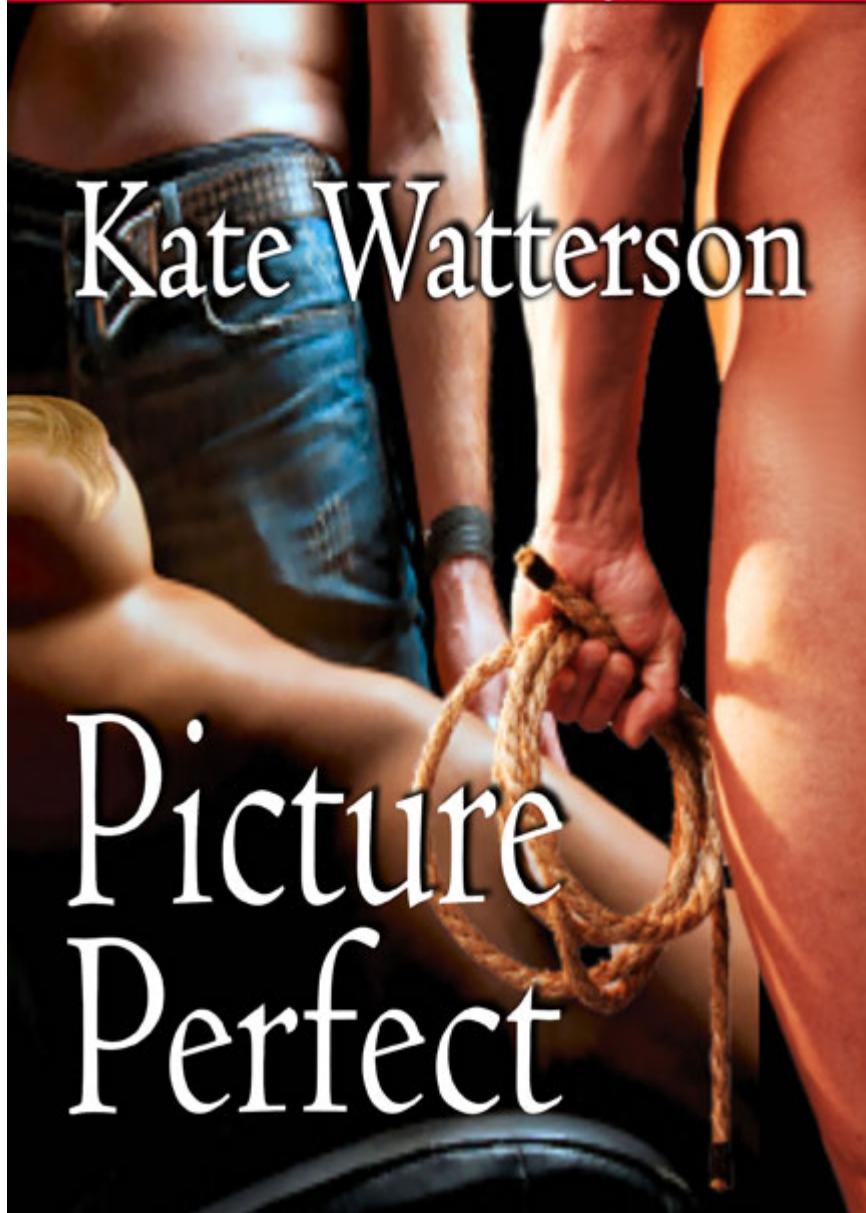


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Letter from Kate Watterson
Regarding Ebook Piracy

Dear Readers,

The issue of Ebook piracy is a growing concern for all authors. Please take into account the time, effort and investment of both the author and the publisher before sharing or selling any Ebook. That said, I hope you enjoy the story!

With deep gratitude,

Kate Watterson

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KATE WATERSON

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Chapter One

The straw was a little on the prickly side, especially considering how much bare skin was exposed to it each time she changed position.

A favor for a friend. Just think of it that way.

Victoria Lambeth obediently moved her head an inch to the side and propped one booted foot on the bale of hay where she sat, a small, hopefully provocative smile on her face.

“Yes, yes, just right, perfect. Keep changing poses, doing what feels natural...right. That’s it. Good girl.”

The litany of encouraging phrases were punctuated by the continuous click of the camera, and she leaned forward, tossed her hair back, and deliberately exposed a pretty graphic view of her breasts since they were all but falling out of the barely there bikini top she wore anyway.

“I like that. Terrific. Don’t move. Just let me adjust the light, okay?” Andy, his long, fair hair caught back in a ponytail, his glasses always just a little crooked, hurried to adjust one of the lamps he’d brought. Victoria was amused to see he wore his usual costume of jeans so ragged a bony knee stuck out every time he crouched down, and his T-shirt had been washed until the logo of the rock band was no longer visible.

Some things never changed. Even back in high school he'd looked like a hippie throwback from the sixties. The barn was warm and smelled like summer between the scent of the hay, weathered wood, and the faintest hint of manure. One corner served as a makeshift photography studio, with the straw bales artistically stacked so she could perch on top of them and two sets of rolling lights.

"You doing okay? Need to take a break? Want a drink? It's warm in here."

"I'm not too warm," she said dryly, with one hand indicating what she wore. "Where did you get this suit anyway? An adult store?"

He pretended to look offended. "Hey, I paid a lot for it at one of your finer shops in Santa Fe. I think maybe I just underestimated the size of your...er...assets. Speaking as a healthy heterosexual adult male, take my word for it, you don't show them off often enough."

She liked to think she was comfortable enough with her body to not have to flaunt what she had or didn't have, so it was true. She dressed fairly conservatively. Maybe even ladylike.

What she was doing now wasn't ladylike *at all*.

She gave Andy a quelling look. "I get one hint of a leer, I'm through with all this, get it?"

This time the offended look was genuine. "I'm a professional, Tori. You're just another model when I pick up my camera. Now, let's make this the best damn shoot ever. Sit back a little and spread your legs. Make it sexy. You're gorgeous. Show me."

It took a little mental pep talk to comply, but she managed to follow the instructions for the next half hour or so, pouting into the camera, lying back with her hand on her thigh and one knee bent, her hair spilling off the edge of the less than comfortable bale of straw.

"What the hell is this?"

The interruption was jarring, and she looked over her shoulder from a bent pose with her ass pointed at the camera to see a man in the doorway of the barn, wearing an amused expression. His tall, lean body was silhouetted by the outside sunshine, his shirt half-

unbuttoned and damp with sweat, the sleeves rolled up to show off brawny forearms. He also had on jeans and dusty boots, and his dark hair was disheveled and waved back from a good-looking face that was all angles and chiseled lines.

This was some crappy luck. She thought Wade Preston was supposed to be out most of the day. In fact, she could swear Ross had told her his younger brother was working on fences at the south end of the ranch, and to quote him, “The job was a long son-of-a-bitch.”

She started to straighten, but Andy barked, “Don’t you dare move, Tori. This is a great shot.”

“I have to agree it’s an interesting view, but mind telling me why you’re taking pictures of my brother’s girlfriend’s ass, Kendall?” The metal in the bridle in Wade’s hand clinked as he moved to casually hang the tack on a peg on the wall.

Victoria was pretty sure she was past maidenly blushes at the age of twenty-four, but she was wrong. Wade always made her a little uncomfortable.

She mumbled, “He’s putting together a portfolio for a job opportunity, and I agreed to help out. No one is going to see these pictures except his potential boss, who shoots naked women all the time. Now, do you mind leaving?”

“This is half my barn,” Wade said, one dark brow going up in a slow, irritating lift.

In the half a year she’d been dating his brother, she and Wade hadn’t really formed any kind of friendship and it bothered her. Victoria couldn’t tell if he didn’t like her, didn’t trust her, or if he was just standoffish by nature.

Whatever it was, posing in a string bikini in front of Andy was bad enough. She felt naked—hell, she basically *was* naked—and though she wasn’t a prude, she wasn’t at ease, either.

