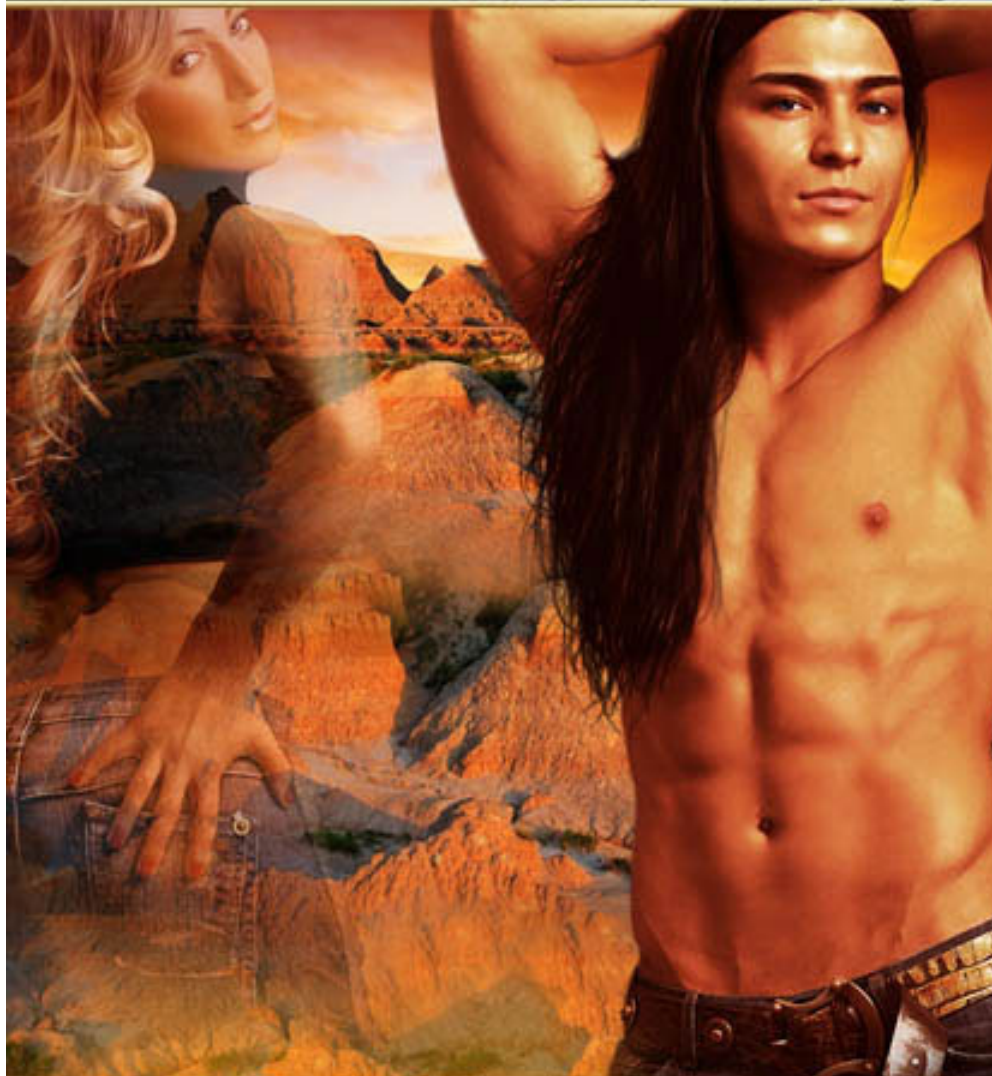


ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*



PROPOSITIONING
Mr. Rain
LAURANN DOHNER

Propositioning Mr. Raine

Laurann Dohner

Book one in the Riding the Raines series.

Trina Matthews lost her husband of sixteen years to a tragic accident. Starting her life over in the small town of Hailey, Texas, at the age of thirty-eight sounded like a good idea but she never counted on the loneliness she'd experience.

Navarro Raine is the hottest man she's ever seen. He's tall, with piercing blue eyes and Native American beauty. He fills her nighttime fantasies and makes her wonder about all the things she's yet to experience in bed. And Navarro has a reputation for being *very* good in that department...

Discovering he's about to lose his family ranch, Trina has the perfect solution for both of them. She's willing to offer Navarro the money to save his ranch if he'll give her the kind of sex she's only read about. It might be the craziest thing she's ever done but after years of vanilla sex, she's made up her mind—it's time to taste a few more flavors.

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



www.ellorascave.com

Propositioning Mr. Raine

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PROPOSITIONING MR. RAINE

Laurann Dohner

Dedication

To the man who always makes me smile and believe in love—Mr. Laurann.

Special thanks to Pamela Campbell— for believing in me!

Trademarks Acknowledgement

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Ford: Ford Motor Company

Porsche: Dr. Ing. h. c. f. Porsche Aktiengesellschaft Corporation

Chapter One

The burn of whiskey slowly eased from her mouth down into her belly. Trina bit her lip and placed her glass down carefully on the table, taking a deep breath. Her nerves were on edge and she figured a few shots of liquid courage were just the trick to get her to do something totally insane. She took another deep breath, expelling it quickly, and then lifted her gaze to glance secretly at the reason she wasn't at home in bed reading a good book as she typically did every night.

In the corner of the bar sat the man who occupied a lot of her nighttime fantasies. He appeared to be in a foul mood as he stared at his hands, wrapped around a glass of some strong blend of alcohol, and nursed his drink. She could guess that right now Navarro Raine was feeling the weight of the world on those big, broad shoulders of his. For days the gossips in town had been busy spreading the word that Navarro's younger brother, a man with a well-known history of drinking and gambling problems, had taken a twenty-thousand-dollar loan out against their ranch that they couldn't pay back.

Missy, down at the post office, said it was a damn shame the Raines were losing their place. Mike, at the gas station, had smugly grinned when he'd said it would be good riddance of the whole Raine family when the bank foreclosed. Trina had listened to it all, feeling really bad for the man she secretly had a crush on. They'd never spoken to each other so she hadn't had an opportunity to tell him she was sorry for the mess he was in.

The grocery checker just that morning had given Trina the latest gossip going around town. Navarro's long time girlfriend, a leggy redhead named Tammy Brent, had dumped him as soon as she'd heard he was going to lose everything. It had pissed Trina off when she'd driven home, thinking how unfair that was. She'd seen the younger woman all over town, but had never liked the outspoken, trashy woman much. It spoke volumes of Tammy's low character to dump a man when he was down for trouble not even of his own making.

Trina swallowed another sip of whiskey. The liquid burned down into her belly again. As she'd put away her groceries hours earlier, her mind had fixed on Navarro's money problems, his mean ex-girlfriend, and suddenly a crazy plan had formed. *It is crazy, she reminded herself. He's never going to go for it in a million years and he'll think I'm a nut job.*

Her gaze lifted again, automatically locking onto Navarro. Only a blind woman couldn't see how hot he was and there wasn't a damn thing wrong with Trina's eyesight. Her attraction to him was so strong that her heart raced every time she laid eyes on the tall hunk. Her panties were wet just watching him from across the room.

He stood about six-foot-two with silky black hair that fell to his shoulders, accented by his deeply tan skin. He worked out often, judging from his muscular arms and broad shoulders that tightly filled out a red flannel shirt. Though he was sitting, she knew he had lean hips, a tight ass that looked amazing in his faded jeans, and long, muscular legs. He always wore jeans that molded to every inch of his body, from hips to calves and he kept his big feet encased in faded black cowboy boots. He was damn near perfect from the neck down.

A scar ran a few inches along his jawline, a thin white line only noticeable if he tilted his head back in good lighting. She'd heard he'd gotten that from his rodeo days when he was younger, working the circuit. A few more scars were said to be at his temple but his long hair hid those. He had the kind of eyes a woman could stare into for hours—a dark, stormy blue framed by thick black eyelashes. His bone structure was strong with dominant cheekbones that some might think made him appear a little harsh but Trina didn't agree. He was just damn sexy to her.

One glance at her watch revealed that if she didn't do this now, he'd leave soon. He worked hard on his horse ranch and when he visited the only bar in town, he usually left around nine o'clock. She assumed he got up early just as did most people in the area. She was learning a lot about ranching since she'd moved to the small Texas town of Hailey a few months before.

Forcing her courage, she took a deep breath and stood, swallowed hard, and walked toward his table. She was glad it was Tuesday night and the bar was almost empty, knowing she'd have been more afraid of doing this if there were a lot of witnesses around. *He's going to lose his home, I'm really lonely, so just do it*, she silently ordered herself. *What do I really have to lose? I could be helping him.*

Navarro seemed to sense her coming toward him and he looked up. His beautiful, dark blue gaze locked on Trina. She almost turned and fled but managed to keep moving toward him even though a blush rose in her cheeks. She paused in front of his table and nervously shoved back a long strand of her curly blonde hair that fell forward.

"May I sit?" Her voice was a whisper. "I have a proposition for you."

Surprise flitted across his features but a second later his dark eyes narrowed suspiciously. His full lips twisted into a frown but he jerked his head in a nod. He let go of the glass and motioned to one of the chairs opposite him. She slowly took a seat.

Trina locked her hands together in front of her on the table so he didn't see them trembling. Her entire body was shaking slightly from nerves and for the hundredth time she pondered if she should go see a shrink since she was crazy to be doing this. She was at least aware how nuts it was so that gave her hope that she hadn't totally lost her ever-lovin' mind. Biting her lower lip, she forced herself to meet his gaze.

"What is on your mind?"

She shivered a little at the sound of his voice. He had a gruff, deeply masculine, sexy voice that made her stomach tighten. She wished she had another drink, her

courage sliding away from her as fast as the warmth in her belly had from the whiskey she'd drunk before approaching him.

"I'm—" She had to clear her throat. "I'm Trina Matthews."

"I know who you are."

That surprised her. "You do?"

He nodded. "You bought the Vern's farmhouse when they retired to Oregon."

She swallowed the lump that formed to her throat. That was one less thing she'd have to say since now she wouldn't have to explain what she was doing in Hailey. She nodded.

"I did. I saw it for sale on the internet and bought it a few months ago. I lost my husband last year when he was killed in an accident at work. I'm from Southern California and I wanted to live somewhere that I wouldn't have to be constantly reminded of my loss."

Trina was proud that she'd gotten that bit of information out without her voice breaking. It had been fourteen months since the devastating reality that Ted had been killed. The move from Southern California to Hailey had helped a lot and she was finally starting to get on with her life, leaving almost everything behind so little reminded her of her marriage.

"I'm sorry. I hadn't heard that." His gaze softened.

"Thank you."

"You mentioned you had a proposition for me? Do you want to buy a horse? I have a few that come to mind if you're just learning to ride. I not only breed them but I train them."

Trina hesitated. "I don't want a horse. I don't even want a puppy. I..." She swallowed, realizing it was harder talking to him than she had thought it would be. "I mean, I'm not looking for a pet or something to take care of because honestly, I have a hard enough time taking care of myself some days."

Sympathy filled the man's expression. "You really loved him, huh?"

She nodded. "We were married for sixteen years."

A stunned look passed over his face. "Wow. I think the longest relationship I was ever in was two years when I was married but it didn't work out."

She took a deep breath. "Whatever we say here, can it stay between us?"

His eyelids narrowed a little again while he raised his glass to his lips to take a sip. He swallowed and his glass kissed the table when he put it down gently. "I'm not a gossip if that's what you're asking."

"I didn't think you were. This is embarrassing and I'd just like your assurance that you won't repeat anything I say to you. Can I have your word? I heard you were very trustworthy."

He nodded. "Sure. I won't repeat anything but I'm kind of confused though. You don't want to buy a horse from me so do you need some help around your place? Is that it?"

She hesitated. "I heard about your brother and what he did."

Anger made his mouth tighten into a firm line. "Yeah, well, I figured it had gotten around that I'm going to lose my ranch. Some people are probably pretty happy about it."

She didn't know what to say to that. "I... Damn, this is harder to do than I thought it would be. I rehearsed this in my head a hundred times on my drive to town but now that I'm facing you this is so embarrassing."

He frowned at her. "Just say what you want to say."

She met his blue-eyed, intense gaze that caused her heart to pound in her chest. He had utterly sexy and beautiful eyes. "The company my husband worked for had to pay me a settlement because it was their fault he died. I don't want to go into the details but someone screwed up and Ted was killed. Ted also had a life insurance policy so money isn't an issue with me." She paused. "I have enough money to save your ranch."

Shock widened his eyes and his hand tightened on his drink, turning his knuckles white. Long seconds passed. "You'd be willing to loan me the money? I'd be good to pay it back. I tried getting another loan but my brother has kind of screwed up our credit. I won't lie about that. It's in the shitter."

"No loan." She hesitated. "I mean, I could do that but then you'd have to pay it back. I...uh...have a job in mind for you to earn the money."

Navarro frowned again. "Look, I don't know what kind of job you have for me but all I know is horses. I am handy with a hammer and can paint. I've done shit on my own house over the years. I put in a new floor and I patched my own roof. I—"

"Not that," she cut in. Embarrassment heated her cheeks. "This is really harder to say than I thought it would be."

Dark blue eyes watched her. "Just say it."

She nodded, letting her gaze drop to his chest, not looking directly into his eyes helped a little. "I was married for sixteen years. Don't ever doubt that I loved my husband because he was a great guy but he worked too much and he was kind of uptight. I thought it was cute." She paused, knowing her cheeks burned hotter now. "I heard you're a real lady's man and I heard that you're...uh...well versed in the bedroom."

Trina saw his chest rise and fall in a quick way as he sucked in air, obviously surprised by what she'd said. She didn't blame him one bit for the reaction either. The silence between them was absolute and very uncomfortable. She wished the seat would open up under her and that she could disappear. This was way worse to do for real than practicing in her head and she could feel his gaze on her while she imagined he was shocked speechless. She licked her dry lips and decided to finish the most humiliating discussion of her life.

"This is harder to say than I thought it would be. I loved Ted but he was, um, not really adventurous in bed. I thought maybe I could give you the money you need to save your ranch and maybe in exchange you could give me what I want. I can't imagine what you think of me right now but I'm not a bad person. I just never had a great sex life. I'm lonely and...shit..." She went silent. "This was a bad idea."

"Is this some kind of joke?" His voice was harsh and tight as he spoke softly.

Trina's gaze flew up to see how angry he was, his blue eyes glittering with rage. She shook her head. "I wish it were because I'd love to give you a punch line about now. I am so sorry. I heard you and your girlfriend broke up, I knew you were single, and you needed money. I...I'm just so sorry." She rose to her feet, realizing she was babbling. "Forget it."

Navarro lunged forward and gripped her arm, strong fingers curling tight around her forearm. He didn't hurt her but it shocked her enough that she gasped softly as her gaze flew back to his. He still looked furious.

"Sit."

The hand released her the second her ass touched the chair again. Navarro Raine's anger melted away quickly. She glanced at his face and then let her attention drop to the table. She couldn't ever remember being so embarrassed in her entire life, having just propositioned a man to pay him for sex. She really did need to see a shrink and silently promised to make an appointment tomorrow. All Trina could hope for was that he wouldn't tell anyone how desperate and sad she was. If it spread around town that she was offering money to men in exchange for having sex with her, she'd never be able to face anyone again.

"Look at me."

Her chin rose, unable to resist his harsh order or his deep, commanding voice. Their gazes locked. His eyes were still beautiful, even when they were narrowed with suspicion.

"Tell me the truth. This *is* a damn joke, isn't it?"

"No."

He frowned. "You're offering me money to fuck you? Is that what you're doing?" His voice was barely a whisper.

"I know it's insane and I'm sorry for bothering you."

"Is that what you're doing?" His voice deepened.

She didn't look away from him even though the urge was there. "I heard you were good at it when some women were having lunch at the diner once. They were comparing notes and they all dated you in the past. I've never..." She sighed and looked away from him, unable to look into his eyes while confessing her darkest secrets. "I loved Ted but every time I asked him to try something so I'd enjoy it, he got upset with me, and acted like I'd hurt his feelings so I shut up." Her gaze lifted again to meet his. "I'll loan you the money, it's the least I can do because I don't want you losing your

ranch. Just draw up something legal and put in what payments you can afford and then bring it to me. I'm just so sorry about this and please don't tell anyone. I don't want to move and I'd be so embarrassed if it got out that I couldn't live in this town." She got to her feet again and fled.

The embarrassment she was experiencing was almost a physical pain. She'd just propositioned a man for sex and it was the stupidest thing she'd ever done in her life. Her hands trembled as she dug out the keys to her SUV, just glad that no one seemed to have overheard their conversation in the bar. She could pray Navarro wouldn't tell anyone what she'd tried to do because she really didn't want to move. She loved the farmhouse she'd bought but she was a fool for offering money to a guy in exchange for hot sex.

A hand gripped her arm and it made her gasp. She dropped her keys and spun around to stare up at Navarro Raine in shock. He was standing very close. He was almost a foot taller than her five-foot-three, and he was bigger up close than she'd imagined.

"Our conversation isn't over." Navarro kept hold of her. "I'm still stunned but I didn't say no."

It was her turn to be shocked speechless.

"Go on. Tell me more."

Speak, she ordered herself. "I don't know what else to say. I just had this crazy idea that we could help each other. I have money and you..." She blushed. "I'm attracted to you and I heard you were really good in bed. I've never had that and I've never..." She sighed, dropping her focus to his chest. "Unless it had batteries or it was just me alone, I've never gotten off. I read books and I've always heard from my friends how great sex can be. I just wanted..." She paused. "It's crazy, isn't it?" She looked up at him again, studying his features. "I promise that I'll make an appointment with a shrink. Just please don't tell anyone because I'd die if everyone knew how pathetic I am."

His eyes searched hers in the dim parking lot for long seconds before they widened in surprise. "You're serious."

Expressions she couldn't read flickered across his face as he released her arm. He took a step back, hooking his thumbs in his front jean pockets. Tearing her gaze from his, Trina bent to pick up her keys. She straightened, gripping them, and glanced at him again.

"I'm really sorry and I mean it about the loan. Just draw up something fair and bring me the paperwork to sign. I can write you a check and I won't need it before you can pay it back."

She unlocked her door and tossed her purse in, ready to climb in after them to flee the scene of her humiliation. A gentle hand clamped on her arm again. She turned to stare up at Navarro, only to discover him staring back at her, nearly touching her body with his. She couldn't read the intense expression on his face but wished that she could.

"You're an attractive woman and could get a lot of guys in your bed."

He seemed to be a nice guy and the least she could do after dropping a bomb on him was be honest.

"I'm thirty-eight years old, not young anymore, and my body isn't what it was twenty years ago. I gained weight when I was married and then I lost it during my grief so I look better in clothes than I do out of them. I've only slept with three men in my life so I'm kind of shy and not outgoing. I always draw the smart types who aren't like you." She paused. "That's not an insult, I think you're smart, but what I meant is I draw nerdy men. Even when I was younger, men who look like you never hit on me. I was attracted to you because I'm not blind and you're damn near perfect."

A small smile curved his full lips. "Damn near, huh? What makes me almost perfect?"

She hesitated. "You have a mirror in your home. You're hot and you know it."

"So what makes you think I wouldn't fuck you without you paying me? You're attractive, Trina."

"I saw your ex-girlfriend and I'm old enough to be her young mother. She's got legs that go on forever and she's beautiful."

"She's also a cold bitch," he said harshly, all teasing gone from his tone.

"Yeah. There's that. What she did was fucked up."

He arched an eyebrow. "You're serious about this offer?"

She just stared up at him, wondering if he was playing with her by even asking that question. He studied her, his expression thoughtful.

"What are the terms you came up with if I agree to do this?"

"I don't know." Astonishment filled Trina. Was he considering it? "I didn't get that far. I thought we could just discuss it and figure it out if I worked up the nerve to approach you, which I kind of doubted I would, so I didn't plan much beyond just propositioning you."

Navarro let his palm slide down her arm until he gripped her hand, surprising her by the action. He stared down at her for long seconds and then opened his mouth.

"If you pay off my brother's loan, I'll give you two months."

Shock tore through her at his words, leaving her speechless.

"Let's say five nights a week for those two months. We could stay at my place or yours but it would be easier if it were mine. Otherwise I'd have to leave before dawn since I have horses to care for. I'd give you seven nights but what I do is really hard on my body and I need to get a couple of full night's sleep."

"Seriously? You'll do it?" She was still stunned.

A smile tugged at his lips. "I can't believe I'm going to get paid to touch you." He inched in closer. "You want me to fuck you, right?" His voice dropped to a deeper tone as he spoke.

Trina knew she couldn't have spoken to save her life at that moment. She gave a sharp nod.

"Then I will and I'll show you what you've been missing."

Her knees went weak and she managed to nod her head again, wanting him to know she was accepting whatever he was offering.

"Follow me to my place."

Another jolt of astonishment ran through her, leaving her able to speak again. "Now?"

A smile tugged at his lips. "Now."

"But I thought you'd want the money first." Panic hit her hard since she hadn't really believed he'd agree to her crazy idea but not only had he said yes, he wanted her to go home with him right then. "But..." She was mute and unable to think.

Navarro's intense look pierced her. "Tonight is free, Trina. Tomorrow we'll start our arrangement and then you can talk money to me so I can write out something to promise you two months of my nights." His hand released her as he stepped back. "Follow me home now, Trina. You were brave enough to come to me so follow me right now."

He walked away, moving slowly for his beat-up pick-up truck. She hesitated for a heartbeat before she climbed into her SUV and put on her seatbelt. Amazement slammed her hard that he'd agreed and had asked her back to his place for a free night of sex. When he backed out of the parking space she found herself shoving the key in ignition, her hands shaking bad but she started her vehicle.

Navarro Raine had offered to take her to his bed, to show her all the things she'd always missed out on in the bedroom if he was really as good as some women in town had bragged. Her entire body trembled at the thought of what he might do to her when they were alone. When he pulled out of the parking lot, she was driving a car length behind his truck.

Chapter Two

The Raine home was a two-story, Spanish-style home. It was too dark to get a good look at its condition but judging from the well-lit front porch it was obvious that Navarro took care of his home. Trina parked behind his truck and climbed out of her SUV. She was grateful that she'd showered and had dressed nicely to talk to him at the bar.

Navarro watched her silently as she walked toward him where he waited at the bottom of the porch. His back was to the light so she wasn't able to see his eyes in the shadows. She really was nervous and it must have shown on her face.

"I won't hurt you."

"I know. I've just never done this before."

He chuckled. "What exactly haven't you done before?"

"I've never gone home with a virtual stranger. I was always in long-term relationships with the few men I did have sex with."

"I promise you that you'll enjoy what we do."

Trina shivered. "Okay. I'm counting on that."

Navarro chuckled again and reached out to take her hand in his larger one, turning toward the house, leading her up the porch steps. At the door he paused to unlock it, shoved the door open and waited for her to walk in first. The living room light was already on as she stepped into his home, allowing Trina to take a good look at the large room that was a bit under furnished but clean. The room only contained a couch, one entry table with the lamp, a large television and a coffee table. It was obvious that a woman didn't live there.

"Bedroom? Or do you want another room of the house? The kitchen maybe?"

She looked up into his handsome face and realized his sexy gaze was studying her close enough to make her blush. "I don't know. I'm not really good at this. That's why I wanted to pay you."

He chuckled, revealing that he had a nice laugh as he gently squeezed her hand, closing the door behind them, and used his free hand to lock it. "We'll go to my bedroom."

She let him lead her into a hallway and up the stairs. He bypassed a few closed doors and went to the one down the hall that stood open and dark. He walked in, flipped on the light and let Trina take in her fill of the room as he released her hand and firmly closed the bedroom door behind them.

The bedroom was pretty bare, only housing a large king-sized, four-poster, wooden bed frame. It was covered with a black comforter and a few big body pillows lay along

the wooden headboard. Two nightstands and a dresser were the only other furniture in the room. Two doors stood open, one led to a small walk-in closet filled with clothing and the other to his private bathroom, the tub in clear view. A pair of discarded jeans lay on the floor and black boxer briefs were on top of them, the only sign of mess in his otherwise clean room.

"Do you have anything to drink?" Trina faced him.

Navarro nodded. "I do but I don't want you drunk."

"Oh." She swallowed. "I thought it would relax me."

"Undress and climb onto the bed." He slowly grinned, showing white teeth.

"So we're just getting right to it, huh?" Her heart hammered in her chest.

"Yeah. I've been hard since the parking lot. Undress and climb up onto my bed, Trina. I want you flat on your back in the middle."

Uncertainty gripped Trina as she hesitated. "Can we turn down the lights? Maybe even turn them off? I wasn't kidding about the part where I look better with my clothes on."

His grin died as blue eyes narrowed. "If this is going to work you need to do what I say, Trina. You need to follow orders. Take off all your clothes. I want you to stretch out on your back in the middle of my bed, completely naked. Is that clear?"

Nervously, Trina started to undress and knew she was blushing heavily, feeling her cheeks flaming with heat. He'd asked to see her naked but she hoped he didn't change his mind once he got her that way. She eyed his black comforter with dread and realized that with her white skin she was probably going to look dead lying on top of it. With her fair skin she avoided the sun as much as possible. She hoped she didn't blind him.

She kicked off her shoes, then unzipped her jeans and slid them down her legs and off, then pulled her shirt off and let it drop. She was glad her bra and bikini-cut undies matched. If she'd known he was going to be seeing her undressed she'd have worn white—it would be less startling against her skin than the black she wore. She risked a glance at him. He was still fully dressed, watching her silently. She paused.

"Aren't you going to get undressed?"

"I will. Take it all off."

Shit. Biting her lip again, she reached behind her to un-fastened her bra and looked away from him as she let it drop. She hoped he didn't get turned off because gravity had dipped her breasts a bit and her stomach wasn't firm or flat. She blushed with embarrassment, assuming he was firm all over.

She reached for her undies last, to slide them down, wondering how he was going to react to the fact that she was totally shaved everywhere from the waist down. She walked stiffly to his bed, realized it was higher than a standard bed, and really did have to climb up since the mattress was hip-high on her. She got to the center of the mattress

and slowly rolled onto her back to stretch out just as he'd ordered her to do. She risked another curious glance his way.

Navarro's shirt was opened slightly so she saw a hint of tanned skin and defined chest but she looked at his face to watch his reaction to her. His gaze roamed her body while he unfastened more buttons on his flannel shirt but she didn't see disgust as he studied her. He actually looked turned on, if she were any kind of judge of his expressions. She was more nervous than aroused as her attention dropped to fix on his chest, which he revealed when he dropped the shirt.

