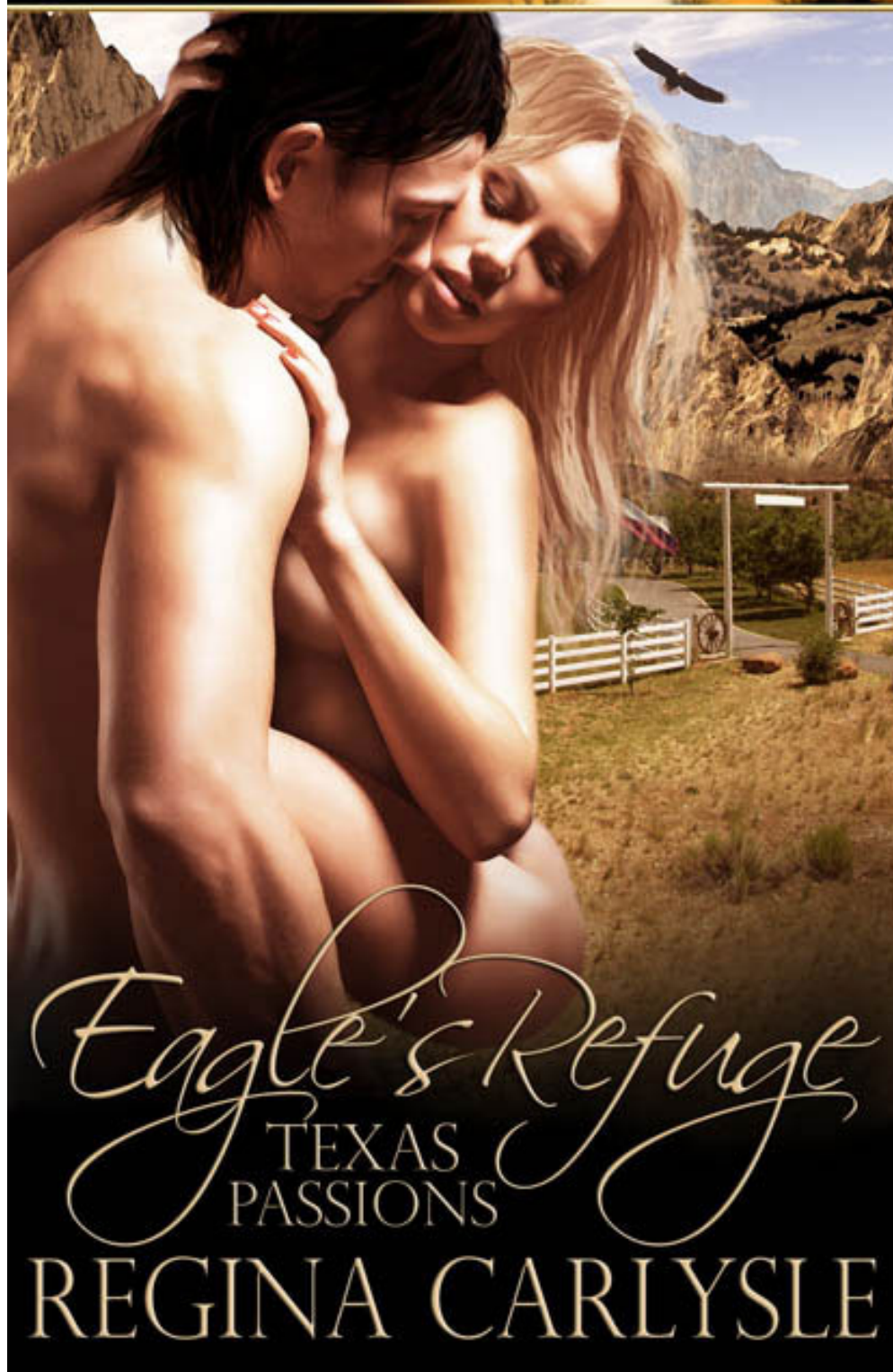


ELLORA'S CAVE **LAWLESS**



Eagle's Refuge
TEXAS
PASSIONS
REGINA CARLYSLE

Eagle's Refuge

Regina Carlisle

Book three in the Texas Passions series.

When Callista Hill settles in tiny Morgan's Creek, she vows to make a better life for herself. She never figured lust and screaming-hot orgasms were part of the equation. One look at the local bar owner and she's flooded with the need to have him in her bed. He burns her to ash with every erotic touch, bringing her sex-starved body achingly to life.

The instant dark, moody Mac Moreno claps eyes on Callie, he knows he wants her. Her lush curves turn him inside out and have his libido racing from zero to sixty in three seconds flat. Burning up the sheets with this sassy, sweet lady brings him back to life. But when her stalking ex hunts her down, will Callie run?

Not if Mac can help it.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



www.ellorascave.com

Eagle's Refuge

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EAGLE'S REFUGE

Regina Carlisle

Dedication

For my partners in crime, Desiree Holt and Cindy Spencer Pape. As always, it is my supreme pleasure to be in your company. This book is also dedicated to those tender but tough cowboy heroes who make our hearts go pitty pat.

Chapter One

Mac Moreno leaned back against the corral fence and looked out over land that now belonged, in part, to him. A year ago, he would never have imagined such a thing but with Joe Morgan's death, the White Eagle Ranch had been split into thirds, leaving his half sister Leah, half brother Dash and himself with a legacy that was pretty overwhelming to a guy who'd scratched out a living alone for most of his life.

Heavy noonday sunshine beat down on him. Mac swept the battered straw cowboy hat from his head and mopped his sweaty brow with a bandana he kept tucked in his back pocket.

Damn hot today.

A savage shriek ripped through the air. Mac squinted at the violently blue Texas sky and watched a lone eagle glide through that vivid palette to land on the roof of the barn where it pierced him with an unblinking gaze. Eagle and man shared a moment of utter communion. No doubt the bird of prey wondered what the hell a nobody like himself was doing out here laying claim to this land, this ranch.

Mac had asked himself the same question a million times over the past few months. Sending his gaze over the immediate area, taking in the stately ranch house in the distance, the corrals, the barn, he wondered about the fickleness of fate. His mother Elena had been the housekeeper for Joe Morgan thirty-odd years ago and on one hot Texas night, she'd slept with the boss and wound up pregnant. That event had ended her employment at White Eagle Ranch and she'd moved on to clean the houses of wealthy folks in the town of Morgan's Creek, scratching out a living as a single mother until the day she'd died.

Mac's jaw tightened.

As he shifted his gaze to the side of the barn, memories assaulted him, bitter and ultimately humiliating. He'd been sixteen, a gangly kid who knew full well the rich, powerful Joe Morgan was the father who'd never claimed him, never wanted him.

"What the hell are you doing here, boy?"

Mac swallowed hard. His hands were shaking but he didn't want his father to see so he shoved them in the pockets of his jeans and tried like hell to look cool. "Looking for work, sir."

Joe scowled at him. He was a big man with a shock of white hair and as intimidating as hell. This was the man who didn't want him, didn't speak to him on the streets of Morgan's Creek, the town that bore his name. The big man looked down and then up, taking him in, sizing him up, and Mac knew Joe Morgan didn't like what he saw. Nope. He didn't measure up but had he thought he would? He'd been fooling himself.

"Aren't you Elena Moreno's kid?"

"Yessir."

Silence fell. Mac sucked in a breath and held it. What the hell had he been thinking? Had he imagined his dad would call him son and hug him like he meant it?

Suddenly Mac felt stupid and dumb and more on the outside than ever before.

Why would the all-powerful Joe Morgan ever in a million years acknowledge a poor Mexican kid from the wrong side of the tracks? To most of the town, Mac was nothing but trash. He had no hope of college and could lay claim to no kind of future. Hell, his mom had saved for years just to buy him a class ring so he could remember his high school days. Dumb thing but it made Elena proud to do it. She'd saved every dime so he could have a couple of new pairs of jeans at the start of every school year. She'd worked her fingers to the bone, scrubbing toilets and polishing floors, to give him the bare necessities of life. Joe Morgan had never contributed. Not once.

In the distance, a horse galloped across a pasture. Pretty Leah, his half sister, the legitimate child of Joe Morgan, was out riding her beautiful mare, her ponytail

whipping out behind her like a shiny flag. Resentment welled up deep inside him. His heart tightened and frustration dug steely spurs into his belly. She had everything. He had nothing. The fact that she didn't know he was her brother wasn't the issue. Mac was so jealous he wanted to just die.

He was the unacknowledged bastard kid of a rich dude who apparently hated his guts.

Mac focused on the older man and wanted to kick his own ass. His being here was stupid, ridiculous.

Joe shifted his stance and gave him a fierce look. "Think you've got what it takes to be a cowboy, kid?"

The spit dried in Mac's mouth. "Yessir."

"Well, I don't think so," he drawled. "Got plenty of hands and they don't need to be babysitting you. Now you get on out of here, kid. You don't belong here."

Mac watched him walk away without a backward glance, standing there, his eyes burning like hellfire from tears. Then he turned and ran as fast as he could to the old beat-up truck he'd borrowed from a friend. Slamming the door of the truck, he rubbed his stinging eyes before driving away.

"Damn, brother. Way too early for such deep thinking," Dash said with a smile as he walked up and leaned alongside Mac at the corral fence.

"Ain't it the truth?" Mac replaced his hat on his head and eyed his half brother. He really liked the big former cop. He was a good man who, like himself, had gotten the surprise of his life upon learning he was a one-third owner of a ranch. "These days I don't know whether I'm coming or going."

"Little wonder considering you close up Hell's Bells around two in the morning, grab a couple of hours sleep and then head straight out here to the ranch. Are those bags I see under your eyes? Hell, man. Get some sleep already."

After cowboying across Texas in his youth, he'd managed to save enough money to buy the town's only honky-tonk. When his mom died, her small life insurance policy had been added to those savings, allowing him to make a healthy down payment on the club and fix it up to boot. He spent every night running the bar and the biggest part of every morning at the ranch. Doling out time between the two places was going to kill him if he didn't watch it.

He grinned at his brother. "Ah well, I'm not bitching. I'll get the schedule thing figured out. I suspect I'll head out of here after lunch and grab a nap before happy hour starts. It'll be okay."

Over by the house, the kitchen door slammed and both men looked up to see Leah Morgan Duffy heading across the yard, her boots kicking up dust with every step. She was a hell of a pretty woman. He'd watched her grow up over the years. Of course, she hadn't a clue then that she had one brother much less two. Her rich, dark brown hair was pulled back into a haphazard ponytail emphasizing the beauty of her face, even more prominent since her marriage not long ago. There was nothing prettier, to Mac's way of thinking, than a woman in love. Yeah, he was a damn sap. No doubt about it.

"Hey, guys," she hollered out as she headed their way. Suddenly she stopped and glared. "Why the hell don't you go to bed, big brother? You look awful."

"Ah, we all can't be as *purty* as you, darlin'," he teased.

"I'm serious, Mac. Talk to him, Dash. Tell him he needs to get some sleep." She looked at both men then focused that laser-sharp gaze on Mac. "If you would just listen to reason, you'd move into your beautiful new home and you could take better care of yourself. Heck, you could take your meals here at the ranch with Shane and me. It would be great."

Mac thought of the house not far from here that he'd built due to Leah's nagging. She'd wanted her brothers to feel a part of the land and a part of the family. He'd been convinced to build but reluctance to move gnawed at him. Joe Morgan's words from all those years ago haunted him, reminding him of the day he'd been made to feel like

nothing, worthless, and not deserving of love. Every time he stepped on this land, he relived those feelings and he hated it.

He drew in a deep breath in time to see the eagle who'd sat perched on the barn take to the skies again. Returning his gaze to the sister he was coming to love, he tapped her nose and smiled. "I'll think about it, honey. But for now, don't push. Okay?"

* * * * *

"Hey, Callie, where do you want this basket of hydrangeas?"

Callista Hill absently looked up at her employee, a pretty twenty-something named Ashley. "Over there on the round table by the window, hon. Those colors will really pop, I'm thinking."

"Good idea. Everyone driving down Main can see them."

"That's the idea."

Once again, she turned her attention to arranging the armload of beautifully etched picture frames on a bureau that sat along one wall. Trying not to think about how badly her bones ached and her back hurt, she valiantly trudged ahead. When she'd purchased Morgan's Creek's only floral shop a month ago, she hadn't realized how much work she'd be getting herself into. But it was good work, honest work, and yes, it served her purposes to move to a town in the middle of central Texas. No one knew her here and she could get lost in this rural setting. At least she hoped so. There was something to be said for that. So far, the few townsfolk she'd met had been friendly and welcoming.

They also didn't pry. A huge plus.

Running was becoming a bad habit for her and she planned to stay put this time. So a month ago, she'd stumbled across a classified ad about this place and decided to put her floral background to good use. It was her dream really and wasn't it about time she started living it? No more running. No more calling the police and hearing them say they couldn't help. She was done. If her ex wanted a face-off, then he could just come and get her. She would make a stand.

Sighing deeply, she straightened to examine her handiwork, satisfied with the presentation, then looked around The Gilded Lily. Pleasure filled her to nearly bursting when she took in the lovely flower-filled vases, and the collection of art and bric-a-brac that added to the ambience. And the place smelled like heaven. Nothing was better, in her estimation, than the fragrance of a flower shop. She'd wanted classy and elegant and believed she had achieved the perfect look for her place.

Watching Ashley fuss and putter, Callie smiled. "Hey, chickie, let's take a break. What do you think?"

The younger woman straightened and tugged at the hem of her pink tee shirt. "Sounds good."

A few minutes later, they sat together, sipping soft drinks and munching on chips. It was mid afternoon on the third day of their grand opening week and Callie was exhausted. She'd already been hired to do the floral design for a wedding and then an elderly resident had passed away so she and her lone employee had been swamped making floral sprays and baskets to send to the funeral home and the church. It was the nature of the business and so far, it had been good.

"I meant to thank you for pointing out that cute little rental on Peach Street," she said.

Ashley unhooked the clip from her long brown hair, then retwisted the mass and reapplied the clip. "Happy to do it. It's a great house. Perfect for a single woman. Are you settled in?"

"Pretty much. Still have some boxes to unpack and a friend in Oklahoma City is sending out a few other little things that I had in storage. Should arrive in a few days."

"I'm so happy she got your old house sold for you."

"Me too, considering the bad market. I have to say starting over in a new place is pretty challenging but I lucked out when you walked in the door looking for work. You have been a godsend," she said, smiling. "As a stranger around here, it's great that you can introduce me to folks when they come in the door."

Ashley stood and picked up the empty soft drink cans and tossed them into the trash. "It helps that I've lived my entire life here. That reminds me, why don't you head out to Hell's Bells with me tonight? I'm meeting friends for drinks and I'd love it if you would come."

"Hell's Bells?"

Ashley laughed. "Yeah, it's the local honky-tonk."

"Cute name."

"Yeah, I think so. The club has a big neon red sign over the entrance and the L's in Hell's Bells are boots that move like they are dancing."

Callie laughed. "Sounds like a fun place. I might have to go soon."

"It's clean and has the best dance floor within fifty miles. Hey, who knows? You might meet a hot cowboy. We have a few of those around here."

Rolling her eyes, Callie stood and wadded up the potato chip bags. "Believe me, honey, the last thing I need is a man. I could use some company though. Maybe I'll take you up on the offer but not tonight. I'm beat and I still have a few hours before we close up."

Suddenly a loud buzz sounded near the back door and both women went still. "That must be the floral delivery truck from San Antonio." She'd been expecting a shipment of fresh flowers for two days now.

"I'll open up for them and have them stack the boxes in the workroom out back," Ashley said as she headed off.

With a nod, Callie made her way back to the front of the shop in time to see a big shiny black truck pull up in front of the store. Propped against the counter, she watched as *cowboy sin* stepped from the cab, all six feet four inches of him. Callie's mouth went dry. Dang. They sure grew 'em long, tall and gorgeous in this neck of the woods. Normally she wasn't the sort of woman to turn stupid at the sight of manly eye candy.

She'd stopped being a total fool a few years ago when she realized her handsome-as-sin husband hid the heart of a maniac.