“Andy,” Tori said with a warning note in her voice. They’d been friends since kindergarten. He got it right away.

“Mind helping me out by leaving, dude?” he asked Wade. “This job pays damn good. I need it if I’m going put that book together I told you about, and...hey, Jesus. Wait a minute.”

Victoria refused to stand there with her ass in plain view any longer, especially since Andy wasn’t shooting pictures but looking at Wade instead. She straightened and turned, folding her arms over her chest in an ineffectual attempt to cover quite a lot of bare skin.

“You, Preston,” Andy said thoughtfully, “are a good-looking guy. One might even say a *very* good-looking guy.”

The only saving grace in the entire embarrassing afternoon was that Wade’s outraged masculine expression was priceless. He said, “What the hell do you want me to say to that? Thanks? Sorry, but coming from another guy—”

“If I take in some pictures of a man and a woman, I might be able to pitch my book.” Andy’s voice took on an edge of unmistakable excitement. “The two of you would look great together, and this is perfect. I couldn’t order up the sweaty-off-the-range look any better. Would you mind taking off your shirt?”

* * * *

Wade Preston couldn’t decide if he should laugh or swear out loud. First of all, he was pretty sure his heart stopped beating when he walked into the barn a few minutes ago. Tori, bent over in a position he’d imagined her in a few too many times for comfort, was really a sight to see. Long legs, a firm, perfectly shaped ass, her slender arms braced on the hay bales as she looked over her shoulder with a coy smile. Long sun-streaked blond hair tumbled around her face, her features delicately beautiful—small nose, enormous dark blue eyes, high, perfect cheekbones, all model perfect—which was undoubtedly why Andy Kendall pressured her to pose for him.

She was wearing almost nothing, just a red and white checked bikini that was little more than some inadequate strands of material

stitched together, and her athletic body, so smooth and female, had an unfortunate impact on his senses.

Especially his sense of loyalty.

She was involved with Ross. If he had fantasies, well, they'd have to just stay his dirty little secret. He loved his brother. Unfortunately, he also loved his brother's girlfriend in a completely different way. That was one hell of a dilemma, he'd discovered. He and Ross had always been close.

He felt guilty, frustrated, and about one thousand other things every time he was around her.

"What?" he asked, forcing himself to focus on Andy's request with effort, his wayward thoughts jumbled by Victoria's presence in her *almost* bathing suit. "Why should I take off my shirt?"

Instead of answering, Kendall turned to Victoria. "Would you? We talked about doing this down the line, but Ross is always so busy and Wade is right here and everything is all set up. Why not just do it now?"

Would she what?

He didn't even realize he'd said it out loud.

"Not total nudity. I wouldn't ask that," Andy explained quickly in a persuasive tone, glancing at him, but his gaze going right back to Tori. "Just a few sexy shots. Upper torso bare, some touching. Not a big deal. I need shots of a couple."

Upper torso bare. Some touching. Yeah, that might just *be* a big deal.

"I'm not a male model." Wade affected a nonchalant shrug, but he had a grim feeling he didn't pull it off. "Sorry."

"Don't have to be. Stand around and look buff. Tori is who everyone will be staring at anyway."

"Comments like that don't make me more comfortable," she said, adjusting the strap on her top in a self-conscious mannerism. Her cheeks were stained a becoming pink.

“I’m just telling him he doesn’t have to have any special skills to do this.” Andrew looked back and forth between them earnestly. “This will be great, and you know what? If we do it this way, no one has to sit around and get nervous. There’s no thinking about it. Let’s just run with it and see how it goes.”

Wade opted for a pretty good out. “It just might,” he drawled, “piss my brother off.”

Victoria looked at him, her pretty blue eyes serious. “No,” she said with reluctant finality. “Ross and I talked about me posing naked, and he’s fine with it. I guess I will if you will. Andy’s right. I’m not much of an exhibitionist. Getting it over with holds some appeal.”

What was he supposed to say next?

Oh, that’s great, but see, I’ve got this thing for you that won’t go away, so maybe us half-naked together isn’t such a good idea.

“Go unbutton his shirt. Preston, all you have to do is watch her do it. Pretend I’m not even here.” Kendall jumped in with both feet, fiddling with his camera and assuming that any red-blooded male would be right on board. Which Wade *would* be, except, Jesus, what had he done in a past life to make fate torture his sorry ass this way?

A light sweat broke out all over his body as Victoria walked toward him, her breasts swaying just enough under the inadequate support of that skimpy top to make him look. Fuck. He *looked*.

“Ross was going to do this with me,” she explained, still looking adorably uncertain. “But Andy’s right. He’s so busy right now he can’t seem to find the time. Since you finished repairing the fence early, it’s nice of you to take his place.”

Well, that was the problem neatly summed up. He’d love to take his brother’s place. In her bed, cock in deep, those long, lovely legs wrapped around his waist. It made him an asshole, but he’d found, unfortunately, that telling himself to just get over it didn’t work. It had been love at first sight like he was sixteen and in the grip of an adolescent crush, not a twenty-five-year-old man who should have better sense, but it wouldn’t go away. He did his best to make himself

scarce when she was around based on the whole out of sight, out of mind theory, but he still thought about her. A lot.

All the time, if he was honest with himself.

Shit.

"I have chores," he mumbled, frozen as she actually reached for the buttons on his shirt. Reflexively, he caught her slim wrists.

"Half an hour," Andy said, already poised behind his camera. "Just give me a half an hour. Damn, that's a good shot already. Let me see more bare chest. This book is going to be an exposé on modern sexuality so look at her like you're thinking about getting laid, Wade."

Oh yeah, that'll be difficult.

"Too modest? Relax. I've seen you plenty enough times without your shirt. Aren't you the guy who wandered out for coffee in just his boxers the other morning?" Victoria lifted her brows with a small laugh, and he realized he still had her wrists trapped and let go, muttering an inner curse. It was true, she seemed to spend the night with increasing frequency as things got more serious between her and Ross, and he never knew when she might be there.

"That wasn't intentional," he said, trying to ignore the sweet scent of flowers drifting from her shining hair as she moved closer and began to unbutton his shirt. He was going to get an erection, damn it, he felt it happening already as her slender fingers deftly began to slip the buttons free. When she tugged the hem from the waistband of his jeans and reached up to push the shirt off his shoulders, her breasts actually brushed his bared skin.

"That's perfect." Andy moved around, crouched behind the fancy, high-tech camera he always seemed to have in his hands. "Stare at each other and think about sex."

"Or a cold beer," Victoria said facetiously, "if the sex thing doesn't work for you."

If she cared to press her hand to Wade's crotch, she might just find out the sex fantasy thing was doing just fine for him. He hoped

Andy didn't catch a nice shot of his bulge for his damned book because that wasn't how he wanted to be immortalized in print. Men had one distinct disadvantage and that was how impossible it was to hide sexual arousal.

His breath went in with a hiss as she actually touched him, placing her palm on his chest. "Nice pecs," she said and gazed up at him from under the fringe of her lashes with a slight smile. "Ross said you use that weight room the two of you put in. It looks like it."

Yes, that it was, remind him of Ross and how lusting after his girlfriend was all wrong. About how a decent brother wouldn't dream of touching her. "Repairing fences isn't a bad workout, either," he managed to mumble, the cool press of her hand on his skin making his cock swell to full mast. His balls actually tightened. "I might not smell too good. It's hard work."

He could use a shower. A long cold one, he had a dismal feeling, when this was over.

"Don't you know women go for the slightly sweaty cowboy look?" Victoria's smile deepened teasingly. "Dusty boots, a pair of jeans, and a hard, tanned chest. Nothing better."

God, her eyes were the most beautiful color of blue. Like the New Mexican sky at dawn as the sun began to rise and the darkness became tinged with indigo. "Is that so?" he murmured, doing his best to sound casual. If she was paying attention, she might figure out his heart was pounding like the hooves of a runaway horse at a flat out gallop.