She experienced the feeling of being punched in the gut as she stared at his perfectly muscled chest, then decided it was better than perfect. His skin was tan over ridges of muscles on his taunt, firm stomach. He had a little hair on his chest—only a small smattering—but hair dipped in a line from under his bellybutton down to the snap of his pants. Two tan hands gripped the front of them as he opened them slowly.

"Trina?"

"Yes?" Her voice shook.

"Don't look so scared, babe."

"I'm nervous." She figured honesty was best and just admitted it.

He chuckled. "I'm the one under pressure."

Her gaze flew to his in surprise. "Pressure?"

"You think I'm worth a hell of a lot of money." He grinned. "Relax, babe."

The smile was instant and something she couldn't stop. "You're totally eye candy. I just wish I were."

He left his black sexy briefs on as he walked to the bed. "I have no damn complaints." His gaze slid over her body. "Trust me. From where I'm standing, you look damn good."

"Thank you."

A chuckle escaped him. "Look at me."

She met his eyes, watching them. "I am."

"What do you want?"

"I don't know. I told you, I don't..." She sighed, a bit embarrassed but ready to be completely open with him. "I know what the term vanilla means since I read. My sex life has totally been as vanilla as it can be. I've read about a lot of things but I haven't done much. I know I was married for sixteen years but he wasn't into experimenting. I wanted to but he didn't."

Navarro watched her. "That's why you want me. You want to experience all of those things you fantasize about, don't you, babe?"

Trina felt embarrassed but she'd gone this far so she figured she might as well totally extend herself. "Yes. I've never been more attracted to a man than I am to you. I

told you that I overheard some women at the diner talking about you. Saying that you are really good at sex and you're..."

"I'm what?" He inched closer to her.

"Um...really good in bed and a little wild. That's what one of them said. She said you were a hell of a lot of fun and another one agreed with her."

Dark blue eyes twinkled with amusement as his lips curved into a sexy smile. "So I got good reviews, huh?"

She smiled back. "Yes."

Navarro stared at her. "Your days of having boring sex are over. I'm the man who's going to take you to new heights and I'm the man who's going to show you what you've been missing out on. You tell me what you've done and then I'll show you what you've been missing."

Trina licked her lips, letting her gaze run once more over his muscular chest and six-pack abs, voting silently that he was the sexiest man on the planet to her. Her body was already responding to just the sight of him and he hadn't even climbed into bed with her yet.

"Trina?"

She met his eyes. "Yes?"

"I'm damn impatient to get my hands and mouth on you. I want you too damn bad to wait forever for you to answer my questions. Do you see what you do to me? If you don't start talking then we're going to have this conversation much later."

Her focus lowered down his body to his black boxer briefs and the sight there caused her heart to pound. Trina couldn't miss that he was sporting a major erection. Navarro wasn't just eye candy from the waist up. She could clearly see how much he wanted her because he was testing the limits of how far a pair of briefs could stretch. She was beyond impressed, she was a little intimidated.

"Babe?"

She met Navarro's eyes. "Yes?"

"Don't tell me I've left you speechless. Answer my questions if you want me."

Trina wanted him so bad she ached. She had to force herself to think to remember what he wanted to know but it was hard to concentrate when Navarro was standing so close to her.

"Wild to my husband was doggy style."

Trina couldn't miss the surprise that crossed Navarro's face as he took a deep breath. "Have you ever had anal sex?"

She shook her head. "I can't say I ever missed not having it either."

A laugh burst from him and his expression softened with humor. "Did your husband like oral sex?"

"Getting it but he never gave it."

Humor evaporated and shock transformed his features. "Never?"

"He tried it twice but he didn't like it so he never did it again. It just made me feel uncomfortable and I didn't enjoy it either so I didn't bug him about it."

Navarro shook his head. "You're damn near virginal, aren't you, babe?"

She shrugged. "Probably."

"Did he turn you on?"

"Yes."

"But left you high and dry in the end?"

Another blush stained her cheeks from the embarrassment of having spent sixteen years in a marriage with dull sex. "I loved him and he was a good man."

"But he didn't know his ass from his elbow in bed, did he?" Navarro didn't wait for an answer. "I want you to relax and trust me. Can you follow orders? You need to do what I say, babe, without question. You'll like what I do and if you don't, I'll find what you do enjoy. You have to be honest with me about everything. Don't fake a damn thing, even though I have a feeling you've gotten pretty good at that over the years. Are we clear about that?"

"Yes."

He paused. "Have you been tested?"

She eyed him, confused. "Tested for what?"

He stared at her, waiting. She nodded, understanding dawning when he directed his attention to her thighs and then looked back at her.

"I get regular checkups and I don't have anything. Aren't we using condoms? I mean, do you know for sure you don't have anything? I'm not on any form of birth control."

"I'm clean and I can't get you pregnant." His mouth tensed. "I had an accident when I was younger that left me sterile."

Sympathy welled in her. "I'm sorry. Are you all right?"

"If you're asking me if everything works, it does, but I can't have kids."

The look in his eyes bothered Trina, spotting real anger there and perhaps a little resentment as well. "My husband couldn't have children either."

Shock paled Navarro's features for a second. "Excuse me?"

"Ted had leukemia when he was a teen and it left him sterile. You looked so angry when you said you couldn't get me pregnant. I'm sorry for your loss. It didn't bother Ted since he didn't want children, always saying he worked too much to have kids anyway."

Navarro's mouth twisted into a tense line. "Did he tell you after you married him?"

"No. He was upfront about it on our first date and wanted me to know before we got close."

"You didn't want children either?"

She hesitated. "I wanted them but I loved Ted. I talked to him a few times about adoption but his work schedule was pretty hectic and he said we were happy enough without them. He just really didn't want to discuss it so I let it drop."

Navarro was staring down at her with a strange look on his face. "Spread your thighs wide open for me."

"Wow." She was stunned. "Zero to sixty, huh?"

He smiled. "Spread for me."

Licking her lips, Trina spread her legs wide. She was grateful for the yoga she'd picked up after Ted's death. She was pretty flexible and she kept her to a routine, in the morning and at night. She was slightly embarrassed as she watched Navarro tear his gaze from hers to look slowly down her body until his only focus was on her exposed sex.

She saw him take a deep breath. "Beautiful."

Arching her eyebrows, she watched him watching her. His gaze rose to meet hers and a grin curved his lips.

"What?"

"Beautiful?"

He nodded. "Oh yeah, babe. Do you enjoy looking at my body?"

"You're in shape and you look great. You're a hard body and everyone loves one of those."

He chuckled. "If I liked really hard bodies I don't think I'd be into women. Have you ever heard the saying "opposites attract"? Well, I'm damn attracted to you and I'm hot looking at your softer body and your curves. Your skin reminds me of milk and I love it a hell of a lot."

She swallowed, relaxing a little on the bed, and was relieved he wasn't turned off by her. She met and held his look, certain that she saw passion in his eyes. Her gaze lowered down his body to the bulge in his briefs, an obvious sign he was definitely turned-on. She jerked her gaze back up to his face to see that he was smiling again, looking amused, and hoped it wasn't at her expense.

"Close your eyes and just feel, okay? You look ready to flee."

She obeyed him and forced herself to relax, ready and willing to trust him. Two large hands gently touched the insides of her thighs. His hands were rough textured and the sensation made her jerk a little in surprise, her eyes opening to see Navarro smiling again.

"Did my touch startle you?"

"Your hands are rough."

"They are calloused from work. Am I hurting your skin? You're so damn soft." His hands brushed her inner thighs again.

She shook her head. "It just surprised me. It actually feels good."

He chuckled. "Close your eyes again and keep spread wide for me. I'm going to show you the finer points of oral sex, babe. I promise you that you'll take pleasure in what I do."

She forced herself to relax even though her heart pounded, reminding herself that this was what she wanted. *Navarro is a stranger so if things go bad, well, I rarely see him in town*, she thought. *I'll make the loan to him but I don't have to talk to him to have him mail a check every month if the sex thing doesn't...*

He stretched her labia open with his thumbs while he brushed his fingers over her mound. She tensed, though she didn't mean to. The guy was spreading her wider, causing air to hit her clit. *No, it isn't just air*, she thought, *it is warm*. Her heart skipped a beat with the realization that he was breathing on her and a second later his hot tongue slid across her sensitive bud. She jerked a little at the strong lick but didn't try to slam her thighs closed. Navarro's shoulders still pushed against her to pin them open as his mouth closed completely over her clit. Trina frantically grasped at his comforter while the man proceeded to suck on and lick her sex, tugging on it in strong pulls.

Pleasure tore through her. She'd never experienced anything that felt that way before. It was too much, too intense, but she didn't fight to get away from that mouth. She was aware of her harsh breathing, panting really, and a louder moan tore from her lips. In her passion-filled haze, her mind barely worked but she realized the difference between the man touching her now and the man she'd spent sixteen years with.

Ted never did this to me. He'd never done much for her clit but play with it a little with a finger before sex. Navarro's hot mouth and tongue were going to kill her.

"Oh God," she panted.

Her nails clawed at the comforter but she wanted to claw her fingers into Navarro's hair. She resisted the urge, afraid he'd stop if she touched him and she didn't want him to. The raw sensation of pleasure tore through her as her body tensed, her back arched even though she didn't mean to do it, knowing it was pushing her pussy against Navarro's mouth harder. She whimpered and then screamed out as she came hard, her climax tearing through her body almost violently.

The hot mouth and tongue released her clit, only for him to blow cool air on her. Her heart was beating erratically and her eyes were squeezed together as her muscles inside twitched from the aftermath of her coming. She was no stranger to masturbation since she did it often but what she'd just experienced made what her own fingers and what her vibrator could do seem damn mild in comparison.

Navarro gently pushed a finger inside her, shocking her by the sudden entry that caused her to moan. Navarro softly cursed, forcing her to open her eyes to see what was wrong as she fixed her full attention on him.

He was bent over her and his face was a foot above hers, one of his hands braced on the bed at her side while his other hand was between her still spread thighs. His finger was inside her and he moved it, sliding in deep and withdrawing as their eyes locked.

"Fuck, babe. You're so damn tight. When is the last time you had sex?"

"With a person or with my vibrator?"

A grin split his lips as he chuckled. "Both. Either. When is the last time something besides my finger was inside you?"

"I have one of those small, thin vibrators that I used last week. The last time I had sex was with my husband, a week before he died, and that was fourteen months ago."

Navarro's eyes darkened with passion as he withdrew his finger completely before entering her with two fingers, stretching her as he slowly pushed both digits deep into her sex. Trina moaned at the sensation, reaching up and gripping one of his pillows. She realized her hips arched to meet his fingers.

"Damn. You're so damn hot and tight but I don't want to hurt you, babe."

Trina shook her head. "You won't. I know it's been a long time but I want you. I really want you."

His fingers withdrew as Navarro straightened up to reach for the waistband of his boxer briefs. "Oh, you're going to get me, Trina. I'm so fucking hard I could break bricks right now. It's just that you're so damn tight and it's been so long for you that I'm afraid I'm going to make you sore."

Trina looked down as Navarro shoved his boxer briefs down his thighs and had to bite back a gasp, seeing that while he wasn't freakishly big, he was much bigger than any man she'd ever been with and he was thick. He was also as hard as he claimed. Judging by the weight and the size of his cock, gravity should have lowered his mass but he was pointed up. She'd never thought a man's penis could be attractive but his was.

"Trina?"

She drew her focus away from his cock. "Yes?"

"I don't want to wear a condom. Is it all right with you? It kills some sensation for me and I want to feel everything with you."

She nodded. "Fine. Please..."

"Are you sure because once I'm inside you it would kill me to try to stop. I want you too damn bad and I know you're going to feel like heaven. My dick is jealous as hell of my fingers from the feel of you."

"I'm sure." She did want him but as she glanced down at his thick erection, she had her doubts about taking him without pain. "I want you."

He climbed on the bed a little more and his large body slightly hovered above hers before he lowered so she was pinned under him. His skin was hot as he settled on top, careful not to crush her, his elbows bracing his weight.

"Wrap your legs high around my waist," he urged her softly. "And keep your arms above your head. I love your breasts thrust up like that."

Following his instructions to the letter, she wrapped her legs around his waist and adjusted until her heels settled on his tight ass, feeling the firm skin and muscle. *Navarro's probably got an amazing ass*, she thought. She hadn't seen it yet without jeans

covering him but she could imagine it looked firm and rounded. Navarro adjusted his arms higher and to her surprise one of his hands encircled her wrists to lock them together between his thumb and fingers. Her gaze flew to his.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm big and I don't want you to move. Hold real still and relax for me."

He was starting to scare her but she relaxed, not fighting his hold on her wrists. Navarro shifted his hips, making her feel amazed that he didn't need a hand to guide his sex to hers as he just shifted his hips closer, and lifted his body a little higher. His thick-tipped cock brushed against her wet and waiting pussy, teased her, and rubbed along her slit to her clit and then back before he shifted a little more and pressed against her entrance.

Navarro breached her pussy, entering her torturously slowly. Her body gave way to his hard flesh penetrating her, stretched to accommodate his wide cock. It had been over a year since she'd had sex and her little handheld vibrator was tiny, thin, and only about four inches long. Navarro was so much bigger than that.

"Oh God," she moaned, as he slid into her deeper.

"Not God, babe," Navarro's voice was deep and harsh. "It's all me. Fuck, you are tight. Am I hurting you?"

She swallowed as he froze inside her. "No. I can feel you stretching me and it burns but it feels good. Are you all the way in?"

He snorted. "Not hardly, babe. You ready to take the rest?"

"Fuck me," she whispered.

Her words sank in the second she uttered them, it being one of her favorite sayings. She opened her mouth to explain but Navarro just groaned, taking her words literally.

"You got it, babe." He pushed into her all the way, hesitating for only a moment when she gasped but then he started to move inside her body.

Trina threw back her head, crying out at the sensation of Navarro filling her as he pumped in and out of her, slowly increasing the speed. Their harsh breathing and her moans filled the bedroom along with the sounds of his bed creaking. He shifted his hips, driving into her from a new angle and it made it feel even better to her. She was shocked minutes later when another climax hit her and pleasure gripped her as Navarro rasped her name as his cock jerked deep in her pussy, coming hard until he stilled his hips.

"Oh my God," she panted.

Navarro lifted his chest off hers slightly as their gazes met. He looked sexy as hell in the afterglow of sex with his flushed features, parted mouth, and narrowed eyes. His lips curved into a satisfied grin.

"That was amazing, wasn't it, babe?"

Swallowing the lump in her throat, Trina nodded. "Wow."

Chuckling, Navarro winked at her as he released her wrists. "You have to stop saying God though. I think I earned having you yelling out my name instead of his."

She laughed at his humorous words, totally not expecting him to be funny after sex. "Maybe I think you're a god."

He laughed with her, slowly withdrawing from her body. "I like that." He moved off her to stretch out on his side and propped his head up, using his bent arm to rest his cheek against his hand. He kept one of his thighs over hers, pinning her leg where she lay. "That was really something, Trina."

She smiled. "So I take it that you won't mind this?"

His grin died. "The only thing I mind is you offering to pay me to fuck you. I don't think its right."

A blush bloomed in her cheeks as she stared at him. "Please don't change your mind. Was it that bad? I mean, I know I'm older than someone you're used to but I promise I won't get attached or expect anything but sex from you. I'm blonde but I'm smarter than that. I know the score here."

"Let me rephrase that. I feel guilty all of a sudden about taking your money for doing something that I want to do anyway. I'm not worried about you getting attached to me."

Chapter Three

It was crazy but Trina parked her SUV in front of the Raine home at eight o'clock the next night. Nervousness settled in the pit of her stomach. Last night had been amazing. After their little talk Navarro had offered to let her spend the night but she'd needed some alone time so she'd said she needed to get home. She hadn't really but she had needed to think.

Guilt ate at her a little over her husband, Ted. He was dead and she realized he'd want her to move on but he'd be shocked if he knew she was paying money to a man to have sex with her. It only made it worse that she was paying Navarro with money she had because of Ted's death. She sighed as she climbed out of her vehicle. As bad as the guilt made her feel, it wasn't going to stop her from visiting the Raine ranch again.

The front door opened before she could knock and the sight of Navarro made her suck in air when she saw he wore nothing but a pair of loose fitting black sweat pants and his hair was wet. He always made her think of that saying "sex on legs" with his muscular, hard body. She let her gaze wander over his broad chest before looking at his face.

Navarro appeared amused as he grinned at her. "Hi. You're prompt. Come on in."

Trina walked into his house and he locked the door behind her. She slowly turned to find that Navarro was still grinning. Her body instantly responded to the memory of the night before. Her nipples tingled, wetness dampened her panties, and he hadn't even touched her yet.

"Did you write something out? I have a bank certified check."

His grin died. "Are you sure you want to do this, Trina? You don't have to pay me."

She nodded. "You'll lose your ranch otherwise, right?"

His mouth twisted into a pained look. "Yeah."

"Then I'm sure I want to give you the check." She paused. "I just hope your brother doesn't do this again."

"I made him sign off on his part of the ranch. He can no longer take out loans on the property. Come with me to my office. I wrote it out, you can read it, and I made two copies. One I'll keep locked in my safe and you'll get the second one."

Trina followed Navarro down a hallway past the kitchen and into what looked to be a converted office that had probably once been a spare bedroom judging by the private three-quarter bath in the corner of the room. Navarro took a seat on the edge of a big old mahogany desk and reached for two sheets of paper lying inches from his ass.

Trina sat where he waved her into a chair. Her purse ended up on her lap while she accepted the papers he offered and read them.

She finally looked up after studying the page. "You were very specific."

He grinned. "When our contract is over we can burn these. I put in there that you'll just state it was a loan I paid off and you'll give me a receipt so if there's ever an issue of where the money came from or for tax purposes it will just seem like a no-interest, legal loan between friends."

She took the pen he handed her to sign both sheets and then handed them back with the pen, watching him sign while she dug out the envelope in her purse. Navarro hesitated before he accepted the check.

"Are you sure about this, Trina? We could write up legal papers instead for a real loan. I really don't feel right about taking money from you for sex."

She laughed. "You never thought you'd be a paid hottie, huh? I think I've heard the term cougar handler if you want a nicer but funnier description."

He laughed, relaxing. "I know what a cougar is and that's definitely not you. You're only two years older than I am. I'm thirty-six."

"Take the check because I honestly won't miss it. I got the settlement, his life insurance policy, and I made a profit in real estate when I moved here. The housing market here is really low so I paid less than half of the selling price of my old house for my new one. Save your ranch and accept the money. I'm just glad you protected it against this ever happening again."

His smile died. "Me too." He took the envelope and just dropped it into a drawer.

"Aren't you going to at least look at it to check the amount?"

He shook his head, standing. "I trust you. Let's go upstairs. I showered after I ate, figuring you'd appreciate not getting the cowboy smell on you."

She stood, grinning. "Cowboy smell, huh? What do cowboys smell like?"

He grasped her hand in his, laughing. "Today it would have been horseshit. I cleaned stalls and I have a garden to plant so I used the fresh manure for fertilizer so you could say it's been a shit day."

She laughed with him and followed him to his bedroom. When he closed the door and locked it, Trina walked over to his dresser to put down her purse. She kicked off her flats, faced him, and found that Navarro had moved by the bed to watch her with his sexy gaze.

"Why do you always close and lock the door?" She glanced at it and then him. "Does someone else live here? I thought you lived alone."

"At the moment I'm solo in the house but I have a few brothers who wander home sometimes. I'd rather not take any chances since it's happened before." He grinned. "Talk about embarrassing."

She laughed. "You got caught with your pants down, huh?"

"And then some." He winked. "I learned that women get kind of irate if one of my brothers stops in here to make comments about what they see."

"You're kidding, right? Oh, you have to give details."

He grinned. "I was dating this woman a few years ago who was into being tied up, thinking the whole cowboy thing was hot. I tied her to my bed and was busy when my youngest brother, River, came home unannounced. One minute I've got a mouth full of breast and the next she's screaming because River said I should have put cloth between the rope and her skin so it didn't get scratched up or red."

"I can't even imagine. Poor her and you." She laughed though. "That *would* be embarrassing."

Navarro nodded, still grinning. "She dumped my ass and accused me of having a weird family, saying my brothers and I were perverts."

"I just thought you had the one brother."

"Nope. There are five of us in all. I'm the second to oldest."

"Wow. So where are the rest of them?"

"Drake is the oldest and he's an attorney who lives in Dallas. I would have hit him up for the money but he just went through a nasty divorce that left him broke so he didn't need to worry about this on top of it. There's Dusty. He's the shit who put up the ranch for a loan because he's got a lot of problems." Navarro almost growled those words, looking pissed. "And last but not least, there are the twins, River and Ryder, but they are hardly ever home. Ryder is in a band—he sings and plays guitar, stays on the road more than not, and only shows up a few times a year to stay a day or two between gigs. River works the rodeo circuit, he used to be a bull rider but he got busted up so now he works with livestock. He's living about fifty miles from here, the pay is shit but he loves his job."

"Wow. Is the brother in a band anyone I would have ever heard of?"

He shook his head. "Not unless you have a thing for native music. He's a full-blooded mix and his way of showing his heritage pride is playing guitar and a little singing. They aren't really popular except to their followers, who are mostly other Native Americans."

Trina gave him a curious look, opened her mouth but then closed it. She was dying to ask but she didn't want to be rude. Navarro hesitated and almost seemed to read her mind.

"Drake, Dusty, and I have the same father and mother. My father was Apache and my mother was Dutch. We're considered half-breeds in the sense we're half Apache and half white. My mother died when we were really young and Dusty was only a few months old. Back then my dad had to travel far to sell horses and I guess she didn't want to worry him when she cut her hand bad, not really thinking she needed a doctor but she got a blood infection. By the time she called for help she was too sick to fight it off. Dusty was a hard pregnancy for her so she was already weak. It about killed my father, losing her. He loved her that much, and was totally devastated when she was

suddenly gone. That's probably why he ended up bringing a hooker home to us for a year."

Trina was shocked but she tried to hide it, giving him her best sympathetic look. Navarro studied her with a grin, looking highly amused.

"Yeah. I know. She really was a hooker that he picked up in a truck stop on one of his trips. She was a pretty thing and full-blooded Cherokee. He said he wanted to save her." Navarro chuckled. "I was five and even I thought she was sexy, not even knowing what sex was. Anyway, he brought her home and she ended up getting pregnant with River and Ryder. They aren't half-breeds like my other brothers and me. My dad offered to marry her but she wasn't really happy here, it was too remote and my dad worked hard so he had to leave sometimes. He was getting the better deal, to be honest, paying her to sleep with him and to take us kids on while he was gone on the road. She was a bad cook but she watched us good. After the twins were born she wanted to leave even though dad tried to talk her into staying but her mind was made up. She left the twins here, knowing she couldn't take care of them and they'd have a more stable life growing up on a ranch than her nomad way of living. My dad hired another woman to take care of all of us after she left and they were involved for a long time but he never remarried. He died four years ago, causing Dusty's shit."

"I'm sorry for your loss. What does that have to do with Dusty? Is he still missing your father that bad?"

Navarro sighed. "Dusty took Dad out for his birthday, they drank hard and met up with a few hookers over in River Bend. Dad insisted he was sober enough to drive them home instead of wanting to pay the women to stay in their rooms all night. Dusty was so shitfaced that Dad ended up dumping him in the back of the truck where Dusty passed out but it ended up saving his life. Dad was too drunk to drive and he ended up rolling the truck. Dad was killed when the truck hit and wrapped around a tree at the bottom of the hill but luckily Dusty was thrown clear since he was in the open truck bed. The truck was so totaled it was impossible to know what it was so Dad must have really been hauling ass. Dusty blames himself no matter how many times we've told him it wasn't his fault. Hell, he was so drunk he was passed out and Dad was the one who loaded him up in the back and decided to drive that way. We're just grateful Dusty survived and no one else was hurt." He paused. "My dad drank often and had some DUI's on his record so it wasn't a shock."

"How did that get Dusty to take out a loan?" Trina blushed, realizing she was being nosey after she'd spoken. "Sorry. It's none of my business."

An eyebrow arched. "Isn't it? Your money is saving the ranch. Dusty gambles. He can't hold down a job because of his drinking but this time he gambled with the wrong person and got in really deep. They were threatening to kill him from what he said so he took out the loan against the ranch. It wouldn't have been so damn bad but he put off telling me until the bank was ready to foreclose. He had all the statements sent to some chick he hangs with instead of here. I had no damn idea or I would have made payments. By the time I found out, I was looking at having to pay it all off in one lump

sum to stop the foreclosure and I just didn't have that kind of money that fast. Ryder is impossible to track down since he lost his cell phone last month. River is easy to get hold of but he's flat ass broke. Dusty offered to try to win the money to save the ranch and in return, I offered to shove both my boots up his ass if he did. I just made him take his name off the deed so he'd never get the chance to do this again."

"So you all own the ranch?"

Navarro nodded. "Now only four of us do." He let his gaze run down her body. "That's enough talking, babe. Get out of those clothes. I've been thinking about what I want to do to you all damn day."

She laughed and reached for the waist of her shirt. "Great. You were thinking about sex with me while you were shoveling shit," she teased. "How romantic."

"You'd be surprised at the things I was thinking."

"You could share with the class." She stripped naked.

Navarro let his heated gaze drift down her body as he gripped the waist of his sweat pants, just pushing them down to reveal that he wasn't wearing anything under them. He was aroused and that sight took Trina's breath away. He was gorgeous, all tan skin and muscles, with a major erection that was impressive. Her gaze rested there for a few seconds before she looked up at his face to find him grinning at her.

"I hope you like what you see as much as I like what I see."

"Judging by the weapon at your hips, you're as turned-on as I am." She laughed. "So how do you want me?"

"Are you into cowboys, darlin'?" He emphasized the drawl in his speech.

"If you're a cowboy then I am now." She winked at him.

He walked over to an armless chair that hadn't been in the room the night before and sat in it, pushing his hips to the edge of the chair. He motioned her to him with a finger and pointed to the floor in front of him as he spread his thighs open to make room for her. Trina walked to him but hesitated.

"I think I'm pretty decent at oral sex," she said softly.

His eyebrows shot up as he grinned. "I bet you are but that's not what I had in mind. This is about you, darlin'. I'm plenty happy. Turn around."

She had no idea what he was up to but she turned to give him her back, more than willing to put her trust in Navarro. His hands gripped her hips firmly while he moved one thigh against her leg.

"Step over. I want you on my lap facing the door."

She was intrigued, having been on top during sex plenty of times but she'd never been asked to straddle a man facing away from him. She lifted her leg to step over his, one of his thighs between hers now. He bumped her with it so she stepped again until her legs were straddling his legs. He used his hold on her hips to ease her down until she sat on his thighs with his rigid cock pressed against her back.

"Do you trust me to not hurt you?" His voice was soft.

