

ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*



Wild
Irish

*Sweet
Thursday*
MARI CARR

Sweet Thursday

Mari Carr

Wild Irish, Book Four

In high school, Lily was too shy to do anything about her feelings for her best friends, Justin and Killian. Now she's ready to put to rest her regrets with a proposal that might shock even her oversexed friends—the three of them, together, one night, multiple positions.

K and J are more than a little surprised to see Lily at their ten-year reunion. The plain Jane they remember is now a stunning woman—who wants to have sex with *both* of them. Who are they to deny her? Even if Killian suspects they might be treading on dangerous emotional territory.

The night stretches into the weekend and, as K suspected, none of them want it to end. But he and Lily know people live in pairs, not trios, and they call a halt now, before it's too late.

Justin, however, knows a good thing when he sees it. He's ready to fight for what he wants...what they all need. He just has to convince Lilly and Killian that unconventional can also be extraordinary.

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Sweet Thursday

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SWEET THURSDAY

Mari Carr

Dedication

This story is dedicated to Bill, my best guy friend in high school, and his fantastic wife Stacey. I appreciate your support of my writing and that you keep my secret identity secret!

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Monday's Child

Monday's child is fair of face,
Tuesday's child is full of grace,
Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go,
Friday's child is loving and giving,
Saturday's child works hard for a living,
But the child who is born on the Sabbath day,
Is bonny and blithe and good and gay.

~Traditional nursery rhyme

Prologue

Lily lay on the blanket Killian had spread out for them and looked at the endless sea of stars above. She'd returned home following her graduation ceremony with her two best friends, desperate to escape gushing family members and too many friends who were hell-bent on finding the nearest keg party.

"Gotta admit, I never thought we'd make it to this point in our lives." Killian was stretched out on one side of her, Justin the other. Killian had actually broken a long silence with his comment as they'd all seemed content to merely reflect on what it meant to be finished with high school.

Justin rolled over and propped his head on his elbow. Lily's breath caught at his closeness and the heat coming from his body. The evening was uncharacteristically cool for Baltimore in June. "I'm pretty sure you mean you and me, K. I don't think there was any question our Lily would graduate from high school."

Lily grinned. They'd taken to adding *our* before her name halfway through junior year. The sound of it never failed to melt her a bit inside. "There wasn't any question about you guys either."

"I don't know. I sort of thought Mr. Laredo was gonna expel us after that senior prank thing."

Lily giggled at Justin's feigned fear. He was ninety-nine percent mischief, compared to her less than one percent. She found that personality trait in him irresistible. "There was no way he was running the risk of getting you two back next year. I think of all our classmates, you were the ones with the best shot of walking across that stage regardless of your grades. I'm pretty sure Mr. Laredo was sobbing tears of joy when he saw that diploma in your hands."

Justin and Lily burst into fits of laughter, but Killian didn't. "Guess this is the last time we'll be together for a while."

Lily sobered up. Leave it to K to bring up the one subject they'd been avoiding since escaping. They'd come here to say goodbye. She'd been looking forward to and dreading graduation for weeks. While she was excited at the prospect of attending college, she hated the thought of leaving Killian and Justin.

Killian was too sweet, too sensitive to let them avoid facing the truth. It was just his way. She adored his strength, his spirit, his innate kindness. She sat up and looked down at his beloved face.

She'd been in love with her best friends for years. She'd never confessed that her feelings ran deeper than friendship because, for one thing, she was too shy and secondly, it was insane. She was in love with *both* of them and in her silly schoolgirl fantasies, they were always a trio, never a couple. It was an impossibility and she'd used that excuse to hold her tongue.

"We'll keep in touch." Even as she spoke the words, she knew the chances of them holding on to each other while half a world apart were slim. She was heading to California and USC, while they'd joined the Army.

Killian sat up as well and nodded. "Sure we will. We'll email, write, call."

Justin grinned crookedly. "I suck at writing letters, but I'd try it for you, Lil."

She laughed. "Thanks, Justin." She looked at her watch, knew time was running out. It was nearly midnight—her curfew. Her strict parents, though wonderful and loving, had refused to grant her a reprieve even for tonight. "I guess I should go in soon. We're heading out pretty early in the morning."

"Fuck," Justin muttered and Lily frowned.

"Language," she said without thinking, her admonition the same one she'd used daily in her attempts to clean up his gutter mouth.

"Dammit, Lil." Killian shook his head. "Who leaves town the day after graduation?"

She smiled sadly. "My dad got it in his head that we needed to take one last family vacation together. We're hitting the road with all my stuff for college in a U-Haul and the camper. He's mapped out a three-week excursion. I have a feeling I'm going to see more of the national parks than anyone has ever wanted to see. Chad's been complaining about taking this trip for months."

Her younger brother Chad and Killian's brother, Sean, were best friends as well, and eleven-year-old Chad wasn't happy about the prospect of spending three prime summer weeks on the road with just their parents and her.

"I don't see why you had to sign up for a summer-school course," Justin interjected. "Aren't you sick of classes? I mean, we just graduated and you're already getting ready to start studying again. That sucks."

"I don't hate school like you. Besides, this bio course is only offered once every two years. It's a great opportunity. And it's not like we would have had the whole summer to mess around. You guys head out to boot camp in two weeks."

Justin shrugged. "Yeah, but we could have planned a senior beach trip together or something."

Lily laughed. "Like my parents would have let me go to the beach for a week with you two."

Killian leaned forward. "Your parents like us."

"Not that much," she teased. Her parents did like her friends, but only because they'd come to the realization long ago that neither boy was likely to come on to her. The moment the thought flitted through her mind, she felt the same depression she'd been suffering for weeks assuage her again. She'd never given either guy a hint of her feelings. Struck by the reality that this could be her last chance, her rationale about not approaching them seemed silly.

Killian and Justin both rose and Killian reached down to help her up as well. "I guess we should go," he said.

She nodded.

It's now or never. Do it!

"Well, looks like this is it." Her voice was rough with the unshed tears she fought to hold in. Her mind was screaming at her.

Kiss them. Tell them. Do something.

Justin reached over and hugged her. It was a strong embrace but a friendly one—nothing more. When he released her, Killian took his place, wrapping her smaller frame in his giant one. Realizing her shyness would never let her speak the words, her hopes suddenly turned to silent begging.

Kiss me. Just this one time, please kiss me.

"I'm gonna miss you, Lil." Killian stepped away and she knew the moment had passed. Her chance was gone.

"I'll miss you guys too."

She watched them leave, waved as they walked away from her. She didn't allow herself to crumble on the blanket at her feet until she heard their car pull away. Then she collapsed, giving in to the tears. She'd let them leave without telling them what was in her heart, without telling them exactly what they meant to her. She cried for ages and when the tears finally stopped, she sat up sadly.

So much for a new beginning, a fresh start. Now she faced her future with a heart full of regrets.

Chapter One

Ten years later

"What the hell are we doing here again?" Killian mumbled as he followed his best friend, Justin, into the banquet hall.

Justin shrugged. "Fuck if I know. For some reason, this sounded like fun after a few beers at Pat's Pub. I think we thought there might be some hot women here."

Killian nodded and glanced around at the line of people signing in at the table by the door. "Yeah, right. Looks like a bunch of married couples to me."

"Guess we missed our chance at the five-year reunion. Must have waited too long to come back."

"Ten years out of high school." Killian shook his head in disbelief. "Feels like the blink of an eye."

"And an eternity," Justin added.

Killian silently agreed. A two-year stint in Iraq definitely skews a man's perspective of time. "At least Tris and Lane will be here, so we'll have someone to hang out with."

"Killian Collins? Justin Porter?" Killian tried to suppress a grimace at the familiar voice, but he knew his best friend had caught a glimpse of it when Justin quickly covered his laugh with a cough.

"Judith Ridley." Killian tried to paste on a fake smile as he greeted the woman who had served as their class president. If he'd been a betting man, he would have won twenty bucks because somehow he'd known Judith would grow up to look exactly like this. Her hair was lighter than he remembered, with that long-in-the-front-short-in-the-back style so many women seemed to have adopted. She was super-slim with a runner's build that screamed, "Ask me how many marathons I've run." She was standing next to a man several years her senior in a Hugo Boss suit his wife had no

doubt made him wear in order to proclaim to her former classmates that she had hit the marriage jackpot.

"It's Judith Rossiter now. This is my husband, Stanley."

Killian and Justin shook the man's hand as he proceeded to inform them he was the CEO of Rossiter Technologies, despite the fact neither had asked what he did for a living.

"Well, it's about time you two showed up for a reunion. Where were you at the five-year?" Judith demanded.

"Iraq," Justin answered shortly. Killian gave him a sideways glance and could practically see the hair on Justin's neck standing on end. His friend had always hated Judith and her snobby group of followers back when they were all in school together.

Judith laughed, though the sound didn't hide her annoyance at his curt answer. "Well, I suppose we'll have to forgive you for missing then, won't we? Don't disappear too early. We're going to do a Who's Who announcement around ten and if I recall correctly, you both won something, didn't you?"

Killian wanted to groan. He and his twin brother Tristan had shared the Most Athletic title their senior year. Football was the be-all, end-all at their high school. Justin, meanwhile, was crowned Class Clown. A fact Killian still liked to give him shit about on occasion.

"Yeah, we did," Killian answered quickly, anxious to end this private torture. Then he glanced over his shoulder at the crowded room and realized this was likely to be the first of many annoying conversations.

"Don't forget to get your name badges. I made them myself. Scanned everyone's pictures from the yearbook and put them on the tags. Now that we're getting older, I thought that might help the classmates who didn't stay in touch."

Killian was willing to bet most of Judith's clique had remained loyal to the area, settling down into Baltimore society. He sensed her tone was meant to imply there were some people who'd actually had the audacity to get out of the city and make something

of their lives. He couldn't imagine anything more depressing than the thought of hanging out with the same guys he'd gone to school with, talking about the same people, doing the same things.

"Come on, K. I think I see your brother and Lane." Justin skillfully maneuvered them away from Judith and her dull husband, grabbing their nametags and leading the way into the room.

"Jesus," Justin muttered when they were out of Judith's earshot. "This was a bad fucking idea."

"We'll have a drink with Tris and Lane, grab a plate of munchies and then head out." Killian looked at his watch. "It's eight thirty now. With any luck we can be home in the recliners by nine fifteen."

"Home sounds good," Justin agreed.

Killian looked around the room and wondered how he and Justin had made it through high school to begin with. They'd been inseparable since sixth grade, when they played on the same Little League baseball team. Given the fact neither of them was particularly good in school, they'd both signed up for the Army the week before graduation. They'd done an eight-year stint in the military, serving in the same unit in Iraq, before coming home almost two years earlier to take over the construction company owned by Justin's father. Justin had sold half the business to Killian and they'd renamed the company Porter and Collins Construction.

They were currently renting a townhouse in a quiet suburb of the city and they carpooled to work together. They shared a history, a special camaraderie he was certain he'd never find with another friend. Hell, not even with his twin brother.

Killian sighed and studied the people around him. Some of the faces were familiar, others weren't. He could pick out the singles, who hung together in packs, as well as the married couples lingering off to the side of the dance floor, looking as bored as he felt.

He wasn't sure why he'd been hit by a serious case of the doldrums recently. He had an easy life, if somewhat dull in its daily repetition. He loved his job and his house

was comfortable, but lately, Killian had begun to feel as if life was passing him by while he plodded along on a treadmill, everything the same – same workdays, same weekend excursions to bars, same television shows on TV week after week. He was constantly on the prowl, but didn't have a clue what he was looking for. Something was clearly missing, he just didn't know what.

"So much for picking up women and getting laid," Justin mumbled, running a hand through his thick, brown hair.

Killian laughed and shrugged. Even the pool of available ladies in town seemed to have dwindled down of late. Actually, Killian suspected it was his standards that had gone up a notch. Justin certainly wasn't sharing the same fate there. "Yeah well, there's always the fifteen-year reunion."

"Don't even joke. I'm never subjecting myself to this again."

Their progress across the floor was impeded by several women, none of whom looked familiar to Killian. When they escaped the fourth awkward conversation, he decided even staying for one drink would take too long and he longingly glanced toward the exit. Judith must have expected some folks to escape early as she'd planted herself four feet away from it, her eyes daring anyone in the crowd to try to leave *her* party.

Justin shook his head. "Jesus, I can't even remember who half these people are."

"Don't look at me. I keep getting dirty looks from the women. I'm trying to sneak peeks at their nametags, but they seem to think I'm looking at their breasts."

Justin grinned. "That's funny. I'm looking at their tits pretending to read the badges."

They were laughing as they approached Tristan's table, but Killian noticed Justin's died rather quickly upon arrival.

"Lily?"

Killian looked up quickly at Justin's stunned declaration and spotted her. "Lily Watterson?"

Lily, who had been talking to Tristan's wife, Lane, glanced over at the sound her name.

"Surprise!" she said, her bright blue eyes shining with delight.

Killian stared at her, dumbfounded for a few seconds. "What the hell are you doing here? I thought you couldn't make the reunion because you were still in California."

"My new job started early. I've been in Baltimore for a couple weeks. I knew the reunion was coming up and I wanted to surprise you two." Her voice was light, musical, her happiness at seeing them shining through. She walked around the table and they each took turns hugging her. Killian secretly sniffed her familiar floral perfume and was besieged by the good memories associated with that scent and her.

"Jesus," he muttered when she stepped away from his friendly embrace. "You're fucking hot."

Lily laughed. "You've always had a way with words, Killian. Thanks."

Though they'd stayed in touch with occasional emails and letters, he hadn't laid eyes on her in a decade. She'd been cute in a plain-Jane sort of way in high school, but now she was a knockout. She'd abandoned her conservative clothes and was wearing a short black skirt showcasing long, firm legs that practically went up to her neck. She'd ditched that horrible pageboy haircut from school and her chestnut-colored hair now hung long and loose over her shoulders.

"What happened to your glasses?" he asked, kicking himself for the stupid question. He was having trouble reconciling this stunning beauty with the quiet girl who'd sat beside him in Anatomy class, dissecting all the dead animals with fervor while he jotted down the answers she gave him.

"Lasik." Her answer was quick and easy and she didn't seem to mind the inanity of it.

"Damn. Am I glad to see you here." Justin stepped closer and gave her a quick peck on the cheek and Killian knew his friend was impressed by this new-and-improved Lily too. "Listen, we're in danger of being stalked by the divorced cheerleaders all night. We're gonna need you to run interference if things get dicey."

Lily patted Justin on the cheek, clearly amused by his joke. "The more things change, the more they stay the same. Haven't you poor boys figured out how to run off the trampy girls yet?"

Justin shrugged and gave her a cocky grin. "It's only the odd occasion when we actually *want* to run them off. Doesn't leave a lot of time for practicing evasive maneuvers."

"Still the same Justin Porter, I see. Leaving a trail of broken hearts in your wake. Please tell me you haven't let his bad-boy habits rub off on you, K."

Justin laughed. "Think you've got that backwards, Lil. It was our boy Killian here who taught me all the tricks. Only reason he fools everyone is because he pretends to be a sensitive, thoughtful guy while I just call it what it is." He started to name "it", but Lily cut him off, placing her manicured finger against his lips almost seductively.

"Don't say it," she warned. "You know I hate that word."

Justin reached up to lightly grasp her wrist and his eyes sparkled with mischief. "Say what, Lily? Fucking?"

"That's it," she said. "Just for that, you're going to have to fend off the horny cheerleaders all by yourself tonight."

Killian tried to adjust his pants covertly at the sight of her pretend anger. She offered them both a guileless smile and Killian was pleased to see that, underneath this new sex-on-legs look, she was still the same sweet girl she'd been ten years ago. The same woman who'd sent them care packages when they were in Iraq, filled with cookies and dirty magazines. The same woman who could write the longest emails he'd ever read about the mating practices of a starfish, *and* make it interesting.

He grinned as she teetered a bit and he glanced down. It was obvious Lily wasn't accustomed to high heels. She pushed her hair off her shoulder in a seductive way and he found himself amused by her antics.

Lily Watterson appeared to be trying to flirt with them.

Not that his boneheaded friend had noticed. Justin flashed him a quick glance, raising his eyebrows suggestively, and Killian fought back a groan. Justin had been taken in by the new-and-improved Lily and was no doubt plotting a way to get her into his bed.

That thought bothered Killian more than he would have expected. This was Lily. Their *friend* Lily.

Why was she flirting...and why was she flirting with both of them?

Killian placed a hand on her arm, turning her attention back to him and trying to change the conversation to something less suggestive. "We were in the Army for eight years, sweetness. I think it's safe to say we've learned how to take care of ourselves."

Her lovely face sobered up. "I hated every single minute you were in Iraq." She'd been a good friend in high school and one of the few people in his life he'd always wanted to see again. However, circumstances had conspired to keep them apart for a decade, though they'd made an attempt at staying in contact, usually corresponding every couple months.

"Well, as you can see," Justin added, "we survived Iraq just fine." Killian knew that was all his friend would say about the subject and he was sorry he'd brought it up.

Lane walked closer and joined the conversation. "I'm interested in hearing about this so-called interference. I'm trying to figure out how you helped them get away from aggressive females."

Lily smiled again. "These two were shameless playboys in high school. Sometimes when girls became overzealous in their pursuit, they asked me to step in and save them."

"She was our guardian angel," Justin said, lifting her hand and kissing her knuckles dramatically. She blushed at his gesture and Killian had to fight down the barrage of emotions spiraling through him at watching his friend kiss Lily.

"Nothing so dramatic, I assure you." Lily started to pull her hand away but Justin held tight to it. Killian could see the slightest hint of surprise and – dammit – delight on her face. "All the girls at school knew we were friends so they'd always ask me about Justin and Killian. If one of them liked a girl, I told her how awesome he was –"

Tristan leaned toward his wife. "In other words, she lied."

They all laughed and Lily continued. "If I knew they weren't interested, I told the girl they were horn dogs only out for one thing or that they were seeing four other girls at the same time or something equally derogatory."

"The truth," Tris added and Lily shook her head at his jest.

"Not really," she said lightly as she glanced at Killian, and with those two words, he was reminded exactly how fierce a friend Lily had been to him and he wondered how he'd let her slip away. For four years, she'd been a big part of his life.

She flipped her hair again and he swallowed heavily. Regardless of her lack of experience with flirting, seeing her face, hearing her voice was firing up all kinds of inappropriate thoughts. He was relieved he'd opted for loose dress pants rather than blue jeans tonight. His erection had made an appearance and was definitely planning on sticking around for a while. He suspected it wouldn't go away until Lily did. Then he decided to grin and bear it. There was no way he was letting her go anywhere anytime soon.

Tristan gestured to the empty seats at the table and Killian was thrilled – and slightly annoyed – when Justin stepped in to ensure Lily was seated between them. One glance at his best friend proved Justin was definitely on the prowl and Killian tried to decide how to feel about that.

"Still no husband, right?" Justin asked, glancing around.

Lily shook her head and giggled.

"Fiancé? Jealous boyfriend? I mean we're all still single here, right?"

Killian rolled his eyes at Justin's straightforward, tenacious style. That was Justin. If he wanted to know the answer, he simply asked the question.

Lily grinned. "Still single. It's just little old me attending the ten-year reunion on my own. Pretty pathetic, huh?"

Justin shook his head but before he could reply, Lily shrugged. "Of course, given the fact I attended homecoming and prom alone, it wasn't likely anyone would notice my lone status here with any real surprise."

"You went to prom alone?" Killian asked. "Why did I think you went with us?"

Lily laughed. "You both had dates but you let me tag along, remember? Talk about a fifth wheel."

Killian thought back to the dance, struggling to recall who his date had been. All he could remember was laughing his ass off at the bad dancing with Justin and Lily and waiting for one of the cheerleaders to lose her strapless, barely-holding-on dress most of the night. "Who was my date?"

He looked at Justin, who shrugged. "I don't have clue. Who was mine?"

Lily shook her head, laughing uncontrollably. "Oh my God, you guys are pathetic. I can't believe you can't remember something like that."

"So put us out of our misery. Who did we take?" Justin leaned closer as he prodded, his chest lightly brushing against her arm. Killian watched her take a deep breath and bite her lower lip.

"To be perfectly honest," she confessed, "I don't remember either, but you both bragged about getting lucky on Monday morning, so you should be ashamed of yourselves."

Killian tried to look chagrined for about three seconds before laughing. She'd always attempted to be their conscience in school. It had never worked, but he'd appreciated her efforts toward redeeming him. "Well, as long as we got lucky."

Lily hit him lightly on the arm but he could see she was enjoying their banter.

"Sounds like you three were really good friends," Lane said.

Tristan nodded. "Yep. Lily, K and Justin broke all the clique rules back in school."

Everyone except Lane laughed. "Oh yeah? Which clique rules did you break?" she asked.

Tris leaned back and placed his arm around his wife's chair. "You know how high school is. Everyone's put in little labeled boxes."

"And God help the person who tries to jump from one box to another," Lily added.

Lane grinned at her husband. "So what box were you in?"

Tris grimaced. "Killian and I resided in the 'dumb jock' box."

"Except," Lily said, smiling at Killian, "neither one of you was stupid."

Killian shrugged. "Well, it's probably safe to say we didn't set the world on fire with our grades. Besides, I don't think it was the classes we took that mattered in high-school society. We played three sports, so we were destined to be called jocks, regardless of what else we did in school."

"That's right," Lily said. "You and Justin had lead roles in *Guys and Dolls* our senior year. I almost forgot about that."

Justin nodded. "So technically we could have been thrown in the 'drama geeks' box."

Lily giggled. "I would have loved to see that."

Lane leaned toward the table. "This is fascinating. I never considered myself a member of any clique in school and I don't remember them being such a central part of how things worked."

"Maybe it was just more pronounced at our high school, but cliques definitely ruled the hallways." Justin reached out to tug Lily's hair playfully. "Tell Lane what box you were in, Lily –"

Lily narrowed her eyes and picked up her butter knife, waving at Justin when it appeared he might say more. "You say that nickname aloud, Justin Porter, and I'll emasculate you. Right here, right now. With this dull knife."

His eyes twinkled playfully. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"What nickname?" Lane asked.

Lily sighed. "Much as it pains me to say this, Lane, you see before you a member of the nerd clique. My nickname in school was Lilywhite."

"I haven't heard that name in ten years." Killian shook his head as he remembered the girl who'd worn the nickname. While it had seemed to fit ten years ago, he was hard-pressed to see that goody-goody girl now. She'd certainly grown up, matured, loosened up. Although...

Lily shrugged, her blouse gaping a bit, and he was treated to a glimpse of her lilywhite breasts peeking out the top of her lilywhite bra. He grinned. Maybe the name *did* still apply.

"Lilywhite?" Lane repeated. "Oh dear. That doesn't sound nice."

"I hated that nickname, regardless of the fact it probably did apply."

"*Did* apply?" Justin raised a suggestive eyebrow at Lily, but she simply rolled her eyes and ignored him.

Killian shook his head good-naturedly. "Price you pay for being valedictorian of the class. Surely you knew that four-point-oh would come with some baggage."

Lily laughed. "Yeah, well. I don't think it helped that my parents were super-strict, which meant no weekend parties for me."

"Social suicide," Killian agreed.

"Plus, your conservative clothing and pixie haircut didn't help either," Justin said. Lily feigned being affronted until he added, "Hey, just pointing out the obvious."

"Oh, is that right, skater boy?" Lily asked with a wicked grin.

Lane giggled. "You were a skater, Justin?"

Killian nodded. "Yep, complete with the long hair and indifferent attitude."