"Get a little closer. Kiss her neck. One hand at her waist, maybe the other on her ass." Andy moved in a semi-circle like a crab, still crouched down. "I'm trying to get the right angle here. Remember, you're lovers and into it. Just do what comes naturally."

Kiss her neck. That graceful, sexy neck. He shouldn't.

Damn him straight to hell, he wanted to so fucking bad...

Wade obediently lowered his head and let his mouth drift across her temple first, just a brush of his lips as he lowered one hand to rest

at the dip of her slender waist. The other slipped around the back and found all bare skin because what she wore covered about nothing.

Pretend for a minute she isn't dating Ross. Pretend she's yours.

That was all too damn easy to do.

Wade nuzzled her neck right at the sensitive spot below her ear and felt the answering shiver of her body against him. Not good. He didn't need encouragement. Victoria theatrically ran her fingers through his hair and quivered again.

Heaven. And hell. He made love to her neck, lightly kissing, nibbling, trying to ignore his now throbbing erection.

"Excellent," Andy crooned. "Jesus, that's *perfect* with the hay bales in the background...take off her top, Wade. Let's hitch it up a notch."

It was proof positive he wasn't capable of rational thought that there was a part of him that was dying to see those gorgeous tits he'd dreamed of in secret. It was ironic he was also possessive enough to not want Andy Kendall to see them much, less have pictures of them handed over to some executive at a publishing company.

She claimed Ross was okay with this. The trouble was, as ludicrous as it might seem, Wade wasn't at all sure *he* was okay with it. Like he had any right to say a thing about it.

He lifted his head. "Only if Tori is convinced she wants to do this."

"I'm not sure at all," she muttered, but then sighed. "They are only breasts, right? Perfectly natural. Every woman has them. For that matter, they aren't particularly covered at the moment, anyway, so...fine, I guess. Take it off."

Chapter Two

It was an unexpected bonus to get home so early, and Ross Preston pulled down the long drive and guided his car carefully over the familiar potholes. Dealing with lawyers always set his teeth on edge, and he wasn't exactly thrilled with the outcome of the meeting he'd had that afternoon. Still, he had managed to get a firm maybe on the bid for the latest land acquisition, and around Santa Fe, where everyone in the world seemed to want to live now, that wasn't a small conquest.

What he needed after hours in a stuffy boardroom was a cold one on the back patio, a leisurely horseback ride at sunset, and to see Victoria. He checked his watch. She'd be at her office until five, so he'd have time to put the steaks he'd picked up in some marinade and maybe make a salad.

Except, beyond a doubt, that was her SUV parked in the drive, and it looked like, from the battered sedan, maybe Andy Kendall was there, too.

A good time to arrive early, he decided with a lazy grin. Andy was intent on a book on the dynamics of human sexuality. So much so, the guy had lined up to collaborate with two psychologists and a sex therapist for the text while he took the pictures. Ross had no idea if it would sell or not, but he did fully understand why Andy had cashed in on a long-term friendship with Victoria and asked her to pose.

Quite frankly, Tori was beyond gorgeous in a girl-next-door way. Blond, slim, slinky but still built, with an engaging smile and captivating blue eyes. Brains came with the package, too, as she was a stockbroker for one of the local firms.

How the hell had Ross gotten so lucky?

He wasn't sure.

To his surprise, the house was deserted. Ross strolled in, appreciative as always of the spectacular view out the floor-to-ceiling windows facing the vista of desert and mountains, and tugged off his tie. Suit coat went next, and then he stepped out of his shoes. The living room was still furnished on the sparse side, with a few bright Indian blankets on the walls, two leather couches, and a beehive fireplace in the corner. The tiled floor didn't have a rug yet because he'd put off buying one, and he and Wade needed to invest in some artwork, but in his opinion the view was main focus anyway. When Victoria moved in permanently, she could take over adding those cozy touches.

If she would agree to move in. He was debating on how to ask her. Over dinner at some expensive and hard-to-book restaurant? Maybe. He didn't want it to look like bribery either.

Wade's horse, he saw, arrested in the act of slipping off his leather belt, was in the corral. Where the heck was everyone?

Oh hell, that's right. Tori *had* told him Andy wanted to take a few shots of her today *a la natural*. Ross had agreed for several reasons, not the least of which was it wasn't decision to make. Her body, her choice, but it was a promising sign in their relationship that she'd bothered to ask him if he cared. Andy Kendall was a longtime friend of hers, he was hardly a threat, and quite frankly, Ross was proud of how gorgeous she was anyway.

Quickly he changed into a T-shirt and worn jeans, slipped on his boots, and walked out toward the barn, enjoying the warm June sunshine. The scent of sage was heavy in the crystal pure air, and he whistled under his breath.

Despite his current state of good humor, he wasn't quite ready for what he saw when he walked through the door. He went stock still just a step or two inside, registering that his younger brother, half-naked himself, had his arms around Victoria, who wore a thong bikini

bottom and absolutely noting else except a pair of crimson cowboy boots. Wade was behind her and had one hand on the flat plane of her stomach, the other cupping one beautifully shaped breast. The contrast of Wade's defined, tanned musculature and Victoria's soft, feminine body was stark, striking, and Kendall appeared to be taking pictures like mad, scooting around and barking out instructions.

"I see the party started without me," Ross said in an even tone, announcing his presence. "Am I interrupting?"

Victoria looked up, losing the sultry pose, her eyes lighting in a special way that humbled him every single damn time. At the same instant, his brother's dark head jerked up, and Wade let go of her so abruptly she almost lost her balance.

That was a bit telling, but not exactly a surprise. Ross wasn't blind. He'd noticed that even though Wade deliberately kept as much distance between them as possible, he wasn't indifferent to Tori. Quite the opposite. He was attracted to her—maybe a bit more than that—and quite frankly, Ross could hardly blame him since he agreed wholeheartedly.

"Not my idea," Wade said, eyeing him warily, his hands now hanging at his sides but his shoulders tense.

"But a great one just the same." Andy Kendall straightened and pointed. "Could you two go back to it, please? I'm getting some terrific pics here. You have great camera chemistry. Come on, just a few more."

"Ross is here now. He can step in." Wade shook his head, just the faintest hint of a flush on his face.

"If you all have is just a few more shots, I'll just watch," Ross said in a neutral tone, backing up to lean against the wall of the barn in a casual pose, arms crossed over his chest. "Don't mind me."

"Are you sure?" Victoria asked, her brows slightly lifted. "We agreed to pose together, but you're never home at the right time. When Wade finished early and Andy was already set up, we figured we'd just go ahead with it. If we'd known you would—"

“I’m sure.” He gave her a reassuring smile. “Why make Andy start over with a different couple? Wrap it up and maybe we can go for a late afternoon ride before dinner.”

Wade muttered something under his breath and reluctantly stepped back toward Victoria’s basically nude body, standing behind her and touching her waist with one hand, the other sliding back up her torso to once again cradle her breast as he nuzzled her neck. She closed her eyes in a pretty good imitation of enjoying the embrace, and Andy murmured encouragement. This went on for about fifteen more minutes, and Ross had to admit they did look good together, Victoria’s blond beauty setting off his brother’s dark good looks. Ross hadn’t been all that anxious to pose for the pictures, anyway, so this was fine with him.

Actually, to his surprise, it really *was* fine with him.

Go figure on that one. He would have thought seeing another man touch his girlfriend’s breasts and rest his hand on her inner thigh would bother the shit out of him, but because it was Wade, it didn’t. His younger brother was more than just a good guy. He was Ross’s best friend and business partner. They’d bought the ranch together, and Wade did all the work around the place while Ross kept his job as a corporate accountant until they could start breeding and selling horses as a full-time venture.

“Okay, I think I have enough.” Andy checked his camera, obviously scanning through the pictures, his expression elated. “These are really good, if I do say so myself, kids. I can’t wait to get to touching them up and printing. I’ll come back tomorrow for the lights.”

He left with almost comical haste, the rumble of the engine on his old car coming clearly even as Victoria grabbed a T-shirt and shorts that were sitting on one the hay bales and slipped into both. With the camera gone, she now seemed embarrassed, and Wade maybe even looked more uncomfortable than she did.