Licking her lips, Trina looked over her shoulder to meet his gaze. "I do trust you."

Studying her eyes for long seconds, he nodded. "I want you to know that I'd never hurt you. Have you ever been bound?" One hand released her hip to reach down to the floor behind the chair.

She hesitated. "I've had my wrists tied once but that was about it."

He lifted the rope and showed it to her. She was nervous suddenly, unsure what he was going to do with it. The rope was fisted in his hand as he moved it closer to brush the rough-textured, thick coil softly across her skin, creating an odd but good sensation. Chills started where he rubbed the rope against. He watched her expression carefully.

"I want to bind you with rope, just your upper body but not near your throat. It won't hurt you, babe. I'd never do that. It will feel good if I wrap you in it but it won't even be tight. Image that roughness across your nipples when I fuck you and how it's going to make your breasts bounce while your nipples rub against the rope. Will you let me do that?"

It sounded erotic and she wanted to try it, her body warming up just thinking about what he described. His other hand slid from her hip around to her front. With her thighs spread wide open he easily slid it down to her sex, rubbing her slit where she was getting wet. She wiggled against his fingers that slid upward to tease her clit.

"That idea of it turns you on. You're a joy and you make me so hot, babe." His hand moved away from her pussy, which he had been touching gently. "Put your arms behind you and cross them for me over your lower back."

She barely hesitated before doing what he wanted, putting her arms back and crossing them so her forearms and the backs of her hands were against her skin. Navarro started to wrap the rope around her shoulders, just inches above her breasts. He tested how tight the rope was every time he wound another loop around her body, making her appear similar to a mummy in snug rope but it wasn't constricting her breathing or near her throat. He knew that would scare her.

Trina shivered as he bound the rope around her breasts, the rough material a little scratchy to her skin but not too abrasive as he wrapped her. She had to press her lips together to stop the moan that wanted to escape as the rope rubbed her nipples. The rough texture rasping against her sensitive skin was an incredible sensation. Navarro wound the rope until she was wrapped to just under her bent elbows at her waist. He secured it there.

She realized why he'd had her position her arms crossed behind her back now that he'd bound her. She couldn't get her arms free or have the ability to touch him. He could do anything to her and she was helpless without her hands.

His hand slid down her back and moved between her spread thighs to stroke her sex with his fingers, teasing her clit by rubbing slow circles over it with the tip of a finger.

"You're so wet," he said softly, and spread his thighs more to force her legs farther apart. One hand gripped the rope at her waist in the back to hold her steady so she couldn't fall off his lap in any direction. "Just feel and relax, Trina."

Nodding, she closed her eyes to do what he said. She relaxed and just enjoyed the bliss he was building in her body. With every breath she took, her skin rubbed on the rope, making her experience new sensations—wonderful, carnal ones that made her ache for more. She knew she should probably be embarrassed about how wet she was getting but she was too sexually excited to care. A moan broke from her lips when Navarro rubbed her clit with his thumb.

"Does it feel good?"

"Yes."

"Just wait until I'm inside you."

"Now would be good. I want you." Her belly quivered when she imagined him doing just that.

Navarro chuckled. "Not yet, but soon, babe. Just feel."

Trina enjoyed the ecstasy of it all as he teased her with his thumb but her body was tensing with need to come. He slid his thumb away from her throbbing clit to push inside her pussy, entering her without warning and she cried out sharply from his abrupt entry, surprised at the wonderful feeling of gratification. She'd wanted him inside her and he was. He curled his thumb inside her, tapping her inside on the wall behind her clit over and over. She gasped and then groaned at the new sensation.

"It should feel pretty good," he said softly. "Right here." He tapped his thumb against her again and then pressed against her inside with firmer pressure where he rubbed.

"God, I ache."

"Use my name, Trina. God isn't touching you. I am."

He touched her and played with her, rubbing and tapping her inside and then withdrew from her body only to slide his thumb forward to torture her clit with teasing rubs. She wiggled on his lap as she moaned. When he entered her again with his thumb, she bucked her hips on his hand, trying to force him deeper, needing him to move in and out of her.

"Please, Navarro. I ache."

"I do too, babe." He hesitated. "Lift up a little."

She braced her feet on the floor and lifted her body off his lap. It was hard to do with his thighs spread wide but she managed it, thanks to his hands that kept a firm hold on the rope to steady her balance.

"Ease down slowly on me," he ordered her.

Navarro adjusted his rigid cock under her so when she lowered her body the thick head of it pressed against her entrance. She lowered on him more, a loud moan tearing from her lips as inch after inch of him stretched her pussy. She let her body sink down

on him until he was buried deep inside her as she settled on his lap. She tried to lift up to move on him but his arm wrapped around her waist, halting her and pinned her on his lap.

"Easy, babe. I'm in charge of this ride." Navarro's voice had deepened. "I set the pace. I'm in total control and you just get to feel."

"You're going to kill me."

"Never. I promise though that I'm going to make you scream my name. I won't let you fall. I have you so just trust me. I want you to lean forward and I want you not to use your legs. Relax and this is going to rock your world...literally."

"Please...I hurt. I need..."

"I know," he told her. "Here we go. Do as I say, babe."

She leaned forward as Navarro gently adjusted her on his lap until she worried she was going to drop face first off his lap and crash into the floor, the only thing that kept her from doing so was his hands gripping her and the rope. He moved his hips before she could protest. His hard and sudden thrust up inside her pussy made her cry out in bliss. He was strong and with her off balance she was helpless as he hammered up into her. The ropes rubbed on her skin and nipples as her body bounced with Navarro's movement. Sensations flooded her on all levels, swamping her in pure ecstasy.

"Oh God," she cried out.

"Navarro." He suddenly froze, buried in her deep. "Cry out my name, Trina. Say it." He started to move again, this time slower, deep thrusts, while angling her body a little more forward since he had her effectively and completely under his control. "G-spot. Remember my thumb? Now feel this, babe."

She could totally feel everything as he angled into her from a slightly different position, pushing deep into her and then slowly pulling back. When she was afraid he was going to withdrawal completely from her body, he pushed into her again, filled her, stretched her and made her pant.

"Ready, babe? You're so damn tight and sexy that I won't last much longer this first time. I'm going to take you hard and fast because I'm ready to explode."

She didn't get a chance to answer him before he moved just as her mouth opened to tell him she was ready. The arm wrapped around her body tightened at her waist while his other hand dived between her thighs, cupping her mound from the front, his fingers against her clit, rubbing her there with every movement. He drove up into her fast and hard, using his legs on the floor to brace as he bucked her on his lap. The rope rubbed her nipples as she bounced harder on Navarro's powerful body. Inside and out she was on sensory overload until the climax hit her brutally. Blinding pleasure tore through her body as she screamed from the force of it.

Navarro cried out something she didn't understand. He pulsed inside her, a pumping fist sensation, when he shot his release into her pussy. He pulled her back from the bending position on his lap to wrap both arms around her, holding her to his

chest. They were both breathing heavily. He held her that way for a good long minute, while they both recovered, and their breathing slowed to a more normal pace.

"So, what do you think of cowboys now? You've been roped and branded, darlin'."

Trina laughed. "Branded, huh?"

"Oh yeah," he brushed a kiss on her neck. "Your skin is so delicate you'll have some redness from the ropes." He eased his hold on her and started to unwind the thick cord, freeing her one loop at a time. "I can't wait to suck on your breasts. They are going to be so damn sensitive I can probably make you come just with my mouth on your nipples. The redness will fade fast but those babies are going to remember me for a day or two. You're definitely branded by me, babe."

She looked down when he completely freed her from the rope and saw that her skin was a little pink but it didn't hurt. Her breasts on the other hand were throbbing a little and felt swollen. Navarro closed his thighs and just lifted her up as he withdrew from her body, helping her to stand when he stood behind her. Their gazes locked as he spun her in his arms to face him.

Navarro didn't say a word as he backed her up to his bed and eased her flat down on it. Trina pondered what he was going to do but she found out fast as he climbed on the bed next to her and stretched out on his side, his beautiful blue eyes locked with hers right before he lowered his head. His mouth latched onto one of her breasts. Trina gasped in shock as his hot, wet mouth sucked hard.

"I can't take it," she whispered, trying to push him away. Her nipples were really sensitive to the point of near pain.

He ignored her hands pushing at his chest and suckled harder. Trina's body jerked under him, trying to wiggle away but he threw his thigh over hers, forced his knee between them and effectively pinned her lower body. With his hand he gripped her arm on the other side, holding her down completely, and continued to suck hard.

She squirmed under him, thrashing, the sensation too much. Her nipple was oversensitive. He released it, shifting his weight over her and went for her other breast, clamping down with that hot, strong mouth, sucking hard as he brought his knee higher to use his thigh to rub against her mound.

In minutes a brutal climax tore through her. Her fingernails dug into his chest as she cried out his name while her body tensed and jerked from the pleasure until his mouth gently released her nipple. He froze over her.

Trina opened her eyes feeling utterly stunned. He'd actually made her come by sucking on her and just rubbing his thigh against her mound. *How does he know how to do that?* His dark gaze looked amused but something else lurked in those depths.

"You're so proud of yourself, aren't you?" she whispered. "That was..."

"Amazing?" He grinned.

"Definitely."

"Can you take me again?" His attention lowered down their bodies. "You make me hotter than you can imagine and I'm hard for you again, babe. Just watching your face while you come has that effect on me."

She ran her hand down his body from his chest to the hard flesh that pressed against her hip and wrapped her fingers around his steely cock. "Lie on your back."

He arched a brow but released her to roll over. He stretched like a cat when he got comfortable on his back on his big bed. Trina sat up slowly, letting her gaze travel down his body, still firmly gripping his cock in her hand. She moved then, climbing between his thighs, pushing them part to make room to sit on her heels. One hand massaged his hard flesh as her other hand cupped his balls.

She leaned forward, met his passionate stare, and then ran her gaze down his chest, his flat stomach—all the way down to the treasure she held. She licked her lips while bending over him and her hair fell forward, spreading on his stomach and down the sides of his hips as she opened her mouth wide.

She licked him as if he were ice cream, swirling her tongue around him while Navarro's fingers combed through her long hair. She took his cock into her mouth a little at a time, testing his length and width, then adjusted her jaw and took him deep. His sharp inhale caused her to smile around his shaft. This was one part of sex she thought she might have a good handle on. Her husband had a stressful job and she'd done this for him often, him always swearing she was damn good at it.

Navarro was thicker and bigger so she had to adjust to the difference as she took him even deeper, sucking and licking as she took more and more of him into her mouth. She slid up until he almost withdrew and let her teeth lightly rake the head of his cock. He sucked in more air and then groaned as she suddenly took him back into her mouth...deep. She rotated her face as she bobbed her head, sucking with every movement.

"Son of a bitch, babe," Navarro groaned. "You could teach me about this. Damn."

She hoped that she could do the next part right. His size did intimidate her. She'd wanted to be a good wife so, as a surprise for her husband, on her tenth wedding anniversary she'd rented porno videos that taught oral techniques. She relaxed her throat, breathed through her nose, and tilted her head as she held her breath. She hadn't done this in a long time but she was confident she could overcome her gag reflex with the angle she used for Navarro's cock. She took more, until she could feel him in her throat. She swallowed hard over and over, knowing those strong muscles were working the head of his cock.

"Oh fuck," Navarro groaned.

She needed air so she backed up and breathed through her nose. She almost totally withdrew from his cock, using her tongue to tease around the head again and took another deep breath. She pushed forward fast and took him back into her throat. She swallowed hard, moving her head.

Trina hadn't missed how much harder Navarro's cock had gotten the first time she did that maneuver. His hips jerked but he didn't push into her mouth, for which she was grateful, knowing he could choke her. She could feel how tense his body was as she kept him in her mouth. Her throat muscles worked him until his body start to shake a second before he came. She swallowed over and over with each burst of his cum into her throat while Navarro groaned loudly.

She backed off him slowly, licking and sucking everything he had to give her until he grabbed her head to force her off his cock. She licked her lips, looking up at Navarro, wanting to see his face. His dark blue eyes were almost closed and he looked a little stunned but damn satisfied.

She cleared her throat softly, smiled. "I take it you liked that?"

"Liked that?" He pulled her up his body. "Do you want to marry me?" He winked at her.

She laughed at his teasing, stretching out next to him. She put her hand on his stomach and he adjusted his arm so she lifted her head to let him and ended up using his arm for a pillow. He was on his back and she was on her side facing him. Navarro grinned at her.

"Where the hell did you learn that?"

She knew her cheeks were blooming with color from her slight embarrassment. "Instructional porno videos."

His eyebrows arched. He couldn't hide the surprise on his features but he grinned. "They teach deep-throating in videos?"

She nodded.

"What else did you learn?"

"That was it. It was the only skill I figured my husband would want me to learn."

"How did he talk you into that?"

She rubbed his stomach to distract herself. She didn't really feel comfortable talking about it. "He didn't. I learned on my own to surprise him."

"I bet it was the best surprise he ever got."

She looked up and met Navarro's gaze. "He didn't complain."

Navarro's smile faded as he got a serious expression on his features. "He was damn lucky to have you, Trina. He should have done all the things you wanted to do in bed if you were willing to learn to please him."

She bit her lip. "He worked hard. He —"

Navarro rolled to face her as his mouth claimed hers in a kiss. Shock tore through her and she jerked away from his mouth. Their gazes locked as Navarro frowned. He cupped her face.

"What's wrong? Don't you enjoy me kissing you?"

"I just..." She glanced down at his now-soft cock lying against his thigh. "You'll taste...you."

He arched an eyebrow. "And?"

She stared at him, feeling confused. "Won't that really bother you? Guys don't kiss women after they do that."

"Let me guess. He not only wouldn't go down on you but he wouldn't kiss you after you blew his damn mind?" Navarro's voice sounded a little angry. "I'm not him." He went for her mouth again.

Trina relaxed, not pulling away as Navarro urged her to open her mouth under his insistent lips, their tongues meeting. The kiss he planted on her was a kiss that leveled her. It wasn't hungry or passion-filled but soft and sweet, almost the kind of kiss real lovers, who cared deeply for each other, shared. She quickly pushed that thought back.

Navarro studied her when he finally broke the seal of their lips. "I happen to love the taste of both of us together. You tasted yourself on me since I was inside you. It's us together and what we do to each other when we touch. Never pull away from my kisses, babe."

She nodded. "I won't."

He smiled. "I know it's probably still early for you but I'm whipped. Ready to let me hold you while we sleep? I don't snore usually but if I do just elbow me and tell me to roll over." His eyes twinkled. "What bad habits am I going to find you have when we're sleeping together? Do you snore? Drool?"

"If I'm really tired I've been known to start snoring but I usually wake myself up when it happens. I think your bed is safe from drool."

"You won't be safe from me." He grinned at her. "I will wake you up at some point in the night. I guess I should ask you if you're going to mind me waking you up by entering you. Will you mind?"

She was stunned. "You'd just *enter* me?"

He chuckled. "Haven't you ever been woken up to a man fucking you?"

She shook her head. "No."

"We'll try it and see if you enjoy it."

She stared at him, nodding. *Is he really going to wake me up in the night that way?* Ted hadn't awoken her in the middle of the night for sex except one or two times in their entire marriage. He'd always made sure she was fully awake before he tried to enter her. Ted was always proper.

Navarro brushed a gentle kiss on her lips, pulling her away from her thoughts. Trina smiled at him as he moved away to shut off the bedroom light. He returned, pulled her into his arms securely and covered them. In minutes Trina heard his breathing change, telling her he was asleep. She snuggled closer to his large, warm body.

She loved being held in Navarro's strong arms. He was so big and solid, even smelled good too—manly, just sexy, and just Navarro. She missed having someone in bed with her but she'd never been cuddled. Ted wasn't one to touch during sleep, saying it disturbed him if she tried to touch him. Ted had wanted space.

Navarro pressed tight to her, touching her. Skin pressed to skin was a great feeling. She snuggled even tighter against him, wanting to enjoy it to the fullest since he seemed not to mind her so close to him. Yawning, she drifted to sleep.

* * * * *

Navarro woke her at three o'clock in the morning when he pushed into her body with his thick cock, the wonderful sensation tearing her from her dreams into an even better reality. He lay curled behind her, spoon fashion. He rolled onto his back, hauling her on top of him with both arms around her hips. One arm locked around her waist and his other hand rubbed her clit while he drove up into her from behind until she came hard.

Afterward he kissed her. "How was that?"

"You can wake me up that way anytime."

He chuckled. "I forgot to tell you I have to get up at six but sleep in as late as you want. Just lock the door when you leave and I'll see you tonight."

He went back to sleep and so had Trina. She woke up at five-thirty. She was in the habit of getting up early thanks to her years of being married to Ted. She quietly sneaked out of bed to get dressed and then she automatically started her morning routine. The one she'd done for sixteen years with Ted.

She was halfway through cooking breakfast in Navarro's kitchen before it dawned on her what she was doing. Navarro wasn't her husband, it wasn't her job to fix the man breakfast, and he might mind her cooking in his kitchen since she hadn't asked his permission.

Embarrassed and unsure if he'd be upset, she finished cooking breakfast, plated it up, and placed it in the microwave to keep it warm as she did the dishes. Since she'd already overstepped by cooking breakfast and the damage was done, she made him a pot of coffee too. She heard his alarm go off at six and suddenly got the urge to flee, knowing she couldn't face him. Cooking breakfast was something he would probably think was odd and she was nervous that it would upset him.

She had to walk upstairs to get her shoes and purse. Navarro had hit the snooze button instead of getting up since he was still sleeping when she stepped into his bedroom. She hesitated for only a few seconds before walking to the bed, barely able to make out his dim shape in the room since the sun wasn't up yet. She sat on the edge of the bed and reached out to rub his back. He was stretched out on his stomach with just the sheet tangled over his ass and thighs. His broad, bare back was hot to the touch and she used her nails and fingertips to rub and gently scratch his skin.

"Mmmmm, that feels good."

Navarro had a husky voice in the morning, more of a soft growl than a tone. Trina had to smile, thinking that, even half asleep, he still was sexy. "I have to go. I left something for you in the micro and the coffee should be ready."

He turned his head, his eyelids barely opening, to stare at her with sleepy eyes. "You made me coffee? Thanks."

She nodded. "I'll see you tonight. We're still on, right?"

He yawned. "Yeah."

The urge to lean over and brush a kiss on him was strong when she stopped rubbing his back but she resisted. "I'll see you then."

She stood and fled.

Chapter Four

Trina was nervous when she drove to Navarro's house that night. She sighed, feeling regret, and was pretty damn sure she'd overstepped boundaries.

She was paying the man to have sex with her and she needed to remember that. She had kicked herself most of the day. *Will he be upset that I made myself comfortable in his home? Will Navarro think I overstepped when I made him breakfast?*

She had been tempted not to come at all. Calling him to make an excuse sounded good but the thought of what she'd miss out on had made her discard that idea. Getting attached to Navarro Raine was a mistake. She knew it and Trina had to force herself to face that as she parked in front of his house.

It was five minutes past eight as she climbed his steps. The house lights were on in the lower floor and the porch light was bright. She was almost to the door when Navarro opened it. Her gaze flew to his to judge his mood and relief hit her when she saw his blue eyes were soft and welcoming when he smiled.

"You're late."

"I'm sorry."

Chuckling, he waved her in. "I'm just giving you shit. You're probably the most on-time women I've ever met." He closed the door after she was inside and locked it. "Thanks for breakfast."

She tensed as she turned to face him. "I'm sorry. It was habit and I hope you aren't upset. I wasn't really awake and I was already cooking before I realized you might not want me making myself so at home in your house."

A black eyebrow arched. "The only thing I was upset about was I had to eat alone and you were gone. Why did you leave so early? I told you that you could sleep in. Just because I have chores at the crack of dawn doesn't mean I'm going to kick you out of my bed when I leave it."

Trina hesitated. "The truth?"

A pair of muscular arms crossed over a broad chest as Navarro nodded. "I always want the truth from you. I was hoping that's an unwritten rule between us."

"I always got up early to make Ted breakfast so I'm used to getting up." Her gaze dropped but then she looked back up at him. "I was kind of worried you might think it was weird that I made you breakfast so I left before you were really awake."

A smile curved his lips. "You're a damn good cook and I loved breakfast so feel free use the kitchen anytime you want. I'm a decent cook but that omelet you made me was damn near heaven."

"I'm glad. I took cooking classes."

Navarro's smile fell as he stared at her. "You took cooking classes?"

Is that a bad thing? She didn't know how to respond except to nod. "Yes."

"Let me guess. Your husband wanted a better cook?"

"He wanted me to stay home because he appreciated me being there. I didn't work so I thought the least I could do was be the best housewife I could be. We didn't have kids to wear me out or tear up the house so I had a lot of extra time on my hands so I took a lot of classes to fill in my schedule."

"What other kinds of classes did you take?"

"Well, I took the cooking classes." She swallowed. "I took a sewing class so I can run a mean sewing machine. I learned scrapbooking which was kind of cool. I took classes on home repair."

Navarro chuckled. "What kind of home repairs?"

"Basic stuff. Ted was an engineer but he wasn't good at fixing things like the broken step on the back porch and plumbers charge too much when a tree root would block one of the pipes so I learned how to run a snake. Just stuff like that."

"Is that it?"

"I took a pottery class. I'm just not skillful though. It was fun but I was horrible at it. You need to be good with your hands. My bowls were crooked or misshapen. I learned how to line dance. I wanted Ted to sign up with me to learn something romantic like ballroom dancing but he worked long hours. We had a neighbor and he always wanted to learn line dancing so we partnered up."

Dark blue eyes narrowed slightly. "You had an affair? How was the sex with him?"

Shock hit Trina. "No. I never cheated on Ted." She frowned. "Jerry, our neighbor, was seventy-two years old. His wife died so he was lonely and the classes got us both out of the house."

The corners of Navarro's mouth lifted as he chuckled. "You should have seen the horror on your face at even the idea that you had an affair. Sorry."

"It's all right. I know people cheat. We, I mean, I've had friends who had their marriages end over that. It wasn't just always the men who cheated. Some of the women did it."

"Did Ted ever cheat?"

She shook her head. "I would have left him. Some of my friends kind of put me down for being a housewife minus kids but I wasn't the doormat they accused me of being." Her chin rose. "I was loyal to him and I deserved that right back." She paused. "And Ted wasn't the affair type."

"All men are, under the right circumstances."

"Not Ted."

"He was a saint?" Navarro questioned.

She hesitated. "He was five-foot-five, went prematurely bald, wore glasses, and was a little overweight. He wasn't outgoing and he wasn't a flirt. Women weren't drawn to him and he wasn't one to draw attention. He was really smart and he was really funny but you had to know him well to see that side of him."

Navarro blinked a few times, looking stunned. "How did you meet?"

"We met through friends. I'd just come out of a bad relationship and I'd sworn off men but Ted was nice. He took me out to dinner a lot, we got to know each other and fell in love. He was a good husband. I..." Emotion hit her and she closed her mouth.

Navarro walked toward her slowly then gripped her arms above her elbows. The expression on his face turned tender. "You miss him."

Tears filled her eyes but she blinked them back, swallowing the knot in her throat. "I am getting past it. At first I was paralyzed. He was my entire world and it was just gone in blink. Him. Our life together. My life."

"What's the hardest thing to still deal with?"

She hesitated. "Being alone all the time. I get lonely."

"Why did you move away from all your friends? You had to have them."

"Some of them felt sorry for me and they stopped treating me like a person. I became something to pity. Half of them avoided me after Ted died. I think seeing what happened made them afraid it could happen to them. I was devastated at first and withdrew from some of them because I was in my own world of grief. And I gave some of Ted's friends the wrong impression." She was still a bit humiliated over it.

"How?" Navarro tugged her to the couch and made her sit while he sat on the edge of the coffee table. "Tell me about Ted's friends getting the wrong impression."

Trina forced a laugh. "This is kind of embarrassing but I was used to taking care of Ted and some of his friends through Ted. When his friend Luke got divorced he mentioned to Ted he missed home-cooked meals so sometimes when Ted went there to hang out with him I'd send some meals to Luke so he could just reheat them and eat a few good meals a week. Ted's friend Gene loved my baked goods. I love to bake so I'd bake extra and send them with Ted to work. Gene was his office partner and also single."

"And what wrong impression did you give?"

She hesitated as her smile faded. "I was bored and needed something to do after Ted wasn't there anymore to take care of. I swear it's embedded in me after all these years. I started making Luke meals and I baked Gene some treats. For a few weeks I dropped them off at their houses. Then..." She blushed.

Navarro rubbed her arms. "Then what?"

She sighed. "This is so embarrassing."

"Tell me anyway."

She stared into his beautiful eyes. "Gene showed up one night at my house out of the blue and he hit on me. I was shocked. He was Ted's best friend and they worked

together. I didn't react well. Actually, I kind of freaked out. It was just a few months after the funeral and he came onto me pretty aggressively. Gene told me, because of what I was doing with him and Luke, that he felt sorry for me and that's why he was there offering to spend the night with me. He said I seemed desperate for a man's company or he wouldn't have come over to give me a pity fuck."

Navarro's hands stilled and anger gripped his features. "That guy is an asshole. What you did was nice and he hit on you because he'd always wanted you. Trust me. He tried to take advantage of you and when you shot him down he turned the blame for his shitty behavior your way. What an ass."

"I probably did seem desperate and it wasn't appropriate for me to keep cooking for them. I was never comfortable around either man again so I stopped talking to them."

Navarro stood and pulled Trina to her feet. "Let's go upstairs." He kept hold of her hand until he closed the door to his room. He locked it and turned. "Strip."

"I don't think I'm ever going to get used to you just telling me to get naked the second we walk in here." She removed her shoes and slowly started to undress.

He laughed. "I'm just happy you do it. I don't want you in your clothes." He tossed his discarded shirt to the floor. "I'm stripping too."

"No clothes in the bedroom rule?"

"I like that one. I also want you to follow my orders in here."

She nodded. "I can do that."

Something in his eyes flickered and he really looked turned-on. "Seriously? You'll take all my orders in here?"

"I can do that," she repeated then paused. "I just don't want pain or humiliation."

A frown tempered his lips. "I wouldn't do that to you. What made you say that?"

"I mentioned that I read books. Sometimes I read these master and slave type books. They turn me on right until it gets degrading or painful. I don't find it sexy or stimulating and I wouldn't want to be with a guy who wanted to inflict that on me. I also don't want to feel icky by doing something I'm not comfortable with."

He was naked as he moved slowly to Trina. "I won't ever hurt you and I don't want to humiliate you. So you get turned-on by light bondage?"

Nodding, she met his curious gaze. "I enjoyed the ropes."

