



The Legends of Loving, Texas Series

Red Rose™ Publishing



The Civil Bride



MALLORY HALL

The Civil Bride

By

Mallory Hall

*To all the
rainbows, in my
family and the
world.*



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ISBN: 978-1-60435-432-4

Cover Artist: Missy Lyons

Editor: Lillith Tash

Line Editor: Zena Gainer

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Chapter One

Loving, Texas-1867

All Lily could feel was the fear in her belly and the hot sun on her head. Her day was not going well, and her situation was desperate. After three long, hot, dusty days on a stage coach, she'd arrived in Loving, Texas only a couple of hours ago to find herself virtually abandoned.

After the stage had arrived, she had stood on the sidewalk warily looking over the large, sweaty men awaiting her and the other "brides." Big and rough around the edges, they milled around the women, who flirted shamelessly. Did they have any idea what these men expected of them?

It had felt like hours before the group dwindled down as the mayor read off names and the men and women paired up and walked off. She looked around the dusty street and was amazed at her good luck; all the men were taken. She was the lone woman. Then Mr. Smarmy – Mayor Burns – approached and told her that her "husband" was running a little late and laughed.

She'd brushed her arms off to erase the impression of bugs on her skin. It was the same feeling some of her womanizing father's friends gave her when they had leered at her and laughed when she blushed and ran off. Her father laughed

along with them.

The sound of galloping horses caught her and the Mayor's attention. Turning, they watched the driver saw on the reins, bringing the horses to a plunging, dusty stop next to them. Coughing and waving the dust away with one hand, she stared at the driver.

Mr. Smarmy said, "Ahh, here he is now."

Unfortunately, the man who got down from the buckboard was tall, handsome, not sweaty or wrinkled, and sported a smile that could charm corn off the stalks in the field.

Her father, in other words.

He addressed Mr. Smarmy. "That her?"

The mayor grinned and nodded. "Yes, indeed."

Lily's "husband" stepped to up to her. "I'm Kane Mitchell." He offered a hand.



Not having a choice, Lily climbed into the buckboard with Kane. Knowing she was in desperate straits, she shrugged off her education, her sunny disposition, and her lady-like manners in order to put him off. Her shrew-like behavior was quite amusing to the mayor and infuriating to her "husband." He hid his disappointment in her well, but she had learned what to look for when the charm

was only skin-deep.

Despite his charming, smiling self, she rode him hard, questioning him and casting aspersions on everything. She was good at it – too good.

He pulled the horses to a stop on the outskirts of Loving.

“You want to stay here, tell me now, and we’ll be shut of each other.”

Desperation churned in her stomach. He’d send her back, back to her father.

“No, yer not gittin’ rid o’ me that easy.”

He stared straight ahead. Finally, he flicked the reins and the horses moved out at a trot. When they were on their way again, she continued with her abrasiveness, but toned it down. She didn’t want him turning the wagon around and taking her back to town, or worse, leaving her here, in the middle of nowhere.

Never having lived outside of a city, Lily was overwhelmed by the emptiness. Bare plains and red dirt surrounded them. Stony hills filled the horizon. Yellow grass grew in clumps with the occasional bare shrub. She saw no trees, no green grass, no buildings, no water, no animals. She looked over her shoulder to the town, but it had disappeared in clouds of dust.

She used the view behind her to reinforce her new philosophy of life – she must go forward because there was nothing behind her. Facing front again, she didn’t see much ahead, either.

Her third – or thirty-third – shock came when they finally reached what

Kane called a house. It was a shack. Two shacks, really, connected by a short hallway open to the weather. And the surprises kept coming.



From the barn, Billy Morgan heard the petulance in the woman's voice. *Serves him right.* Still hurt, Billy gave his horse a pat and hung up the brush. Sounded like Kane's mail-order bride wasn't too eager.

"I can do it myself," she said.

"I know you can," Kane explained. "I'm trying to be a gentleman."

"Don't touch me," the woman said.

Hope selfishly bloomed in Billy's heart. Maybe he hadn't lost his lover completely. He wandered into the bright sunlight.

Kane stood on the passenger side of the wagon with his hands fisted on his hips. *He sure doesn't look like the happy bridegroom.* The woman, short and slender, reached out with her foot for the hub of the front wheel and jumped to the ground. She lifted her chin at Kane.

Intrigued now, Billy wondered what had happened to turn Kane Mitchell from an excited bridegroom to disgruntled gentleman in a few short hours. He'd bolted out the door the minute he'd cleaned up after riding herd most of the day. Billy knew Kane had stifled his enthusiasm for his sake, but he was still raw at being left for an unknown woman. He'd crushed the hurt in his stomach and

waved Kane off. Kane and he hadn't been together since the mail-order argument, and Billy missed him in bed, but he was determined their ranch partnership would survive Kane getting hitched.

He'd known his feelings for Kane were more than those for a friend, even the occasional lover, but it had taken Kane hooking into the mail-order bride deal for Billy to acknowledge that he was in love with the man. He rubbed away the empty feeling in his belly. Since Kane and his bride were standing there glaring at each other, he decided it was time to say hello.

Much to Lily's dismay, another beautiful man strolled up. He was dusty, sweaty, and unshaven, which emphasized the light blue of his eyes. Yellow-blond hair curled around his head. Shorter than Kane, he looked comfortable with himself. And he was smiling, whereas Kane was scowling. She'd have to work her 'charm' on this cowboy, too.

"Howdy, Kane."

In tandem, they turned and watched his approach. He tipped the edge of his hat to the lady in the calico dress. "Ma'am."

She glared at him. "That's Miss," she snapped.

Surprise had him wanting to take a step back, but he stood his ground. It wasn't good to let cattle or women know they could push you out of their way.

“Who’s this?” Lily asked Kane. “What are you lookin’ at?” she asked the blond, who scowled on cue.

“Billy, this is Miss Lily Beacham. Miss Beacham, this is my friend and partner, Billy Morgan.”

“How do,” Billy said, unsmiling, his speech steady as his wary gaze.

“He ain’t no partner of mine,” she exclaimed. “You didn’t say nothin’ ‘bout no part...”

“Enough!” Kane held a hand up in front of her face. “He’s *my* partner, not yours, so don’t worry about it.”

Business partner? Life partner? The word gave Billy the hope he needed, but nothing to hang it on.

“I’ll put the wagon up,” Kane said to Billy, not taking his eyes off his bride. “Why don’t you show Miss Beacham the house?”

Billy plastered on a smile. “Sure thing.”

Kane threw a warning glance at him then grabbed at the head of the nearest horse and dragged them and the wagon away. She had succeeded in running Kane off.

Billy watched until he disappeared inside, and then turned to Miss Beacham. “It’s not a very big house, but there are two bedrooms.”

She stared at the grayed boards of the dogtrot, the uneven porch across the

front, and the alley between the main part of the house and the bedrooms that gave the style of house its name.

“That’s the dogtrot, or alley. The bedrooms are...”

“This isn’t a house. This is worse than any tenement in New York City. Worse than anything I’ve – I seen on the trip here. Worse than that damn blowhard described.” Miss Lily Beacham stepped onto the porch and promptly caught her skirt on the one board that stuck up. She kicked the plank loose before Billy could move, and threw it—and a fine throw it was—into the underbrush. Cussing once again, she slammed the pine door behind her.

He decided she could find the kitchen herself.



Billy, the blond cowboy, trailed after Kane when she went inside and slammed the door in his face, leaving her alone for a few precious minutes.

The shack didn’t improve on closer inspection. While there was a potbelly stove in the kitchen, there was no table and no sink. Greased paper covered the square excuse for a window, and she didn’t have the desire to open the door and see more empty plains with no water in sight.

Returning to what could be called the front room, she inventoried all the comforts of home. One wooden chair, one handmade wooden couch, the seat and back covered with padded canvas, and another excuse for a window.

“At least it won’t take long to find everything.”

She was tempted to sit on the couch but her buttocks were numb from the stagecoach, followed by the hard, flat wagon seat. Rubbing her behind, she stood in the doorway and gazed at her new home.



Billy heard banging noises coming from the barn. He knew Kane wasn’t mad at him, so he’d go listen, commiserate with his old friend, and offer any comfort he may have to offer. And try not to gloat. Too much.

He stepped from sunlight to the dim interior of the barn. “Want to explain what happened to the happy, excited cowboy that left here earlier?”

Kane raised his eyes from the pail he’d just kicked. “He met *her*.” One hand pointed at the house, the other picked up the pail and tossed it into a corner of the barn. “Miss Lily Beacham. She’s comes out west as a mail-order bride.” Kane glared at him. “A *bride* who doesn’t want to get married!”

“She doesn’t want to get married?” *Strange... Wonder what it means for me and Kane?*

“No, she doesn’t. She had no intention of getting married.”

“Why’d she come then?”

Kane threw his hands in the air. “I have no goddamn idea! All she says is

she's not getting married, to me or anyone else."

"Anyone else? What, did you get to pick the one you wanted, or did they pick?"

Kane drew the brush over the gelding's coat, erasing the marks of the harness. "They were assigned."

"By who?"

"The mayor."

Billy let that stew for a minute. Then he grinned. The belly laugh followed, but he tried talking around it. "You mean...you mean, Mayor Burns, the man you beat shooting targets, the one you wiped clean at cards, the one...the one..."

"The one I caught running out Mrs. Marshall's back door in his long johns at dawn." Now Kane was grinning.

Billy gave up and slipped down to the floor huffing and chuckling and holding his stomach. "I sympathize with you."

Kane looked at him over the horse's rump with a carefully neutral expression.

"Really, I do." Billy fell on his side, rocking with laughter.

"Glad I could amuse you." Kane stepped out of the stall and slid the bar across the gate. Towering over Billy, he gave a grim smile. "You're enjoying yourself way too much. I think you need to cool off."

“No!” But Billy was laughing too hard to defend himself from Kane’s will.

He was dragged across the dirt floor and out the back door. Catching his breath, he started to good-naturedly fight Kane’s hold. He struggled, but Kane was bigger and stronger, one of the things that attracted him to the man in the first place. Billy’s breathing deepened as the touch of Kane’s hands played their magic. They wrestled, shoved at each other and moved ever closer to the horse trough.

“No,” he said using his serious voice, but then ruined it by giggling. With Kane behind him, he planted his boot heels. Kane’s right arm was draped over his shoulder and across his chest. Billy savored the feeling of being surrounded by his lover. His stomach trembled at their position. Tempted as he was to nibble on Kane’s strong arm, he resisted. Just because it didn’t appear that Kane was going to have sex with his bride, nothing said he wanted sex with his ex-lover.

With Kane’s next move, Billy’s stomach did that lovely pre-sex roll.

Kane slid his left hand down Billy’s back and between his legs. Gripping a thigh, he lifted Billy off the ground and dumped him in the trough. On the way down, Billy took a good hold of the arm he’d wanted to nibble, and pulled Kane down into the water on top of him.

Spluttering, laughing, and trying to catch his breath, Billy popped his head up out of the water. He was face-to-face with a dripping wet, unsmiling Kane. Without thinking, Billy brushed a kiss over his lips, and then froze. *Oh, crap.*

He braced for a punch to the head, chest, or stomach. It didn't come. Kane stood, water sluicing down his chest and cascading over his pants. He held his hand out. Tentatively, Billy took it and let the big man pull him to his feet. They stepped out of the trough, both sober and quiet now, and dumped the water out of their boots. Kane turned and walked in squishy wet socks into the barn.

Billy hung his head. He'd gone and kissed the man while he was mad as hell at his un-bride. Dismayed by his action, he trailed Kane into the barn.

"Hey." Kane was halfway up the loft ladder.

Billy lifted his head and braced himself. Whatever Kane had to say, he deserved. "What?"

"Come on." Kane continued up the ladder.

He couldn't think of a thing they needed to do in the loft, but Billy followed. Maybe Kane wanted privacy to yell at him. He wanted Kane as a friend, no matter who the man was sleeping with.

His breath caught in his chest when his head cleared the loft floor. Kane already had his shirt off and was fighting with the buttons of his wet pants. There were gift horses, and then there were gift horses. Billy had no intention of looking this one in the mouth, but he could give the man a chance to take it back. He climbed the rest of the way up and cupped Kane's jaw.

"You sure?"

“I want you,” Kane said in a guttural voice. “Hard, and fast.”

Billy pulled his shirt over his head and was out of his pants faster than spit. Naked and rigidly aroused, he watched Kane toss his pants over a bale. Kane stepped close and grabbed him. Big, heavily muscled arms wrapped around his torso. Kane’s mouth came down hard on his. Teeth scraped his tongue as Kane sucked it into his mouth. Breathing hard, Billy let the tornado swirl around him. He held as tightly to Kane as Kane held him.

Kane ended the kiss and spun Billy around, pushing him to his knees. Eager for what was coming, Billy dropped to all fours and spread his legs. His balls and dick hung down, twitching in anticipation. Kane came down behind him. Billy heard him spit and waited to be penetrated.

Two big hands clutched his butt cheeks and squeezed. Pressure on his hole increased, and Kane’s penis slid home. Billy threw his head back in bliss. Kane’s hands were all over him now as he rocked against him. Hooking his hands around Billy’s shoulders, Kane lunged and slammed home again and again. His dick was thick and filled Billy to capacity.

Billy dropped his chest to the floor, whimpering in ecstasy. Kane’s hips pumped faster and harder while his hold on Billy’s shoulders kept him in place as he ravaged his smaller partner. Billy whimpered with pleasure and spread his legs wider. Reaching back, he gripped Kane’s thighs, pulling him closer. Kane’s balls

slapped his own as Kane fucked him with the finesse of a longhorn bull.

Billy loved every thrust, every slap of flesh against flesh. He felt the familiar anticipation building in his gut as he realized he was going to come. Never before had he come without being touched, fondled, or sucked off. Billy's cum spurted onto the hay-strewn wood of the loft. Kane plunged in and out of his ass without letup. His dick pulsed inside Billy, who felt every beat of Kane's heart. Sweat slid down Billy's back as their lungs worked to pull in enough air to stay conscious. Kane rammed into him a last time with a shout of release as the battering ram in Billy's ass emptied into him until Billy felt cum dribble out of him.

Breathing heavily, they both rested, but the extra lubricant excited Kane too much to stay still for long. He started moving slowly and carefully. His big hands held Billy's cheeks open and Billy knew he was watching his dick slide in and out. He tightened his sphincter and was rewarded by Kane's shudder.

Kane pulled him up from the floor so he was on all fours again. He lay his head on Billy's back and let his hands roam over his chest, his armpits, his neck, and – yes! – his cock and balls. He caressed them lovingly. Spreading some of his own lubricant over Billy's genitals, he rubbed and squeezed and pulled until Billy was pumping his hips, thrusting his penis through Kane's slick fists. The hard-on in his ass caressed him on the inside. Quiet now, they rocked together and took their time loving.

The men's second orgasms were smooth. Kane pulled out, turned Billy around gently, and lay down next to him with an arm around his shoulders. Billy let his head roll toward Kane's chest. He could smell sex and sweat and man – wonderful odors that made him feel loved and wanted.

"I'm sorry, Billy. I didn't hurt you, did I?"

Astounded, Billy looked into Kane's concerned face. "No, not at all. I loved it." He ran a hand over the muscles bunched in Kane's shoulder. "It made me feel..."

"Used. I'm sorry I took out my anger at her on you." Kane rose and started dressing.