Hell, he probably *was* uncomfortable as hell in a literal physical sense because if Ross had to guess, his younger brother had a raging hard-on from his deliberately averted posture.

To his surprise, he was a little aroused himself. He liked a good soft porn flick now and then as much as the next man, but he'd never considered that it would be a turn-on to see his girlfriend with someone else. Their sex life was the best he'd ever had with anyone he was involved with, mostly because of how he felt about her, but also due to the fact she was equally as into it. With her wholesome girl-next-door looks, he expected somehow for her to be shy when they'd finally slept together, and she had been, but was really warming up in bed. She liked sex, and her uninhibited response definitely enhanced the experience.

"You want to saddle the horses while I run up to the house and change?" she asked. "It's a gorgeous afternoon and a ride sounds perfect."

"Will do." He caught her hand and tugged her toward him before she could leave, giving her a soft kiss on the lips. "It was nice of you to do that for Andy."

"Yeah, well, I don't think nude modeling is going to be my new career, but I hope it helps him. I'll be right back."

He watched her hurry out of the barn, then turned to Wade, who had picked up some of the hay bales and started to stack them back the way they should be.

"Good of you to help out, too," Ross commented.

"They didn't give me much of a choice."

He lifted his brows sardonically at the curt response. "I know firsthand fondling those pretty tits isn't a hardship, so don't sound too put out, little brother."

"I was specifically *told* to touch her that way." Wade didn't quite meet his eye and reached for his shirt.

"I'm just saying I can't blame you much for enjoying it."

"I..."

Ross waited for him to finish, more than a little amused at his brother's discomfort.

"I'm dusty, tired, and need a beer plus a shower," Wade muttered finally. "You two have a nice ride."

He left, his stride long, dust puffing up from under his boots when he hit the path up to the house. Ross moved toward the tack room to get the bridles and saddles, wondering if it was a good thing, or a bad one, that the afternoon had turned out like it did. So far Wade had handled his attraction to Victoria by keeping his distance, often only offering the minimum courtesy of a polite hello or good-bye and getting the hell out of the vicinity the minute she was around.

If they were all going to live together, that needed to be addressed in some way. He hadn't told his brother yet he was going to ask her to move in, and it was only fair to Wade to give him a vote. The house was half his, after all, but the more Ross thought about it, the more he wanted Victoria there all the time.

As things stood, he was pretty sure his brother would say no to the idea. How to fix the problem was the real question.

* * * *

A lovely long trail ride, a spiky brilliant sunset that turned the mountains from pink to crimson to a deep gold, and an intimate dinner on the flagstone porch behind the house, complete with crusty, medium rare steaks and a nice bottle of merlot, all made for a very romantic evening.

Except that Ross was preoccupied. Not too visibly so, but enough that Victoria noticed the distraction. As she sipped her glass of wine, she regarded him over the rim. In profile, his handsome face wore a faint frown.

"You aren't bothered by this afternoon, are you?" she finally asked bluntly. "You seem pretty quiet."

"Bothered?"

“About the photo shoot.” She would always rather talk things out right away if possible. Maybe she shouldn’t have posed with Wade. *He* certainly hadn’t acted all that enthusiastic about it.

But he had warmed up to the idea in one really obvious way, and Victoria didn’t know what to think. With her nearly bare bottom nestled against his groin, she’d felt his erection. In the past six months, she’d worried about how to get Ross’s younger brother to warm up to her. Naked apparently worked, she thought wryly, but was it just a physical reaction to a nude woman, or was it her?

To her chagrin, it hadn’t been all one-sided, either. The gentle, sensuous feel of his warm mouth on her neck and the touch of his hand had caused a few traitorous thoughts to cross her mind, and she now had an uncomfortable sense of guilt about the whole episode.

“Bothered a little, but not how you mean.” Sprawled in a deck chair, his long legs extended, Ross lifted his brows.

“And what do I mean?” she asked cautiously.

“Was I jealous? No.”

Yes, that was exactly what she meant. She relaxed, not realizing how tightly she was holding the fragile stem of the wine glass. “I have a small problem, and I’m trying to figure out how to solve it, that’s all.”

Victoria studied him, wondering what the hell that enigmatic comment meant. She loved his face, the bone structure masculine yet almost what she could term elegant, with high cheekbones, arched dark brows, and a straight nose. His eyes were midnight dark, his skin holding a perpetual tan because he loved to be outside, and his thick hair held the slightest wave. Good looks aside, she also was drawn to the man himself because he was as nice as he was good-looking and that was saying something. Considerate, intelligent, fun to be around, but also confident enough to allow her some space when she needed it. They didn’t agree on everything, but he was okay with it when they didn’t. Ross was the quintessential example of a man comfortable in his own skin, and he never tried to prove anything to anyone.

She'd fallen in love with him in about five minutes flat after they met at a cookout at a friend's house six months before.

"I can't help if you don't explain." She moved to refill her wine glass. It was Friday night, she knew she'd be staying over so she didn't have to worry about driving home, and the merlot was excellent. "You were bothered but not jealous. I confess I'm a little confused."

"Wade has a crush on you." Ross made a face. "Okay, that sounds stupid. He's twenty-five, so crush isn't the appropriate word. He has a thing for you. It bothers him, but he's definitely the stay-out-of-my-face type, and I can't figure out how to talk to him about it. Or if I even should. It isn't bugging *me*, except to the extent it *is* bugging *him*."

Victoria sat up in her chair. If it wasn't for what happened earlier, she would have laughed in complete disbelief. "He'll barely speak to me."

"Exactly. Why do you think that is?"

"I thought he didn't like me. It has been bothering me for months."

"Trust me, he more than likes you. And it has been bothering *him* for months."

She admitted, "Maybe this afternoon wasn't the best idea then."

"Yeah, well, maybe, maybe not. I can't decide if I want to bring this subject up so he and I can at least talk about it." Ross stood in an athletic movement and held out his hand. "In the meantime, what do you say we move this party inside? It's getting cool out here. We can finish our wine, listen to some music, and I'll build a fire, if you like."

It was true, at this elevation, once the sun went down it got chilly pretty fast. Victoria let him pull her to her feet. "That sounds romantic."

Ross looked into her eyes. "If you want romantic, we could skip the fire and finish our wine in bed." He leaned in close and his mouth brushed her ear. "After."

A tingle of anticipation shot through her, and her breasts tightened. They had great chemistry in bed, and though she'd never before thought of herself as adventurous in the sex department, she trusted Ross so much it was different with him. "I hope you aren't assuming I'm going to sleep with you, Mr. Preston," she said teasingly, resting her free hand on one muscled shoulder.

"Hmm," he said, and nibbled on her neck.

It felt delicious but unfortunately reminded her of Wade and earlier in the afternoon. A very real part of her couldn't believe she'd posed essentially naked in front of two men—or three if she counted Ross. She wasn't a prude, but she was a pretty private person. If this book idea flew, the pictures might even be published. At least it wasn't some cheesy magazine but supposed to be artistic and more about the dynamics of human sexuality and the beauty of love. In retrospect—with the current revelation, especially—she wished she had refused to let Wade stand in for Ross for those damned book shots Andy wanted so badly. She could still feel the light sensation of Wade's long fingers, slightly calloused from working with the horses every day, cupping her breast and the warm press of his mouth on her neck.

Unfortunately, she had the sinking feeling now she and Wade would be even more awkward with each other. He hadn't stayed for dinner but muttered something about meeting one of his buddies in town and left almost the minute they returned from their ride. That was pretty standard procedure for whenever she stayed over.

"I'll carry the wine," Ross said, letting her go and picking up the bottle and his glass, "if you'll just grab the door."

Obediently, she crossed the flagstone patio and opened the French door that led into the kitchen. He was right. The pleasant evening was transitioning into a cold, crisp Western night.

"Fire or bed?" he asked, one brow lifted, a faint smile on his mouth.