No thanks. She wasn't about to fall into that trap again.

But still she watched, unable to stop herself.

She went still as the harsh afternoon sunlight caught his nearly shoulder length black hair. His Mexican heritage was evidence in the tones of his skin. A dark blue tee shirt molded to a chest that was, in a word, yummilicious and the faded jeans he wore hugged his hips to perfection. A silly, sex-starved woman might want to trail her fingertips over the hard mounds of his chest to test the resilience of his flesh.

Oh wait!

She was a sex-starved woman!

Whoa, Nelly!

Callie cleared her throat and forced her eyes to look anywhere but at him as he approached the door of The Gilded Lily. Behaving like a giddy teenager wasn't her idea of class so, with effort, she reined in those little hormones that were tap dancing down her spine and doing cartwheels in her belly.

Uh-uh. Ignoring the hormones here.

Besides, his face probably wouldn't match up to all that male bodily perfection. Wasn't remotely possible.

Then he stepped in the door, filled up her space with his size and presence and removed the battered straw cowboy hat from his head. He nodded her way.

"Howdy, ma'am."

Holy guacamole!

His face was strikingly handsome, from the dark, heavily lashed eyes to his proud nose and slashing, sharp cheekbones. The stranger's slight smile came from beautifully sculpted, infinitely kissable lips.

Sexual attraction reared its head and shouted *Olé*.

"Hey," she managed. "Welcome."

He sent his gaze around the flower-filled room before focusing like a laser on her. "Nice place you have here. Congrats on your new business."

"Thanks."

Though he clutched his hat in one big bronze hand, he reached down and lifted a brightly decorated pot of violets and frowned, giving them a sniff. When he replaced them on the table, he looked up with a shockingly white smile. "Drove by here several times and saw the grand opening sign out front. Kept meaning to stop in."

Callie ran suddenly sweaty palms over the sides of her jeans and managed to unstick her tongue from the roof of her mouth. She smiled and stepped from around the counter and stuck out her hand. "I'm Callista Hill."

His hand practically swallowed hers as he squeezed gently. "Mac Moreno."

For the sake of her sanity and this uber-horny reaction she was having to the man, she stepped back. "What can I do for you, Mac?"

Mac looked around the room again and zeroed in on the small refrigerated room that held a large assortment of cut flowers and arrangements. "I'm looking for something pretty and bright."

"Okay then, let's go look." She walked past him, feeling the heat of his gaze on her back, and knew the chill that swept her didn't come from the tiny room she'd stepped into. He was most definitely checking her out. Mac followed her inside and despite the cold his body heat reached out like a lusty caress.

Callie was in big trouble here.

Quickly she pointed out an assortment of long-stemmed beauties and, with his agreement, gathered up a dozen or so bright flowers.

"Yeah, those will do," he murmured before backing out of the area, leaving her to follow.

"Good selection, Mac." Callie reached to a shelf behind the counter and took down a long, white floral box. "Your wife will love these."

Damn! Could she be any more obvious?

Feeling heat steal over her cheeks, she cursed the fair skin that came with all her natural bloneness and hoped he wouldn't notice. She turned to find him grinning at her. Rogue!

"I'm not married. Don't even have a lady at the moment," he said. Then his smile faded a little, his voice went soft. "A box won't be necessary. The flowers are for my mom."

He was buying flowers for his mother.

Something about that made her heart melt and she wondered for a fleeting moment if there might be far more to Mac Moreno than panty-drenching good looks.

"Oh. Um. Okay. Paper?"

"That'll work."

Biting her lower lip, she totaled up the purchase and watched him pull a twenty from his wallet. Then she wrapped the fresh flowers in a couple of large sheets of waxy green paper.

Mac took them and replaced the cowboy hat on his head. "Thanks, Callista."

"Callie," she managed. "My friends call me Callie."

He smiled again. "Nice to meet you, Callie, and good luck with the new business. Morgan's Creek is a small town but the people are friendly. I hope you'll like living here."

"I'm sure I will. Thanks."

Mac headed toward the door but then he stopped, the flowers clutched in his fist, and walked back to her. He dug in his back pocket and withdrew a tan-colored business card. "I own a honky-tonk here in town. Hell's Bells isn't fancy but it's about the only place around where you can listen to music and have a beer or two with friends. We

have a cover charge to walk in the door but if you give this to the older fella at the door, you can get in free."

Callie took the card and grinned. "Someone just told me about this place. She said it was a good spot to hang out."

"I like to think so. Why don't you come by one night soon and I'll buy you a welcome-to-town beer?"

Looking into his eyes, she recognized the interest swimming there. Her heart thumped but she smiled and nodded. "I think I'd like that, Mac. Thanks."

Mr. Long, Lean and Yummy had no sooner gotten into his truck when Ashley rushed up from behind and grabbed her. "Oh my God! Is that Mac Moreno?"

"The very same. He came in to buy flowers for his mom. It must be her birthday or something."

Ash walked around her to lean her elbows on the counter. She frowned behind the lenses of her square-framed glasses. "Uh-uh. She's dead. She's been gone for a long time."

That left only one reason for the flowers. He was taking them to the local cemetery. Callie swallowed hard, so moved and touched she could barely speak. "Oh my. That's something, isn't it?"

Ashley sighed too then looked at her. "Mac Moreno is the hottest damn man alive. I swear."

Callie watched the truck pull out onto Main and drive away. She eyed the card before tucking it into her back pocket. "I'm not about to argue with you about that, my friend. Hot doesn't begin to cover it."

Chapter Two

Mac leaned back in his chair and propped his booted feet on the scarred surface of the desk in his office, ignoring the vibrations of music pounding against the walls and the muted sounds of the crowd just outside. Typical Friday night at Hell's Bells and he was well used to the noise and basic insanity. It had been a busier than busy day with work at the ranch beginning early accompanied by the multitude of little things here at the club. Already he'd booked an up-and-coming country band to play the club next month, overseen the unloading of cases of whiskey, hired a couple of new waitresses and had the giant ice machine repaired.

Still he was restless.

Sleep had been hard to come by for the past weeks. He figured it was one of those deals where a guy just knew his life was about to change. He'd tried to fight the restlessness with hard work but hell, he was still wound tighter than a spring.

A knock sounded on his door.

"Come in."

Barry Evans, one of his bartenders, stuck his head inside. "Hey, Mac, thought you'd want to know the Miller brothers just showed up."

"Hell." Mac scrubbed his hands over his face. "Those little pricks are nothin' but trouble. Keep an eye on them until I get out there."

Just what he needed.

The young brothers were a handful during sober moments but give them a drink or two and trouble was sure to follow. He was inching closer to telling the troublemakers to get out and stay out. In all these many years, he'd never barred anyone from Hell's Bells but there was a first time for everything. He wasn't going to put up with a minute more of their shit.

Knowing he had to get out there and head off disaster, he stood and stretched out the kinks in his tired body before making his way to the door. A blast of sound hit him the minute he stepped into the hallway and entered the main room of the club. Walking up to the crowded bar and leaning there for a minute, he took in his little kingdom, feeling that familiar sense of pride in his accomplishment. It was a nice place. His mom might have frowned at his choice of a profession, but inevitably she would be proud that he'd made the venture work. Mac could count on one hand the number of times he had truly disappointed Elena Moreno. She adored him and he returned the emotion in spades until the day cancer had taken her.

While couples two-stepped on the crowded dance floor, he let his mind wander to the years they'd struggled to beat the disease that had killed her. Very little money and a paltry insurance policy hadn't gone far. Bitterness burned through him at the thought of Joe Morgan living out there in his big ranch house having all the money in the world yet not possessing enough kindness in his heart to help when things were so grim. Hospice had been there at the end. To Mac they were angels and a year didn't go by that he didn't send money to the local hospice folks. He would never forget their kindness during his mom's final days. So as he watched couples dancing and people talking and laughing, he thought of her and missed her.

"Hey, boss, looks like you could use one of these." Mac smiled at Shelly, one of his waitresses, who'd sidled up to hand him a long-necked bottle of beer. He nodded his thanks and took a drink.

She leaned close to whisper in his ear. "You know that new woman who opened the flower shop? The one you mentioned the other day?"

Mac gave her a look and caught the mischievous glint in her brown eyes. She'd caught his attention. He was listening. "Yeah?"

Shelly cocked her head and flashed him a grin. "She's here."

He squinted and sent his gaze around the room. Damn, it was crowded tonight. "Where?"

"Table five. Over near the bandstand."

"That your table?" Try as he might, the crowd was too big and she was on the other side of the room.

"Yeah, I've been waiting on her and Ashley."

Mac grinned and kissed her soundly on the lips. Shelly laughed and swatted at him. "I don't need kisses from you, boss man. I could use a raise though."

"No raise." Mac laughed. "Well, maybe. Let's see how this thing goes."

"Gotta admit, I'm really curious. We've had new ladies move to town before but this is the first time you've mentioned one of them. She's really pretty, Mac." Shelly lifted her reddish brows and gave him a slow up-and-down before wrinkling her freckled nose. "She might not be interested in an old honky-tonker like you."

"Wanna bet? I'm gonna lay on some charm. Don't laugh. I can be charming."

When Shelly quit giggling, he turned serious. "Fix me a glass of whatever she's drinking."

"One margarita coming right up, boss."

Mac wasn't one to talk to others about his personal life but after meeting Callie that day in the flower shop, he knew he wanted to get to know her better. He'd sought out Shelly and asked her to alert him if she ever came through the door. What was said between the two of them would remain private. After all, Mac had given Shelly away at her wedding to Parker Jones no more than three months earlier. They were friends. When he made his way around the perimeter of the dance floor and got a look at Callista Hill, he figured he might just owe Shelly that raise after all.

Mac's mouth went dry.

Callie sat nursing her drink, tapping the toes of her dark red cowboy boots in time to the music. A silky-looking white top molded gently against her gorgeous full breasts and damn if his mouth didn't dry up some more. In the old days, he might have considered a classy woman like her out of his reach. No longer. If he'd learned nothing

else in his thirty-four years, he knew that a man had to reach out and grab what he wanted before it was too late. The neon lights from a beer sign hanging on the wall behind her threw blue lights over her pale hair. Yep, he'd always had a thing for sexy blondes and seeing her again reminded him of the first time he'd clapped eyes on her that day in *The Gilded Lily*.

He hadn't been able to shake the image of her since then.

As he stood there checking her out like a horny teenager she looked up. Her big green eyes widened and then her smile followed suit. She waved.

Mac didn't need a clearer invitation. He walked up and lifted the margarita a bit before placing it in front of her. "Looks like you need a fresh drink."

"Hi, Mac. Yeah, I do, thanks. Please have a seat." She frowned a little. "Unless you are working?"

Mac pulled out the chair next to her and sat. "I'm the boss, remember? No reason I can't stop for a few minutes to talk with a pretty lady. Glad you finally stopped in."

She gathered a bit of salt from the rim of her glass and put it in her mouth. Helplessly, Mac took in the action and felt his cock tighten. Jeez. Such a simple thing and he was ready to jump her sweet bones. "You know what they say about all work and no play," she said, smiling. "Ashley finally convinced me to come. I used the little card you gave me. Thanks."

"Where is Ash?" He looked across the dance floor. "Ah, there she is." She was dancing with Jase Grant, a tall, lanky cowboy who worked at the local feed store.

Callie laughed. "Yeah, she's had her eye on that guy for a while now. I think she's in heaven. Beginning to think I'm gonna be a third wheel tonight."

"Not if I'm around you won't."

She arched a brow and sent him a flirty little grin that turned his insides to mush. "Is that right, cowboy?"

"How about a dance? I pretty much have two left feet but I'm game if you are."

"I'd love to."

Mac settled his hand on the small of her back. She wasn't a tall woman but more on the petite side of things. Small. Curvy. He pulled her against his body, knowing in that instant that he wanted to lick every inch of her naked body. Mac sucked in a breath when her breasts settled softly against the front of his shirt and his cock went tight and hard. He spoke nothing but the bald truth when he'd said he wasn't much of a dancer but he could fake it 24/7 if he could hold Callie against him like this.

For just a second, he bent his head to inhale the soft fragrance of her shampoo and then she looked up at him. Her wide, heavily lashed eyes were a little dazed and he wondered if she was as affected too. Then she smiled. "Hm. I think I could get used to dancing with you, Mac Moreno."

Okay.

This was a good sign.

It had been a long time since he'd felt this kind of sexual interest in a woman and since he wasn't a dumbass, he squeezed her hand slightly and tightened his arm around her until she was plastered to the front of his body. Just where he wanted her. Bending his head low, he whispered in her ear. "Then I'll have to oblige you. Been meaning to ask if you've had anyone willing to show you around Morgan's Creek?"

"You offering?"

"I am. I've lived here most of my life. Know the ins and outs."

She laughed. "The ins and outs, huh? That sounds interesting."

Whoa.

Sassy.

Mac liked that about her.

"I haven't asked where you hail from and what brings you to Morgan's Creek."

"Ah, a long sad story, Mac. I won't bore you with the reasons, at least not now, but let's just say I needed a change and something rural suited my purposes. Came here from Oklahoma City."

"Do you have family there?"

"Nah. My folks passed several years ago. It's just me. What about you? Do you have family in these parts?"

Mac looked down at her. "A half sister and brother. That's it. Small family. My mom died years ago."

"I'm sorry," she said quietly. "That's tough."

When the song ended, Mac led them back to the table to find Ashley sitting there with Jase. "Hey! You having fun?" she asked Callie the minute she sank into her seat.

"I am. Getting to know Mac."

Ashley frowned suddenly and glanced at Jase. "Um. I hate to ask this but are you ready to leave?"

"Leave?"

Mac had a pretty good idea what was going on. Sparks sizzled between the young couple. He looked at Ashley. "Look, if you two want to get on out of here, I'll see that Callie gets home." Then he looked at Callie and saw understanding in her eyes. "That okay with you?"

"Heck yeah," Callie rushed to reassure. "You guys don't have to babysit me. I'll be fine and Mac can see me home. Thanks for talking me into coming tonight, Ash. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

Relief swept Ashley's face as she and Jase stood. "Yeah, you bet. I won't be late."

"No problem. Have fun."

Mentally rubbing his hands together, Mac leaned back and took a sip of his beer. She was a beautiful, interesting woman and he was dying to get to know her better. "How did your grand opening week go?"

"It was great. It really was. Looks like I'm the owner of the only florist in the area so my services are in demand. I like that. It keeps me busy."

"You have a nice place there. I know how it feels to build a business from the ground up. Nice sense of satisfaction when you can make a go of things. Looks to me like you're off to a good start."

"I hope so. I haven't seen much of Morgan's Creek but from what I know so far, it's a nice little town and a good place to make a home."

"Where are you living now?"

"Little house at the corner of Peach and Fourth Street."

"Oh yeah, the old Wilson place."

"That's the one. It's small but neat and has lots of potential," she said. "I'm only renting now but if things work out with the shop, I might bite the bullet and just buy it outright." She turned in her chair and faced him more fully. A small smile tilted her lips. Mac wanted to kiss her at that moment more than he'd wanted anything in a long time. Her gaze drifted over his face and he saw the interest shining in those pretty eyes. "What about you, hm? Where do you —"

Shelly suddenly stopped at their table, an apologetic look on her face. "Um, boss, could you come check something really quick? That ice maker is still acting up."

"I just had it repaired today."

"He messed up somewhere then because it's still not working right."

Mac stood and looked down at Callie who hurried to reassure him. "No, don't worry about me, Mac. Take care of business. I'll stay right here."

Impulsively, he reached down and gave her shoulder a light squeeze. "Don't move. Be right back."

Chasing after Callie Hill probably wasn't the best thing to be doing while technically on duty, he thought as he fooled around with the industrial ice maker and

handled a couple of other small details. No, he was taking tomorrow night off and showing her the sights, assuming she said yes.

Mac headed back into the main area of the club just as the band was taking a break. A sudden male shout went up and then Mac's eyes went wide when one Miller brother launched himself at the other, fists flying.

Shit!

Mac ran toward the scene of chaos just as one of the brothers caught a fist in the nose and fell backward into Shelly who was trying to balance a tray loaded with pitchers of beer. Shelly yelped and jumped, the tray tilting back, and then he heard a scream.