Billy stayed on the floor. He stayed there while Kane dressed. He stayed as Kane started down the ladder. He stayed when Kane left the barn, and he stayed as the lump in his throat grew to such proportions that his lower lip trembled and he feared he just might shed a few tears.

Chapter Two

Kane Mitchell trudged toward the cabin, a crazy woman ahead of him and an angry, used man behind him. How could he have done that to Billy, the man who had dragged him out from under a sinking wagon, tended his wounds, watched his back? Billy was the one who had comforted him when all hell broke loose around them and the air was heavy with the smell of burning gunpowder and blood.

Kane burned with shame. After all they'd shared, he'd taken Billy like an animal. Kane stopped and wiped a hand over his face. How could he?

"I s'pose you expect me to wash and cook and clean for both you and your friend."

Kane dropped his hand and stared at his purchased bride. She was petite, but had a bosom capable of filling a man's hands. Even covered with the long calico dress, he could tell her bottom was nicely rounded and her waist small. The long sleeves and high collar made her appear modest, but her mouth proved it was an illusion; she cussed like a cowhand. And she kept secrets. Lots of them, like where she came from, how old she was, whether she had a family, and the damned reason she changed her mind about getting married. He didn't understand her and wasn't

sure he wanted to take the effort to.

“What do you want from me?”

The simple question seemed to take her aback. Instead of running her mouth like she'd done most of the way from town, she shut it and crossed her arms over her chest.

Kane was curious now. “Well?”

“I don't know what you mean.”

“You came out here as a mail-order bride, but don't want to get married. You ask every question that pops into your head, but you won't answer any. You take exception to cooking and cleaning, but insisted on coming out here to the homestead after I offered to leave you in town. What do you want from me?”

“Nothing. I don't want nothin' from you.”

At least she was looking at him now. “That's the first straight answer you've given me.”

“Why are you soaking wet?”

More questions and criticism. I knew it couldn't last. “I took a dip in the horse trough out back to cool off,” he said. He took a couple of steps toward her. She backed up.

“Look, I'm not going to do anything to you. I want to go inside and change into dry clothes, make supper, and get some sleep. I leave very early in the

morning.”

She let him go past her then followed him inside. “You’re going to make supper? I can’t *wait* to see this.”

He let his shoulders droop. This shrew had turned his life upside down in a matter of hours. She criticized his every move, his every word. She’d come here under false pretenses. He’d gotten so worked up he’d taken his frustration out on the man closest to him. He’d be lucky if Billy ever spoke to him again. Throwing his hat on the table, he turned around to tell her just what he thought of her.

Billy stood in the open doorway behind her. “Kane’s a great cook. He learned during the war so we wouldn’t starve to death, or have to eat hardtack with a side of bugs.” He walked into the room and hooked his hat on a chair. “Kane could find a rabbit in a coyote den, kill it, skin it, and not wake the pups. Then he’d roast it over an open fire until it was juicy and succulent, the meat falling off the bone. You won’t get better food anywhere in this part of Texas.”

Kane watched and listened. The War of Northern Aggression had shown him things he never wanted to see or remember again. He didn’t think Billy liked remembering it, either. They didn’t talk about it much, and never to others. But Billy did so now to soften the prickly non-bride and keep Kane from being a rude bastard. *After I’ve used him so savagely.*

“Billy, I...”

Billy held a hand up to stop him. “So you better decide if you’re going to going to keep diggin’ yer spurs into him. We have a peaceful home here. It’s all we wanted after the war. Turn it into a battle, and it’ll be me that runs you back to town. And I’ll drop you like a sack o’ rotten potatoes and hightail it back home with a grin.”

Kane stood at the head of the human triangle arranged around the front parlor, shocked to the soles of his boots. Billy didn’t talk like this – full sentences, complete words, eloquent. And all for him, the man that had dumped him, brought the bitch into their house, and then heartlessly used him. Billy, the man who had more to lose than any of the three of them, stood relaxed, with a grin, protecting Kane.

Kane glanced at Lily to get her reaction. She looked as surprised as he felt, but she stood up to Billy’s cold stare. His mouth dropped open when she nodded.

“I can cook, a little,” she offered. “Mostly casseroles and stews. I can clean house. I can’t ride a horse ‘cause I never been around ‘em, but I can fork hay or whatever while you’re working.” She glanced at Billy. “He tol’ me you ride herd at the XY ranch.”

“When we’re needed.”

“You both own this place.”

“That’s right,” Billy said.

“I ain’t doing any of that sex stuff. With neither of ya’.”

Kane stuttered, but Billy smiled.

“You don’t have to do any sex stuff. You can stay long’s you take care of some things around here. We’re pretty tuckered after ridin’ herd or doing chores around here.”

Hugging herself, she nodded at Billy. “I’d like that very much.” She turned to face Kane, who finally shut his mouth. “I’m sorry I was such a trial.”

He nodded, unsure of what to say.

“Kane and I’ll bunk in the back room.” Billy clapped his hands together. “For tonight, we’ll make supper while you get settled in.” Billy gave Kane a wink as he walked past and into the kitchen.

Kane found his mouth open again. He snapped it shut. “I’ll get your trunk.”

Lily Beacham flicked him a quick glance and then followed him into the alleyway.

“First door is yours.” He made a bee-line for the barn. Shock didn’t cover what he felt about Billy defending him and Lily caving. He shook his head to clear it. Didn’t work.

The trunk wasn’t small, but it was surprisingly light. He hefted it to his shoulder, but froze when something rolled around inside it. All he needed was to break something precious of hers to start the war all over again. Holding the trunk

tipped down at one end to keep the contents from banging around, he carried it to the first door. It was open, but he'd be damned before he'd walk in without an invite. He poked his head in.

She stood in the corner with shoulders hunched over, her reticule cupped in one hand while the other rooted around inside it. Her dress hung crookedly, and was threadbare in places. It had been fashionable once, but no more.

"Miss Beacham?"

She started and clasped a hand over the opening of the cloth bag.

Needing to lighten the moment, he cleared his throat. "Counting your money?" he asked mischievously.

She turned beet-red and put both her hands, and the bag, behind her back.

Kane bit his lip. Laughing was probably the worst thing he could do in this situation. "Don't worry. I won't steal it."

Her eyes narrowed in suspicion. "I don't have enough to bother stealing."

He no longer felt like laughing. This woman was the poorest of the poor. As he stepped inside the room, he acknowledged that her education was as lacking as her wardrobe. "Can you sew?"

That put her back up. Carefully, he set the trunk down, and held his hand up to keep her from jumping all over him...which put a picture in his mind he didn't need. The straw-filled mattress lay folded in half, exposing the rope

supports. He flipped the mattress flat and sat on the foot of the bed. Maybe making himself a bit smaller would make him seem less threatening.

“If you can sew, we’ll buy some cloth so you can make yourself some dresses.”

“What do I have to do?”

Chagrined, Kane closed his eyes for a moment. Somewhere, sometime, Lily had learned the hard lesson that nothing in life is free. “Nothing more than you’ve agreed to already.”

Her eyes narrowed as she glared at him. “No sex stuff?”

Now his face turned red. He sure as hell wanted sex, wanted it with a woman, but he wasn’t about to bargain with her for it. “No sex stuff.”

Her shoulders relaxed a little. He stood and walked to the door. Before pulling it closed behind him, he felt he had to set something straight. “No sex stuff until you’re ready, Miss Beacham.” He closed the door.

Why the hell had he said that?



Lily Beacham, twenty-two years old and well-versed in how far a man would go to get sex, stared at the door and shivered. When she’d gotten off the stage coach, rumped, sweaty, and wrinkled, her first thought was that she had arrived at the end of the world. Her second thought was, had she gone far enough?

Memories of her father chilled her to the bone. Surely he wouldn't come all the way to Texas to find her. Would he?

"Frying pan, or the fire?" she asked herself. Not having an answer, she forced herself to think of all she'd left behind.

The comforts of her previous home had included a four-story house in New York City featuring a front parlor, a family parlor, a music room, a library, a large, fully-equipped kitchen, five bedrooms, and a staff of twelve. Family heirlooms filled the house to bursting. Lily couldn't have cared less about these remnants of her family's history. The present had concerned her far more than the past, even as a child. Being physically, painfully reminded of the present several times a week made one very conscious of it.

Papa was good at physically reminding *his* women of how important a man he was. Her mother had died giving birth to her father's heir, the first boy, and Papa wasn't pleased when the boy died not long after. He mourned his son. His daughters mourned their mother.

Not to be thwarted in his quest for an heir, the ever-resourceful Mr. Beacham had acquired a new wife within six months and proceeded to get her with child. The beatings shifted to his second wife when she produced two more girls, for a total of four daughters worthless to him.

Papa had remarried four months after his second wife died of pneumonia,

and his mood had worsened as the daughters continue to arrive. He struck out at any and all of them, including his third wife until – blessed day – she bore him a son.

Her father had cradled the infant in his arms, proclaiming, “Finally, a son – a child worthy of continuing my name, and taking over the bank.”

Uncharitably, Lily had prayed the boy wouldn’t be able to add two and two. She was the oldest, the one with the most scars, visible and invisible. Her love for her sisters and brother kept her home longer than she intended.

Lily was twenty when her brother was born. For the next year Papa had ignored his wife, leaving her and his eldest daughter to become friends. Rachel Whiteside Dunn Beacham had been a young widow when she met Lily’s father. She’d married the first time for love, the second time for position. Her late husband had taught her about sex, and Lily’s father, passion. Over the next peaceful months, Rachel revealed more and more to Lily about sex – different positions, sex in a myriad of places, sex with a man and another woman, sexual activities that were publicly frowned upon that were practiced in secret by Mr. and Mrs. Beacham.

Then, he had started to humiliate her. That she would not stand.

Lily’s shock at the things Rachel told her grew in leaps and bounds. Rachel was blunt while telling Lily about the last confrontation she’d had with Lily’s

father.

It was unfortunate for Mr. Beacham that he hadn't researched Rachel's family more thoroughly before wedding her. Even from behind the scenes, they were financial scions of Boston. This crucial fact escaped his attention in his rush to marry a young, beautiful, sexually adventurous woman and produce a son.

The only things that mattered to him then were his name, his bank, and his son. Since John III was her son, too, she was left with the bank and his name.

Rachel explained to him that she had enjoyed his attentions until recently. Since then, he appeared to have lost respect for her.

"Respect?" he bellowed. "You're nothing but a sl..."

"Your wife," Rachel interrupted. "Who is tired of being used, and will no longer stand for it."

"Then lie down."

Rachel continued as if he hadn't spoken. "My promise to you is that should you touch me in a disrespectful manner, in order to hurt or humiliate me, I will see to it that your precious bank runs aground in a sea of investigations. Large amounts of money will be reported missing by influential businessmen. Every political contact you have will be severed. This includes any abuse you intend for your progeny."

"Progeny? I would never harm a hair on John's head!"

Rachel had lifted an eyebrow. “You have six daughters in addition to your son. Treat them with indifference if need be, but you will not abuse them again. John is also my son, and my family is influential enough to make sure you never see him again if you do not accede to my wishes.”

“You may continue with your mistresses, your associates, your orgies, and leave me to my own resources. I will maintain our home. If I choose to take a lover, I will be much more discreet than you could ever hope to be.”

Lily wondered how Rachel had survived speaking to Papa so. But the peace brought home by Rachel Beacham did not last, and neither did she. Rachel took a chill in the fall of the year Lily turned twenty-two, from which she never recovered. It settled in her chest, and she died that winter. Two of Lily’s sisters had married already, the second one taking the younger girls with her. Rachel’s death left John III and Papa in the house, alone with Lily.

Used to her father’s ways, and normally able to keep out of his way, she remained to help raise her brother. Women came and went but never stayed, and her father did not remarry.

One night Papa had come to her room and dragged her from bed by her hair. Raging and yelling that her presence had dried up the flow of loose women, he forced her down the hall to his room. John III woke up and cried out. At almost three years of age, he was still innocent enough that even her father wouldn’t

brutalize his daughter in front of him. Lily had taken advantage of the break in Papa's attention to wrench her hair free – painfully leaving some of it behind – and disappear into one of her hidey-holes, where she stayed through the night listening to her father search for her.

In the morning, sober and surrounded by servants, he ate breakfast and left for work without speaking to her. His look, however, promised he hadn't forgotten last night's escape. Terrified of what she expected when he returned home, she made her decision.

She had to go. She called for John III's nanny. "Mrs. Morris, come and take John. I have errands to run."

"Yes, Miss."

Lily gave her little brother a fierce hug. Her father would never hurt his precious son; at least, not physically. She gave Mrs. Morris a hug, too. The nanny had been hired by Rachel shortly before her death. Short and chubby, she had pockmarks on her face and was the most loving woman in the world. She was in no danger from Beacham.

Lily went to her room and packed her most serviceable dresses, shoes, and hats. She slipped her mother's locket into an interior pocket in her valise. There were only two more things to do before she left – get some money from the safe, and give Mrs. Morris Uncle Jeb's name and address.

Spinning the combination, she had imagined Papa's surprise when one or two hundred dollars turned up missing. She opened the safe and fell back on her heels. There must have been five thousand dollars inside. Reflex made her check over her shoulder before reaching into the safe and slipping most of the money into her bag. Delighted with her windfall, she had gone up to the nursery to give Mrs. Morris the name and address of Rachel's brother.

"What is this, Miss?" she asked.

"If you ever need anything, if you think something is not right, or...or that something is going wrong..." She threw her hands up in the air. "Just get in touch with him, for anything."

Confused but used to taking orders, Mrs. Morris nodded and tucked the note into her bosom, and then patted it.

Lily grinned. "Take care of my brother," she said as she ran down the stairs, grabbed her valise, and exited the Beacham house for the last time.

She had taken the first train out of the city. Changing trains every three or four stops, she headed north, then west, south, then west again. She switched to a stagecoach after crossing the Mississippi, and changed routes and directions four or five more times. Exhausted, she took a room in a hotel and fell dead asleep for twelve hours. She ate breakfast in the dining room and saw a poster for Mail-Order Brides.

It had offered very few details, but one was that the prospective groom paid the bride's way. *Papa would never imagine I'd travel for free with all this money. What better way to hide from a man to whom money is everything?*

Now, here she was in a desolate, isolated shack with two good-looking men.

"Damn."

Chapter Three

The next few days were tense at the homestead. Billy forced himself to remain cheerful in the faces of doom and gloom. Lily proved to be a passable cook, but a total loss at washing clothes.

“You want me to what?” she asked him again.

She’d already proven how much a city-girl she was by asking if there were alligators in the stream. “After you wet the clothes down, you rub them on this rock with the soap.”

“You want me to wash clothes on a rock in a stream.”

“Umm...”

“All right, I get it.” She tiptoed to the edge of the stream, taking care not to wet her boots and, holding one of Kane’s shirts by the collar, dipped the tails in the water.

Billy stifled a laugh. He’d learned the hard way she didn’t appreciate amusement at her expense.

Holding the shirt far enough away to not be able to smell it if it was a live skunk, she sidestepped to the rock. It took her a while, but she managed to kneel down without getting wet or showing a bit of leg. Holding the soap in one hand,

she stared at the shirt.

“Ain’t gonna jump up and clean itself,” he said. Taking the shirt, he stepped into the sluggish stream, doused the shirt a couple of times, slapped it on the rock, and rubbed it with the soap.

“You got your boots wet.”

He glanced up at her then back at the shirt. “Yep.”

“If you took your boots off they’d stay dry,” she said as she sat and began to untie her laces.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you.”

“I don’t want to get these wet, only the shirt.”