"Oh my God," Lane said. "I would have loved to see that. You're so clean-cut now."

Justin leaned toward Killian, putting himself even closer to Lily. His arm lightly rasped her breast and Killian suspected the *accidental* touch was intentional. "You hear that, K? Lane thinks I'm clean-cut."

"Ha ha," Tristan's wife said. "You know what I mean. So the nerd, the jock and the skater overcame social adversity to become friends. I think I see what you mean, Tris."

They laughed at Lane's summary until the deejay began playing music. Lane perked up when a fast dance number sent a pulsing beat through the room. "I haven't heard this song in years! Come on, Tris, let's go get jiggy with it." She reached down to pull Tris up, who stood up slowly.

"You've gotta be kidding me. Will Smith?" Tris asked.

Lane put on what Killian jokingly referred to as her *power look* and he knew his twin was about three seconds from hitting the dance floor. "Did I forget to mention? The Fresh Prince totally makes me horny."

Tris appeared to file that piece of information away and they laughed when, sure enough, he went willingly.

Killian knew his twin lived to make his wife happy and he was glad his brother had found a true and lasting love. A pang of regret whipped through him as he considered how different his path and Tristan's had been. While his brother had been happy to remain at home, working in the family pub, Killian had felt the call to leave.

The poem his mother, Sunday, used to recite to them when they were kids drifted back through his mind. Thursday's child has far to go. Talk about a prophecy. He'd traveled extensively during his eight years in the military and it wasn't until he'd spent time away that he'd truly appreciated the importance of home and family and laying down roots. Now he was home and he still felt as if he was facing miles and miles of uncharted highway.

"How about a drink?" Justin glanced behind him toward the bar. "Looks like the line has died down."

"I'd love a beer," Lily confessed.

Killian laughed as he stood and offered Lily a hand to rise. "Gal after my own heart. Come on, one for all and all for one. No one crosses this pit of vipers alone." Justin stood as well and they made their way to the bar, enduring several five-minute catch-up conversations with long-forgotten acquaintances.

On their way back to the table, Killian saw Lane and Tris had been waylaid by Judith and her husband and, for a second, he considered saving his brother. Then he grinned and decided it would be more fun to watch his brother suffer. Tristan threw him a dirty look and Killian chuckled silently.

"So what *did* happen to the long hair and attitude?" Lily asked Justin when the three of them sat down with their drinks.

Justin shrugged. "Eight years in the Army is what happened."

"But you've been out for a while, right?"

"Almost two years," Killian answered.

"Long enough to grow your hair back," Lily teased.

Justin grinned and ran his hand over his short brown hair. "I can't stand for my hair to get shaggy now. Drives me nuts. Not sure how I ever wore it that way."

"I think you'd have done anything back then to get on your dad's nerves. He hated the long hair, therefore you loved it." Killian reached for his beer and grinned. "I think most of our teenaged decisions were based on what would bug the adults the most."

"Not me," Lily said. "I toed the line."

Justin laughed. "You're right about that. Tried like hell to get you to do just one naughty thing when we were in school, but you never would."

Lily sighed. "I know. My parents were so strict and I—" She shrugged. "For better or worse, I've always been one of those people who do exactly as they're told."

“Still?” Justin asked, leaning closer to her.

Killian watched her lick her lips nervously and he knew she wasn’t immune to Justin’s charms—regardless of how overtly obvious they were. Her gaze traveled back to Killian and he caught the vibes she was throwing in his direction as well. She was definitely trying—in her own sweet way—to flirt with both of them.

That thought rocked him right down to his core. She was playing with some serious fire.

Lily’s eyes narrowed. “No. I’ve shed the shyness, the insecurities. Lived a little.”

“And now you’re the world’s sexiest marine biologist,” Killian said and Lily turned to face him.

“I’m not so sure about *that* title.” She smiled at him, clearly pleased by his compliment. He studied her face, wondering what was going on that incredible mind of hers. Lily was the most driven person he’d ever met and he could see that same determination pulsing through her tonight.

“You’re the only person I’ve ever known who knew exactly what they were going to do after graduation on the first day of ninth grade. Announced it to all of us in Mrs. Day’s freshmen English class.”

Lily laughed. “I can’t believe you remembered that,” she said, surprise evident in her voice that he’d retained the small kernel of knowledge. When Killian thought on it, he realized there was a whole encyclopedia of Lily Watterson tidbits residing in his brain.

He tried to shrug off the comment, tried to act nonchalant. “You were always obsessed with the ocean and sea creatures and science shit. You used to talk about that stuff all the time in anatomy class. Never saw anybody get more excited about cutting apart dead guinea pigs.”

She laughed and crossed her legs, the motion dragging her skirt an inch higher on her tanned thigh. The enticing action wasn’t lost on him or Justin.

"So now you're a doctor." Justin leaned back in his chair and grinned. "Doctor Lily. I like the sound of that. How'd you like USC?"

"I loved it. It's an awesome school."

"And now you're back on the East Coast. To stay?" Killian asked.

She nodded. "Yep. I came home last month. I'm renting an apartment in the city and working at the aquarium."

"You should have called the first day you got into town," Justin said.

"I told you. I wanted to surprise you. Besides, I've been inundated with unpacking and getting used to my new job. Haven't had two seconds to myself."

Killian couldn't explain the sudden wave of euphoria that passed through him. She lived in the same city as him again. He caught Justin's eye and he could see his friend was processing that information as well.

He frowned, struggling to understand if this whole night was a race to the finish line *against* his best friend to see who got to take her home, or if Lily was leading them down a path of her own making. Both scenarios troubled him.

Justin leaned toward Lily and, in typical fashion, quickly moved the conversation away from the safe zone. "You know, from your letters, Lilywhite, I got the impression you never really broke bad in college either."

She shrugged. "I don't know about that. I had some fun. But I guess at heart, you're right, I'm the eternal good girl."

Justin leaned forward and pressed the issue. "No drunken one-night stands? No crazy all-night frat parties? No skipping class?"

Lily frowned. "No—to all three questions. And believe me, I regret it. More than I can say. I swore when I stepped through those reunion doors, everyone would see a different Lily. My inner good girl has ruled me since the cradle and I've had enough. I was actually hoping to convince you guys to teach me a few of your naughty tricks tonight."

"What makes you think we have any tricks?" Killian asked with a light chuckle, trying to conceal how strongly her words were resonating in his head. Shit. They were pounding like a bass drum. Lily wanted to be a bad girl...with *both* of them?

"Don't you?" Her question was an outright dare. "There was a list of your sexual escapades as long as my left arm when we graduated from high school. I think that's the reason I liked hanging out with you guys so much. I lived vicariously through you."

"But not anymore?" Killian asked.

She shook her head, looking up at them both through the veil of her thick eyelashes. She was wearing smoky-colored eye makeup that accentuated her blue eyes and the desire burning behind them. "Not anymore. I'm nearly thirty and horny as hell. Tonight I'd sort of like to be bad *with* you."

Killian glanced at Justin and saw the intense interest on his friend's face. It was like watching two trains collide and being helpless to stop it.

Justin moved his chair closer to hers, his voice quiet when he spoke. "Are you asking for what I think you are?"

"Do you want me to say the word?" she whispered.

Killian swallowed heavily as she looked at them, but Justin was the one to respond. "I'd love to hear you say the word."

Lily leaned back, the action thrusting her breasts forward the slightest bit. "Ménage."

Killian reared back, feeling for a moment as if he'd been sucker-punched. Lily wanted to engage in a ménage with them? What the hell could she be thinking? Before he could formulate a response—hell, before he could even process the thought—Justin took the decision out of his hands.

"Well, Doctor Lily. It would appear you've come to the right place."

She looked at his friend, grinning seductively. "Oh? Why's that?"

Justin placed his hand on her chin, claiming her full attention, and Killian knew exactly what was coming. Knew he wouldn't stop Justin, even though he should. "Tonight, we're going to take you for a walk on the wild side. Show you the ropes. Serve as your tour guides."

Chapter Two

"Tour guides?" Lily looked from Justin to Killian and back again and Justin had to fight back a grin at her obvious delight in his proposition.

Killian put his arm around the back of her chair and Justin noticed the slight hitch in her breath as she realized she was in very close proximity to both of them.

"He's kidding," Killian said shortly and Justin frowned at his friend's comment.

"No, I'm—"

"Lily Watterson?"

Justin looked up at the balding, overweight man hovering behind Lily's chair and fought back a growl. Talk about bad timing.

"Chandler?" she asked, standing and smiling.

Justin studied the man more closely. Dear God, she was right. It was Chandler Watkins, the poster child for bullied victims in high school—a chubby boy with acne, too willing to please and too often the butt of all the jokes. Poor Chandler hadn't aged well.

The man's grin grew when it was clear Lily recognized him. "Thank God. Someone who's managed to remember my name."

Lily laughed. "I'm not likely to forget my competition."

"Competition?" Killian asked.

She nodded. "Yes, don't you remember? Chandler and I were neck and neck for the valedictory honor. But don't let that fool you, we were pretty good friends too. He plays a mean game of chess."

"I have to confess I was relieved when the valedictorian role went to you. I hate public speaking. Standing up at graduation and delivering a speech would've killed

me.” Chandler tugged at his dress shirt and Justin suspected the man was suffering with the tight neck as it was buttoned all the way up to support his tie.

Lily narrowed her eyes good-naturedly. “You know, I’ve often suspected you threw the race. I mean, a B in keyboarding? Really?”

Chandler waved his chubby fingers in her face and laughed. “Still employ the hunt-and-peck method to this very day. You won fair and square.” He turned his attention to the men. “Justin Porter. Killian Collins. Great to see you both again.”

“You too, Chandler,” Justin replied. They each took turns shaking the man’s hand.

“Been a long time, eh? Ten years.” Chandler smiled widely as Killian asked him what he did for a living and he launched into some long-winded description of his real estate law practice.

As they made small talk, Justin’s mind drifted back to one Friday afternoon during their freshmen year. A few assholes had cornered Chandler in the hallway and were shoving him around. Killian had taken one look at the situation and plowed into the midst of the circle of bullies, bending over to pick up Chandler’s backpack and leading him away from the other guys.

The response had been so typically Killian that Justin hadn’t even given it a second thought until this moment. Now as he watched Chandler talking to Killian with something akin to hero worship in his eyes, Justin felt the familiar twinge of remorse that had been niggling at him lately. He’d spent his entire life drifting from one place to the next without ever really living in any of the moments, content to follow in Killian’s wake and see where they landed.

As he approached thirty, one fact was making itself painfully clear to him—he’d merely existed in high school, in the army and in civilian life. He’d moved from place to place waiting for something special to happen. But it never did.

You were a skater, Justin?

Yep. Complete with the long hair and indifferent attitude.

Killian's words had stung with their accuracy. His father had called him a drifter once, frustrated by his son's apathetic approach to life. It was a fight they'd had since Justin had learned to walk.

He ran a hand through his hair, pushing the thoughts aside and forcing himself to focus on Lily's face instead. He grinned. Enduring all the bullshit at this reunion had been worth it, simply because he'd found her again. Her comments about wanting to be naughty were the answer to a prayer. Life had been too dull lately. And he'd be a fool to refuse the offer she was making.

He needed to get Killian on board. One look at his friend's face proved that would be a challenge. He wondered why Killian was resistant to Lily's blatant interest. They'd shared women before, so the concept wasn't new or even uncomfortable. They'd started experimenting with threesomes back in high school, making out with a girl at the same time. At the beginning, he suspected it was a lark, horny teenage boys' attempts at doing something wild. But sharing had felt...*right*. And as they became adults, the experiments had gone quite a bit further.

He looked at Lily when she smiled at something Chandler said and felt a slight lurch in the vicinity of his heart. No, it wasn't the sharing that was different. It was the woman.

"I was wondering if I could drag you away for a moment, Lily. I'd love for you to meet my wife," Chandler said.

"I'd like that. Will you guys excuse me for a few minutes?"

They nodded and Justin watched Lily cross the room with Chandler. They stopped before a petite woman in a wheelchair and Justin felt guilty for not making more of an effort to befriend Chandler in high school. While he hadn't participated in the bullying, he hadn't expended any effort to get to know the guy either.

"Nice guy, that Chandler," Justin said when they were alone.

"What the hell are you doing?" Killian asked.

"I was about to ask you the same thing. Were you not sitting at this table and listening to the same things I was? Lily wants to release her inner bad girl tonight...with both of us! This is the opportunity of a lifetime."

Killian narrowed his eyes, his nostrils flaring with anger. "Opportunity? You think thrusting Lily into a ménage is an opportunity?"

Justin put his hands on his hips. "That's a rhetorical question, right?"

"Goddamn it, Justin. This is Lily you're talking about. Not some hook up from a bar. You can't seriously think she understands what she's agreeing to?"

"I think she just made it pretty clear she'd jump both of us in a New York minute if we offered the ride." His words had come out more callously than he'd intended, but he was fighting back some serious demons tonight and Killian's holier-than-thou attitude was tweaking his nerves.

"You prick."

Killian's fists clenched and Justin wondered if his friend would actually hit him here. They'd fought before. He had a fierce temper, while Killian's tended to be a slow burn. On occasion, they'd both reached the boiling point at the same time. Mercifully those times were few and far between, since they were pretty evenly matched in a fight and they suffered for their anger for days afterward.

"Takes one to know one."

"You're an insensitive motherfucker sometimes." Killian's words were spoken quietly, but the malice was clearly there.

"Watch it, K. I'd hate to mess up your nice clothes but if you throw a punch, I'm fucking bringing it."

Killian looked around the reception hall before closing his eyes and Justin imagined he was counting to ten in his head. When he opened them, Justin knew the heated moment had passed. He often wondered how Killian was able to pull himself together like that—so quickly, so effortlessly.

When he spoke again, his voice was calmer, reasonable. "It's Lily, Justin."

"I know!" he replied hotly, then repeated himself, his cockiness fading away. "I know."

"You know it's Lily and yet you're still willing to involve her in a ménage. I don't give a shit how sexy she looks or how much she flirts with us, she's still innocent."

Justin considered his friend's words. "I don't think she's as innocent as you believe. And even if she is, she was serious about taking a walk on the wild side, K. I figure she can do that with *us* or she can find a stranger or two—who might not be as careful with her as we would."

"No." Killian shook his head. "We're not going there. Not with her."

The adamant look on his friend's face took him aback. "Why not?"

Killian frowned and dropped back down into his chair. "Jesus, Justin. You know, at some point you're gonna have to face the fact that there are consequences to every action."

Justin sat on the edge of his chair, Killian's words running through him like sandpaper. "I don't need a fucking sermon from you, K. I get enough of those from my father. I just don't see why giving Lily a night to explore her fantasies would have any other consequences than we'd all get laid and be happy."

"I don't picture Lily as a one-night-stand kind of girl."

"You heard her, Killian. You heard her say she wanted to have a little fun. Fine. We'll lay it all out on the line for her. You can issue your gloom and doom and dire warnings and we'll let *her* decide. She's an adult. Regardless of who she was to us a decade ago, she's changed. You're protecting the memory of the shy girl she was. Why not try to get to know the woman she's grown into?"

"Yeah." Lily's voice drifted down from above them. "Why not get to know me now?"

Justin looked up and wondered how much of their conversation she'd heard. He'd expected to see anger on her face, but instead she simply looked...beautiful. Christ. He tried to ignore the small voice in the back of his head that said he really was a heartless bastard.

She smiled serenely and took her seat between them again. "Still trying to protect me, Killian?"

Killian shrugged. "I'm not sure you know what you're asking for, Lil."

She looked at his friend, reaching over to take Killian's large hand in her own. "I know exactly what I'm asking for, and I knew before I came here tonight that if there was the slightest chance of capturing your attention, I'd take it." She glanced over her shoulder to include Justin in the "your".

"God, K. I don't think you understand how much I want to do this. I'm sick of coloring inside the lines all the time. I want to grab hold of this opportunity to be free and wild and uninhibited—for just one night. I don't want to look back at my life in fifty years and realize I never did one daring thing. I'm tired of regrets."

"If we do this—" Killian started.

She placed her finger over his lips. "*When* we do this," she corrected.

"*We* call the shots. We decide what your limits are. If you can't agree to that, then no deal."

Justin fought the urge to contradict Killian's threat. "We'll give you what you want, Lily. We'll take care of you."

She ran a manicured hand through her long, dark hair, pushing it behind her shoulder, and his breath caught at the way the movement thrust her breasts forward. Where the hell had this Lily come from? Her every movement seemed to scream sex and seduction.

She'd been with him and Killian throughout their teen years and he'd always thought she was cute, but *this* woman? Holy crap. He'd never approached her sexually

in high school because she was too sweet, too innocent, too...well, unavailable. She hadn't been kidding about the ever-watchful eyes of her parents. To say they kept her under their thumb was an understatement. Plus, the younger Lily had given off some serious untouchable vibes, where this older, more mature Lily was sending up a beacon he'd have to be a blind man to miss.

"I can take care of myself." Her voice was low, husky and sure, and Justin grimaced at the ever-growing tightness in his pants. Damn zipper was chafing his cock. This was the last time he went commando.

Killian sighed. "Yeah, well, I don't know why you're so sure we're your 'wild side' guys. It's been ten years, Lily. Don't you think there's a chance we've changed a bit?"

"I know we haven't seen each other, but I've read your letters, your emails over the years. I think I know exactly what kind of men you are." She ran her hands along her thighs nervously. "I've missed a lot of opportunities in my past and I regret that fact. I want to be someone different and I figure tonight could kick off my new future in style." She thrust out her breasts and fluffed her hair, feigning sex appeal with her quirky sense of humor. "Besides, I bought this new outfit, got a fancy haircut, practiced walking in these damn heels—all just for you two."

They laughed, but her words touched something inside Justin. If there was one thing he could understand, it was regrets. It was as if she could see inside his head. She was a good friend, but regardless of the fact she was dressed to kill, she was treading on unfamiliar ground.

Rather than acknowledge how much her comments touched him, he reverted to form and made a joke. "Jesus. Twenty-eight years old and you're still doing your homework."

Lily grinned, leaning forward and giving him an eyeful of her cleavage. "Do you have a problem with that?"

"Hell no," he said, expelling a breath on the words.

"You know, it's a far cry from us being friends to us being willing participants of a ménage. What makes you think Justin and I would go for something like that?"

Justin narrowed his eyes at Killian's comment.

"I was your friend in high school," she said. "And I've never been an idiot. I heard the rumors, the whispers of the other girls in the locker room."

Justin leaned back for a moment and considered her answer. She'd heard about them. All these years, she'd known about their penchant for sharing.

Killian's hand moved from the back of her chair to her face. He cupped the back of her head, forcing her to look at him.

"Haven't you ever heard that expression, 'Be careful what you wish for'?"

She offered them both a cute, gentle smile, her face artlessly pleading. "It's just one wish, K, one night. Please."

"Damn. Power look," Killian muttered and his hand dropped to his lap.

She paused, obviously confused, but Justin understood exactly what his friend was talking about. She'd taken him down with that look too and he was pretty sure neither one of them was going to refuse her a damn thing tonight.

"Do you even know what you're asking for?" Killian added.

She narrowed her eyes, annoyed. "I'm not thick, Killian. I know what I want to happen tonight."

Justin leaned even closer. "Tell us. Put it in words."

She grinned at his challenge and he was blown away by the daring woman facing him down. "Sex. You, me, K. Bed optional. As many positions as we can squeeze into the night."

Killian choked on his beer at her words. His response caught her attention and she frowned. "You *have* done this before?"

"Yes," Justin admitted.

"So it's not the sharing that's an issue?" she asked.

"I don't have a problem sharing with Justin." Killian's answer was quick and sure and Justin grinned.

"Have you done it," she paused and swallowed, "a lot?"

Killian glanced at him and Justin shrugged. This was Lily, not some faceless woman. She deserved the truth. "I don't know what you'd call a lot, but yeah, we've indulged more than a few times."

She nodded. "And you like it? I'm not making you do something—"

Killian's hand moved again, tangling in her tresses, and Justin watched Lily's nipples tighten beneath her silky blouse. Her deeply inhaled breath proved his friend's touch had directed her thoughts to exactly the kind of adventures she was asking for. "We like it. We like it a lot."

Justin nodded in agreement when her eyes darted in his direction.

She smiled, pleased by his response. "Good, then I don't see why we shouldn't all take what we want."

Killian sighed. "I don't want us to hurt you, Lil."

"I know you guys. I trust you. For one night, let me—let *us*—live this fantasy." Justin stared at her as she spoke and he could see the sincerity of her words. "Say yes, Killian. You know you want to."

She knew K was the hard sell. That thought bothered him. Didn't she think he'd be worried about her welfare too?

Before they could continue their conversation, Lane and Tris returned to the table. "Bad news," Tristan said as he took his seat. "Judith has the deejay's microphone. I think she's prepared some sort of speech."

Justin groaned. "That woman's voice goes through me like food poisoning."

Before anyone could reply, Judith called for silence in the room. Justin tried to listen to the woman's prattling speech about her charitable organizations and all the other so-

called amazing things the in-crowd had done over the past ten years. His mind had just started to drift when he heard his name mentioned with Killian's.

He glanced over and rolled his eyes at his friend when Judith gave what everyone else in the room would believe was a heartfelt thanks to them for their years of service protecting our country's freedoms.

"She's on a roll," Lily muttered and Justin had to fight back a laugh at her comment.

Judith continued to ramble on and he gave up the pretense of listening. He looked at Lily, pleased when she caught his gaze and held it. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Tristan studying them. What would Killian's twin say if he knew they were considering taking Lily home tonight...together?

Lily appeared to have given quite a bit of thought to her proposal. He watched her as she pretended to listen to Judith's speech. She crossed her legs, tapping her manicured nails on her thigh impatiently. He reached over and gripped her hand to still it while dragging his fingers against her smooth skin. Her quiet inhalation of breath told him she liked his touch. Killian leaned closer, resting his arm against the back of her chair, his fingers idly caressing a few strands of her hair. The gesture was enough and Lily smiled at his friend. Justin released her hand and casually moved his inward and up, lightly grazing her upper thigh. She closed her eyes slowly and he grinned at the sexual tension radiating from her. She was a powder keg about to blow.

He moved his hand back to his own lap after only a moment when he felt several sets of eyes glance in their direction. Regardless of the good-girl image Lily wanted to shatter, he wouldn't do anything to mar her reputation. Especially not here in the midst of these old acquaintances who were now strangers. This night's affair would remain private, something between just the three of them.

Killian's original concerns came back to Justin as he studied Lily's flushed face and erratic breathing, and it overrode his enjoyment of the moment. His friend was right.

Lily was essentially an innocent and there was a big difference between fantasizing about a ménage and taking part in one. They would have to take care, take it slowly.

He imagined some of the sex acts she might want to try and found himself second-guessing his decision to initiate her into a night on the wild side. Then he imagined her in bed with strangers and he saw red.

She wanted the fantasy and he was damn well going to give it to her. He studied her lush lips, her pale cheeks and the image of kissing her, touching her bare skin for hours on end didn't seem like a very steep price to pay. He wanted her...bad.

"And our very own Lilywhite—"

Justin's ears perked up to Judith's voice when Lily went stiff beside him. The room laughed and he watched Lily plaster on a false smile as Judith continued.

"I mean Lily *Watterson* is now a doctor. Not that anyone's surprised to hear our valedictorian went so far with her education. Now before you start going over to her and asking for prescriptions for valium..." Again Judith paused so everyone could titter at her stupid joke, and Justin took a deep breath, allowing himself to imagine the woman breaking a nail later and having a nervous breakdown in the aftermath. "She's not a medical doctor, but a marine biologist. I guess she only prescribes valium to dolphins."