He arrived at table five just in time to see Callie get drenched by an entire pitcher of beer. Jarred, she jumped to her feet. The white shirt she wore might as well have been transparent. It was plastered to her breasts, emphasizing the outward hard thrust of her nipples and the small indent of her bellybutton.

"Get them outta here," Mac roared to the bartenders who'd also rushed into the fray. "Right damn now!"

Holy flyin' fuck!

Callie's eyes were wide in disbelief when she stared down at herself and saw the mess she was in. Mac hurried over just as she crossed her arms over her breasts, clearly visible beneath the sodden fabric. "Here now, honey. You just come on with me. I'll get you fixed up."

He drew her against his body as two of his biggest, meanest employees escorted the sorry Miller brothers from Hell's Bells. "Shelly?"

"Yeah, boss."

"Tell the band to get busy. We need to get the crowd settled down."

She nodded and took off as he tucked Callie closer and led her through the crowd of people and to his office.

"Damn, I'm so sorry about this, darlin'. I feel so bad."

He led her into the room and turned to look at her, every apology he could think of sweeping through his mind. She stared at him for a second or two then started to laugh.

Huh?

She had to be in shock.

Finally she shook her head, managed to swallow her mirth and gave him a teary-eyed look. "Ah Mac, don't worry about it. All I know is you sure as heck know how to show a girl an exciting time."

Mac smiled. Had to love a woman who was such a good sport. "Come with me," he said. "I have an apartment back here and I figure I can find a clean tee shirt somewhere. You can put that on."

She followed him into his living quarters, her arms still crossed over her chest. "This is nice, Mac. You live here?"

His apartment wasn't much. It was a one-room affair with the bed at one end, a couch, a television and a small kitchen. Spartan living conditions, but it was close to work. That was for sure.

"Yeah. It's not much, I know. I have a house outside town but I haven't moved into it yet." Mac dug through a drawer and found a tee shirt, which he handed her. "Here ya go. Bathroom is over there. Make yourself at home."

Callie ducked into his small bathroom and re-emerged a few minutes later carrying her sodden shirt. A lacy beige-colored bra peeked from the crumpled fabric. Mac found a plastic grocery store sack on the counter of his kitchen which she used to put the wet stuff into. He grinned at her.

"You look kind of cute in my tee shirt." The thing hung to her knees, almost swallowing her whole.

Holding out her arms, she looked down at herself. "What? This old thing?" Then she wrinkled her nose. "God! I reek. Your tee shirt will never be the same. I promise to get this washed up and returned to you, Mac."

"There's no hurry. For what it's worth, it looks a helluva lot better on you than it ever looked on me."

From out of nowhere, he recalled the way her breasts had looked with her wet shirt plastered to them. Damn. He'd wanted to take one of those hard, perky nipples right into his mouth to suck. To say she was magnificent was an understatement. It had been a hell of long time since he'd been attracted to the point of desperation but he was the kind of man who could put his cards on the table and play them. He would have her, get to know her, or die trying.

As he drove her toward her little house on Peach Street, Callie kept up a steady stream of chatter as he pointed out one local landmark after another. It didn't take long for them to reach her house. Morgan's Creek wasn't a big place, after all. She went quiet as they approached her front door and she dug in the pocket of her jeans for the house key. "Can you come in for a while?" Then Callie smiled and shook her head. "I'm sorry, you have a business to run and you've already taken too much time dealing with my little wardrobe malfunction."

"Hey, don't worry about it." He took the key from her hand, inserted it into the lock and opened her door. "One of the benefits of being boss is I get to do what I want. Now that the Miller brothers have been tossed out on their butts, things should stay pretty calm but I probably need to get back."

Callie leaned against the doorframe and looked up at him. "I understand. Thanks for the loan of the shirt and for getting me home, Mac."

Mac wanted to make his intentions toward her perfectly clear. Stepping close, he propped his arm against the doorframe, effectively caging her. His hand settled directly over her head. Her eyes went wide as he leaned in. "You work tomorrow, right?"

Her gaze swept his face, settling briefly on his lips before she looked him straight in the eye. "Uh-huh."

"Me too. My next day off is Sunday. I assume you are closed that day."

"I am," she whispered.

Mac reached out and traced her lips with the tip of his finger. "Tell you what. Why don't I pick you up late Sunday afternoon? I'll show you the sights, such as they are, and we'll grab some dinner."

"Are you asking me out on a date, Mac Moreno?"

"Hell yes. What do you say?"

"I say absolutely."

And then Mac did what he'd been dying to do since seeing her that very first time. Moving close enough to feel her breath brush his lips, he pressed his mouth over hers and kissed her. She was sweet, warm, and tasted like sunshine. Callie opened her lips when he swept his tongue deep and he felt the tiny sound she made move through him like lightning. His erection thickened, lengthened behind the fly of his jeans, making demands he knew Callie would reject at this point. Frustration made his belly tighten.

It had been a hell of a long time since he'd wanted a woman this much.

Deepening the kiss, he sank his hand into her hair and moved close enough to feel her soft curves brush his chest. Knowing she wore nothing at all beneath his old tee shirt was pure torment. He wanted to touch her more than he wanted his next breath but he held off. Pushing her this quickly might scare her away. Mac didn't want that. He had big plans for Callista Hill and they didn't include a quick feel on her front porch.

Breathing heavily, he drew away, pleased to see she was affected too. Dark hunger moved through his body. Releasing her, he cupped the side of her face and pressed one more kiss on her swollen lips. "I'll see you Sunday, Callie."

Chapter Three

At about four on Sunday afternoon, Callie was dressed and ready for her date with Mac when the phone rang. Not many people had her new number. Maybe it was Linda, her Oklahoma City friend, saying her boxes had been shipped so she scrambled for the phone.

"Hello?"

Nothing.

"Hello?"

Still nothing.

Callie frowned. She heard breathing on the other end and then a click. Odd. A whip of unease chased itself down her spine and she wondered if Doug had found her. Again. The past four years had been nothing but one frantic move after another as her ex-husband and world class nutjob stalked her from place to place, making her life miserable. She'd been one of those unlucky women who realized too late that the man she'd married was a complete stranger. During their months of dating, he'd seemed the perfect guy for her. Loving, attentive and great-looking. At the time, Callie had believed herself in love with Doug Hill but it hadn't taken long to realize she'd made a ghastly mistake. He'd fought the divorce at every turn and then, when things were finalized, had turned up the heat. Doug saw her as a possession, as his to control, and in the past it hadn't mattered how many times she called the police, he was there. Watching. Spying. Stalking.

Well, she had big news for him. She was through running. Callie was ready to live and knew that elusive freedom was hers if she were brave. No wimps here. No way. If he showed up again and began to make her life hell, she'd head straight to the police but she wasn't going to hightail it out of town. Not this time. The fact they'd been

divorced four years and he still continued with this stuff was a testament to how truly obsessed he was.

Pausing in front of a big round mirror hanging above a wall table in her living room, she shook her head. Yes, she was attractive but there were plenty of women out there in this big wide world who were far prettier. She was smart but certainly not brilliant. Callie saw herself as a normal woman in every way so it was puzzling to her why he continued to make her life hell.

Shoving memories of her ex to the farthest, darkest corner of her mind, she concentrated on Mac Moreno and the way he had kissed her a few nights ago. A shiver swept her but this time it wasn't fear causing the reaction. Memories of the heat that moved through his dark eyes caused her body to react. A thrill of expectation washed over her and she knew that if Mac wanted a hot affair with her, she would be a willing participant in whatever seduction he had in mind. In her experience, forever was a fantasy but *now? For the moment?* Oh yeah, she could handle some of that. The man was hotness personified. He wanted her. Mac had made that more than clear when he'd kissed her and brought her sleeping libido roaring back to life. She'd wanted him, lusted after him from the minute he stepped from that big black truck in front of her store and if he was interested in a wild, hot affair, she was ready to take the leap.

Callie studied the careless cut of her tousled blonde hair and examined the barely there look of her makeup and hoped Mac would approve. She wore a sleeveless linen cropped top in a soft aqua color paired with black linen capris and matching black flats. Earlier she'd tucked her two-piece bathing suit into her oversized leather purse since Mac had requested it.

Hm.

Wondering what he had planned, she turned when she heard his footsteps on the front porch and his subsequent knock. Nerves fluttered through her belly. She opened the door and drank in the sight of him looking hotter than hell in his jeans and a solid

white shirt with mother-of-pearl snaps marching down the front of it. The contrast of the white against all that dark skin made her catch her breath. Lordy, he was gorgeous!

“Hey, Mac.”

She stepped back as he came inside and sent his gaze around her living room before settling on her. He gave her a hot up-and-down look and smiled. “Well don’t you look good enough to eat.”

Now didn’t that conjure an image?

“Hungry are you?” she said, grinning.

Mac laughed and pulled her into his arms. “You know it,” he whispered against her lips. His kiss was soft at first then gradually deepened, practically stealing her breath. She’d always been a sucker for a good kisser and Mac Moreno was a blue-ribbon, champion kisser in her estimation. His tongue swept deep and Callie felt her toes curl just a little bit. Her pussy tightened, growing wet in anticipation of what he could do to her body with that mouth of his. She let herself fall under his spell, the scent of his subtle cologne heady and appealing, awakening her senses in a way they hadn’t been for such a long time.

When he broke the kiss his eyes burned hot into hers. She fought back the disappointment and went for her bag. Within a minute or two they were driving the streets of Morgan’s Creek as Mac showed her around. They drove by the school and several businesses. He pointed out the courthouse that sat nestled in the town square. Some of this she’d seen, of course, but Mac added extra touches and bits of history that she hadn’t known.

“So we’re going to dinner?”

Mac reached out to adjust the air conditioner vents then gave her a look. “Yeah, we’ll have dinner at the ranch.”

“The ranch?”

"I share ownership of White Eagle Ranch with my sister Leah and my brother Dash. As I mentioned, I built a house out there on the property but I haven't moved into it yet."

"Why not?"

Mac shrugged. "I'm working up to it."

She sensed a story there but didn't press. Twenty minutes later, her eyes went wide at the stately pillars marking the entrance to the ranch. Impressive. Her curiosity grew. His little apartment in back of the club was okay but why on earth wouldn't he have moved in already? This place was spectacular. Off in the distance, she spotted what she assumed was the main house along with an outcropping of barns and other buildings. Beautiful rolling pastureland stretched out into the horizon with big brown cows, Herefords she supposed, munching grass and meandering around everywhere. No, she didn't know much about ranches. She'd seen a few but damn, this place was impressive.

Instead of heading toward the big house in the distance, Mac took a left-hand turn down a graveled road and drove another half mile or so.

"Oh Mac, it's beautiful," she said when the single-story Spanish-style house came into view. It was a sprawling structure with its tan stucco, dark-brown tiled roof and arched doorways and windows. Several large yucca trees occupied the gentle curve of the circular drive and someone had lovingly landscaped the place to perfection. Her eye for plants and flowers was beyond satisfied with the assortment of blooming crepe myrtles, hibiscus and oleander. "I can't believe you haven't moved into this place yet. Did you do the landscaping?"

"Spoken like a florist." Mac shook his head. "No, I hired a local outfit to do it for me. I don't mind getting my hands dirty planting things but I just don't have the time between half days here at the ranch and the rest of my time at the club."

As she continued to take in his house, she finally looked over at him. "You know what they say about all work and no play?"

His smile was brilliant in the late afternoon sunlight. "I think we should do something about that. Don't you?"

Mentally rubbing her hands together as a whip of desire coursed through her veins, she laughed. "Sounds like a plan, Mac."

Hours later, when full dark settled over the land, Callie stood at the back door leading from Mac's spacious master bedroom to the outside patio. Mac had declared after a dinner of grilled steaks with all the trimmings, they would christen his new pool. It was a beauty, dominating much of his large, beautifully landscaped backyard. So here she was after changing into her two-piece suit feeling a little uncomfortable.

Maybe it was a throwback from her days as a preacher's daughter and all those lectures about modesty but she was nervous. Butterflies danced in her belly as Mac lazily swam the length of the pool. His body was backlit by pool lights as he cut through the sparkling water. They'd kept things light and fun through the course of the meal preparation and later as he'd given her a brief tour of the house but always there had been an undercurrent, a sort of knowing, of what might come later.

Looks like *later* was suddenly *now*.

Summoning her inner diva, she opened one of the French doors and stepped out onto the beautifully tiled patio. "Looks like you got a head start," she hollered.

Mac stood in the pool and shoved his shoulder-length wet hair out of his eyes. Callie swallowed hard at the sight of him nearly naked. His chest was utter perfection, cut with muscles formed, she suspected, from years of physical labor and his six-pack abs made her fingers itch. Below the surface of the water he wore simple black swim trunks. Mac smiled, his teeth flashing white in the darkness. "Couldn't resist. Damn, you look cute. Come on in."

Barefoot, she walked past his patio furniture, which included a table and chair set and a chaise built for two, and made her way to the edge of the pool. A big round hot tub connected to the pool at the shallow end so Callie tiptoed around the wide tiled

edge and sat there as Mac waded up to greet her. Grinning, he planted his hands on either side of her thighs. "Are you coming in?"

Playfully she pushed at one yummy bare shoulder. "Why are you in such a hurry? You're lucky to get me out here at all considering that big meal I just had. My belly is downright poochy." She patted it in emphasis.

Mac laughed and moved his eyebrows up and down. "Ah hell no, honey, I love your belly. The first time I ever saw you I thought...man, what a sexy belly."

She loved a laughing, teasing man and could play the game but then Mac caught her hands and pressed his mouth there, right above the line of her bikini bottom. Callie sucked in a breath and held it, paralyzed with the intense urge to have him. His tongue teased and licked as a gasp curled up, then released from her throat. Mac looked up, his dark eyes no longer showing a dollop of humor. Intensity blazed from them. Drops of water clung to his thick, black lashes like diamonds. "I like everything about you, honey. Every beautiful bit."

Mac straightened and stepped between the spread of her legs. The heat of his body wrapped around her like a heady sexual wave and then he leaned in to take her mouth with voracious hunger. His muscular chest pressed against her breasts, rubbed there, and Callie felt her nipples instantly tighten. She wanted his hands there. Now. Immediately. And then they were. Her breasts filled his palms to overflowing as he lightly kneaded them, his thumbs tracing seductive circles around her nipples as if he had all the time in the world. Callie whimpered.

Mac broke the hot kiss and stared down at her, a muscle bunching in his strong jaw. His fingers plied her nipple and Callie gasped. "This what you need, darlin'?"

"Yeah."

His eyes narrowed as he reached for the tie at the nape of her neck. "Let me take care of this for you." Reaching behind her, he untied again, this time at her back, until the scrap of fabric fell between them. Mac's eyes went hard with lust, his gaze fastening

on her breasts as he took the bikini top and negligently set it aside. "This is what I've been waitin' for, darlin'."

She wanted to speak. She wanted to tease him again and make him laugh but she just couldn't. Overwhelmed by the moment, she finally gasped when Mac lowered his head and took one nipple into his warm mouth to suck. Instantly her fingers went into his wet hair to hold him closer. Sensation swept from her nipple, through her center to settle in her quivering pussy. Her bikini bottom was drenched by the time he moved to the other breast, gently devouring until she wanted to howl with frustration. Mac's big hands swept her bare flesh slowly, provocatively as his mouth hungrily sucked it deep.

His mouth moved lower as he stroked her ribs with his tongue, nipped with his teeth. Callie's nipples, hard as gems, received the light brush of evening air and puckered even more, making her want, for just a split second, to grab his hair and bring his mouth back where it belonged. But then she was distracted again by the way he bent lower to tease her belly and drag his tongue along the line above her bikini bottom. Mac sent his hands along the sensitive insides of her thigh and finally, finally stroked the seam of her pussy with his fingers.

"God! Mac!" She choked on the words, sinking her fingers into his hard shoulders, widening her legs for a firmer touch.

