of something like this.

Richard's jaw clenched, something she hadn't seen since the first time she'd caught him having an affair. "I don't know for sure. My father would never confide in me, but I'd bet money on it."

Not quite trusting Richard, Elizabeth pushed out of Chandler's arms and sat forward. "So why are you here?"

Richard reached for his jacket draped over the adjoining chair, pulling an envelope out of an inside pocket. Tapping it against his knee, he met her eyes. "You and I should never have gotten married. I admit I treated you badly." Sighing, he continued to tap the envelope, looking unsure of himself for the first time since Elizabeth met him. "I'm not a good father to Angelina. To be honest, I have no desire to try. I'm too selfish."

Not sure what he was getting at, she glanced at Hayden to find him staring at Richard, his entire body tense.

Surprisingly, the hostile look on his face didn't appear to faze Richard at all. Leaning forward, Richard handed the envelope to her. "I had my attorney draw these up." Taking a deep breath, he let it out slowly. "I'm giving up all rights to Angelina. You have full custody." At her gasp, he gestured toward Hayden and Chandler. "Now one of them can adopt her. The senator wouldn't be able to do a fucking thing about it and could never get her." Looking away, he stared down at his hands. "Both of you will be safe from him."

Incredulous, Elizabeth glanced at both Hayden and Chandler, seeing the same surprise on their faces. Wiping away the tears that blurred her vision, she smiled tremulously. "You're wrong about one thing."

Richard snapped his head up, frowning. "What?"

"You are a good father and you're not as selfish as you think. You're risking the senator's wrath to make sure Angie's safe and happy." Impulsively, she knelt beside Richard's chair. "I'll never be able to thank you enough for this, Richard."

Looking more than a little uncomfortable, Richard smiled slightly and stood. "Just make sure my daughter's happy."

Hayden moved forward to shake Richard's hand. "That's a promise that's easy to make. We'll take good care of both of them."

Chandler helped Elizabeth to her feet, wrapping an arm around her waist. "With pleasure. Now are you going to tell the senator, or are we?"

Richard smiled, genuine amusement lighting his eyes. "Oh, allow me. You owe me that much." Folding his suit jacket over his arm, he started out.

Hayden smiled. "One other thing..."

Richard paused on his way to the door. "What?"

Hayden's grin was one she remembered from years earlier. "I've already sent everything Elizabeth had to the newspapers. She no longer has anything on him that the rest of the world won't know about in a few hours."

Stunned, Elizabeth could only gape at him. “You really did that?”

Hayden inclined his head in that sexy way he had. “I called the senator as soon as I put it in the safe and told him I’d use it if he ever threatened you or Angie. He did. I never bluff.”

Richard laughed, a deep belly laugh she’d never heard from him before. “Oh God. I’ve got to get home. I can’t wait to see the bastard’s face.”

Chandler shook his head. “You really hate your father so much?”

“Can’t stand his fucking guts. He’s interfered in my life too many times. We were never close, and he didn’t want a damned thing to do with me until I was already grown. He and my mother deserve each other.” Starting for the door again, he stopped, turning to Elizabeth. “When Angelina gets old enough to understand, do you think you could explain...?”

Nodding, Elizabeth realized she’d never really known Richard at all. “I will.”

The joy she saw on Hayden’s face before he turned to walk Richard out had her tears flowing freely. Wrapping her arms around Chandler’s waist, she buried her face against his chest. “It’s over.”

Chandler lifted her chin, his own eyes misty as he kissed her lightly and wiped away her tears. “No, baby. It’s only just begun.”

## Chapter Ten

Flanked by Hayden and Chandler, Elizabeth stood on the front porch, waving goodbye. Angie had been beside herself with excitement all week, talking about little else but the trip to the circus with both sets of her grandparents. “Did you see your parents’ faces when Angie called them grandma and grandpa?”

Chandler bent to kiss her hair. “I probably looked that way the first time she called me Daddy.”

Hayden ran a hand over the shoulder that had healed, something he did often. “I have no idea how much she understands but thankfully she seems happy.”

Elizabeth giggled, happier than she’d ever been. “She’s thrilled. Neither one of us has ever been so happy, and she loves her two daddies like crazy.”

Hayden smiled. “Her two daddies love her.”

Chandler pinched her bottom. “How about her momma?”

Squealing, Elizabeth jerked away, turning to face both of them. Running her hands over Chandler’s and then Hayden’s chest, she smiled seductively, dancing away when Chandler reached for her. “Everyone’s gone. Even Martha has the day off.” Circling them, she ran a hand over their tight butts and the zippers of their worn jeans, smiling as the bulges grew under her caress. “How about if I show you?”

Whipping an arm out, Hayden snagged her around the waist, tossing her over his shoulder. “How about if you do?”