“Water moccasins.”

“What are they?” she asked. “Special shoes for washing clothes in?”

Billy straightened. “Water moccasins are snakes, poisonous snakes. They live in and near every puddle of water in the state of Texas.”

Lily was on her feet as if lightning had struck her. “Snakes? Snakes!” She fled to the safety of a water willow overhanging the bend of the stream.

Billy tried, but he failed. Laughing, he plunged the soapy shirt back into the water until it rinsed clear and then tossed it to her. “They won’t usually bother you if you let them know you’re here. Splash around, stomp your feet, and they’ll take off.”

Lily clutched the scrawny tree trunk. The delicate strands of the hanging branches created a rippling light that highlighted her eyes and her hair. *She's right pretty once she shuts up.*

"I don't appreciate you making fun of me about a normal, logical fear. It's rude and ungentlemanly."

Billy shook his head. "Didn't last long." He washed a second and a third shirt, tossing each to her as he finished. She stretched them out over the thicker, bottom branches of the willow. *At least she has a bit of sense.*

"How did you and Kane meet?"

It was a demand but it was voiced quietly. Without looking at her, Billy wondered what sounded different, besides her not yelling.

"Kane joined the Confederate Army soon's he turned eighteen. Joined up with General Garnett in Beverly."

"Beverly?"

"Virginia. General McClellan wanted the supply depot, and he brought along two thousand of his friends to get it. Garnett's men were split between Rich Mountain to the west, and Laurel Mountain to the north. When McClellan took Rich Mountain, Garnett retreated. We heard Beverly had already been taken, so we went the long way, over Cheat Mountain. The wagons got stuck crossing a river. Kane and me met there, at Carrick's Ford in the Cheat River Valley, hauling

overloaded wagons outta the muck.”

“What, did you stand up in the water and say howdy?”

Billy grinned. “No, I hauled his soakin’ wet ass out from under a wagon.”

“Was he stuck or something?”

Billy chuckled at the memory. It was one of the few good ones he had out of the hell called war. “Kane was pushing a wagon from behind when it got stuck in the mud. The oxen pulling it decided backing up was easier. They knocked him down and were stepping all over him when I grabbed his arm and pulled him up.”

Lily remained quiet. Billy went back to washing shirts.

“How old were you?”

“Why do you want to know?” he asked without looking up.

“Just curious.”

“Curiosity killed the cat.”

“Surely not all of them.”

Standing up, Billy threw back his head and laughed. “You’re a pip, Miss Beacham.”

“I beg your pardon?”

Billy tipped his head to one side. There it was again. Her voice, manner, and tone had changed. *How does a poor, uneducated girl from the city learn to sound like a school marm?*

“Oh, darlin’, you don’t have to beg.”

He could practically see her ire rise. Her face took on a pink hue, her shoulders squared, and her nose tipped into the air.

“You, sir, are no gentleman.”

“And you, Miss Lily Beacham, are a fraud.”

Before she whirled away from him, Billy thought he saw a frisson of fear in her expression. *No, not the phony Miss Beacham.*

He turned back to the water. *How can I use this newfound information? Tell Kane? Taunt Miss Lily? Keep it to myself until I need some leverage?*

He nodded at this last notion. “I think that might be the best.”



Kane checked the gelding’s leg. It was warm to the touch, but not dangerously so. Another two days should take care of it. He lifted his hat and scratched his head. Two horses weren’t enough when you had two riders and a lady who needed a wagon. Mentally counting their combined but meager savings, he thought they might afford another horse by next month.

Well, a nag anyway.

The slamming of the cabin door made him jump, and he slapped his hat against his leg in annoyance. The action startled the gelding, who jerked his head against the lead. Disgusted, Kane calmed the horse and then turned him out into

the corral. He hurried to the house. There were some things Miss Lily needed to learn.

He stormed through the cabin door and got madder still. Miss Lily sat on the sofa. There was no laundry in sight.

“Where’s the laundry? Did you leave Billy to do it all? Cooking and cleaning were part of the deal, and laundry is cleaning.”

She sat quietly with her head down and her hands clenched in her lap.

“Well?” He insisted. “Billy and I ride hard all week. We get one afternoon off to do the chores around here. If you can’t even...”

The sob cut him to the quick. The war was over, but he was a southern gentleman by birth. Ladies crying brought out his care-taking side, and his emotions. He sat beside her on the sofa while she cried into her hands. He felt like a vicious fool. Anyone could have seen she was upset.

“Miss Lily,” he tried.

She shook her head and kept crying.

He tried once more to speak to her, but she wasn’t having any of it. Finally, feeling hopeless and helpless, he put his arm around her and pulled her close. Patting her back, he let her cry it out.

She is from the city, he reminded himself. He rubbed her arm and she turned her face into his chest. *She just needs more time to settle down, get used to things out here.*

One of her hands flattened against his chest.

Just one little hand, one touch, and his groin tightened. Damn, he wanted her.

Her tears slowed and the sobbing turned into hiccups. She cuddled closer to him and lifted her face.

“I...I’m sorry. I just got so damn mad and scared.”

“It’s all right, honey.”

Her tear-drenched eyes were a soft brown, like sugared cinnamon. “I’m trying to get along.”

“I know you are.”

She blinked and he wiped an errant tear away with a fingertip, then she blinked again and parted her lips to take a deep breath.

“Aw, hell.” He kissed her.

Settling his lips on hers, he concentrated on soothing and comforting her. His tongue snaked out and tasted her lips. At the first touch, she stiffened, but soon she opened her mouth to him and he dipped inside. He explored the soft insides of her cheeks, let his tongue taste hers, and then traced the sharp little edges of her teeth.

She slid an arm around his neck and pulled him closer. It was the only encouragement he needed. Pulling her into him, he deepened the kiss, letting her

feel his desire. She shifted her bottom closer to his leg, and he traced the outside of her hip with one hand, letting it trail over her thigh. When he felt one of her hard, tight, delicious nipples press into his side, his stomach stampeded as he leaned back and pulled her down half on top of him. He filled his hand with a soft breast topped by a tightly-furled nipple. He flicked it, and she moaned into his mouth. Sliding his knee between hers, he lifted it until it pressed against her mons. Reflex angled his hips and pressed his hungry erection up into her soft flesh.

Billy's whistling stopped them in their tracks.

Lily pushed off him and jerked upright. She pushed her skirts down and smoothed her hair back. Kane was on his feet. The whistling got louder. There was no way Billy would miss his stiff cock.

"I'm sorry, Miss Lily. I didn't mean to go that far."

She sat quiet and still, her head down. Kane hightailed it out the back door just as Billy came in the front.

Confused as all get out, Kane headed into the barn, hoping Billy would come out, and soon. It had been a long time since he'd felt Billy's mouth on his cock. Warm, wet heat was what he needed now.

Jeez. From Lily to Billy. The only living thing on the ranch he didn't want was the damned horses.

"Kane?"

“Yeah, Billy. In here.” Kane faced into the corner that doubled as the tack room. He grabbed a bridle.

“Going for a ride?”

Kane looked at the bridle. “Uh, no. I was going to...”

“To what?”

Kane tossed the bridle away and shoved his hands in his pockets.

“She got to ya’ again, huh. She got to me, too.”

Kane’s head whipped up, but Billy was staring out the back door. For a minute there, Kane thought she’d seduced Billy. But, no, that wouldn’t happen.

“The dear Miss Lily might be able to throw together a stew, but she can’t wash clothes in a stream.” Billy grinned at him. “She was going to take her boots off.”

Kane snorted. “Hope you talked her out of it.”

“I scared her out of it. Seems she doesn’t like snakes.”

Kane tried a smile, but didn’t quite succeed. “At least she has some sense,” he said, remembering how easily she’d folded into his arms.

“Um, Kane?” Billy asked. Kane looked at him. “Maybe I don’t have any sense at all.” His gaze wandered to the back door again. “I know you wanted to get married and all but, looks like that ain’t gonna happen any time soon. So, I was, uh...”

“Yes.”

Billy’s head whipped around. Kane held his gaze.

“You don’t know what I was going to ask.”

“Yes, I do.” Kane stepped toward Billy. “I was afraid you wouldn’t want me anymore. I bought a bride without thinking about how you’d feel. I bring home a witch who is determined to make our lives miserable, and then use you...” Kane held up a hand to stop Billy’s automatic defense. “You and I both know it. Even if you did like it, my motives were in question, not yours. But I’ve missed you, Billy.”

Straight-faced, Billy said, “Aw, shucks.”

Kane laughed. “Come on. There’s a hayloft waiting for us.” He set his boot on the bottom rung before Billy spoke.

“I’ve missed you, too.”

Kane gave him a wry grin over his shoulder. “Prove it,” and pulled himself up the ladder. He was kneeling, waiting, when Billy’s head popped up through the floor. Taking hold of his face, he traced circles with his thumbs. “You’ve always been there for me.” And he kissed him, sweetly, softly, on the lips that haunted his dreams.

Without breaking contact, Billy climbed to the floor in front of him and wrapped his arms around him. Tenderly touching his tongue with his own, Billy licked and sucked and tasted. Kane broke the kiss and stood.

“I want to take your clothes off.”

Billy climbed to his feet and spread his arms wide as if to say, “what are you waiting for?” Kane didn’t hesitate.

He opened the buttons on Billy’s shirt, but there were two more on the tucked in shirttail. He caught Billy’s amused expression as he dipped a finger into the front of his pants.

“You’re hiding things from me,” Kane teased.

Billy grinned as Kane dropped to his knees at his feet. He smiled when he saw the bulge Billy was sporting. Outlining the erection with one hand, Kane slid the other between Billy’s legs to cup his ass. He massaged the huge cock straining Billy’s pants until Billy flexed his hips to increase the pressure.

Kane dropped both hands to unbutton the flap of his pants. Since it was chore day with no roping or riding planned, he wasn’t wearing the heavy long johns they usually wore to protect themselves. Billy’s cock sprang free. Wrapping both hands around it, Kane kissed and then licked the glistening head. He laved the length and pushed Billy’s pants down a bit more.

Then he opened wide and took the throbbing dick into his mouth. Billy caressed his head and moaned. Kane pulled his head back slowly, swirled his tongue around the smooth head of Billy’s prick, and then sucked the full length deep into his mouth again. Billy’s hips pumped slowly as he pulled his dick out of

Kane's mouth and pressed back in.

Kane increased the pressure. Stretching his lips over his teeth, he pulled back. Working his tongue around the slick flesh filling his mouth, he cupped Billy's balls and massaged them as he sucked his friend off. He breathed through his nose and worked on bringing Billy to the brink. With Billy moaning and rocking his hips, Kane sucked and licked until Billy tensed. At that moment, Kane slipped a finger into Billy's ass as Billy came in his mouth. After swallowing, Kane eased his mouth off Billy's softening erection and kissed his belly.

"My turn," Billy said bending over to kiss Kane's mouth.

Kane reveled in Billy's thorough exploration. Using his tongue, he poked and licked Kane's mouth, which Kane held open for him, occasionally licking Billy back. Kane was holding Billy's naked hips. He pulled him close so he could feel his damp penis on his chest. It twitched. Kane smiled.

Billy cupped his chin and lifted it. "Should I suck you off? Maybe I should use my hands and nothing else, huh? Either way, I'm gonna get your dick hard."

Kane was already hard, but willing to let Billy work on him anyway. Kane unbuttoned his own pants and lay down in a pile of straw. His cock pointed at his chin. "I want to be inside you."

Billy's eyes flared and he bent to remove his boots.

"No. Just like you are."

Billy still wore his mostly-unbuttoned shirt, his completely-unbuttoned pants hanging open but still riding his thighs, and his scuffed work boots. He was the sexiest, most arousing sight Kane had ever seen, and he wanted him. His dick twitched and Billy gave him a crooked grin.

“Yes, sir,” Billy said softly.

Trapped by his pants, he shuffled up Kane’s long legs. He didn’t stop until his boots bracketed Kane’s waist. Holding his pants just below the cheeks of his ass, he lowered himself until he was poised inches from Kane’s dick, now pointing straight up, courtesy of Kane’s shaky hold.

“Please,” Kane whispered, his eyes focused on the tip of his erection.

“With pleasure,” Billy said as held himself open and squatted down.

Kane’s penis entered slowly, wondrously. Billy wiggled his ass, and pressed down bit by bit. Kane closed his eyes and just let himself feel the tight band gripping his penis, and the warm softness of Billy’s insides. When Billy finally settled with Kane’s dick buried deep inside his ass, Kane exhaled and opened his eyes.

Billy was watching him. Kane looked at the man almost sitting on his belly. His blond hair was disheveled, his eyes clear and unsmiling. His barely-there beard glowed burnished gold. More blond hair on his chest peeked out of his shirt and his pants were bunched around his knees. Kane’s heart ached with feeling.

He sat up slowly, trapping Billy's legs, leaning side to side to free them so Billy could stretch them out behind him. Rocking harmoniously together, Billy closed his eyes and rested his head on Kane's shoulder. Kane cupped the back of his head and ran kisses up the side of his neck. When their motion picked up speed, Billy put a hand on the floor for balance. Kane set his feet with his knees slightly bent so he could thrust up into Billy. They grunted and groaned until Kane lay back to thrust up, and Billy pulled his feet under him control the depth of penetration, and they banged together, ass to hips, as they fucked in the dust motes dancing in the afternoon light.

Billy's penis wave wildly from their gyrations, and Kane wrapped a hand around it to pump fast and hard. His hand moved faster than his hips, and Billy shot cum into the air a few moments before Kane shot his into Billy. The sound of breath sawing in and out filled the barn as they rested in each other's arms.



Lily wandered outside the cabin. There wasn't much to look at, but it was better than staying inside. The cabin walls were roughhewn pine and didn't take well to being wiped down. The cook stove was clean; dinner was simmering. She couldn't imagine returning to the stream to wash clothes.

So now what?

She looked at the barn. She didn't know where Kane and Billy had gone off

to, so she walked toward the barn, the largest building on the homestead. It figured they'd spend the time and money on the animals while they lived in a shack.

"While I live in a shack," she amended.

She shook off that thought. They were being better to her than she had any right to expect. Her cooking skills were mediocre at best, and she fully intended on making it clear she would not be doing any laundry from now on. She gave a shudder. Hating and fearing snakes came even more easily than hating and fearing her father.

The shade of the barn was a relief from the constant glare of the sun. At this rate, her skin would freckle and burn, and she'd look the part of ranch wife.

Woman. Hand.

Just what am I?

Shuffling noises from the loft caught her attention. Straw drifted down from between the cracks – as did male voices.

"About Lily..."

She froze with her mouth open. Just about to call out, she decided to eavesdrop instead. It had served her well at home.

"What about her?"

"She won't be doin' any laundry far's I can tell," Billy stated flatly.

That, sir, is correct.

“We can do the laundry,” Kane said.

“I don’t mind doing it, Kane, but that leaves her with nothin’ but the cookin’.”

“She can clean up the house.”

Billy snorted. “What’ll she do after those five minutes?”

Lily’s lips curled. *Just what I was thinking.*

“She said she’d muck out the stalls.”

“And after that?”

“I don’t know, Billy. But I just can’t send her back. I think she’s afraid of something.”

Lily’s brows raised. *So Kane can be perceptive, too.*

“Too bad she doesn’t want anything to do with that ‘sex stuff.’”

Oh!

There was a slight pause before the laughter.

Lily bit her tongue. *So they think it’s funny, do they?*

“I think we got that covered,” Billy said with a chuckle.

Covered?