"Oh my God," Lily muttered. "Was she always this obnoxious in high school?"

Killian chuckled next to her. "I was thinking she's gotten nicer. Who knew Judith had such a great sense of humor?" They all laughed at his joke and Justin was grateful for his friend's ability to lighten the mood. While he tended to lead with his left in situations like this, Killian always managed to calm the waters with his wit.

"Now," Judith continued, "the reunion committee thought it might be fun to pull up all the Who's Who winners and we're fortunate to have quite a few in attendance this evening. Come up when I call your name and then we're going to take a picture."

Justin groaned. "I'm not going up there."

Lily laughed then covertly ran her fingers along his thigh. "If I have to go up, you have to go up." As she spoke the word *up*, she quickly tapped the obvious erection stretching the front of his pants. "Oh, and given the fact you were Class Clown, maybe it would be a good idea to fake a trip or something on the way to the stage."

Everyone at the table laughed loudly enough at her suggestion that it drew the attention of several people from surrounding tables—as well as Judith, who didn't appear happy about having her time in the limelight interrupted. "Well, it would appear Justin Porter is still up to his old tricks, so why don't we have the Class Clown come up first."

One quick glance down at his lap and he knew everyone at the table was going to be aware of his predicament as soon as he stood. Justin bent down to whisper in Lily's ear as he rose, using the opportunity to try to adjust his pants. "I'll get even with you for this later."

"I look forward to it," she replied huskily.

"Fuck." Her heated tone and warm breath sent his cock into red alert and he was suddenly afraid he might truly fall on the trip across the room, given the tree trunk currently residing in his pants.

"Think of toe fungus," Killian said quietly enough that only Lily heard.

"A vasectomy," Lily added.

Killian grinned. "A root canal."

"Very funny," Justin murmured. He took a quick breath then decided he could get his revenge and a shield now. He reached down and pulled Lily up, guiding her in front of him as he made his way to the stage.

"What are you doing?" she whispered as they approached Judith.

He grinned at the furious look on Judith's face. This impromptu scheme was getting better and better. "I think there's been some mistake," he said, reaching for the microphone and taking it from Judith's hands. "I clearly remember winning Most

Likely to Succeed with Lily. I think it was my two-point-oh GPA and brilliantly planned and executed senior prank that clinched it for me.”

The crowd laughed and cheered, likely recollecting the fact he and Killian had released a greased pig into a busy hallway the morning of final exams. “In fact, I think it was Mr. Laredo, the assistant principal, who nominated me.”

Lily laughed and shook her head but, bless her, remained in front of him. “Poor pig,” she said. The microphone picked up her comment and everyone laughed again. Well, everyone except Judith.

She grabbed the microphone back. “Ah, Justin still has that sense of humor,” Judith said tightly. He noticed she didn’t mention whether or not it was a good or bad one. Justin and Lily moved slightly to the side as Judith announced the rest of the Who’s Who winners. Killian and Tris flanked Justin in the back row, congratulating him for his quick thinking. They posed for no less than seven million pictures, Judith in her element organizing everyone.

Finally they were able to return to the table and the deejay started the music again with a slow dance number. Tris led Lane to the floor this time and Justin decided it was time to take the bull by the horns.

“So about tonight—” he started, but Lily cut him off.

“I want us to leave...together. Right now.”

Chapter Three

Lily had to fight back the nervous giggles threatening to erupt as Justin and Killian led her to the parking lot. They both had her by about a foot height-wise and she had to take two or three quick steps to match every one of their long strides. She was practically running by the time they reached Justin's pickup truck. Though, lagging slightly behind, she noted the Army had changed both men in subtle ways, taking Killian's stocky football frame and turning it into pure muscle. Jason, always lanky in school, had filled out nicely, with strong arms even his dress shirt couldn't hide.

"My car is over there." She pointed to her Subaru Outback two rows away.

"It's staying there too." Justin hit the button on his key ring to unlock the truck's doors.

"But I think..." She tried to consider her argument, her reason for wanting her car with her.

Killian gripped her arm and pulled her to face him. "If you're having second thoughts, Lily, now is the time to say so."

"I'm not." She wasn't. At all.

She'd had weeks—years—to think about, dream about this night. Hell would freeze over before she'd let these two men get away from her again. She'd had too many years to regret her shyness, her blasted innocence in high school. Too many years to dream about what could have been.

She'd come to this high-school reunion with only one thought in mind—to seduce Justin and Killian. She was going to give herself one night to live the fantasy before letting the real world and all its grownup responsibilities back in tomorrow.

Her crush on Killian Collins had started the first day of school her freshman year. She'd been the new kid in school after her father's work transferred him from Atlanta to

Baltimore. She'd never forget how terrified she'd been as she set out to meet her new classmates.

During first period, she'd taken a seat at the front of the classroom, trying to block out the whispers of the other kids as they tried to figure out who the new girl was. She could still recall a couple of the girls making nasty remarks about her short hair and ugly clothes. The nerd label had been attached to her within five minutes of entering the classroom and it was one that didn't go away through all four years of high school.

By the time second period had rolled around, she'd been near tears and plotting a trip to the clinic to convince the nurse she was too sick to stay. Killian had followed her into English class, claimed the seat next to hers and started talking to her as if they'd been friends forever. Somehow he'd known, he'd seen her fear and he'd alleviated it. He'd claimed her heart that day. Though she'd been far too timid to act on those feelings back in school, she'd be damned if she'd make the same mistake tonight.

"I just think it would be more convenient for all of us if I had my car with me. That way, when—"

"When we're finished fucking, you can sneak away like a thief in the night."

She turned to Justin and tried to be angry, but that emotion never surfaced when it came to him. "I hate that word. And I wouldn't sneak out."

"Sure you wouldn't."

"Get in the truck, Lily." Killian opened the door and waited for her to decide. He wouldn't force her, but they weren't leaving her any other option either.

She grinned and patted his cheek as she approached the truck cab. "You won't scare me away, K. I'm going through with tonight and that's all there is to it."

She expected to see the pained grimace he'd been sporting all night, so she was surprised when a wicked smile crossed his face. "I wouldn't have it any other way."

She stared at him, and then laughed when Justin gave a hoot behind her.

"Give me a boost." She faced the front seat, wiggled her rear end at Killian and glanced over her shoulder, immensely pleased when his eyes narrowed.

"God *damn*, you've got one hot ass. Was that always there?" Killian asked.

"Guess you couldn't see it underneath my good-girl clothes."

"Freaking long skirts," Justin said, his voice laden with disgust.

"My mother bought my clothes back then." She felt as if she should say something in her defense.

"Well, I have to say, I prefer your style to hers." Killian placed his strong hands at her waist, lifting her into the high cab. Rather than scooting over on her ass, she slowly crawled on all fours to the middle of seat, savoring the sounds of both men inhaling deeply behind her. She felt certain her short skirt wasn't covering much. Rather than sit down, she remained crouched on hands and knees, twisting her head around to look at them.

"You guys coming?" She stressed the word *coming* and giggled when Justin groaned.

"Hell yeah." Justin walked around to the driver's side while Killian climbed in beside her.

She started to sit, but K stopped her, placing his hand on her rear. "Don't move. You can't poke the bear, Lily, and not expect him to poke back."

It was her turn to groan when Killian's fingers slid under her skirt and caressed her ass. "It's a thong. Jesus. I love thongs."

"Wore it just for you," she teased.

Justin hauled himself onto the seat in front of her and she blushed when she found herself up close and personal with his crotch.

"Well, hello there," he muttered and she giggled.

"Jeez. This may be a bit harder than I thought." She was surprised by the fact they could take such a wicked act and make it fun. "There's clearly too much history here."

Her words were meant as a joke, but both men took them as a dare. Killian's hand ventured beneath the thong and he ran his finger from her clit to ass and back again, while Justin lifted her face to his. Before she realized his intent, he kissed her, deep and sexy as hell.

Christ, she'd been kissed before, but never like this. Justin kissed as if it mattered.

Killian's finger traveled back to her clit and she jerked back, gasping when he applied the perfect amount of pressure to the sensitive nub. Justin grinned and rested his forehead against hers. "Sometimes having a history can make things sweeter, easier. For instance, I have a sneaking suspicion you enjoy kissing. So you can be damn sure I'm gonna take lots of time with those pretty lips of yours." He punctuated his promise with another kiss and she let herself fall into the gentle beauty of it.

Distant laughter drifted from the direction of the reception doorway.

"Much as I'd like to finish this here, I think we should move this party to our place," Killian said.

She and Justin broke apart as Killian's hand rubbed her ass before helping her sit between them and buckling her in.

She glanced back, relieved to see two men standing at the reception hall door, chatting and smoking. They obviously weren't aware there was anyone in the truck until Justin started the engine and they pulled out of the parking lot.

"How about giving me one of those kisses?" Killian placed his hand on her cheek, pulling her lips to his. Where Justin's kisses were swift and potent, Killian's were tender. She marveled at how much their kisses fit their personalities. Killian had always been the protector, not only for her but for other misfits in school, like Chandler. He was their champion and she hadn't been surprised when he'd enlisted in the Army. She ran her fingers through his dark hair, trying not to melt under his soft caresses.

They separated at the sound of Justin's quietly muttered curse. "Gonna be lucky to make it back to our place if you two keep that up. You're steaming up the window and my cock's about to rip through these freaking pants."

Lily laughed. "Poor Justin. Where do you guys live? Is it far?"

"Too damn far," Justin replied.

At the same time Killian said, "Not far."

She shook her head and sighed happily. Though she'd considered her proposition carefully for weeks, she never really let herself believe it would actually happen. Killian leaned forward and toyed with the radio, switching through the stations until he found a slow country song. A peace descended upon them and Lily assumed they were just as lost in thought about the coming night as she was.

During the silence, she took time to observe the two men who'd been her best friends at one point in her life. Killian was kicked back, relaxed. He'd taken hold of her hand and was lightly rubbing her knuckles, the motions soothing. She glanced over at Justin, whose fingers were tapping impatiently against the steering wheel. A quick peek at the speedometer confirmed her suspicions. He wasn't joking about wanting to get her home as quickly as possible.

Justin's entire demeanor screamed of a cocky nature, but she knew there was more to the man than the smartass he loved to portray. She'd seen his true colors the day they'd buried Killian's mom. Sunday Collins had passed away after suffering from a long bout of cancer during their sophomore year.

Killian had been strong throughout the funeral service, standing stoically next to Tristan and his pop as her coffin was lowered into the ground. It was the first funeral Lily had ever attended and she still remembered how much she'd physically hurt, watching Killian's face as he said goodbye to his mother.

Justin stood beside her and she hadn't realized until the service was over that he'd been holding her hand the entire time. As the crowd dispersed and the family began to walk to their cars, they hung back with Killian...

Lily looked around the cemetery, searching for some words of comfort to offer. She didn't know what to say. Wasn't sure she could speak through the painful lump in her throat.

"My mom took off when I was three." Lily looked up, surprised by Justin's words. "I don't really remember her...and you know my dad. Conversation isn't exactly his thing. The first time I met your mom was after Little League practice. Sixth grade. She'd made us all chocolate chip cookies. Best fucking cookies I ever had."

Killian nodded and Lily watched him covertly wipe away a tear.

"A bunch of the parents were standing around. My dad was late coming to pick me up—as usual. Somebody asked where my mother was."

Killian grinned sadly. "You said aliens abducted her."

Justin laughed, though it certainly wasn't a happy sound. "Always was a little bastard. After that, your mom sort of claimed me. It was her voice I heard yelling my name from the stands. She baked me a cake on my thirteenth birthday—first cake that had my name on it and wasn't made by the grocery store. Whenever I smart-mouthed somebody, she set me straight in that calm, sweet voice that made me wanna fall on my knees and promise never to be bad again as long as I lived."

Killian laughed. "Discipline by guilt, my sisters call it."

"Yeah. Well, it worked on me and whenever I did something good in school, she made me some of those cookies. I didn't know my mom, Killian, but I'm sure as hell glad I knew yours."

Justin had known exactly the right words, and it was in that precise moment Lily had given a piece of her heart to him as well. She took a deep breath to calm herself. She hadn't expected the memories of her friends to be so potent, so strong after all these years.

She steadied her mind and recalled her purpose—lust. This was just lust, pure and simple. She was going to grab this night—this *one* night—filling it with as many sexy memories as she could while erasing every regret she'd ever suffered in regards to letting these men slip away. Then she was walking away in the morning and starting over fresh. Her future was finally going to begin. Spotless. Clean.

Killian pulled her hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles tenderly. She glanced over, taken aback by his kind smile.

Suddenly she could see there was a flaw in her plans she hadn't anticipated. Hadn't seen coming. Her desire for Justin and Killian could too quickly and too easily become something less containable, less acceptable.

Lust could be shared with more than one, but could love?

The past crashed in on her with that thought and she remembered why she'd never approached them before—she could never choose between them. Never consider a future with one and not the other. She took a deep breath and pushed that thought from her mind.

Just tonight. Just tonight.

Lily looked up when Justin pulled the car into a parking area in front of a row of townhouses. The buildings looked fairly new and they were well kept, the lawn groomed.

"Home sweet home." Justin put the truck in park and turned it off. Neither man made a move to open the doors and get out.

"Last chance, Lily," Killian said. "Once we get you in that house, things are gonna get pretty serious."

"Stop trying to scare her, K." Justin frowned at his friend before cupping her cheek gently in his large palm. "If you get scared or it becomes too much for you, just say so."

She took Justin's hand in hers, pulling it away from her face. "I won't say no. To anything."

Killian growled behind her, opening his door and reaching for her. She gave him her hand, amazed by how calm she felt. She wondered where she was getting the nerve to speak so casually. Why wasn't her heart racing with fear? Why weren't her hands shaking? This was completely out of her comfort zone and yet, as she held Killian's hand and followed him to the front door, she knew this was where she was meant to be.

Justin unlocked the door, hitting a light switch on his way into the living room. She glanced around the room, not surprised to find a bit of mess. She'd have been more concerned if she'd discovered the place spotless. It was clear they were two bachelors living together without the nagging influence of a woman. There was a half-eaten bowl of cereal on the coffee table, a couple empty beer cans, a few stray socks scattered around. Overall, the place looked comfortable and lived in.

What *did* surprise her was that the house was tastefully decorated. The furniture all matched and looked fairly new and clean. There were family pictures in frames on the wall and curtains hanging in the window that matched the décor.

"Nice place," she said.

Killian smiled at her comment. "Can't really take credit for that. My sisters helped us decorate when we moved back to Baltimore. We joined the service straight out of high school so we were pretty much starting from scratch. Gave Keira and Riley free rein to set the place up."

"They did a nice job. Two recliners?" She grinned when she spotted the two oversized chairs flanking the couch, all three pieces of furniture facing the biggest flat-screen TV she'd ever seen.

Justin laughed. "We always said when we got out of the Army, our first purchase would be recliners and a big screen. At the end of a long day, it's nice to come home, kick back with a beer and catch a game on the tube."

She walked over to one of the recliners and sat down. "So, have you broken them in yet?"

Killian's eyes narrowed, while Justin grinned widely.

"Don't know that we have." Justin walked forward until he stood directly in front of her, her gaze level with the reason he broke every speed limit in his race to get here.

She licked her lips, surprised when Killian walked to the second recliner across the room. He gestured to her with a wave of his hand. "It's your fantasy, your night."

She pressed her legs together, the thought of giving Justin a blowjob while Killian watched throwing her body into overdrive. She resisted the urge to pinch herself lest she was dreaming, instead putting her fingers to work opening Justin's dress pants.

The second she lowered the zipper, she realized he'd made the job easy for her.

"No underwear?"

Justin shook his head.

"You always were too impatient."

He grinned, placing his hands in her hair, his rough touch betraying his need. "Suck my cock, Lily." Then, he added a husky, "Please."

She pulled his erect penis out, thankful when he pushed his pants down, the material falling to his ankles. Apparently Justin's large size wasn't restricted to merely height and she closed her eyes, excited by the idea of taking all of him into her mouth. She wasn't a virgin, wasn't as innocent as she knew Killian suspected. She'd dated a few men and done her fair share of experimenting.

Tonight, though, all those past experiences seemed to pale in comparison as she opened her mouth and sucked in the head of Justin's cock.

Out of the corner of her eye, she watched Killian lean back against the recliner. His hands were moving to his pants and she assumed he was trying to find some relief of his own.

Justin's fingers returned to her hair and his grip tightened. She let him direct the speed, the motion for the moment. She could tell he was holding himself back, taking things slowly. As she adjusted to his girth, she decided to up the ante, reaching around and grabbing his ass, pulling him closer as the head of his cock brushed the back of her

throat. He moaned and Killian bent forward. She felt two pairs of eyes watching her every move and she marveled at the intensity of their scrutiny.

She squirmed, trying to ignore the surfeit of moisture gathering at the juncture of her thighs. Killian must have noticed her distress. He stood, walking over and kneeling beside the recliner.

Killian leaned over to whisper in her ear. "You need a little relief too, don't you, Lily?"

She nodded once, the motion driving Justin's dick even deeper.

"Jesus," Justin mumbled, using his hands to direct her motions once more. "Spread your legs. Let Killian make you feel good. I want you to climax on his fingers while you swallow down my cum."

Her eyes drifted closed, the images he described ripped from her naughtiest fantasies.

"Not sure what you were worried about, Lily." Killian's hand gripped her right knee, opening her legs for his sensuous touch. "Seems to me you're a natural at being a wild woman."

She moaned when he punctuated his comment with a quick rub of her wet thong.

"Move back on the recliner." Justin pulled his cock from her mouth, tapping her lips with his finger when she started to protest. "I've got an idea."

She leaned back, starting slightly when Justin stepped to the side. He kicked off his shoes and pants and released the footrest. She was nearly fully reclined when he straddled her, his weight supported by his knees on the armrests. He leaned over her, his cock nudging for entrance to her mouth once more. She welcomed him back gladly, loving his sure, strong strokes, swallowing the head on each upswing.

"Fuck. You're good at this." Her eyes narrowed at his language and he laughed. "You're gonna have to get used to the F word, baby girl. It's my favorite word...and my favorite thing to do. Now open those legs and let Killian have a taste."

Killian's fingers peeled her panties down her legs before returning to push her skirt above her hips. She jumped when she felt his tongue rasp against her clit. She hadn't expected him to move so quickly. Her eyes closed once more, savoring the salty taste of pre-cum as it dripped from Justin's cock. Killian added his fingers to the play, driving two inside her pussy while sucking on her clit, teasing the ripe bud with firm lips.

"Jesus, Justin. She's hotter than the Iraqi desert."

Lily groaned, the sound vibrating against Justin's cock. His hand returned to her hair and she noticed his movements in her mouth were less careful, more erratic as he approached his climax. The thought of driving one of the sexiest men she'd ever known to this place sent a fresh round of arousal to her pussy.

Killian didn't miss that fact. "Our girl likes having her mouth fucked."

She grinned at his words and Justin moaned again. "Watch those teeth, Lil. And Killian, hurry up. I'm not gonna make it much longer."

Killian increased the speed of his fingers and deepened the suction on her clit. Lily felt stars gather behind her eyes and knew she was a goner. She reached up, grasping Justin's balls, loving how they filled her hand.

"God. Dammit." Justin spoke his cry through gritted teeth as Killian twisted his fingers inside her, hitting a sweet spot she didn't know existed. She screamed around Justin's cock, the sound no doubt announcing her orgasm to every neighbor within a five-mile radius.

Killian didn't lighten his assault, driving her climax even higher with deeper, stronger thrusts. The orgasm, though probably only a few seconds long, seemed to last for hours. When at last it began to wane, Killian pulled his hand away, placing light kisses on her quivering thighs.

Justin gripped her cheeks with both hands. "I'm gonna come." She forced her eyes open, the need to see his face overwhelming all the other sensations roaring through her body. The first hot splash of cum painted her throat and she swallowed, loving the way Justin's face contorted, the pleasure suffusing it resembling that of intense pain.

Nothing like making someone hurt so good.

For several seconds, they all remained motionless—Killian's head resting on her leg, Justin's now-soft cock filling her mouth.

She sighed contently as Justin pulled out, moving one leg over her and rising from the recliner.

She started to protest him leaving the chair, but the words died in her throat when Killian came over her, his body covering hers from chest to toe. Somewhere along the line, he'd taken off his pants as well.

His lips grazed her cheek. "Ready for round two?"

Chapter Four

Killian kissed Lily's face, savoring the sight of her flushed cheeks and well-loved look. She was incredible. He couldn't believe he'd ever questioned her ability to participate in a ménage. She was living, breathing sex and he couldn't wait to explore every nuance of her.

"Round two?" Her hot breath washed over his face when they separated.

"Meatloaf might not have a problem with two out of three, but I have a little situation here that needs attention." He rubbed his erection against her stomach and she laughed quietly.

"You call that little?"

He grinned. "Well, thank you for noticing."

Justin chuckled and Killian glanced over to discover his friend had moved away from them, sitting on the floor, his back leaning against the wall that was no doubt holding him up after the incredible blowjob he'd just received.

"You've always been all talk, K. How about a little more action? I'd like to move this party up to the bedroom eventually."

Justin held up a condom, tossing it across the few feet that separated them. "You might need this."

He caught the square foil wrapper.

"Impatient," she and Killian said in unison. They laughed for a few moments while Justin rolled his eyes.

"Although," Killian bent down to kiss her again, "I'm feeling sort of impatient myself."

Lily lifted her legs, wrapping them around his thighs. "Me too."

He quickly donned the condom, his mind whirling over the fact he was about to have sex with Lily Watterson. The idea felt completely foreign and yet totally right.

He placed the head of his cock at the opening of her wet entrance and paused.

"If you ask me again if I'm sure, I'm going to hit you...hard." Her words caught him off-guard and he grinned, pushing in a few inches before pausing.

"I was actually going to see how you felt about a quickie. There's no way I'm gonna be able to go slow this time. Promise to make it up to you next time."

Her pussy fluttered against his cock.

"Mmm," he hummed, directing his words to Justin. "I think she likes that idea."

"Thank God," Justin muttered as Killian slowly pushed the rest of the way into the tight clasp of her body. She shuddered when he seated his cock to the hilt and he stopped again, taking a moment to appreciate the wet heat surrounding him. He hadn't been joking about this being over fast. He'd been sporting this particular hard-on since first spotting her at the reunion.

"I love how you feel inside me," she whispered against his cheek. He kissed her neck, around her ear, agreeing with the sentiment. They fit together perfectly. That idea niggled in his brain for a split second before he brushed it aside.

"Hold on, sweetness."

He retreated slowly but couldn't resist the need to push back in immediately. He tried to keep his thrusts steady but her pussy was waging a relentless siege on his cock. Her inner muscles tightened, clamping down on him in the most delicious way. Her hushed moans driving him to move faster, just so he could keep listening to her beautiful cries.

He wasn't aware until he heard Justin's voice directly beside him that his friend had given up his post at the wall and was kneeling beside the recliner. "Jesus, that looks hot."

Killian's pace picked up again and Lily cried out. "God, yes!"

Justin cupped her cheek, turned her face toward his and started kissing her. Killian wasn't sure why he got off on watching his best friend pleasure a woman, but it had always been this way.

Because of the awkward angle of the recliner, Killian's hands were occupied, holding his weight off Lily's slight frame. "Pinch her nipples, Justin. Make those pretty breasts of hers feel good," he commanded.