Chandler followed them into the house, running his hand over her bottom and thighs. “We’re all alone, darlin’. You’re in for it now.”

Running her hands over Hayden's butt, she giggled, marveling at how lighthearted she felt now that the senator was no longer a threat.

The pictures of him with numerous women and the following interviews with the same women, who freely admitted to having slept with the senator, effectively ruined his career.

She pushed those thoughts of him away and turned her head to look up at Chandler. "Oh, you sweet talker. I'm all aquiver."

Running his hand over her bottom, he slid it between her legs. "Not yet, but you will be."

Hayden started up the stairs, his hand still on her bottom. "I'm taking this ass."

"Holy hell."

"I thought that might get your attention."

Elizabeth shuddered as Hayden carried her into the master bedroom and set her on her feet. Chandler followed them in, kicking the door closed behind him.

Hayden turned her, pulling her back against him, and burying his face in her hair. "You trust us, baby?"

Elizabeth moaned as his hands came up under her shirt to unsnap her bra and cover her breasts. "Yes."

Chandler reached for the snap of her shorts. "You'd better." Bending, he kissed her, nibbling at her lips as Hayden ran his fingers over her nipples. "Soon you're gonna be taken like never before."

Just thinking about what they would do to her had her insides clenching. They'd touched her there several times in the last few weeks, each time exciting her more than the last. The dark promises they'd made, telling her how incredibly full she'd be, excited the hell out of her.

It had driven her crazy with anticipation for weeks. It looked like today her waiting had come to an end. They quickly stripped her of her clothes, leaving her naked between them.

Fisting his hand in her hair, Hayden tilted her head back to take her mouth with his, using his other hand to manipulate her nipples.

The feel of his denim-covered cock pressing into the small of her back had her arching against him, gasping into his mouth when Chandler knelt in front of her and spread her folds. Not being able to see him somehow aroused her even more. No matter how many times they did things like this, it never failed to excite her. His bare thighs spread hers making her tremble when she realized he'd already undressed.

Leaning back against Hayden, she gripped his forearms tightly as Chandler ran his tongue through her slit.

Chandler's breath felt warm on her thigh. "Nice and wet as always, baby."

Hayden lifted his head, looking over her shoulder, but keeping her from turning to see Chandler. "Hmm, Chandler looks like he's enjoying himself." He smiled at her as he pinched a nipple.

The jolt of heat went straight to her clit, which throbbed under Chandler's attention, burning more with each mind-numbing stroke. Her nipples ached, needing a firmer touch, which Hayden denied her.

Her clit burned hotter, her body gathering when suddenly Chandler stopped. Groaning in frustration, she gripped Chandler's shoulders as he stood and lifted her against his chest.

Chandler's mouth covered hers, giving her the taste of herself as he moved toward the bed. Raising his head, he eyed her mouth hungrily. "I want to feel that mouth on my cock."

Rubbing against him, Elizabeth caught his bottom lip between her teeth and tugged. "I want to feel your cock in my mouth. Hard and thick and hot."

Setting her on her feet, he ran a hand down her bottom. "And then in your pussy."

Hayden, now naked, moved in from behind. "And your ass."

Watching Chandler eagerly as he positioned himself on the bed, Elizabeth crawled up between his legs, eyeing the way he stroked his cock, the drop of moisture on the tip making her mouth water. "Why don't you let me do that?"

Chandler released his cock and leaned back on his elbows. "Mouth only. Keep your hands right where they are."

Licking the plum-sized head, she smiled around it, her eyes fluttering closed as Hayden ran a hand down her back and to her slit. Keeping her hands on either side of Chandler's hips, she took him into her mouth, running her tongue over his cock, savoring the taste of him. It soon became hard to concentrate on what she was doing, her mind and senses taken over by Hayden's touch.

He spread her thighs even wider, stroking her pussy, his talented fingers driving her quickly toward the edge.

Elizabeth shuddered with both pleasure and emotion, still amazed that both men were really hers. Even knowing what they were about to do, she trusted them completely, knowing that neither one of them would ever hurt her.

If anything, they still babied her too much.

She wanted to see if she could make them want her so much they could forget about all of that, at least temporarily. She sucked Chandler deep to her throat, tilting her bottom higher, determined to make them wild for her.

"Fuck, Lizzy. Stop. Now."

Ignoring Chandler, she ran her tongue over the underside, digging her nails into his thighs, moaning when Hayden withdrew his fingers and began stroking her clit.

Chandler gripped her hair, pulling her away from his cock with a harsh groan. "Damn, I'm too fucking hot, just thinking about it. Let go, baby."

Hayden withdrew from her and slapped her lightly on the bottom.

With a firm grip, Chandler pulled her over his chest. "I like you right where you are."

She heard a drawer open and shut before two condoms landed on the bed beside her. "I like where I am, too." She closed her eyes again, rubbing her stomach against the hard cock that pressed into it, moaning when Chandler's hands went to her breasts.