He reached up so his thumb brushed her nipple. "Still tender?"

"A little."

"I was thinking about you today."

"Were you dealing with more shit?" She grinned up at him.

"Nope. I was breaking in a few horses." His heated gaze ran over her.

Her body instantly responded to his words. The idea of him on the back of a wild animal made her have some racy thoughts. He'd have to be a tough guy to risk life and

limb to climb on the back of a strong, wild animal. She didn't look away from him as he stared into her eyes. "So what were you thinking?"

"Do you like toys?"

"Sex toys?"

He nodded. "I went into town today to pay off the loan after I cashed your check. The ranch is safe. Thanks, by the way. When I got home I went online and ordered some toys I thought you'd enjoy. They won't arrive until next week but I want you to get used to the idea."

"What kind of toys?"

He smiled. "Nothing painful. I got things I think will make you feel really good. It will be a surprise."

"I hate surprises."

He laughed. "You are unique then."

"I'm impatient too."

Reaching out, he lifted her onto the bed. "Me too." His focus went down her body.

Trina eyed his cock, seeing he was rock hard, and licked her lips. When her attention lifted, there was no missing the passion in his gaze. She moved on the bed. With him standing next to it he was at the perfect height for what she had in mind. She rolled onto her stomach, reaching for him, hearing him suck in air.

"What are you doing, babe?"

Easing closer to him, Trina caressed his cock with her hands, inching her mouth closer. "What does it look like I'm doing?"

He didn't pull away as she licked the crown of his shaft. His cock jerked in her hold as her fingers wrapped around the base. She took him into her mouth, licking and sucking, coaxing a groan from Navarro as his hand caressed her cheek.

"You're too damn good at this. I won't last long but I'm not going to say no. I believe in payback so when you're done it's my turn."

The memory of his mouth on her made her passion kick into overdrive. She took his cock deeper into her mouth and moved on him faster. Navarro groaned as his hips slowly thrust a little, moving with her.

"Fuck, babe." His voice was husky. "Your mouth is so damn hot and good."

She let her teeth lightly scrape his shaft and took him deeper, feeling him in her throat. She swallowed over and over. Navarro cried out as he came hard. She swallowed everything he gave her before easing him out from between her lips. His hand was fisted in her long hair but he hadn't hurt her. His hold eased as she looked at him while she sat up. His head was thrown back, his eyes were closed and a satisfied smile was firmly planted on his lips. Beautiful eyes opened as he lowered his head.

"You're so damn amazing at that. I'm damn near embarrassed about how fast I came but I won't be because you're just that good."

She laughed. "Thank you. To be honest, I'm glad I can get you off fast. After a few minutes my jaw starts to hurt. You're pretty big."

"Then I'm glad you turn me on so much that I can't last past a few minutes when your mouth is wrapped around me. Lie back and spread wide for me, Trina. It's my turn to cause devastation in your body."

Moving on the bed, Trina stretched out on her back. She hesitated, still not really comfortable with exposing herself to him but she did it, wanting to feel his mouth on her that much. She really wanted to get off, aching with the need to come. Watching and hearing Navarro climax, tasting him, had turned her on completely.

He got on the bed with her, on his knees. His gaze ran down her body, fixating between her thighs. "Do you always shave?"

She nodded. "Does it bother you? I shaved tonight before I came over. I didn't want you to find stubble."

He chuckled. "Ever waxed?"

"Ouch. I tried it once but it hurt so bad I screamed."

His response was a deep chuckle. "Sorry. Why shave?"

She hesitated. "Ted wanted me to try it about eight years ago, wondering how it would look. I preferred it so I kept shaving."

His fingers brushed her outer lips. "Soft. You did a really good job. If he didn't go down on you why did you like to keep shaving it all?" He locked gazes with her. "Please be honest because I want that between us always."

"I like the feel of it when I..." She blushed as discomfiture burned her cheeks.

"Touch yourself?"

She nodded.

"Do you do it often?"

She looked away. "Do we have to really talk about this?"

"Babe?"

Her attention jerked back to him, his dark blue eyes pinned her where she lay. She sighed. "I have a high sex drive and Ted didn't. I think I've hit my prime or something. I masturbate a few times a day and every night because it helps me sleep."

A soft groan came from his parted lips as he stretched out flat on his stomach between her thighs. "Fuck, that's hot."

"What is?"

He smiled at her from between her thighs. "You, babe. Most women aren't that into sex. You'd let me fuck you morning, noon, and night, wouldn't you?"

She nodded. "If you did, I wouldn't masturbate anymore." She smiled, relieved that she hadn't shocked him with her honesty, and encouraged to keep talking since he seemed turned-on by her answers. "You're better at getting me off than I am. Thank you, by the way. You don't know how —" She shut up. "Just thank you."

"Close your eyes and feel."

She let her head fall back. Navarro used one of his hands to spread her pussy lips open to give him freer access to her. She gripped the bedding when he breathed on her sex an instant before his hot tongue teased her clit with a slow, lazy swipe and then another. She remembered to breathe until his mouth covered it entirely. A shiver went through her body when he used his teeth to lightly scrape the sensitive bud.

Navarro played with her clit and slid two fingers inside her pussy and slowly teased her in another way. She bucked her hips as the bud tightened, swelled, and the aching inside her grew to a dull pain of need.

"Please," she panted.

Full lips fastened over her clit and his strong tongue licked her with more pressure. His fingers moved fast and deep, pumping her hard in tune with what he was doing to her with his mouth. That was all it took. Trina arched her back, crying out his name, as the climax gripped her. He didn't stop, making her cry out again and again until he let her go, removing his fingers.

A deep growl penetrated her blissful haze of sexual satisfaction. Navarro. The sound surprised her, not used to a man making that sound as he gripped her. Trina didn't protest as he flipped her over onto her stomach. Strong hands spread her thighs wide a second before his body came down on her as his hips settled between her legs.

"Babe?" His lips were by her ear. "Relaxed?"

She smiled. "Oh yeah. If I got anymore so you'd need a spoon to pick me up."

"I want you to stay that way."

She nodded. "I can't move now but give me a few minutes."

A cry of surprise and pleasure burst from her when Navarro entered her slowly from behind. He was hot and hard as he pressed deep into her pussy. She moaned at the sensation of being stretched and filled by his rigid, thick cock. His legs spread her wider and he slowly fucked her in deep, long strokes as he totally pinned flat to the bed.

She moaned, pushing back into him as best as she could but his weight was holding her down pretty effectively. He braced one arm for his weight and then shoved his hand between her hip and the bed to curl his palm between her thighs from around her hip until his fingers ended up rubbing her clit. He fucked her harder and faster, pounding against her ass where he had her pinned.

With his fingers rubbing her clit and him moving inside her it was too much. She came again, screaming out, and clawed the bedding. Behind her Navarro bucked into her, groaning as he came, buried deep. He shivered, almost collapsing all of his weight on her after pulling his hand from beneath. He kissed her shoulder, trailing his lips up to her neck.

"I'm going to wake you up in the middle of the night again. Can you take me in a few hours?"

She smiled. "Please."

Navarro chuckled. "You're really a gift, babe." He kissed her shoulder. "I'm done in. I'm sorry about how early I go to bed."

"I'm tired too." She closed her eyes. "I don't want to move."

He laughed as he withdrew slowly from her body, lifting off her. "You're on top of the covers so you have to get up. You tear them down the bed for us and I'll get the light."

She forced her body to move, grateful when Navarro handed her a towel when he stood at the edge of the bed to help her stand. She used it to clean herself and then pulled back the covers. She got back into his bed as the light went out. In seconds he was flat on his back, pulling her into his arms.

"You can make yourself at home here, Trina. If you want to sleep in, sleep. If you want to cook, eat with me." He nuzzled her neck to place a kiss there. "I like you in my arms. Did you sleep good with me?"

"Yes." She burrowed closer to him. She didn't mention that she slept too well for her own good.

Chapter Five

Trina walked up the porch steps, biting her lip, reminding herself that Navarro had told her to be herself. She loved to bake. *So maybe I overdid it but I was bored today.* This was the fifth night and she wouldn't see him for a few days, just as their agreement stated. *He's been a real sport about me cooking breakfast. I hope he handles baked goods just as well.*

A smile curved her lips, remembering the night before when she'd arrived at his house. Navarro had met her at the door totally naked, hauled her into the house, nearly torn off her clothes, then lifted her naked body into his arms. She'd been shocked when he'd carried her into his dining room, staring in stunned amazement at what he'd done to it.

Candles lit the room. He'd tossed a sleeping bag on top of the dining room table and he'd promptly laid her on top of it. He had chuckled as he ordered her to stay still. She had frozen in place, just allowing him to do what he would with her. He bent to lift something at the edge of the table. She'd stared at the scarf but said nothing as he'd bound her wrist. He had gone around the table tying her limbs to the four corners where he'd already attached the scarves to the legs. He'd smiled at her while informing her that he'd been thinking about doing that to her all day.

Being in the dining room had made Trina a little nervous. What if one of his wayward brothers came home? She'd gotten the impression they weren't good about calling to give a warning before they popped in but she'd forgotten that worry when Navarro had walked to a side table to hold up honey in a bottle he'd kept by a candle so it would be warm on her skin. It had been a sexually stimulating experience as he'd dripped the warmed substance on her breasts, stomach, and thighs.

She'd been tied flat, bound so she could barely move and then Navarro had gotten on the table with her. He'd started at her breasts, licking to remove each drop of honey. By the time he got to her thighs she'd been so hot and bothered that she'd been begging him to fuck her. He'd finally untied her ankles, hiked her legs over his shoulders, and used his mouth to make her come. He'd damn near licked her to within an inch of her life.

She knocked again at the door, her mind still on the night before. After she'd climaxed, Navarro had untied her wrists, tugged her off the table, and had gripped her hand to drag her into the living room. He'd spun her around, bent her over the back of the couch doggy style, and entered her in a heartbeat. The sex had been wild and fantastic with her pinned over the furniture, him driving into her from behind, hot, fast, and rough. She'd loved every second of it.

When Navarro still didn't answer the door, she backed up and frowned as she dragged her thoughts back to the present. Was he in the shower? She turned her head to glance at the long driveway, seeing his truck wasn't parked there. It hadn't been there last night either, yet he had been home. She debated on what to do. Should she just leave or wait a few minutes and knock again? She knew he came home, ate, and then showered before she arrived since he'd told her his routine.

Last night they'd showered together after he'd fucked her against the couch. She loved bathing with the man because he'd let her wash him, had almost purred when she scrubbed his thick, silky-to-the-touch hair. It fell to his shoulders and she loved it. He had washed her next and they'd both been excited by the time they were clean. Navarro had given her one more thing she'd never experienced. He'd lifted her against the wall of the shower stall, had her wrap her arms and legs around his body, and he'd taken her against the wall, standing up, holding her.

She hadn't come but it had still been an incredible feeling, being held that way. He knew she hadn't gotten off so he'd reached up afterward, grabbed the removable showerhead and taught her about water pressure. She shivered, remembering him pinning her to the wall with one of her feet on the floor while his thigh had pinned her other leg high up and wide open. He'd made her come hard with the showerhead pouring water over her clit. They'd fallen into bed after that already worn out and half asleep.

Standing on his porch still, Trina dragged her thoughts to the present once again, and glanced at her watch. It was eight-twenty-five.

Where is Navarro? She knocked as loud as her fist would allow, thinking he really needed to get a doorbell. It was a big house not to have one. He still didn't come to the door so she walked to the porch swing and placed the baked goods on the seat. She didn't have paper or a pen but she hoped he'd guess who had brought them. Depression hit her. Had Navarro forgotten? It hurt. She walked down his steps to climb into her SUV.

She had just put on her belt and started the engine when the lights of a vehicle drew her attention. It was heading her way. She killed the engine, got out of the SUV and put a smile on her face while she stood there waiting for Navarro to park. Relief hit her hard that he hadn't stood her up. *Thank God, he was just running late.* But, it wasn't Navarro's truck. She frowned when a blond man climbed out of the vehicle.

"Hi. I'm Adam. Are you Trina?"

She nodded. "Yes."

"Navarro was hung up so he wants you to follow me out to the north barn where he is."

"Okay." She was a bit surprised but Navarro worked with horses and she knew he had a barn since he'd told her he'd cleaned stalls. She just was stunned that he wanted her to come to him. "Lead the way."

"He said he'd be there for a while so you might be spending the night in the barn. He wanted me to give you the option of staying or going. One of the horses is having a hard birth so it could be a long damn night."

Indecision hit her. Was Navarro going to be annoyed with her if she actually came to the barn? Was he just too polite to call a rain check? Adam watched her as he rubbed his thigh, looking impatient.

"He told me to tell you he'd like for you to come out there."

She nodded. "Okay. Hang on." She ran up the porch steps to grab the tub and took it back to the SUV. "I'll follow you."

He climbed back into his truck. The road wasn't much more than a dirt trail through the high grass. Adam drove slowly and she wondered if he was doing it for her benefit. She smirked. Her SUV was tougher than the Ford the man in front of her drove because she had purposely bought a heavy-duty SUV knowing she was living in the boonies. They drove for about twenty minutes when she saw the barn with lights coming from an open door. Adam parked so she parked her SUV beside him.

Adam opened the truck window and said, "He's inside and I'm going home." He tipped his cowboy hat. "Night."

Trina watched the guy drive away before getting out. Examining the open barn doors, she moved forward. Inside she saw stalls, a loft with an opening and ladder, but no Navarro. She smelled hay and then spotted a few horses that stared back at her over their stalls.

"I'm here, babe," Navarro called. "In the back to the left."

Trina followed his voice through the barn, finding him in the last open-door stall. She stared at Navarro, unable to help it. He was barefoot, shirtless, and petting a very pregnant mare that was leaning against the back stall wall. Navarro had his hair pulled back in a ponytail and as she studied him she noticed how tired he was.

"How is she?"

The smile didn't reach his eyes. "It's her first foal and she's having a rough time of it. She's not too stressed and the foal is turned right but I think it's going to be a long labor. If things change I'll call Mike Arles, the local vet. I don't know if you met him in town or not yet."

"I haven't. What can I do?"

He patted the mare one last time before walking to Trina. "I'm sorry about this. How do you feel about camping out? Ever had sex in a barn before?"

She looked into his eyes, trying to read his expression, and what she saw verified he was exhausted but trying to hide it. He was a proud man and he'd given her his word about her having him five nights a week. It seemed as though he was going to give her those evenings even if it killed him. He looked ready to fall on his face. She took a deep breath.

"I'd love to spend the night. It's my time, right?"

"You know it, babe."

"Good. Here's what I want. Tell me where we're sleeping. Are there sleeping bags? Are they put down?"

"I haven't done that yet but I had Adam bring me a few and drop them in my truck bed. He also brought me a cooler with drinks and a few sandwiches since I missed dinner." He reached for her. "Come here."

Trina shook her head. "My time, my dime, right?"

A frown marred Navarro's handsome face. "Are you mad? I'm sorry about this but Adam couldn't sit with Willow. His brother is getting married and it's the bachelor party tonight. He's the best man."

"I swear I'm not mad. I'll be right back."

She turned around and walked out of the barn to go in search of the sleeping bags, found them, and carried them back into the barn. Navarro was still standing where she'd left him with the same frown on his features until he saw her walk in with the sleeping bags. He looked surprised before moving toward her.

"Let me do that, babe."

"Let me. Where are we sleeping?"

He pointed. "There, so I can keep an eye on her but we're outside the stall so she doesn't step on us. I can do this."

She met his concerned gaze, smiling. "You take care of her and I'll take care of this. Let me do it, okay? It will make me happy." She winked at him. "I like to feel needed."

The smile he gave her was relieved and genuine as his tense body relaxed. "Okay."

Navarro returned to the stall while she unzipped one sleeping bag to spread it out and used the second one for a top blanket. She left the barn to find the cooler in the back of Navarro's truck and carried in the heavy box, setting it down by the sleeping bag bed she'd laid out. On her last trip outside to her SUV, she grabbed the tub along with her purse. She hesitated before grabbing the towel she kept in the SUV to put on her seat when it got hot and tossed it over her purse while she carried everything into the barn. With a glance down at the soft dirt floor, she kicked her shoes off.

"Is anyone going to show up or is it just us tonight?"

Navarro looked over his shoulder at her. "Just us. Adam won't be back until tomorrow. He's the only one who is working with me right now."

She reached under her shirt to unfasten her bra, removed it, and dropped it on the tub, and then removed her jeans. Navarro grinned, watching her get comfortable now that she just wore her undies and shirt. She smiled back at him and then went to her knees on the sleeping bag to open up the cooler. She took out two sandwiches for him and got out a coke. She met his gaze.

"Come eat."

He petted the mare before walking to a hose first to wash his hands and used his jeans to pat them dry. He thanked her when he took a seat on the edge of the bed she'd

made. As Navarro inhaled both sandwiches she studied him closely, taking note of the exhaustion in his eyes and in his sagging shoulders.

"You've had a rough day."

"It's been a long one."

"You need rest. Can you lie down and take a nap?"

He frowned. "You're here and we have plans. We're in a barn so I was thinking up what I wanted to do to you here."

"Navarro," she said softly. "Take a nap first. Please? That would make me happy. I can see that you're beat."

"But —"

"My dime, my time. I want you to lie down and let me touch you until you drift to sleep. You need some rest. We can have sex later."

"If you touch me we're going to have sex before I get some sleep." He grinned. "Hang on. Let me turn down the lights so we can settle in. If Willow gets into trouble we'll know it. She's not shy about making a ruckus if she needs attention."

Trina watched Navarro get to his feet to close the barn doors before he switched the overhead lights to a dimmer setting. The door was wood with large gaps in the gate so they could see Willow clearly when he closed that door to keep the horse corralled. He stripped out of his jeans and briefs, down to bare skin.

Trina reached for her purse, wishing she had lotion but she did have sunscreen, deciding it would have to do. It was greasy but not too bad and it smelled really good as she spread it on both hands. Navarro's eyebrows arched.

"Sunscreen?"

"Lie down on your stomach." She moved the top sleeping bag with her thumb. "Stretch out so I can give you a backrub."

He looked shocked. "A backrub? Seriously?"

She smiled at him. "I took a class."

A grin split his lips. "Seriously?"

A laugh burst from her. "No, but I could. Now stretch out here and let me rub you down, sexy."

As tired as he was, Navarro was hard, still ready to have sex. She watched him grin at her as he sat on the sleeping bag. Staring at his aroused, stiff cock, she realized what she needed to take care of.

"I changed my mind. I want you to lie on your back first."

Without protest, he stretched out on his back. "You want to ride me?" He tapped his thighs, spreading his legs apart a little. "Climb on, babe. I've wanted you all day."

She poured more sunscreen on her hands, the scent of coconut filled the air, smelling really good. She grinned and moved between his thighs. He opened wider to give her room, and she stared into his eyes.

"Relax and enjoy."

The sunscreen made her hand slippery as it moved over his shaft, coating him. Her other hand cupped his balls, playing with them, stroking and massaging. A groan came from Navarro as he exhaled. Smiling, Trina watched his body react as she slowly rubbed him for a while, his soft moans and uneven breathing telling her how much he was enjoying her touch. When he tensed up and his balls tightened in her hand telling her he was going to come, she squeezed his shaft just a little tighter, and moved her hand faster. Navarro threw back his head and said her name loudly when he came. She used the towel to clean them both as Navarro lay spent, trying to catch his breath.

"Roll over on your stomach now that you don't have a kickstand."

Navarro chuckled at her joke but he really looked exhausted at that point. "Lie on your back. It's my turn."

"Please roll over." As much as she wanted him between her thighs, making her feel the kind of pleasure she knew he could give her, she wanted to take care of him more. "I am going to give you that back massage."

The second he rolled onto his stomach Trina straddled his ass. She knew he could probably feel how wet and turned-on she was even through her panties. To her amusement he turned his head to grin at her knowingly, verifying he definitely was aware of her state of sexual awareness of him. She grinned back and inched upward to straddle him higher, to get a good position.

"I want you to relax and just enjoy what I do to you." She poured a healthy dose of sunscreen on her hands. "You've had a hard day and you deserve this."

Something flickered in his eyes, an emotion she couldn't read, then it was gone. He hesitated and then nodded. She was relieved that he wasn't going to argue with her. She really did want to do something nice for him and a good massage would relax him enough to sleep, something he desperately needed.

"Only if you wake me if I fall asleep. It's my turn, babe. I want to make you come."

"I will," she lied easily, a smile on her lips.

Navarro laid his cheek against the bedding as she started to spread lotion on him. She waited until he closed his eyes before she leaned forward to spread her hands out on his broad shoulders. She loved touching his warm skin and the muscles she gripped revealed he was tense. A soft grunt came from him.

"Damn, babe. That feels amazing. I can't remember the last time someone rubbed me."

"It's my pleasure."

Navarro's body relaxed even more under hers as she rubbed him, massaged his shoulders and his lower back. She knew when he drifted to sleep as he quietly started to snore, just verifying to her once more that he was as exhausted as he'd looked. She eased off him, careful not to wake him, and used the towel to clean her hands. The scent of coconut filled the air, masking some of the horse and hay scents that filled the barn.

The mare stood silently in the stall and looked fine when Trina glanced that way. She stretched out next to Navarro as she covered him with the other sleeping bag. Gently, she tugged his hair free from the band that held it.

The one light in the barn was dim enough that Trina knew she could sleep lying on her back next to Navarro without it disturbing her. She hesitated and then reached down as she turned her head, watching Navarro sleep with his face turned her way. He was so damn handsome that he took her breath away. In sleep, his features had softened, making him appear younger and more vulnerable. He was the sexiest man she'd ever met.

Knowing she shouldn't, she still slipped her finger inside the edge of her panties where she was soaking them. While watching Navarro sleep she rubbed tight circles around her clit with her fingertip and imagined it was his digit touching her. In record time she came, eased her finger out of her undies, and turned on her side to curl into his big, warm body.

The fact that she was sleeping in a barn on the floor and she didn't care because Navarro was next to her wasn't lost on her. She curled tightly against his large frame, enjoying the closeness and his warmth. She yawned, drifting to sleep.

* * * * *

When Navarro got up, it woke her and she heard Willow panting hard. Navarro just put on his briefs and opened the gate to the stall, cursed, and turned around to run across the barn. The overhead lights came on, blinding Trina when she sat up in time to watch Navarro sprint back into the stall. She got to her feet as he walked behind the mare.

"What can I do?"

Navarro didn't look at her. "Just stay back, babe. She's about to give birth."

Nervousness hit Trina hard. Navarro moved around the mare examining her at every angle before he urged Willow to lie down on her side. The mare was freaking out a little and she looked scared. Navarro got down on his knees at her tail and Trina only hesitated a second before walking into the stall and going to her knees at the mare's head to rub her face.

"It's all right, baby," she crooned.

"Damn."

Trina looked over the horse at Navarro, seeing his grim expression, meeting his worried gaze. "Is she going to be okay?"

"She should be but this just isn't going the way I wanted it to." He was physically examining the horse. "I feel hooves so that's good. Just talk to her and keep petting her. If she tries to lift her head, keep it down even if you have to lie across her. I don't want her trying to stand."

The next twenty minutes passed in a blur while Trina tried to sooth and keep Willow down, having to hold her when the mare tried to get up a few times. Navarro had talked Trina through how to keep the horse calm. As he moved behind the mare Trina saw him tense and watched in awe as Navarro helped birth the foal. He pulled as the mare struggled to push until the foal finally was free. Navarro grabbed towels to rub at the foal vigorously while Trina blinked back tears, watching with amazement as Navarro helped the foal to stand. It wobbled but it stayed up.

"Let her up."

Trina moved back to get out of the way as Willow struggled but got to her feet. The new mother turned, heading for her foal, and Navarro backed away, taking the bloody towels with him. Both of them ended up outside the stall, watching Willow tend to her baby.

"Damn. That was scary."

Trina stared up at Navarro. "You were remarkable and you didn't look scared once."

"Willow is one of my favorites and I didn't want to lose her. She had a hard time birthing so I don't think I'm going to breed her again."

She wasn't sure what to say so she just looked at Navarro, realizing he had blood and gore on him from the birth. "Why don't I drive you to the house so you can shower?"

He looked down his body. "Nah. Can you hold the hose? I don't want to leave them alone until Adam gets here to watch over them."

He walked to a stall near the front of the barn, jerking his head so Trina understood. She opened the stall to see the space had been converted into a large shower with a drain in the floor and a spray-nozzle hose lying nearby. Navarro removed his briefs. They needed to be thrown away. He stood naked, staring at her, grinning.

"The water is damn cold."

She winced. "Sorry."

"Hit me from the neck down and get my arms really well." He made a face, grimacing. "There's soap on the shelf there. Once I'm wet, please hand it to me."

The water wasn't cold, it was freezing. Goose bumps covered every inch of his skin and guilt ate at Trina as she soaked Navarro from the neck down. She handed him a bottle labeled soap. He scrubbed every inch of his body while she hosed him off. He told her where the towels were so she grabbed two and ran back to the stall where Navarro waited with clenched teeth, his entire body shaking.

She helped him dry before leading him to their bed, instantly stripped off her shirt and undies, and followed him down into the sleeping bags. His skin was icy cold but she ignored it as she wrapped her body over his, trying to warm him as they lay together. He pulled her tighter, shivering hard.

"Sorry, babe. This isn't very romantic, is it?"

"Shut up," she laughed. "Just hold onto me. Am I warming you any?"

"Yeah."

She pulled the sleeping bag higher, tucking it around his body. When his chills lessened and finally stopped she lifted her head to study his face, only to realize he had fallen back asleep with her sprawled on top of him. Her fingertips tested his skin, worrying a little less now that he wasn't noticeably cold to the touch. She lowered her head to put her ear to his chest and listened to his heartbeat, a sound she loved to hear. Navarro Raine was a remarkable man and watching him in that stall with Willow showed what kind of caring person he was.

Eventually she eased away from him, climbed out from under the sleeping bag, walked to the light switch, and turned the harsh overhead lights off so just the dimmer one by the stall was on. She paused at Willow's stall to check on mom and baby and saw they were doing well as Willow tended to her foal. Trina climbed back on top of Navarro to warm him and tucked the blankets tightly around them. He didn't stir, proving he was exhausted.

Trina admitted to herself that she was attached to Navarro way too deeply and also faced the fact that she was letting herself feel too much for him as she put her head down, listening to his heartbeat again. It was slow and steady as he slept. She loved lying on top of him, being wrapped around him, and decided that being skin to skin with him was pure heaven. One week with him had passed, leaving seven more of them to look forward to. In less than two months Navarro wouldn't be hers anymore.