Mac made a rough sound and dipped his fingers into the front of her bikini bottom to stroke her wet flesh. "Damn, Callie." Acting swiftly, ignoring her gasp of protest, he removed his fingers from her drenched pussy and lifted her legs to spread her across the surface of the wide, tiled edge of the hot tub until she lay there like a randy sea nymph. Mac swiftly untied the strings at her hips and plunged his fingers deep. In and out, his fingers stroked, gathering the moisture there.

"I love the feel of your cream on my fingers," he said low as he fucked her slowly, steadily with them.

Callie's hips arched as pleasure swamped her. It had been so long since she'd last had sex she was ready to go off like a rocket. Lust curled low in her belly as Mac settled his mouth there to gently nip at her skin.

He drew his tongue over her, increasing the speed of his sexy finger fucking. "Gonna taste that cream soon, honey. Count on it."

"Mac, I'm—"

"Yeah, I'm with you." Whipping deep, swirling his thumb over her throbbing clit, he killed her, just killed her. Desire knotted hard and then released with the speed of a comet as she came.

"Not done here, Callie." Mac kissed her lips then gathered her up and brought her down into the pool. The feel of the water surrounding her only heightened her sexual hunger. Feeling light, buoyant, she wrapped her legs around his lean waist as he carried her deeper and then over to one side of the swimming pool. Callie buried her nose in his chest, breathing him in, loving the feel of her pussy pressed to the hard muscles of his belly. His cock, hard beneath his trunks, prodded her until she held tighter and squirmed against him. It had been so long, so, so long for her and she had to believe the fates had created Mac Moreno just for her. She was suddenly thrilled to pieces she'd waited for him to end her sexual drought.

When Mac carried her to the side of the pool, he disentangled her legs until they slid down against his. Keeping one arm solidly around her, he reached for a condom sitting there.

"Looks like you had seduction in mind, Mac," she whispered.

"Honey, I've had seduction in mind from the first minute I looked at you. Take my trunks off, Callie."

Callie settled her hands at his waist and gave his trunks a tug, feeling a momentary drag when the wet fabric caught on his hard cock. Sinking her teeth into her bottom lip, she worked them past the obstruction until his erection sprang free. The trunks forgotten at the sight of all that lovely hardness, she quickly abandoned them to cup his

thick stalk in her hands. Warm, no, not warm, hot. He was so hot, thick and pulsing with life in the very palm of her hands. Stroking from base to tip and down again to lovingly stroke his balls, Callie barely noticed when Mac finally discarded the trunks and sent them floating off in the other direction. She looked up and saw his eyes were closed, his face a stony mask. "Ah man," he whispered. "I'm dying for you. I can't wait. It's been too long."

Too long?

She'd thought she was surely the only one deprived of sex around here.

Needing him so badly she ached, Callie watched Mac rip open the package and hand the condom to her. "Put it on me."

She brought the bit of latex below the surface of the water and slowly covered him. He groaned, the sound low and as sexy as hell, before he grabbed her around the waist, lifted and then settled her over his cock. "Ready?" he whispered as the thick, fat head settled at her opening.

In answer, she wrapped her arms around him, buried her face against the curve of his throat and squeezed tight. Then he lowered her slowly, by devastatingly tiny increments until he was buried to the hilt. Pleasure swept her as he stuffed her pussy full of his heavy cock. Mac's hands found her ass and held on as he turned to press her back against the side of the pool. In. Out. In. Out. Oh my God, so damn slow. Callie swore she could feel every bump and striation brush her vaginal walls, and each down stroke made her tremble as if she were caught in a storm. Then he moved faster.

"Can't wait. Need more."

"Yes, Mac. Give it to me."

Faster and faster he surged deep, rotating his pelvis against her clit at each pass until her head swam with sensation. Her body clasped him, milking him, and she knew sex had never been this good before. Setting her teeth against his hard muscular chest, she fought against crying out, against falling completely apart, but then choice was taken from her as her body seized and she came in a giant tsunami of feeling. Waves of

pleasure poured over her. Mac groaned and went still. She felt his cock pulse deep inside her as he too tumbled from the mountain's crest.

Hours later Mac pressed her against the frame of her front door. It had to be at least three in the morning.

"Wish you could come in," she whispered between kisses.

"No can do. I have to be at the ranch in a few hours and you said you have to open the store early. I'm trying to be strong here. If I come in, I'll go hunting for your bed and that'll be it. No sleep for either of us."

Callie pressed her lips to the strong column of his throat. "Mmm. So worth it. It has been a long, long time since I've been with a man. I'm glad it was you, cowboy."

"Yeah?"

She'd tried to keep her tone light and knew she'd succeeded when Mac grinned. "Would you care to explain that, darlin'? You are a damn beautiful woman."

Callie sighed. "Want to sit for a minute?"

When she'd first moved into her little rental, she'd picked up a cool-looking bench for her front porch. A giant whiskey barrel full of petunias sat next to it. It was the first time she'd actually used it but she followed Mac over and took a seat next to him. Immediately, his arm went around her shoulder and she got the feeling Mac was the kind of man who made women feel safe.

"I got a divorce when I was twenty-five," she began as Mac's hand moved comfortingly over her arm. "I don't want to get into details too much but I knew pretty quickly the marriage wasn't going to work. Doug fought the divorce at every turn and even after it was finalized."

"After? I don't get it."

Callie looked at Mac and blew out a breath. "Long story short, he has been stalking me for years. I've moved to four different cities and towns, not counting this one, since our divorce."

She felt Mac stiffened. "Did you talk to the police?"

"Many times over the years. But Doug is smart. By the time the cops arrived, he was always gone. He's obsessed though I have no clue why. Guess he always saw me as a possession and a little piece of paper stating we were divorced didn't mean a thing to him." A shudder swept her and she felt Mac's arm tighten around her.

"Has he ever hurt you, Callie? Touched you?"

She heard the slowly simmering rage in his voice and shook her head. "No. He did nasty little things like park across from my house and sit there for hours. Or he'd follow me to wherever I happened to be working and watch me from a distance. Creepy stuff. He's one of the reasons I'll never own another pet."

"Fuck!"

"I'm tired of running, Mac. A woman has to take a stand and I guess I'm going to take it here, assuming he shows up. What else can I do? I'm tired to death of not having a life. Of not feeling safe. It sucks and I'm not doing it anymore."

Mac looked worried by the time she'd finished. After she walked inside and watched him get in his truck and drive away, she wondered why she'd bothered telling him. Well, he'd kind of asked so, yeah, she'd finally unburdened herself without going into too much detail about just how crazy Doug Hill really was.

She closed the plantation shutter at her front window and made her way through the quiet house and into her bedroom

Odd.

The small lamp on her bedside table was on. She hadn't done that. At least she hadn't thought so. Frowning, she looked around the small room as a shudder of foreboding swept her body and then she went completely still. Terror dug through her

belly with steely claws when she looked at her bed. There was the imprint of a body in the middle of her bedspread along with an indentation in her pillow. She wasn't losing her mind. Her bed was always neatly made. She had a *thing* about that after all. Callie slowly let out a breath in a feeble attempt to fight panic. This could only mean one thing.

Doug was here in Morgan's Creek and he'd been in her house.

Chapter Four

A few days later Mac walked into the main area of the bar and watched as wait staff worked at setting up the small buffet they rolled out for happy hour every day. Bowls of tortilla chips, along with a heating pot full of melted cheese for nachos and other snack things were placed on the big cart from four to six daily. If he was lucky, most of the customers would have enough free food and cheap beer to encourage them to stay a little longer when full price went into effect.

The place was fairly empty at the moment with roughly twenty locals hanging out, some playing pool in the game room and others having a beer or two at the tables scattered through the cavernous club. A lone man sat at the bar. Mac didn't recognize him but noticed he didn't have a drink. He walked up and leaned his elbows on the bar.

"Could I get you a drink?"

The man nodded. "Yeah, I'll have a beer."

Mac grabbed a glass, drew a beer and set it down in front of him. "Would you like to run a tab?"

"Nah, that won't be necessary." He put a ten on the bar and Mac gave him change just as the cell phone in his back pocket rang.

Turning away from the customer slightly, Mac dug out his phone and smiled when he saw Callie's number on the display screen. "Hey, sweetheart. I was just thinking about you."

"Oh yeah? That sounds interesting. What were you thinking?"

"I've been thinking that I can't get you out of my head. Between your work and mine, I've been wondering if we'd ever see each other again. Been bothering me some," he confessed. "I'm determined to make some time for you."

Mac heard her sigh on the other end and his belly tightened. Man, he had it bad. "Is this just the curse of hard workers or something? What? We get to have no life?" she asked wearily. "I had that big engagement party last night at the Caldwells' place and then another funeral. Jeez! I've been swamped."

Leaning against the bar, he watched the swirling lights over the dance floor come on. Somebody turned the music up until it practically shook the walls. "Listen, Callie, I've been thinking about that. How about we go out and grab a bite to eat?"

"Tonight? Don't you have to work?"

He laughed. "No, I have to get out of here for a while. My manager is back from a trip out of town so I'm good. How about it?"

"I have a better idea."

"All ears here."

She paused for a second. "I hate to ask this but I'm up to my neck in unpacking stuff. My boxes arrived from Oklahoma City late this afternoon and I dug right in. In no way am I presentable."

Mac laughed. "I actually prefer you when you aren't presentable."

"Bad man."

"Just a man who knows what he likes. Listen, why don't I pick up something and bring it over. Bet you're due a break."

"Wow, what a guy! I could use one of those."

"Okay. See you in about an hour or so."

Mac tucked the phone back into his pocket and felt his heart speed up. He'd never met a woman who'd so instantly hooked him. Like a damn trout. He didn't know what it was about her that touched him. She was as sexy as hell but funny with an ingrained honesty that was so appealing to him. Sure he'd had relationships. What thirty-four-year-old man hadn't? He'd come close to getting serious with a couple of women but in

the end things hadn't worked out. Mac had never taken the whys and wherefores out and examined them because, to his way of thinking, the spark was either there or not.

There was definitely a spark with Callie.

Hell, more like an inferno.

"Well now, doesn't Mac look like a man with things on his mind?"

Mac looked up at sound of the familiar drawl and saw Shane Duffy, Leah's husband and a first-class vet, grinning at him. Mac's brother Dash was with him, smiling slightly, as he took off his straw cowboy hat and took a seat at the bar next to Shane.

"You're just in time," Mac said as he reached for a couple of long necks from the cooler and passed them across the counter. "The beer is cold and the company is fine. What brings you by?"

Dash took a swig of his beer and sighed. "Damn that's good. You might call it an intervention."

"That's right," Shane said. "You need one."

"Is that right?"

"Yeah, you aren't sleeping enough and you look like hell. When are you going to take some time off and get your shit together?" Dash, a former cop, gave him a hard look.

"Well—"

Shane piped up. "And Leah is bugging the hell out of me about you moving into that damn house, Mac. You already have the place furnished and some clothes there. Move into it. You know how she feels about family and hell, man, you're her brother."

"I'm thinking about it. Spent a little time out there the other night."

"Yeah, with a woman," Dash said with a grin. "Carmen and I drove by your place and saw your truck. We heard a woman laughing from the backyard."

Mac shook his head. "Now that's exactly why I shouldn't completely move in. Spies are everywhere. Seriously, I *am* thinking about it. Joe Morgan was never my biggest fan and it rankles like hell to take a damn thing from him."

Shane leaned back on his bar stool and gave him a steady look. "Yeah, well he's dead and buried. There comes a point when a man has to put the bad stuff behind him, get on with things."

Mac knew they both meant well and they were right. He reached into the cooler and popped the top on a long neck for himself. "Been thinkin' on it some."

Both men looked at him and finally Dash spoke up. "About damn time."

"You're both right. Leah called this afternoon to nag at me too," Mac said, smiling a little as he recalled the conversation. Had to love a feisty woman. "I'm going to take a week off starting now."

"That's good, Mac," Shane said.

"Yeah, I figure you two are right and I thank you for worrying about me. I've just come to the realization that I'm due a great big break. Are you sure you can handle things at the ranch? I'll only be a phone call away."

"Been wondering something," Dash murmured, his eyes narrowing slightly. "Does this little vacation have anything to do with the woman who was over at your place the other night?"

Mac smiled. "It might." He tipped back his beer and took a drink. "But you know a real gentleman never tells."

Less than an hour later, Mac went up Callie's front steps carrying a couple of white sacks. He'd stopped at the Burger Barn and picked up some burgers and fries but food was the farthest thing from his mind. Desire burned through his belly as he remembered the ways they'd touched each other that night at his place and he hadn't had enough of it. Not even close.

Callie opened the door the instant he knocked. Her smile was broad and friendly and she looked as cute as hell with her hair in a high ponytail, wearing skimpy shorts and a tiny tank that featured little bitty straps. Mac didn't know how she managed to look cute but smokin' hot all at once, but he wasn't complaining. Her gaze took him in, going from happy to horny in three seconds flat.

Mac was no fool. Moving past her into the house, he shut the front door and pressed her against it to take her mouth with a hunger that had nothing to do with the burgers he'd brought and everything to do with his need to fuck her hot and fast.

"Mac," she whispered against his lips. "Um. Wow."

"To hell with the food."

"Yeah, to hell with it. Kiss me, Mac."

Mac dropped the sacks on the floor.

He didn't think twice. On her in an instant, he took the kiss deep, plunging his tongue into the warmth of her mouth, tasting her sweet, wild response on his tongue. His hands reached for the hem of her skimpy little top.

"Fuck it," he said, practically growling the phrase. "Not waiting."

"No. No waiting." Callie swept her hands over the front of his tee shirt, down his sides and dug her fingers in. Her breath rushed out in sexy little pants. Mac's libido sat up and howled as he gently brushed her hands out of the way and whipped Callie's top over her head to bare her breasts.

He latched onto one nipple. It hardened against his tongue as he sucked it, rubbing his tongue around the areola and nipping the stiff bud with his teeth. Callie's fingers went into his hair to bring him closer and he happily obliged, rubbing his hard cock against her pussy. Eagerly stroking her, feeling her heat seep through their layers of clothing, he dry fucked her and didn't stop until Callie was writhing against the door.

Mac kissed his way down the center of her body, pausing at her ribs, her belly. "Been thinking about this for days."

Callie whimpered. "Me too. I'm such a slut."

"Never, honey. Never." Mac went to his knees and filled his palms with her ass as his teeth snagged the front of her stretchy pink shorts. Tugging until her pussy was exposed, he breathed against her hot flesh and finally gave up the game to push her shorts and panties down the length of her legs until they lay in a puddle around her bare feet. Her scent curled around him, filling his head and ratcheting up his desire. "Step out of them."

Callie obeyed.

"Spread your legs."

Another whimper.

Mac smiled against the soft curls covering her pussy, gripped her bare ass cheeks and yanked her close. He opened his mouth over her pink wet flesh and sent his tongue on a slow foray over her slit. Above him, Callie gasped and went still. Her legs trembled. Mac sent one hand lower, releasing his grip on her butt to slide his fingers through the shadowy crevice of her ass until he reached the opening of her pussy. Sliding two deep inside, loving the feel of her drenched heat against his fingers, he slowly circled her clit with his tongue. It was swollen but not as much as he wanted it to be. Lightly sucking the hard morsel, he finally brought both hands around to spread her labia. Mac released her clit only long enough to drag his tongue through the drenched, creamy layers of flesh. He prodded her opening several times before returning to her clit again.

Callie cried out.

Mac increased the pressure on her clit as he plunged his fingers deep into her pussy. Vaginal walls squeezed and released against them as she writhed against his mouth. Mac drank her down, ate her up, loving the soft sounds of pleasure she made until finally she'd had enough and flew apart with a little shriek. Bringing her down gently, he surged to his feet and lifted her beautifully naked body into his arms. Callie

wound her legs around his waist, clinging to him, her face buried in the crook of his neck. "Bedroom. Now."

"First door on the right."

"Hang on."

Mac carried his warm bundle straight into the bedroom and when he spread her out on the bed, his hungry gaze studied every inch of her bare body. Quickly stripping, he grabbed a couple of condoms from his pocket and tossed them to the bed. Standing there, looking down at her, Mac fisted his hand around his cock and drew it slowly over his aching erection.