Shivers racked her body as Hayden parted her wide again, positioning her legs outside of Chandler's. Wiggling against Chandler, she froze when a cold, lube-coated finger touched her bottom hole. Even though they'd done this several times, she could never quite become accustomed to having her anus invaded.

Hayden separated the cheeks of her bottom, spreading the lube liberally before pressing a finger into her, his hand on her bottom tightening when she shuddered. "Nice and easy, Lizzy."

Chandler seemed to know she needed more and slid his hand under her, his callused fingers resting on her clit, unmoving.

She rocked her hips, needing the friction, which also moved her on Hayden's finger. But she couldn't stop.

"That's it, Lizzy. Fuck yourself on my finger."

Shocked by the way he talked to her, she stilled. "Oh, God." Catching her breath, she held onto Chandler as she began moving again, unable to remain motionless.

"Two fingers now, Lizzy."

Unable to believe how her bottom opened to the relentless pressure of his fingers, she whimpered as the tight ring of muscle gave way. The burn, as always, surprised her, making her anus tingle in a way that seemed to take over her completely. It made her clit burn hotter, her pussy clench tighter, and her nipples ache to be touched.

Chandler removed his hand from between her legs. "No more of that. You're gonna come too soon." Wrapping an arm around her, he held her immobile against him.

"Damn it, Chandler. Oh!"

Hayden withdrew from her, leaving her empty and needy. "Christ, with the way she's clamping down on my fingers, I can only imagine what she's gonna feel like on my cock. Just a little more lube, darlin'."

With her face buried against Chandler's chest Elizabeth's arousal grew. The trepidation about what would soon happen only added to it.

Chandler held onto her thighs, keeping them parted with her knees on the bed, her bottom high, which also kept her from rubbing her clit against him.

The entire area from her clit to her anus burned, her body automatically arching her bottom higher, exposing herself completely to Hayden's ministrations. Needing his touch, she pushed back, offering herself to him completely. Her thighs had long since become coated with her juices, the addition of the lube making her slick along her entire slit. As Hayden worked even more of that lube into her, her anus gripped at him, desperate now to be filled as whimpered cries continued to erupt from her throat.

She never would have believed she would not only allow, but actually *need* something there. When Hayden leaned forward and wrapped an arm around her waist to pull her back against him, she gasped at the feel of his cock bobbing against her. Her body had become so sensitized that every touch enflamed her, and she burned everywhere as she watched Chandler clumsily don a condom. The fact that his hands shook made her feel even better.

"Ready, baby?"

Reaching up, she grabbed Hayden's shoulders, arching her neck to give him better access. "God, yes." She trembled when the muscles under her hands bunched and shifted as he lifted her slightly, positioning her over Chandler's waiting cock.

Inch by inch, Chandler filled her, his slow possession making her squirm.

Once his cock was seated to the hilt inside her, she rocked her hips helplessly. "Oh God. I'm going to come."

Chandler tugged once at her nipples, making her cry out as the warning tingles from her slit spread. "No. You're not coming until we're both inside you. Be still." He took her from his brother, wrapping his arms around her to pull her tightly against his chest. "Don't move. Fuck. Those hard little nipples are poking into me. Wait

'til I get my mouth on them again. Stop wiggling, damn it. Hayden, would you hurry the fuck up? I'm dying down here."

With a rip of foil, Hayden chuckled. "I'm enjoying the show. Do you know how fucking sexy it is to watch this lubed ass wiggling and know that I'm going to fuck it? Ready baby?"

Shaking with nerves and excitement, Elizabeth gripped Chandler tightly, moaning deeply when she felt the tip of Hayden's cock at her opening. "I want it so bad but I'm afraid."

With a hand on her back, Hayden held her steady. "Nice and slow, Lizzy." His low crooning came out ragged and deep, doing nothing at all to soothe her.

In fact it did just the opposite. Their hands gripped her more firmly than ever with a savageness that she'd never experienced in their lovemaking before.

But this is what she'd wanted, and she'd been damned if she let herself chicken out now.

Besides, she needed this, all her inhibitions fleeing as she pressed down against Chandler, tilting her bottom up for Hayden's possession. Squeezing her eyes closed, she groaned at the relentless press of his cock against her opening. When the tight ring of muscle gave way under Hayden's demand for entrance, she cried out, amazed at how much it burned. It felt nothing like his fingers, and just knowing it was his cock working steadily into her made her feel more vulnerable and helpless than she could ever have anticipated.

Each shallow stroke took him a little deeper, opening her up to his erotic possession. Chills racked her body as he continued, her cries and whimpers becoming louder and wilder with every stroke.

Hayden's hands tightened on her hips. "Too fucking tight." His voice sounded tortured, his breath coming out in groans.