Justin's hand gripped her breast, not bothering to venture beneath her silky blouse. There simply didn't seem to be time. Killian's cock pounded harder and Lily threw her head back as he watched Justin tweak her nipple firmly through the material of her bra. Her pussy began to ripple against his cock, her orgasm too strong for him to resist. His balls tightened and he followed her into climax, cursing as pulse after pulse of semen filled the condom. "Holy fuck," he muttered.

His arms collapsed, his weight now supported by his elbows. Her chest rose and fell rapidly with her accelerated breathing and he savored the feeling of her nipples as she rubbed against him. His soft cock stirred to life once more.

Lily's eyes opened and he knew she'd noticed. "You're kidding me."

He shrugged and grinned. He'd never felt the pull to fuck so strongly and he shook his head. "Might take a few times, sweetness."

"I didn't think guys could –" She blushed and he and Justin laughed.

"Little late for the blushes, Lil," Justin said, running his knuckles along her cheek. "We've officially outed you as bad girl of the century. Now you're just going to have to keep up."

Lily tightened her legs around Killian's hips and he groaned as she worked her pussy muscles against his cock. "I was valedictorian, remember? While I may lack hands-on experience, I'm a very quick study."

Killian clenched his teeth as he pulled out of her body. "Come on. Let's move this show to the bedroom."

He rose from the recliner, allowing Justin to offer Lily a hand to help her up as he quickly disposed of the condom. As she stood, her skirt fell back into place. For a moment, the three of them looked at each other – and then burst into laughter.

Justin shook his head. “You’re still dressed.”

“I guess we were in a hurry.” Lily shrugged and pointed at their shirts. “I have a confession to make.”

“Oh yeah? What kind of confession?” Killian asked.

“I used to study in Mrs. Armini’s classroom after school because it overlooked the track. You guys would do laps without your shirts and I loved looking at your bare chests.”

“Damn, Lily. You were pretty good at hiding your interest.” Justin crossed his arms over his chest. “I had no idea.”

“I was shy and awkward and incredibly plain looking. You guys would have run the other way if I’d revealed my crush. Besides, I can’t tell you how much teen angst I wasted on the fact I was in lust with both of you at the same time. Regardless of my book smarts, I didn’t stumble upon the idea of a threesome until our senior year and by then...” She let her sentence fade away, unfinished.

“By then, we were friends and none of us wanted to screw that up.” Killian recalled having more than a few impure thoughts about Lily in school, but like her, he’d never acted on them, never admitted them – even to Justin.

Justin reached over and wrapped his arm around Lily’s shoulders, pulling her close. “I would have screwed up the friendship in a flash if I’d known you were hot for my body,” he joked, and they all laughed.

Killian shook his head. “You probably would have. As I recall, your entire reason for living at that point in time was sex.”

“Has that changed?” Justin joked and they laughed again.

"I'm glad I didn't confess my feelings then," Lily admitted. "I was too young, too naïve. The timing is perfect now. We're all adults, all able to grab a night like this and enjoy it without letting immature emotions muddy the water."

Killian wondered if that was true and he could read the same concern on Justin's face. He didn't like working under a deadline, didn't like time limits. Lily seemed determined to keep this reunion brief, but she was a fool if she thought they'd let her leave their lives again that easily. Regardless of what happened tonight, he wanted the friendship back. Of that, he was sure. As for the rest? He sighed. Time would tell.

Justin gestured toward the stairs with his head. "Come on. Let's finish this conversation in bed. Naked."

As they reached the top of the stairs, Justin paused a moment before leading them toward Killian's room.

"Not gonna let Lily see that disaster you call a bedroom?" Killian taunted.

Justin grinned. "Your bed is bigger."

"Told you not to skimp on money, wasting your time with the queen-sized mattress."

"And once again, you get to say I told you so. You go on ahead. I just bought a box of condoms the other day. Something tells me we're gonna need them if we're going to keep up with our wild woman tonight. I'll grab them out of my bedroom."

Killian nodded, aware Justin would be grabbing the new tube of lubrication he'd purchased as well. He worried about where his friend's thoughts were traveling. Though they'd both sampled Lily's lovely body, he had no doubt Justin wouldn't stop until they'd claimed every part of her. He led Lily into his bedroom, wondering if she was ready for what that would entail. He watched her quietly take in his simple room, wrapping his arm around her waist from behind. "You hanging in there?"

She nodded, turning to face him, remaining within his hold. "I'm fine. I'm better than fine."

He bent his head to kiss her, the pull of her lips too irresistible. Her tongue lightly brushed his lower lip and he took her invitation to deepen the kiss. He wasn't sure how long they lingered, tasting each other's mouths, sharing the same air, but it was Justin who brought them back to reality.

"Getting kind of cold in this bed alone."

Killian raised his eyes and caught a glimpse of Justin lounging on his bed. He'd removed his shirt and his arms were crossed behind his head. Killian wondered how long he'd watched them kiss. Did Justin get the same thrill from watching that he did? They'd never discussed their habit of sharing, always just going with the flow. Now he found himself wondering how his friend really felt about it.

Killian quickly unbuttoned his shirt, shoving it off his shoulders. He caught Lily's quick intake of breath and he grinned. "Still look okay?" he teased, flexing his muscles playfully.

She didn't laugh, instead stepping closer, running her hand along his bare chest. "I've always wanted to touch you."

His eyes closed as her hand explored his pecs, his flat brown nipples, his abs. When her lips lightly caressed his chest, he knew he was going to be a goner if they didn't get her into the bed soon.

"And once again, you're still fully dressed." Killian walked to the bed, sitting beside Justin who'd moved from a lounging position to a sitting one, his legs hanging over the edge of the mattress.

"Take off your clothes," Justin prodded.

Lily licked her lips and Killian could see she was uncomfortable with the concept of taking her clothing off as they watched. He grinned. "Be daring, Lily. You're sexy as shit. Now show us that body."

She took a deep breath and he watched her amazing determination—no, it was courage, he decided—rise to the forefront.

She unbuttoned her blouse slowly, tantalizing them with tiny peeks before stripping the shirt off completely. Next she shed her bra and Killian's hand went instinctively to his now-raging erection, trying to soothe the hungry flesh. Her breasts were perfect, large and firm. His mouth watered and he heard Justin curse under his breath.

"Fucking hell, Lil." His friend was also working his hand against his own stiff cock.

She reached up and cupped her breasts, holding them up and smiling. "You like?"

"Come here." Justin's voice was gravelly, demanding, but Lily didn't take offense as she crossed the room to where they sat. Both of them reached for her, each claiming one of her lilywhite tits with their lips.

"Oh my God," she breathed and Killian felt her left hand tangle in his hair, holding him to her. He sucked her taut nipple into his mouth, watching out of the corner of his eye as Justin bit the nipple he'd claimed. They worked her sensitive flesh until her squirming and moans became too much to bear.

"Take off that fucking skirt." Justin pulled away and Killian knew his friend was suffering the same fate as he. The fact he'd already come once tonight didn't seem to be appeasing his cock as the head threatened to split under the force of the blood pulsing through it.

Killian helped Lily shed the skirt when he noticed her hands shaking with the effort. One look as her face proved it wasn't fear, but need driving her reaction.

"Hurry," she pleaded as he pushed the material to the floor and she kicked it off.

Justin lay back on the bed, his legs still hanging over the edge, beckoning Lily toward him. "Grab one of those condoms, baby girl. I want you to ride me."

She hastily did Justin's bidding, putting the condom on him and climbing onto the bed.

"Not that way." Justin turned her so she faced away from him and Killian could see the confusion on her face.

Killian helped her into position, keeping her hips directly over Justin's, and pushed her back down slightly. "Arch your back a little and take him in this way, Lily."

She reached between her legs, drawing Justin's cock to her pussy. Slowly, she sank down.

"God yes, Lily. You feel so good inside, baby girl."

Killian marveled at the way she easily accepted the new position, her movements slow and easy at first.

"It feels strange this way. Strange but good. Your—" Her words stopped abruptly and Justin's hands clenched on her waist, stilling her movements.

"Cock," Justin said. "Say it, Lil."

She shook her head and tried to resume moving, but neither of them was inclined to let her escape.

"Call it a cock, sweetness. Tell Justin his cock feels good inside your pussy."

"I don't like those words."

Killian chuckled. "You don't like the words, but you sure as hell like what they do. Tell him. Tell him you like it."

"I like his cock. It feels nice inside me."

Justin's hands relaxed and Killian kissed her. "You are so sexy, so hot."

She smiled at his praise, riding Justin harder, faster. Killian ran his hands through her hair, shocked when her hands gripped his waist and her lips began to descend, licking a trail from his neck, down his chest to his—

"Fuck, Lily." Her lips engulfed his cock, her hips still moving against Justin's.

"Holy shit." Justin rose up on his elbows, watching as Lily took them both inside her body.

On each retreat from Killian's erection, she sank back on Justin's cock. As she surged forward, she took his dick to the back of her throat, swallowing the head until he thought he'd pass out from the intensity. He'd never gotten a blowjob like it before

and, paired with the image of her fucking Justin's cock, well...he was about to embarrass himself again. What the fuck? He was coming at the drop of a hat like a randy schoolboy.

He tried to think of anything to slow down his imminent eruption, even tried to close his eyes, but her motions became harsher as she was shoved forward by Justin's hips thrusting into her. His friend's moans mingled with hers and he gave up the battle.

"Fuck it," he said harshly. "I have to come."

"Me too," Justin said through gritted teeth. He took the man's words as permission, gripping Lily's head, holding her still as he pushed into her mouth one more time. His climax seemed to set her off and her body twitched as she swallowed his cum, her fingers digging into the muscles of his thighs so hard, he knew she was leaving bruises.

As he pulled from her mouth, Justin moved quickly, rising and turning her onto her stomach. He shoved into her once, twice, before Lily screamed and Justin's ass flexed with his own orgasm. Killian couldn't take his gaze away from the sight of the two of them gasping for air as they reached the pinnacle.

After a few moments, Justin rolled to the side, Lily whimpering as he left her body. "Did I hurt you, Lil?" Justin asked with such concern, Killian kicked himself for calling his friend a heartless prick at the reunion. Watching him with Lily had proven Justin was just as worried about her welfare as he was. She was theirs to care for and he knew it was a task they both took seriously.

"No," Lily whispered. "Just sort of fucked me to death. It's okay though. I liked it."

Justin laughed as Killian sat down on the edge of the bed, running his hands along the supple skin on the back of her leg.

"Must've been good," Justin teased. "You just said the F word."

Lily groaned but her eyes remained closed. "Nap," she said, and he and Justin chuckled as her breath deepened and she drifted off to sleep.

Justin stood from the bed and pulled off his condom. "Let me take care of this and get a warm washcloth from the bathroom. She's bound to be sore when she wakes up."

Killian nodded. "I'll try to get her between the sheets."

Justin laughed and slapped him on the back. "Fuck this one-night thing. She's staying the whole weekend."

"Maybe even longer," he whispered when Justin disappeared down the hall and he looked at Lily asleep on his bed. "Maybe even longer."

Chapter Five

It was still dark outside when Justin stirred. He wondered for a moment what had woken him, and then he felt it again. Lily's hand moved slightly on his stomach, her warm breath tickling his chest hair. He glanced over her shoulder and could see Killian spooning her from behind. A quick peek at the clock told him he'd only slept a couple of hours.

He struggled to put the events of the night into some sort of order he could understand. He'd gone to the reunion hoping for a quick hookup, maybe with some old high-school girlfriend. He'd envisioned an easy night of slap and tickle, a few shits and giggles between the sheets and then his trademark fast escape. Instead, he'd found Lily, the one woman from his past who'd always seen through him, seen straight to the core and still found something redeemable, something good inside.

His mother had taken off when he was small, so he'd grown up in the most masculine home on the East Coast—just him and his dad. They'd existed on takeout, eating every meal on paper plates in front of the TV. It was Lily who'd introduced him to the concept of eating at a table, showing him there was actually a proper way to set one. She'd taught him how to make lasagna and how to make a bed with hospital corners. She'd helped him pick out his tuxedo for prom and gone with him to the florist to order the corsage for his date. For four years, she'd taken it upon herself to expose him to things his mother should have shown him.

When he'd admitted he didn't know how to dance, she hadn't laughed. Instead, she'd taken his dilemma to heart and, in typical Lily fashion, she'd researched an answer. He grinned as he recalled her showing up outside his door the Saturday morning of prom...

"What are you doing here?" he'd asked, surprised to find Lily armed with a CD player. His dad had taken off to check out one of his jobsites.

"I'm going to teach you how to dance." She walked in and immediately started clearing garbage off the coffee table.

"How to dance?" Justin followed her around and started picking up the mess too, used to Lily cleaning up whenever she came over to visit.

"Yeah. I mean, I don't really know how to dance either and I'm not exactly Madonna, but I watched MTV the last couple of nights and I think I've figured a few things out."

"You watched MTV? For me?" He smiled at the idea of Lily studying the concept of dancing just to help him.

"It's senior prom, Justin. There's no way I'm gonna let you go in there doing those stupid lawnmower and sprinklers moves."

"They're funny."

"Just watch me." She pushed play and a fast song with a super-strong beat started pulsing through the room. Lily began moving to the music and after a few songs and a lot of laughter, Justin felt as if he'd actually be able to dance at prom without embarrassing himself.

"Now for the slow songs," she said.

Justin grinned. "Slow songs are easy. You just wrap your arms around the girl and cop as many feels as you can in three minutes."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Well, I guess we can skip that part of the lesson then."

He shook his head. "No, I'm not sure we can. I think maybe I should teach you how to defend yourself during a slow dance."

"I don't think I have to worry about anybody asking me for a slow dance."

"Why not?"

"I don't have a date for prom, remember? I wouldn't be going at all except you and K are making me."

Justin pointed to the CD player. "Put the song on, Lil."

She pushed play and Aerosmith came through the speakers. He walked over and smiled when she blushed. "Okay, put your hands around my neck." She did and he shook his head at how she was touching him and still managing to keep five feet between them. He gripped her waist and pulled her body against his. She gasped at the closeness, but he ignored her and started swaying.

He'd intended to tease her as they danced, pretending to grope her while instructing her on how to fend him off, but the second they'd started dancing, he'd forgotten the joke and instead they'd just moved in time to the song.

It was the only time he'd ever danced with Lily and he was surprised now to realize he could remember the moment so vividly. Steven Tyler's lyrics had been right. He didn't want to miss a thing. And apparently, dancing with Lily in his living room, he hadn't.

He watched her sleep and marveled over how amazing the night had been, then he chuckled silently thinking about how their goals—though completely opposite—had led them both to this same place. While Lily wanted to explore her naughty nature, take a walk on the wild side, he'd been thinking lately he should settle down, find a nice girl and try to become a better person. Talk about irony.

She shifted a little and Justin felt Killian stir, watched as his friend opened his eyes, taking the same stock of his surroundings that he'd just taken.

"She's still here," Justin whispered.

Killian grinned. "So she is."

"Where else would she be? You guys wouldn't let me bring my car." Lily lifted her head, her sleepy look twisting something inside Justin.

Killian leaned forward and placed a gentle kiss on her shoulder. "You don't need your car. We're not finished with you yet."

"You ready for round three?" Justin asked with a grin. "You sort of conked out on us after round two."

She looked over her shoulder at Killian before turning back to him. "What did you have in mind?"

Justin caught Killian's gaze, wondering if his friend was hoping for the same thing he was. In all their years of playing at threesomes, there was one position they'd never tried, never even suggested. With the other women, he'd never wanted to go that far, but now, with Lily, he wanted it more than his next breath.

"How familiar are you with anal play?"

Lily noticeably stiffened and Killian frowned. "Justin—" he started, but Lily cut him off.

"Do you want the truth?" she asked.

Justin scowled. "Of course I want the truth. Don't ever tell me something just because you think it's what I want to hear. You never did that in the past. Don't start now."

Lily nodded. "You're right. I guess honesty is about the best thing we have going for us with this night of fantasies. We don't have to pretend or lie or wonder because we all know each other so well."

"It's not going to be just one night, Lil." Justin didn't mean to lay it out so abruptly, but her obvious intention to cut and run come morning was starting to grate on his nerves.

"But we said —"

"We know what you wanted, sweetness," Killian said. "But there's no way we can squeeze all the fantasies into just one night. Stay the weekend with us."

Lily bit her lower lip but Justin could see her obvious desire to stay. He decided to push the envelope. "Turns out you aren't the only one with some fantasies to fulfill. You've sort of whetted my appetite for more."

"More?"

He nodded. "Which brings us back to my original question."

Lily swallowed heavily and he could see her mind working overtime to figure out how to word her answer.

"Honesty," he reminded her. "We'll know if you're lying anyway. You're shit at it." He spoke the words lightly and she giggled.

"I know I am. Part of that good-girl baggage."

"Lily," Killian started, "we're not going make you do anything you're uncomfortable with."

Though his words were directed at her, Killian's glare was drilling holes through Justin's head.

"I've never done anything," she paused and sighed, "sexual in, um, that area."

"Why not?"

She laughed at Justin's forthright question. "No one's ever asked."

"Well, I'm asking."

Killian muttered, "Jesus, Justin."

"I'd like to try." Her blush covered nearly her whole body as she spoke and Justin narrowed his eyes, studying her face intently, trying to read any deceit in her answer. He saw none.

"Are you sure?"

She nodded quickly. "I'm sure." Then, in typical Lily fashion, she twisted the subject around, lobbing the ball directly back into his court. "What did you mean I wasn't the only one with fantasies left unfulfilled? I sort of thought you guys had covered all the sex bases."

Justin cleared his throat, looking toward his friend for help, but Killian closed his eyes and shook his head. "You started it. You finish it."

Justin looked back at Lily. "I know I said K and I have participated in threesomes before. That wasn't a lie, but there's one thing we've never—" Fuck. This is why talking things out was never a good idea. It led to awkward conversations.

"You've never what?"

"Taken a woman at the same time."

Lily nodded slowly. "You mean—"

"I mean I wanna fuck your ass while Killian claims that hot pussy of yours."

Lily sighed. "I'm pretty sure that would hurt. A lot."

Justin chuckled. "I think we'd make sure it didn't."

"And if it did, we'd stop. Immediately." Killian's voice was firm and Justin knew he'd pay later for starting this line of conversation. Regardless of the fact his friend clearly wanted the same experience, he knew K well enough to know he'd never ask for it because of the risk of causing Lily pain.

Justin just happened to know there was good pain and bad pain, and he'd seen Lily react with definite lust to his rough touches throughout the night.

"So it's settled," he said, deciding there was a definite risk in allowing anyone to think about this subject for too long. "You'll stay the weekend and we'll do a bit of experimenting."

Lily looked as though she wanted to protest, but he wasn't man enough to hear which part she took exception to, so he leaned down and kissed her. Claimed her lips, hard and long, working overtime to try to wipe out any lingering fears she had. He'd rather rip off his left nut than hurt her and if that meant skipping the double penetration, so be it. He just couldn't let her leave. Not yet.

When she went soft in his arms, he gentled the kiss, letting Killian pull her toward him. She went willingly and Justin watched his friends embrace, his cock twitching at

the sight. He watched for several minutes before deciding to re-enter the picture. He brushed her long hair aside, kissing the back of her neck. He grinned when he felt her tremble with his touch. He let his hand drift down the side of her waist while K stroked her cheeks, her jaw with his fingers.

"So beautiful," he heard his friend murmur. "So brave."

Justin considered Killian's compliments and realized they were true. Lily had come to that reunion with the goal of seducing not one of them, but both. So far, she'd taken to their advances like a fish to water, never balking, never shying away. She was amazing.

His hand left her waist and hip, moving to grip her ass. She stiffened under his touch for only a second before relaxing again. He looked up and realized Killian had broken off the kiss. For a moment, Justin thought his friend might call a halt, so he was surprised when Killian twisted onto this back, dragging Lily on top of him.

"Get up on your knees, sweetness, and straddle my hips." Killian directed her into the position before pulling her head back down, his lips taking hers again for a brief kiss. "Be very sure, Lil."

Lily grinned at Killian and then turned to face Justin. "I'm sure."

Her trust, her belief that they would make this good for her, blew him away. In all his life, no one—except maybe K—had ever had such unshakable faith in him. The magnitude of that truth nearly knocked him over. He smiled, suddenly feeling like the luckiest bastard on earth.

He rose, moving to kneel by her hip, running his hand along her smooth buttocks. Killian had reclaimed her lips and he wondered if his friend wasn't hoping to distract her a bit from what he planned to do. He ran his fingers along the valley between her ass cheeks, relieved to find her pussy wet and hot as fire. She wasn't afraid. Given the size of her engorged clit, he'd say she was damn excited at the prospect of what he offered. He pressed on her clit and she groaned, thrusting toward his fingers, seeking

more of the pressure. He provided it, rubbing the nub firmly, quickly. Her hips took up the pace and she broke away from Killian's kiss to gasp for air.

"God, Justin. That feels so good."

"All I ever want is to make you feel good, Lily." As he spoke the words, he realized they were the truth. He continued applying pressure, loving the mindless motion of her hips as her body sought more pleasure.

"Come for us," Killian demanded. "Let me see that pretty face of yours when you climax."

Justin increased the pressure on her clit, sliding his thumb into her pussy. She groaned, her inner muscles clenching against him. With his other hand, he gathered some of the copious moisture between her legs, drawing it to her anus. She stiffened for only a moment when he tapped the puckered hole. Killian kissed her again and Justin saw his friend playing with her breasts as well.

Lily squirmed between them like a toddler in church, her body shifting into overdrive with all their touches. When he slid his finger into her ass to the first knuckle, he watched the dam give way. She trembled as she came, crying out her pleasure in the sweetest voice he'd ever heard. God, she was the most gorgeous woman he'd ever met.

She collapsed on top of Killian and he watched his friend embrace her, whispering sweet nothings in her ear as her body slowly stopped quivering. He didn't realize for a moment that his fingers were still inside her, he was so overwhelmed by her reactions to them. He moved his hand away from her clit and pussy, but left the one finger in her ass, wiggling it slightly.

She groaned but didn't move away. In fact, she offered the slightest pressure, pushing back against his finger as if to invite more. He paused when he felt Killian's gaze on him.

"Get the lube," his friend said and Justin nodded. Even though her body was producing plenty of juice, it was her first time with this type of sex play and he wanted her completely comfortable.

He moved from his spot on the bed, reaching for the lubrication he'd carried in when he'd fetched the condoms. Speaking of which, he looked back at K and raised his eyebrows. Killian shrugged slightly then nodded.

Justin grabbed a couple condoms, handing one to his friend. Lily had begun to stir, the reverie of her climax fading, and she watched him curiously.

"So what's the plan?" she asked.

"I thought I'd let Killian fuck that hot pussy of yours while I stretch your ass with my fingers."

Lily shook her head. "Those words just fly out of your mouth, don't they? I don't think I've ever met anyone like you. You can spout out the dirtiest words I've ever heard in my life without even blinking an eye."

He and K laughed at her comment. "I figure if I can do it, I can say it. You might wanna think about that, wild woman."

"Touché." She sighed but grinned. "Here, let me do that." She took the condom out of Killian's hand and both men watched, spellbound, as she ripped the package open with her teeth before pulling the rubber over Killian's dick in such a sexy way, Justin felt for his friend. He couldn't imagine trying to hold back in the face of her tormenting.

When she finished, Killian swallowed heavily before choking out the words, "Climb on."

She obeyed, pressing down on Killian's cock like they had all the time in the world.

"We've created a monster." Justin resumed his spot beside her hip.

"We've created a cock tease." Killian placed his hands at her waist, holding Lily still when she grinded his dick even farther inside her.