Callie licked her lips. "Come here, Mac."

Lust burned through his veins as he reached for protection and covered himself. "Can't think of anything but you, darlin'. I'm dying for whatever you'll give me."

"Aw, Mac. I'm a generous woman."

Joining her on the bed, he spread her legs wide to settle himself between them. Still on his knees, he looked down at her wanton pose. Her eyes were lambent, filled with need that he was pretty damn sure matched his own. With her palms splayed over her breasts, pink nipples displayed between her fingers, she looked like a forties pinup girl with all those sweet dips and curves. And Mac wanted to lick every little bit of that soft, silky flesh. Slowly, taking his time, he drew his hands along the insides of her thighs from knee to the sexy dip between her leg and groin. Taking in every detail of her drenched pussy, he flicked his gaze to Callie's face and saw pink color spread over her cheekbones. "You're beautiful," he whispered. "Do you have any idea how often I've thought about you lately?"

"Tell me."

"Every goddamned second, I reckon."

Her smile was slow and sexy. "Then what are you waiting for, Mac?"

Zeroing in on her pussy, Mac traced the petals of her sex with a forefinger, gathering her cream before rubbing it across her swollen clit. Callie arched into his touch, a soft sound escaping from her lips. He played with her, carefully watching her reactions, learning what she liked by the cadence of her breath and the heightened color on her cheeks. Her eyes closed as he stroked her pussy. Mac wanted to bury himself hard and deep but he wanted her wild beneath him so he increased the pressure of each touch, finally putting his mouth to work on the tender insides of her thighs. He nipped her torso, sucked her nipples.

Grabbing a pillow, he flipped Callie to her belly and shoved it beneath her until her ass was elevated, two tempting mounds that he longed to tease with his teeth. He delivered a stinging little bite to her ass and heard her answering moan and then Mac followed that up with kisses as he plunged his fingers deep into her channel. Watching his wet fingers slide in and out of her body was so erotic he felt his balls draw up tight and hard. His aching cock was so stiff he didn't think he'd make it a second longer and then he just gave up.

Gripping the bend of her legs, he widened her farther as he settled her knees on the mattress. "Come up a little, darlin'."

When Callie was balanced on her knees, her gorgeous ass elevated, Mac came up behind her and sent his cock deep into her honey. Strong vaginal muscles gripped him so hard he lost his breath and then he began to move quickly in and out of her body, straining against her as his balls pressed tightly to her heat. Adjusting his thrusts, he brushed her G-spot, heard her low moan and continued to stroke her there with each pounding surge.

"Mac!"

He reached beneath her, pressed her clit repeatedly between his thumb and forefinger until her tenuous hold on control slipped a notch. He rotated his cock against her then whipped it through her heat at an explosive pace. Tiny fingers of sensation raced from the soles of his feet to the top of his head and every place in between as his

body gathered for climax. Beneath him, Callie cried out, her voice muffled against the mattress. Her limbs quivered. Oh hell yeah, she was there and so was he. No more dicking around. A roar of pleasure crashed through his body as he came with a low sound, his cock going off like a rocket deep inside her smoldering pussy. Callie shivered beneath him and in the aftermath, Mac stretched across her back, kissed her and wondered what the hell this woman was doing to his heart.

Sometime later, after they reheated and devoured the burgers and fries, Mac helped Callie put away contents from the boxes that had arrived that day. The woman sure liked to read. Already he'd carried three heavy boxes to her built-in bookcases and begun neatly stacking book after book onto the shelves. Callie had turned on *working music* as she'd called it and classic rock from the eighties and nineties rolled from her sound system. Mac had to laugh. Most women in his past had found him a little intimidating but not Callie. She was completely funny to him and so unselfconscious about things. Sometimes she danced barefoot across the floor and occasionally belted out lines from songs in an off-key lilt. Shaking his head at her humming to an old Stones song, he shoved another two books into place when suddenly she stopped with the impromptu concert. He looked over his shoulder and saw she had gone still. She sniffed the air.

"Do you smell something?"

Mac took a couple of steps toward her and sniffed the air too. "Now that you mention it, yeah."

Following his nose, he approached three or four boxes stacked along one wall of the living room. "In here, I think," he murmured, reaching into his jeans for a pocket knife he always carried. "Let's open some of these and see if we can get to the bottom of this."

Callie had been opening stuff with an opener that held a sharp razor so she bent over one of the boxes and went to work slicing packing tape while Mac opened the one next to it. Suddenly Callie screamed and jumped back. Mac caught her against him as she buried her nose against his chest.

"Fuck!"

A huge rat that had obviously been dead for some time lay atop the linens in the box. The thing smelled to high heaven. Mac held Callie close, feeling her tremble.

"I hate rats! I mean it, Mac, I hate them," she whispered.

Feeling as helpless as hell in the face of all this, Mac patted her back and buried his face in her hair. "Let me throw the thing out, honey."

Callie drew back and looked at him and he instantly recognized the fear swimming in her eyes. She sucked in a shaky breath and mustered a smile. "I'm okay now. It just surprised me. Ick." She shuddered violently.

Pressing a kiss to her forehead, Mac went about disposing of the thing while Callie carried the box of linens into a laundry room and started shoving sheets, pillowcases and blankets into the washing machine. Mac walked back into the house and found her there, her hands shaking as she tried to pour soap into the tub. "Here, let me."

Mac took the jug of laundry soap from her hand and got the machine started before settling a hand on her lower back and steering her into the living room. Together they sat down on the couch and he pulled her against him. "Tell me what you're thinking here, honey."

Callie looked at him and frowned. "I think someone put that damn rat in the box. There wasn't a hole in it anywhere."

Anger balled up in his belly but he fought it down. "You think your ex did this?"

"Doug. Yeah, I do. It would be just like him to find out where I stored things and do something like this. He's a real classy guy."

Mac considered things and figured it was likely. No hole in the box meant someone had to put it there and Doug Hill was a likely suspect. He just wished the dude was here right now, at this exact moment. Mac wanted to kick his ass. When Callie went very quiet, he glanced at her. "What's wrong?"

She pulled her bottom lip between her teeth then released it. "Um. Mac, I think Doug is here in Morgan's Creek. I think he has found me."

"What the fuck?"

"Now calm down."

"What the hell do you mean, calm down? Why didn't you tell me?"

Callie glared at him. "Because you'd just get all worked up. See? I know how you think."

"You do, huh? Tell me what I'm thinking now."

She shook her head. "You want to head out and tear the town apart looking for him but I don't want that, Mac. It's important that I take a stand. If he shows up and I can prove he's in town, I'll go to the police. In the meantime, I'm not going to panic."

Mac closed his eyes and prayed for patience. "Why do you think he's here, honey?"

Callie proceeded to tell him about the light in her bedroom and the messed-up covers. Mac saw red and jerked to his feet. "What the fuck? Why the hell didn't you tell me this, Callie? I could've turned around that night and came straight back here. Did you call the police?"

"No, I didn't."

Frustration mounted as he glared at her. "And why not?"

"You forget. I've been through this before. The police will show up and tell me that I must have turned on the light myself and I simply forgot. They will take one look at the bedding and roll their eyes at me." Callie got to her feet and faced him down. "I'm sick of being treated like a silly woman with an overactive imagination and I'm not going through that again unless I have proof. Right now I have proof of nothing. Get it? Nothing!"

Mac held up his hands. "Okay, stop it. You're getting yourself all worked up, Callie. I don't want to get into a yelling match with you about this but you should have told me." He didn't want to fight with her. He wanted to pull her against him and make

sure she knew there was at least one person on the planet who gave a damn that some asshole was terrorizing her. Giving in, he yanked her into his arms and held her until she relaxed against him. "I'm staying with you tonight. Got that? I have the week off and damn it, I'll stay as long as you need me."

Chapter Five

Callie wasn't going to think about Doug being out there somewhere. The man had occupied too much of her time over the past few years and she was sick of it. Finding happiness shouldn't be a hard thing. It should be a given that it was there if you were brave enough to reach for it and she was sick to death of the past hovering over her like some kind of dark cloud keeping her from the kind of future she wanted.

A big ceramic pot featuring watery, beautiful swirls of rose and turquoise sat on her worktable in the back section of The Gilded Lily. At the moment she was filling it with a selection of silk flowers for a customer. Tucking an assortment of delicate Paper Whites here and there, she sighed. Mac had held her through the night and she couldn't recall a time when she'd slept more peacefully. He exuded strength and comfort. Yeah, he was an alpha guy all the way but along with all that testosterone was tenderness. She loved that about Mac Moreno.

Love.

Odd that word should come to mind when she thought of him. From the beginning there had been an instant connection. It was far too soon for those kinds of feelings but he touched her as no other man before. Not only was Mac responsible for that "first love" giddiness that bounced around in her belly but he had awakened her body. Every measured touch brought her screaming to life. She could count on one hand the number of guys she'd slept with since the divorce. Always Doug's harassment ended things and pretty much made her shy away from entanglements but she wasn't going to let that happen with Mac. He was too important. He accepted her little quirks and eccentricities. Never once did he roll his eyes as if her sunny approach to life was something shameful. She'd never been a big believer in fate but it almost seemed they

were two halves of the same whole. They meshed. They worked. It was impossible to ignore the connection.

"Hey, that's looking nice," Ashley said as she stepped into the workroom and leaned close to examine Callie's handiwork. "Christine is gonna love that."

Callie blew out a breath and pushed back her hair. "I hope so. The purple silk tulips are a cool contrast, don't you think?"

"Oh yeah. It's great. Love the big magnolias too. So elegant. Are you doing three of them or sticking with just two?"

Examining her handiwork, she shook her head. "Nope. Three is overkill."

Ashley walked up to the small refrigerator and grabbed a couple of bottles of water and handed one over. She grinned. "Guess I don't have to ask how you and Mac are getting along. You are just a-glowin' all over. I saw him drop you off this morning."

"He's some kinda guy, let me tell you. There's still so much I don't know about him."

The other woman sat on a high stool and sipped her water. "I've got all the dish. This is a small town, after all."

She couldn't help being curious about anything involving Mac so she listened quietly as Ashley spoke.

"Joe Morgan owned White Eagle Ranch. It's the biggest one in this area and for a long time everyone thought Leah was his only child. It wasn't until after he died and the will was read that everyone learned he had two illegitimate sons. Dash is a former cop from Chicago. I think his mom was a stewardess when old man Morgan met her. Dash has a bad scar on his face from something that happened when he was on the police force there. He's a really nice man though and very hot. He's engaged to Carmen Whitefeather and learning the ropes at the ranch."

"He lives there?"

“Uh-huh. Leah pretty much put her foot down and insisted her brothers build on the ranch or at least live close by. Dash lives at Carmen’s place, which is really nearby, and Mac built on the ranch property. Guess she wanted her family together, ya know?”

Ah. That explained Mac’s house at the ranch but didn’t explain why he didn’t actually live there. She’d wondered about it when she was out there that first night. It was beautifully decorated with its tiled floors and lush leather furnishings. Anyone would want to live there. Sure, he’d said he liked living close to the club but she’d sensed there was more to the story.

“What about Mac?”

Ashley shook her head. “Ah, Mac. He grew up really poor and his mom barely made a living for the two of them. She cleaned houses. A hard worker from what I hear.”

“Morgan didn’t help?”

“Nope. Not a bit. Mac might not have existed as far as Joe Morgan was concerned. Elena got cancer and Mac spent every minute with her. They were very close. After she died, he opened Hell’s Bells. He was no longer the boy from the wrong side of the tracks, he’d become a respected businessman. Everyone likes Mac. I guess the rest is history. After the old man’s death, he built that nice house on the ranch.”

“He hasn’t moved into it completely.”

“Yeah, I know. Figure he will one day.”

Callie hoped so. She could only imagine how bitter Mac would be over the way he and his mom had been treated. He was a proud man and it didn’t take a genius to figure he’d balk at the notion of accepting anything from the man who’d never claimed him.

A bell rang and both women looked up, knowing someone had come into the store. “I’ll go,” Ashley said as she headed from the room. Then almost instantly, she stuck her head back in. “Hey, a friend of mine just stopped by. Mind if I go to lunch a little early?”

Callie shook her head. "No, go on, Ash. It's really slow today and I'm actually considering locking up for an hour so I can grab a bite to eat with Mac. He's coming by."

Ashley grinned and wiggled her brows up and down. "Ooh. Sounds promising. A little nooner maybe?"

"Hmm. Could be," she teased in return. "Go on. Have fun."

A bit later she stood back and admired her finished product, pleased with the elegance of the arrangement. She set it aside and cleaned up the worktable and was just heading to the front of the store when Mac walked in.

Mr. Yummilicious, wearing faded jeans and a black tee shirt, whipped off his straw cowboy hat as he moved in to grab her up for a smoldering kiss. Callie leaned against him, loving the way he held her against his firm chest. His kiss held heat and intensity, conveying he'd been as hungry as she for more of what they shared the night before. "You taste good," he whispered against her lips. His teeth nipped and then he stroked with his tongue. "Are we alone?"

"Nice of you to *not* check before you kissed me. Must have you hooked, huh?"

His teeth flashed white when he grinned. "Like a fish."

"You don't look like any fish I've ever seen." Callie moved from his arms and flipped the lock on the door, setting her store sign to *closed*. Moving in for the kill, she smiled and grabbed his hand. "Come with me."

"Where are we going?"

"To the back for our quickie."

Mac laughed and when they got into the workroom he swung her back into his arms for another hotter-than-hell kiss. Heat crawled over Callie's body to settle in her breasts, her belly and lower. Her pussy creamed at the feel of him, his cock pressed tightly to her center, rubbing slowly. Nipples, tightly pearled, brushed over his rock-

hard chest. He'd been uppermost in her mind all morning and now she was frantic to have him thrusting inside her again.

"Damn, you feel good, Callie," he whispered against the curve of her neck. Sensation swept her and she squirmed to get closer. Her hands got busy teasing the planes of his chest, loving the hard feel of him, testing his muscle with the tips of her fingers.

She turned her head to give him better access to her neck, shivering as his mouth did wicked things to her flesh. "I can't stop touching you."

"Keep it up," he murmured.

"Just try to stop me, cowboy." She felt his smile against her skin. "Do I amuse you?"

"More every time I'm with you. You have a sharp and clever tongue."

"You have nooooo idea." Grinning, she grabbed the hem of his tee shirt in both hands and gave it a yank, exposing all that yummy dark skin. Planting her mouth smack-dab in the center of his chest, she kissed her way across the firm mounds, circling his nipples with her tongue, licking, sucking. His deep groan of acceptance only made her hotter for him. He loved what she was doing and she knew it. Mac reached behind her to slide his hands beneath the short skirt she wore. Filling his palms with her butt, he squeezed her flesh and simultaneously rubbed his cock over her aching pussy.

Jeez Louise!

The man knew how to touch her, knew exactly how to make her burn. He slid his fingers into the elastic of her panties and just as he slid his fingers ever closer to her damp flesh, she pulled away. Breathless, she lifted one finger. "Hold that thought."

She snagged up a four-step ladder that she used for reaching high shelves and scooted it in front of him. Mac's black brow lifted. "What the hell?"

"Be patient. Hang on." Callie sat on one of the wide steps that brought her eye level to the huge bulge resting behind the fly of his jeans. The man made her mouth water.

Smiling up at him, she hooked her fingers in the waistband and dragged him close. "I have plans for you. Big plans."

"I'm all ears." Mac's voice was deep, dark and full of expectation.

"Not thinking about your ears." Pulling her bottom lip between her teeth, she worked the buckle on his belt and then the snap and zipper of his jeans. Then she paused. "Gotta love a guy who goes commando. Lordy, lordy, you are some kinda man, Mac Moreno." Callie slid his jeans down a bit, out of her way and took his hard, bulging cock into her hands.

Mac went still and then fisted one hand in her hair, forcing her gaze to his. His eyes burned with hunger and lust. His voice came out rusty. "You don't have to do this."

"Have to? Oh Mac, I want to. I've thought of nothing else since last night when you showed up with burgers and we had hot sex instead."