“Can’t I have both?” Victoria asked. “We can sleep in tomorrow, and it’s still a little early.”

“You can have whatever you want with me, sweetheart. Remember that.”

The seriousness in his voice rendered her speechless, but she didn’t have to respond because he walked out of the open kitchen, set the wine on the coffee table, and then went over to kneel by the fireplace. She settled on one of the comfortable leather couches and tucked her feet under her, wineglass in hand as she watched him deftly bank the logs he took from the built-in spot for them in the adobe wall, add kindling, and scrape a match. The blaze caught in a minute or two, the wood snapping.

“I love the smell of pinyon burning,” Victoria murmured when Ross joined her on the couch and comfortably settled his arm around her shoulders.

“Nice fire, good wine, a beautiful woman...what more could a man want?” He did look relaxed, which was nice. His job tended to be stressful, and sometimes it took him a while to decompress.

“Hot sex?” she supplied with a laugh. “Just an educated guess here.”

“Wrong.”

“Really?”

“Yep. *Very* hot sex.” He gave her a wicked wink.

“I’ll see what I can do.”

His mouth brushed her temple, and his warm breath sent a pleasant shiver through her body. “That sounds promising. Do you have something special in mind?”

“Hmm. I’ll have to think on it.” He smelled fantastic, like sage and fresh air with a hint of Ross mixed in.

“Fair enough. In the meantime, care to make out on the couch in front of the fire?”

His smile was one of the first things she’d noticed about him. Slow and so damned attractive. Even when he wore one of his

designer suits she was reminded of a handsome cowboy because there was just a hint of untamed male in it.

The rhythm of her heartbeat increased, and her breasts tightened. “I might be persuaded into a kiss or two.”

Dark eyes gleamed and his voice deepened. “Where? Here?” Long fingers skimmed her lips and then traced a path downward over the curve of one breast, lightly toying with her nipple through her blouse. “Or here?” Without waiting for her answer, Ross cupped his hand between her thighs. “Or here?”

“All three might be nice,” she said, the sudden heat and dampness between her legs undeniable.

“Feeling adventurous tonight, Tori?” He rubbed seductively, putting pressure on her clit through her jeans and underwear.

She sucked in a breath because it felt so good. “Maybe.”

“Just what I wanted to hear,” he said before he leaned forward and claimed her mouth in a hot, demanding kiss, his fingers already busy with the top button on her pants.

“Bedroom,” she murmured against his lips.

“Later,” he answered.

Chapter Three

Wade parked his truck down by the barn, going inside to check on the one mare they had about to drop her foal. She looked fine, contentedly taking the apple he'd brought her, swishing her tail.

"Not a momma tonight, Chica," he told her, rubbing affectionately between her ears. "But I'm thinking maybe tomorrow." He left her with a small, reassuring pat on the rump and walked up to the house, his hands shoved into the back pockets of his jeans. He took his time, strolling along. It was cool now, and he could smell the tang of a fire. A part of him wished it was later because he imagined Ross and Victoria were still enjoying cozy conversation and a drink or two in the living room, but the friends he'd met for dinner had wanted to see a movie he had absolutely no interest in, and truth was he was pretty damned tired from rebuilding that fence.

Then there was the little matter of holding Victoria's bare breast in his hand earlier in the day. Why the hell did that have to happen anyway? To his dying day he'd remember the smooth, firm weight of it cradled in his palm, the silk of her skin under his mouth, the satin texture of her hair against his cheek...

Jesus. He'd been bad off before, and what were things going to be like now? When he'd walked up to the house after that little photo shoot, he'd been literally shaking like a dead leaf in a high wind. It wasn't just seeing her without her clothes on or touching her like a lover either, because the worst of it might her personality. Sweet enough to help out Andy because they were friends, even-tempered, had a great sense of humor, didn't play games...she and Ross hadn't ever even had a fight that he was aware of, and she also had the one

thing Wade considered to be most sexy of all in a woman, and that was brains.

Nice, pretty, perfect body, and smart.

Dating your brother, a mocking voice reminded him.

Son of a bitch. He didn't want to see her. Yet he *did* want to see her.

This situation sucked.

The adobe house had a Spanish style portico across the entire front of it, and he stepped into the coolness of the shadowed overhang, pausing with his hand on the door, listening for the sound of voices inside. Nothing. Good, maybe they were already in Ross's bedroom. At least that would save him from having to mumble something moronic in an attempt to be polite.

He opened the door, walked in about five steps, and froze.

They were not in Ross's bedroom but instead on one of the angled couches arranged to best see the spectacular view of the mountains and still enjoy the fireplace. The room was dark, but with the fire built up enough he had a clear view. Clothes were strewn across the floor. Jeans, a blouse, and God help him, a pair of black lace panties...

Victoria was naked, half reclined against one of the arm rests, eyes closed, her delicious breasts quivering with each shuddered breath. Her knees were bent and apart, Ross's dark head between her open legs. His brother was wearing only jeans, barefoot, his lean body prone as he moved his mouth against her pussy.

She moaned, the sound slicing right through Wade, and as both of them seemed to be concentrating on her obviously approaching orgasm, it didn't seem either of them noticed he had walked into the room.

Even if he was sentenced straight to an express ride to hell, Wade found he couldn't leave to save his life, riveted to the spot like his boots had been nailed to the floor.

Her fingers curled into Ross's hair, and she arched, panting, her blond hair spilling over the dark leather in a shining gold curtain. A

small cry rang out as she came, her slender body tensing, her skin taking on the telltale pink flush of sexual release.

Beautiful. It was all he could think, but then again, he was surprised he could think at all because every drop of blood in his body had rushed to his prick. That wayward part of his anatomy hardened faster than he ever remembered.

How to escape gracefully was a real problem at the moment, for not only did Ross murmur something and lift up to kiss the plane of her stomach, but Victoria opened her eyes. Limp in the aftermath of her climax, her head was tilted in Wade's direction, and the dreamy look of contentment on her face was suddenly replaced by a startled realization of his presence. His brother noticed him standing there at the same time, levering himself up on the couch and running his hand through his already disheveled hair.

"Whoops."

Wade cleared his throat. "Yeah, you guys might want to use the bedroom next time."

"You're home earlier than we expected."

"Sorry." And what he wished—what he *really* wished—was that at this point he could just negligently stroll away as if none of it bothered him. In college, where there wasn't a lot of privacy available, he'd walked in on his roommates before with their girlfriends. Maybe not in quite so graphic a position, but he'd certainly been in the room before and heard the sounds that indicated what might be going on, but he'd just ignored it and gone back to sleep.

Of course, none of those girls had been Victoria.

This was not at all the same. Goddamn it, he wanted to feel the same amused indifference, but he just...*didn't*.

"This is your house. You don't have to be sorry." Victoria said in a strangled voice, "Ross, hand me your shirt or something."

“Why?” His brother didn’t move. “I’m willing to bet my half of this ranch that Wade’s really admiring the view. Remember our earlier conversation about him?”

What conversation? Wade had managed to turn his leaden feet to leave, but he halted, giving his brother a sharp look. He’d wondered more than once if Ross didn’t sense how he felt about Victoria. His older brother had even asked him about it in a roundabout way once, but he’d just been evasive because he was guilty as charged.

Victoria didn’t say anything, just stared at Ross, who reached out to circle one perfect pink nipple with a fingertip. “How,” he asked in a husky voice, “adventurous are you feeling, Tori?”

“Ross!” Her gaze flicked back to where Wade stood. It about did him in when she whispered, “You can’t be serious.”

* * * *

This was a risk, but then again, the old adage “nothing ventured, nothing gained” seemed appropriate. The more Ross thought about it, the more sense it made to him, but it needed to make sense to Victoria.

Damn, she was so gorgeous with her honey-colored hair around her shoulders and that kickass body sprawled naked next to him. But as good as the sex was, he’d enjoyed just as much the conversation over they’d had over dinner, and every time she laughed or just looked at him his heart tripped over itself. This wasn’t just about sex.