Footsteps on the wood floor of the loft forced her to back away toward the barn door. It wouldn’t do to get caught eavesdropping.

“Tomorrow night?” Kane asked.

“Yeah.”

She held still another moment trying to decipher the sounds coming from the top of the loft ladder. First there was a smooshing noise. The next sound reminded her of her hand smacking John III’s padded bottom when he was naughty.

Billy said, “Ow!” then laughed.

Kane spanked Billy? She quickly left the cool dark of the barn. Halfway to the cabin, she turned and sauntered back in the direction of the barn. The two men walked out and checked their stride when they saw her. They traded a glance, but continued toward her.

“Howdy, Miss Lily,” Billy said.

She gave him a quick smile and looked over at Kane. *He definitely looks guilty.* That could be due to him kissing her earlier, or whatever the two men had been doing in the loft.

“Doin’ barn chores?” she asked pleasantly.

“Uh, yeah. Barn chores.”

Kane is definitely nervous. Why?

“Did you finish up?”

“Yeah. All done,” Kane mumbled.

“Darn. I would have liked to learn what to do.”

Billy lifted an eyebrow. “You *would have liked* to learn?”

She gave him a questioning look. “Yes. There’s not much to do around the house.”

“I can show you around the barn a bit,” Kane offered. “It’s not complicated.”

Billy looked at Kane. “Sure. You two run along. I’ll go finish up the laundry.”

Lily’s cheeks heated up, but she didn’t say anything. Billy walked off whistling a jaunty tune.

“Come on,” Kane said and trudged back to the barn.

She followed and listened as he showed her where the pitchfork and shovel were kept, how to hang the brushes and combs, and where the tack was kept.

“I’ll show you how to clean the leather, if you’d like.”

Lily wrinkled her nose. “Is this what a clean barn smells like?”

Kane grimaced. “I guess we need to muck the stalls first.” He grabbed the pitchfork.

“Thought you said you were all done in here?”

Kane’s face reddened. “Guess I forgot about mucking the stalls.” He handed her the shovel and pulled down the single board gate of the first stall.

Lily grinned at his back. *At least I know he doesn’t lie very well.* She stepped inside the stall and headed toward the business end of the horse. The big brown beast

shifted on his feet. Kane hauled her back and against his chest just as a back hoof lashed out and connected with the wall.

“Don’t ever get near the back legs of a horse!” Kane yelled as he dragged her out of the stall.

Scared silly, Lily dropped the shovel and threw herself into Kane’s arms. To her relief, he wrapped them around her and gave her a hug.

“Horses are easily spooked,” he said into her hair. “They kick to protect themselves, or they kick out in fear.”

Lily nodded and succeeded in rubbing her cheek against his chest. He smelled warm and musky. His arms tightened fractionally before dropping away from her. She straightened.

“Lily, I’m sorry about what happened earlier.”

Unaccountably annoyed at his hands-off stance, she said, “When the horse missed me?”

“No! In the cabin. I shouldn’t have kissed you like that.”

“How should you have kissed me?”

He sighed heavily. “Lily...”

“That’s all right, Kane. Don’t worry.” She picked up the shovel. “I’ve forgotten it. You should, too.”

Both his eyebrows flew up. “You forgot it?” he asked softly.

She wanted to smile; she really did. Of course she hadn't forgotten. Not a single touch or the warmth of his body against hers. He smelled muskier now, but the first time being held in a man's arms wasn't something a girl forgot, any more than her first kiss or the feelings that kiss created. Her stepmother had told her how good sex could be, but Lily hadn't believed her. It was easier to believe the bruises on Rachel's face.

"Of course." She set her hands on her hips after leaning the shovel against the wall. "So how do I clean up after the horses if they don't want me near them?"

Chapter Four

Routine is the way of life on a ranch, and cooperation was the way of life between ranches.

Billy and Kane rose early and got the cooking fire going. They fed and brushed the horses and milked the cow they'd purchased from the XY Ranch for Lily. They said it was for Lily, but they both took to having milk for supper and cream in their coffee. Meanwhile, Lily rose and washed, put on the coffee, and made breakfast. Kane churned fresh butter as soon as he discovered Lily could make biscuits, and the butter disappeared like rain in a drought.

Eggs came from a small farm to the north, the bacon from the local hog ranch. The XY's cook doubled as a butcher. Billy traded horse-training time for other things they needed, like the kitchen table made by the hog farmer. The hog farmer put his old wagon horse to pasture and trotted into town at the heels of a pair of feisty mustangs Billy had caught and trained to harness.

Lily was fascinated by all the work that went into one small ranch that didn't even run cattle. She was astounded that neighbor helped neighbor and rancher helped farmer. Back home, she hadn't even known the name of the people who lived next door never mind considered asking them for anything. Here in

Loving, Texas, of all places, she had found a home. True, she was more a sister than a woman, but her two men treated her like a queen.

I have two men. Wouldn't Rachel be proud. Lily chuckled softly.

Billy did all the laundry when he wasn't training horses for the neighboring ranches. Kane's talent was with leather. He brought home raw hides and made bridles as supple as a lady's garters, had made Lily a covered easy chair, and was finishing up his second saddle with fenders attached to the stirrup leathers to protect the rider's legs from morning dew, bristly bushes, cactus spines, and the occasional sharp horn. The boss of the XY wanted as many as Kane could make.

Meanwhile, their savings grew, and Lily felt guilty. She was sitting on almost four thousand dollars. She'd been on the ranch for a month now and felt a part of something, but what? Kane and Billy came home every evening, washed up and ate the meal she prepared, then disappeared for an hour or so. Not every night, but most. That was the only time she felt left out, alone. But she had descended on them under false pretenses, so had no right to demand they stay home each evening. She just wished they would.

This morning, she intended to talk to them about it. She got the coffee going and wrapped a shawl around her shoulders against the dawn chill. She ambled out the door, going slowly to give herself time to figure out how to say what she wanted to say. Wanting them to know she was comfortable here, and willing to

stay as long as they let her. She didn't want to mislead them about her intentions.

She didn't want to get married no matter how much Kane's kisses turned her head. Sex was not something she looked forward to. Maybe some day she could lower herself enough for it because she did want children. Some day. Later. Much later, because the thought of sex made her sick to her stomach. She didn't like pain.

When she reached the barn, she called out. "Kane? Billy?" She stepped inside, but no one was there except the two horses. They lifted their heads from their feed buckets, eyed her, and went back to eating. "At least you didn't kick at me."

She called up to the loft, but the men weren't there. Vaguely concerned now, she walked out the open back door that led to the stream. Holding in her shudder, she picked her way carefully down the middle of the path, making no noise. No matter what Billy said about making noise to scare away snakes, she thought if they didn't even know she was there they'd have to leave her alone. It made sense to her.

A rustling in the bushes ahead brought her to a stop. Holding still, she strained to hear. The sound of male voices made her relax until she acknowledged she couldn't tell if it was Billy and Kane, or two other men up to mischief. Clutching her skirts tight to her legs, she crept forward until she saw a man's

back. – a bare back, rippling with muscles, shining with sweat. He raised his head and Lily recognized Kane’s dark, curly hair. Relieved, she started to call out but hesitated.

He was moaning.

Lily leaned to the right and saw his backside was bare too. And his hips were pumping and he was still moaning. He bent over again and said something.

Billy? He called for Billy.

“More, Kane, more.”

That was Billy. Mesmerized, she took a few steps closer to see better.

Kane bent over Billy whose pants were around his ankles. Billy moaned. Kane grunted and stiffened. He gave one or two more groans then rested his head on Billy’s back.

What the...? Why is Kane leaning over Billy? Snake bite? She shuddered.

Billy straightened up and turned. And Lily got an eyeful.

Billy wasn’t snake bit, but his cock was swollen and stiff and sticking out in front of him. It bobbed as he moved. Wrapping one hand around it, he grabbed Kane by the neck and...

Kissed him on the mouth?

“My turn,” he said into Kane’s mouth.

Her mouth dropped open. She stared as Kane dropped to his knees and

kissed Billy's...cock.

Lily snapped her mouth shut. Thankful they hadn't heard her teeth click together, she strained to see through the thick bushes.

Billy dropped down on a seat-high rock and leaned his back against a tree. Kane took Billy into his mouth and sucked on Billy's...on Billy.

Her tummy rolled, but not like she was getting sick. It felt good. Shock and anticipation held her still.

What will they do next?

Billy grabbed Kane's head as it moved up and down. He moaned, "Yes," over and over.

The warm tingling throughout her body made Lily want to moan along with him, but she clamped her teeth down on her lower lip. The last thing she wanted to do was interrupt them. They were making love. Rachel had told her about men having two women, or two men having one woman at the same time. She'd never said anything about two men together without a woman.

Kane ran his hands up Billy's legs and played with his swollen member while he sucked and licked the top. It was purple on top where Kane wrapped his tongue around it. Veins pulsed along the sides that looked like the veins in old Mrs. Murphy's legs that she said ached when she was on her feet.

I wonder if Billy's cock aches like that.

Billy wriggled and opened his legs. His cheeks were sticky with a white material. Kane sighed... and put his face between Billy's cheeks. He sucked one of Billy's sacs into his mouth. Billy had his hands on his own shaft now. He pulled and stroked it, rubbed it on Kane's face, and jerked it hard and harder and harder until Kane pushed his hands away and took over. He started to put it in his mouth but Billy stopped him.

"No," he said raggedly. "Watch me come on you."

Lily fanned herself. *My, it warmed up fast this morning.*

Lily's eyes burned from being held open, but she didn't want to miss a motion, a sound, or a word. She watched in fascination as Kane's hands pumped faster and faster as the two men stared into each other's eyes. The emotion she saw between them almost brought her to her knees. She was watching their faces so closely that she almost missed the white liquid squirting from Billy three or four times to land on Kane's chest. Then, she was in for one more shock – Billy leaned forward and licked Kane's chest.

Lily's heart sank. Knowing this was what they did when they left her alone in the house saddened her. She really was alone.

No. She shook her head. She must be dreaming. She had to be. These two men couldn't be having sex in the woods where anyone could see them. They were good men; big, strong men that made her tremble with desire as they loved each

other. Big men...

...Who were shaking off their stupor and righting their clothes. Lily crept backwards until she was clear of the bushes, and then ran all the way back to the house.

She threw a frying pan on the stove and cracked two eggs into it, not caring about the bits of shell. Slapping sliced bacon into the pan, she slid the biscuits inside the stove.

"I'm flustered. Just flustered," she muttered as she ran across to her room and splashed water on her face. *I should splash some cold water between my legs, maybe cool myself off down there, too.*

Giving in to the shock of it all, she dropped down onto the edge of the bed to ease the ache between her legs. *The bed they gave me.*

She jumped to her feet.

Did they sleep together? Have they slept together in this bed? She waved the thought away. Who knew? No one knew. No one could know, or they'd be run out of town. That was the only thing she was utterly sure of. A minute later, she ran back to the kitchen to save breakfast.

Kane was at the stove. Billy sat at the table sipping coffee. Both were fully dressed. *As if they'd parade around naked in front of me.* She trapped a giggle in her throat. It made a gurgling sound.

Kane turned to look at her. "Everything all right?"

"Yes," she squeaked. "Yes, yes. Everything is just fine."

"The biscuits almost burned," Billy drawled.

So did I. Heat flooded her face.

Kane took the pan off the stove and placed it on the table. "You look flushed, Miss Lily. Are you feeling all right?"

Lily laughed. Surprisingly, she didn't sound hysterical, just a tad high pitched. "I'm fine. Just fine."

"Well, Kane," Billy said, "everything is 'jes' fine'. Ain't that right, Miss Lily?"

She tittered this time and caught Kane's frown. "Maybe I am feelin' a mite poorly."

Billy's eyebrows crawled up his forehead.

"Maybe I'll lie down."

"Maybe you should," Kane said. "You rest up this morning. Billy and I should be back early today."

"Early? Why early?" Even she heard the shrill demand in her voice.

"Boss has business in town today. Said I should work on those saddles this afternoon instead of riding herd all day." Kane's expression was worried.

"Oh. That's fine then, isn't it?" she said cringing. "I'll, uh, just go and, uh, lie down. Bye." She beat a hasty retreat out of the kitchen, but heard Kane's quizzical,

“Wonder what’s got into her?”



“I think it’s more what hasn’t gotten into her,” Billy mumbled.

“Don’t you start talking strange, too,” Kane said shooting him a telling look.

“I didn’t say anything strange. Let’s eat and hit the trail.”

“Yeah. Let’s do that.”

Billy kept his mouth shut while they ate, tidied, and saddled up. The ride to the ranch was short and quiet, and they arrived just as the boss man was getting into his fancy gig.

“Kane, Billy, come on over here.”

They walked their horses over to him.

“When can you have two more saddles ready, Kane?”

“Well, sir, with riding herd it’ll probably be another three weeks before I can get them done.”

“That’s too long. Head back to your place and work on them both until they’re done. I’m going to need them sooner than we expected.”

“Sir?”

“Morrison over in the next valley wants to join up our herds for a fall push to the nearest cattle depot and sale. With two more of your saddles, we can run six men on the outside of the herd without fear of them getting cut up by the beeves.

This will be a money-maker for us, Kane.”

Billy, tired of Kane’s talents being taken for granted, spoke up. “How much is he gonna make for each saddle? If he’s outta work for two or three weeks, that’s wages lost.” He ignored Kane’s warning glance.

The boss grinned. “You look out for him, do ya’, Billy?”

Fury burned in Billy’s gut as he faced the man in his fine suit. No one was going to make Kane out to be anything but the best, not without facing Billy’s own wrath. Before he could respond, the boss spoke again.

“That’s good, because he’s gonna need it. I predict his saddles are going to make him a small fortune. I’ll pay a hundred dollars a saddle and his wages. How’s that sound, Kane?”

“Just fine, Boss. Just fine.”

“Get to work on those saddles. Billy, give him a hand. I’ll pay your wages, too, while you’re helping him.”

The fury melted into a bellyful of cheer. “Yes, sir, I’ll do that.”

The gig whirled away through the dust. Kane and Billy watched it a moment and then looked at each other. They gave a rebel yell and set off at a gallop for home, laughing like fools and ignoring the XY’s horses whinnying and milling around the corrals after being stirred up by the noise.

They rode hard until they were well away from the ranch then reined in to a

ground-eating lope.

“What the hell were you thinking?” Kane yelled over at him.

“Watching out for your ass!”

“My ass, hell. It’s the money you were watching!”

With a great big lasso knot in his stomach, Billy slid his cowpony to a dusty stop. Kane made a wide circle and galloped back to him. He had a big grin on his face when he pulled up next to him.

The horses danced in excitement, accurately reading their riders’ mood.

“You don’t think I was worried only about money, do ya’?” Billy asked.

Kane sobered and slid off his horse. He came up to Billy’s side and pulled him from the saddle. Billy’s horse jerked his head but held his position.

“No, you big lummo. You were watching out for us, both of us. And you made the point about the money. I didn’t have the guts to ask. I was gonna take what he offered, no questions asked.”

Kane brushed Billy’s hair out of his face and kissed him hard. Billy clutched Kane’s shirt for balance, but they tumbled into a small stand of shrubs, crushing the leaves and releasing their bitter, tangy smell.

Kane’s mouth was hard on his and they both breathed hard. Kane fought with Billy’s buttons until they surrendered. He grabbed Billy’s dick and pumped him without breaking the kiss. Billy followed suit and they scrambled in the dirt,

tugging on flesh and sucking on tongues.