"Lean forward, Lil, and hold still." Justin gently nudged her forward until her head rested on Killian's chest, leaving her ass open and ready for his intentions. "This will be cold at first." He squirted a generous dollop of lube at the entrance to her anus and

grinned when she shivered. He suspected the chill *and* the anticipation had caused her response.

He lightly rimmed the tight pucker before slowly pushing his finger in. He drove the digit forward until it was completely inside her and he felt her stiffen at his relentless stroke. No doubt she'd expected him to stop at the first knuckle again.

"You're holding your breath, sweetness." Killian ran his fingers through her hair, lifting her face to his. "Breathe."

She stirred and Justin decided to let K do the comforting while he did the initiating. He pulled his finger in and out several times, keeping his pace easy, gentle. Soon she began anticipating his return trip and started moving toward him. Killian—showing more patience than Justin would have been able to muster—finally broke and started thrusting up inside her shallowly while Justin countered the movement in her ass.

He hadn't realized how much of Killian's cock he would be able to feel through the thin membrane between them.

"I can feel his dick, Lil. God, how can you hold all of that?"

Killian and Lily both groaned at his heated question and he continued. "Imagine when it's my cock inside you, not my finger. Killian and I will be able to feel each other as we take you. Jesus, do you know how tight that's gonna be?"

"So good," Lily whispered.

He paused. "Fuck. That doesn't make me gay, does it?"

Lily and Killian burst into fits of laughter and Justin's finger fell out of her ass. "Dammit, you made me lose my place."

"I'm sure you'll find it again," Lily replied once she'd regained control of herself.

Killian was still shaking his head. "Sometimes I worry about all the shit that goes on inside that head of yours, Justin. You're not gay, now shut up. My balls are about to explode and you keep distracting me."

Lily began to ride Killian and Justin decided he couldn't stand not tasting her lips another minute. He gripped her hair, kissing her quickly before moving away from the couple. She looked over at him questioningly and he grinned and shrugged. "I like watching you," he admitted.

"Good." Killian sat up, pushing Lily on her back to the bed. "I can't wait any longer, Lil. Gotta have you. Gotta —"

She wrapped her legs around his friend's waist and he watched them move frantically toward the finish line together. They'd both clearly been holding back for too long. Killian pumped into her body like a piston and Justin marveled at the way Lily spurred him on, her fingernails leaving red tracks along K's back.

They cried out at the same time as they came and Justin ran his hand along his own painful erection. He donned a condom when Killian pulled out, falling to the side of the bed on his back, panting. Justin came over her, an apology hovering on his lips. They'd taken her several times tonight. He was a bastard to ask for more.

Before he could speak a word, she reached up to him. "Come inside me. I've missed you."

He swallowed heavily, slowly pushing his way into her warmth, her comfort, her body. He took her with great care, rocking gently while stroking her clit the way he knew she loved. She came twice before he joined her. Killian was asleep by the time they finished and when Justin returned from the bathroom with the washcloth, Lily had curled up on his friend's chest, sleeping soundly as well.

For a moment, he sat on the edge of the bed and watched them. Lily had asked for one night and they'd convinced her to give them the weekend. He ran his hand lightly over her hair and wondered how much more he dared to ask for, realizing he wanted far too much.

Chapter Six

Lily opened her eyes, trying to focus on the strange sheet under her head. It was warm, flesh-colored and moving. She sucked in a breath and tried to look up covertly. Killian was watching her, his breathing even and deep. She wondered how long he'd lain awake, allowing her to use him as a pillow.

"Morning, sweetness."

"Hey." She licked her lips and wiggled her hips slightly, fighting to mask her wince and failing.

"Sore?"

She shook her head and Killian rolled his eyes at her outright lie. "Of course you are. What do you say I fill the tub with hot water and bubbles? You can have a nice long soak while I make you some breakfast."

She sighed. That sounded heavenly—mainly because she could really use some time alone to get her thoughts in order. "I'd like that." She glanced behind her, aware the other side of the bed was empty. "Where's Justin?"

"He had to run a couple errands. Got an early start."

She looked at the clock. It was nearly twelve. "You call noon an early start?"

Killian chuckled. "That's about as early as we were going to manage today. You wore us out last night."

"Yeah, well, considering I'm actually the last person to wake up, I think I may win in the 'worn out' category."

Killian frowned, reaching over to cup her cheek. His gesture was so sweet, she fought back tears. "You doing okay with this?"

She nodded. "I think I'm overwhelmed by how—"

"Amazing it is." He finished her sentence perfectly.

"In my wildest dreams, I never imagined it would feel so... God, where the hell are my words today?"

He grinned. "You're saying it all just fine. You sure you're okay with staying longer? I know the deal was for one night, but we just got you back after a decade and last night went by too damn fast."

She agreed with his assessment. "I want to stay longer."

He sat up, pulling her along with him. He leaned forward to kiss her. "I'll start running the water. Why don't you dig through the top drawer in that dresser over there and see if you can't find a T-shirt to wear. I doubt you wanna put those fancy clothes back on and since we're just hanging out today, I sort of like the idea of you walking around in my shirt."

She grinned. "Sounds great."

He walked out of the room and she swallowed past the lump clogging her throat. What the hell was she doing? Staying longer was stupid, utterly stupid. She'd wanted Justin and Killian for ten years and she'd told herself she could handle one night. Just one night to live out her wicked fantasies before returning to the real world, a bit lonelier perhaps, but at least she wouldn't be suffering anymore from the damn regret that had plagued her this past decade.

She'd known the words she wanted to use to describe last night to Killian, but all of them would have given her away, revealed far too much. The dream of being with K and Justin didn't hold a candle to the reality of it and her fantasies had been pretty fan-damn-tastic. How was she going to be able to protect her heart if today followed suit? Both men were funny, handsome, generous. It was as if everything she'd adored about them in high school had solidified, grown and matured into more than she'd ever anticipated. Criminy. She was falling fast and hard...for both of them...*again*.

"Stupid," she muttered.

"Water's just about ready," Killian yelled out from the bathroom.

She roused herself from the bed, crossing to the dresser. "I can do this," she muttered. "I can do this."

She grabbed a T-shirt from the drawer, pausing to smell the fresh, clean shirt, hoping the cotton carried some of K's mouthwatering, masculine scent.

Jeez. She rolled her eyes. This was *not* going to end well.

* * * * *

Lily reached for another piece of pizza and tried to remember when she'd had a nicer afternoon. She'd lounged in the bathtub until the water went cold, the long soak doing wonders for her stiff muscles. Rather than coming down for breakfast, she'd discovered Justin had returned with a late lunch—three large pizzas and a case of beer. Staples, he'd called them. They'd spent the last hour eating, talking, reconnecting. The longer she spent in their presence, the more she remembered how easy it had been hanging out with them.

"So after Dad showed us the ropes of the construction business, he hightailed it to Florida. Last I heard, he even got himself a girlfriend." Justin took another bite of pizza.

"My dad retired too, right after Chad graduated from high school. He and Mom moved back to Atlanta since that's where most of our family is from."

"You didn't want to settle in Georgia?" Killian asked. He was sitting next to her on the couch, while Justin was lounging in his recliner.

"Nope. Baltimore is close enough. Not that I don't love my parents, but distance really does make the heart grow fonder in this instance. And besides, Chad's still here too, so it's not like I don't have any family in the area."

Killian laughed. "I used to think I couldn't wait to get away from my family. Too damn many of us kids living in too small a space. I was only in the Army about five minutes before I missed the shit out of all of them."

"That's because your family rocks." Lily took a sip of her beer.

"Amen to that. Plus your sisters are hot."

Killian narrowed his eyes at Justin and Lily giggled. "Oh my God, you still don't let him jerk your chain with that line, do you?"

"It's my sisters he's talking about. There's a fine line, you know?"

Justin grinned. "I don't see anything wrong with saying the truth. Besides, it's not like I could ever put the moves on them. Not when Keira's married with a kid and Teagan's as good as with Sky Mitchell, of all people."

"I noticed you didn't mention Riley," Killian joked. "She's available."

Justin shuddered and Lily grinned. "I take it your baby sister is still a handful?"

"On a good day." Killian put his arm around her back, lightly massaging her neck.

"How's your pop?" she asked.

"Excellent. Really great. He had a minor stroke a couple years back. Actually, Lane, Tristan's wife, was his nurse. That's how those two hooked up."

"And Justin said Keira's married with a baby?"

"She has a little girl, Caitlyn. Most gorgeous kid on the planet. Her first birthday is in a month and Keira's having a big bash at the pub. You should come with me and Justin. I know my family would love to see you again."

Her heart sped up at the thought of seeing Killian and Justin socially after this weekend adventure. "I, um," she swallowed heavily, "I'll have to see what my work schedule looks like."

"Cool." Killian took her answer in stride and she was relieved he didn't notice her nervousness. She glanced over at Justin and realized she hadn't been as lucky with him.

"I thought the aquarium job was a nine-to-five." Justin wiped his mouth with a napkin, threw it on his empty plate. He put the plate and his beer on the coffee table and came over to join her and Killian on the couch.

"For the most part it is," she replied. "But there may be some weekend hours involved if the aquarium puts on special events and that type of thing."

Justin nodded but she could see he wasn't finished. "What kind of break do you get for lunch?"

"Why?"

He grinned. "Because sometimes K and I work downtown. We could swing by and take you out for burgers."

Killian's fingers played with her hair and she tried to ignore how good his simple touch felt. He leaned closer and she felt his breath on her cheek as he spoke. "Lunch would be fun. There are a couple places down on the waterfront or we could always hit Sunday's Side for the daily special. Riley's taken over as chef there and I have to admit, my sister can cook."

Lily remembered Killian's family restaurant fondly. While she'd never spent any time during high school in the pub side, she'd worked with Killian and Justin on school projects around one of the tables in the restaurant more than a few times. When she'd been alive, K's mom, Sunday, would make them snacks and chat with them as they worked. Memories of the smells and the warmth of the place rushed through her and she was amazed by how much she really wanted to go back to see it.

"That sounds nice. I guess we'll have to see how it goes."

Justin ran his hand along her leg and she had to fight back a shiver. His touches went through her like electricity, sparking every sexual cell in her body to life. "How it goes?"

She nodded uncomfortably and she wondered if he'd let the subject lie. "I've only just moved back and started work. I'm sort of trying to get my bearings there. You know how it is."

Justin stared at her and she fought to hold his gaze, refusing to let him see any weakness. Dammit. She'd made a mess of everything. For someone with so-called intelligence, she'd dropped the ball on this scheme. While the romantic part of her was thrilled by the thought of continuing to see them, the reasonable side of her screamed this whole affair couldn't end in any other way but disaster. A ménage was a fantasy,

not a lifestyle. Somehow she'd have to find her way back to "just friends" without losing her heart along the way.

Justin grinned and she realized she'd dodged the bullet...for the moment. "I bought you some presents when I went out this morning."

"You did?" she asked.

"Mmm hmm." Justin leaned closer and nuzzled his nose against her neck. She loved the rough slide of his cheek against hers.

Killian's hands left her hair and traveled to her waist, drawing up the T-shirt she'd donned after her bath. "No panties. Very good, Lil. You're definitely top of the class in being naughty."

"You guys are good teachers." The breathless quality of her response gave away her sudden, raging lust.

Killian pulled the T-shirt over her head and she was instantly struck by how sexy it felt to be totally naked, sitting between two fully dressed men. Killian turned on the couch, leaning back against the arm of the large sofa, taking her with him. Her back rested on his muscular chest while Justin took his position at her feet.

"Open your legs, Lily." Justin's hands gripped her knees, pushing them apart. He helped her lift one, placing it along the back of the couch while putting her right foot on the floor. She was spread out like a banquet feast and she reveled in the hungry look in Justin's gaze.

He leaned forward, sucking her clit into his mouth at the same time Killian's hands came around to play with her breasts. She laid her head back on K's shoulder, closing her eyes and soaking up the beauty of their dual affections.

"Open your eyes, Lily."

Lily turned her head to face Killian.

"Watch us."

She glanced down her body, inundated by the sight of Killian's large hands engulfing her breasts, his fingers pinching her tight nipples, the pleasurable impulse shooting throughout her body and driving her hips toward Justin's questing mouth. He was devouring her pussy like a starving man and she cried out when his tongue thrust inside her.

"Too good," she whispered.

Killian chuckled. "Ain't no such thing, sweetness. Not with you. Do you wanna know about Justin's presents?"

She pushed her hips toward Justin's mouth again. *Presents?* "I thought *this* was the present." Justin pulled away briefly to grin at her and before she could think about it, she leaned up and ran her finger along his lips, wet with her juices. She pulled her finger back and sucked it into her mouth, wanting to take a taste.

"Holy fuck, that's hot." Justin dipped his finger into her pussy, plunging in hard and fast a few times before pulling it out again. He ran the finger along her mouth, painting her lips with the slick moisture. Her tongue darted out to taste but he shook his head. "That's for K."

She turned her head and Killian swooped down to take the offering, kissing every bit of the essence off her lips while his hands held her face in place. She loved the way Killian cupped her cheeks when he kissed her. The gesture so romantically sweet it never failed to bring tears to her eyes.

Justin watched them kiss for only a moment before returning to tease her once more with his mouth, his lips, his teeth. His sensuous assault on her pussy was relentless, wonderful. His firm hands on her hips couldn't hold back her body's need to move, to grind on his face, to steal every bit of pleasure from him it could while Killian laid claim to her lips. She was lightheaded, breathless when her climax came. She threw her head back and cried as pure white-hot lightning streaked through her, blazing so brightly she thought she'd be blinded by the intensity.

She lay for several moments, limp as a wet noodle, grateful for Justin's and Killian's comforting caresses as she tried to recover from the single greatest orgasm of her life.

"Wow." They both chuckled at her comment. Justin had pulled her feet to his lap and was lightly rubbing them, while Killian simply held her tightly in his warm embrace. K was a large man and she loved being surrounded by him, the sensation of being protected, cared for, more compelling than she would have ever imagined.

A rattling sound caught her attention and she watched Justin pull a plastic bag onto his lap.

"My presents?" she asked.

He nodded and, for a moment, she thought he hesitated. She felt Killian take a deep breath, the rising of his chest pushing against her back. "If you don't want to do this, Lil, you only have to say no," he said.

She looked at Justin curiously. "Show me what's in the bag."

He pulled out several packages and it took her a few moments to figure out what she was looking at. She spotted another tube of lubrication and a tiny remote-controlled vibrator shaped like an egg. Those items were obvious, but one was not. It was clearly a sex toy, but it wasn't one she'd ever seen before. Of course, her experience with toys was limited to the single slim vibrator she owned.

"What am I looking at?"

"You know what these are." Justin tossed the vibrator and the lube onto the coffee table. "This one's a butt plug." Justin lifted up the item she'd been questioning.

"Ah."

Killian turned her face toward him with a hand on her jaw. "'Ah'?"

She grinned. "I already said last night I was willing to try anal play." She felt a hot flush cover her cheeks but she forged on anyway. "I sort of liked Justin's finger when he...you know."

Justin laughed and shook his head. "We're going to have to seriously start working on your dirty talk, Lily. Later. Right now, I want to go back to bed."

"Bed sounds good." She rose, surprised when Killian bent forward and picked her up in a fireman's hold.

"Bed sounds damn good. Bring the toys, Justin. This is gonna be fun."

Lily giggled as Killian carried her upstairs. He'd always been the more serious of her two friends, so she loved seeing his playful side.

"You're crazy. Put me down."

"Nope. Not 'til I have you in my bedroom again."

"You fellas are starting to get greedy."

Justin laughed as he followed them upstairs and into Killian's room. Killian threw her down on the bed and she giggled as she bounced on the cushy mattress.

"That's your fault." Justin pulled his T-shirt over his head. "You're too fucking sexy. My cock's been stiff since I woke up this morning. I'm pretty sure that could be dangerous to my health."

She pushed up, leaning on her elbows. "Well, we can't have that, can we? Come here, let me see if I can't kiss it all better."

Justin closed his eyes, clearly trying to cool off his lustful desires, and she grinned.

Killian shook his head. "You've got about five seconds to take her up on that offer or I'm moving in."

Justin glanced over at Killian with a glare. "You might *try* to move in," he taunted. Lily laughed when both men raced to remove their pants, both intent on winning the prize. She tried to push down the warmth that suffused her body as she considered the fact they both viewed her as a reward.

Then happiness was quickly washed away with the cold realization that they were willing to fight over her.

It was that fear—more than all the rest of her anxieties—that drove home the hopelessness of this situation. While they were sharing her this weekend, this could only be a short-term arrangement. Come Sunday, she had to call a halt to at least the physical aspect of their relationship. God willing, they would accept that decision and not hate her for it because the idea of living in the same city and not having their friendship would hurt more than she cared to think about.

She never wanted to drive a wedge between them and she refused to ruin a lifelong friendship. When this weekend ended, she'd have to convince them the lust had passed. Justin had called her a terrible liar. She hoped for all their sakes he was wrong in that assessment.

Both men approached the side of the bed at the same time and she moved, kneeling before them on the mattress. "Wait." She put a hand against each of their chests. She needed the sex to distract her from her troubling thoughts and a naughty seed bloomed in her mind. "You said you didn't mind sharing, right?"

Justin nodded and Killian looked at her questioningly. "We don't have a problem with it. Obviously," he added with a small smile, gesturing at the three of them as they huddled closely together, naked as the day they were born.

She moved slowly, keeping her hands on their chests. Neither man moved, clearly interested in seeing what she would do next. "So you wouldn't mind if we did it this way?" She sat on the edge of the bed and took each of their cocks in her hands. She bent forward to lightly kiss the tip of Killian's dick, while running her hand along Justin's rigid flesh. Both men hissed.

Justin's hand tangled in her hair and she glanced up to see a sinful look cross his face. "You think you're up to taking on both those cocks at once? With just your mouth?"

She offered him a wicked smile before moving over to nip at the tip of his head.

He groaned.

"You don't mind?" she asked. "Standing so closely together?"

Killian shook his head. "I've seen Justin naked plenty. And we've been trapped in tighter spots."

Their time in Iraq crossed her mind and she realized the two friends had likely been through so many experiences – bad and good – that there was little that would surprise them about each other.

"I want you to come on my breasts." She wasn't sure where the words had come from, but the moment she'd uttered them, she knew they'd always existed – yet another of her secret desires emerging. She'd created quite a list in the past decade and Justin's and Killian's willingness to indulge her was a heady feeling to say the least.

"Oh fuck yeah," Justin muttered. "Come here, baby girl." He pushed his cock toward her lips, not stopping until the head brushed the back of her throat. "Swallow my dick. Take it deep."

His words triggered a multitude of hungry needs and she took him as he requested, never relinquishing her grip on Killian's cock. Justin began to thrust inside her mouth, his movements rougher than the previous night. She fought back the sensations his rough touch triggered and she savored his unquestionable dominance.

On the fifth thrust he pulled out and cupped her cheek, forcing her to meet his powerful gaze. "Open that sweet mouth up for K."

She turned, offering her mouth for Killian's control. Unlike Justin, Killian's motions were gentle but no less potent. He claimed her mouth as if she were his most precious possession. She blinked back tears at the intensity of the moment, of her emotions, trying to convince her traitorous heart it was making a mistake. She couldn't love them both. She couldn't.

Killian pulled free and she turned back to Justin, relishing his forceful, hungry return. Over and over, she welcomed them into her mouth, caressing their firm cocks with her lips, her tongue, her hands. Their hands engulfed her face and she closed her eyes, giving herself up to the feelings.

Killian was the first to break the silence. "I can't hold off much longer," he said, as his cock went deep into her mouth. Justin's hand covered hers on his dick, clasp tighter, encouraging her to rub him harder, faster. Killian moved out of her mouth and did the same. She watched as both men quickened their joined strokes before coming.

Killian's cock erupted first, his semen shooting out in strong bursts, landing on the tops of her breasts. She moved forward, anxious to catch every drop, and Justin's orgasm came as well. Hot cum covered her as both men grunted out their pleasure from above. She squeezed her legs together, trying to calm her own throbbing needs.

"Lay back." Killian pushed her shoulders down to the bed and she went willingly, whimpering when each man gripped a knee, shoving her legs apart.

"Shhh," Justin consoled. "We're going to take care of you, Lil."

She trembled when she felt Killian's lips cover her sensitive clit and she knew it wouldn't take much to push her toward her own climax. Justin shoved two fingers into her pussy and she cried out with relief. As Killian sucked on her clit, Justin fucked her into the hottest orgasm of her life.

"Don't move a muscle," Justin commanded and she fought against the instinct to laugh.

"That won't be a problem," she replied breathlessly. Justin left the room as Killian crawled onto the bed, lying down beside her. He pulled her face toward his and kissed her sweetly. For several moments they lay with their foreheads pressed together, merely sharing each other's air.

When Justin returned, she was pleased to see a washcloth in his hand. "Thought you'd like to clean up a bit before carrying on." He placed the butt plug on the side table and she could see he'd removed it from the packaging and washed it as well. She tried to hide the slight tremble their toy *and* their desire produced. While she was anxious to experiment and learn, a tiny part of her knew taking both of them inside her body at once would shatter her resistance.

Justin washed her breasts, his movements easy, careful. Once he'd removed all evidence of their earlier sex, he put the washcloth down while Killian pulled her to a sitting position. He ran his knuckles down her cheek and grinned at her.

"You look sexy as hell after sex."

She ran her hand through her tangled hair and shook her head. "Have you had your eyes checked lately?"

Killian tapped his temple. "Twenty-twenty, sweetness."

"Come here, Lil." Justin had donned a condom and was lying back on the bed. She crawled over him, surprised when he quickly positioned her over his cock, pulling her down firmly, steadily. Once he was seated to the hilt, he held her hips in place, not allowing her to move. "Just like last night," he said, "except this time Killian will do the honors. I have a feeling he'll have a gentler touch than me. Besides, I want you too much. Can't wait."

She smiled and resumed the same position as the previous night, leaning forward to rest her head on Justin's chest. Killian ran his hand over her ass before rimming her anus with the tip of his finger. She felt the bed move with his weight as he reached over to the nightstand for the lubrication and the plug.

Justin began kissing her, lightly pushing his cock into her. She tried to quicken his pace but he broke away from her lips, grinning and shaking his head. "Not yet. *Now* who's being impatient?"

She narrowed her eyes. "I bet I could make you give me my way."

Justin's face took on a cocky look for only a second—then she clenched her inner muscles against his cock and he groaned. "Dammit, K. Hurry up. Our Lil doesn't fight fair."

Killian laughed, smacking her ass once, harder than she would have imagined he would.

"Hey," she protested, but Killian ignored her and slapped the other butt cheek.

"Behave yourself." He lightly rubbed the sore spots on her ass before opening the lube and squeezing some into her tight rectum. He pushed a single finger in, his movements soon mimicking those of Justin's cock in her pussy. She rode both shallowly for several moments before Killian slowly thrust in another finger. She gasped at the tight pinching, but before she could consider the slight pain, Justin took her lips, kissing her senseless. Soon the muscles loosened and again her body began moving on instinct, need. She wasn't sure how long their slow initiation lasted, but she complained when Killian pulled his fingers out too soon.

"Don't stop. I like that."

Killian ran his hand along the back of her thigh. "Then you'll love this."

She froze when she felt the solid tip of the plug pushing against her anus.

Justin ran his hands through her hair before rubbing her back. "Relax, Lil. The plug's only a small one. It won't hurt you, I promise."

She took a deep breath and placed herself into their care. Once the plug was fully seated, Killian bent down to press a faint kiss at the small of her back.