Ross knew he was in love with her. Deeply. It was different from anything he’d ever felt for a woman before.

The trouble was, Wade was involved, too, and he knew his younger brother. He didn’t do anything halfway. He’d always been that way—all or nothing.

Two brothers into the same woman spelled trouble usually, but in their case, did it have to?

It seemed a simple equation. Victoria enjoyed sex, so shouldn't two lovers be better than one? Wade was obviously dying to fuck her, though he was too old-fashioned to ever put it that way, but Ross had seen the look on his brother's face a moment ago. As for himself, it was a double bonus if she agreed because not only did he find the idea of watching sexy as hell, but it solved the very real problem of getting Wade to agree to ask her to move in.

It was unconventional maybe, but as long as there was no jealousy involved, Ross had come to the conclusion that what they did was their own business.

"What exactly are you asking?" Victoria's smooth skin still held a flush from her recent orgasm, and beneath his light touch, her body quivered.

He knew her pretty well after seven months, and there was a flare of excitement in her beautiful eyes he didn't miss. "Ever thought about it?" he asked without explaining because he guessed she understood perfectly what he was suggesting. "I would think every woman might have *that* secret fantasy. This is all about you, Tori. I know you find him attractive." "Of course I do. He looks almost exactly like you," she retorted, but she hadn't done a thing to cover her nudity.

Yeah, she'd thought about it.

"I happen to be standing right here," Wade interjected into the conversation. But, Ross noticed, his brother hadn't left the room, either.

"It wouldn't make me jealous," he told her, leaning forward to touch her smooth cheek and looking into those midnight blue eyes. "I promise. Anyone else, yes, but not Wade."

"I—"

"When I saw the two of you together in the barn, it turned me on," he admitted bluntly.

Her eyes widened. Was she just startled or intrigued?

"It turned me on, too," Wade said in a voice that was a trifle thick. He stood in the same spot, statue still, his gaze fastened on Victoria's face. "I'm going to guess you noticed."

"I noticed," she confessed, the two of them exchanging a telling look. The chemistry wasn't just on camera.

And no refusal, Ross noted. Persuasively, he murmured, "But nice girls don't sleep with two men, is that the problem? First of all, no one but the three of us will ever know, and second, who says they don't? Nice girls just don't talk about it or do it indiscriminately."

Then Wade sealed the deal. He said with raw but obvious honesty, "I fell in love with you the minute I saw you, Tori. The problem was, of course, I only met you because Ross wanted to introduce me to his new girlfriend. I've spent the better part of a year feeling like the world's biggest asshole, but I've found there are some things you just can't control."

Heart on his sleeve, yep, that was his younger brother.

Victoria gazed at him with a poignant expression on her face. "I had no idea. I thought you didn't even like me. If Ross hadn't told me earlier...well..." She trailed off.

"How long have *you* known?" Wade asked him.

"Since day one," Ross admitted. "I just wasn't sure how to handle it. That is, until now."

Both of them looked at Victoria.

"Don't do anything you aren't comfortable with, Tori," Wade still didn't move.

Ross did. He stood and reached down to scoop her up against his chest, the seductive, warm weight of her in his arms making his already rock hard erection pulse in time with the beat of his heart.

"Can we continue this discussion in my bedroom?"

"Yes," she said, slipping an arm around his neck.

Yes.

"All three of us?" He wanted to be clear on just what she was agreeing to.

“If you’re sure.” She blushed but didn’t look away.
“Oh, yeah.”

Chapter Four

It was obvious she'd lost her mind, Victoria decided, and if a person was crazy, well...

They did crazy things. Like agreeing to sleep with two men at the same time.

Two gorgeous, sexy, men—she corrected inwardly as she watched Wade strip off his T-shirt and reveal that nicely muscled chest and taut stomach—who both actually happened to be *nice* guys.

And both of them claimed to be in love with her.

Taking that into consideration, was there a woman on the planet who would disagree with what she was doing?

Well, yes. Her mother for one.

Now was not the time to think about *that*. Maybe it was the wine. Could she blame the merlot for her astonishing decision? Because she didn't think she'd ever be the kind of woman who would want to...

"You are so beautiful." Ross, his erection high and prominent against his stomach, joined her on the bed. His hand smoothed her shoulder and then cupped a breast as he bent his head. The sensation of his mouth gently sucking her nipple made her eyes close, but she opened them at once again as the mattress dipped on the other side of her.

"I agree," Wade whispered in her ear and captured the other breast in his palm, his thumb gently rubbing the taut crest in a way that tingles straight downward between her legs.

No, really, she wasn't about to do this, was she?

Wade had the kind of hard body that showed he worked outdoors ninety percent of the time. Sculpted biceps, toned abs, defined pecs,

and a burnished tan to go with it along with all that gorgeously tousled raven hair. His rare smile also was something to behold, lighting up a room. She'd been asked by more than one of her friends if there was any possibility of getting set up with Ross's younger brother, and in retrospect, Victoria had to wonder if her reluctance had more to do with her personal attraction to him than anything else. She'd always explained he was on the shy side, but he wasn't really. He just tended to be quiet unless he had something to say.

I fell in love with you...

Ross was a thoughtful, passionate lover, but he really was more urbane and polished. Wade, on the other hand, took the strong, rugged, silent type to a whole new level. His declaration didn't just sound heartfelt, she had a feeling it really *was* heartfelt.

Processing the implication of an involvement with two men who just happened to be brothers was going to be an interesting lesson in self-introspection, but at the moment, she couldn't think at all because the way they touched her felt...incredible. She was languid, yet needy. When Wade lowered his head to touch his mouth to hers in a very sexy, very passionate first kiss while Ross slipped his hand between her legs and began to stroke her very wet pussy, she moaned.

Her entire life she'd thought of herself as conservative, but she had to admit it was incredible, and the forbidden aspect of it was part of the excitement.

"Condom?" Wade asked her, nibbling along the curve of her cheek, his breath warm and tantalizing. "I really need you, and I promise I'm perfectly healthy, but—"

"Pill," she interrupted breathlessly as Ross removed those skilled fingers and she felt a sense of loss.

Not for long. Wade shifted over her, his knees nudged her legs even farther apart, and he looked at her with those incredible dark eyes as the swollen tip of his hard cock pressed against her vaginal opening.

“Good. I want to feel this in every way possible. I’ve imagined it too many times to not want it to be perfect.”

The slow, sure pressure of his entry made her eyes drift shut, and as his cock filled her inch by inch, Victoria clasped his shoulders, arching up shamelessly to take as much as possible until his lean hips rested against her open thighs. He began to move with urgent and unrestrained need, and he kissed her, sometimes softly, but also deeper and hot, too, with his tongue and lips insistent.

She had to admit it drove her wild, and the uneven sound of Ross’s breathing as he watched them made her even hotter.

It was the fastest orgasm of her life, part of it due to how aroused she was by Ross before Wade walked in on them, so they both deserved credit for it. She shuddered at the acute ecstasy of her climax as it hit her like a summer storm. Wild, ungovernable, her inner muscles clenched around his thrusting penis as pleasure rolled over her in scorching erotic waves.

“Jesus,” Wade hissed through his teeth, but he didn’t stop until she came again just moments later. Only then did he go still and tense, the pulse of his ejaculation accompanied by the ragged exhale of her name as he groaned and dropped his face into her outspread hair.

It was only the beginning.

When Wade rolled off her finally to sprawl on his back, his broad chest lifting rapidly, Ross playfully tapped her on the shoulder. “Remember me?”

“Vaguely,” she managed to say on a weak laugh. “I am not sure I even know who *I* am right now.”

“Let me remind you,” he said with a teasing grin, his hand smoothing her hip. “You are the most gorgeous, sensuous woman on the planet. Isn’t that right, Wade?”

“Absolutely.”

Ross teased her collarbone with his mouth, just grazing the skin with his teeth, nipping up the curve of her throat. “I had fun watching, but I know from experience doing is even better.” His erection pulsed

against her hip, and Victoria was surprised to realize even in her sated state she shifted toward him, pressing against the length of his hard cock. She might not be quite ready for sex again at the moment, but she could drive him crazy another way, and it was unexpectedly arousing to think of doing it in front of Wade.