Billy had a handful of Kane's balls while jerking him off with his other hand. Kane had both hands wrapped around Billy's cock and was yanking him to orgasm. Still, they didn't break their kiss. Billy's cock spasmed and Kane ripped his mouth away and wrapped his lips around the head. Shaking, Billy maintained his own rhythm on Kane's equipment.

When Billy was empty, he pushed Kane back and pounced on his dick. He sucked and laved until Kane erupted into his mouth. Finishing him off, Billy plopped into the dirt and caught Kane's look of amazement. Both dusty as hell, dicks slick and soft, and they both still wore their heavy roping gloves. Their laughter started and crescendoed, threatening to run even their well-trained ground-tied cowponies off into the wilderness.

Redressed and remounted, they trotted back to the homestead, sharing the occasional grin. Just before topping the hill, Kane leaned across and kissed Billy again. They rode into the yard and pulled up at the porch.

Deeper in love than ever, Billy wondered how this thing with Lily would ultimately affect them. Kane, he knew, still wanted her. He hoped whatever did happen wouldn't ruin his relationship with Kane. Billy's dreams always featured Kane, but now Lily played a role, too. Just for Kane, of course.

They found her in the kitchen. She jumped a foot when they entered.

“You’re...you’re home early.”

Kane grinned at her. “Tol’ ya’ we would be.”

“I jes’ didn’t figger this early.”

Billy cocked his head. Her speech had deteriorated again. He had to find out her secrets before she messed any more with Kane’s head and heart.

“Tell ya’ what,” he said. “Kane, you go on and work on the saddles. I’ll stay here and help Lily with supper.”

“That’s a great idea,” Kane said. “I’ll be in the barn.”

His strut brought a smile to Billy’s face. He left it there as he turned to Lily. She wore an apron she’d made and clutched a knife in her hand. “You done with the vegetables?”

She looked at the knife. “Not quite.”

“You finish them up, and I’ll get the beef. You’re making stew, right?”

“Yeah. Stew.” She went back to chopping vegetables by the dry sink.

Billy fetched the dried beef and picked up another knife. He sliced the beef into cubes and dropped them into the pot of water she’d set on the stove.

“How are you settling in, Lily?”

“I’m doin’ good. I meant to tell you this morn...I meant to thank you both for making me feel at home.”

“Kane has a way of making people comfortable. He likes to take care of

them, make sure they have what they need.”

“I can tell.”

“Good, good.” Billy sliced more beef. “Because I wouldn’t want Kane to get hurt.”

Lily paused in her chopping. “What do you mean?”

Billy lifted his head. “Just what I said. Kane can be hurt.”

“I think everyone can be hurt.”

Billy shrugged. “I’m only worried about Kane.”

Another moment of silence.

“You don’t think I can hurt you?”

Surprised at the question, Billy stared at her and nicked his finger with the point of the knife. “Ouch!”

Lily smiled grimly. “That answers that question.”

Billy gave her a wry grin.

She examined the cut. “It’s not too bad. Come on, I’ll patch you up.”

He shook his head. “What the hell are we going to do with you, Lily?”

Her complexion paled. She bit her lower lip. “We’ll have to figure that out together, won’t we?”

Billy eyed her curiously but she focused on his finger. *What did she mean by that?* He had to wait to ask her because Kane walked in.

“Jeez, Billy, you can’t even cut up some potatoes.”

“I was cutting meat.”

“Oh, that explains it,” Kane said with a straight face.

“Jack off– I mean, back off, of course.” Billy watched the blush on Lily’s cheeks. Surely someone not into that ‘sex stuff’ wouldn’t know what jack off meant. Would she? Another secret.

Kane took a knife from the dry sink. “I need this one for cutting holes. It’s got the best point.”

Billy held up his finger, now sporting a strip of white cotton. “I know.”

Kane laughed and left again. Lily busied herself with the food while Billy poured coffee for both of them.

“Sit down, Lily. Take a load off.”

She turned. “Excuse me?”

There it is again, the queen of the manor attitude.

“Sorry. I’m still more used to being around men than ladies.”

She nodded – regally, Billy thought – and sat down by the cup he’d filled for her. She tipped in some milk from the pitcher. Billy stared at her pinkie finger sticking out.

Oh, yeah. Our Lily is faking the poor little me with no education and no place to go. It’s time to share secrets.

“Tell me about yourself, Lily.”

She raised her eyebrows at him. “You already know everything you need to know.”

“Everything?”

“Yes.” She took a sip of coffee.

“Y’all come from up north, huh?”

“Yes. From, um, Ohio.”

“Hmm. Y’all were poor growin’ up, lived the rough life.”

“Yes.”

“Where’d ya’ larn to talk so nice?” Billy purposely deepened his backwoods drawl.

“What do you mean?”

“Yeah, like that.”

Her cheeks shone pink as she fiddled with the handle of the cup. “My moth—ma and me cleaned for this lady. She taught me to talk better.”

“Ah see. And the pinky thing? Ya’ hold it out when ya’ pour.”

“Yes, she taught me that too. So what? I worked hard to learn. And it isn’t wrong to better oneself.”

“Better oneself?”

“Why the questions, Billy? You don’t really care about the way I talk, or that

I hold my pinkie out. What do you really want to ask me?"

She was pretty when she got flustered and angry. Her plump lips flattened, and her eyes blazed. No wonder Kane wanted her.

"Jes' askin'," he said. Instinctively he knew if he pushed, she'd shut down, now that her dander was up.

"Don't think I don't notice your own talk changes when you're trying to belittle me. Or that it changes when you're around Kane."

A bit alarmed but determined not to show it, Billy shrugged. "Kane taught me to talk better. I grew up in the backwoods of Virginny. Don't nobody there talk good, or hold out their pinkie when they're pourin'."

She harrumphed and finished off her coffee. "Make yourself useful. Fetch some more water for washin', and take care o' the breakfast dishes."

Smiling, feeling like he'd made some headway, Billy rose to his feet. He couldn't resist one final push at her. He scratched his balls. Her eyes dropped and her face flushed scarlet. She walked out of the kitchen, and he heard the door to her room slam.

"Damn. Guess that was a little much, even for me." He hoped she didn't tell Kane. He felt bad about embarrassing her, but Kane'd ring a peel over his backwoods head.

Chapter Five

The next couple of days wore Lily out. Between trying to avoid both men and learning what had to be done on the ranch, her dreams kept her from getting much sleep. She woke up several times sweating and panting, with her pulse pounding between her legs. It left her feeling tired and restless.

Early one morning, she gave up on sleeping and stumbled into the kitchen. Billy was there, barefoot and shirtless with rumpled hair, his jaw cracked as he yawned and scratched his belly. He dropped his hand quickly when he saw her.

“Mornin’, Miss Lily. Couldn’t sleep either, huh?”

“Um, no. I’ll just start the coffee.” She ground the beans and measured the water while Billy poked up a fire in the stove. She put the coffee on top.

“I have some things to do,” she said.

Lily escaped from Billy’s electrifying presence. She couldn’t forget watching him and Kane in the woods. Her heart beat loud and fast whenever either one of them was near, especially Kane.

She flopped backward across her bed after closing her door. She daydreamed about him; his height, the width of his chest, how his arms felt as they closed around her, how his lips felt when they met hers. She sighed.

“I am hopeless. Absolutely hopeless.”

After seeing her father’s handiwork on her stepmother Rachel’s face, arms and back, Lily had vowed to never let any man do that to her. Ever. And she had never thought to be tempted to break that vow, until Kane...and Billy, she had to admit. He was a good-looking man. Women would hang all over him in New York. Hell, she would have hung all over him before seeing Kane and the effects of ‘love-making’ on Rachel.

Lily recalled the grocery delivery boy she’d had an innocent crush on for about two weeks. It had to be innocent, as she’d only been thirteen to his fourteen. She knew the delivery schedule and made sure to be in the back garden whenever he arrived. They had talked and laughed a few times, and once, he had given her a fast, dry peck on the cheek. That was the day her father had been looking for her.

He’d found her and beat her bare bottom until welts formed, and then locked her in her room for a week. He’d said he had to do it because he loved her, that it was all for her own good. She learned that lesson and never asked what happened to the boy, but he’d never returned. Lily prayed he’d only been fired. That was the least her father would have done to him. She shuddered at what else he might have done.

A knock on her door brought her upright. “Yes?”

“Coffee’s ready,” Billy said.

“Fine. I’ll be out in a minute.”

“It’s real good, Miss Lily.”

“Thank you.”

“You make a great pot of coffee,” he said.

“Glad to do it.” *Please go away. Please.*

“Well then, I’m gonna head to the barn and wait for Kane.”

“Good. I’ll see you later.”

She listened to his footsteps fade away. “Whew.”

Determined to get on with it, she rinsed her face with cool water and went back into the kitchen. Kane strode in, fully dressed, thank God. *I might have combusted at his feet if he’d showed up half-dressed like Billy.*

Kane filled a cup with coffee and poured enough milk in it to flood a pasture. He inhaled the aroma and took a swallow. “This is great coffee, Lily.”

“That makes it unanimous.”

“Huh?”

Lily smiled at him. “Billy said it was good, too.”

“Oh. Is Billy up?”

She frowned at him. “He’s waiting for you in the barn.”

“Okay. I’ll be in the barn,” he said needlessly.

“I’ll ring the bell when breakfast is ready.”

“Good idea.” Kane pulled the door open and left.

Lily shook her head. Both men were distracted this morning. All three of them were walking on eggshells and she was getting tired of it. Pushing her unproductive thoughts aside, she sliced bacon and counted out ten eggs before starting the biscuits.

Suppressing a shiver of awareness, she wondered what Kane and Billy were doing. It kept her inside the rest of the morning.



“Now what do I do?” Cleaning up after breakfast had taken all of ten minutes. Straightening her bed took two. Lily sighed. She was bored, and when she was bored, she usually got into trouble. At least, that’s what Rachel had always told her.

To prove she wasn’t totally useless, Lily stirred the stew simmering on the corner of the stove. It wasn’t time to add the potatoes and carrots, but she tossed in some dried beans she’d put on to soak early that morning. They’d soften more over the next couple of hours, alongside the dried beef, and both of her men loved beans. Lord knew they had enough of them.

She smiled. *My men*. Funny how that sounded more comforting than scary. A month ago, she had been sweating with fear over the two huge, strong men she’d come to live with. Now, they were hers. Smiling and humming happily, Lily made

her decision quietly. She'd stay. She'd treat them like kings. And maybe, just maybe, she'd let Kane know she might be interested in some more kisses.

They were out in the barn working on the saddles. She hadn't known what went into making a saddle. Maybe they'd let her watch. And she bet they'd like more of that axle grease they called coffee, for starters.

Tossing the dregs out of the coffee pot, she put fresh grounds in, threw in the egg shell they insisted it needed, added water, and set it on the stove. While she waited for it to come to a boil, she considered how to approach Kane. When the coffee was ready, she still hadn't decided, but she was convinced she was going to do it.

Not having a real tray, she put three cups on a flat, tin plate. Doctoring the coffee with some precious sugar and the raw cream, she hummed a tune she'd learned from her mother. Lifting the 'tray', she walked out of the kitchen and headed for the barn.

It was empty.

Looking at the scattered tools, the wood shavings on the floor, and the half-finished saddle, Lily figured her timing was good. They were on a break. But where?

"By the creek, of course."

Then she remembered what she'd seen the last time she went looking for

them at the stream.

The tin cups rattled on the plate. She was trembling. Setting the makeshift tray down so she didn't dump the coffee on the wood shavings, she tried to calm herself. She hadn't seen anything yet and warmth curled up from her belly and shivers ran down her spine. Did she dare? How could she not?

Lily crept out the back door of the barn and down the path through the woods. She edged quietly into place by the stream. They were there, sitting next to each other on the bank, and talking too softly for her to hear.

Billy raised a hand and brushed a hank of hair off Kane's forehead. Kane laughed softly and knocked his hand away.

"What? It was stuck on your lashes."

"I'll stick you on your lashes."

"Promises, promises."

Kane pushed against Billy's shoulder and set him rocking side to side. Billy exaggerated the movement, playfully falling against Kane. He didn't budge.

"You're like a rock," Billy complained.

"Maybe I'll hit you over the head with myself and knock you out."

Billy giggled. Lily'd never heard him giggle before, but it sounded right.

Kane glanced over at Billy. "I love that little sound you make when you laugh."

Billy looked back. He leaned forward and gave Kane a kiss.

“Greedy little bastard, aren’t you?” Kane said without heat.

Billy slipped his hand between Kane’s legs. “No more than you.”

Kane leaned back and let his knees fall open.

Lily couldn’t see what Billy’s hand was doing any more than she could see the effect it had on Kane. Ever so slowly, so she wouldn’t make any noise, she inched sideways so the men were in profile. Billy’s hand rubbed up and down the bulge in Kane’s pants. The sheer size of it captured Lily’s attention. She stared at the spot between Kane’s legs as Billy measured him with his hand and opened a button. He traced the outline of the bulge and opened another button. It only took a moment before Kane’s erection sprang free from his pants.

Big didn’t cover it.

Lily tried to recall her little brother’s genitals. True, he was just a little boy, but his didn’t look anything like Kane’s or Billy’s. She wondered if all boys grew up to be as big as her men. She had overheard her father talking one night, telling one of his women to kiss his prick. She’d thought he’d gotten stabbed by something. *Maybe he meant...* she blinked. While she’d been daydreaming, Kane and Billy had been on the move. *What are they doing now?*

Kane had his boots and pants off and was flat on his back. His member – his prick – poked into the air. Billy was stark naked, head to foot. He had a beautiful

chest covered with tight, blond curls. Kane had less hair, and it was dark, but it was just as beautiful.

She blinked again. Billy was kneeling between Kane's legs. His hands and his gaze were focused down low. He mumbled and Kane lifted his knees. Billy slid forward and pushed his prick out of sight. Kane lifted his rear end up.

Both of them moaned, not in pain but in pleasure. They rocked back and forth. *It must feel good. Like Rachel said, the pleasure came from the friction of two bodies rubbing together. It had to be an awful lot of pleasure.*

It was. Billy and Kane rocked and rubbed and moaned. Their hands traveled over each other's bodies. Their lips met and fused. When they separated, she was surprised to see them keep their mouths open and duel with their tongues. Then Kane sucked Billy's tongue into his mouth.

Heat pooled in Lily's belly. Between her own legs, a wet, wanting warmth spread. Her nipples tingled and tightened.

Billy threw back his head and cried out in ecstasy. His back was arched and veins stood out on his neck. When he dropped his head forward, he said to Kane, "Take me from behind again."

Lily's ears perked up. *What does that mean?*

Kane and Billy wrestled around changing position. Now Billy was on all fours, his bare backside presented to Kane's lingering glance and traveling hands.

Kane was on his knees behind him. Their different positions put Lily more on target for a front-row seat. What she saw almost knocked her over.

Kane wet his finger and spread Billy's cheeks apart. Lily saw the puckering skin pulse and clench. Saliva pooled in her mouth. She lifted one hand to her breast and pinched the nipple to stop the tingling. It didn't work. In fact, it made it worse...or better.

She had to clap a hand over her mouth when Kane pushed his finger inside Billy's butt. He pushed it in and pulled it partway out.

"More?" he asked Billy.

"Yes, please." Billy was swaying left and right with his head hanging down. He was breathing hard.

Kane pushed his finger back inside. Pulled it out. Then two fingers disappeared inside Billy.