Justin turned her gently until he was on top of her. The plug in her ass amplified his possession of her body. He pushed inside her over and over until she cried out with her orgasm. Her spasms drove Justin to the apex as well and he shuddered, muttering the word "fuck" lightly against her cheek.

"Language," she whispered and he chuckled as he pulled out. In an instant, Killian took his place and she marveled at her body's instant response. She craved them both and she didn't know how she'd ever be able to walk away from them, from *this*.

Killian drove her back to the brink and she shuddered under the impact of her climax. He fell to her other side, gently removing the plug, and then her two lovers held her as they drifted into sleep. Only when she was sure they wouldn't see did she let the silent tears flow.

Her resistance was shot. Her heart was theirs. And she was fucked.

Chapter Seven

Killian sat on the recliner as Lily cuddled on his lap lazily. They'd settled in for the afternoon, ready to watch a bit of Sunday football. He pretended to watch TV, aware that his thoughts were elsewhere. They'd gone out for breakfast that morning and Lily had talked them into letting her pick up her car before returning to their place for some early-afternoon delight. They'd had sex on the kitchen table, Lily sucking his cock while Justin took her pussy. None of them had bothered to get dressed again as Lily wore yet another of his T-shirts with nothing underneath. After the rendezvous in the kitchen, he and Justin had simply thrown on sweat shorts and not bothered with shirts.

He played idly with Lily's hair, trying to assimilate this woman with their shy friend from high school. At times—like now, when the three of them were just hanging out—it seemed easy to believe they hadn't spent the last ten years on opposite ends of the world.

"I have another confession to make," she said as she stared at the television screen.

"Oh yeah?" Killian asked.

She turned to grin at him. "I thought you were totally hot in your football pants. Used to live for Friday nights just so I could stare at your muscular thighs and tight butt."

Justin laughed and shook his head. "Damn, Lily. I'm starting to think you were hornier in high school than we were."

She giggled. "You guys have certainly helped me make up for lost time."

"I don't know about that. From the letters you sent to us in Iraq, I got the impression you were dating quite a bit." Killian wasn't sure why he'd raised the subject, but reading about her boyfriends had always bothered him. Until this weekend, he'd

thought his feelings were based on the protectiveness he'd always felt toward her. Now he wondered if it wasn't jealousy.

"I've had a few boyfriends over the past several years."

"But no Mr. Right?" Killian asked. Justin looked at him strangely and he wondered what his friend thought of his question.

Lily shook her head. "Nope. No Mr. Right yet."

"But you wanna get married someday, right?"

She looked at him and then Justin before answering. "I've always pictured myself married with kids. What about you?"

Killian nodded. He wanted a family as well. He'd grown up in the middle of one of the world's best homes and he knew he wanted to give that same life to children of his own. "Yeah, settling down with the right woman is definitely in my plans."

"Not mine," Justin interjected. "I'm a free agent."

Lily laughed and shook her head. "Ah, Justin, you know the harder they fight, the harder they fall. You're gonna land on your ass one of these days and I hope to God I'm around to see it."

Justin shrugged good-naturedly and they all turned their attention back to the pre-game show.

The weekend had gone too fast and every sexual interlude had ended with the three of them madly dashing toward release. Every time with Lily felt like the first time. Killian was hesitant to bring up what would happen next. God knew he didn't want this day to end anytime soon.

"Where's that damn delivery guy?" Justin looked at the clock on the DVD player. "We ordered almost an hour ago."

Lily rolled her eyes. "I'm sure he'll be here any minute, Mr. Impatient." She rose from his lap and Killian fought back his growing erection as he caught a brief glimpse

of her ass before his oversized T-shirt fell past her thighs. "I'll go get some plates and napkins."

She was almost at the doorway to the kitchen when there was a knock at the front door. "Told you so," she sang out as she continued out of the room.

Justin stood up to answer the door, reaching for his wallet on the coffee table as he went. "About damn time," he said as he opened the front door.

"Blame Chad. He insists on driving his piece of shit car. The thing died halfway here and it took me twenty minutes to get it started again."

Killian rose quickly, cursing under his breath. He'd completely forgotten they'd invited Sean and Chad to watch the game. The events of the weekend wiped every thought that didn't contain Lily from his mind.

He saw Justin give him a panicked look as well when Lily's brother carried in a twelve pack of beer and settled in on the couch. "What's with the shorts? It's not that hot in here."

"Gotta admit I'm glad the food is here. You guys sure do know how to help me work up an appetite," Lily called from the kitchen.

Chad's gaze narrowed as he turned his head at the sound of Lily's voice. He'd just risen from the couch when Lily came out of the kitchen. "Here are the plates." She froze when she spotted her brother and Sean in the room.

"Lily?" Chad asked as he took in her half-dressed appearance. "What the *fuck* is going on here?"

"What are you doing here?" Lily's face was flushed and Killian crossed the room, not looking forward to what was certain to turn into an ugly scene.

"I think I'd rather know what *you're* doing here." Chad gestured angrily to Killian's and Justin's lack of clothing. "Where are your clothes?"

"Listen, Chad," Killian started, placing himself between brother and sister. "We can explain."

Chad shook his head. "You assholes! You both fucked her, didn't you? What kind of sick bastards are you?"

Sean stepped closer to Chad. "Hey man. Now wait a second. This is K and Justin you're talking to. They'd never take advantage of Lily. You know that." Sean looked toward him, his eyes questioning, almost pleading, and Killian felt as if he'd taken a bullet to the chest.

Lily walked around Killian, moving closer to Chad. "Wait. You don't know the whole story. You don't understand —"

"I understand perfectly! They took advantage of you."

Lily laughed, the sound full of misery, and Killian wished he could turn back time. Find a way to remove Lily from his painful situation. "I'm nearly thirty, Chad. I passed the point where anyone could take advantage of me long ago. I came here knowing and *wanting* what happened."

Chad's anger turned toward his sister and Justin took a protective step closer to her. Killian knew the situation was in danger of turning nasty if he didn't intervene.

"Chad. We're all consenting adults. I'm sorry you had to find out this way, but —"

"Get dressed, Lily." Chad pointed toward the front door. "We're leaving. You're coming with me."

Lily shook her head. "No, I'm not leaving." She paused, took a deep breath while dashing away a tear. Killian gritted his teeth, fighting the impulse to hold her. Touching her now, when Chad was so angry, so volatile, would only make things worse.

"Chad..." Sean stepped forward. He started to touch Chad's shoulder but apparently saw what Killian did. A ticking time bomb poised to explode. His hand hovered in the air above his friend's arm. "I think you and I should get outta here. Leave the three of them alone."

Chad shook his head but Sean continued speaking, his tone calm, reasonable. "You need to calm down, man. Take a little time."

"Chad, please." Lily's voice was pleading and Killian wondered what she was asking for. Forgiveness, understanding, time? He swallowed against the lump in his throat. They'd been bastards to put her in this position. Assholes for indulging what clearly should have remained a fantasy.

"Fuck this." Chad stepped away from Lily, following Sean to the front door. He turned before leaving, his angry gaze piercing all of them before landing on Lily. "We're not finished talking about this. I'll be at your place later. One hour, Lil. You've got one hour to get out of here or I'm coming back to get you."

He left. Sean gave Killian an apologetic smile. "I'll talk to him."

Killian nodded his thanks, his voice failing him as Sean took his leave as well. As the front door closed, Lily sank slowly to the couch. Killian expected her to fall apart, dissolve into tears, but as always she surprised him. She simply leaned back and sighed.

"Wow. That didn't go well."

Justin looked at him and Killian shrugged. Obviously his friend had expected hysterics as well.

"You okay, Lil?" Justin walked toward the couch slowly, almost cautiously, and Killian fought back a grin at his friend's uncharacteristic reticence.

"No." Her reply was simple and quick. "But I'm an adult and I'm perfectly capable of making my own decisions, my own mistakes."

Killian frowned. Did she think this weekend had been a mistake?

Justin sat down beside her. "Chad was way out of line."

Lily grinned. "I'm his big sister, Justin. I think he's perfectly within his right to be protective of me. That was actually sort of sweet. He was only eleven when I went off to college on the other side of the country. The sister who left him back then had been a goody-goody girl with no boyfriends. He sort of missed the part where I grew up, just like I missed it for him. We're going to have to get to know each other again and I suppose that means discovering the good and bad parts."

Again with the bad. Killian clenched his fists against the anger building inside him. She'd started the weekend as an experiment in being naughty, but Lily was as far from being a bad girl as Mary Poppins.

"Lily," Killian said, walking over and joining her and Justin on the couch. "You don't regret what we did here this weekend, do you?"

"Oh no," she answered quickly. Killian took a deep breath of relief. "God, I don't want you to think that. It's just the reality was so much better than the fantasy that I forgot."

"Forgot what?" Justin took her hand.

"Forgot that this weekend really *was* a fantasy. That it can never be a reality."

With her words, Killian felt the door on their adventure close. There wouldn't be any more chances to explore.

Lily had remained resolute in her assertion that this was a one-weekend deal and Chad's untimely visit had just solidified it. One glance at his best friend proved Justin wasn't going to accept her answer easily, and while Killian didn't want the physical aspects of their newfound relationship to end, he could see the wisdom behind Lily's decision to keep the physical experience brief.

After two days, he was already feeling her tugging on his heartstrings. The sweet girl who'd been his friend in school had grown into an even lovelier woman. If she stayed and allowed the ménage fantasy to continue, he'd merely fall deeper under her spell.

And then where would they all be? While he didn't mind sharing a woman with his best friend on occasion, he certainly didn't see how any good could come of expanding on the concept. People lived in pairs, not threesomes, as Chad's reaction just proved. While Sean had taken their unorthodox situation in stride, Killian couldn't begin to know what the rest of his family might say. How could he explain to his old-fashioned pop that he and Justin were both having sex with Lily at the same time? He shook his head. That was one conversation he never wanted to have.

Lily looked at the clock and sighed. "I guess I should head home. Try to find a way to explain this to my little brother."

Justin scowled and Killian knew there was no way this conversation would end well. "Fuck Chad. It's still early yet. He's a big boy and you don't owe him any explanations."

"That's not true and you know it." Rather than comment further, Lily moved straight to evasive maneuvers. If Killian weren't so worried about her, he'd have been amused. "Besides, I haven't been home all weekend. There are still a few boxes I'd intended to unpack and there are some things I need to do before heading back to work tomorrow. Laundry, for one."

Justin leaned forward. "You never told us what time your lunch break was."

"I didn't?" She swallowed heavily and Killian knew the next few minutes were bound to be painful...for all of them.

"No, you didn't." Justin stared at her, refusing to back down. "How about lunch tomorrow? We can grab hot dogs on the waterfront."

Lily rose from the couch. "Um. Why don't I call you guys later, let you know if that's possible?"

She started for the stairs and Killian could see she was plotting a quick escape after putting her own clothes back on.

"Sit back down, Lily." Justin rose quickly and blocked her path to the stairs, his arms crossed on his chest.

"I really need to get home."

"I get that," Justin said. "And I'm going to let you go. In a minute. Now sit down."

She perched on the edge of the couch. "Well, make it quick," she said, looking toward Killian for help.

Killian narrowed his eyes at her remark, shaking his head. She should know better than to poke a riled snake.

"I can see we're gonna have to clear the air on this," Justin said.

Lily looked at Justin, confused by his comment. "Clear what air?"

"When you asked us for one night to live this fantasy of yours, did you really think we were gonna wave goodbye to you forever when dawn came? Jesus, Lil. We're friends and we live in the same town. What the fuck's going on inside that head of yours?"

"Justin." Killian's voice was rife with warning but Lily cut him off.

"No, K. It's a valid question and my answer is I have no idea what I was thinking. I suppose I thought we'd have some fun and then go our separate ways again. That was stupid. I can see that in hindsight, but I guess now I'm worried about seeing you again."

"Why? You think it will be weird, awkward?" Justin asked.

"I think it'll be hard." The words must have escaped her lips before she could think better of them and she closed her eyes, wincing at what she'd just revealed. "I mean—"

"No." Justin sat beside her and covered her lips with his finger. "You just said what you meant. Why would it be hard?"

She shrugged, but Killian wasn't willing to let her off so easy.

He wrapped an arm around her waist, pulling her back to his chest. "Why would it be hard, Lily?"

"It was just supposed to be one night."

Justin leaned closer. "That's not an answer."

"It's the only answer I have."

"So we take it from a different angle." Justin picked up her legs, placing them over his lap while Killian leaned back against the arm of the couch, taking her upper body with him. His movement caused her T-shirt to rise and left her exposed from the waist down. "I don't want this to end now. What about you, K?"

Lily twisted to face him and he swallowed heavily. He felt torn between what he wanted and what he knew was right. While Justin lived on emotion, Killian had always

been firmly ensconced in the land of reality and practicality. Lily was residing on that side with him.

"I don't want this to end either." The words were ripped from his chest and he knew his tone had proven to Lily he understood the seriousness of what Justin was dangerously proposing.

"I see. So what exactly is it you're asking for?" she asked. "I date both of you? Were you not just in this room with Chad? Didn't you see his reaction? Doesn't the idea of one woman dating two men seem a bit unacceptable to you?"

Justin looked at her and grinned. "Has any part of this weekend felt unacceptable?"

She sighed. "No, but —"

"But you can make up a million excuses for why this is supposedly wrong. Be honest, Lil. You promised you would. Do any of your flimsy excuses work when placed against the fact that all of this, the three of us together, fits? We're right. Admit it."

Lily licked her lips and Killian felt his mouth go dry in the face of Justin's words. He'd never seen his easygoing friend so passionate, so adamant about anything. He usually took the middle ground, never drifting into anything that could be considered a red zone. This was as red as it got. What the hell could he be thinking?

"Justin," Killian said. "I think there's a helluva lot more at stake than the three of us just hooking up for sex."

Lily nodded. "We've only been together for one weekend."

"All I want you to say is you won't go into hiding when you leave here. If one of us calls, I want you to pick up the phone. If we ask you out to dinner, I don't want you to start scrambling for those 'I have to wash my hair tonight' excuses. I wanna dump the time limit and let the cards fall where they may."

Those words sounded more like the Justin he knew — and Killian also knew his friend wasn't going to like what was coming next.

"I can't do that," Lily said.

"Neither can I." Killian ran a hand through his hair, trying to figure out how to explain to his impulsive friend what he wanted was impossible.

"Why not?" Justin asked.

Lily turned toward him and Killian fought to still his racing heart. She was clearly making an appeal to him for help. "When I made my proposition Friday night, it was a one-night deal. I agreed to the weekend, but I can't do this anymore."

Killian nodded. He understood her concerns. Clearly Justin didn't.

"Why the hell not?" his friend asked.

"Justin, dammit. Just let it go." Killian ran his hand through his hair again, frustration raging through his system. "I told you Friday night there would be consequences."

Justin rose from the couch angrily. "Fuck that and fuck *you*. Both of you. This weekend has been one of the best of my life. Can either of you say that isn't true for you too?"

Killian scowled and he watched Lily's eyes drift downward.

"Justin, please try to understand."

Killian knew his friend was fighting a losing battle. Lily had always been one of the most determined women he'd ever known. In that regard, she reminded him of his sisters. When she made her mind up to do something, she stuck to it. She knew trying to pursue a long-term relationship with two men was destined to fail and Chad's reaction had just driven that fact home.

"Lily," Killian said. "I understand why you don't want to pursue the physical relationship. But we're friends, sweetness. We've always been friends. I don't think any of us wants to see that end."

Lily tried to covertly wipe away a tear and she nodded. "I can't tell you how much it's meant to me, reconnecting with you guys this weekend. I don't think I realized how much I missed you these past ten years."

Killian leaned forward, pressing his forehead to hers. "We're always gonna be friends. I don't see that ever ending."

Justin walked to the stairs and gripped the railing. "Goddamn it. You two don't get it."

"No, Justin," Killian said, holding Lily's hand tightly in his. "*You* don't get it. We did the fantasy thing. But Lily's right. It's time to get back to reality."

"And reality means we can only be friends?" Justin's face betrayed his simmering anger.

Killian nodded. "It does."

"Fuck that!" Justin walked over to the living room wall, punching a hole in it.

Lily gasped. "What are you doing?" She rose quickly and rushed to Justin, reaching for his bleeding hand, while Killian fought back his own seething anger toward the unfairness of their situation. Sometimes he wished he were more like Justin, able to express his emotions in a flurry of aggression. Instead he closed his eyes and counted, trying to take deep, calming breaths. It wouldn't do any good for Lily to see how much both of them were hurting. Jesus, he could see the same pain reflected in her face.

But she's right.

Killian considered the alternative, wondered what would happen if they took Justin's path. What if they continued seeing each other, sleeping together? Where would it end? *How* would it end? He could see himself spending a lifetime with Lily. Where did Justin fit into that picture? There was a hell of a big difference between a weekend fling and a lifetime commitment. It was difficult enough to decide to settle down with a woman. How did a man make that decision in regards to a woman *and* his best friend?

Lily was right to make a clean break now. They would return to their high-school friendship. That's how it had to be.

"Justin." Lily stroked his friend's hand with her fingers, tears gathering in her lashes. "Please. Please try to understand."

Justin's anger seemed to have cooled, his rage turning to something worse—cold indifference. "I can't."

"You have to see that this could never work. Not in the long run. I would never come between your friendship with Killian and if we continued down this path, that's what would happen."

"I don't see us fighting over you, Lily. We're sharing."

"For now. But dammit, Justin, can you really say you could do that for a lifetime? Hell, I wouldn't ask you for that. I wanted one night. You both gave me a glorious, amazing weekend. But that's all that can come of this. You guys are the best friends I've ever had and I really, *really* don't want to lose you. Please let that be enough."

"It's enough," Killian said, desperate to stop the pain he could see in her face.

Justin fell silent and Killian wondered what his friend was thinking.

Finally, after an eternity, Justin raised his gaze to Lily and shrugged. "I guess it'll have to be enough."

Lily looked up at Justin hopefully. "Really?"

"I don't wanna stop seeing you. If I can only have your friendship, then I'll take it."

Lily smiled sadly. "Thank you," she whispered.

Justin bent down and kissed her on the cheek. Killian could see the agony the platonic touch caused him. "So we can do lunch? Hang out, right?"

Lily nodded. "If you want to. I'd like that."

Killian walked over and placed his arm around Lily's shoulder. Like Justin, he was already missing the right to kiss her, touch her the way he had during the weekend. "Of course we want to. We're friends. Buddies. Pals."

Lily laughed lightly. "So we'll meet for lunch or dinner."

"Definitely," Killian said, the word burning a hole in his gut.

"Then," Lily paused uneasily, "I guess I'll see you guys later."

"Later," Justin said tensely.

She nodded and forced a smile to her face before leaning forward to kiss Justin and then Killian on the cheek. "Goodbye."

Lily had hastily thrown her clothes on, leaving Justin and Killian as they sat in their recliners with little more than a "see you later." As she closed the door to their townhouse behind her, she fought to hold back the tears until she made it to her car. It wouldn't do for either man to see her fall apart on their front porch.

She'd managed to walk away. Managed to stick to her guns, calling a halt to the ill-fated relationship before too much damage was done to her heart. She unlocked her car and climbed in. It took three times before her tear-filled eyes could find the keyhole to start the damn vehicle. She needed to pull herself together before she faced Chad. The last thing she needed was to let him see her so upset. Her brother clearly didn't need much of an excuse to return here and beat the shit out of her weekend lovers.

Lovers. They'd been her *lovers*, giving her so much more than she'd ever dreamed. She took a deep breath and put the car in reverse. She had to get out of here, get home before she turned around and begged Justin and Killian to forgive her, to take her back. She pulled out of their parking lot and swiped the tears from her eyes, forcing herself to concentrate on the road in front of her.

What had she done? She'd started the weekend so sure of herself, of her desires. All she'd wanted was one night. One night to live out her fantasy and wash away a decade of regret.

How the hell was she supposed to know her lust was based on so much more than physical needs? She'd blamed teenage angst for her overblown feelings toward Justin and Killian. Now she realized those feelings hadn't been immature, inexperienced or misplaced. She'd genuinely loved Justin and Killian since high school. Had she realized

the depth of her feelings, she never would have made her proposition, never would have broached the idea of a one-night stand.

She fought to harden her heart. So much for putting her regrets behind her. As she drove home, she realized she'd just added a million more where Justin and Killian were concerned. The worst part was, this time she'd taken them down with her as well. She wiped her nose as she recalled the anger on Justin's face, the hurt on Killian's.

"This is why you don't mess with shit like this, Lilywhite." She shook her head and swallowed down the lump in her throat. Berating herself wasn't going to help.

"You fucked up." She didn't even wince as she muttered the word. She'd fucked up royally.

* * * * *

She was almost through her fourth eighteen-hour day at work when her cell phone rang. She ignored it, unable to summon the energy to speak to anyone.

She'd managed to calm her brother down Sunday night, the two of them having a long heart-to-heart. She'd assured him the affair was over, that her feelings hadn't been engaged. No doubt she'd shocked her brother by being a willing participant in a ménage, but he accepted her words, her lie. They'd made plans to have lunch together the next weekend and he'd left.

After that, she'd avoided thinking or feeling anything about the past weekend by immersing herself in research. No doubt she was setting herself up for abuse by her coworkers, who were already asking for little favors since she didn't appear to mind working past quitting time. Her phone started ringing again.

"Dammit," she muttered before picking it up. "Hello?"

"Hiya, sweetness." Killian's voice washed over her like a welcome breeze on a humid day.

"Hey, you."

"Justin and I were wondering if you wanted to go out for dinner tonight. Thought we'd hit Sunday's Side for the special, and then go over to Pat's Pub for some sweet Thursday relief."

"Sweet Thursday?"

"That's what Justin has dubbed our 'almost the weekend' drinking night. It's our way of sticking it to the man and starting the weekend early."

Lily laughed. "Aren't you guys *the man* at work?"

Killian's light chuckle calmed her frayed nerves. She'd missed hearing his voice, his laughter this week. She'd spent days wondering if he'd really call. "Yep, I guess maybe to our workers we are. Damn. Sort of sucks some of the fun out of it."

"Well, regardless, it seems like an awesome tradition."

"You okay, Lil? You sound done in."

She closed her eyes, rubbing them tiredly. "Been putting in some long hours this week."

"Ah, I see."

The tone of his voice made her believe he really did see. Killian was far too perceptive when it came to her. "So, um, what time?"

She imagined she could actually hear the smile in his voice. "We're sitting outside. Pack up your shit and come on. That five o'clock somewhere thing passed about three hours ago."

"How did you know I was here?"

"We drove by your place. When we didn't see your car, we took a chance and cruised by."

She grinned at their determination then a niggling worry crept in. "Justin's okay with this?"

"It was his idea. We meant what we said on Sunday, Lil. We're friends, nothing's changed there."

“Okay. Great. I’d like to see your family again and I am sort of hungry. Give me ten minutes to shut stuff down.”

“You got it.”

Lily rushed around her office, turning off the computer and lights before grabbing her purse. She caught sight of her reflection in the mirror and groaned. Her hair was pinned up in what she called her work ‘do – a loose bun on top of her head. It had been relatively neat when she’d left her house at seven o’clock this morning, but now more was falling out than was being held up by the hairclip.

“Shoot,” she whispered, trying to tuck in some of the bigger chunks. “Well, if they weren’t serious about the friend thing before, they will be after they see me now. I look like hell.”

She locked her office door and dashed toward the exit. Her head was screaming at her for being so utterly stupid but her heart wouldn’t listen. She’d missed them and it was just dinner and a couple drinks. Surely she could survive that.

No, you can’t.