An ache settled in her chest, knowing she was going to get her heart broken. That fact slammed into her brain hard. She was falling for a man who was only with her to save his ranch—a contract made up by a lonely woman looking for good sex with a man who needed money. She squeezed her eyes closed, knowing in that moment that falling completely in love with Navarro was going to be unavoidable unless she stopped seeing him immediately. The only decision to make was that next week she wouldn't come back.

In his sleep Navarro moved, wrapping his arm around her waist and his large hand slid down, gripping a handful of her ass. One of his thighs shifted her legs, pushing between. His other hand moved to rub her hip.

"Thanks, babe," he mumbled.

She smiled. *Maybe I could stay two weeks and still be able to leave with my heart intact. One week more can't hurt, right? Then I'll end it before I get too wrapped up in Navarro to walk away without it tearing me apart.* She drifted to sleep listening to the sound of his heart.

Chapter Six

"Nav? Hello? Wake up."

The body on top of Trina's tensed, waking her. But she didn't want to wake so she burrowed tighter against the warmth above her. She realized at some point their positions had changed since now Navarro was sprawled on top of her. He moved slightly and then cursed.

"Shit. Get out and give us a minute, Ryder."

Trina opened her eyes as some of her sleep fog cleared, remembering where they were instantly, the barn rafter above her a good clue. Navarro was pinning her down and his head was turned to look at something near their feet. *Ryder*? She let her mind search for why that name was familiar and then it hit her.

She tensed before lifting her head to stare over Navarro's shoulder at a longer-haired version of Navarro, only his skin was a lot darker. His eyes were a piercing dark brown, and his features were just a little harsher. His black hair was loose and ran down the front of his tank top almost to his waist. His eyes met hers.

"Who is this? Aren't you going to introduce us?" Ryder smirked with amusement.

"Damn it, take a walk and give us some privacy." Navarro sounded irritated.

"Do you bring women to the barn often, Nav? I never pictured you for the kinky type."

Navarro almost growled. "Damn it, Ryder. I said take a walk. We'll join you outside in a minute. Willow had a rough birth and we were here because of it. Now take a hike or I'll get up and kick your ass."

The man peered over his shoulder, glanced at the stall, and his amusement left. "Did Willow do okay? Is the foal sound?"

"Yeah. Now leave."

Ryder turned his attention back on Trina. "I'm Ryder." He grinned and held out his hand, bending a little at the waist as he reached for her. "I'm his younger brother and I'm the better-looking one."

She waved, avoiding his hand. "It's nice to meet you but could I shake your hand when I'm dressed?"

He grinned as he dropped his outstretched hand, straightening to his full height. "I prefer you didn't. What's the fun in that?" He chuckled. "Being dressed is overrated and I prefer naked chicks myself."

"Get the fuck out," Navarro gritted out. "On the count of five I'm going to carefully get up so I don't flash Trina's body and then I'll kick your perverted ass out of the barn the hard way if you don't move. One. Two."

"Spoil sport." Ryder spun around and walked away.

Irritation was clear on his features as Navarro stared down at Trina. "Sorry about that. I guess my brother's band is on a break. I told you they never call before they show up." He carefully got to his feet, extending his hand to pull Trina up. He turned, finding their clothes, and handed Trina hers. "Get dressed fast. He is a pervert and it wouldn't surprise me if he walked back in, trying to catch you naked."

She laughed as she started to dress but frowned a few seconds later, searching the area around the container. "My bra is gone."

Navarro shoved into his jeans and cursed. "Damn Ryder." He focused his attention on her chest for a second. "I'll get it back. He loves to pull pranks so he probably swiped it before he woke us."

She shook her head. "Don't worry about it. My shirt is thick and loose enough to mostly hide that I'm not wearing one. He can't laugh about his prank if you ignore what he's done."

Navarro watched her, grinning. "I see."

"I grew up with six boy cousins tormenting me as the only girl and the best way I found to deal with them was to pretend I didn't notice what they'd done. I once wore a dress with two happy face stickers stuck to my butt. It drove them nuts that I wouldn't remove them or give them the satisfaction of acknowledging they were there."

He laughed. "What else did they do?"

"The usual shit. They decorated my dolls with trash, they painted my bike black with spray paint and I just thanked them and told them they looked better that way. It pissed them off. I guess I was supposed to pitch a fit or cry. I got my revenge plenty though when they hit their teens. They discovered girls and I discovered getting even."

"Tell me about it."

Trina laughed. "My cousin Marty was the worst and had a mean streak so when he was fifteen he was all into this girl named Becky and I saw them at the diner together. I figured if there was ever a time to get even, there it was, so I walked up to the table and asked him if that rash on his privates was any better, mentioning my mom could whip him up a new cream if it was still itching like crazy and oozing green goo. You should have seen his face and hers." Trina giggled. "Oh, I thought he was going to kill me but he was afraid to mess with me after that. You can bet he didn't get anywhere with her with his supposed nasty-boy rash. I had my own mean streak."

Navarro chuckled, reaching out to cup her face, lifting her chin until she was staring into his eyes. "Thanks for last night. I'm sorry about Ryder. Adam wouldn't have come in here, seeing your SUV still parked outside."

"It's fine."

"This wasn't how I planned our night."

"It's really all right and I'm glad it turned out this way." She waved toward the stall. "Watching a foal being born was amazing and so were you."

He pulled her closer. "Why don't I make it up to you tonight?"

Temptation was there but she shook her head. "Your brother came home and you get two days to yourself. I'll see you on Sunday, right? Eight o'clock?"

"I'd like to see you tonight."

"You don't owe me for last night, Navarro. Seriously." She went on tiptoe to kiss his cheek. "Your brother is waiting." She dropped to her heels and then spotted the container. "Oh. I hope you don't mind but I was bored yesterday so I baked." She pointed. "I'll get going."

A hand shot out to grip hers, his blue intense gaze locked on hers while his fingers played with her wrist. "I would like you to come over tonight. It's not about making anything up to you." He moved closer. "I want you."

There was no missing the passionate look and she responded to it. "Okay."

"Come hungry at six o'clock because I'm grilling steaks. You eat them, right?"

"I love them."

"Now let me introduce you to Ryder and expect to get hit on. He loves blondes and the guy never misses an opportunity to try to get one into his bed."

Outside it wasn't just Ryder waiting but Adam was there too, eating some kind of burrito, sitting on the tailgate of his pickup. He grinned when Navarro and Trina walked out of the barn. Ryder turned around, his gaze locking on Trina, and grinned at her as they approached.

She held out her hand. "Hello, Ryder. I'm Trina."

Ryder had large hands like Navarro, but his weren't calloused on the palms. His had rough spots on his fingertips, which she discovered as they shook hands. He didn't just shake her hand, instead he gripped it and lifted it to his lips, turning it palm down to place a kiss on her skin. Trina cocked an eyebrow at the tall man.

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Trina."

"Let her go." Navarro sighed. "I warned her about you."

"Well, hell." Ryder released her, shooting his brother a dirty look. "That's no fun. I'm trying to impress the lady." His amused gaze fixed on Trina. "He's full of shit so anything he said isn't true." Amusement lit up dark eyes. "I'm an angel."

Laughter spilled from Trina. "Sure you are and I'm a six-foot-six heavyweight wrestler."

Adam laughed, almost choking on his food, and winked at Trina before his attention slid to Navarro. "Willow do good?"

"It got iffy for a while but both are fine now. How was the party?"

"Great." Adam chuckled. "It's a miracle I pulled my ass out of bed this morning." He glanced at Trina before looking back at Navarro. "Her name was Candy and she went home with me since Trip is getting married this weekend."

"Candy?" Ryder chuckled. "Stripper?"

Adam's grin spread. "A really good one. She was a very talented...dancer."

Trina grinned. "Well, I better head home so he can finish that story without fear of making me blush." She faced Navarro. "At least you'll have someone to share that container with."

A smile curved his lips. "How much did you bake for me?"

She hesitated for a second before answering. "I went overboard since I haven't had a chance to bake for anyone but myself. I avoid doing that since I don't want to balloon up." She touched her hip. "I got carried away and made the things I thought you'd like."

"Thanks." He winked at her. "I'll see you at six."

"Should I bring anything?"

"Just yourself."

She nodded, waving at the men who were watching her. Gripping her purse she walked to her SUV. She followed the dirt road, easily finding the main road to the Raine house. She turned toward the highway without getting lost.

* * * * *

"So who's the blonde?" Ryder studied his brother. "She's cute but not your type."

Navarro tensed, an instant frown curving his mouth.

"Where's the legs with red hair?"

Adam cleared his throat. "Bad topic. Drop it."

Ryder glanced at Adam and then Navarro. His expression hardened. "I heard a rumor in town, so are you going to tell me what in the hell is going on? Is the ranch in trouble? I stopped to buy smokes at the drug store and Mable asked how I was holding up since the ranch was about to be taken away from us. What the fuck is going down, Nav?"

Navarro hooked his thumbs in his jeans. "Dusty got into debt and put a loan out on the ranch but it's fine now, all paid off so the ranch is free and clear. I handled it. I would have called but you never replaced your damn cell phone or you just didn't bother to give me a new number."

"Son of a bitch," Ryder growled. "What did he do now?"

"Same shit." Adam sighed loudly. "Drinking too much and gambling, only he borrowed from the wrong sort this time. He took out a loan on the ranch and hid it until it was damn near in default." His gaze shifted to Navarro. "How did you get the

money? We sat down and figured we couldn't pull it off without selling some land. Did you sell the far pasture to ole man Horris?"

"Sell the land?" Ryder looked furious. "You didn't!"

Rage hit Navarro. "No. I didn't. What the hell do you care? You breeze in here whenever the hell you want and you can't even be reached. Once again I was left dealing with shit to save this family without you around."

Ryder stepped back, shocked. "I'm sorry. I should have called to give you my new number. I'm...shit. You're right. Do you need money? I have some. We'll pay off the loan together."

Navarro hesitated. "I have the money so don't worry about it and this won't happen again. I had Dusty sign off on the ranch so he can't take out anymore loans against it."

Ryder stared at Navarro with a frown. "It's his ranch too."

"He's always welcome here but he's no longer on the deed since I can't risk this happening again." Navarro glared at his brother. "We damn near lost the ranch. Do you get that? He had the notices sent somewhere else and if I hadn't gotten my hands on twenty grand we'd be homeless. What happens if next time he takes out a hundred grand or more? He's not trustworthy. He is our brother but he's sick, Ryder. We can't risk our home again."

Adam cleared his throat. "He's right, Ryder. You haven't seen how bad Dusty is. We were left with just over a week to get our hands on that money or they would have taken everything away and we don't have that kind of money sitting around." Adam eyed Navarro. "Where did the money come from?"

Navarro hesitated.

"I grew up on this damn ranch too." Adam looked grim. "You all tell me I'm your brother even if we aren't blood. This is where I live and you say the land is as much mine as yours since I grew up with you. I have a say, right? Where did you get the money? Please tell me you didn't do something crazy, like sell your championship buckles."

A groan came from Ryder. "Not your buckles, bro. Tell me who you sold them to and we'll buy every damn one back."

"Fuck." Navarro didn't want to tell them. "It goes no farther, okay? It's between the three of us."

Both men nodded and Navarro relaxed. "Trina had the money and she wrote me a check for twenty grand. She's the one who made it possible to save the ranch."

"Nice girlfriend." Ryder whistled. "We'll pay your woman back. What happened to Red anyway? You upgraded, by the way. I hated her. She was bitchy and whiney."

Adam snorted. "You have no idea what kind of bitch she was. When she realized the ranch was going to be lost she dumped Nav faster than you could say broke."

"I'm sorry." Ryder frowned at Navarro. "You liked her a lot."

"I liked fucking her." He shrugged. "She was okay but I wasn't in love. It pissed me off more than anything that at the first sign of trouble, she was leaving dust trails on her way out of here."

"Who is this Trina? I don't remember her from town."

"Her name is Trina Matthews and she bought the Vern's farmhouse. She's from California." Navarro hesitated. "She's a widow whose husband was accidentally killed in some job-related accident last year. Don't bring it up though because it's still painful for her. She came here to start a new life away from reminders of the life she had with him."

"Kids?" Adam sipped coffee from his mug.

"Her husband couldn't have them and he didn't want to adopt. She married him despite it."

Ryder's body tensed as he stared at his brother. "Really?"

Navarro met Ryder's eyes. "Yeah and yes I told her I couldn't get her pregnant. She didn't bat an eyelash. She is a good person."

"I like her already." Ryder smiled.

"So do I." Navarro turned his attention toward the barn. "Trina's a great cook who makes omelets that melt in your damn mouth. She bakes and she made me something. I'm hungry so let's see what she made."

Navarro retrieved the tub and placed it on the truck bed next to Adam. "It's heavy. She said she overdid it but I thought she was kidding. She used to bake shit and send it to work with her husband for his friends." He popped the lid and stared. "I mentioned I'd like to see how she could bake yesterday morning so she was nice enough to send this so I could sample her cooking." A grin split his lips. "It looks like she sent me everything to try."

"Shit," Ryder chuckled, diving a hand in. "Cookies. A cake. Brownies. Hot damn! Is that banana bread?" He sniffed and groaned, his gaze lifting to Navarro. "How interested in her are you? I might give you a run for this woman if this tastes as good as it smells."

Adam grabbed a bag of chocolate chip cookies and popped one into his mouth, chewing, and grinned at Navarro. "Forget Ryder. Worry about me. I always believed Mama when she said the way to a man's heart was through his stomach and I'm falling in love."

Navarro grinned, tasting the best damn brownie he'd ever had in his life. "Hands off, guys. She's all mine."

* * * * *

At home Trina showered and heard the phone ring as she dried off. It hardly ever rang so she was hopeful it was Navarro and ran for the phone. "Hello?"

"Hi, Trina."

Pain lanced through her at the sound of the voice on the other end of the phone. "Paul. Hi."

"I was wondering how you are doing."

Biting her lip, Trina gripped the phone hard. "I'm getting along. How are you? How are your parents doing?"

"Fine. We're good. It's Mom and Dad's anniversary on Sunday and I was hoping you'd fly back here to come to their party. It would mean a lot to them if you showed up since you meant so much to Ted."

She sat on her bed, not caring that her towel was wet, or that she was getting the bedspread damp. "I...its short notice. It's already Friday."

"You have the money." Anger tightened Paul's voice. "My brother made sure you were well off and could afford to make last-minute trips."

Ted's family was angry that Ted hadn't left them any money. The insurance policy had been put in her name, everything had been, and Paul, Ted's brother, had been especially angry. He and Ted were ten months apart and resembled each other as though they were twins. Just seeing Paul was really painful, as if she were looking at Ted—until Paul opened his mouth. They looked very similar, sounded alike, but Paul was an asshole while Ted had been a sweetheart.

"You haven't gone through all that money, have you?" He spat the words.

"Of course not."

"I know you have to be shit with money since Ted had to treat you like you were a kid rather than a woman. He took care of everything. He—"

"Don't." She cut him off.

"He deserved better. You were always wrong for him."

Pain and anger hit her. "He was happy. I quit my job because he asked me to and we lived that way because he wanted that kind of life with me. Don't blame me if you didn't understand our lifestyle. He wanted to take care of everything and he wanted me at home to take care of him and I did that. I was the best housewife I could be. I put aside all of my dreams and ignored what I wanted because I loved him, Paul. Don't you dare accuse me of being wrong for him when I gave up everything to make him happy."

A snort sounded over the phone. "He knew you couldn't do anything so he kept you at home. You're one of those pathetic women who—"

The phone made a loud sound when it slammed into the cradle. Trina stared at the receiver, stunned that she'd hung up on him, having never done that to Ted's brother before, no matter how mean he got. He was bitter about Ted's death and resentful that Ted had left everything to Trina. She was pretty sure he was even bitter that Ted's marriage had lasted while Paul had gone through four wives, proving what a big jerk he was.

The phone rang. She hesitated. It rang again. She jerked it up. "I won't let you talk to me that way, Paul. Do you understand me? I won't be berated and put down. Do you get that? Don't call here and start tearing into me, damn it. I lived to make Ted happy and it cost me plenty sometimes but I did it because I loved him that much." She took a deep breath.

"Babe?" Navarro's voice was soft. "This isn't Paul. Are you all right? You sound pissed."

She closed her eyes. "I'm sorry. I just hung up on him and the phone rang. I thought you were him calling me back."

"Who is this jerk?"

"Ted's younger brother."

Navarro hesitated. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. I'm sorry. Hi." Trina tried to shake off her anger.

"Are you sure you're all right?"

She hesitated. "Ted's brother is upset that Ted left everything to me. I was just his wife. The family thinks no matter how many years we were married that they should have gotten everything. Paul is particularly upset and he calls sometimes just to rile me, I swear. I'm really fine. I just didn't expect his call or his verbal attack." She took another deep breath, relaxing. "So to what do I owe the pleasure of your call?"

He chuckled. "I loved the brownies the best. I had to fight Adam and Ryder for one of the loaves of banana bread. Thanks, babe. You can bake for me anytime."

"I'm glad. I know I overdid it."

"We ate it all."

A sudden burst of laughter came from her as she lay back on her bed, Paul totally forgotten. "No way. I made enough to feed ten guys."

"We made breakfast out of the whole thing." He laughed. "That's why I'm calling. You offered to bring something to dinner so can you make us up something for dessert? I was going to offer ice cream but after tasting what you take out of an oven it just pales in comparison. Adam and Ryder are eating with us but then they are going to the bar tonight so we'll be alone."

"Okay. Any suggestions?"

"Surprise me." He lowered his voice. "I'm looking forward to the alone time with you the most."

"Me too." Hearing his words made Trina smile as warmth spread throughout her body.

"Thanks for the backrub last night. Thanks for everything."

"I had a good time."

"Sure you did. Sleeping in a barn on the uncomfortable dirt floor with me had to be a hell of a lot of fun."

"I did have a good time." She sat up. "And I didn't sleep on a dirt floor. I slept on you and you're damn comfortable."

He chuckled. "Always happy to be there for you, babe. I'll see you at six."

"Okay."

"And, babe?"

"Yeah?"

"Don't let that jerk get to you, okay?"

"I won't. See you then." She hung up, grinning.

Chapter Seven

"You're an excellent cook." Trina smiled across the table at Navarro.

"Now," Adam laughed. "When he was sixteen he invited a girl over and decided to impress her with his grilling techniques. He damn near burned the back porch down. We had to hose off him...and his date."

"Not the kind of smoking hot date he had in mind," Ryder laughed.

Navarro chuckled. "I learned to never grill that damn close to the house again."

Trina turned her attention on Adam. "So I take it you are a lifetime friend?"

"Not lifetime but damn close. My mom worked for their dad after Ryder and River were born. We came to the ranch when I was four and I grew up here with them after that. My mom worked here right up until she died last year."

Ryder chuckled. "He's one of us and so is his brother Trip. We made them blood brothers when we were just kids. He about fainted when he realized real blood was involved."

"Cool. So do you have a place around here?" Trina couldn't help but grin.

Adam hesitated. "I live on the ranch."

Navarro met her gaze as she looked at him. "Adam put a nice mobile home on the land. He didn't want to live with all of us in the house."

"Want wouldn't exactly be my choice of word to use," Adam chuckled, pointing at Ryder. "He kept stealing all the women I brought home. Between him, River, and Dusty, I couldn't keep one for long so I moved out so I could have the same woman in my bed more than a week at a time."

Trina grinned as her attention focused on Navarro. "What about you? Is he being polite and not mentioning your name? Did you try to swipe his girlfriends too?"

"No." Navarro didn't smile. "I was engaged to Debbie at the time and then we got married."

Debbie. So that is the ex-wife's name. She nodded and noticed the laughter had died when Navarro spoke. A glance at the other men revealed their grim expressions as they stared at Navarro. He met their looks and then looked at Trina.

"She was a bitch. She fooled me completely, but I didn't want to see it. I was young and believed I was in love. For some reason she thought I owned the entire ranch and was getting someone with a hell of a lot more money than I ever had. When she realized I wasn't just modest but actually didn't have much money she was spiteful." His mouth twisted into a grim line. "She tried to fuck every one of my brothers and then she went after my friends."

Ryder took a sip of his beer. "We wouldn't touch her."

"Damn straight," Adam nodded. "Brothers don't do that shit to brothers."

"My friends weren't so saintly." Navarro sighed. "I met her when I was on the rodeo circuit so I should have known better. She was kind of wild but she was fun. I talked about the ranch and how I wanted to retire from the circuit to go home. Then I got hurt so while I was recovering she got me to marry her and I brought her home when I was well enough. It all fell apart hard."

"I'm sorry." Trina meant it. "You got hurt on the rodeo circuit?"

A surprised look was on Adam's face. "She hasn't seen the scar?"

Ryder snickered. "Sorry, man. Maybe you can show her soon."

Trina frowned. "I saw some scars on you but..."

Navarro shot Adam and Ryder a dirty look. "I got gored in the nuts by a bull. Unless you lift them up and look on the backside near my ass you won't see the scar."

Trina nodded, understanding now what was so amusing to Adam and Ryder. "I missed that. I was too impressed with the front view to pay attention to anything else."

Adam choked on his beer. Ryder laughed, pounding him hard on the back. Navarro chuckled.

"I'll show you soon. That's why I can't have kids. Everything works but that part of me. At first I was terrified I'd never be able to have sex again so I know I should count myself lucky that being sterile was the worst of it."

"I'm sorry. Everything does work though, and pretty damn great too." She winked at him.

A grin curved Navarro's lips. "We'll test out the equipment after they leave." He glanced at both men with a telling look. "Hopefully that will be soon."

"Not until we get some of that cake your woman brought," Ryder said, chuckling as he grinned at Trina. "I'm in love with your banana bread. If you ever dump Nav, when you realize he's not someone you want to spend an eternity with, I want you to marry me."

Trina was surprised that they thought she was Navarro's girlfriend and it was obvious they believed she was more to him than just a woman he was having sex with. After finding them naked and curled up together in the barn, she knew both men realized they were having sex but they were taking it as more. It told her that Navarro obviously hadn't shared the facts with them on why she was really there. Her gaze flew to his but he just winked at her, smiling.

"She's too bright to dump me for you, Ryder. You're in a band and on the road way too much."

"You haven't heard me play or sing yet." He waggled his eyebrows at Trina.

She laughed. "You could try but I'm a one-guy type of girl. You'd just be wasting your time." She changed the subject. "I hope you eat chocolate since I brought a Death By Chocolate Cake with me. It's to die for."

The men laughed. When they finished dinner she sliced up the cake, giving them each a huge piece of it and herself a small slice. If she looked at that cake too hard her thighs started to swell and her jeans got tight. She sat down to watch the men test her cake. Navarro groaned, reaching for her hand across the table and gave it a squeeze before he released her.

"Heaven."

"That's why it's called a "death" cake. It kills your diet too." Trina stood after she ate. "I'll do the dishes so you can talk to them."

Standing quickly, Navarro grabbed her hands. "No you don't. I cooked and you brought dessert so Adam and Ryder are doing the dishes before they leave for the bar." He tugged her toward the living room. "'Night, boys. See you in the morning. Don't forget to dry the dishes after you wash them."

Navarro locked the bedroom door and leaned against it, grinning at her. "Hi. We're alone finally."

"Hi."

"I want you so bad. Take it all off."

She stripped. Her heart raced with excitement, and the look in Navarro's eyes turned her on. He looked at her the way he'd looked at her chocolate cake, as if she were something he couldn't wait to put against his lips. He kicked off his boots.

"How are Willow and her baby?"

"They are perfect and healthy as horses." He chuckled. "I don't want to talk about them. I want to talk about what to do together tonight. Are you ready to try something new?"

"I'm ready to do anything with you," she said honestly.

She was already naked as Navarro stripped naked. She openly stared at his body, loving to look at every hard angle of his muscular frame. He closed the distance between them to grip her hips the second he was totally nude. He lifted her up his body, yanking her against his chest, and her arms wound around his neck. His mouth took possession of hers before she could say a word. She kissed him back. The passion that he hit her with made her knees turn to jelly. It was a good thing they were wrapped around his waist.

He walked until her back hit the bed as he took them both flat. He released her to brace his arm to hold his weight from crushing her. Navarro grinned as he tore his mouth away and their gazes locked.

"I'm going to lift up and I want you on your hands and knees under me."

She nodded, releasing her hold on him. When he pushed up from her body she turned on the bed slowly, keeping under him since his arms caged her in on each side where he braced his weight. She moved to her hands and knees. Navarro lifted a hand to push her hair over her other shoulder out of the way before he went for her revealed skin with his mouth.

It was a magnificent feeling as his lips, tongue, and teeth raked her, his mouth trailed upward to her neck and she moved her head to the side to give him more access to her sensitive skin. His hand wrapped around her waist and brushed down her stomach straight to her mound. His fingers found her clit to rub her, discovering by touch that she was wet so his finger slid easily against her swelling nub. A soft moan tore from her parted lips.

"I want you. No playing tonight, babe."

She nodded. "Yes."

He shifted, pressing against her back, as he released her clit. Navarro reached further behind her and gripped his cock, guiding his erection to her pussy. He entered her with one strong push of his hips against her ass. It made Trina gasp and then groan at the way he drove right into her without pause. His now-free hand braced on the bed next to her to keep him steady as he pounded into her from behind. The fingers of the hand against her mound pressed on her clit, furiously strumming the sensitive bundle of nerves. Trina lowered her head and moaned loudly into the mattress and her fingers clawed the bedding.

The room was filled with their heavy breathing, Trina's loud moans, and a slapping sound as Navarro's hips slammed against her ass. Navarro changed positions as he drove into her and that did it for Trina—the new sensation was too much, too intense. She gasped, her body tensed, and she screamed his name as the climax gripped her. Navarro responded, released her clit, gripped her hips with both hands as he rose upright, and pounded into her even harder. He cried out her name seconds later as his strong hips jerked against her ass while he emptied his release into her.

When Navarro collapsed onto his side, he took Trina with him, both of them breathing heavily. Trina found the strength to smile, amused that Navarro hadn't broken contact anywhere on their bodies when he'd taken them both down. She was still impaled on his cock. He inched closer so his chest and her back were tightly pressed together and he moved one of his thighs, draping it over hers to hold her in place.

"You're staying tonight, right?"

She looked at him over her shoulder and forced her eyes open to meet his beautiful gaze. "If you want me to. It's not like anyone is waiting for me at home." She smiled to soften the words.

He smiled back. "Good. I'm not done with you yet and by the time I'm ready to sleep I am hoping you're too tired to move."

"What else do you want to do to me?"

He started to move inside her, causing her to moan in ecstasy. He had her pinned on her side so she couldn't move her legs with his thrown over hers and his other leg bracing them where they were. She couldn't believe he was still hard but the proof was moving inside her and it was an incredible sensation. He stopped a few minutes later and Trina wanted to cry out for him to continue. She was close to coming again.