Lily was breathing hard. The warmth had spread to her butt, and she clenched her cheeks together. It wasn't enough, but it was all she could do for the moment.

This is sexual excitement. I didn't think it possible, knowing what I know. Or what I thought I knew. Kane and Billy aren't hitting each other, or pinching, or calling each other names. But they are very definitely having sex. And both of them are enjoying every blasted minute of it!

Lily felt left out, alone.

Until she noticed what Kane was doing.

He took hold of his large member, pointed it at the puckered entrance to Billy's insides, and *pushed it in!*

Lily watched, astounded as the muscles in Kane's rear end flexed as he pushed forward. He relaxed and backed up, then pushed it in again. He repeated this action for several minutes while Billy moaned and writhed and Kane made harsh grunting noises. Kane pulled his thing out and pressed it between Billy's cheeks, rubbing up and down. A white, milky fluid fountained out of Kane. He collapsed on Billy's back.

"Jerk me off," Billy asked. "Please."

Kane's hands wrapped around Billy's waist. She saw his arms moving back and forth but couldn't see what he was doing. She stepped to the side for a better look and heard the rustle of bushes and the snap of a twig.

Kane, Billy, and Lily froze. Lily moved first, turning and running for the cabin. She didn't wait to see if Kane or Billy followed.



"Damn!" Kane bellowed as he scrambled to his feet.

"Was that who I think it was?"

"Yeah. Lily."

"Oh, no."

Billy watched Kane fumble into his clothes. He grabbed his boots and turned toward the path, but Billy held him back.

“Don’t.”

“Don’t? Good Christ, Billy, she saw us!”

“I know she did, which is why she’s embarrassed and possibly upset. Now is not the time to track her down and yell at her.”

“I’m not going to yell at her!” Kane yelled.

Billy held on to his arm until Kane dropped his boots and stomped away to the edge of the stream. Quickly dressing, he kept his eye on Kane. This was the most delicate situation either of them had been in, and they needed to think it through. He pushed his feet into his boots.

“How long was she there?”

“How the hell do I know? I know she saw enough to know what we were doin’.”

“Maybe not. She doesn’t seem to be experienced.”

“Maybe not, but maybe she is. Maybe that’s why she doesn’t want any part of sex.”

Kane looked thoughtful. “You mean like maybe she was abused?”

“I don’t know for sure. But I know she embarrasses easily, and she’s not familiar with a man’s body.”

Kane narrowed his gaze at him. "And just how do you know that?"

Whoops. "She saw me scratchin' myself earlier today and she ran into her room." Kane's gaze didn't lighten up. "That's all. She was embarrassed. That doesn't say experienced to me."

Kane looked away. Billy didn't fear Kane, but he didn't want to piss him off either. If Kane's position with Lily was delicate, Billy's position with Kane was fragile. He had a home, land, and a lover to lose. Kane didn't know it, but nothing he could do would change Billy's mind. He was here, he was in love, and he was staying. Even if he had to beg Kane's forgiveness.

"Then what she saw probably shocked and sickened her," Kane said.

Billy's heart ached. He wished Kane would accept their lifestyle. No one had to know. Well, except for Lily of course. He had to put out this fire, and fast.

"Let's get back to the saddles."

Kane whipped around and stared. "The saddles?"

Billy nodded and got to his feet. "We work on the saddles. Leave Miss Lily alone for a while, give her time to settle down..."

"Or pack."

"Then we go in, we talk, assure her that nothing has changed, and we go on as before."

Kane frowned. "That's the stupidest thing you've ever said."

Billy shrugged. “Think what you want. But if you go after her now, while you’re both upset, it’s only gonna make things worse.”

“And that, my friend, is the smartest thing you’ve ever said. Toss me my boots.”

Billy led the way back down the path. He breathed a sigh of relief. He had to keep Kane and Lily apart until he had time to work out a plan – one that kept everyone happy, especially Kane. And the plan had to include Billy. Happy or resigned didn’t matter, because he’d found his home, and he wasn’t giving it up.

Chapter Six

She heard them before she saw them since they made enough noise for entire crew of cowboys on spring roundup. Not that she knew what that sounded like, but she could imagine. Busying her hands with the biscuit dough, she kept her head down as they both walked in through the back door.

Boots shuffled on the plank floor but they didn't move off. Willing the heat from her face, she kept her eyes focused on the dough. "Dinner in about ten minutes." She shaped the edges of the rolled out dough, and laid it in the leftover bacon grease in the cast iron frying pan.

Still they didn't move. She stepped back, pushing them away with her skirts, opened the stove door, and popped the skillet inside. Before she could close it, Billy spoke up.

"You didn't cut the biscuits."

She glared at the biscuit cutter by the sink. Without thinking, she reached back inside the stove for the pan. Kane pulled her back by the arm.

"Watch it! That skillet's probably hot already," he said, slapping a hand towel into her hand.

She used the towel to lift the pan out. Setting in the counter, she counseled

herself that nothing had happened; she hadn't seen anything. She lied.

She jammed the cutter through the soft dough leaving the little corners that crisped up. They were Kane's favorite.

Get a hold of yourself.

Putting the pan back in the stove, she steeled herself to face them. When she looked up all she saw was the tops of their heads because they were both looking at the floor. She brushed her hands together.

"I'll just go freshen up while they cook," she said untying her apron. They let her get two steps away.

"We need to talk," Kane said.

"Yeah," Billy added unnecessarily.

With a smile, she started forward again. "We can talk over supper. Right now..."

Billy held her captive by an elbow.

Kane nodded. "We need to talk now."

She let Billy steer her toward her chair at the table. He held it for her, surprising her, and then sat down across from Kane. They didn't look at her, neither did they look at each other.

"What's this about?" she tried. There was a smidgen of hope they hadn't seen her or heard her crashing through the woods running over everything in her

way.

Kane lifted his head. "We know you saw us, Lily."

She arched an eyebrow.

"In the woods. Together," he added when she sat mute and still.

"Even if you don't have anything to say, we do," Billy said. "We want you to know that we'd never hurt you, or force you to do anything you don't want to."

She leveled a look at him that used to shut her brother up. Unfortunately, her brother had been three. Billy was anything but.

"When I joined up with the mayor's bride order, I wanted to get married, have a woman around the place, maybe start a family," Kane continued. "When you didn't want to get married, I figured you'd leave. But you didn't. You wanted to stay."

"But no sex stuff," Billy added.

Kane threw Billy an aggravated look. "But we're men. Men have needs."

Lily had heard enough. Next they'd be telling her it was all her fault. "It wasn't your first time."

Both men looked up at her. Her face caught fire, hot enough for smoke. "My biscuits," she yelled as she jumped, grabbed the cloth, and pulled the biscuits out. "Thank heavens they didn't burn," she muttered, giving the pan a good look before dumping the biscuits out. She set the empty skillet on the dry sink and returned to

her seat. The short interlude gave her time to will her blush away. *All business*. “It wasn’t the first time I saw you. Or heard you.”

Kane and Billy exchanged glances and then returned to their study of the table. Right now they seemed more embarrassed than she was.

“I overheard you in the loft a few days ago. Then, one evening when you’d both left me alone again, I wandered out to look for you.”

They both raised their heads. Kane looked confused. Billy looked amused.

“I was lonely. I’m here all day by myself with little to do...”

“If you’d...”

Lily kept talking over Billy’s admonishment. Now was not the time. “And every evening, well, almost every evening, you come home, eat, and disappear. I wondered what was exciting enough to...”

She didn’t have a chance to check her blush this time. Kane chuckled once and stopped. Billy laughed out loud.

“You know what I mean.”

“Sure do, Miss Lily,” Billy said with a grin.

“Billy.”

“What?” he asked Kane. “It’s obvious to me that she isn’t as disgusted as you thought she’d be, or as embarrassed as I thought she’d be. So let’s talk. Get it all out in the open.”

Kane squirmed in his chair. Billy put both arms on the table with his hands clasped. Lily peeked at them through her lashes. She wasn't quite ready to "get it all out in the open."

Billy broke the deafening silence. "I'll go first. Why don't you want any of the 'sex stuff,' as you so politely put it? Did something happen to you to make you fear having a man make love to you?"

Do I tell them? How can I not when all I want is the feeling seeing them together gives me?

"It was my father."

Kane snapped upright, outrage clearly written on his face. Billy looked saddened. He put his hand over hers.

"Did he hurt you?"

Lily blinked. "No, it's not what you think. He didn't touch me...that way. But he would have, and that's why I left. He beat me regularly, as well as my sisters and my stepmother, Rachel." She took a deep breath. "She was my friend, and he hurt her every time...every time. She'd have bruises on her face and arms. You could tell she'd been weeping. Then it stopped, as quickly as it started. She threatened him with a knife after he brought two other men to the house." With her head sunk on her chest, Lily couldn't see their reactions to what she'd said.

"Hitting isn't part of making love, Lily," Kane said softly. "Some men like to hurt others, but it doesn't have anything to do with sex."

“Not always, anyway,” Billy added.

Lily looked up at him. “But some men like to hurt women.”

Billy nodded. “I don’t consider them men, really, but yes, some can’t get off unless there’s pain involved.”

“Billy!”

“It’s out in the open, Kane. We’re out in the open.” Billy looked directly at Lily. “But only here. No one in the area can know. They’d like to kill us if they found out about me and Kane.”

Lily looked from Billy to Kane and back. “Why?”

“They don’t like men that, uh, like other men.”

“They’re afraid is what they are,” Kane added.

Lily shifted her gaze back to Billy and saw the truth in his gaze. He loved Kane.

“You two have been together since long before I came along, right?”

Kane and Billy’s eyes caught, and they nodded.

“Where does that leave me?” she asked. She was looking at Billy.

He raised his eyebrows. “Wherever you want to be.”

Since they were both being honest with her, she decided she had to be as honest. But she needed to know she wouldn’t be horning in where she wasn’t wanted. Her obnoxious, poor, uneducated persona stood between them.

“I was never poor. I have an exceptional education, and am trained to run a large household with a staff. I have money, too. I acted the way I did because I was afraid you’d want to have sex with me,” she stated baldly, looking at Kane.

He gave her a little smile. “I did. Until you opened your mouth.”

Billy laughed, and Lily had to smile.

“Pretty good, huh?” she asked.

“You should be on the stage, darlin’,” Kane said with a wisp of a smile.

“Kane, could you find it inside you to give me another chance?”

She felt, rather than heard, Billy’s intake of breath, but she kept her eyes locked on Kane’s. She knew Billy would always love Kane, so Kane was the one she had to convince.

“I could manage that,” he replied. He took one of her hands and gazed into her eyes. “Can you manage, um, living here with, uh...”

“Both of you? Yes,” she said without a qualm. “In fact, I – I’m real interested in what you do. Together. With each other.” Her face flamed again, but she was determined to get her idea out, even if it choked her.

“Could I watch?” she asked quietly.

Billy and Kane spoke at the same time.

“Good God, no!” Kane said, his face as red as hers.

“Anytime, Miss Lily,” was Billy’s smiling reply.

“Why not, Kane?” Billy asked. “She’s already seen us, several times as a matter of fact.”

Keeping her eyes down to avoid embarrassing Kane any further, she said, “I want to know if it will hurt when you put, uh, your member in my bum.”

A hush fell over the three of them. Mortified, Lily kept her hands in her lap. She was about to run when Kane’s hand joined hers.

“That’s not men and women do, Lily. That’s what men do with each other.”

“She’s as innocent as, as... Hell, I don’t know anything that innocent,” Billy breathed.

Kane’s voice came from above her lowered head. “Men...women have...”

“Men put their penis inside a woman’s vagina, Lily,” Billy explained matter-of-factly.

“Geez,” Kane moaned.

“That’s one way a man makes love to a woman. There are others.”

Lily lifted her head. “Others?”

“Many others. They use their mouths and hands. They use their bodies and their feelings. Making love is more than a physical act, Lily. It involves the heart, the mind, and the soul when you’re with the right person.”

Billy, Lily noticed, studiously avoided Kane’s surprised stare. He kept his pale blue eyes trained on her.

“Have you ever made love to a woman, Billy?”

“Once. It was very nice. And she enjoyed herself as much as I did.”

Lily looked over at Kane, who still watched Billy closely. “Okay. I’m ready.”

Kane sat straight as an arrow. “Right now?”

Billy slumped in his seat and slid his hands into his front pockets. “Oh, yeah.”

“To watch,” she added cautiously.

Billy chuckled.

Kane shook his head. “I don’t think I can do it.”

“I can,” Billy said standing up. He walked around to stand behind Kane. He whispered into Kane’s ear, but Lily heard. “Let me do all the work. You just sit back and enjoy it.”

Kane wiped his face with both hands. He looked over his shoulder at Billy to say something, but Billy kissed him. Holding Kane’s head steady, he licked his mouth and sucked on his tongue.

Lily was riveted. A hollow formed in her stomach the perfect size to hold the heat that flared to life. She watched Billy’s hand slide down Kane’s front and settle over the front placket of his pants. It was flat. She peeked around Billy’s hip. His wasn’t flat.

Kane broke away and stood up. “I can’t. I just can’t.”

Billy backed him up against the dry sink. His hands ran up Kane's sides and started unbuttoning his shirt. Kane let his head drop back. But Lily could see Kane wasn't getting big like he had when he was alone with Billy. Or thought he was alone.

Kane put his hands on Billy's shoulders. "Stop." He looked over at Lily. "Maybe," he said slowly, "if Lily were to help us?"

Her head was shaking before he finished his sentence. "I'm not ready for that."

Billy hooked his arm around Kane's waist and pulled him upright. He walked over and held out a hand to Lily. She looked at it like it was a snake.

"Trust me, Lily. I have a plan."

She thought a moment then nodded. Billy knew Kane best. "All right."

He ushered them into the front room and pulled his shirt over his head. Then he bent to remove his boots. "Take off your boots, Kane."

Kane looked suspicious but complied.

"Now you, Lily."

Billy stood in his bare feet, his naked chest at eye level. Lily sat on the canvas sofa.

"Me?" Her voice squeaked as she eyed Billy, then Kane. He had the beginnings of a smile on his face. Obviously, he'd caught on to Billy's plan. Too bad

she had no idea what they expected of her.

“I think Kane will be more comfortable if you took off your clothes.”

She went a little giddy from the lack of blood in her head. She wasn't ready for that, either.

“Maybe just some of her clothes, Billy. I'd be a bit more comfortable with some of her clothes.”

Billy nodded and she inhaled.

“I guess that's fair,” she managed.

Bending over, she undid her laces and tossed her half boots to the side.

“Okay?”

Kane grinned as Billy slid his arms around him from the back. “For now.”

She took the moment to really look at the man she wanted. Billy helped by taking Kane's shirt off completely and fondling his nipples. They were circled by dark hair and came to points only a second after Billy's fingers started teasing them.

Kane dropped his head back onto Billy's shoulder. Billy watched her from behind Kane, watched her stare as his hands glided over Kane's broad chest, run down his flat belly, and slide over the now-prominent bulge in his work pants. Her deep, blue eyes followed his hands up and down, through the heavy thicket of hair in the middle of Kane's chest, down the ribbon of curls that disappeared under the

waistband of his lover's pants.

Kane's breathing had deepened and evened out. He was feeling instead of thinking about Lily's hungry gaze. Billy cupped Kane's erection, pulling the material tight across it to show Lily how big it was. He felt the wet spot and smiled. Kane always lubed the head of his dick the minute it got hard.

He played with Kane's navel and unbuttoned his pants. They dropped a little and broke Kane's concentration. He lifted his head.