Elizabeth felt as if her body no longer belonged to her. They'd taken it over completely. Each stroke of their hands, brush of their lips, or thrust of their cocks controlled her. Her anus burned, the indescribably full feeling stealing her breath. Taken completely, she

could do nothing but hold on to Chandler as they stretched her in a way she'd never thought possible.

Hayden's voice, barely recognizable, rumbled close to her ear as his big body covered hers. "Fuck, Lizzy. You feel so good."

"Oh God. It's amazing." Her clit burned where it pressed against Chandler, and the friction on it as they moved her had her clenching on both of their cocks. Groaning harshly, they set up a rhythm, holding her securely for their deep thrusts, only to withdraw and thrust into her again. Her body jolted repeatedly as though touched by a live wire, and the erotic tingling of her pussy and anus combined with the sharp pleasure of the friction on her clit.

Filled to overflowing, her body gripped them both tightly, feeling every bump and ridge of their cocks as they slid over sensitive tissue. Suddenly it became too much. Holding onto Chandler's shoulders she came with long swells of sizzling heat that burned her pussy and anus and spread everywhere.

She tilted her head back, the cries erupting from her throat frightening her, sounding more animalistic than human.

Both men groaned hoarsely, Chandler's head thrown back as he rocked her on his cock, the pulsing of both cocks inside her prolonging her own orgasm.

Hayden's ragged groan sounded like nothing she'd ever heard before, and his hands, like vices, held her steady. His breathing sounded ragged in her ear. "If you don't think we want you after that..."

Elizabeth held onto Chandler's heaving chest, struggling to catch her breath. "Holy hell."

Chandler chuckled, the sound of it rumbling in his chest and comforting against her ear. "Now that we have that settled..."

Hayden kissed her shoulder and withdrew, smacking her bottom lightly before dropping a kiss on it. "I'm gonna take a shower. You want to wash my back?"

"I'm dead."

She yelped as Hayden lifted her off of Chandler's cock and into his arms. "Let's wake you up."

Curling into him, Elizabeth smiled. "Aren't you worn out?"

Lifting her, he dropped a quick kiss on her lips. "It seems with you, I have a never ending supply of energy for sex."

Burying her face in his shoulder, she blew out a shaky breath. "I can't believe we actually did that."

Hayden tightened his hold. "I never bluff, baby. You'd better remember that."

He entered the shower stall, turned the water on, and held her under the spray that hadn't yet warmed.

Elizabeth squealed. "Hayden, I'll get you for that!"

Hayden laughed and stuck his own head under the spray, kissing her deeply. Turning before they both drowned, he braced her against the wall. "Say it."

The tenseness in his body and on his face told her that this wasn't the time to tease. "I love you, Hayden Scott. I've loved you and Chandler since I was sixteen years old and not a day went by that I didn't miss you."

Groaning, he buried his face in her neck, a shudder wracking his body. "Christ, I felt like some sort of pervert for wanting you when you were still a teenager. Even my father saw it and told me to stay the hell away from you. When you went away..."

Alarmed when he shuddered again, Elizabeth gripped him tighter. "I'm back and I'm not a little girl anymore. I'm a woman who loves you."

The hand on her bottom tightened as he lifted her against him. "Show me."

\* \* \* \*

Lying on the bed, Chandler smiled.

He couldn't imagine life getting any better than this. Knowing how much Hayden needed this time alone with her, Chandler stayed where he was. His brother still paced the house at night, checking and double checking the windows. Not a night went by that he didn't get up at some point to check on Angie.

He couldn't help but grin every time he thought about the senator's fate. Richard had been the one to call to tell them that his father was now a broken man. The people he'd lied to and manipulated over the years turned against him. The senator's number of friends declined steadily until he'd had no choice but to resign and go with his wife to a property they owned by a lake somewhere.

Richard seemed thrilled with his life now and had actually proposed to his girlfriend, a woman his father couldn't stand.

Angie seemed more content and settled every day, and her laughter was often heard in the halls. She'd named every animal she came across and had already turned most of the ranch hands into her willing slaves.

Life was good.

Lizzy's squeal interrupted his musing.

Hayden's bark of laughter followed. It was a sound Chandler hadn't heard the entire time Lizzy had been gone but he heard frequently now. "But Lizzy, I'm just trying to help you wash off the lube."

"That's not how you wash it off. Hayden!"

Since it sounded like fun, Chandler stood and slipped into the steamy bathroom. Tossing his condom into the trash, he made his way through the steam. "Let me help you with that, Hayden."

Elizabeth squealed again through her laughter. "What on earth have I taken on?"

Chandler opened the shower door, his cock stirring as Hayden braced Elizabeth against the shower wall. "Two men who love you to death. Now about that lube..."

**THE END**

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When Leah Brooke isn't spending time with family or friends, she can be found working on her laptop creating new stories.

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