Very arousing. What was up with that? Maybe it was the wicked exhilaration of how she already crossed a line she never dreamed she'd ever cross. The two naked men on either side of her were irrefutable evidence of her erotic journey into uncharted territory.

In one swift movement she rose to her knees, using her hands on his shoulders to urge Ross to his back. She'd never been big on giving blow jobs, and he hadn't pressured her, either, but since this might garner an award as the most reckless evening of her life, why not?

His cock rose, hard and long, against his taut stomach, and he reclined against the pillows of the bed, his eyes heavy-lidded as he watched her take a fingertip and wipe a bead of semen from the shiny tip of his erection. Out of the corner of her eye she could see Wade watched them, his tall body relaxed and his arousal still impressive, even half-softened by his recent release.

She licked her finger in a long slow slide of tongue on flesh, tasting the salty essence of his sperm.

One of them gave a low groan. She wasn't sure which.

Victoria leaned over and took the head of Ross's cock in her mouth, circling her tongue on the smooth crest. His breath went out in a low hiss, and his fingers sank into her hair as she began to suck, her fingers curling around the base, gently squeezing.

This time the groan definitely came from Ross. "Oh...babe..."

She continued, her hair brushing his stomach as she slid her mouth up and down the hard length of flesh, her fingers working as her tongue teased and swirled, testing the slit at the crest, exploring the contours and shape of his cock until the sound of his respiration grew ragged and uneven.

“I think you’d better stop.” Long fingers tugged at her hair. “I’m going to come. Jesus, Tori.”

In response—to her own surprise—she stroked his balls and kept going until he made an inarticulate sound and the hot rush of his orgasmic release filled her mouth.

Count that as outrageous, never-done-it-before act two of the evening.

* * * *

Wade touched her...everywhere. He felt like a child with a new toy—like he’d been given a coveted gift and was filled with wonder.

He *was* filled with wonder, actually, and some measure of disbelief he’d gotten so damned lucky. He’d always been a breast man, and Victoria’s centerfold tits were the perfect combination of firm and soft, of full yet not heavy, with luscious rose-colored nipples. He lightly skimmed the tip of one, gratified when it tightened to a hard point.

“I could play with these all night.”

On her side next to him, her supple body relaxed, Victoria looked half asleep. “Hmm...it’s nice on this end, too.”

“I can do even better.”

That opened her eyes. “Is that so?”

“Yep.” Her sexuality fascinated him, no doubt about it. He’d never made love to a woman who enjoyed it with such unabashed enthusiasm.

Ross had fallen asleep, nude and tranquil, and who could blame him after the blow job of the century. Wade knew full well the male of the human species was a creature stimulated by visual images, but he hadn’t expected to enjoy watching the woman of his dreams suck someone else off, but it was undeniable he had. He was hard again, his dick throbbing and so rigid he ached, and unless the tantalizing

woman lying next to him objected, he'd very much like to make passionate love to her again.

"Sounds promising," she said in a light teasing voice, her midnight blue eyes holding his gaze. "I have this thing, you know, for hunky cowboys."

He rolled in one lithe move on top of her slender body and did his best impression of a Western drawl. "If you'd oblige me by spreading your legs, ma'am, I'd like to take you on a little ride."

Her pussy was warm, soft, and exquisitely tight, and as he sank in all the way to his balls, Wade told himself paradise did, in fact, exist.

He whispered, "This feels so fucking good."

"I agree." Her hands rubbed his shoulders, and her eyes drifted shut.

He moved, and she moved with him in an erotic rhythm that made him grit his teeth and concentrate on not ejaculating too soon like an adolescent on his prom date, but when she arched and whispered his name, her inner muscles clenching, he lost it. His orgasm was so intense the world went blank as the pleasure shook him, and he didn't drift back until a few long heartbeats later.

She was incredible, was his first coherent thought. Everything he thought she'd be and more, but there still was the interesting problem of how the hell they were supposed to deal with this interesting development.

Sex was only part of this triangle. One corporate accountant, one beautiful stockbroker, and one handyman slash cowhand. It might make an interesting title for an erotic book, but how did it work in real life?

Wade kept his weight balanced on his elbows and relished the light fragrance of her hair against his cheek and the soft feel of her beneath him.

Tomorrow.

He'd have to analyze all of this tomorrow. He imagined they all would.

Chapter Five

Holy crap.

Ross wished he could come up with more poetic phraseology, but holy crap seemed appropriate to the moment.

The night before *had* happened.

The room was bathed in a soft, summer light, and a glance at the clock revealed it was well past eight o'clock. Next to him Victoria still slept, her blond hair spilled over the pillow, her lashes like lacy fans against her cheeks. Wade, on the other hand, was already gone, which wasn't surprising because he usually got up at sunrise.

Very briefly, Ross contemplated waking Victoria in the most pleasant way possible but decided against it for two reasons. She liked to sleep in and she worked hard all week and deserved it. Besides, he had a feeling he needed to talk to his brother alone.

Quietly, he eased out of bed and dressed, pulling on his jeans and a T-shirt, padding barefoot into the kitchen. There was coffee made, he saw with true gratitude, and he drank a cup black, gazing at the mountains with one shoulder against the doorframe. Then he pulled on his boots and headed for the barn. Wade was there, wielding a pitchfork as he tossed hay into one of the stalls. He glanced up as Ross came in, saying in a neutral voice, "I think Chica will drop her foal today. I called Doc Peters."

The horses were important—it was why they'd bought the ranch—but there were other issues to get out in the open that were more immediate.

"That's good news but not really why I came looking for you." He added quietly, "Tori is still sleeping."

Wade didn't pretend to misunderstand and he lifted a brow. "I can't imagine why. I kept her up half the night, but then again, she kept me *up*, too."

"I noted your enthusiasm."

"Probably hard to miss."

"Want to talk?"

Wade's smile was wry. "I'm guessing we should."

"I think so."

His brother gestured at a hay bale. "Have a seat in my office."

Ross smothered a laugh. "Much better than my square box on the fifth floor of the bank building, though I do concede they gave me a nice view of the mountains."

"Everywhere in Santa Fe has a nice view of the mountains."

"True enough, but let's skip more discussion about the general scenery and get right down to it. I want to ask Tori if she'd like to move in. I've been thinking about it for the past few months but was worried it would just make you more miserable. Last night changes everything."

"I didn't realize it was that obvious how I felt about her." Wade looked rueful and rubbed his jaw with a gloved hand, leaving a smudge.

"To me, yes, but then again, I know you pretty damn well. Now, tell me, what do you think?"

"I think a lot is going to depend on how Tori feels about what happened in the light of day. Was it just a sexually adventurous impulse that she's going to regret? That's what worries me. I know she isn't the promiscuous type, and sleeping with two men on a regular basis isn't exactly conventional."

Ross had really thought this over, and now he was more convinced than ever it could really work out. "Who the hell has to know what happens behind closed doors except the three of us? It is perfectly logical for Tori to move in with me. We've been dating long enough. You live here and you're my brother. No one is going to

think anything of it. The main reason I hadn't already asked her was you, and that problem, if what I saw last night is any indication, is solved."

"You weren't jealous, Ross?" Wade's gaze was straightforward. "I mean you've got to be not just honest with me on this, but with yourself. My feelings for Victoria exist, but you're my brother and you and I are closer than most. I don't want anything to ruin it." Ross smiled. "Tell me this. Have you been jealous of me all along? Pissed I had her and you didn't?"

"No." Wade shook his head immediately, and a thoughtful expression crossed his face. "Why the hell would I be pissed at you? More like ticked off at myself for being interested in your girlfriend. I've been glad all along she makes you happy."

"There you go." Ross spread his hands. "That's it in a nutshell. Now, what do you think about asking her to move in?"

A slow smile curved his brother's mouth. "That it's the best damn idea you've ever had."