He lifted his leg off her. "Get back on your hands and knees for me and spread your thighs wide apart." He released her.

She moved to her hands and knees and parted her thighs, bending her head to watch Navarro get up on his knees. She really enjoyed doggy style with him. When he played with her clit while he fucked her it really got her off. The fact that he made her climax still amazed her. *He knows what a clit is and isn't afraid to play with one.* She grinned as she thought that.

"What?" He smiled.

"I was just thinking about how you know how to get me off."

She watched him reach for the drawer next to his bed and remove a few things she couldn't see, keeping them behind his back. He moved behind her again, sitting on his knees and then inched forward, positioning himself. She tilted her head to watch what he was doing as he moved closer.

"You said you've never tried anal sex, right?"

Her heart almost stopped. She swallowed hard before shaking her head. "You're kind of big."

He laughed. "Will you trust me?"

Looking into his eyes made the decision for her. "Yes."

His lips curved into a naughty grin. "You'll get off on it."

"I think I'm about to find out, aren't I?"

He nodded as he removed what was behind his back. "I went to town today and bought a few things."

He lifted a vibrator, a black one bigger than the tiny one she had at home but it wasn't huge—about six inches long and not too thick but not real thin either. He lifted a condom wrapper and then a small tube of lube to show her what he had. Trina's heart sped up.

"I'm going to talk you through this. You'll enjoy it or we'll stop." Navarro gave her an intense look. "Do you still trust me?"

"I do." She meant it. She'd let him tie her up and she'd been helpless then.

Reaching for the condom first, he tore it open with his teeth and put it on his cock. He met her curious look with a smile. "This will make me a little smaller. These damn things are tight and as much as I'd love to feel you without it the first time, this is going to help."

"Okay."

He chuckled as he opened the lube. She watched him coat the condom from tip to base very generously. He left the lube open when he dropped it on the bed. His gaze met hers as he picked up the vibrator but didn't coat it. He turned it on and she could tell by the sound it was on the highest setting.

"This is going inside your pussy nice and slow and it's going to feel great for both of us. I'll feel it too when I'm inside your ass, babe."

She was still nervous but she was turned-on too. She nodded. "Okay."

Amusement lit his features. "You look unsure. I want you to feel pleasure, because if you like this, you'll let me do it again."

She laughed at that, relaxing completely. "That's totally logical." She wiggled her ass at him. "Let's do this."

"Before we start, I want you to know that when I first enter you, it is going to hurt a little. I'm going to go slow or it would really hurt. You need to adjust to me but don't tense up. Once I'm in it will feel good, okay? It's just entering the first time that burns a bit."

She nodded and then grinned. "Do you know this from personal experience?"

He laughed. "Not from your end." He swatted her ass lightly. "I'm a giver, not a taker."

As he lifted the vibrator, Trina turned her head away and tried to remain relaxed. He didn't just push it inside her but teased her clit first, coaxing moans from her. It was a strong vibrator that rubbed against her, making her swell with need. He slid it toward her pussy and teased her by pushing it against her entrance and then slid it back to her clit and rubbed her with the vibrator again. If he kept it up she'd come. There was something too erotic about being spread wide open with his thighs between hers and being at his mercy. It excited her. He slid the vibrator back and slowly pushed it deep inside her pussy. She moaned as it filled her, vibrating hard, and made her aware of every inch pressed deep in her body.

The bed moved as Navarro did. He slid his hand around her hip to reach her clit and rubbed slow circles around the nub with his fingertip. With the vibrator inside her she really wanted to come. He stopped doing circles and lightly tapped her clit with his fingertip. Something rubbed against her ass but she didn't tense. The sensation was actually good as Navarro rubbed his well-lubed, condom-covered cock against her. She moaned.

"Don't tense up on me, babe." His voice was husky.

She nodded to let him know she heard what he said. It was hard to try to stay relaxed with the vibrator inside her and his finger tapping lightly on her clit, unable to stop her inner vaginal muscles from tensing in need of climax. She experienced pressure from his cock but at the same moment Navarro's finger pressed against her clit hard. He rubbed his finger up and down against her throbbing bud as he pressed slowly into her ass.

She breathed through pain and pressure, able to take it since it wasn't overbearing. She made a sound, but it wasn't pain. Navarro froze and then rubbed her clit again while he pushed into her ass more slowly. Trina didn't tense up or try to pull away even though she could have as he sank deeper into her. The sensation was nearly painful pressure but then his hips were against her ass.

"Fuck," he groaned. "I'm in and you're so damn unbelievably tight. How are you doing, babe?"

"I want to come," she whispered.

"Am I hurting you?"

She shook her head. "I feel so damn full and stretched."

He groaned. "We're going to go easy at first. Here we go. When I start to move you're going to feel the vibrator move. I'm against it so when I drive into you it's going to push it into you more and your muscles are going to work to push it out. Ready?" He adjusted his thigh so it pressed against her pussy.

She nodded as Navarro started to move. The sensations were overwhelming and she couldn't tell if it was pain or pleasure as he moved slowly and then started to increase the pace. His finger teased her clit but he made damn sure she didn't come, actually eased off the pressure by just tapping her instead of rubbing when she neared climax. He moved faster and the sensation of him in her ass, the vibrator inside her, and his finger on her clit was too much for her mind to try to focus on so she didn't. She just let all the pleasure and sensations flow through her.

"Fuck, babe," he groaned. "Ready? Come for me." He pressed against her clit, strumming it frantically as he fucked her hard and deep.

Trina screamed when she climaxed and her body almost seized. It was too powerful, too intense, too blinding for her to hold back how devastating it was as pleasure tore through her. Behind her, she heard Navarro shout out as he came. Trina's arms gave way and she would have totally collapsed if Navarro wasn't gripping her to hold her ass in the air. She shook and moaned as her body jerked and bucked and her muscles twitched over and over from how hard she'd come.

She almost cried out again and had to bite her lip when Navarro eased gently and slowly out of her ass and then withdrew the vibrator. When he released his hold on her hips she dropped on the bed sideways, curling into a ball. The vibrator was turned off and Navarro disposed of the condom when he moved away from the bed. She lay there panting with her eyes closed and still twitched from the aftermath of what he'd done to her.

The bed moved and a second later Navarro's body curled around her back. "Babe?"

"Um."

"Did I hurt you? Are you okay?"

She forced her eyes open and turned her head to see that Navarro looked worried. She smiled at him. "I can't move. That was...way too intense."

Relief was evident on his features as he pulled her tighter into his arms, holding her. "It was fucking amazing on this end. Damn."

She rubbed her face on his arm he had shifted under her to pillow her head. "I never thought I'd like that but I did. It was just so intense. I couldn't tell pleasure from pain and then I was coming so hard it almost hurt."

He kissed her shoulder again. "Tell me about it. You're tight to begin with but your virgin ass was almost painful." He nipped her shoulder lightly with his teeth. "So do you ever think you'll let me do that to you again?"

"Yes."

"One of us has to get up and turn that damn light off."

"You killed me. I'm not moving."

Navarro laughed. "Ah. So that's how it is. I do the work and then I get to turn off the light?"

"Uh-huh." She laughed. "You're the big, strong, tough guy who used to play with bulls. I think you can take on a light."

He chuckled. "Can you sleep with it on? I don't want to move either. I'm exactly where I want to be. I'll turn it off later."

She closed her eyes. "What light?"

A light kiss brushed Trina's neck before Navarro dropped his head on the pillow and his body went lax while he held her closely to him. Trina was exhausted. She knew she was going to be asleep in less than a minute, too wiped out after what Navarro had done to her. Her last thought before she passed out was how addicted she was getting to him. *What will I do when he's gone?*

Chapter Eight

Ryder was grim when his brother came in the front door on Sunday night. Navarro glanced at his brother when he dropped his coat on the hook inside the door. He just wanted to get clean as he looked at the clock, seeing it was just past seven. He needed to shower fast and to eat before Trina showed up. She'd left Saturday morning and told him she'd be back Sunday night at eight if he still wanted to keep to the Sunday through Thursday schedule they'd set up.

"We need to talk." Ryder moved into his path.

"Later. Trina is coming soon and I have to get ready."

"No. She's not." Ryder frowned at Navarro. "She called and left a message saying she had to go out of town, something about her in-laws, and she'd fly back in the morning. She said she'd call you tomorrow and be here tomorrow night at eight unless you left her a message cancelling."

Disappointment hit Navarro. Last night he'd missed having Trina in his bed and he'd spent the day thinking up what to do to her. He'd come up with some ideas he couldn't wait to try. He sighed and reached down, removing his muddy boots.

"I went in the safe."

Navarro tensed and his head shot up. "Why?"

"I found your contract with Trina Matthews." Ryder leaned against the wall. "What the hell were you thinking? What the hell was she thinking? She saved the ranch so you could sell yourself to her? Did I get that right? Fuck, Nav. What the hell?"

"You had no right going in the damn safe." Navarro glared at his brother. "Did you tell Adam?"

"Do you see him standing here next to me asking you if you've lost your damn mind? I thought she was your girlfriend, not the woman who pays my brother to fuck her."

Navarro had Ryder pinned to the wall in a heartbeat. "Don't put it that way."

Ryder stared eye to eye with his brother. "That's the way it is. She gave you money and for eight weeks you fuck her five nights a week. Your contract was pretty damn clear, bro. What the hell were you thinking?"

"Don't repeat what you found out and don't ever say a word to her about it."

"I want an explanation. Is this your new career? Banging lonely widows for money? Jesus, Nav. You're a man whore."

"I was losing the ranch and she was lonely. We both needed each other. I..." He released Ryder and stepped back, getting a handle on his anger. "She came to me with

the idea. I was shocked at first by her proposition and I thought she was kidding. She doesn't have to pay me to be with her because I like her a lot. We made an agreement and it wasn't a difficult one to make. I..." Navarro sighed. "I plan to pay her back every penny as I can afford it. I told her that but she doesn't want the money. I will pay her though because I know how wrong that contract is."

Ryder pushed away from the wall to study his brother closely. "I saw on Friday how much you really like her. Hell, we heard you that night. We were still here when..." He pointed to the ceiling. "Your bedroom is right over the damn kitchen. It sounded way more serious than like. I've heard you with a lot of women over the years but that sounded over the top. What in the hell were you doing to her? I almost wanted to go up there and make sure you were both still alive when the screaming and the shouting stopped."

Frowning, Navarro glared at his brother. "Forget you read that contract and stay out of what's between Trina and me."

"I'm worried about you."

"Don't be."

"Then convince me I shouldn't worry, Nav. You're the levelheaded one but you are getting paid twenty grand to fuck a woman. What kind of woman does that? I saw the way you looked at her and I don't want you getting hurt, damn it. It will be like Debbie all over again. You were so damn bitter for years after that bitch left. She was all about money, what she could get, and she didn't give a shit about you. Nice women don't pay guys to bang them. Trina is using you and I won't see you hurt."

"Trina is nothing like Debbie. You are pegging her totally wrong."

"Then tell me how she really is."

Navarro stared at his brother and knew Ryder was sincerely worried but he had no reason to be...this time. "Her husband was killed last year. She loved him but he was shit in bed, all right? She was attracted to me, heard about Tammy dumping my ass as soon as Dusty got the ranch in a bind, so she thought we could help each other out. She's sweet, Ryder. She's a damn good person. She was bright red as she stammered all over herself telling me what she wanted to do for this exchange between us. She's damn near virginal, she's that innocent, and I'd know that because I'm bedding her. She's not some cold bitch who goes around paying guys to climb into bed with her. She was a housewife to a man for sixteen years and she's just lonely. That's why she came to me."

"So you're her crutch until she gets her life back on track? Just the guy she uses to get over her dead husband? She's good looking and you know damn well that men are going to be all over her when she decides not to be lonely anymore. I saw the way you look at her and I heard you with her in your room. It sounds like you have it bad."

Navarro frowned. "I don't know what's going to happen in seven weeks when our contract is up and she doesn't either."

"What do you want to happen?"

"I don't know. We've only been together for a week."

Ryder shook his head. "I saw the way you looked at her and I saw you last night when you came home. You asked me twice if she called. Admit she's under your skin. You should have seen the kicked-puppy-dog look on your face when I told you she wasn't coming tonight. You're bummed, aren't you?"

"Mind your own business. I'm a grown man."

"You're my brother and I'm worried about you. I think you're getting way too attached to her and you're going to get hurt in the end when the nice white lady kicks your Indian ass to the curb when your job is done. When she's ready to settle down it will be with a guy from her own world."

"It's never been a race issue," Navarro almost growled. "That's your issue, not mine. Trina couldn't care less that I'm part Apache. You're the one who had an issue with a woman obsessed with the color of your skin."

"You're right." Ryder sighed. "And you're not part Apache. You're half. If it wasn't for your eyes, nobody would know you were even white, bro. If it isn't a race issue with her then it will be because you're a poor rancher. She's obviously got money to be able to toss away twenty grand for sex. How much money does she have?"

"I don't care and I never asked."

Ryder reached out to grip Navarro's shoulder. "I saw the way you look at her and I know you. When Adam bumped into your woman to take the cake from her when she came in the door, I thought you were going to deck his ass. I saw jealousy flash there, showing me how possessive of her you are. She's not yours though, is she? She's a job. You are going to get burned."

"Mind your own business." Navarro shrugged off his brother's hand. "I'm going to shower. If you want to be so damn helpful to me then why don't you make me a few sandwiches? I missed lunch." He walked toward the stairs.

Ryder hesitated, watching his brother carefully. "Let me handle her from now on."

Navarro had walked a good six feet away when his brother spoke. He froze a second and then spun back around. His eyes narrowed as he glared at Ryder.

"What did you say?"

"She's attracted to you and we're about the same in looks and body. She paid for sex for seven more weeks and I won't fall in love with her. You are falling for her. Let me finish the damn contract. I'm better in bed than you are because I've had a hell of a lot more experience." He smirked. "I'll be the Raine who fills that contract with Trina. Tomorrow night you need to go into town and I'll meet her here instead."

Navarro marched to his brother and stopped in front of him. "If you try to lay a finger on Trina, I'll break it. Got it? Try playing your damn guitar in a cast and see how well you sing missing a few of your damn teeth."

"That's what I'm talking about, Nav. She's a job, not your damn girlfriend. She's paying for sex so she isn't lonely, right? You're too involved with her."

Snorting, Navarro glared at his brother. "You just want to fuck her."

"Yeah, I do. I won't deny it would be great to screw her ten ways to Sunday to make her happy. I won't fall in love though. In seven weeks, when she walks away, it will just be a fond memory for me of a woman who was great to screw. I assume she's great from the sounds you were making since I've never heard you shout like that before."

Navarro fought his anger. "If you touch her I'll hurt you. Got it? Worry about yourself and don't worry about me getting hurt. Mind your own ass."

"Damn it, Nav." Frustration rolled through Ryder. "I don't want you messed up again."

"You heard me," Navarro gritted out softly. "If you touch her, if you even try to touch her, if you bring up that damn contract to her, I'm going to kick your ass all the way back to wherever the hell you came from this time and it's going to hurt you severely."

Ryder sighed as he watched his brother storm up the stairs, shaking his head. His brother had it bad for the little blonde. She wasn't even Nav's type. His brother had damn near self destructed over a woman once and he didn't want to watch it happen again. Trina Matthews was bad news and he knew that, even if his older brother was too blind to see it.

* * * * *

Trina mentally compared herself to a teddy bear that had gone through a washing machine and then the dryer cycle. Having spent the day with Ted's family and friends had been a living hell for her. His parents had wanted to talk nonstop about Ted as if he were still alive and it had been painful. Paul had been an asshole and had made snide comments about money, had tried to nose his way into her life, and had even asked her a thousand questions about her new home.

Paul's cousins and long-time friends had treated her in an array of ways. Some of them had been kind but mostly they'd treated her as though she were an outsider and one they didn't particularly want to be around. She had a feeling Paul was behind that. She'd gone to the party though to make Ted's parents happy. She really shouldn't have gone, knowing now it had been a mistake.

When she'd landed at the airport, she discovered her SUV had a flat front tire and it had taken a tow truck driver almost an hour to reach her. She'd been informed someone had pulled a prank and had just let the air out of the tire. At least ten cars had been targeted besides hers so the guy had towed her SUV to a local gas station, filled the tire for her, and she'd grabbed gas station hot dogs for dinner. She was exhausted as she pulled into her driveway after midnight.

A light on upstairs in her bedroom window drew her attention. Trina was certain she'd turned off all the lights before she left but figured that she must have forgotten that one in her rush to get to the airport. She'd made last minute flight plans after Ted's

mother had called her to beg her to fly back to California for the party on Saturday. She hadn't had the courage to say no so she'd packed and taken the first flight there.

She climbed out of her SUV and walked to the back to get her stuff, glad she'd packed light for her quick trip. She gripped her overnight bag and her small suitcase, stumbling a little on the walk to her front door, and realized she was dead on her feet, ready to just fall into bed. She doubted she'd even get undressed first. She unlocked the door, thinking maybe she'd sleep in her shoes. She locked the door behind her, dropped everything on the floor, and looked at the couch, tempted to sleep there.

"No," she groaned aloud. She headed for the stairs. She stumbled into her room, fixed her eyes on the bed, and just yanked down her jeans as she kicked her shoes away. She reached up the back of her shirt, unfastened her bra, and removed it. Her fingers ran through her hair, tearing out the pins and freeing the long strands. She rubbed at her scalp that hurt from having it up for too long. She started to unbutton her shirt when someone cleared their throat.

Trina cried out in startled fear, spun around toward the source of the sound, and lost her balance. Her ass hit the edge of her bed as she stared at Ryder Raine sitting in the rocking chair in the corner of the room by her closet. She hadn't seen him when she'd walked in, the open door blocking her view. She grabbed her pounding chest with one hand and then realized she was in a pair of undies and a half-unbuttoned shirt as his gaze raked down her front.

She grabbed at the comforter and dragged it over her lap and up to her chest where she clutched it in place, just staring at him in mute shock. *What the hell is he doing in my bedroom? How did he get in the house? Why the hell is he here?*

"Sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you."

"Frighten me?" She found her voice. "You scared the shit out of me. I could have had a heart attack!" She took a deep breath. "What are you doing here?" A horrible thought struck her. "Is Navarro okay? Has something happened to him?"

Dark brown eyes narrowed. "He's fine, in bed sound asleep."

Relief swept through her. "Good." She stared at his brother. "What are you doing here? How did you get in?"

"I knew the Verns and I dated their daughter about ten years ago. There's a lock that doesn't work well on the mud porch. If it gets wiggled the lock opens." He grinned, giving her a wink. "I used to sneak in."

"Oh." She frowned and pulled the comforter more firmly around her body. "What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to talk to you."

She frowned at him. "About what? It's after midnight. I...I'm confused. I'm totally lost on why you'd come here to talk to me and I'm really uncomfortable that you let yourself into my house."

Ryder stretched his legs outward, obviously getting more comfortable in the chair as he crossed his ankles. "I went into the safe today. Nav was closemouthed about what kind of shit Dusty pulled and how deep into shit Nav had to go to get Dusty out this time. I thought Nav had taken out a loan and I wanted to see where he'd gotten the money so I could make payments to help him out. Imagine my shock when I found that contract."

The blood drained from Trina's face, knowing that Ryder knew the truth. Embarrassment flashed through her entire body in a wave of heat. She let her gaze drop to the floor and tried to swallow the lump that formed in her throat before she forced her gaze back to his. He was calmly watching her and she couldn't read his expression.

"Okay. So why are you here? Are you going to tell anyone about it?"

He shook his head. "Tell people my brother is a paid man whore? Fuck no."

Trina winced. "It's not like that. Don't say that about him."

"That's what he said."

"You talked to him about this?" Her cheeks burned more. She wondered how Navarro handled his brother confronting him and if it had upset him.

"I did. We had a discussion." Ryder's eyelids narrowed. "That's why I'm here. You and I are going to come to a new agreement and write a new contract."

Shock hit Trina. "Excuse me?"

"Nav told me you lost your husband and you're lonely. I'm real sorry for your loss." His attention drifted around the room. "I saw the new furniture and you put some bucks into this place. It looks great, by the way. I saw what you drive. I took a peek at your clothes and you should get a damn safe to keep that jewelry in. You've got money." He frowned at her. "I also peeked in the photo albums you have downstairs. You've been to Europe and all over the place. You are used to the good life so I can't figure out what you're doing in our little piece of the world, but it's your life."

"You had no right to—"

He cut her off. "Didn't I? You're blackmailing my brother into fucking you, lady. You saved our ranch by using your money to turn my brother into a whore for you."

She was too shocked to speak but then she found her voice. "I offered to just loan him the money. He didn't have to..." She slammed her mouth closed.

"Fuck you?"

She nodded miserably. "I offered to loan him the money with no strings."

"He's got pride. We learned nothing comes in life for free and there's always a price. Navarro is a good man and he's always been the responsible one. Our brother Drake couldn't wait to get the hell out of here when he took off to law school and he lives in Dallas to avoid us. Dusty was always the fuck-up of the family, one party to the next, and he was the closest to Dad because they both loved to tear it up with booze and whores."

"Nav hit the rodeo circuit when he was just seventeen. Ever see his championship belts? He was that damn good. He sent money home to the ranch and hell, kept it floating because by then Dad was a full-blown alcoholic. Dusty was well on his way and Nav paid for that law school for Drake. Then Nav paid for me and River to pursue our dreams. River wanted a life like Nav and I love music. Nav floated us all on cash, barely surviving himself, but that's how he is. He took care of us, including sending Adam and Trip to college because they are family too. When Nav got busted up he came here and then Dad was killed. Nav held this family together even though he was going through pure hell with his wife, his recovery, and Dad's death."

Trina listened, nodding, and feeling her heart ache for Navarro and all he'd gone through that she hadn't known about. The gossips in town hadn't told her much of the Raine history.

"Now Dusty almost lost the ranch and Nav had to save us again. If we lost the ranch...well, shit. It's our home. We all know it's always here for us, that Nav is here for us, and that Adam is here for us now that he's back. Nav's a good man and he'd do anything to save our home. You put him in a position where he couldn't say no and he's not the type of man to make that kind of contract with you. Do you understand? It's going to tear him up."

"Okay." Pain lanced through Trina's heart.

"Okay what? You don't care what it does to his pride to be forced to fuck a woman for money or okay you get that he can't do this anymore? You aren't his type. You're too old, you're not tall enough, and he liked the redhead way too much. You're as far from his type as it gets, Trina. If it wasn't for the money, I can promise you, he wouldn't touch you."

Tears filled her eyes, though she knew he was being purposely mean. He was hitting his mark if his intention was to insult her.

"Tell him it's over and I won't bother him again. He doesn't owe me anything any longer. I'll send a paper just as we agreed that states it was just a loan and he made all the payments so the debt is totally paid off." Trina's voice broke.

"You think he'd let that sit? He's honorable to a fault and you paid for a service." Ryder stood. "I'm not saying you should get screwed out of your money. You just signed up with the wrong brother. I don't have his damn morals so here's the deal. I'll fuck you for the next seven weeks. I'm better at it than Nav is anyway." He smiled. "And if you're into kinky shit or want to try whatever, I'm there. I even have a buddy who loves to tag team that I can call in if you've got threesome fantasies."

Horror flooded Trina as she shook her head frantically. "No."

"No to threesomes? That's fine." He reached for the front of his shirt. "We might as well get started tonight. I want to fuck you and you're totally my type, Trina. Nav has a thing for tall women with bright hair but me? I am attracted to short blondes and have a weakness for them."

"Don't." Fear gripped her. "I don't want you. Please just leave. The contract is over. Tell Navarro he doesn't owe me anything and I'll send that paperwork so it's all legal and the loan is paid off in full, just like I said I would."

A frown curved Ryder's full lips and his fingers froze on his shirt. "I'm not going to hurt you, baby. You'll love fucking me more than Nav. He and I are the same size about everywhere. I've got more experience by far so I promise you that you'll love what I can do to you. Satisfaction is guaranteed." He winked.

"Leave." She stood and gripped the comforter in fear. "Please just leave. I'll send the paperwork tomorrow. I swear. Just leave."

Ryder's frown deepened. "You look scared. I'm not going to hurt you."

"Leave. Please?" Her voice shook. "I don't want you. I just want you to leave."

"You're lonely and you want a man in your bed. You want hot sex and I'm offering you all that."

"Please go." She inched for the bathroom.

"Baby, I'm not going to hurt you. Calm down. We'll sit and talk about this. I can appreciate you and do things to you that Nav would never even consider. It will be damn hot. It will burn you up."

She dropped the comforter and dived into the bathroom. She slammed the door and locked it. "Get out!"

Ryder sighed after a long minute of silence. "My intention was never to scare you. I'll come back tomorrow and we'll talk. Just give it some thought. Wouldn't you like to fuck a guy who really wants you instead of Nav? I do, Trina. I really want you. I'll be back around noon tomorrow and I'll knock on the front door this time."

Trina sat down on the floor and listened until she heard the downstairs door slam. Hot tears fell down her cheeks as she curled into a ball on the bathroom floor and cried herself to sleep.

Chapter Nine

Trina was sore after sleeping on the bathroom floor. She was humiliated and worse, she hurt inside. She'd thought Navarro honestly enjoyed being with her despite the fact that she was paying him. He had seemed to have fun with her and even seemed to prefer sleeping with her. Why else had he wanted to spend Friday night together when he hadn't had to? Hot tears filled her eyes as she packed a small day bag. She planned to avoid Ryder Raine.

She still couldn't believe Ryder had just let himself into her home. He had frightened her because she didn't want him touching her and was terrified he wouldn't take no for an answer when he persistently told her he wanted her. Worse, the things he'd told her about Navarro had made her feel as if she'd forced him into ever touching her, making everything they'd shared seem dirty and ugly. She knew it had been an insane idea from the start to exchange money for sex and also realized she had no one to blame but herself that it had ended so badly.

She picked up the sealed envelope and taped it to her front door when she grabbed the bag she was leaving with. She made sure the envelope wouldn't blow away if it grew windy. Ryder's name was written clearly on it in big black marker so he couldn't miss it when he arrived to discuss earning the money.

She drove her SUV into town to run errands, had decided to make a day of it by having lunch and dinner in town. A trip to the beauty shop to get a facial, her nails done, and maybe she'd even do a little shoe shopping. That would cheer her. She glanced at her watch and then removed it, dropping it into her purse. She didn't want to keep glancing at it and dreading when noon approached, knowing Ryder would go to her home. She hoped he'd leave her alone once he got the papers. She'd be thrilled if she never saw or spoke to the man again.