"Uh..."

"Shh," Billy crooned. "Lily's going to take off her stockings now. Watch her."

Kane watched as Billy watched. Lily hesitated, but then shone true to Billy's intuition. This was a sensual woman. No other woman would admit to being excited by watching two men make love.

She lifted a foot to the seat and slid the hem of her skirt up over her knee. She kept her eyes on Kane while she peeled the cotton knit stocking down her smooth thigh, over her dimpled knee, and off her narrow foot. Kane sighed.

Billy pushed Kane's pants down. Before he could rip his eyes from Lily's leg, Billy took him in hand and slowly massaged his erection. Kane automatically pushed his ass back into Billy's crotch. This time, Billy sighed.

Lily was focused on Billy's hand filled with Kane's flesh.

"Spread your legs, lover," Billy murmured.

Kane lifted one foot out of his pants, then the other, and kicked his pants on top of Lily's boots and stockings. Billy cupped Kane's balls from the back, traced the crack of his ass with one finger, and kissed his shoulder.

"Think that deserves another stocking?"

Voice tight, Kane answered, "Yeah."

Lily kept her eyes on Billy's hands stroking Kane between his legs, but lifted her other leg and took off the stocking.

"Don't," Kane said when she went to brush her skirt back down. She didn't.

"Don't she look a picture, sittin' there for us?" Billy asked.

Lily sat sideways with her foot still up on the seat. Her skirt draped across her thigh and pooled between her legs.

"Think she'd lift her skirt for us if I take off my pants?" Billy whispered.

Kane looked the question at Lily. She dipped her chin infinitesimally. He wouldn't have seen it if he hadn't been watching.

Kane was surrounded; Billy behind him lovingly playing with him, Lily in front lovingly disrobing for him. His heart swelled. *Best of both worlds.*

Billy stepped away. Kane heard pants slide off and hit the floor. Then Billy's hands returned to their gentle fondling. His erection was stiff and tight, just how Kane liked it. Billy nestled his penis in the crack of his ass. Kane bent a bit to open himself and the big, hard dick settled nicely between his cheeks. Billy rubbed it up

and down.

Lily watched Kane's dick as it jerked at Billy's teasing handling. Kane smiled grimly and wondered when the skirt would go up. "Lily," he said softly. He liked her watching him, and didn't want to distract her too much. "Will you lift your skirt for me?"

Her hands fluttered then settled on the pool of cloth covering her private parts. Her fingers plucked and lifted bits of it, but she didn't show anything.

"Billy. Let Lily see you."

With a resigned sigh, Billy pulled his cock from its nesting place and stepped to Kane's left. Kane grinned. He was left-handed. He wrapped his fingers around Billy's impressive dick and gave a little squeeze. Lily's eyes drifted between the two erect penises at eye level. He wondered which one she liked better.

"Lily?"

She shot a quick glance to his face then settled her gaze on the action in front of her. Then she pulled her skirt up and showed her drawers.

"She's cheating, Kane."

"Huh?" he grunted. He was staring at the white drawers with the closed slit between her legs.

"We showed her ours. She should show us hers."

Lily looked up at Billy. "Should I take them off?"

Her voice was a wisp of its normal self. Her breathing hitched every once in a bit. Kane would bet she was wet....*down there*. He shivered. He felt Billy's lips on his shoulder.

"Please?" he asked.

Instead of standing, Lily lifted her hips and stripped her drawers off. Her skirt settled over everything, hiding everything. But without anyone saying a word, she lifted the material up to reveal a thatch of thick dark curls at the top of her thighs.

"That's a girl," Billy sighed.

Kane glanced over his shoulder to see Billy smiling at Lily. Good. He wanted his lovers to like each other.

Billy rubbed a hand over his back. "Maybe you should go down on me for her."

Lily's eyes opened wide enough for him to worry, but she *had* said she wanted to watch.

"Would you like that, Lily?"

She shifted on her seat, restless and wanting. "Yes, please."

Kane stepped away from Billy's side. Taking both Billy's hands, he pulled him in front of Lily and went to his knees.

"Watch me, Lily. Maybe you could do this for me some day."

He traced a hand across her cheek then turned to look at Billy's cock. A pearly drop marked the tip. He licked it off.

Lily gasped. Kane looked over at her. She was practically drooling.

"You want to touch it?"

"No, Kane, she should touch you first," Billy said.

Surprised, he looked up. Billy watched him with fevered eyes. Kane kissed the cock bobbing in front of him. He stood up.

Lily looked from right to left, left to right. Kane's cock, Billy's cock. Tentatively she reached out both hands and touched them at the same time. Both he and Billy laughed when she jerked away from them. At her touch, both cocks had jumped and twitched.

Her face lit up with her smile. "I didn't think it – they – would do that."

"Touch me again, Lily," Kane pleaded. "You make me twitch all over."

Smiling, she brazenly wrapped her hands around his aching cock.

"Can I..."

"Anything you want, Lily."

She kissed him. On his cock. Maintaining as much composure as he could. He noticed Billy absently stroking himself.

"Would you kiss Billy?" he asked.

Billy started to speak, but Kane forestalled him with a raised hand.

Lily looked up at Billy. “May I?”

Billy smiled and stepped a little closer. Still holding his dick, he said, “Will you show us your pussy?”

Lily frowned.

“Between your legs, sweetheart. It’s called a lot of things, but pussy is my favorite,” Billy explained.

“Kane?” she asked.

“I’d love to see it, too. And taste it.”

“Really? With your mouth?”

“Yes, but we can do that later,” he said, backing off at the look on her pretty face.

“Um, how do I...”

“Lean back and spread your legs.”

She settled back on the sofa and moved her knees apart. Not enough.

“Let me show you how,” Billy said. He sat down next to her, put his hands behind his knees, and pulled them up and spread them apart.

“Oh!” Lily exclaimed.

“You don’t have to go that far,” Kane said with a look at Billy.

Billy stayed where he was, knees spread, feet in the air, a smile on his pretty face. “Maybe Kane could do me with his mouth and play with you with his hand.

For starters.”

Lily, brave, inexperienced soul that she was, lifted her knees and spread them.

Her pussy opened for him like a flower. First the hair parted, followed by her outer lips slowly releasing and revealing her whole pussy. Excitement glistened on her curls and slicked her plump, red lips. As Kane watched, she clenched and moisture dribbled from her tight channel. Billy sat up and looked, too. Before she could react, they were both on their knees examining her fragrant, wet, hot, red, pulsing pussy. Kane could smell her and it went to his head. He reached out a finger and touched the pulsing center.

Lily moaned and panted. “I felt like this while I watched you have sex with Billy. It feels like I’m missing something,” she said, nearly sobbing.

“Go ahead. Take care of the lady,” Billy said with a smile.

Kane sat on his heels. He used his fingers to part the slippery folds. More liquid seeped out and ran down the crack of her ass. She was holding herself so wide, her butt hole peeped out from between her cheeks. Holding her open with one hand, Kane used his fingers on her pussy. He slipped his fingers up and down the wet channel, slid one finger partway inside her, then circled the stiff button he’d found hiding. She gasped so he circled it again.

Lily’s hips were lifting toward him when he realized he wasn’t sure what he

was about. He looked at Billy.

“That’s it, buddy. Rub her, slide a finger in and out,” Billy said in a tight voice.

“You want...”

Kane worked his hand in and around her cunt. Billy put his hand at the top and pulled her flesh up, revealing the button hidden there. It was a tiny pink hill surrounded by slippery red flesh. Billy pulled on it and a hood slid back to reveal the inside.

“That’s her clit. Rub it, Kane.”

Kane touched it, and Lily jerked spasmodically. The noise she made said she liked it. He pressed harder, and Lily yelled. He circled it, flicked, rubbed it. As she came, she cried out and convulsed. Her legs shook and fell down, splayed out on the sofa.

“Lily?”

“Now I know why Rachel kept going back for more,” she panted.

Kane laughed. “Now it’s our turn.”

He turned to Billy and they kissed. Gripping each other tight, Kane realized they were both more excited than ever. He pushed Billy onto his back at Lily’s feet. Then he knelt with one knee on either side of Billy’s head and guided his full-to-bursting cock into his mouth. He sighed with bliss, and Billy started sucking.

He swallowed Billy's dick and sucked on him. He pumped his hips, sliding his dick in and out of his mouth. He kept his head moving up and down, sucking and licking Billy's erection.

Hips flexing, head nodding, Kane concentrated on getting Billy off until he came in Kane's mouth. Billy pulled Kane's hips lower and took more of his penis in his own mouth. He squeezed Kane's balls and played with his sphincter. Kane groaned and came, pulling his dick out from between Billy's sheathed teeth. Breathing heavily, he lifted his head to see how Lily had taken it all. She smiled at him sweetly and cupped his jaw.

"Will you make love to me, Kane?"

He and Billy got to their feet. "It takes a man a little while to recover."

Lily stood and, to his and Billy's astonishment, took off her dress and chemise. Naked, she stood still and let them look their fill.

"You're beautiful, Lily," Kane said, and kissed her.

He cupped her breasts as she leaned forward, eager for his hands to be on her flesh. Kane sighed and played with her nipples while tasting her mouth. He started when Billy stroked his dick.

"Look's who's up already."

Kane grinned wryly. "I guess I'm ready." He looked down at the sofa. "You might be more comfortable on a bed."

Lily tilted her head. "Let's go."

Kane took her hand and started to the door. Lily took one step and stopped.

"Are you coming?" she asked Billy.

"You want me to come with you?"

"We're in this together, Billy."

Kane didn't know how it happened, or when it happened, but he was in love with Lily and Billy. It had taken this innocent miss to make him see he could never give up Billy, and now he couldn't – wouldn't – give her up, either.

"Come on, Billy. If I do something wrong, you can fill me in."

Billy threw back his head and laughed. "Somehow I don't think you'll need help. But I'm willing to lend a hand, so to speak."

The three of them trooped toward her bedroom, naked as the day they were born.



Lily's deflowering was, to say the least, painful. Kane was not a small man. Lying on her back, with her knees up and spread, she was engulfed by her men.

Billy was kissing her as deeply as Kane ever had. Kane was suckling on one breast and playing with the other. He lay on top of her, and his weight went a long way to easing the ache that was building again, but his prick was poking her in the thigh, not in – what had Billy said? – her pussy.

She liked calling it that. It gave the boys a good reason to pet her.

Billy pulled on her tongue at the same moment Kane pulled on her nipple. She groaned and arched her back. Kane came up and took over her mouth. His prick was nuzzling the hair between her legs. She shifted her legs further apart. Billy moved sideways and Lily reached out a hand and wrapped it around his dick. She squeezed and stroked like Kane had. Billy held still, but she could hear him breathing. Slowly, he pulled back. She thought he was going to leave, but he pushed his huge erection forward so she could stroke him more.

“Tighter,” he said in a hoarse voice.

Kane lifted his head. He lapped at Billy’s dick and then went back to her mouth.

“Is it time, Lily? Are you ready?” Kane asked.

“I don’t know how to tell.”

“I do,” Billy said.

Kane lifted off her and Billy slid his hand into her pussy.

“She’s really wet and slippery. I think she’s more than ready,” he said, smiling at her.

Kane pulled her knees up and settled between them. He nudged the head of his penis into her channel, stretching her.

She groaned.

“That’s it. Keep going,” Billy murmured.

Kane pushed forward and slid deeper. He pulled back and pushed higher into her.

Lily felt the tearing like it was her soul being ripped out. She screamed as he ripped through her maidenhead. Tears ran from the corners of her eyes. She clenched them shut.

“Oh, God. Lily, I’m sorry,” Kane cried. He started to pull out, but Billy’s hand tightened on his shoulder.

“No. Stay there,” Billy said. “She has to get used to you there. The pain will pass, Lily. Trust me. It will never hurt like that again.”

“I hope not,” she mumbled.

The three of them held perfectly still. Gradually, the pain leaked away and was replaced by a feeling of incredible fullness. She was stretched wide and high. Kane held himself rigid until she started to relax. The more she relaxed, the less rigid he became.

“I’m all right now.”

“You sure?” Kane asked.

She nodded.

Kane buried his face in her neck. “I don’t know if I can move. I’m afraid I’ll hurt you.”

“You won’t,” Billy said. He lowered his head to the back of Kane’s neck and kissed him. He was rubbing his back, too. “Start slow.”

Kane started slow. Flexing his hips, he moved in and out of her in a steady rhythm.

“That’s it, Kane,” Billy said softly.

Kane started kissing and licking her face and neck. Gentle bites on her shoulders were followed by soft licks to ease the sting. His hips kept their rhythm but increased their speed. The delicious friction of the smooth but hard prick sliding in and out of her built heat from her thighs to her womb. She felt soft convulsions start deep inside of her, and lifting her hips, she matched him push for pull.

“That’s it, Kane. Fuck her.”

Kane pulled her knees up higher and picked up his pace. The heat centered around her clit and vagina. She lifted her hips and banged into Kane as he rammed down into her.

She yelped and grabbed the bedposts.

Kane was grunting. Sweat gleamed on his arms and chest. Over his shoulder she could see Billy’s almost feral gaze. He stared at where she and Kane were joined.

“Fuck her. Fuck her,” he chanted very softly.

Kane was in a sexual frenzy. He was grunting and slamming in and out of her. One hand was filled with a breast, and he had most of his weight propped on the other.

The heat pulled her mind away. All her feeling was concentrated where Kane made love to her. She was spread open and filled with her new lover's prick.

She arched and screamed. Kane slid his arm under her waist and pulled her up tight against him. Lily felt his dick spasm inside her as he filled her with his seed. They collapsed together in a sweaty tangle of arms and legs with Kane still on top of her. Billy was kneeling between Kane's legs.

"Kane..."

Kane lifted his hips without pulling out of her. Billy came closer. He was stroking his own erection.

"Can I..."

"Come into me, Billy," Kane said after a nod from Lily.

Kane reached back and spread his cheeks. Lily tilted her hips to keep him inside of her while Billy slid up behind him and pressed his dick into Kane.

Kane closed his eyes and groaned.

"You all right, Miss Lily?" Billy asked as he pressed deep inside Kane's ass.

Kane groaned and settled heavily on her.

"Oh, yes," she moaned.

Billy smiled and starting fucking Kane slowly, like Kane had started with her. As he picked up speed, Lily felt Kane harden inside her. Her eyes opened wide as she looked Kane in the face.

“It has a mind of its own,” he said with an apologetic grin.

“That’s very good.” She lifted her hips more and started matching Billy’s pace. He grinned at her over Kane’s shoulder.

“I knew you were a beautiful woman, Lily.”

She grinned. “Shut up and fuck us, Billy.”

Both men laughed causing all sorts of wonderful feelings in her pussy. Kane pulled her down the bed, which brought him more on his knees. Billy was clutching Kane’s shoulders and humping hard and fast. Lily returned the favor and Kane groaned his approval.

No one was quite sure who came first.

Chapter Seven

Grimacing, Lily shoved the biscuit pan into the stove. *Two months. Two whole months and nothing.*

“Don’t look so sad, Lily. We’ll bring him around.” Billy poured coffee for them both.

“I don’t want to force him into something he doesn’t want.”

Billy took her hands. “He loves you, Lily. Of course he wants to marry you.”

“But what about you?”

“I’m fine with it. I love you too, Lily. I want you to be his family.”

“I want you *both* as my family,” she said.

“So do I,” Kane said from the doorway.

Lily turned as Billy let go of her hands. “I didn’t hear you come back.”