She stopped at the exit, her hand on the doorknob.

What are you doing, Lily? You can’t do this. You can’t be with them and not want them, want more.

She was about to turn around when her cell phone rang, startling her.

“Hello?”

Justin’s voice barked at her through the airwaves. “We can see you standing at the door. Stop thinking so much and get your ass out here.”

She rolled her eyes, smiling, and then she pushed the door open. Both men were leaning against Justin’s truck and she was reminded of last Friday night. She walked over and tried to ignore the pangs in her heart seeing them provoked.

"You're a sight for sore eyes." Killian reached for her, giving her a friendly hug. She sniffed in his masculine scent, the spicy odor reminding her of waking up beside him on Saturday morning.

"You look like shit." Justin's arms were crossed over his chest and he was scowling at her.

"Gee thanks, Justin. You sure know how to talk sweet to a girl."

"You're fucking gorgeous and you know it. I'd just like to know what kind of job you're doing that you work all damn day and don't get a break for dinner?"

She fought to resist the magnetic pull of his compliment and his concerns. Her fingers itched to touch his hair, his five o'clock shadow. "I'm new. I'm just trying to get established." It was a lie, but she wasn't about to admit work was the only thing that had gotten her through the past four days.

Killian reached over and ran a finger under her eye. His gentle touch was nearly her undoing. "I don't like these dark circles. And I swear to God, you look like you've lost weight. You were already too thin. When's the last time you ate?"

She shrugged. "I had lunch." Actually she wasn't sure she had, at least not today. Maybe yesterday. Her stomach growled and both men shook their heads.

"Sure you did." Justin turned and opened the passenger door. "Get in. We're gonna have to feed you before that hungry tiger inside you escapes and kills us all." He walked to the driver's side.

Killian gave her a hand up before he joined her in the cab. "You need to take better care of yourself, Lil. New job or not, it does you no good to work yourself into exhaustion."

She nodded. "I know that. I'm fine. Really."

Neither man seemed convinced, so she gave up the battle and tried to change the subject. "So how's work going for you guys?"

Justin shrugged. "Same shit, different week."

"That doesn't sound good."

Killian chuckled. "Don't let him fool you. He loves his damn job, ordering guys around, running the show. Guy was born to be self-employed. Too headstrong to take orders from anyone else."

She grinned. "Must have made the Army tough to take."

Killian rolled down the truck window and put his arm on the sill, soaking up the air in his face like farm dog. "Oh, he took orders just fine when someone had a bead on his ass."

Justin shrugged. "I will say I prefer the fact that none of my day-to-day decisions are life or death ones anymore."

Lily shivered lightly at the thought of both of them being in such danger, but Killian misunderstood her response. "You cold? Is that too much air?"

"No. The fresh air feels good. I've been cooped up in that lab all day. I'm glad you both found jobs you like. I bet you're good at running the construction business."

Justin turned at the stoplight. "Never really thought much about whether or not I liked it. It's a job and I think I'm pretty good at it."

She nodded. Justin's answer was so typically him. He was one of those people who never really seemed to care where he was or what he was doing. The only time she'd ever seen any real burst of emotion from him was Sunday night when she'd said they couldn't be anything more than friends. It was that image that had haunted her most of all the past few days.

"Well, here we are. Welcome to sweet Thursday, Lil. K and I have been holding down the tradition for years now. It's nice to have a new partner in crime."

She laughed, grateful for the olive branch they were extending. Though they'd said friendship was enough, she'd tossed and turned wondering if they'd follow through on the promise. She knew she'd hurt them with her thoughtlessness, so to be included in their circle once again relieved her more than she cared to admit.

As they got out of the truck, Justin grabbed her hand and stopped her before they entered. "Just so you know, first round is on the newbie."

"Oh, is that right? Part of the tradition?"

Killian gave her a wicked grin, putting a friendly arm around her shoulders and leading her into the restaurant. "It is now."

Chapter Eight

“Who’s a sweet baby girl?”

Justin watched his best friend make a jackass of himself playing with his small niece on the living room floor. Somehow Keira had shanghaied them in to babysitting for the evening so she and Will could go out to dinner with a couple friends. The only reason he’d agreed was because Lily was part of the deal.

She came out of the kitchen with a tiny dish of something that smelled repugnant. “What the hell is that?”

“Strained peas.” Lily wrinkled her nose as well. “Seems a bit like child abuse to me, but this is what Keira said to feed her. Said it was Caitlyn’s favorite.”

Killian picked up the squirming kid and held her on his lap. “Want me to hold her while you feed her?”

“Sounds like a plan since there’s no highchair. Don’t know what kind of bachelor pad you guys are living in here. No highchair, no crib.” Lily laughed as she perched on the edge of the coffee table and started feeding Caitlyn, who surprisingly enough really did seem to like the green mush Lily was shoveling in her face.

Justin leaned back in his recliner and fought down the same discontent, the same anger that had been pulsing through him since they’d dropped the “fantasy” part of their relationship and returned to mere friendship.

While the past two weeks had proven the three of them shared a solid foundation in terms of being compatible companions, Justin couldn’t get past the fact that Killian and Lily had both willingly thrown away the opportunity at something real simply because they were following some stupid set of societal rules that said two men couldn’t date the same woman.

He watched her wipe off Caitlyn's face, grasping the giggling baby's hands and moving them about as if they were dancing. The image reminded him of the day Lily had taught him how to dance.

"Don't want to miss a thing," he muttered.

Lily glanced over at him. "What?" she asked.

"That Aerosmith song. We used to listen to it all the time in school. Remember?"

Lily nodded and laughed. "Heck yeah. I wore out my *Armageddon* soundtrack listening to that song."

He felt his bad mood returning when it appeared she didn't remember dancing with him. "It was a good song."

Lily nodded and he could see he'd confused her with his stupid conversation. He sounded like a moron.

Killian used Caitlyn's bib to wipe up a bit of drool on the toddler's chin. "Are we still on for sweet Thursday? I was thinking we could skip Pat's Pub and try that new dance club down on the waterfront for a change of pace."

"I'm in." Lily gave the baby another spoonful. "How about you, Justin?" He grunted and Lily turned to look at him. "You're in a weird mood tonight. What's wrong? Bad week at work?"

"No."

"Quite the conversationalist." Lily smiled at him but he could see she was hurt by his curtness. He mentally kicked himself for being a prick. He'd agreed to her damn conditions, let her convince him they'd be happier this way. Fucking problem was he *wasn't* happier, not even close. He walked around feeling as if he'd been punched in the gut every minute of the day. He watched Killian act all nonchalant and honorable and he wanted to ram his fist in his best friend's face.

Lily took Caitlyn from Killian and he fought back the pain of watching her holding the baby in her arms, refusing to acknowledge how great a mother she'd make. She'd

never run out on her kid. Never leave him to grow up alone, feeling as though he wasn't good enough. The pain associated with that thought caught him off-guard and he clenched his teeth against it. Where the fuck had that come from?

Lily stood up and rocked the little girl, the baby's chubby fist gripping her hair tightly, tugging on it. She laughed while Killian tried to pry Caitlyn's fingers loose.

Too many inappropriate feelings raced through Justin. Anger at his mother, anguish at losing Lily, confusion about the future and Killian. What the fuck was he supposed to do now? He couldn't keep playing this drifter game. He was sick to death of pretending he didn't give a shit about anything.

He looked at Lily and Killian and realized he cared too much. Too damn much.

Jesus, he had to get out of here before he lost his mind completely.

"Well, looks like you all have things under control. I've got a date."

"A date?" Killian narrowed his eyes and Justin knew his friend wasn't buying the lie.

"Yeah, K. A date. You remember those, right? Guy, girl, screwing. It's fucking Saturday night. You two might not mind running a daycare on your weekend, but I've got better things to do."

He walked toward the front door quickly, trying to avoid the hurt look on Lily's face.

After all, it wasn't his fault they were all suffering. It had been her decision. Hers and Killian's. He was just playing along for their sakes even though every part of his soul screamed they were missing out on something special, something better. *They* were fucking up the future. Not him.

"Later."

He slammed the door behind him, not bothering to look back or wait for either of them to say anything else. All he could think of was escape.

* * * * *

"You're the life of the party tonight." Killian's brother pulled up the stool next to his but Justin ignored him. "You've been nursing that beer for close to an hour. At this point, you should either forget about drinking or get Tris to pour you a fresh one."

Justin pushed the mug away. "You need something, Sean?"

Sean grinned good-naturedly and Justin felt like a prick for his shortness. He'd always liked Sean the most of Killian's crazy siblings. He was easy-going and grounded, less emotional than the rest of the Collins clan. "Just thought I'd see if you wanted some company. Thought maybe you might wanna talk about why you're sitting over here like Doctor Doom. You and K have a fight or something?"

"No, K and I aren't fighting."

"Ah, then it must be pretty Lily who's tied your dick in a knot."

Justin looked up, surprised. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Chad said the ménage thing was a one-weekend deal. I know better. You've got the hots for her. I don't think that's any secret. I've seen how you and Killian look at her when you come around. What's wrong? Did she pick K?"

Justin ground his teeth together at Sean's words. So much for playing his cards close to his chest. He didn't realize he'd been walking around like a dumbass with his heart on his sleeve. "No, she didn't pick K."

"She pick somebody else?" Sean's genuine surprise that Lily wouldn't want him or Killian soothed his ragged edges a bit and he gave a mirthless chuckle.

"She's not dating anyone."

"Oh, well, Chad said she's been in a mood lately too." Sean and Lily's brother had remained friends throughout school and had gotten an apartment together after graduation. Justin had always felt a kinship with the younger guys because their friendship reminded him so much of his with K.

Justin shrugged. "I haven't noticed Lily being moody."

"So you and K aren't fighting over Lily?"

Justin took a sip of the beer and winced. Tasted like warm piss. "No, we're not fighting over her." Then, before he could think better, he added, "Rather than come between me and my best mate, Lily has decided to take herself out of the running for a relationship with us."

"With *us* or with *one of us*? Thought the ménage was some sort of limited-engagement thing." Leave it to Sean to pick up on his slip of the tongue.

Justin shrugged. "It was."

Sean frowned. "No. I'm starting to think maybe it wasn't. So when the weekend was over, did you guys offer yourselves singly or as a matched set?"

"What's with the third degree?" he asked.

Sean leaned back nonchalantly. "I'm just making conversation."

Justin toyed with his mug. He considered waving Tris over for a fresh one, then reconsidered. Why bother? He looked at Sean and felt the devil urging him to wipe the smug expression off the young man's face. "And it doesn't bother you to think about the fact that your older brother and I took Lily together at the same time? She didn't jump between bedrooms, Sean. We were all in the same bed."

Sean would be hell to play poker with. His expression never changed and he merely nodded. "So what? I may have been younger than you and K, but the stories about you two in high school were still circulating when I got there. You guys were sort of legends."

Justin shook his head. "Jesus."

"I know Chad still wants to kick your ass and I'm pretty sure if it was one of my sisters caught up in this kind of relationship, I'd probably react the same way, but I know K. And I know you. Neither one of you would ever hurt Lily."

"You're right. We wouldn't. But that doesn't seem to matter to her because she's not giving us a chance to expand on the weekend. We're all just friends." Even Justin could

hear the disgust lacing his tone as he said the word *friends*. “Lily is a firm believer in the idea that two men can’t love the same woman at the same time and that a woman can’t return those feelings if they do.”

Sean took a sip of his beer. “Lily loves you both?”

“She hasn’t said as much, but yeah, I’m pretty sure she does. Of course, God forbid she go against the norm. She’s a rule follower. Always has been. She’s not about to break away from the standard society throws in our faces—that says three people in a relationship is unacceptable.”

Sean shrugged. “I’ll admit it’s not the norm, but I don’t see why it couldn’t work. Look around this bar, Justin.” Justin turned as Sean pointed to a biracial couple sitting at a table near the door. “Fifty years ago that couple would have been ostracized, run out of town on a rail. But not anymore. Society has wised up.”

Justin nodded.

“Check out the two guys in the corner booth.”

Justin followed Sean’s direction and spotted the two men sitting closely, talking quietly. “Society’s growing up in regards to homosexuality too. So who’s to say, somewhere down the line, threesomes won’t suddenly become the norm?”

“Only problem with this whole speech, Sean, is you’re preaching to the choir. I’m the only one who’s willing to fight for the relationship.”

Sean shook his head. “I don’t see you fighting for anything. I see you sitting alone in a bar, sulking.”

Justin leaned back and considered Sean’s words. He’d put up a small argument, a token bit of resistance at the beginning and then, as always, he’d backed down, given up. He’d never really fought for anything in his life. Never felt strongly enough to work up the enthusiasm. Now, well...now he knew what he wanted. Knew it all the way to his gut.

“You’re right. I’m not.”

"Why not?"

Justin shrugged. "I guess I let them convince me I was wrong to want it. I listened to their words, rather than my heart."

Sean smiled and put a strong hand on his shoulder. "You've told me Lily's concerns—about what society will think, how Chad will react, her fear of coming between you and K. What was Killian's argument against the relationship?"

Justin grimaced and gestured toward Sean. "He hasn't said as much, but I think you and I both know the answer to that—his family."

Sean nodded. "That's what I was afraid of."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah, I can see Killian worrying about Pop's reaction."

Justin frowned. "That's the thing I never get. Your pop is awesome. One of the greatest men I've ever known. The guy supports you all in everything you do. One hundred percent."

Sean grinned. "Which is exactly why none of us ever want to disappoint him. For what it's worth, if the subject of family comes up again, tell K I'm behind him no matter what the three of you decide to do. I think it would be kind of awesome to have Lily join the family and you're already part of it. Always have been."

Sean's words went a long way to soothing Justin's anger and anxiety. "Thanks, man." He stood and threw a few dollars on the bar.

"So what are you going to do?" Sean asked.

"Go pick a fight."

Sean laughed. "Knock 'em dead."

Justin headed for his truck, pulling the vehicle out on to the quiet street. On the trip home, he tried to decide how to present his argument to Killian. If he could get his best friend on board, they could approach Lily together—a united front. He'd seen enough sadness in her eyes the past couple weeks to last him a lifetime. Regardless of her

certainty she'd made the smart choice in walking away from a relationship, he could see what the decision was costing her.

He slowed down as he approached the driveway to his townhouse, surprised to find Lily's car still parked there. He entered the dark house quietly. As his vision adjusted to the dim lighting, he could make out Lily's figure asleep on the couch. Killian was sprawled out in his recliner, also dead to the world. A quick glance at the television confirmed they'd fallen asleep while watching a movie. He grimaced. So much for the divide-and-conquer option.

He crossed the room and knelt beside her, running his hands through her silky hair. "Lil," he whispered.

She blinked sleepily and it took several moments for her gaze to land on his face. "Justin?"

"I think you and K fell asleep. Must have been a lousy movie."

She sat up slowly. "It was. What time is it?"

"Little after midnight."

She rubbed her eyes and he could see her becoming more awake, more aware. "How was your date?"

"I lied," he confessed. "I didn't have a date."

"Oh." He waited for her to say more but she fell silent and he sensed her guarding her reaction. The idea that she didn't feel free to rail at him for being such a bastard earlier reignited his annoyance at the situation.

"I guess I should go." She started to rise but he stopped her.

"No, it's late and you're not going anywhere."

"Justin?" Killian stirred on his recliner, pushing down the leg rest and standing up stiffly. "What's going on?"

"Lily thinks she's driving home. I told her it's too late."

Killian glanced at the clock and Justin could see, on at least this subject, they were agreed. "He's right. I don't want you on the roads alone at this hour. You can take my bed and I'll sack out down here in the recliner."

She shook her head but Justin cut off her refusal. "You're staying. No arguments."

Lily leaned back against the couch and crossed her arms over her chest. "Were you always this stubborn in high school?"

Justin grinned. "I was worse back then. I've matured quite a bit."

She sighed and he could see they'd won the fight. "Fine, but I'll take the couch."

"No. You're sleeping upstairs with us. Where you belong."

Killian and Lily looked at him, both startled by his declaration.

"Justin," Killian started, but Justin waved him off.

"I'm not fucking doing this friendship bullshit anymore. We tried it and it didn't work."

"It's only been two weeks. I wouldn't call that much of an effort on your part." Killian put his hands on his hips and Justin was sorry Lily was here for this part. He was convinced he could sway K to his side, but doing it in front of Lily wouldn't be easy.

He looked at Lily as he spoke. "It's stupid. Stupid to pretend the three of us don't belong together just because you're freaked out about what people will think."

Lily rolled her eyes impatiently. "You saw Chad's reaction."

"And as far as I'm concerned, that's Chad's problem, not ours."

Justin turned and gestured to Killian. "And you're wasting time worrying that your family won't understand. Am I the only person in this room who knows how fucking awesome your family is? They love you and I'd bet a million dollars they'd accept you if you said you wanted to be a woman and change your name to Lola."

Killian laughed, despite himself. "Lola?"

Justin didn't crack a smile. "By the way, Sean thinks the idea of the three of us going out is pretty cool."

"You told Sean the three of us were dating? Why would you do that?" Killian's smile faded and his fists clenched. Justin grinned. He'd been itching for a fight for weeks. The idea of relieving some of the stress he'd been suppressing seemed like a welcome idea.

"He may be your kid brother, but he's not a kid. Guy's actually pretty damn smart. Looks like your younger brother got all the brains in your family."

"What if he tells Chad?" Lily asked.

Justin looked at Lily, sorry to see she'd gone pale. Jesus, he was fucking this up.

"Sean won't tell Chad anything until we do."

"What the hell is the matter with you? This isn't some kind of fucking game." Killian took a menacing step closer and Justin beckoned him to keep coming.

"You're right!" Justin yelled. "It's not a game. My life is not a game. I'm tired of letting you call all the shots while I follow you around like some goddamn dog on a leash."

"What's that supposed to mean? I don't tell you how to live. If you've got a problem with where you are, take a look in the mirror, buddy. Take a little responsibility for once in your life." Killian stepped closer, his hands shoving at Justin's shoulders, pushing him back a step.

"Oh, I'll take some responsibility. Take the blame for kicking your ass!" Justin caught himself and moved forward but before he could throw a punch, Lily was there, in between them.

"Stop it!" She put a hand on each of their chests and if Justin wasn't so furious he'd laugh at the insanity of her attempt. There was no way she would be able to stop a fight between them—they had her by at least a foot each.

"Get out of the way, Lil," he said, reaching down to move her aside. He was surprised when she pushed him back with an amazing amount of force.

"No. This was exactly what I was afraid would happen. I'm not about to watch my two best friends in the world kick each other's asses over me."

"We're not fighting *over* you, Lily. We're fighting *for* you. What's it gonna take to drive that point into your stubborn head?"

Lily narrowed her eyes at his angry words.

"Don't you talk to her like that!" Killian also tried to move Lily out from between them but she shrugged him off as well and Justin barked an angry laugh.

"You're not much brighter, K. Why don't we all just stop fucking around and say what we want? Why not cut through the bullshit? I want to date you, Lily. I wanna go out with you. I wanna fuck you senseless and I want to try to build a real relationship. I don't want to be just your friend. You mean more than that to me."

Lily gasped at his words. "But Killian—"

"Killian's a part of this. He's been my best friend since forever. We lived through fucking hell on earth together and now we've got a chance to spend a little time in heaven...with you. I don't see anything wrong with that."

Lily fell silent, but he could see his words had resonated with her. Glancing up, he suspected they'd struck a chord with Killian too. "What about you?" Justin prodded.

Killian sighed and closed his eyes wearily. "I want the same thing."

Lily turned to look at his friend. Killian opened his eyes and grasped her hands in his. "Dammit, Lil. I thought I could give you what you wanted, settle for the friendship and everything would be fine. I've been wandering around ever since I left the military, looking for something and never finding it. I'm pretty sure what I've been looking for is you. Maybe we *are* crazy to try this. Maybe people really aren't meant to live in threes. All I know is if there's a shot at making it work, the three of us will do it."

Lily pulled her hands away from Killian and dropped to the couch heavily. "What am I supposed to say to that? *God!* Why do you both have to make this so difficult? What woman could resist that?"

Justin knelt in front of her. "Don't resist it. Say you'll stick around. Date us."

She gave a sad little laugh. "Date *us*. Date both of you."

"We said the one thing we had going for us was honesty. Killian and I have both been honest about our feelings, about what we want. What do you want, Lil? Just say it. Say it and it's yours."

She licked her lips nervously as Killian sat down beside her on the couch. Justin didn't leave his spot on the floor.

"I've been in love with both of you since I was girl. But I wasn't raised this way. My parents, my brother, they won't understand."

"Are you living for your family or living for you?" Justin asked.

She considered the question. "For me."

Killian nodded. "So am I."

"And what would make *you* happy?" Justin put his hand on top of hers where it rested on her lap. Killian quickly claimed the other.

"I've only ever dreamed of being with you. Both of you. I thought sex would alleviate the obsession, you know? Satisfy the craving and I could move on. Turns out it wasn't just sex driving my request at the reunion. I didn't realize until I spent the weekend with you how much I'd missed you guys. Missed talking to you, hanging out, watching the football game. Just being together."

"Stay the night, Lil. Let's pick up where we left off two weeks ago. No limits this time, no deadline." Justin squeezed her hand, silently praying she'd accept his offer.

"Just let the cards fall where they may?" She repeated his line, but he shook his head.

“No. We’re not going to be that careless.” He’d been wrong to make that comment. Try to brush off the seriousness of the situation with a freaking joke. This wasn’t a joke to him. Justin needed her to understand that.

Killian released her hand, putting his arm around her shoulder, pulling her close so he could kiss the top of her head. “Why don’t we take it one day at time? None of us is treading on familiar ground here. I don’t think there’s exactly a precedent for long-term, committed-ménage relationships.”

She smiled. “What about your family, K? I don’t see my folks very often and I do think Chad will accept it in time. You see your pop all the time. He’s gonna realize something is up between the three of us. Are you really willing to come clean about this to him?”

Killian shrugged. “Apparently Justin’s already started laying the groundwork with some of my family. I’ll figure out what to say to Pop. Let’s don’t worry about that now. Tonight, let’s just concentrate on us.”

“Get upstairs.” Justin rose to his feet, helping Lily rise as well. His blood was still boiling but now it was lust – pure and simple – driving up the heat rather than anger.

“And take your clothes off on the way.” Killian turned Lily, pointing her in the direction of the stairs. “I’m going to need you naked by the time you get to my bedroom.”

Justin grinned at the raw hunger in his friend’s voice. Obviously the last two weeks hadn’t been as easy for K as he’d assumed.

Lily started up the stairs, her hands going to the buttons on her blouse. Justin followed closely, laying a firm smack on her ass. “Hurry up.”

She turned, startled by his rough touch, her face betraying not anger but need. Killian must have spotted the look as well. “You like having your ass spanked, sweetness?”

She blushed and Justin laughed. "Later, Lily. We've got all the time in the world. We're gonna make a list of all those naughty-girl fantasies and we're going to do every single one of them. Now move."

She giggled as they chased her upstairs and their song drifted through his mind. He sure as hell didn't want to miss a single thing tonight.

Chapter Nine

As they entered his room, Killian stopped in the doorway, watching Justin tickle Lily as she pulled off her blouse and jeans. He smiled as he tried to figure out how they'd gotten here. For the past two weeks, he'd fought to convince himself that remaining friends was the best thing for all of them. In hindsight, he could see it was merely the easiest thing. Trying to make a permanent relationship with three may be tough, but he couldn't deny that in this instance, Justin was right.

"You just gonna stand there and watch or are you going to hop in?" Justin pulled his T-shirt over his head, grinning at him.