She stopped at a small shoe store first. She was walking out of the store with two new pairs of high heels when she saw a car driving past her on the street. Shock hit her as she spotted the driver of the car and her knees went weak.

"Son of a bitch," she muttered.

Trina's ex-brother-in-law had just driven by her but hadn't turned his head, hadn't seen her as her surprised gaze followed the car driving slowly through town with a large rental sticker on the bumper. At the end of the street it headed north, telling her that he was headed for her place since there was no other reason he would be in town. *Why is he here?*

She shook her head as she dropped her shopping bag into the SUV and walked down the sidewalk to the diner. It was a damn good thing that she was planning on being gone all day since she hoped that Paul would get bored waiting for her to return

and fly back to California when she didn't. She made an instant decision to rent a motel room for the night in town to avoid going home altogether and knew Paul would have left for certain rather than face a night sleeping in his rental car. She realized she'd have to buy a few things if she stayed in town but she was up for a new outfit anyway.

She stopped walking as a horrible thought struck her. "Son of a bitch."

What if Paul was there when Ryder showed up? The two would meet. She relaxed, realizing that Ryder wouldn't blow her secret. He wouldn't want anyone to know she'd propositioned his big brother to sleep with her for money any more than she'd want it to get out. She calmed down as she walked into the diner, feeling certain it was going to be fine. *I just have to believe that.*

* * * * *

Ryder rang the front door, regretting that he'd let himself into Trina's house the night before. She probably thought he was a real son of a bitch. He'd just wanted to get to know the woman better. Doing a little recon inside her house had told him a lot about her.

She had money, was well traveled, and she had class. Why she had wanted to screw Navarro, of all people, was beyond him. He loved Nav but the guy was a rancher now and was too down to earth ever to be comfortable in a world of wealth. Ryder turned his head and examined the rental car, frowning. He wondered if Trina had company.

The front door opened and Ryder turned around. He frowned at the short, balding man standing in front of him. The guy's shirt was torn, his hand was bleeding, and his face was flushed red. The man glared at Ryder.

"Who the hell are you?"

Ryder arched his eyebrows. "I'm Ryder Raine. Who are you?"

The man's expression darkened with rage. "You! You're the asshole who owns Raine Ranch, aren't you? Wait right there. Don't move."

Ryder clamped his lips together, instantly pissed. He didn't know who the short jerk was but nobody talked to him that way. Ryder moved. He didn't take orders from anyone. He pushed open the front door, stepping inside, and saw the man picking something up from the hallway table. The man faced him clutching a torn-open white envelope. Ryder saw his name on it and was shocked. The man waved it at him.

"Do you want to explain to me how the hell you talked Trina into making a loan to you? Twenty thousand dollars is a hell of a lot of money. What kind of swindler are you? I'm going to call the police and have you arrested."

"What the hell are you talking about? Arrested for what?" Ryder almost snarled the words. He'd gone from annoyed to flat out pissed off at the little weasel in front of him. "Is that mine? That has my name on it."

The man threw the letter at Ryder, who snatched it from the air, and studied the envelope. The seal had been torn open so he knew damn well it had been sealed. He

removed the paper that was wrinkled as though someone had fisted it. He scanned the contents and was stunned as he read it was a payment-in-full notice from Trina Matthews to the Raine Ranch stating that they'd completely paid off the twenty thousand dollar loan they'd borrowed from her.

"I want an explanation right damn now," the smaller man snapped as he crossed his arms over his chest. "Every damn thing that Trina does is my business. I knew I should have come after her sooner. I knew it was a mistake letting her get away for a while. I'm going to talk her into selling this damn piece of shit house and returning to California with me."

"Who the hell are you?" Ryder glared at the man and pocketed the paper in the back of his jeans.

"I'm Paul Matthews. Who the hell are you and how the hell did you talk Trina into loaning you money? Are you trying to romance Trina when I'm not around to make scum like you leave her the hell alone?"

Ryder frowned, thinking there was something about the guy that was familiar but when he said his last name, it hit Ryder hard. He'd flipped through some of Trina's photo albums and that's where he'd seen this guy before. Ryder tensed hard and turned his head to stare at the large photo over the mantel on the fireplace. It was a picture of Trina smiling at the man who was currently standing in front of him. Ryder turned to him as rage filled him on his brother's behalf.

"Your wife lent my ranch twenty grand and just like the letter states, we paid her back. It's not just me who owns our ranch, its family owned, Mr. Matthews. We just needed a short-term loan to float us until something came in, and it came in all right." Ryder was furious as he glared at the man but tried to hide it. "I just came here to pick this up since Mrs. Matthews got the last payment from us that she'll ever get. Have a good day." Ryder spun before he lost it, storming out of the house.

He drove back to the ranch then passed it and drove to the East pasture, knowing Nav and Adam were working out there. Ryder had brought them lunch earlier and had promised to come back later to help them with the downed fences that a storm had knocked over. After he parked Ryder walked slowly toward Nav. He really dreaded the upcoming conversation they needed to have.

"You're back fast," Adam chuckled. "I thought you said you were heading into town for a few hours to hook up with a chick so you could get laid."

Nav dropped the shovel and studied his brother closely. "He looks pissed off as hell. She must have stood him up."

Ryder met Nav's eyes. "We need to talk about Trina."

* * * * *

Rage hit Navarro as he ripped off his work gloves and ate up the distance between himself and Ryder. "What did you do? Is that who you went to go see? I told you to stay the hell away from her. If you put one damn hand on her I'll break it, damn you."

Ryder backed up. "She's married, Nav."

Frowning, Navarro still glared at Ryder. "No shit. I told you she was widowed last year."

Ryder shook his head. "She lied. I just met her damn husband. There's a picture of her and him on the mantel in the living room and unless I just met and spoke to a ghost, she lied to you. The man was pissed off as hell about the loan she made to the ranch and ranting about calling the cops, thinking I forced her to loan the money to us. The chick lied to you, Nav. Her husband is as dead as I am. He just got here because there was a rental car parked in front of her house with airport parking stickers."

"You're wrong." Navarro was stunned.

"I looked at him and compared him to the picture sitting on the damn mantle over the fireplace fifteen feet to the left of the guy in her living room. He said his name is Matthews. The picture was her kissing him on the lips with their arms around each other. She lied to you and fooled you. You've been screwing a married chick. I warned you that this was some kind of game to her. She's some bored rich bitch whose husband was off somewhere."

Shock tore through Navarro and his heart pounded. Could everything have been a lie? Was she really married and just looking for some fun on the side? If her husband worked in another state, living close to the job, then weeks could go by when he wasn't around.

"What did Trina say?" Navarro knew there had to be an explanation.

"She wasn't there." Ryder withdrew the folded paper he'd smoothed out. "Here's more evidence. It's a paid in full statement for the loan she made you, stating the contract is over."

Navarro took the paper with a shaking hand. It was wrinkled but it wasn't torn as he straightened it out to read. Sure enough it was a signed document from Trina stating that she'd been paid back every penny of a twenty-thousand-dollar loan and that the Raine Ranch no longer was in debt to her. He closed his eyes, fisting the paper as fury hit him hard.

"I'm sorry, man." Ryder sighed loudly. "It's better you found out now rather than later."

"Damn," Adam said softly. "I liked her too, Nav. Ryder is right. Its better you found out now. So do you think this guy is going to come over here with a shotgun or try to kick Nav's ass for screwing his wife?"

"Nah," Ryder shook his head. "He's some weenie in casual wear who looks like the only swinging he'll ever do is with a golf club on some fancy course. You should have seen this guy. I never would have pegged her for hooking up with him. It must be his money. He's this short, chubby, balding guy. No wonder she was stepping out on him."

"I need a drink." Navarro folded the paper and handed it to Ryder. "Put this in the safe where it won't be misplaced. I don't trust her as far as I can throw her now. I don't want to lose this in case her husband leaves town and she suddenly thinks I owe her a damn thing. If I never see her again it will be too soon."

Navarro headed to his truck in a fury of rage. He'd trusted Trina, believed everything she'd said, and what made it worse was he'd started to feel things for her way too deeply. He thought she was special, that she was someone he really wanted to get to know. He started his truck and drove to the house. He really did need a drink. He needed to get laid too. He didn't want the last woman he touched to be that lying bitch. He was going to town.

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Trina ate some pizza for dinner. Hailey only had one motel and it wasn't the nicest place to be but it was better than going home in case Paul was still hanging around waiting for her. He could wait all damn night. After the party at his parent's house he'd tried to corner her to dig into her again about Ted and the money.

It wasn't her fault that Ted had decided to leave her everything. After Ted died Paul had borrowed thirty grand from her. She'd written the check without question and she'd never asked for a dime back. He'd asked for Ted's Porsche too. Ted had loved that sports car, it had been his baby, and it had been painful to part with it but Paul was his brother so Trina had signed the title over to him. She knew he deserved to own something that would keep him connected to Ted. No matter how much she gave, it would never be enough for Paul, obviously.

She'd spent sixteen years of her life with Ted and had given up her dreams to be the kind of wife he'd wanted, even given up motherhood. If Paul thought she was going to sign over every dime of the money she'd received, he had another think coming. She deserved every dime.

In the room next door a couple started having really loud sex, their bed slammed against the wall, and the woman moaned loudly. Trina eyed the wall and laughed until it reminded her of Navarro. The laughter died. She missed him and it hurt knowing that she wouldn't see him again. Ryder's words had left her with no doubt that right now Navarro was relieved that he didn't have to deal with her again.

Hot tears filled her eyes and she wiped them away. She needed a drink. The town's only bar was right down the street. She could walk there, have some drinks, and then come back to her room. The couple next door should hopefully be done by then or too worn out to keep her up all night. She put on her shoes, grabbed her purse, and made sure she had her door key.

The sun had gone down. Trina glanced at her wrist only to remember she'd dropped her watch in her purse earlier. It didn't really matter what time it was. She walked down the street, noticing that most of the shops had closed at dusk. She

appreciated the small town of Hailey but it sure didn't boast much nightlife besides the bar. She heard country music as she walked closer.

It was surprisingly packed for a Monday night but she guessed it might have had something to do with the rodeo since she saw the big screen TV on with some cowboy being bucked on a bull. The man dismounted hard but stayed on his feet. Some people in the bar cheered. Grinning, Trina headed for the bar to sit down on a barstool and gave a smile to the bald guy with tattoos who was bartending. She remembered his name and smiled as Thomas grinned at her.

"Hey," he moved closer to her. "How do you like Hailey?"

She nodded. "I have felt really welcome here. Thanks for asking."

"You don't come in here enough. If you want to meet more neighbors this is the place to be." He poured her white wine.

Trina was impressed. "You remembered."

"I try to always remember what people drink. Are you here to watch the rodeo? The barrel racing is about to begin. They are just showing highlights from some of the events today. A lot of folks don't have cable or satellite so they come in here. This one is from Tennessee. Know anything about the rodeo?"

Shaking her head no, she sipped her wine. "I'm not really bummed about that either. Tennis is more my style of a sport to watch. There's a lot less blood and injuries. They have some clowns too but they don't wear makeup."

Thomas laughed. "That's a sport I refuse to put on my big screen. Sorry, little lady." He chuckled. "We have a local hero in here tonight so it makes it extra special for the rodeo fans."

"Really?"

"Hell, yeah. Navarro Raine came in. He has championship buckles from the events he used to win when he worked the rodeo circuit. He..."

Shock hit her and Trina tuned out the bartender's voice, twisting on her barstool to glance around the bar. *Navarro's here?* Dread hit her as her gaze searched the room and then she saw him over in the corner. He stood talking to a group of men and she could tell it was his back she stared at, his wet hair in a ponytail. He was wearing a blue flannel shirt with his standard faded, snug blue jeans. She couldn't see his feet but she would bet that he was wearing his faded black cowboy boots.

She bit her lip and knew she should talk to him even if it was just to apologize. It hurt that he'd lied to her by making it seem as if he'd really wanted her but then again, Ryder had said Navarro felt he had no choice. Trina took a few deep breaths and decided she'd face him to apologize for putting him in a situation that he was forced into and hopefully they'd have no hard feelings.

She climbed down from her barstool and walked through the bar, noticing it really was packed so she had to weave between bodies to walk up behind him. He was laughing and chatting to a few men about rankings. She wasn't sure what that was but

one of the men by Navarro noticed her as she approached. He reached up to take off his cowboy hat, grinning at her. She gave him a weak smile and walked closer.

Navarro turned around as he followed the man's gaze and looked surprised. Then his mouth tightened and he frowned. His expression seemed to go cold while Trina stared up at him. She was shocked at how angry he looked. It froze her in her tracks with four feet separating them still.

"Hello, Ms. Matthews." It was the man who'd removed his hat.

Her gaze jerked to him, having forgotten his name but he worked at the grocery store. She nodded at him. "Hello."

"Are you here to watch the rodeo?" The man was determined to carry on a conversation with her.

"I'm afraid not. I just came in to have a drink. I don't know much about rodeos."

He chuckled. "I could teach you. Do you want to have a seat with me? We can watch it and I'll explain what's going on to you."

She was in a bind as her gaze flew to Navarro, seeing he still glared at her. She didn't know why he was so angry.

"Um, thank you but I should go." She glanced at the man gripping his hat. "Thank you though." Her full attention drifted back to Navarro. "Um, Mr. Raine? Could I talk to you for a minute?" Her mind frantically searched for a reason, for the sake of the men around them, for why she needed to talk to him that wouldn't sound odd. "I was thinking about buying a horse and someone recommended that I talk to you," she lied.

Navarro's jaw clenched, the muscle jumped along his jawline as his lips pressed into a tighter line. "Not tonight. I'm out having fun. I've been put through a lot of shit lately and I'm here to blow off some steam. I've got nothing I'd sell to you right now for any price."

She took a step back, feeling mentally slapped. "Okay." Her voice was shaky and she was also embarrassed. "Have a nice night." She spun around to make her escape and almost slammed into someone.

Trina stared up at Tammy Brent. The tall, leggy redheaded woman was dressed in a skin-tight miniskirt with a half shirt. Her breasts were almost falling out of it, and she wore enough makeup for two women. She also happened to be Navarro's ex-girlfriend who'd recently dumped him.

"Nav," the woman purred, sidestepping Trina. "I heard you were here. I've missed you, baby."

Trina turned as she followed the redhead who closed the space to Navarro. Navarro met Trina's gaze and then looked away from her to stare at Tammy as the woman threw herself against his chest. Tammy was almost as tall as Navarro in her high heels. Just inches separated them in height. Navarro hesitated before he hugged the clinging woman to his body.

"Tammy." His voice was husky.

The redhead eased back to grin up at Navarro. "I missed you, baby. I hate it when we fight. Buy me a beer and let's make up."

Navarro's cool gaze turned so he looked directly into Trina's eyes. They stared at each other and pain lanced through Trina hard at seeing the redheaded slut with her hands spread on Navarro's shoulders and his arm around her waist, body to body. He stared right at Trina as he said the words that made her heart bleed.

"Sounds good, baby."

Trina spun around quickly and walked out of the bar, fighting back tears. She managed not to run but she wanted to. Ryder had been right when he'd said that Navarro never really wanted Trina, that he'd been forced by his circumstances to act as if he wanted her just to save his ranch. It hurt and she had to come to terms with that. It tore her up so damn bad she could barely breathe, the pain crushing in her chest. Anger was her next emotion. She'd offered Navarro a loan so if he hadn't really wanted to go to bed with her, if he wasn't attracted to her, all he'd had to do was take the damn money.

She exited the outer door and was outside, so cool air hit her face as she sucked in air. A sob passed her lips and then she was running, taking off at a jog down the street toward the motel. She wanted to go home, no longer wanting to stay in town anymore. It was too close to Navarro and his on-again girlfriend. They would be just down the street from her, touching each other.

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Navarro watched Trina leave. What the hell? He frowned. He'd seen raw pain flash in her eyes the second before she'd spun away. She'd slammed into three people on her way out the door but she hadn't seemed to notice. She'd just fled the bar as if the place were on fire.

"Hey." Tammy rubbed his chest. "Buy me that beer."

He tore his attention away from the door Trina had just disappeared through. Trina had walked up to him and wanted to talk. He knew she probably wanted to try to explain away why she'd lied to him about being a widow. He hadn't wanted to hear her damn excuses. He'd been married to a woman who had fucked around on him with other men and he'd always thought those men were the worst sort—to knowingly touch another man's wife. Trina had made him one of those lowlifes when he'd unknowingly helped her commit adultery.

"I forgot something in my truck. I'll be right back."

Navarro pulled out of Tammy's grasp and headed for the door, after Trina. Maybe they should talk since he had a few things to say to her. He'd thought she was too good to be true and damn it, she had been. It pissed him off. He stormed out of the bar and turned left to the parking lot. He stopped, scanning for her SUV. He frowned when he didn't see it.

His fists clenched. How the hell had she left so fast? Behind him the door opened and he spun around as Tammy walked out. She stopped and smiled, her hand went to her hip.

“Let’s get out of here and go to my place. I’ve missed you, Nav.”

Chapter Ten

Trina was going to kill her brother-in-law. Four nights ago she'd gone home after the scene in the bar with Navarro to find Paul there. He'd broken in. She should have picked up the phone and called the police and had him arrested for trespassing and just been done with it. She'd instead let it go because he was Ted's brother. She already had been upset enough without causing a confrontation with Paul. His lame excuse was he'd had to use the bathroom and didn't think she'd mind him breaking a window to get in. She minded all right.

She'd also put up with his shit because she was hurting. Even shitty company was better than rambling around her empty house feeling sorry for herself. Paul at least kept her busy. It was a full-time effort not to kill the guy. Every time he opened his mouth it was a challenge not to tell him where to go and she doubted he would appreciate a suggestion to vacation in hell. She reminded herself that it was Friday and he was leaving on Saturday. She had less than twenty-four hours to go and she kept telling herself she could survive that.

Paul said he was worried about her and wanted to spend a few days in Hailey to make sure she was doing well. He was full of shit and she knew it. He was spying on her, plain and simple. She'd found evidence of that because she'd noticed that things were moved in her house. He'd gone snooping in her bedroom too. She knew it but she just couldn't prove it.

Trina had to tune out his bitching about the lack of interesting scenery the entire ten minute drive into town. She parked in front of the diner and got out quickly. She fought the urge to grip her dress, hike it up her legs to her knees, and sprint away from him. For a nickel she'd run for her damn life to get away from the annoying man. She had needed to get out of the house so they were having dinner in town.

She walked inside the diner ahead of Paul, not giving a damn if he was behind her or not. Inside she immediately headed to a table by the window to sit down at the edge of the booth seat while putting her purse by the window. She was afraid Paul might try to sit next to her but the move worked. Paul paused beside her before he took a seat across the table, obviously unhappy as he frowned at her.

"This is the best place to eat in Hailey?" He glared around the large room with his upper lip curled in disgust.

"They serve really good food."

He snorted as the waitress walked over to hand out menus. Trina flashed the woman a stressed smile and ordered raspberry iced tea while Paul ordered a soda. Trina opened her menu even though she almost knew it by heart but she kept her

attention locked on it so she didn't have to look at Paul, who was seriously pissing her off.

The waitress came back a few minutes later to take their orders and Trina noticed more people were coming into the diner as they passed her table so she glanced at her watch, noting it was almost six o'clock. The diner did serve great food and she knew a lot of people ate there on weekends. The waitress, Betty, took their orders and disappeared.

"We should talk," Paul said softly.

Trina looked at him and sipped her tea. "What do you want to talk about?"

He studied her with a frown. "I don't know what you see in this town or why you want to live here."

"I think the town is wonderful, the people are nice, and I love the house. I am enjoying living in a small town."

"It's as boring as hell and there's nothing to do here. You have to miss Orange County."

She sighed. "I don't."

An unhappy expression fixed on Paul's face as he continued to frown at her. "I have been thinking, Trina. Ted wouldn't want you to bury yourself like you are in this morgue. You need someone to tell you what to do and Ted knew that about you. You're one of those weak women who flounder helplessly without a strong man to take control of you."

Trina was so stunned she was speechless as she stared at Paul. *He couldn't have just said that for real. No way, her mind reasoned. I'm hallucinating because he had has driven me insane this week. That has to be it.*

"This is what is going to happen. I'm taking charge of your life and you are going to put that house up for sale so we both are going back to California together. I will make the ultimate sacrifice and I'll marry you. You'll transfer all of your money into my account and I'll take care of you like Ted did. We'll set up an allowance for you to live on and you can stay home like you did with Ted to be my little house slave." He paused as his focus dropped to her breasts, smirking. "I hope the sex is worth it."

She realized she had a death grip on her iced tea when the pain in her hand became noticeable and knew she was about to break the glass. She let go of it so she didn't get cut. She opened her mouth and then closed it. *He really just said all of that.* She let that sink in and then the rage hit.

"That's why you wanted to come to town with me, isn't it? You want to do this here? Really?"

"Now relax. Are you on medication, Trina? Is it in your purse? You're looking a little flushed with excitement. I hope you know what a sacrifice I'm making but I'm willing to do that for you. I'm sure it is the best thing for you. From now on, I'll call all the shots."

She reached for her tea and gripped it while she slowly stood. She had the table dig into her hips as she straightened as best she could. She lifted her tea and raised it over Paul slowly and tilted the glass. Satisfaction filled her as she watched it unfold. Paul's expression turned horrified as his shocked gaze followed her movement. He barely closed his eyes in time when the ice and tea spilled over his head, soaking him. Trina sat, putting the glass on the table, and watched her brother-in-law gasp and sputter as he wiped frantically at the wetness on his face.

"Are you crazy?" He hissed, glaring at her and frantically looking around as he grabbed napkins to dab at his wet shirt. "What is wrong with you?"

The waitress almost ran to their table. Betty looked wide-eyed and shocked as she stared at Paul and then her gaze darted to Trina. Trina picked up her purse and scooted out of the bench seat. She stood, forcing a smile at the waitress.

"Make my dinner to go please and bring the bill."

The woman glanced at Paul and then nodded and fled. Trina glared at Paul. He was staring at her, looking pale and stunned. Trina was done, knowing she had taken more than enough shit from him. She realized the diner had gone quiet and knew that she and Paul were causing a scene the second she'd dumped the tea over his head but she was too furious to care.

"Listen to me and listen to me good," she ground out. "You are an asshole. You don't tell me what to do, ever. The day you control my life, well, that day is when hell freezes over. I'm not some weak little wife type, asshole, and I don't need a man to control me or tell me what to do. If you ever try to pull this shit again I'll show you weak when they have to surgically remove my shoe from your ass. When you walk in the door of my house after you find a way back there, you have five minutes to pack up your things and get the hell out or you'll need that surgery. I want you to get on a plane, take your miserable, bitchy little bald ass out of my life, and don't ever come near me again. Do you hear me?"

His mouth had fallen open and he'd gone paper white. He said nothing. Trina glared at him. She moved, bending over as she gripped the table, fighting the urge to smack him.

"Did you hear me?" She yelled that.

Paul paled even more as he nodded but didn't say a word. She did watch his face turn red though after it stopped being paper white. His fists gripping the table balled tightly and she saw his knuckles whiten while rage filled his green eyes. She experienced a little satisfaction over what she'd said to him, having stood up for herself.

"Ms. Matthews?" The waitress was behind her and spoke hesitantly. "Here's your food. I boxed up both meals."

Trina turned and opened her purse. Her hands were shaking as she pulled out three twenties and handed them to the waitress. "Here." She thrust the money into the woman's hand.

Betty's eyes widened. "It's less than twenty."

Trina took the bag. "I'm sorry for causing a scene." She was embarrassed now that she'd blown up. "Keep the change and I'm sorry I cussed in public." Her gaze roamed the diner and she flinched as she saw a few kids. "I'm sorry," she said louder, meeting the gazes of a few parents. "I...I'm sorry I lost my temper."

As she spun around to walk to the door she met a familiar and sexy pair of dark blue eyes. She wanted to die on the spot. She did stumble as she took a misstep but she kept going. Her horrified gaze left Navarro's. He was sitting by the front door in a U-shaped booth with Tammy, Adam, and Ryder. All four of them were staring at her, right along with everyone else in the diner. She dropped her head, feeling her cheeks burning with shame. She wanted to run but just kept walking to escape the room.

She pushed the door open and blinked back tears as she left the diner, moving quickly toward her SUV. Navarro, his girlfriend, his brother, and Adam had just witnessed what happened with Paul. Hell, she'd be the talk of the town by tomorrow. It was a small town and she'd cussed out a man in a family diner. More tears burned the back of her eyelids. Now everyone would think she was the crazy widow lady who lived out on the Vern place, thanks to that asshole Paul. She really hated him.

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Navarro laughed. Ryder had been teasing Adam about his stripper. He glanced at Tammy, seeing her irritated expression still in place. She'd invited herself to dinner with them when she'd seen the three of them park at the diner and she was pouting over the fact that he was ignoring her. In his defense, he'd just wanted to have a meal with Adam and Ryder. Ryder was leaving and they'd come into town to drop him off to pick up his car that was getting a tune-up before he hit the road.

Navarro saw movement and looked over Ryder's head as a woman with blonde hair wound in a tight bun stood a few tables down. His eyebrow rose as she dumped a drink over some middle-aged man's head. The guy sputtered and looked shocked as the woman sat back down. Betty, the waitress, rushed to the table.

"Shit. Some guy just got a drink dumped on him." Navarro jerked his head in the direction of the center of the diner. "Some woman just hosed him."

Ryder and Adam turned their heads. They heard the man but couldn't hear what he was saying. Navarro chuckled, amused by the incident. The woman at the table suddenly moved and then stood. Betty rushed off toward the kitchen a second later. The blonde turned sideways to face the table she'd just vacated and shock hit Navarro when he realized it was Trina. He'd know that profile anywhere.

Navarro tensed, listening to Trina going off on the man. Trina's voice had been shaky and even from across the room, he could hear that she was really upset. He saw her hand rise as she subconsciously clutched her purse to her chest and then she leaned over to yell at the guy. He watched in stunned shock as she turned to face the waitress. Trina was shaking more as she took the bag from Betty and paid her. Trina looked

toward the back of the diner and he heard her apologizing, sounding ready to cry. He moved, scooting toward the edge of the seat, ready to go to her.

Ryder kicked him hard under the table. Navarro jumped as his glare flew to his brother. Ryder shook his head, giving him a look that said “stay out of it and stay put”. Navarro forced himself to relax as his focus flew back to Trina.

She turned to leave and her gaze caught his. She almost jerked to a stop. She paled and her mouth opened. She seemed to yank herself out of the stunned moment quickly. Her gaze tore from his, darted around his table, and then she moved faster for the door. She glanced at him one more time and then almost ran as she left the diner.