“No. But I heard you.” Kane looked at Billy. “And you. And there’s only one way I’ll agree to marry Lily.”

Kane held Billy’s gaze. “All I needed to know was how Lily felt about it. I was working up my courage to ask her.” Now he looked at her.

Lily read his intent in his eyes. Smiling, she nodded.

“Lily and I will get married in town, by a preacher. Then we’ll come back

here and pledge ourselves to each other, all three of us. I don't want you to leave or feel left out, Billy. I, uh, love you, too."

Billy, to Lily's surprise, blinked his eyes and looked away. "I'd like that."

"Why?"

Surprised again, this time by Kane's question, she looked at him. So did Billy.

"Why?" Billy asked.

"Yeah. Why would like to pledge yourself to me and Lily?"

It took a moment, but finally Billy lifted his chin. "Because I love you both. I love you, Kane and Lily."

Kane pulled Billy to his chest and hugged him. "Good. Good."

Lily put an arm around each of them and hugged them together. "I have a home, and two men to love me, and be loved by me." She gave each of them a kiss.

Kane stepped out the door and picked up something from the porch. "I made this."

He held out a long iron bar. One end was bent perpendicular to the handle then twisted into the shape of a triangle. Each angle had a flat star shape welded to it.

Billy stared at it. "It's a branding iron."

"Yeah. A branding iron. Ours, if y'all agree."

Lily grinned and clapped her hands together. "It's perfect. Our triangle held together by our own stars!"

"It's great, Kane. I like it," Billy said.

Kane grinned. "Good. Now all we have to do is build a decent ranch house, expand the barn, buy breeding stock, some horses, pigs, maybe a chicken or two, and we'll be all set."

Lily couldn't miss the wistful looks on the men's faces. "I have a wedding gift for us."

They turned to her.

In all the fuss of their first time together, they'd both either forgotten, ignored, or didn't hear, when she told them she had money. It was time to remind them.

"I have some money."

Kane shook his head. "No, you need to keep your own bit of money. You know, for little things you need."

"I don't think I'll need quite that much."

"Kane, she's been holding out on us. She's probably got a hundred bucks tucked inside her corset," Billy said with a grin.

Kane grinned, too.

"Four thousand."

Kane looked confused. Billy looked downright incredulous.

“Dollars?” Billy asked.

She nodded.

Kane looked to Billy and then to her. “No way. Where would you get that kind of money?”

“My father.”

“He gave you...”

“I took it.”

Kane’s mouth dropped open. Billy dropped into a chair at the table. “Great. He’s probably looking for you all over Texas.”

“He didn’t know where I was going. He didn’t know I was going.”

“Still, Lily,” Billy said patiently. “If anyone took four thousand dollars from me, I’d search high and low until I found them.”

“Why hasn’t he found you?” Kane asked.

“I don’t think he looked. He has a son, so daughters don’t matter.”

“Except for beating on.”

“Except for that,” she agreed.

“He still could come looking for you,” Billy predicted. “What’s your real name?”

Lily frowned. “Lily Beacham.”

“You ran away, stole four thousand dollars, and used your real name.”

Lily blanched. “I never thought of it. Oh God. What if he is looking for me?”

Kane rubbed her back. “Don’t worry. You’ll be Lily Mitchell soon enough.”

Even so, Lily worried hard and long until her wedding day arrived. In the dress she had made herself, she fussed with her hair until Billy called for her.

“Come on, Lily. You looked beautiful when you went in there.”

She grinned. “Coming!”

She left the room and preened as the two men, dressed in their Sunday best, circled her and whistled through pursed lips.

“That’s enough. You’ll turn my head,” she said with a smile.

She stood between them. Kane turned her head with one finger on her chin and kissed her. Billy’s hand cupped her jaw and pulled her back to him.

“You’re beautiful, Lily.” He kissed her, too.

Blinking back tears of happiness, she banned all thoughts of her father as she and Kane climbed aboard the wagon, and Billy mounted his horse. The ride to town was fun, filled with laughter and joy. Lily could tell it showed on her face by the looks her two men gave her.

The wagon rolled to a stop by the little church. The preacher was there to greet them, and the mayor – at Kane’s insistence – was there to act as witness. The irony suited all three of them.

As the groom kissed the bride, followed by the best man, the mayor cleared his throat.

“I have a telegram for you Miss Bea – Mrs. Mitchell.” He handed her a folded yellow paper.

Lily’s stomach churned. No one knew she was in Loving. No one in the world except her, her two men, the town’s people, and the mail-order bride company. *And there would only be one person looking for me.*

“When did you receive it?”

“Jes’ this mornin’ or I’d’ve ridden out to deliver it.”

Her hand holding the telegram shook. She smiled grimly at her groom.

“Would you read it?”

He took it like it was one of the water moccasins she hated. The paper crinkled as he opened it.

“It’s from a Mrs. Morris,” he said looking at her.

Lily closed her eyes. “The housekeeper. Read it, please.”

Billy had come up beside her and put his arm around her shoulders. She put her hand over his and gave it a gentle squeeze.

“No need to hide. Father dead.”

Lily gasped and closed her eyes.

“Brother living with uncle. All girls are fine. Write to them at...”

Lily's knees sagged and Kane reached for her. Billy kept his hand on her back as she broke down and sobbed.

"I'm right sorry about your pa, Mrs. Mitchell," the mayor said before walking away.

Lily's sob turned into a laugh.

The preacher offered a glass of water. "I am so sorry about your loss. And to hear of it on your wedding day." He tsked until Billy and Kane got her out of the church and into the carriage. Kane whipped up the team and they thundered out of town.

Laughter bubbled up between the sobs. Kane pulled the team up a mile past the livery and wrapped his arms around her.

Laughing and crying, she held on to him like a cowboy down in a stampede. Billy's horse came to a stop next to them, and she reached out for his hand.

"It's over. Finally over," she sobbed.

"I wasn't sure whether you would end up laughing or crying," Kane said solemnly.

Billy laughed. "Did you see the look on the mayor's face when he realized she was laughing *and* crying?"

They gave her time to pull herself together, and then started back to their place.

“Now we can buy lumber and tell everyone that my father left me the money.” Happier than she had thought possible, Lily rode back home with her arm through her husband’s elbow.

When they arrived, there were carriages, wagons, and saddled horses all around their homestead.

“What the devil?” Kane said.

“Surprise!” Billy said with a laugh and galloped toward the house.

Lily and Kane frowned at each other.

“He set us up,” Kane muttered.

“Set us up how?” Lily asked looking at the vehicles scattered about the property.

“A party.”

Lily started. “He planned a wedding party for us,” she agreed, delighted with the idea.

Kane was less than pleased. “And put off his own ceremony.”

“Oh, the little devil. Don’t worry. We’ll get him.”



They rode in to the cheers of most of the cowhands from the XY Ranch and half the people who lived in town. Billy had seen to everything. There was punch for the ladies and beer for the men. Everyone had contributed a dish, with the

owner of the XY supplying a barbecued side of beef. Lily showed her true colors by stepping in as hostess and charming everyone. Several of Kane's friends told him on the sly he'd been wise to keep her a secret. Billy grinned all day.

As the heat of the day faded, people made their farewells and headed back to their own homes. Many promised to invite them for dinner, and Lily promised to be more visible.

"No more hiding in the hills with these two ruffians," Mrs. Hornett admonished as she ushered her brood of five into their wagon.

"Good night," Lily said. As the stragglers gathered their things, she made eye contact with Kane. He nodded back at her.

When the last ones had left, Kane found Billy sprawled on the sofa in the front room.

"Aren't you the sneaky one," Kane said as he sat next to his friend, lover, and soon-to-be partner in more ways than one.

"I can be," Billy said with a self-satisfied grin.

Lily came up behind Billy and wrapped her hands around his throat. "So can I. Get up, you slacker."

She tugged him to his feet. Kane gave him a push now and then as they made their way to the bedroom.

"Hey, you guys deserved a party," he protested.

When they were inside the bedroom – made larger by the removal of the wall between the two bedrooms – Lily put her fists on her hips. “You thought you could postpone our ceremony.”

“No, Lily. Never that,” Billy said. “I just couldn’t figure out how to tell everyone to come an hour after we got back, that’s all.”

She smiled. “You have a point.”

Billy held up a hand. “Hold on.” He went over and pulled something out of his saddlebag. He brought it over to where Kane and Lily watched curiously.

Unfolding the cloth in his hand, he revealed a gold ring. “I was saving this for our private ceremony.” He took Lily’s right hand, since she already had one on her left hand, and slipped the ring on her pinkie.

It fit perfectly. Lily misted up.

“It was my mother’s.”

Lily let the tears fall and grabbed onto the big blond man. “I love you, Billy.”

“I love you, too.” Billy lifted her chin and kissed her sweetly on the lips. He turned to Kane. “And you, Kane.”

Kane lifted his hands and framed Billy’s face. “And I pledge my life and love to you, as I did Lily.”

Billy dropped his head on Kane’s chest.

Kane straightened and cleared his throat. “So, who gets the girl first?”

Lily slapped at him and Billy laughed.

“Let’s do it together.”

Lily wasn’t quite comfortable with the look in her men’s eyes. In moments, she was naked and watching them undress each other. They grunted and pulled each other’s boots off. Then the shirts, socks, and pants went and they, too, were naked and staring at her.

With a squeal, Lily ran around the bed to put it between her and the two wolves now stalking her. Laughing too hard got in the way of her escape, and the three of them were soon wrapped around each other, trading kisses, touches, and love.

“I want to make love to you, Lily,” Kane said.

“Me too,” Billy said. “At the same time.”

“Wha...? How?”

“You willing to take me in your pretty little ass?” Billy whispered.

Lily shivered.

“And me in your pussy?”

She glanced from one to the other. “You’ve been planning this.”

Sheepishly, Kane looked away. Billy, however, had no qualms. “Since the first time I saw that sweet hole of yours on the sofa.”

Thinking it through, Lily decided that this was exactly what she had signed

on for. She knew if she was uncomfortable or hurting, they'd stop, and they would beat themselves up over it for weeks.

She twisted her torso so she was chest to chest with Billy. She snuggled her butt into Kane's crowded crotch. "Think you can both take me on?" she purred.

Billy grinned and kissed her with an open mouth. Kane reached around and massaged her breasts while rubbing his cock against her ass.

"How do we do this?" she asked when Billy let her up for air.

Kane shifted behind her. "We figured if I lay down..."

He trailed off as she turned slowly to look at him. "You figured, huh?"

Poor Kane blushed.

"Go on, darling, tell me," she said.

Kane lay on his back. "Now you kneel over me." He guided her knees into position on either side of his waist.

Lily felt exposed, especially when Billy nuzzled her butt cheeks and stroked his rough hands down the inside of her thighs. Her breath rushed out. It was a vulnerable and very, very exciting position to be in. She spread her knees more, opening herself wider. Moisture dribbled from inside her. Her throat locked.

Billy was kneeling behind her. "You get so wet so fast, Lily." He reached his hand up and cupped her pussy. He ran his fingers in and around her and then pulled his hand away.

“Why’d you stop?” she asked in a shaky voice.

“God, Lily, you are wonderful,” Kane sighed from below. He had both hands fastened on her breasts, which swung beneath her.

Billy dipped a hand into her well again. She clamped down on his two fingers. “Ah, Lil, that’s my girl. Slick me up, darlin’.”

Lily turned her head to see him wiping his hand along his erection. She understood his actions now and squatted down a bit more. Her inner lips opened and Billy gathered more of her essence to rub on himself.

Lily’s excitement flared. She lifted her left knee and set her foot next to Kane. Her vagina and clitoris twitched, bringing her to a sobbing, moaning wreck.

Billy cupped her cheeks. Carefully, he spread them open and then licked her behind. She shivered and felt moisture drip from her to Kane’s belly. He groaned and latched onto a nipple, sucking hard enough she felt it in her womb as she became distracted by Billy pushing against her rectum.

She arched her back and moaned deep in her throat as he penetrated her. *Is this how Kane feels when Billy loves him? No wonder they did it so much.* Billy pushed in deeper. Far from hurting, it felt wonderful. She pushed back against him, bringing Kane to a half-sitting position to remain latched onto her breast. Billy pushed again, and she yelled as she felt his hips snub up to her behind.

“You okay?” Billy asked through a tight jaw.

“Oh, yes.”

“Come sit on my dick. Lower yourself slowly, and I’ll guide it in,” Kane instructed.

Lily looked into his eyes. Lowering her hips, she captured the head of his penis. Slowly, she sank further and further until he was completely imbedded inside her.

Shocking them, even in light of their lifestyle, Lily said, “Fuck me. Both of you.”

They shared a look, and both pulled out then pushed back in. Kane would lift his hips while Billy flexed his. Kane’s penis hit her womb with his thrusts. Billy and Kane rubbed each other each time they pushed inside her. Working the rhythm, Billy shoved his cock deep inside her ass. As he withdrew, Kane shoved his deep inside her vagina.

Pressure built inside her that compared to nothing on earth. Full to bursting with two cocks buried in her, Lily reveled in their touches, hard or soft. Billy held her hips in a punishing grip while Kane sucked the bottom of her womb out through her nipples, bouncing, jouncing, banging, thrusting into her.

Her orgasm built. Stretched in front and behind, she was too busy feeling their cocks smashing together to think, but Kane was aware of what was happening. He slid his hand under her and rubbed her clitoris. She was so slick, his

hand slipped several times.

As soon as Billy felt Kane's hand, he reached for Kane's balls. He fondled them as he banged in and out of Lily's sweet ass. Her cheeks were red from exertion. Sweat pooled in the small of her back. Billy only wanted more.

Kane felt like his cock was going to burn off or explode. Explode, he decided as Lily's orgasm started with hard contractions deep inside her. He knew by the moaning that came from behind Lily that Billy felt it, too.

Lily was crying out when Kane came in a rush. He pumped his seed into her even as Billy threw back his head and cried out.

Carefully easing out of Lily, Billy slid down beside Kane and kept breathing. It was all he could do.

Kane lay still with his eyes closed.

Lily sat on top of him like a sex goddess. Her hair was all over the place. Her nipples played peek-a-boo through the strands that laced across her heaving chest. Her head was back, and her eyes were closed. Her hips still gyrated, and her pussy pressed hard into Kane's pubic hair at the root of his dick. Billy stole a glance at Kane to see him watching Lily, too. Kane looked at him and smiled.

Lily gave an abbreviated yelp when Kane flipped her over onto her back. He buried his face in her pussy and licked, slurped, and lapped at her.

Billy leaned over her. "He's insatiable."

“So am I,” she said, and kissed Billy.

He deepened the kiss when she took his cock in one hand and stroked it.

Billy filled his hand with a breast and played with her nipple, tugging and pinching. Between them, Lily screamed her way through two more orgasms before sleep overcame them all.



Billy slept like a log, and woke in stages, feeling better than he had in years. It only took him a minute to realize it was because Lily was sucking on his dick. He looked up to see Kane fucking Lily from behind and grinned.

This was the marriage for him.

The End

<http://www.freewebs.com/malloryhall/index.htm>

Author Bio

Always interested in the physical side of things, Mallory Hall turned to the keyboard and cut loose. Her work background includes bartending (and bouncing!) emergency switchboard operator, waitress, storeowner, and reference librarian. Widowed with a grown daughter, she lives in Central Florida.

Red Rose Publishing

The Civil Bride

Aspen Mountain Press

The Aft Shaft in Goin' Down Anthology, Vol. 1