When Mac relaxed his grip and it turned into a loving caress on her head, she bent to run her tongue over the wide head of his erection. Licking along the tiny slit at the end, taking her tasting of him to the broad rim, she teased and sucked his flesh until, above her, Mac groaned. Finally she sank her mouth over him, taking as much as she could, sliding her tongue over him, sucking hard and then lightly alternating the pressure. Gripping the thick stalk in her fist, Callie worked him slowly up and down, paying special attention to his tightly drawn balls. Releasing him from the lusty imprisonment of her mouth, she slid her lips and tongue down then up his length. Her fingers gently stroked the taut sac and then finally, she stroked it with her tongue.

"You're killin' me, darlin'. That's so fucking good."

"I'm glad," she whispered against his cock before again taking him fully into her mouth, fucking him that way. One hand found his rock-hard thigh. Stroking, teasing, in tandem with movements of her mouth, she felt Mac hold still as a statue until finally he gripped her hair and pulled away. What was wrong? "What did I—" she began but then Mac reached down and effortlessly lifted her, turning with her in his arms until she was sitting on the worktable.

"I need to fuck you, Callie. This isn't just about me. It's about us."

She opened her mouth to speak but it was too late. Mac gently laid her back on the table and before she could say *yes, please* he had her panties stripped off. The cold of the table surface chilled her ass but then Mac's hands were on her needy pussy and any hint of discomfort was immediately replaced by a quick, hot blast of heat. Pleasure whipped fast and hard through her body when Mac sent his fingers deep. He pumped them in several times and her hips lifted to meet each clever stroke.

"Come here to me, darlin'," he said as he lifted her into a sitting position. Scooting her to the edge of the table, he lifted her skirt up around her waist until she was bare, completely exposed to him. Hunger swam in his dark eyes as he parted her legs and looked his fill. His big, bronzed hands provided a provocative contrast to the pale flesh of her thighs and Mac trailed his fingers, some of them damp from her cream, along that tender skin.

Frantic to have him, desperate for completion, Callie reached for his cock. It rose up between them, hard and thick. Mac groaned. "That's it," he growled low. His jeans were loose around his hips but he managed to dig out protection and cover himself. Taking his erection in his hand, he trailed the fat head through the drenched flesh of her pussy and then drove deep.

Simultaneously, they sighed, went still. Pleasure arced up through Callie's belly and her pussy vibrated as her muscles tightened to hold his thick cock. Unable to help herself, she looked down and studied the way their flesh connected. As Mac slowly plunged deep, disappearing into her flesh, she sucked in a sharp breath. She propped her hands on the table and sent her legs around his waist, mesmerized by this slow, sexual dance. His cock emerged, glistening from her juices before thrusting back in.

"Look at us, Mac," she managed.

"Yeah."

"Faster."

Mac obliged with a low, hungry sound as he sent his cock deeper, pumping, thrusting, pounding through her needy pussy. Sensation sizzled through her veins, lashing her with pleasure until with a cry, she flew apart. Mac went still, seeming to gather himself before surging three more times until, finally, he made a harsh sound and came. Instantly, Callie's arms went around him as she rested her head against his chest. His heart pounded against her ear and she loved the sound of it, loved the idea that she could make this big, strong man come apart this way. "Mac," she whispered.

She looked up to see emotion glinting in his smoldering eyes. He bent his head to kiss her gently, brushing her hair back with one hand. "You are an amazing woman, Callie."

"I'm glad you think so."

Minutes later they repaired their clothing and cleaned up a bit. Callie locked up the shop and let Mac help her into his truck. As they headed to her house for soup and sandwiches, she asked him what he'd been up to.

"I went to the club and did a little paperwork. Made a few calls. Not much."

She frowned at him. "You are supposed to be on vacation, Mac!"

He shrugged. "Just needed to make sure things were in order over there. The decision to take some days off was kind of sudden. Not a big deal. Leah called and asked me to pick up some stuff at the feed store too, so I did that and ran it out to the ranch." He looked over and gave her a sexy grin. "All done in record time so I could show up for our quickie."

"Ha. Ha. Funny."

"I still think I should stay with you for a while."

Callie shook her head as they pulled up in her driveway. "Nah, I was spooked last night but seriously, Mac, I need to handle this."

"I beg to differ. I really don't want to fight with you about this."

Rolling her eyes, she got out of the truck and they walked into her house. She'd locked it up tight when they'd left together this morning. "Home sweet home." Mac followed her into the kitchen and opened the fridge to gather up the makings for sandwiches and set them on the counter. While he was doing that, she went to the pantry for a loaf of bread and some canned soup.

Anger, a wild fear, swept her when she opened the pantry door. Gasping, she stepped back and immediately felt Mac's arms go around her from behind. "Oh my God! Oh shit, Mac, he's been here." Cans were lined up like soldiers, labels facing out. Everything was in alphabetical order. A jar of artichoke hearts, bread, and chicken noodle soup sat with the carrots and cocoa. An unopened jar of grape jelly set next to the green beans. Freaky shit! "Doug has been here. Look, Mac. He arranged my pantry."

"Sick fuck!"

"Yeah, he was like this in our marriage. He had to have things just right. Crazy. I swear, he's crazy."

Her heart pounded hard as she struggled to catch her breath. Sometime this morning while she and Mac had been out, he'd come into *her* house and touched *her* things. There was no smidgeon of doubt about it.

Mac stepped back and took her arm, turning her to face him. Rage shifted over his face, coloring his cheeks. His nostrils flared. "Let me take a look around. Just sit down, Callie."

She shook her head. "No. I'm not a child. I'm not a victim or a wilting flower. I'm coming with you."

A muscle worked in Mac's jaw. "Fine. Come on then."

Her house was small and it didn't take long for them to see the mess Doug had made in the bedroom. The beautiful floral bedspread was sliced to ribbons and stuffing from the pillows was strewn around the room as if he'd been so enraged he'd wanted to inflict as much damage as possible.

"Callie. Come here, honey."

Mac spoke from her bathroom so she joined him and stopped still in the doorway. Doug had taken a tube of lipstick and written *die slut* on her mirror. Tears of rage and frustration burned her eyes so Callie scrubbed her hands over her face as she struggled to get a grip on things. He'd been bad before with the calls and the watching and sneaking around to scare her but Callie couldn't fight the feeling things were escalating out of control.

"Oh Mac," she whispered.

Suddenly Mac's arms were around her. His hold tightened. "You listen to me, honey. We're calling Sheriff Coleman and filing a report, okay?" Though his voice practically vibrated with emotion, his tone was gentle and low. "And then you are gonna pack a bag. Get your stuff together and come with me to the ranch."

She looked up at him, for the moment ignoring the tears that fell in a steady stream down her face. "I don't know."

"Yes you do, Callie. You can't stay here. I can protect you out there while Doug is hunted down and arrested. My family will help."

Callie opened her mouth to protest but the phone by her bed rang. Pulling from Mac's arms, she grabbed it up and spoke.

"Left you a note, Callie. Did you see it?"

Doug. She'd know his voice anywhere. He laughed.

"You bastard!"

"Now now, no name calling. You know I don't like it when you use gutter language. It's not appropriate."

"Not appro—" she began when Mac yanked the phone out of her hand.

"Listen up, asshole." Mac growled the words and then Callie heard a click as Doug hung up.

Mac cursed and punched a number into the phone. While he'd asked the sheriff to come by and stated it was an emergency, he went to her closet and dragged a suitcase out. He pointed to it. "Pack. Now. I'm getting you the hell out of here."

There was no use arguing. She wasn't stupid and Mac was right. Doug was getting braver by the minute and today there had been a touch of insanity in his voice. Shivering in reaction, Callie did as Mac said and began to shove clothing and toiletries into her suitcase.

Within ten minutes, she was sitting in the living room with the sheriff and Mac talking things through. Together, Mac and the sheriff had examined every lock and latch, finding Doug had entered by the guest bedroom window, which she'd apparently, very carelessly, left unlatched. His footprints were prominent in the dirt outside. Callie seldom went into the guest room and she'd simply overlooked the window lock.

Dumb!

Sheriff Coleman was a brawny middle-aged man. He sat on her couch making notes on a pad. "Do you have a picture of Doug Hill?"

"Yes. Hang on and I'll get it." Callie pulled out a photo album and searched through it until she found one of his more recent photos. She handed it over to the sheriff. "This is about seven years old but he hasn't changed much."

Mac who had remained standing through the interview looked at the picture when Sheriff Coleman handed it over. His eyes widened incrementally. "Hell, he was in Hell's Bells a few nights ago. I actually poured him a beer."

When the sheriff got up to leave, he shook hands with her and then Mac. "I'll keep an eye out and have my deputy patrol this area, Callie. We'll find him. I promise you." He turned to Mac. "It's a good thing that you're taking her out to the ranch. She'll be safer there. Every soul out there knows the land and how to use a gun. Hoping it doesn't come to that. Let me know if anything else happens."

Chapter Six

"I love this big tub, Mac." Callie sat in the warm tub, leaning against him, and sighed. Mac knew he could stay like this with her until his skin shriveled and the water went cold. She was warm, sweet and wet, lying against him. Something about her felt so damn *right*. He wouldn't have wished for the circumstances that had brought them together this way, sharing the same space but at the moment, he wasn't going to second-guess things. His big oval tub sat along one wall in his master bathroom. Above them a shell-shaped sconce sent muted lights over them both.

Sex was one thing but intimacy? That was new for Mac, a man who'd been careful to keep sex and intimacy two separate things. But Callie, in just a short time, had managed to squirm under his skin and into his heart.

Mac settled his mouth against her wet hair, breathed in the scent of her and sent his gaze down the front of her body. Drops of water dappled her chest and sparkled like diamonds against her taut, pink nipples. Capturing one with the tip of his finger, he finally gave in and cupped both full breasts in the palm of his hand. Mac bent to Callie's ear. "I'm a big guy, darlin'. When I built the house, I didn't plan on something like this but Leah insisted." He shrugged. "She said life is short and I reckon she's right about that. I suddenly found myself owning part of this land and all that comes with it so I went all out and built something with an eye toward the future."

Callie rolled her head back and looked at him, her expression soft and dreamy as she relaxed in the water. "The future?"

"Yeah. I thought for a long time that I was a solitary man, someone who didn't need a lot of people in his life. Figure I was wrong about that."

"You are pretty close to your family, aren't you?"

Mac laughed a little. "Getting there. Coming to grips with having sibs made me take a long hard look at myself and the way I was living. I'm tired of feeling like I'm all alone in the world, on the outside looking in. Like I was when I was a kid." He slid his hands lower until his fingers were splayed over her belly. Callie sucked in a breath and went still in his arms. "I'm tired of running from what I want."

"We have that in common, I think," she said. Callie settled her hand over his, entwining her fingers, and then turned her head to press an open-mouthed kiss on his chest. Her tongue swept out to taste his skin. "No more running for me either. How about we take a stand together. You and me?"

Mac placed his finger beneath her chin and lifted her face. She didn't wear a drop of makeup but she didn't need it. Her skin was peaches and cream beautiful, her lashes thick and spiky from the water. Tracing the gentle arch of one brow with his thumb, he watched her eyes go all dreamy and soft and felt his heart thump hard in his chest. Tenderness rocked him. Kissing her, tasting the damp sweetness of her lips, he took the kiss deeper, sending his tongue on a searching quest into the warmth of her mouth. Callie sighed and Mac quickly drank it down, absorbed it into his pores.

Callie turned in his arms and while he was lost in the simple act of kissing her, she straddled him, reached for him. Her breasts flattened against his chest, sending hunger to claw through his belly. She sent her fingers into his hair, over his neck and shoulders. Mac groaned, broke the wild kiss and set his teeth against the column of her throat, licking drops of water, sucking tender flesh. And then her hands were on his cock, stroking from base to tip, squeezing gently and then with a firmer touch.

"Closer," he whispered. "Come closer."

Mac gripped her ass and slid her forward a tiny increment. Only an inch more and her silken pussy pressed against his tightly drawn balls. She wriggled against him and Mac swore as the breath plumb left his body. Savage sensation rocked him, prompting him to set his teeth against her shoulder and flex his fingers over the firm mounds of her ass. His fingers dipped into the shadowy crease, opening her to his touch. Sweeping

his finger over the bud of her anus, Mac felt her go still. "I want to take you here. Fuck you here."

"Never done that," she gasped. "Could with you though."

Unable to resist, he slid the tip of his finger into her ass to the first joint. Callie's breath expelled in a rush. Mac played there, loving the responsiveness of her, her openness to try new things. Knowing she wasn't nearly prepared for that kind of game, he removed his finger and, with his other hand, transferred his touch to her pussy, sending his fingers into her, fucking her that way as her hands slid along his hard cock. Every nerve ending in his body sat up and howled for release. Skating over that very fine edge, Mac bent his head to one nipple and sucked hard. When Callie writhed against him, squeezing vaginal muscles against his fingers, he gave up. He couldn't wait. He released her nipple, licked it, then spoke against her breast. "Reach behind me. I put a rubber out there earlier." At the rate they'd been going at it, Mac figured it was best to play things safe, so he'd set a condom next to the stack of towels on the ledge just in case.

Callie leaned against him and reached out. "I love a prepared man."

"Hand it over."

She shook her head. "No, let me."

Callie's fingers trembled. Her breath came out in soft little pants as she ripped the package open with her teeth and reached between their bodies to cover him. Savage need gripping him, Mac lifted her until her creamy pussy hovered over the head of his cock. "Fuck me, darlin'."

Sinking down on his erection with a soft sound, Callie gripped his shoulders, digging her fingers into his skin. Mac groaned too as her heat surrounded him. Once she was settled and he was lodged to the hilt, he began to move. Water from the tub sloshed in a gentle motion that gradually grew more violent as she rose over him repeatedly, taking him deep into her body. Mac thrust upward, gripping her ass to hold her closer, knowing in that instant he'd never get enough of her.

Callie's body was so wide open to him Mac felt the hard, swollen knot of her clit press against his pubic bone on each downstroke. Her thick cream coated him only to be washed away from the warm water in the tub. Wound tighter than a spring, Mac thrust upward, absorbing each nuanced sensation, feeling his balls tighten painfully. Heat swept his skin in a wave.

"Mac!"

"Yeah, that's it, honey. Fuck me. Take it all. Deep and hard. Damn, woman, you're killin' me."

Callie went stiff, her back arching against the shelter of his arm. Mac latched on to one tightly pearled nipple and sucked it as she flew apart. The hard spasms brought his own climax crashing over him, through him. He released her nipple and growled against it, his teeth gritting as pleasure tore through him.

When Callie finally relaxed, he pulled her against his chest and held her, knowing damn well he could hold her like this forever.

* * * * *

The next morning Callie and Mac sat around the kitchen table at the ranch house. She'd only seen the place in the distance but up close it was even more impressive than she'd imagined. Leah, Mac's sister, sat across the table from her looking worried. She was a beautiful brunette, very striking and so welcoming that Callie liked her instantly. Her husband Shane, a tall, lean glass of water, leaned against the counter nursing a cup of coffee. Carmen Whitefeather, Dash's fiancée, sat at the big table too. She was a pretty Native American woman and Callie realized instantly upon meeting her that she was nearly blind. A big dog sat near her chair and Carmen had the habit of resting her fingers on its head. Dash, a big, dark man with a shaved head, stood behind her. She knew that Dash had been a Chicago cop once upon a time and had been badly burned in the course of his duties. Wicked-looking scars covered one half of his otherwise handsome face.

"I don't think you should go back to work, Callie," Leah said, determination heavy in her voice. "Just stay here so we can all keep an eye on you."

Callie shook her head and looked at the occupants of the room. "I can't, guys. Really. I just opened the store and I'm not about to let Doug keep me from my business. He's already taken too much from me and I won't stand for it."

"We're taking a stand," Mac said. His dark eyes were fierce, shining with determination. "Callie and I talked about this late into the night. I don't want her alone so I'll be driving her to and from work. No problem. And the asshole won't be trying anything in the heart of downtown Morgan's Creek. He may be crazy but he's not stupid."