"There's no way I'm going to let you two have all the fun." He untied the drawstring of the sweatpants he'd donned before they'd started to watch the movie. Lily's gaze followed his progress as she slowly pulled off her panties and bra.

"Damn, Lil. You're so pretty."

She smiled sweetly, walking over to kiss him. When they pulled apart, she shook her head in disbelief. "How did we get back here?" He knew her question was rhetorical, that she wasn't sorry about her decision.

"I was thinking the same thing." Killian looked over at Justin. "Not quite sure where Mr. Putting His Foot Down came from."

Justin laughed. "Your brother sort of got me fired up. Got me into fighting condition."

"Remind me to thank Sean next time I see him."

Lily giggled. "Thank him nothing. I'm baking him a cake."

Justin's eyes narrowed. "Why aren't you in that bed?"

Killian didn't give her a chance to answer. Merely whisked her up and carried her over to the mattress, lightly tossing her in the middle. He crawled in beside her, her laughter dying as he kissed her. He heard Justin rifling around in the nightstand drawer a few moments before feeling his friend's weight hit the other side of the bed.

"Stop hogging all the kisses."

Killian and Lily broke away as she turned to face his friend. He watched them kiss and tried to understand the crazy part of him that was feeling like the luckiest bastard on the face of the earth right now.

"Come here again." Killian dragged her over him and she quickly straddled his hips, planting soft kisses against his chest.

"I missed you both so much," she admitted.

Justin knelt beside them and ran his fingers through her hair. "Never again, Lil. Promise you'll never leave us again." Killian looked at his friend's face and realized the seriousness of Justin's plea. For a moment, he was reminded of the young boy he'd grown up with. The one who'd never let anyone see how much he was hurt by his mother's abandonment.

Lily turned and kissed Justin lightly. "I promise. I won't leave unless—"

"Dammit. There's no 'unless'. This is going to work." Justin was adamant, determined, and Killian silently agreed. This was going to work. God knew he didn't want to consider the alternative. He'd lived the past ten years without Lily. He wasn't doing that again.

"Guess we're just going to have to prove to our Lily how serious we are, Justin." Killian pulled her down onto his chest. "Lift your ass," he coaxed, moving her into the position he wanted.

Justin grinned, his hands moving to her pussy. Lily's eyes drifted closed, her hips thrusting back toward his friend.

"You're wet, Lil. So wet and hot." Justin's words traveled through Killian's body, spurring him on, and he reached over to pick up one of the condoms Justin had retrieved from the nightstand.

He pulled the rubber on as Lily moaned above him, her body trembling under Justin's touch. He caught his friend's gaze, recognizing the question in Justin's eyes. He nodded once. They both wanted the same thing. Killian wanted it so badly he could taste it and he knew Justin felt the same.

Killian kissed Lily as Justin continued to touch her, tease her, drive her to the brink. She cried out as she came and Killian was overwhelmed with the need to feel her pleasure. Gripping her hips, he pulled her onto his cock as she climaxed, her body engulfing his rigid flesh, her inner muscles vibrating, caressing him.

"Oh my God," she gasped as he dragged her down, impaling her to the hilt. His movements triggered another orgasm and she trembled under the impulse. He felt Justin move directly behind her. Heard Lily's quick intake of breath.

"Shhh," Killian consoled. "Let us take care of you, sweetness. Let us show you what it means to share."

He watched Justin open the tube of lubrication, felt his friend's progress through Lily's response to his touches.

With his cock buried inside her, he could feel when Justin's finger breached her ass, thrusting in and out of the tight portal.

"Do you like that, baby girl?" Justin asked.

Lily nodded, moaned in response.

"Can you take two fingers?" Justin didn't wait for a response to his question and Lily stiffened briefly under the added pressure. Killian ran his hands through her hair, pushed his cock in and out shallowly a few times until she relaxed again.

"Feels so good," she whispered against his chest, and Killian couldn't hide the grin that her words produced.

Justin looked at him and Killian watched as his friend reached over to put on a condom as well. He closed his eyes, said a silent prayer they weren't pushing Lily too far, too fast. Lily opened her eyes when Justin returned behind her. He'd lubed up the condom and Killian watched him press more lubrication into her rectum.

"Lily," Justin whispered.

She lifted her head, looking at Killian for a few moments before a smile crossed her lips. Then she turned toward Justin. "I want you."

It was all she needed to say. Justin lined his cock up with her anus and Killian held his breath as he felt his friend slowly push in. Justin was right. The feel of his friend's cock penetrating Lily made Killian victim to the intense pleasure of sharing as well. It felt as if he was getting fucked twice and he struggled to take a deep breath.

Holy hell – the sensation was incredible. Far better than he'd ever imagined.

"Jesus, Lil. So tight, so perfect. I love you." The words were unexpected, but Justin's tone proved them true. She was giving them the ultimate gift. She was theirs – to hold, to love, to share. She was their Lily – from beginning to end. They all froze when Justin reached the hilt.

"Lil," Killian said. "You okay, sweetness?"

"Move! Please God, move. I need more."

Justin's harsh release of breath filled the room and Killian chuckled. "You heard our girl, Justin. Move."

Justin pulled his cock out slowly and Killian groaned at the impact. "Jesus," he muttered. "I didn't know it would feel so –"

"Fucking awesome." Justin finished his statement as he moved back in. Killian began his own shallow motions, his eyes never leaving Lily's face. He was ready to retreat at the first sign she was in pain, but all he saw reflected in her eyes was utter, complete bliss.

"God, I love you, Lily," he said, repeating Justin's earlier proclamation.

Lily opened her eyes and he panicked when he saw the trace of tears on her lashes. "I love you too," she whispered. "Both of you. So much. I always have."

He smiled, kissing away her tears, and Justin shuddered above her. "Damn. This isn't gonna take long. Feels too fucking good."

"Language," Lily chastised and they all chuckled at her jest before they groaned as one when Justin retreated and returned – harder, faster than before.

Lily reached the peak first, her body trembling as her orgasm claimed her. Killian tried to fight back his own but the tight clench of her pussy and the solid rub of Justin's cock against his proved to be too much, and he gave in as well. Justin followed quickly, yelling out his release in a stream of sweet nothings, liberally punctuated by cursing.

"Holy fuck, Lily. Shit, you're gorgeous. Jesus, I'll never get enough of you, of this."

Lily collapsed on his chest and Killian struggled to breathe as Justin followed her down, his weight falling against her back.

"Move. Over." Killian pushed against Justin's shoulders until his friend fell to the side. As Justin's cock left Lily's body, she shuddered and Killian quickly wrapped her up in his embrace.

He closed his eyes for just a moment, aware of the fact he should move, should pull out of Lily's body too, make sure she was okay, but he didn't want to break the spell, step away from the magic of the moment.

"I think I like sharing," Lily whispered.

He chuckled. "Me too, Lil. Me too."

* * * * *

Lily stirred and opened her eyes. It was dark in the room and, for a moment, she didn't know where she was. Then she felt Justin's arm tighten around her waist, spooning her more closely, and the entire night came back to her. She was in bed with her best friends...again. Her resolution to return to a platonic friendship with them had lasted all of two weeks.

She tried to regret her actions, tried to return to the sensible side that said this relationship would never last, but the feelings wouldn't come. She was in love with them, had always been in love with them and she was tired of fighting those feelings. She snuggled closer to Killian, relishing the way his hand rested on her breast. She was warm, safe, loved and happy.

Justin's cock brushed against her ass and she shook her head.

"Again?" she whispered as he chuckled.

"Told you'd I'd never get enough."

She rolled over onto her back, welcoming his gentle kisses. She ran her fingers along his beloved face and wondered why she'd ever bothered fighting this.

"I was thinking maybe you'd like to take a bath. I'm worried you're gonna be sore in the morning."

She smiled at him. "I'm fine, Justin."

He shrugged. "Even so, I'd feel better if you let me take care of you."

"Let *us* take care of you." Killian's sleepy voice drifted from her left.

"A bath sounds lovely." She had to admit she was feeling twinges in unfamiliar areas, although she'd never confess that to her guys. They'd go into protector mode and start handling her with kid gloves. She liked their rough, needy touches. Loved the feeling of being so incredibly desirable. Plain old Lilywhite had conquered the hearts of the two hottest boys in school. She was suddenly looking forward to the fifteen-year reunion.

"What's that naughty grin about?" Killian asked.

Lily gave them a wicked smile. "I was imagining the three of us going to the fifteen-year reunion together and turning every color-treated hair on Judith's head white."

Justin laughed. "Holy shit. I think you actually just talked me into going back for another reunion. Didn't think that was possible."

"Come on." Killian took her hand and they all rose from the bed. "Let's get you in that bathtub. You can soak out the stiffness and then go back to sleep."

"Sleep?" she asked, drawing her finger down his chest seductively.

"Sleep," Killian repeated. "Neither one of us is touching you again until tomorrow — *late* tomorrow."

She pushed out her lower lip in a pout but Justin shook his head, lightly smacking her bare ass. "And no power looks. Bath, bed, sleep. That's it."

She sighed. "Fine. But I have to say I'm a bit disappointed in your bad-boy attitudes."

Killian laughed at her taunt. "Well, you know what they say, sweetness. Nothing like the love of a good woman..."

"Damn. Even trying to be naughty I get cast in the *good* role."

Justin wrapped his arms around her from behind. "Oh Lil, you're definitely good. Very, *very* good."

She giggled. In that context, being good didn't sound half-bad.

Chapter Ten

Two weeks passed in the blink of an eye and Killian marveled at how easily they'd fallen into a routine. Bit by bit, more of Lily's things made their way from her tiny apartment to their townhouse—her toothbrush and hair products were in the bathroom, her fleece blanket was on the couch, her favorite snack foods filled the cabinets. Their bachelor pad was slowly becoming a home for three and he didn't think of it as *his* bedroom anymore, but instead referred to it as *their* bedroom.

They didn't talk about the future because it was all still too new, too fragile. However, with each passing day, Killian became more convinced this could easily turn into a lifetime. He'd lived with Justin for nearly a decade—they were used to each other. They were like brothers, and adding Lily to the mix only made the friendship stronger, better.

"You're awfully quiet." Lily ran her hand along his thigh as he pulled into the parking lot of Pat's Pub. "Nervous? Because if you're having second thoughts, we can play it cool."

Killian grinned and shook his head. "No, Lil. We all agreed we aren't going to hide our relationship. That's no way to live. We come out of the closet today." He wished he felt as confident as he sounded. They'd discussed keeping the details of their unusual relationship a secret, but decided instead to take the bull by the horns and come clean with their friends and families. Especially since he and Justin had finally convinced Lily to move in with them at the end of her three-month lease.

Caitlyn's first birthday party seemed the perfect venue to test the waters. Killian's entire family would be there, as well as Lily's brother Chad. Killian had expected Justin to gloat about not having to worry about this part since the only family he had was his

father, who was several hundred miles away in Florida. However, a quick glance confirmed Justin was feeling the strain of the situation just as keenly as he and Lily.

"You okay, Justin?"

Justin nodded. "Sean said something a couple weeks ago and I guess it's sort of been working on me."

Lily grasped Justin's hand as Killian put the truck in park and turned off the engine. "What did he say?"

"He said he never wanted to disappoint his pop, said that was true of all your brothers and sisters."

Killian nodded. "That's true, but Justin, Pop is cool. I know what we're doing is unconventional, but I don't think we're hurting anybody. We just have to make sure he understands that."

"I know that and I'm not changing my mind. I want us to tell people. Hell, I wanna scream to the world that Lily's ours. It's just...my relationship with my dad has never been a very close one and I don't want to mess up things between you and your pop. I want to make sure *you're* sure. No pressure, you know."

"I'm sure." Killian appreciated his friend's concerns.

Justin took a deep breath. "Well, it's settled then. I'm getting tired of trying to keep my hands off Lily in public."

Lily laughed. "I haven't noticed that hands-off thing. When was that happening?"

"You're our Lily. You've always been ours." Justin squeezed her hand while Killian grabbed her free one. "So. Ready or not?"

Lily grinned but Killian could see her nervousness. "Ready."

They climbed out of the truck and walked into the pub. Most of the family was already gathered there and Riley quickly claimed Justin to help carry food from the kitchen, while Keira pulled Lily into a conversation with Teagan and Lane.

He walked over to the bar where Tris was pouring out a beer for Ewan. "Bit early for drinking, isn't it?"

They'd closed down the restaurant and pub for the day for the private family party. They didn't do it often but Pop was a firm believer in celebrating life, so on occasion, he shut down the business for a few hours to open the place up as a part of their home. Killian loved their special celebrations.

"Don't get too many days off." Ewan picked up his mug and toasted him. "Gotta take advantage of it." Ewan glanced toward the stage and Killian wondered about his usually easy-going brother's scowl.

"Who's the blonde with Sky?" he asked when he saw a woman he didn't recognize.

"Natalie Miller," Ewan answered. "She and Sky went to school together. She's traveling with him and Teagan for a while, doing some sort of photographic biography."

Tris leaned on the counter of the bar. "I don't know how Teagan can stand to have someone following her around with a camera all the time."

Ewan shrugged. "Nat's a friend. I'm sure that makes it easier. Excuse me a minute."

Killian watched his younger brother pick up his beer and head toward the stage. His previous sullenness disappeared as he engaged Natalie in conversation. "What's that about?"

Tris chuckled. "Baby brother's got it bad for the older woman. She won't give him the time of day, though. Riley's been giving him shit about it."

"Riley doesn't approve of the age difference?" Killian frowned, wondering what his family would say about his relationship if they were concerned about Ewan's interest in an older woman.

"Nah. Riley just likes pushing Ewan's buttons. I'm sort of hoping he succeeds. Natalie's pretty damn cool and she'd be lucky to snatch up Ewan."

"Reliable, workaholic Ewan falling in love. Never thought I'd see the day." Killian saw Natalie shake her head at something Ewan said before he turned to see Justin and Aaron Young, Riley's friend, carrying a castle made entirely of colorful cupcakes out of the kitchen.

"Jesus," Tris muttered. "How many freaking cupcakes did she bake?"

"Dunno," K replied, "but I think it's safe to say we could all eat a dozen each and still have leftovers."

Tris rolled his eyes. "Leave it to Riley to make three hundred cupcakes for a one-year-old. Girl doesn't have a sensible bone in her body."

"Maybe not, but look at Caitlyn." Killian grinned when his niece's eyes lit up when she saw the towering confection. She clapped and giggled. Riley bent down to swing her around, putting a tiny tiara on the little girl's head. His youngest sister had definitely ensured Caitlyn felt like a princess on her special day.

Keira hugged Riley and then the women went to work setting out the rest of the food, while Justin crossed the room to him. "Some cake. Jesus."

Killian shrugged. "Riley got her baking skills from my mom."

Pop came over and slapped him on the back. "That she did, Killian. Although I think that would have impressed even Sunday. Justin."

Pop reached out to shake Justin's hand. "Pat. How are you doing?"

"Great. Just great. Have to admit it's nice to get this family under the same roof every now and again."

"I appreciate you letting me tag along," Justin said.

"Oh, son, after all these years, I think it's safe to say you're included in that family description. After all, you kept an eye on my boy, brought back from Iraq safely. I'm not likely to ever forget that."

Killian could see how much Pop's words meant to Justin, but he also sensed his friend's fear that his welcome would be revoked at any minute. Lily walked over to them, taking both of his pop's hands in hers.

"Hello again, Mr. Collins."

Pop grinned. "Well, little Lily Watterson. Can't tell you how glad I am you could join our little party today. You know, you're not a schoolgirl anymore, so no more of that Mr. Collins stuff. It's Pat."

Lily nodded. "Okay. Pat."

"It's nice to have you back in town. These two hooligans have been running wild for years. Think they need your good influence around again. I'm pretty sure neither one of them would have graduated if it hadn't been for you."

Justin laughed. "Yep. Lilywhite definitely kept us out of jail back then."

They all laughed, except Lily, who smiled uneasily. "I've always tried to be a good influence."

Killian knew she was worried about his pop's reaction when they told him their news. He decided it was time to bite the bullet, put them all out of their misery. "Actually, Pop, Justin and I have convinced Lily to move in with us."

The smile didn't leave his pop's face, though he could see the man was confused. "There are only two bedrooms in your townhouse. You and Justin gonna start bunking together in one room? Won't that cramp your style a bit?"

Killian saw Tris lean closer and Sean walked over with Chad to join the conversation. Lily went pale when she realized a small crowd had gathered and Killian reached out to take her hand and pull her close. A light of understanding crossed his pop's face and the man's smile grew bigger. "Well, it's about time you snatched this girl up." Pop slapped him on the back and Killian could see his father had only grasped part of the truth.

"Lily and I are dating," Killian confirmed, looking toward Justin. Shit, he'd practiced this conversation half the night as he lay awake in bed, listening to Justin and Lily's easy breathing as they slept. "Justin and I are both dating her."

Pop looked from him to Justin and Killian knew he needed to say more. Sean, bless him, decided to step in to offer some help.

"That's great," Sean said quietly. "If anybody could live as a threesome, it's you guys."

"Threesome?" Pop asked.

Chad scowled. "What the hell are you talking about, Sean? Lily, what's going on?"

Lily cleared her throat uncomfortably. "I'm in love with Justin and K, Chad. We're going to try to make a relationship of it."

"The three of you?" Chad asked.

"Damn," Tris muttered from behind the bar. "Didn't see *that* coming."

Killian scowled at his twin but Tris put his hand up. "Didn't say I thought it was wrong, just surprising."

Riley walked over and Killian fought to roll his eyes at the growing crowd. "What's going on?"

Sean grinned. "Killian, Justin and Lily are moving in together. Going to live in a committed ménage."

Riley's eyes widened. "Wicked. Fucking awesome!"

"Riley," Pop admonished. "What have I told you about using that word?"

"Sorry, Pop, but you gotta admit that's pretty cool."

Pop shook his head as he looked at his youngest daughter. "Cool?"

"K and Justin have been best friends for as long as I've been alive and Lily's perfect for them. They're crazy about her and she's crazy right back. Why can't they make a family of three?"

"I agree," Sean said.

Pop shook his head, disbelief written on his face. "It's because you two are the youngest," Pop muttered. "You needed more time with your mother. Instead you just had me and somewhere I went terribly wrong."

Riley laughed. "You raised us with the motto 'live and let live'. I don't think there's anything wrong with that."

Pop considered her words and then nodded. "You're right. There isn't anything wrong with that." He looked at Killian. "Are you happy, son?"

Killian nodded. "Happier than I've ever been."

"And you two?" Pop looked at Justin and Lily. "This arrangement works for you as well?"

Lily nodded and Justin took one step forward. "It's the first time in my life I've felt like I belonged somewhere, Pat," he said.

Pop grinned crookedly. "You've always belonged somewhere, Justin. You just never seemed to realize it before now."

Killian thought about Pop's comment and realized it was true. Since sixth grade, Justin had been at his side, through Little League, high school, Iraq, work. Justin had been his constant companion. They'd already shared a lifetime together...and now they would share a love.

Pop rubbed his balding head. "Well, I'm not going to say this won't take some getting used to."

Chad shook his head. "We're gonna get used to this?"

"Chad." Lily's voice sounded like a plea. "Please let me explain."

Sean put his hand on his friend's shoulder and he and Lily pulled him away from the group. Killian knew his brother would help Lily smooth the news over with Chad and he was grateful for his brother's help.

"Well, now that we've cleared that up. What do you say we eat?" Riley smiled and Killian stared at her, overwhelmed with the urge to hug her. Of all his siblings, Riley was the one who constantly managed to surprise him.

"Riley –" he started, but she cut him off, grasping his hand and pulling him away from Pop and the others.

"Hee-hee! I am the good one now," she sang in a taunting voice.

Killian narrowed his eyes. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"I'm always the one in trouble, doing questionable things. You've just bought me at least six months worth of free passes. Nothing I do is gonna top a ménage!"

He laughed and then gave her the hug. "You really are a rascal."

She shrugged. "That's not to say I'm not happy for you, K."

Justin walked up behind him and Riley grinned at his friend. "So you guys really think you can pull this off?"

Killian nodded. "We're determined to try. I love her."

"I do too," Justin said.

Riley shook her head. "Lily is one lucky girl. Shit, I forgot the candles. You guys grab plates and I'll be right back." She paused before leaving, reaching up on tiptoe to kiss Justin on the cheek. "Welcome to the family, Justin. Just what I needed. Another annoying brother."

Justin laughed and tugged her hair. "I won't let you get away with nearly as much of the shit your brothers do."

"Bullshit. I know you, Justin Porter, and I think it's safe to say I may have a new partner in crime." She walked away and Killian sighed.

"Damn. I think she's right. You aren't going to be a good influence on her."

"She called me a brother," Justin said, grinning like a fool.

"You're not really excited about the prospect of having Riley for a sister?"

Justin shrugged. "Never had a sister. Figure even Riley's better than nothing." Justin laughed but Killian could see through his joke.

"I guess you're right."

Lily returned and Killian could see she was upset. "Didn't go well with Chad?"

She shook her head. "I don't think he's crazy about the idea of his sister shacking up with two guys and I'm pretty sure he wants to kill both of you right now. Sean's talking him off the ledge."

"We didn't expect this to be easy," Justin said.

Lily nodded. "Actually, it was easier than I thought it would be. We were right to start with K's family. They're beyond amazing."

Killian smiled. "They *are* great." He looked around the room. News of their announcement had apparently spread as he caught both his older sisters sneaking surreptitious glances their way. Teagan winked at him. Ewan was grinning at him from the bar—Tris having clearly filled him in. He chuckled when both guys gave him a thumbs-up.

The rest of the party passed too quickly as they all ate too much, drank too much, laughed and danced. Teagan and Sky sang a song they'd written just for Caitlyn, who ended up wearing two of her special cupcakes—on her face, in her hair, all down the front of her dress.

Killian wrapped his arm around a tipsy Lily as they left the pub. He'd volunteered to be the designated driver and got a kick out of listening to Lily's and Justin's drunken laughter. He'd never seen Lily drink and he found her inebriated state funny. She was a very lovable drunk.

"I love you, K." She'd uttered the same line at least twenty times during the last hour.

"I love you too, Lil." He helped her into the truck and buckled her in.

Justin crawled into the passenger side. "Only with *your* family would I get completely soused at a kid's birthday party."

Killian laughed. "The Collins clan does know how to have a good time."

"I love your family," Lily said and Killian kissed the end of her nose.

"They love you too, Lil."

"We did it. We told them." Killian could hear the amazement in Justin's voice. "We told them and they didn't freak out."

Killian started the truck and looked over at his two best friends. "What do you say we go home?"

Lily closed her eyes and leaned her head back against the seat. "Home. I love our home."

Justin and Killian laughed. "So do we, Lil. So do we."

The End

About the Author

Some people fall apart on their 30th birthday, others on their 40th. For Mari Carr, 34 was the year that took her down. After she spent the day crying and saying, “I haven’t done anything I thought I would,” her husband finally asked what was left undone. Her answer was simple—she hadn’t written a book or decorated her house. “So do it,” he said.

Five years later, the house is sparkling with fresh paint and new furniture and her computer is jammed full of stories—novels, novellas, short stories and dead-ends. The lesson: It’s never too late to achieve a goal or two!

High school librarian and English teacher by day and mother of two busy teenagers, Mari Carr finds time for writing by squeezing it into the hours between 3 a.m. and daybreak when her family is asleep and the house is quiet.

With the publication of her first book, her latest goal—publishing before 40—has been achieved with a couple of years to spare. Phew!

Mari welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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