* * * *

Stepping out of the shower, Victoria gave the image in the mirror a wry smile as she towel dried her hair. Funny, the woman reflected there didn't look any different. Same nose, same chin, same blue eyes.

Good, maybe everyone wouldn't be able to just look at her and *know*.

The only trouble was, *she* knew.

In spite of Ross teasing her about the fantasy of having two men—no, strike that, two deliciously sexy, gorgeous men—make love to her, she hadn't ever imagined herself in that scenario, much less with two brothers.

Maybe she should feel like a slut, but she just...didn't. Neither Wade nor Ross thought of what happened that way—she knew it—

and so instead of being tawdry and taboo, it had just been one of the most satisfying, exciting nights of her life.

Glad she had gotten into the habit of leaving some clothes in his closet and cosmetics in the bathroom off of Ross's bedroom, she finished getting dressed. She slipped into a pair of shorts and a sleeveless silk top in a pale pink shade, applying little more than some light powder, a hint of mascara and some lip gloss.

The house was quiet, so both of them were probably in the barn. Victoria helped herself to a cup of coffee, always amazed at how, for a pair of bachelors, the place was tidy, the counters neatly wiped clean, dishes put away, trash emptied. Though, she had to admit, the contents of the refrigerator never failed to make her laugh. Several different types of beer, a jug of outdated milk, at least four opened jars of salsa—all hot—and assorted condiments. Nothing else but empty shelves.

"We need to go to the grocery, I know, but damn, I hate that chore. I'd rather muck out a stall than push a cart down the frozen food aisle."

The sound of the voice behind her made her turn around, almost spilling her coffee. Wade slid open the screen and stepped into the room with his slow, sure stride, his dark eyes intent. He smiled.

"Good morning."

That smile...

"Good morning." No way could any living, breathing female on this green earth resist that mesmerizing smile. It did interesting things to the pit of her stomach. Ross strolled in behind him, dressed for the weekend ranch workday in a denim shirt and worn jeans, his dark hair attractively ruffled from the breeze outside. "Sleep well?"

Considering they'd slept with her, the question was unnecessary, and something about the way both of them looked at her made her a little wary. A sort of expectancy, maybe, she wasn't quite sure. At least facing them in the light of day wasn't quite as embarrassing as

she'd thought it might be when she'd first woken up and taken stock of what happened the night before.

"We need to talk to you," Ross said, his handsome face bland.

"Actually, I'm going to let you do the talking, Ross. Here's my contribution to the discussion." Wade took the few steps to where she still stood by the refrigerator, gently removed the coffee cup from her hand and set it on the counter, then pulled her into his arms. His mouth came down to cover hers in a long, hot kiss, his tongue rubbing against hers persuasively, his hands cupping her ass so she was nestled very firmly against his groin. When he let her go she could hardly breathe, and it wasn't just from lack of air, either.

The man really, really knew how to kiss.

He winked at her. "Just so you know where I stand on the matter. I'm heading back to keep an eye out for our four-legged bundle of joy."

Wade, usually so subdued and standoffish, just *winked* at her. More than that, he left whistling. Ross must have noticed her expression because he laughed and said, "He's in one hell of a good mood. Wonder why?"

She'd blushed more in the past twenty-four hours than she had in the past ten years. "What 'matter'?" she asked, trying to ignore the rush of heat into her face.

He hesitated and Ross wasn't one to hesitate normally. Finally, he said, "The only reason I haven't brought this subject up before was because of Wade."

"You still haven't brought it up," Victoria pointed out.

"It's important to me, and I don't want to screw this up," he muttered. "I was going to do the dozen roses and soft music thing, but oh hell, I'm just going to ask outright. I know you love having your own place, but would you consider moving in with us?"

She'd thought about it before, naturally, but playing house with Ross on the weekends was one thing, and the commitment of sharing a space with him all the time was something else. Besides, he was

right. Before now, she would have refused because of Wade's discomfort with her presence.

That had changed.

In fact, everything had changed.

"During the week, I miss you," Ross said softly. "And not just in my bed. All the time. And you saw how happy Wade is now. If I didn't think this would work, I wouldn't ask you to change your life in such a drastic way. I care about you too much for that."

There would be disadvantages, of course. She'd have a significant commute, whereas now she was about five minutes from her office. She also just signed a new lease on her apartment, invested in some new furniture...not to mention a relationship took some work. Surely if there was a third person, it would be exponentially more difficult.

But those negatives were just details.

"Tori?"

"Yes."

"You aren't saying anything." He moved to take her hand, simply twining their fingers together. "Honey, you don't have to decide this instant. I understand—"

She shook her head, "No. I mean yes. That is yes to the question."

"Seriously?" It was his turn to catch her in his arms and pull her in close for a jubilant kiss that made her knees weaken and her heart pound. He grabbed her hand then and practically dragged her into the hallway. "Come on, I'm suddenly very much in the mood for breakfast in bed."

"Ross," she objected, laughing, "I just got up. Besides, I think it has been established there is little to no food in this house."

"Not the kind of breakfast I had in mind."

Moments later, he had her naked. And when he parted her labia with his long fingers and the tip of his tongue teased her clitoris with the expertise of someone who knew exactly how she liked it, she closed her eyes at the delirious sensation and decided food was underrated anyway.

Epilogue

“Congratulations on the book deal.” Victoria reached for her glass of iced tea and took a sip, enjoying the warm breeze but grateful for the awning above the table. Late August in New Mexico usually meant scorching sun. Luckily, without any humidity, in the shade it was comfortable outside, and also interesting to watch the people stream by the little café as they ate.

Predictably, Andy ordered something vegetarian and demolished it in record time. She ate her enchiladas more slowly, eyeing him suspiciously. He offered to buy when he invited her to lunch, and that happened rarely.

“Thanks. Man, I am over the moon on this. I got an advance, can you believe it? They liked the concept, they were impressed with the credentials of the people I’ve got on board with me on the project, but most of all, they loved the pictures. I’ve got say myself, they really *are* good.”

“I’m glad,” she said dryly, “because it wasn’t exactly the easiest thing in the world to pose essentially naked.” Though that fateful day marked an interesting change in her life, no doubt about it. Living with Ross and Wade was...well, sometimes wonderful, sometimes exasperating, but somehow it *worked*. They were all busy people and had very different jobs and different schedules, but the flow of day to day life was cohesive, and pretty much every waking second she felt damn lucky.

And the sex...

Men tended to be more adventurous about sex, anyway, and put two of them together and she didn’t have a chance. Two pairs of

hands were definitely better than just one, in her enlightened opinion, not to mention the other perks.

“...and I’m just asking.”

Victoria jerked back to the moment. “I’m sorry, I was thinking about something else. Asking what?”

“They were really impressed with you and Wade as a couple, so I’d like to stick with that. The guy should go into acting or something. When he was touching you, his expression was exactly what I wanted. It was perfect. I thought you said he didn’t really like you.”

“I was wrong.” Uh-oh. The lunch suddenly made sense. It was a bribe. Victoria shook her head. “Andy—”

“Don’t kill me, but I already told them you’d do it.” At least he had the grace to look apologetic. “This is really important to me, Tori. I’ll make it up to you somehow, I swear it. Anything you want photographed, I’m your guy. Now, tell me, do you think you can talk Wade into posing again without pissing off Ross?”

It was really such a funny question. She smothered a laugh and looked down the crowded street. After all, in an odd way, *she* owed Andy.

With a smile, she murmured, “Don’t worry about Ross. He isn’t the jealous type, and, yes, I think I can talk Wade into it. No problem.”

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writing also as Emma Wildes and Annabel Wolfe, Kate Watterson has over thirty published books to her credit, plus six Eppie nominations, one Eppie win for best historical erotic in 2007, a RWA Lories win, WisRWA final for best historical romance, and is a Passionate Plume winner. She loves suspense and to write erotic stories in the genre is a special treat. Fans are what make the world go around and she loves to hear from them. Contact Kate at:

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Also by Kate Watterson

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