Dash shifted and moved to the coffeepot to refill his mug before turning to give her a look. She and Mac had fully explained the situation and from that moment she'd seen Dash turn *cop* right before her eyes. He was an impressive man and all business when it came to stuff like this. "You'll be staying with Mac. That's good. I know he's armed and he'll be ready for anything your ex might throw at you."

"Damn straight," Mac said as he reached for her hand. His touch was warm and reassuring and Callie wanted at that moment to just crawl up into his lap and feel his arms around her and know damn good and well she was safe. Callie mustered a smile for him. "She'll be okay during the daytime. Sheriff Coleman knows what's up and this is a small town, after all. It's my hope we can all be spared the worry and Doug will be rounded up and arrested for the break-in at Callie's place."

Shane nodded. "Yeah, that would be the ideal thing but we need to be prepared. He could come here and force a confrontation. The shithead is just itchin' for a fight if you ask me."

"He is," Leah agreed. "So how are we going to handle things if he sneaks onto the ranch?"

"Easy," Dash said. He looked at Mac. "You've got me on speed dial, right, Mac?"

Mac nodded. "Yeah."

"If there's trouble, call me and immediately hang up. That'll be the signal for trouble."

"Sounds good."

Leah looked around the room then at Dash, frowning. "What about Shane and me?"

"As I'm heading to Mac's, I'll call you. We'll meet up with our weapons ready."

Callie sat back and watched the plans for her protection fall into place and wondered why Mac had so long resisted being a part of this place and these people. They were willing to go to the mat for a total stranger but Callie was no fool, they were doing it for Mac too. He was family. He was their brother.

Squeezing Mac's hand, surprised at the hot burn of tears in her eyes, she looked at the assembled group. Callie cleared her throat. "You guys don't even know me. I can't thank you enough for what you are doing."

Leah smiled suddenly and reached out to pat her hand. "Oh honey, no thanks needed here. When friends or family needs help you just have to do the right thing."

"That's right. Who can you count on if not for friends and family? In the end, we all need each other. It sustains us," Carmen added softly. Dash came up behind her and settled his lips against her shiny black hair.

With the plan set into motion and feeling a little more safe and secure knowing everyone had her back, Callie headed with Mac into town. Ashley had opened The Gilded Lily and was tidying up the place as the two of them walked through the front door. Immediately Ashley stopped what she was doing and rushed up to hug her tight.

"Hell, honey! I've been so damn worried about you."

Callie shook her head. "I'm okay. My house is a mess but other than that, no real damage done." She glanced up at Mac. "The big guy here is taking good care of me."

He put his arm around her, his dark eyes intense. "I'll keep right on doing it too. I'm heading out to talk to the sheriff but I'm only a phone call away. All right?"

"Okay." She went up on tiptoes, planning to give him a quick kiss, but Mac made it clear *quick* wasn't what he had in mind. His kiss was wild and hot, melting her bones like butter. Sinking against him, Callie forgot about Ashley, the shop, Doug.

Everything.

She'd take what she could get. Every moment of it.

"I'll see you later," he whispered against her lips. "Soon."

"Sooner."

A wicked, sexy grin flashed. "Soonest."

Callie stood at the sliding kitchen door overlooking Mac's backyard studying the shadows that dipped and played over the surface of the pool. That she loved being here was unquestionable. Mac seemed more at home in his new house every day and they'd developed a pattern for living together that was seamless and without worry. In quiet moments she wondered how long it could last. It had been the path of her life that good things didn't continue forever and one day she'd just wake up to the fear and terror and know it was time to move on. Again.

No.

Wasn't happening this time.

Deep in her heart she hoped that Doug had finally given up on all this crazy shit, this weird, beyond-strange obsession, but knew it wasn't so. He was there. Waiting, watching and Callie knew she couldn't let down her guard until he was permanently gone from her life. Now, in the deep of the night, she knew it wasn't just Doug's threat that had her all restless. It was Mac.

She was falling in love with him.

Mac showed her daily with every touch, every stroke of his body into hers, every emotional connection, that he cared for her. But love? Could she be so lucky to earn the

heart of a man who'd known so much loss that he'd shut away those vulnerable parts of himself?

Suddenly Mac's strong arms came around her from behind. "Mac."

He drew her against his warm, naked body and settled his lips against her shoulder. "I missed you. What are you doing up?"

His voice was rusty from sleep. She sighed and leaned against him, turning her face enough to capture his lips. The kiss was soft, sweet and lush, but holding a comfort that she'd never known before. "Thinking."

"'Bout what, sugar? Are you worried?"

"A little," she turned in his arms. "He's out there. Just being quiet, I know, but I can feel him."

When she'd gotten up naked from their bed, she'd put on her stretchy tank top along with her panties. Now Mac's thumb traced the skinny spaghetti straps and slid them off her shoulders. Bending his head, he tasted her bare flesh, nipping gently, drawing it into his mouth before sliding over to taste her throat. "Let me give you something else to think about, darlin'."

"Umm. What a plan." Her arms went around him, fingers tracing the long, strong muscles of his back. Mac's dark skin felt like velvet beneath her palms and helplessly, she lifted her face to him. "Kiss me, Mac. Take me to bed. I need you."

Mac's hungry kiss, his answer to her plea, went deep and hot, quick as a flashfire burning. His hands gripped her ass, fingers plying her flesh, and then his fingers were there, beneath the scrap of cotton dipping deep into her cunt. "I love your cream on my hands, in my mouth. You are the most delicious woman, Callie."

Speechless under the assault of his words, his hands on her body, she managed to gasp his name as he pressed her to the cool glass of the door. His mouth was frantic on hers, eating hungrily at her lips as he finally fisted his hands in her top and yanked it up and over her head. Her nipples pulsed, ached for a firmer touch, and finally, finally he drew one in his mouth to suck. His teeth plied her and Callie could only sink her fingers

into his hair and hang on for the ride. Mac released her nipple with a soft pop, licking it once more for good measure before he went to his knees, a loving supplicant, before her. His lips traced her ribs, her belly, before slipping his fingers into the elastic of her panties to find her dripping pussy.

Her panties were drenched, impossibly wet, but then panties weren't an issue at all. Mac whipped them down her legs and tossed them aside. "Widen your legs. I'm going to eat you out. Now. Come on," he whispered, his voice rough with lust. "Ah yeah, good girl."

Mac gripped her naked ass for purchase and buried his face between her legs, his busy tongue working her over until she wanted to scream her pleasure. Her fists tightened in his hair but he didn't seem to notice. Mac's heavy palms swept gently over her ass before he focused with laser-like precision on her needy pussy. Parting her labia with his fingers, he drew his tongue along her center in a slow tasting. Callie's knees went weak. Mac sent his stiffened tongue deep into her channel, leaving her little choice but to hang on for the ride as he fucked her with his mouth, eating her out with the touch of a master. Her clit pulsed and throbbed in time with the pounding of her heart. "Mac! I need —"

"Yeah," he breathed hotly against her flesh. "Hang on."

Mac sucked her clit, teased with his tongue as pleasure knotted hard in her belly. Callie gasped a breath, moving against his mouth as the ever-expanding sensations curled tighter and tighter. He sank his fingers into her cunt. Callie burned, ached, crying out sharply as the world imploded, blasting through her body with savage force. She screamed as her body pulsed, tears trailed down her cheeks, and then Mac had her in his arms, his long legs eating up the distance between the kitchen and the master bedroom.

In a hot flash, he had her in the center of the bed, kneeling among the rumpled bed linens. Dizzily, still under the effects of the powerful orgasm, she faced the headboard.

Mac came up behind her. She felt the heat of his body blast through her as he guided her fingers to the wooden edge of the headboard.

Holding on tight, she felt him move behind her, heard the snick of paper and knew he was covering himself. Callie sucked in a breath, going still as he dragged the fat head of his cock over her drenched pussy with agonizing slowness. Mac brushed it tauntingly over her swollen clit and then drifted higher to settle at her opening. With a low groan, he buried his cock to the hilt.

Callie gasped then went still as he bent to press his mouth between her shoulder blades in a loving touch that zipped straight to her heart. His hands cupped her breasts, flicking the nipples with his thumbs, pulling gently, and then his fingers were entwined with hers on the headboard as he withdrew then thrust again with savage intensity. Feeling swept her from the bottoms of her feet to the top of her head, hitting every nerve ending in between. Hot and fast he fucked her, so connected with her body Callie had no clue where she stopped and he began. In. Out. In. Out. Little sounds escaped her lips as Mac buried his cock deep, infusing her with pleasure.

"Can't hold on long," he gasped.

"Don't stop. Do it, Mac. Please."

Every surge and withdrawal lashed her until, mindless with need, she came long and hard, crying his name. Behind her, Mac went still then thrust twice more.

"Callie. God!"

The reverence in his voice was her ultimate undoing. A shiver swept her as, impossibly, she came again.

She loved him. She knew it now. Feelings rolled over her like a song and when she shivered again she knew it wasn't from the strong orgasms she'd experienced.

Callie was a total goner for the first time in her life. How could she have ever imagined what she'd known with her ex even remotely resembled what she felt for Mac Moreno? It was a shallow, weak thing and nothing like what she had with this man. The power of her emotions swept her but she didn't want Mac to know. Not yet.

As Mac pulled her into his arms and drew her, spoon fashion, against him, she closed her eyes, the most important question of her life hovering in her mind. Could he love her? Maybe a little bit? Wishing didn't make things so, but she did it now and kept it up until she felt Mac's breathing slow as he finally drifted off to sleep.

Chapter Seven

The next morning Callie rode into town with Mac. It felt weird to not be driving her own small compact car but Mac insisted it wasn't safe for her to be alone. At least not yet. So she didn't complain and left it parked in the three-car garage at Mac's house on the ranch. Over the past weeks, she'd begun to feel a little like a refugee from a war-torn country. Most of her things were still at her little rental house but over time, she and Mac had gathered up more and more stuff that she'd found she needed while staying at his place. Her clothes hung across from Mac's in the big walk-in closet in his master bedroom. Makeup, lotions and perfumes sat alongside Mac's grooming things in the bathroom.

It was strange for her.

In all the years since her split from Doug, she'd never entered into anything that remotely smacked of the long term. Though Doug's harassment of her had much to do with that, the truth was she'd yet to meet a guy who'd rung all her bells and then some as Mac had done.

This is temporary, she reminded herself. It was a sad fact of life that good things seldom lasted. At least that had been her reality.

Mustering a smile, trying desperately to shake off the blues, Callie glanced at Mac. "Thanks for the lift into town. I don't like being dependent like this, you know. It's just weird."

Sharp morning sunlight caught on his black hair and emphasized the masculine lines of his face. Solemnly, he reached out and took her hand. "There is a time to be independent and a time to lean on others. You don't have a lot of choice here, honey, because you know me well enough to realize I'll do anything to keep you safe until that

bastard ex of yours is locked up somewhere." He smiled a little. "No sense arguing about it. How about I come by for lunch after I've finished up at the ranch?"

"Sounds like a plan," she said as Mac pulled into an empty parking spot in front of The Gilded Lily. "You want to pick up something or shall I?"

"I'll do it. Sandwiches from Daisy's Deli?"

"Perfect." Callie opened the door and stepped out of the truck. Looking around, she noted the average, everyday goings-on of small-town life. Several men wearing work clothes stepped from the front door of the nearby coffee shop. The bakery across the street was making homemade bread. The scent of it rolled through the air, making her wish she'd at least had toast for breakfast instead of the single cup of coffee. Teens heading to the local high school drove down Main, honking their horns at each other the way kids do.

When she and Mac got to the door of the shop she dug her keys out of her purse but Mac took them from her and opened the door for her. The cowbell over the door clanged once as they stepped inside and then they both stopped. They could only stare at the scene of devastation.

"What the fuck?" Mac picked up a broken piece of pottery from a display table and turned it over in his hand. Crystal wineglasses had been dashed to the hardwood floors, flowers lay strewn about, their stems broken. An antique dresser that held beautiful frames and other knickknacks had been gouged with something sharp. Most likely a knife.

"Oh Mac," she whispered. Tears swam in her eyes. All her hard work, all the money she'd spent lay on the floor of her shop like so much litter.

"Bastard." Mac muttered the word and reached into his back pocket just as Ashley walked in.

She covered her mouth with her hands as she looked around. Then she focused on Callie and rushed up to hug her. "I'd like to kick the crap outta that guy, honey. I'm so sorry." When Ashley pulled back, she shook her head. "We'll get it cleaned up, Callie."

"Don't touch anything, ladies," Mac said, holding the cell phone to his ear. "I'm calling Sheriff Coleman."

Together Callie and Ashley walked through the rubble and found the back door open. It looked like someone had taken an axe to the thing because it hung in pieces from its hinges. How had Doug gotten past the officers who'd promised to keep an eye out on her store? Shaking her head as she headed to the front area again, she reasoned they couldn't stand watch 24/7. Doug had slipped in and simply done this when they were somewhere else.

It didn't take long for Sheriff Coleman to arrive. The big, burly man with a gruff voice wore a pristine cowboy hat as part of his cop uniform. He shook hands with Mac and her, nodded at Ashley and took a look at the carnage. Two of his deputies followed him into the room and immediately began taking pictures and dusting for prints.

"Looks like our boy got busy last night," the sheriff observed. "I'm sorry he got by us, Callie."

Callie shook her head. "No, you can't be everywhere. I'm not the only citizen here and you guys have other people to worry about besides me. Can I get you some coffee?"

He nodded. "That would be good."

"I have an unopened can of coffee. I'll go make some. You and your deputies might be here for a while."

Roughly an hour later, the fingerprints were taken and whatever other evidence to be found was gathered, the cops left the three of them alone in the store. It was only midmorning and already exhaustion sank deep into Callie's bones. She was so damn tired and not just physically. Emotional exhaustion was harder than the other stuff and at this point she was so over it all she just wanted to curl up in a ball and cry for a while.

No time for that though.

She watched Mac emerge from the back of the store with a broom and a large trash can. "What would I do without you?"

"No need to worry about that, honey, I'm right here. Not going anywhere. Let's get this mess cleaned up."

"You have things to do, Mac," she said, feeling emotion choke her. "Ash and I can deal here."

Truthfully she didn't want him to see her cry. She didn't want him to see her fall apart. Over the years she'd fooled everyone into thinking she was tough and could handle things on her own but it was a lie. Inside she was as soft as a squishy marshmallow and everything Doug had put her through was suddenly too much. She wanted him gone. She wanted to live her life freely without constantly looking over her shoulder.

Callie opened her mouth to argue when the front door opened. Stunned beyond belief, she watched Shane and Leah Duffy and Dash and Carmen come in, armed with brooms, mops and dust pans. Carmen held a big box of garbage bags in one hand.

"What are ya'll doing here?" Running a ranch was hard, tough work. She knew for damn sure they couldn't afford the time it would take to help her with this mess.

Leah walked up and hugged her. "Helping. What else?" Mac's sister drew back and studied Callie's face. "Mac called and when our brother calls, we come. Simple as that."

Suddenly it was too much. Their kindness undid her. Stinging tears welled in her eyes and before she could blink, Leah was hugging her as she sobbed her frustration.

* * * * *

Mac couldn't remember too many times in his life when he'd been quite this pissed off. Today ranked right up there with the worst of those moments. Cleaning up the mess had taken the rest of the day and it didn't take a genius to figure Callie had pretty much lost everything. Insurance would take care of it but it didn't take away from the fact Doug Hill had violated Callie and that his rage was obviously escalating.

Something was in the very air he breathed and it smelled a hell of lot like danger to him. No doubt, the fact Callie was now living with him had provoked the bastard. Mac figured the ass would be coming out of the shadows pretty damn soon.

Shirtless and barefoot, wearing only his oldest pair of jeans, he sat at the kitchen table nursing a beer as Callie walked into the room, fresh from a shower. Instantly he smiled. She wore an oversized burnt orange football jersey that hung almost to her knees that she'd obviously swiped from one of his drawers. Her hair was damp, hanging in ringlets to just past her shoulders. Cute. Hell yeah. Cute as a button. Mac's heart tightened. She'd been through a lot lately but she'd held up like a trouper. He thought back to earlier in the day and the tears that had inevitably come and it pissed him off all over again that Doug Hill had finally managed to get to her like this.

"Come here, Callie."

Callie walked up to him and Mac instantly pulled her onto his lap. His arms went around her to hold her close and he knew in that instant that nothing had ever felt more right. He hated the circumstances that had brought her into his life but loved that he was man enough to take care of her, love her.

Love?

Shock, instant recognition, blasted through his system as he buried his face against her damp hair and breathed her in. He'd been a total dumbass not to recognize what had been staring him in the face for days. She was his. There was no way in hell he'd ever let her go. "You tired, honey?"

"I was but the shower perked me right up."

"Liar."

Callie laughed then sighed as she settled in to rest her head on his shoulder. "Think so, do ya?" She trailed one hand over his chest then lower to explore his belly. Mac's body tightened, his cock hardened instantly and he wondered if this hot flash of lust would always be there between them. Her breath felt warm on his skin. "Hey, it's a pretty night. Wanna go make out in the backyard, Mr. Moreno? Hm?"

Mac ran a hand over the soft flesh of her naked thigh until it settled over her satiny panties. Lightly, he squeezed her butt. "What do you have in mind?"

Callie looked up at him and grinned suddenly before leaning close to his ear. "Why don't you join me and we'll see what's up?" To emphasize her words, she reached down to stroke the hard bulge of his cock where it pushed against the fly of his jeans. Lust curled through his belly.

"Somebody needs to spank your pretty ass. A man who knows how to do it."

Callie sucked in a breath and then laughed softly as she pulled away. When she stood next to his chair she gave him a sexy up-and-down look. "Hm. Might like to see you try that, cowboy. Why don't you grab us a couple of beers and meet me outside on that big double-wide chaise of yours and we'll talk about it."

"Now that's the best thing I've heard all day."

Flashing him a quick, naughty smile, she stepped out onto the patio as Mac went to the fridge to grab a couple of long necks. As a precaution, he reached into his back pocket to find a couple of condoms and his cell phone and was just turning to join Callie when he heard her scream.

His blood went cold.

Grabbing his cell, he quickly punched the number that would speed dial Dash then tossed it aside as he raced toward the sliding glass door. Doug Hill stood near the edge of the pool holding Callie against him, a gun pointed at her head.

Fear and fury roared through his body.

Fists clenched, hating the helplessness he felt, Mac stepped carefully forward. "Let her go."

"Hold it right there, buddy," Doug Hill snarled. "One more step and I'll blow her fucking head off."

"Don't come closer, Mac!" Callie yelled and then she screamed in pain as Doug gave the arm he held behind her back a vicious yank.

"Bastard!" Mac took another step ready to leap on the maniac and tear him limb from limb. "Don't touch her. Don't hurt her."

"I can do exactly what I want, Moreno. Callie belongs to me. She always has." Doug Hill had probably been a good-looking man at one time but tonight his thick curly hair stood on end crazily, as if he'd been running frantic fingers through it. Stubble covered the lower half of his face and even in the darkness, his eyes looked hollow and crazed as if he never slept. He was a man who skated along the very edge of sanity. "Isn't that right, honey?"

"Callie doesn't belong to you," Mac gritted out. "She never has."

"Bullshit! Just because she spreads her legs for you now doesn't mean she's yours. She's my wife."

"Not anymore, Doug," Callie said through her teeth. "I divorced you."

"Shut the fuck up!" Callie's ex gave her arm another yank, making her cry out. "You don't divorce *me*. I divorce *you*. I decide when I'm done with you, Callie, and I'm not finished with you. You're mine."

Silence fell for a second.

Mac shook with rage, his mind whirling with options. The man was completely insane and there was just no way to know what he might do. In the distance, Mac heard sirens blast across the otherwise quiet night sky and then Dash's voice broke the stalemate.

"Drop it or I will shoot you."

Dash's sudden appearance sent events into motion. Caught off guard, Doug turned with a jerk, momentarily taking his attention from Callie. As Mac rushed forward, Callie dropped to the ground, leaving Doug open and vulnerable. A shot rang out from the rifle Dash held and the small gun went flying.

Callie's ex-husband grabbed his injured hand just as Mac plowed into him head first. Landing a blow to Doug's belly, Mac fell with Callie's ex into the pool. Doug,

caught off guard, flailed around like a wounded fish but Mac hadn't started. Grabbing a fistful of shirt, he stood him up in the pool and smashed his fist into Doug's nose. Grunting, blood spurting from his nose, Doug continued to fight. Mac landed another blow to his mouth and again blood ran dark in the moonlight.

"Asshole!" Mac yelled. "Who the fuck do you think you are?" He pounded him again as a red haze of anger carried him under. He wanted to kill him for what he'd done to Callie and that was a fact.

Mac heard shouts. The sirens got louder but he wasn't finished. Not by a long shot. And then Callie was there, grabbing his arm. "Mac! Honey, stop or you'll kill him," she yelled.

Suddenly Shane was there in the pool with them. "Settle down, Mac. I've got him." He dragged Doug Hill to a safer distance where hands were waiting to give assistance.

Damn.

Breath billowed in and out of his lungs as his face burned hot from fury. Callie was wet and slippery as an eel, clinging to him, kissing his chest and murmuring that she loved him.

He was hearing things.

Closing his eyes, he shut out the sounds of chaos and tightened his hold on Callie as he struggled to calm down enough to think.

"Mac. Mac. Mac. Shh. It's okay," Callie whispered.

When he opened his eyes, he saw Dash talking to Sheriff Coleman and two deputies leading Doug off in handcuffs. It was over. Mac cupped Callie's face, examining every inch of it. "Are you all right?"

Tears and laughter bubbled out. "Yeah. Yes, I'm fine. My arm hurts a little but it's not broken. I can move it. Oh Mac. I was so scared he would hurt you, honey."

"Me? Hell, sweetheart." Unable to resist, he pressed his mouth to her lips then her forehead. "He had a gun at your head. God, woman. God."

Wrapping her up in his arms, he waded from the pool and together they climbed the steps to the patio. Leah was there holding a rifle, pointed down, in one hand as she reached for her dripping husband. Another rifle was lying on the ground and Mac assumed it belonged to Shane. Looking around the area, taking it all in, he realized they'd dropped everything they were doing to come and help. They were prepared to defend him and the woman he loved.

Yes, loved.

Warmth mixed with relief curled through his chest and Mac couldn't remember a moment when he'd felt quite so whole. No longer did he feel like that poor Mexican kid from the wrong side of the tracks, his nose pressed to the glass, wishing desperately for what was on the other side when at the moment everything he'd ever wanted was right here in his arms.

Yeah. Hell of a night.

Sometime later the excitement of everything died down. Paramedics had checked everyone out for injuries before heading off. Mac had changed into fresh, dry jeans and Callie had pulled on shorts and a tee shirt. Dash lingered just long enough to make sure everyone was okay then he hurried off to reassure Carmen who was waiting for him at home. Shane borrowed a pair of Mac's sweats and after Leah made sure they'd stop in for breakfast the next morning, headed out the door to find their bed.

Now Callie sat cuddled next to him on the couch. Once the adrenaline rush ended, she'd begun to shake so he held her tightly, warming her, whispering to her that everything was okay now.

He ached for her.

It was a physical thing but then again, so much more. His heart ached for her too. Yearned. Craved. She was everything he'd ever imagined or hoped for in his wildest dreams. She made him laugh and dream of a future filled with all the good things people should have. "Feeling better, sweetheart?"

Callie nodded. The brush of her hair against his chest was soft. "Thank you."

"No thanks necessary, Callie. I'd do anything for you." Mac felt her go still. He wasn't an idiot. This was the most important thing he'd ever done and he damn sure didn't want to blow it. Nerves skittered along his spine. "I don't want you to leave."

She looked up, her eyes wide and searching. "What are you trying to say, Mac?"

"Stay with me. Here at the ranch."

"You mean until everything is settled with Doug?"

Mac cupped her face and dragged the edge of his thumb along her cheekbone. "No. I want you to move in here with me, honey." When Callie didn't speak Mac plunged forward. "From the time I was a little kid, I've felt I didn't belong. Mom loved me but that was about it. After a while I started to think maybe there was just something wrong with me. Maybe I was just unlovable or something."

Tears rolled down Callie's face. "Mac. Oh honey."

He shook his head. "It's okay. I was just a silly kid who didn't know any better. Now I know there's more for me, something good and real. It's you, Callie. You make me a better man. You give me hope for a future that's clean. Good, ya know? I love you. I think I loved you the minute I saw your smiling face behind the counter that first day."

Callie choked. A sob broke from her lips and it scared the shit out of Mac until she launched herself at him to throw her arms around his neck. Raining tiny kisses over his neck, his face and chest, Callie whispered of her love. "Oh Mac. Honey, I love you. I can't help it, I do."

He kissed her long and deep, feeling his love returned with every sigh she made, with every small little sound that told him of her pleasure. Standing, he lifted her up and carried her to bed. Callie clung to him, still planting soft little kisses on every bit of skin she could reach.

Mac's heart thumped, joy rising up, threatening to explode through his veins like a pyrotechnic show. Setting Callie on her feet beside the bed, he quickly stripped off her clothes and then removed his. Together they sank down onto the mattress, their hands

touching bare flesh, kisses going deep, then deeper as they expressed their love for each other.

She would stay.

She was his.

The words swam through his mind like a whispered mantra bringing peace to his hungry soul. Mac filled his hands with her breasts, thumbing the tightly furled nipples until they were as hard as gems. He came over her, bending his head to suck one deeply, loving the way she moved beneath him. When he took the other nipple into his mouth, Callie sent her fingers into his hair to hold him close. Swirling the spot with his tongue, scraping his teeth against the delicate bud, Mac felt Callie's grip tighten.

"Mac. Yes."

"I need to fuck you, love you."

"Yes. I'm here. Not going anywhere."

Needing her more than he needed air, he took one of her knees in his hand to spread her open. Mac stroked from knee to groin, teasing her sensitive inner thigh with the tips of his fingers and the stroke of his palm. Heat radiated from her pussy. It rushed over him in a wave. Unable to slow down when he desperately wanted to savor things, Mac drew his finger down her slit, collecting cream before dipping into the honey sweetness of her pussy. Callie made a low, gasping sound, arching up into his hand as he fucked her that way. Vaginal walls clasped and squeezed and finally she cried out as orgasm shook her.

"Come to me. Mac, I need you," she whispered breathlessly. "Fuck me."

Mac came up over her, his knees on the mattress. Looking down at her, he fisted his hand on his cock and drew it slowly up and down the thick, aching length. A tiny drop of fluid leaked from the tip and Mac watched Callie's eyes go lambent as her tongue swept her lips. He wanted that sweet mouth on his cock, sucking him deep as she'd done before. His balls twitched and hardened in response to his thoughts.

Reaching for protection on the bedside table, Mac covered himself then leaned over Callie. Taking his cock in hand, he trailed the head over her drenched pussy. She shuddered with reaction, sending frantic fingers over his chest and belly. He pressed against her clit, causing Callie to suck in a sharp breath. "Hurry," she whispered. "Hurry."

"I wanted to go slow but damn it. I can't. Not now."

Mac plunged deep, filling her up. Vaginal walls clamped down and he wondered if he would ever get enough of her hot cunt. In and out he moved, as her legs went around his hips to hold him tighter. Her ankles dug into his ass as he surged deep only to retreat again, her sighs painting the air around them with the sounds of her pleasure.

"Faster. Oh faster, Mac."

Happy to oblige, in an agony of torment, he lashed her pussy with the strength of his thrusts, pounding deep then deeper until Callie's back arched, her hard nipples too much temptation to resist. Mac took one in his mouth, sucking hard as he fucked her. The tempo couldn't be sustained as his balls drew tight against his body. "I love you, Callie."

"I love you too."

The simple words seared him as he came long and hard, his cry of completion mingling with hers until, replete, they fell together, holding on through the night.

Epilogue

Carmen Whitefeather and Dashiell Hyde were married on a sunny afternoon. Mac watched the couple take their first dance as man and wife where their love affair had begun. Here on the White Eagle Ranch. Mac didn't know a whole lot about brides but he thought she was beautiful in her Native American wedding dress. It was white doeskin, rubbed and worn to butter softness. Small seed pearls were fashioned in an intricate pattern around the hem and sleeves. Dash told him it was the same dress her grandmother had worn many, many years ago. It sure as hell suited her and damn if Dash didn't look happy as they danced together. Sharp, late afternoon sunlight sparkled on Carmen's loose black hair. The long white feather, trimmed with more pearls, skimmed along her cheek with each movement.

The wedding reception at the ranch was in full swing now and most of Morgan's Creek had turned out to celebrate the happy couple. Leah and Shane stood at the perimeter and Mac swore that even from this distance, Leah's eyes were just a little misty over the whole thing. Shane leaned close and said something that made her smile.

"Dash and Carmen look so wonderful together," Callie said as she slipped her hand in his.

"Damn fine couple."

She stepped back a little and gave him a teasing up-and-down look. "You look pretty damn fine yourself, cowboy." He and Shane matched Dash today, each wearing Texas wedding duds, black, western-cut tuxedos with their boots and cowboy hats. "Think I might just keep you around."

Mac grinned. "You'd better, woman. Don't think you have much choice in the matter." Reaching out to hug her close, he marveled at the love he felt for her. She was so damn pretty in a simple dress in a soft blue color. Callie had told him the color was

aqua. He didn't know shit about that stuff but she damn sure looked good enough to eat. "Want to take a walk?"

Callie nodded. "Sure."

Hand in hand they ambled through the crowd of people until Mac spotted several bales of hay stacked high near the barn. Shrugging out of his tuxedo jacket, he spread it out. "Sit."

"On your nice jacket? No way."

"Sit, Callie. I won't have you getting your pretty butt scratched from this hay."

She rolled her eyes, laughing. She was always laughing. Mac loved that about her. "Okay. Okay. Jeez, you're bossy."

When he settled down next to her, he pulled her against him as music drifted over them, surrounding them. From the barn a horse whinnied. "Been meaning to talk to you about something."

"Shoot."

"I really love living with you, Callie, but it's not enough." Her eyes went wide and he knew he was fucking this up. Mac shook his head. "Shit. I'm not doing this right."

"I'm listening," she said quietly.

"When I was a kid, I wanted to be a part of this ranch so badly I could practically taste it." He leaned over, propping his forearms on his knees as he struggled with his thoughts. "My life was tough and I guess I was pretty damn bitter over everything that Joe Morgan *didn't* do for me and for my mom. Maybe now I've figured that happiness doesn't work that way. A man can't wait for the good stuff to happen. He's got to grab it and take it and make it his." Mac looked at Callie, willing her to understand. "That's what happened when I met you, honey. I saw happiness the minute I looked at your pretty face. I realize now that I want you more than I ever wanted acceptance from my father or a place on this ranch."

"Oh Mac." Callie reached out and swept her palm over the length of his back.

Mac straightened and reached into the front pocket of his pants. When he pulled his hand out a platinum and diamond engagement ring winked from the end of his pinky finger. His heart in his throat, he watched Callie's eyes go wide and then instantly fill with tears. "I know this is sudden but I love you, honey. Will you marry me? Live with me here on the ranch? Build a future with me?"

Tears rolling, Callie cupped his cheek and kissed him. "Yes, Mac. Oh yes. How could I ever say no? I love you so much."

Joy exploded in his chest as he took her hand and slid the ring into place. His kiss was hungry but tempered by the solemnity of the moment. He'd never thought to do such a thing. Never had he thought he'd find a woman who completed him as Callie did. As she sank against him, her nose buried against his chest, the lone eagle swooped regally across the blue Texas sky to land on the roof of the barn. Its unblinking gaze took him in, measured the man he was and seemed to approve.

Mac had home, family and a woman who loved him. It damn sure didn't get any better than that.

About the Author

Regina Carlisle is an award-winning, multi-published author. She likes writing that is hot, edgy and often humorous, and puts this trademark stamp on all her stories. Regina lives in west Texas with her husband of 25 years and counting, and is a doting, fawning, over-indulgent mother to her two kids. When she's not penning steamy erotic tales or hot contemporary stories, she's indulging in long chats with friends who help her stay sane and keep her laughing.

Regina 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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