The man at Trina’s table got up. His face and bald head were wet. His shirt had wet trails from where the drink had run down his clothes. He looked pissed off as hell as he stormed for the door. The guy’s hands were balled into fists and he resembled a furious little troll to Navarro as he was hot on Trina’s heels. Navarro moved to get out of the booth, realizing the guy was going after Trina and he looked angry enough to hurt her. It shocked Navarro that her husband was so short, deciding the guy really did resemble a troll.

Ryder moved faster and stood first. “I have this. Sit.”

Ryder took off out of the diner. Navarro hesitated and then just turned his head, staying in his seat. He could see Trina’s SUV through the window. He hadn’t noticed it when he’d arrived because he was parked on the other side of the diner while Trina was parked along the street. She put the bag of food in the back and then opened the driver’s door to climb in.

The troll grabbed her and spun her around. Navarro was on his feet when he saw Trina’s body slam hard against her SUV. Her back had hit the back passenger door violently enough to make the SUV rock. Her husband had her by her arm and Navarro heard her cry out in pain.

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Trina cried out as the hand dug painfully into her arm under her elbow. She was twisted around so hard she fell back and hit the SUV. Paul looked furious as he glared at her.

“I’m done with this shit. I’m getting you a damn shrink,” he hissed. “And you’ve just given me the proof that you’re nuts. I always knew you were insane and now I’m going to have you locked up for embarrassing me like that. You’re a psycho bitch.”

“Let her go,” a deep voice commanded. “We don’t manhandle women in this town.”

Paul spun and glared up at Ryder. “You.” He released Trina. “You stay the hell out of this. She’s not going to lend you any more money.”

Trina’s gaze flew to Ryder. He had met Paul? She was confused about their meeting because Paul had never said a word about Ryder. Ryder didn’t look at her. She was

shocked he'd come to her rescue but she was more surprised that the two men had met. She rubbed her arm where it hurt from Paul's bruising hold. She turned her head to see people walking toward them and feared this was going to be an all-out scene.

"I'm going home," she said in a shaky voice. "Thank you, Mr. Raine." She glared at Paul. "I'll go pack your shit and put it outside with your car. Don't even bother knocking on the door. If you try to get into the house I'll have you arrested."

She turned to climb into her SUV again. She got a leg in when someone grabbed the back of her dress. The sound of material tearing was loud as she was violently jerked away from the door and slammed against the back door of the SUV again. Paul was in her face before she realized what he'd done.

"You aren't leaving me stranded here."

"Get your damn hands off her," a voice growled. It was male, deep, furious, and belonged to Navarro Raine.

Paul yanked his hand away from Trina and spun. He stared up at Navarro and then glanced at Ryder and then back to Navarro. "Stay the hell out of this. This is a family matter."

"I don't give a damn," Navarro stepped so close to Paul that he had to step back or bump against the much larger man. "If you touch your wife that way again I'll break your damn hand." Navarro looked enraged as he made the threat.

Trina gasped. "Wife?" She stared up at Navarro in stunned shock. "I'm not this asshole's wife." Confused, she said, "I told you my husband died. This is Paul, his brother."

Shocked blue eyes flew to hers. She saw Navarro's mouth open but then he pressed it tightly closed. He frowned as rage tightened his features into a hard mask. He looked over his shoulder to glare at his brother, directing that fury Ryder's way.

Ryder looked pale. "Brother?" He stared at Trina.

Trina frowned at Ryder. "Yeah. This is my brother-in-law, Paul Matthews. He came for a *surprise visit* on Monday." She glanced back at Navarro but he was still glaring at Ryder. She didn't know what the hell was going on. She met Ryder's confused gaze. "Why would you think I was married to him? Everyone knows my husband died last year."

Ryder refused to look at Navarro. "I saw him in your house and there was a picture of the two of you on the mantle." He jerked his thumb toward Paul. "It was a picture of both of you kissing and hugging."

"That was a picture of Ted and me. People mistook them for twins." She shot a glare at Paul. "But they are nothing alike inside. Ted was a wonderful man but Paul is an asshole and he better never touch me again."

"I'm going to have you locked up, you unstable bitch," Paul hissed. "Just wait until I'm done with you."

"Do you want to know why Ted left me everything? He didn't like you," she said softly. "You treat everyone like shit and you berated Ted all the time. He loved you but he couldn't be around you. I'm done, Paul. I tried to put up with you for Ted because you are his brother but don't ever call me again. You are never going to get another damn penny from me. I was his wife for sixteen years and I was his life so he wanted me taken care of financially. I can't believe you'd tell me I was going to marry you thinking you were doing me some big favor when you and I both know you just want the damn money. Ted would roll in his grave if he knew what you were up to."

Trina turned her attention to Navarro and gazed into his beautiful eyes. He took a step toward her but then Tammy was there, stepping between them.

"Baby, our dinner came. Come eat it before it gets cold." Tammy smiled up at him.

Trina moved quickly and climbed into her SUV, closing the door before Paul could try to stop her again. Her hands were shaking a little as she put the key in the ignition and started it. Her driver's side door jerked open and she turned to confront Paul again but it was Navarro who stood there. He stepped between the open door and the SUV frame.

"Adam is going to give your brother-in-law a ride to your house to collect his shit and make sure he leaves without giving you trouble." He stared at her. "I thought you were married. I thought you'd lied to me because Ryder said he met your husband."

Trina turned off the engine. "How could you believe that?"

"Damn, Trina, I'm sorry. I was so pissed off at you. I..." He sighed and glanced away for a second but then his gaze returned to her. "I told you about my ex-wife and how she fucked around on me, nailing dozens of guys, and I was the last to know it. It's hard for me to trust and when Ryder said you'd lied to me..." He shook his head. "I'm sorry. I just accepted that. I didn't want to believe it but hell, with my history of trusting women that I shouldn't have, can you see where I screwed up?"

"I never lied to you, Navarro."

"I realize that now. Damn, babe. I'm sorry."

She flinched at the endearment. "I have to go. I don't want Paul going into my house so I need to get there and pack up his things from the guestroom so it's all outside by the time he arrives."

He took a step back. "Can I come over tonight? We'll talk."

Trina was so tempted to say yes but she knew it would be pathetic if she agreed. She shook her head no. "Ryder told me the truth and I'm very sorry I put you in that position but now we have nothing to talk about."

His blue eyes widened. "What are you talking about?"

She looked away to stare through her front windshield, her attention going to Adam, Ryder, and Paul where they stood by the front door of the diner. Paul looked annoyed while Adam was talking to him.

"Trina? What did Ryder say?"

She shook her head. "It doesn't matter."

Her focus shifted to the diner window next as she watched Tammy Brent sitting at the table where she waited for her boyfriend and pain seared through Trina. Tammy Brent was young, had bright hair, and was tall, just what Ryder said was Navarro's type. Navarro didn't go for short, older blondes and that was Trina.

"Like hell it doesn't matter, Trina. Look at me, damn it. What the hell did Ryder say to you?" Navarro was obviously pissed.

"He just set me straight. Please move out of the way so I can close the door. I have to go home. Have a good life, Navarro. Thanks for...everything." She started the engine.

"Trina..."

She looked up at him, staring into his beautiful eyes. She could stare into them all damn day and it hurt her to admit that. "Your girlfriend is waiting, Navarro. You don't owe me anything. I know you might feel that you do now that you aren't pissed off at me anymore, thinking I'm like Debbie, but your suffering is over."

He stumbled back a step and looked confused. "My suffering? What in the —"

Trina slammed the door closed, hit the lock down, and threw the gear in reverse. She heard Navarro yell her name as she backed into the street. She didn't bother to look at him as she pulled away from the diner. She let the tears fall but when she reached her house she put her grief on hold. She parked the SUV and almost ran into the house to pack Paul's stuff.

* * * * *

Navarro watched Trina drive away and swore he saw tears sliding down her face. His suffering? What the hell did that even mean? His girlfriend? Shit. He wanted to hit something. He turned his head and saw what he wanted to hit the most so he stormed toward his brother. Ryder never saw him coming until he'd grabbed his baby brother and shoved him against the side of the diner. He gripped Ryder by his arms as he turned his head to glare at Adam.

"Take asshole there for a walk. I want privacy."

Adam nodded and pointed to Paul. "Let's go have a drink inside for a few minutes and then I'll give you that ride."

Navarro waited until they were alone outside and then glared at Ryder. "What the hell did you tell Trina about me?"

Ryder frowned. "Want to let me go?"

"No. Trina said you talked to her and you set her straight about me. She mentioned something about my suffering. What the hell did you say to her?"

Sighing, Ryder studied his brother. "I just told her the truth, man. She isn't your type and she'll never be your type. The only damn reason you were doing her was to save the ranch. You always look after your family and you'll do anything to make sure

we have a home. I told her I'd give her what was left on the contract but she freaked out and locked herself in the bathroom."

Navarro tensed. "What bathroom? You said she wasn't there the day you went to her house. You said her husband was there."

Ryder flushed, knowing he was caught. "Shit."

"What did you do?" Fury hit Navarro so hard he shook with it.

Ryder stared into his brother's eyes. "I went there the night I found the contract. I broke into her house and was waiting in her bedroom when she got home late. I told her I'd do her and she told me to get out. I explained to her that I was better than you in bed and thought I'd show her. Instead she freaked out so I left. I met the asshole over there with Adam the next day when I went back to talk to her once she calmed down."

"I am trying really hard to not knock out your teeth." Navarro fought the urge. "Did you say I didn't want her? Is that it? Did you make it sound like it was a hardship on me to touch her? Is that what she meant about my suffering?"

Ryder hesitated and that was all the answer he needed. Pure rage poured through Navarro. He released his brother and reeled away before he really did beat the shit out of him. He walked a good five feet away and spun around to glare at Ryder, his hands fisted at his sides.

"I was trying to protect you," Ryder said softly. "She was going to hurt you."

"She was going to hurt me?" Navarro yelled. "Her? *You* hurt me. You, man. I was happy with Trina but look at everything now. I told you to stay the hell away from her and to leave it alone but you didn't. You fucked up everything. You told me she was married and lying to me." He lowered his voice. "I was happy and now she won't even talk to me. I lost her."

Ryder sighed. "I didn't fuck it all up, Nav. You have Tammy back."

Navarro closed his eyes as his shoulders sagged. "Get in your car and go back to your damn band before I beat the shit out of you, Ryder." He took a deep breath. "Run before I kill your ass."

Chapter Eleven

Trina glanced at the clock and frowned because it was nine-thirty at night, long after anyone should come to her front door. The doorbell rang again and seconds later someone pounded on it repeatedly. She tied her robe tighter around her body as she walked down the stairs and turned on lights as she went. *If that's Paul I'm going to grab an umbrella from the stand and beat him with it.* She walked to the front door and flipped on the porch light.

"Who is it?"

"It's Navarro. Please open the door, Trina."

Surprised, she hesitated, trying to think, but her mind was blank on reasons he'd be there that wouldn't make the situation worse. "Go away."

"Damn it, open up the door so we can talk."

"We have nothing to say to each other."

"Please, Trina? I'm not leaving. Don't make me stand out here all damn night because it looks like it's going to rain and I won't leave until you talk to me. I swear to God, I'll sleep on your porch."

She looked at the door and found herself reaching for the locks, knowing it was a really bad idea. She unlocked the door and opened it a few inches to stare up at Navarro. He'd obviously changed clothes from when she'd seen him a few hours earlier at the diner because now he was wearing a black sweater with jeans. She wasn't sure why he was there but as she stared up at him, she really wished he weren't. His hair was down and he looked angry as she met his eyes.

"Can I come in?"

"No." She shook her head. "What did you want to talk about? Shouldn't you be sleeping? It's late. I was in bed."

"I went to bed at eight and laid there because I can't sleep. Please let me in. We really need to talk and I don't want to do it on the damn porch."

She stepped back and released the door, moving away a few feet as Navarro pushed it slowly open. He stepped into the house and curiously glanced around the living room as he closed the door behind him. He took the room in with a quick sweep and then his gaze locked with hers.

"I don't even know where to start."

She hugged herself around her waist. "There's nothing left to say. We should just go on with our lives like nothing ever happened. I think that's the best way to handle this."

He frowned. "Bullshit. There's plenty to say. Ryder left town because I was going to kill him and he damn well knew it. He fucked us up. I am so torn up right now."

She was trying to make sense of his words but he just wasn't making any. "What does that mean?"

His hand lifted toward her but it dropped before he touched her. "Ryder said you were married and that he met your husband. He saw a photo of you..." His gaze left hers as he went to the fireplace.

Trina turned to watch as Navarro lifted the picture of her and Ted from the mantle. He held it up, studying it, and softly cursed. He turned, showing her the picture. "Is this Ted?"

"Yes. That was a few years ago."

"Ted and his asshole brother sure look a hell of a lot alike. Ryder saw this and saw your brother-in-law, thinking you'd lied to me about being a widow. He told me that you'd lied to me just to have an affair on your rich husband who had just come to town and then handed me the statement you wrote out that ended our contract as the proof. He met your brother-in-law who reamed his ass about giving the ranch a loan and threatened to have Ryder arrested." Navarro put the picture back. He faced it toward the wall so the photo of her and Ted no longer showed. "I believed the worst and I'm so damn sorry, Trina. I was so pissed I headed right to town to get shitfaced. I was feeling ten times the idiot for being fooled by another woman I trusted."

It hit her then. "That's why you were so angry with me at the bar?"

He nodded. "Yeah. Angry doesn't cover it. You know what my ex-wife did to me. I was the last damn one to know that she screwed half the guys in town before I was clued in. I was working my ass off trying to recover from my injury from the bull and trying to put the ranch back in order after my dad had let it go. I was busting my ass and my wife was doing any guy who said yes to her." He paused. "I have trust issues. I think guys who screw married women are scum and I was so damn angry thinking you'd used me like that and made me the kind of man I hate worst."

"I never lied to you, Navarro. Ted died last year. Paul and Ted look a lot alike. I wish you'd just picked up the phone and called me to ask me to explain."

"I should have."

They stared at each other until she looked away first. "Well, thank you for explaining why you were so angry with me. I thought you were upset about me forcing you into sleeping with me."

"What?" He nearly snarled.

"Ryder came here and he told me how I'm not your type, how I'll never be your type, and how you would do anything for your family to keep the ranch. He told me how you felt and I'm so sorry I put you in that position. That's what I tried to tell you in the bar. I was going to tell you how sorry I was." She looked away and then her gaze lifted to meet his again. "If you'll remember I did offer to loan you the money without strings. I just wish you'd taken me up on the loan."

He took a step toward her. "Exactly what the hell did Ryder say?"

Trina shrugged, looking away from him. "I don't remember word for word. He just made it clear how you didn't really want me and how you felt forced into it." She refused to look at him now and put distance between them as she moved to the couch to sit, rubbing her fingers over the armrest.

"Look at me."

She hesitated long seconds before lifting her chin. Their gazes locked. Navarro looked livid. "Ryder is full of shit and he wanted to fuck you. When he was feeding you this bullshit didn't my asshole brother hit on you?"

She nodded. "He was waiting for me in my bedroom late Sunday night when I came in from the airport. He scared the shit out of me. He'd broken in and I was half naked by the time I realized he was there. He said he'd take over the contract and how he wanted me and how he even had a friend he could call to join us if I ever wanted a threesome. He scared me because he wouldn't leave no matter how many times I asked him to so I locked myself in my bathroom."

"I'm going to kick his ass," Navarro swore, his hands fisted at his sides while he stared at Trina. "How could you think I didn't want you? You were in bed with me. You've had me inside you. You know damn well what happens between us when we touch."

"How could you think I was married and everything was a lie?"

He took a step toward her and then stopped. "I miss you, babe. I was happy with you and I looked forward to you coming over. Ryder put his damn nose in our business and fucked it all up. I am so damn sorry I believed the worst of you but damn it, I've been burned. It's no real excuse but it's all I've got. Whatever the hell he said to you, he was full of shit. He was worried that I'd get hurt because of the past and he knew you were under my skin. He didn't know you and he assumed you were some heartless slut who goes around paying men to fuck you on a regular basis. I told him he was way off base but then he had to go and start his shit because he wanted to fuck you himself."

She stared at Navarro, trying to take it all in. He was talking fast and rambling but she'd picked out some key words in there. "Under your skin? What does that mean?"

"He knew that I was..." He paused, his blue gaze looked away and then back, locking with hers. "You made me happier than I've been in a long time. He was afraid I'd get too damned attached to you and at the end of the two months that I'd get my heart broken."

Her heart almost beat out of her chest at the thought of Navarro caring enough for her to be able to break his heart. Her throat went dry.

"I told him to stop worrying about that shit. He didn't know you and he assumed you'd just walk away from me because someone like you could never have feelings for someone like me." He took another step closer. "He didn't understand that there was something special between us. Was I the only one to feel it, babe? I wanted to see where it led and I still want to see where it leads." His eyes searched hers. "I miss you and I

want you back in my life. I want to spend my days thinking about the shit I want to do to you at night and I want to look into your eyes when you come for me as I touch you." He took another step toward her, almost touching her as he stared down at her. "I want you in my damn bed at night so I can hold you. I sleep better when you're against me."

She avoided touching him as she got to her feet to put distance between them then turned her back. She let her head drop and closed her eyes. She couldn't do this, couldn't let him talk her into going back to what they had. It hurt too much losing it and it hurt too much losing him.

His large hands curled around her hips gently. "Trina? What's wrong?"

She shook her head. "I can't do this. I just can't, Navarro."

His hands tensed. "Was it just sex to you? Are you telling me that when we touch you don't feel a deeper connection? Tell me the truth."

She walked away from him, instantly missing the warmth of his hands soaking through her thin robe to her hips. She turned when she'd put half a room between them and met his gaze.

"You want the truth?"

He looked grim. "I do. I really want the truth. No bullshit. Remember our rule? No lies."

"That wasn't a rule. The only rule we came up with was no clothes in your bedroom."

He slowly smiled. "Okay. That was a good rule. Want to go to my house to my bedroom to finish this conversation?"

She smiled back. He could make her smile and she hated it. Her smile died. "It was more than sex to me and I was getting too attached to you. I realized that pretty damn fast and kept reminding myself that it was just sex to you so I could try to protect myself from getting hurt when you just walked away when our contract was over."

"But it's not just sex to me, babe." He took a step toward her.

She put up her hand, palm out. "Stop. I put distance between us for a reason."

He frowned and took a step back. "What is the reason I have to be this far away?"

"I can't think when you're near me and I need to. I got hurt regardless of me trying to protect myself. It hurt when Ryder showed up here and told me he was taking over the job of fucking me and how the only reason you'd touch me was because you needed to save your ranch. I didn't expect you to fall in love or anything but I believed you really wanted me when you touched me. I felt like everything we had done together was nothing but an act suddenly and it made it all ugly and dirty."

Anger tightened Navarro's face. "It wasn't and damn it, you know how much I want you every damn time I touch you. I wasn't acting. You can't really believe that shit now, can you?"

"I didn't want to. I wanted to talk to you in the bar but you were so damn cold and it just hurt. You humiliated me with that comment you made. I know no one but me

understood it but it really hurt. Then your ex-girlfriend showed up and..." She paused. "That really hurt. I have no right but God, it just tore me to shreds seeing you together. I was jealous and she was touching you and...it just tore me up. It still does."

Navarro looked at the floor. Trina stared at him. His face was a little pale and he was chewing on his bottom lip. His gaze rose and she saw guilt radiating from his eyes. It was so clear an expression that she could read it easily. Inside, pain stabbed at her heart. She closed her eyes, turning away, as tears burned behind her eyelids.

"I take it that you're back with her?" Her voice was so soft she questioned if he even heard her.

"No." His voice was firm.

Trina studied his features as she opened her eyes, carefully trying to judge the look in his steady gaze to see if she could read honesty or not. He didn't look away from her.

"We're not back together. Yes, she was with me in town today but it wasn't because she was invited or I wanted to eat a meal with her. She just saw us and sat down at our table."

She wanted to believe him desperately. "But you've slept with her recently, right?" It took every ounce of her courage to ask the question, knowing that his answer could tear her apart in a hundred different ways.

Navarro stared at her. "She kissed me but that was it. I thought about sleeping with her to get even with you, to be honest, but I just wanted you regardless of how angry and hurt I was thinking you'd lied to me. I couldn't stomach her touch with you on my mind so I went home alone."

Desperation gripped her, hoping he was telling the truth, and then feeling disgusted with herself over how eager she was to believe him. She took a deep breath, trying to rein in her emotions. She'd gotten hurt, she didn't want a repeat of it, and she was still reeling from the pain she'd suffered.

"It doesn't matter," she lied. "It was probably better that this happened because it was a bad idea from the beginning. I don't know what I was thinking to proposition you that way. It was crazy and now it's over."

"No," Navarro snapped. He shook his head, taking a step toward her. "I won't let you go, babe. It's just not going to happen. I can't walk away from you or I know I'll spend the rest of my life regretting it. We are going to work this out, it's that damn simple, and I won't take no for an answer. You need to give us another shot."

Confusion, pain and frustration slammed her on all sides. "What do I even say to that? What do you expect from me?"

He shrugged. "I don't know. I'm just trying to be honest. I want you, damn it, and I want it the way it was. I want you to come to my house at eight o'clock at night after I spend all day thinking up fantastic shit that I want to do to you. I want you to walk into my bedroom, strip when I tell you to and I want you happy because you make me happy. How do I get you back, Trina? How do I do that, babe? Will getting on my knees to beg work? You could bring me to them. If I had a time machine I'd take us back to

Saturday morning when you kissed me goodbye and when I thought that Sunday night you'd be right back in my bed. I was happy then."

She stared up at him, astonished. "You just want to pretend none of this happened and just go back to the way it was before I left?"

"Desperately." He nodded. "I'd give anything to be back in that place we were."

She stared at him, seeing total sincerity there. She also saw pain in his features. "Will you answer me a few things?"

"Anything."

"Would you ever trust me and not instantly assume I'm lying because your ex-wife was the way she was or will I have to deal with this over and over if we give it another shot? If you hear something will you swear to ask me before you just accept it?"

He flinched. "I learned an important lesson and I'll trust you. It's just that you were too good to be true, babe. I was looking for the brick to hit me in the head so when Ryder handed it to me, I believed the blow was real. You're just...hell, as I said, too good to be true."

"What do you mean, I'm too good to be true?" She stared at him with astonishment. "I'm not."

He walked to the couch and sat down hard. "You loved your husband." He jerked his head toward the mantle. "The guy is dead and you still have his picture up. Nobody has ever loved me that way. He was shooting blanks even and you didn't give a damn. I tell women I'm sterile and they run. I told you the truth and you're the only woman who ever tried to comfort me. You didn't look at me with pity, horror, or treat me like I'm half a man. I've had women react that way." He paused. "A few even joked about it and it was downright mean. Try to imagine standing there hiding your emotions while a woman is making fun of something that tore you to hell and back. I've been there, babe."

That made Trina angry on his behalf. What woman was stupid enough to dump a guy like Navarro over a reason like his injury? What kind of cruel person would make fun of a man for that?

He paused, watching her, not looking away. "Do you want to know why I date younger women? They aren't ready to have kids and most of them don't want children when they are in their early twenties so my condition is a bonus to them if the condom were to break. When they reach the point where they want kids they dump me. I've had it happen more than a few times. I dated a few older women who had kids but they just wanted a father figure and someone to pay the bills, not really giving a damn about me personally. As much as I wanted to be a father, I didn't want to get that way by marrying a woman who'd never love me."

Trina was shocked at his words. She opened her mouth but Navarro cut her off before she could speak.

"You baked for me and you made me breakfast. Nobody has ever done shit like that for me. I was married and she never did anything but try to fuck my brothers and

she did screw around with my friends. She made my life hell when she realized I wasn't well off. She punished me daily a dozen damn ways. You..." He sighed.

"I what?" Trina's heart was breaking for him and she fought the urge to hug him. She really wanted to put her arms around him, to provide some comfort. She couldn't stand seeing the sadness in his beautiful eyes. "What did I do?"

"You made me happy and made me feel like no one ever has before. You always talk about your life with him." He jerked his gaze toward the frame on the mantel and then back to Trina. "I want to kick the guy's ass because if I'd had what you gave him of yourself, I would have worshiped you right back. I want that, Trina. That's why I think you're too good to be true. You terrify me because you give me hope that we might be happy together. The hope is great but the thought of me falling for you and then you walking away from me, well, it scares the fuck out of me. I don't think I could survive losing you if I really had you. You make me feel like you want me for the man I am and I know you won't leave me just because I can't get you pregnant. You make me feel so damn much but mostly you make me whole when we're together."

Trina moved then, unable to stop herself, and walked right to Navarro where he sat and she placed her hands on his shoulders. She pushed him back and straddled his lap on the couch. His arms instantly wrapped around her waist as she hugged him around his neck and pressed her body tight to his. His arms tightened around her so they were both squeezing each other as he folded her tighter into his arms. She pulled back to stare into his beautiful face.

"I'm not ready to have sex with you but I want to hold you and I want you to hold me."

He nodded. "Having you back in my arms feels right, babe. Doesn't this feel right?"

She nodded. "You terrify me too."

She took a deep breath, licking her dry lips. She knew it would be totally insane to do what she was thinking about. He'd hurt her, he'd thought she was a liar but she had to admit he had reason to have trust issues. She wanted it back the way it had been too. The time machine he mentioned did sound good. She stared into his eyes and realized they were two people who desperately wanted the same damn thing regardless of the level of pain either of them had suffered.

She made a decision, deciding to do something totally insane, because to her, he was worth that kind of risk. "I'll be at your house at eight o'clock on Sunday. If it's going to work, that's the rule. This week is erased and we agree to never talk about it again because it never happened."

Relief washed over Navarro's features as he nodded. "Thank God, babe. Can I take you to bed? I missed you and I want to make love to you."

She shook her head. "I need a few days. I'll be at your house on Sunday though. I'll be ready by then to take us back to where we were."

"Thank you." Joy lit his face as he smiled tenderly at her. "We're in this together then. You and me, babe."

"Yeah. If you hurt me again –"

His eyes hardened. "I won't."

"If you do I'm going to bake you brownies with laxatives." She buried her face in his neck, clinging to him.

Navarro laughed. His large body shook both of them since they were tightly wrapped around each other. "I'll eat every damn one if I do something as stupid as to not trust you again. I swear."

She inhaled his scent, just letting herself enjoy him holding her. She'd missed him so much it had physically hurt her, leaving an ache in her heart. She'd never thought she'd be in his arms again. She'd never let herself believe he might feel more for her than sexual desire but he had admitted that he wanted to try to have more with her than either of them had bargained for.

"Let's try this again," he said softly. "Here's the new deal. We'll both be totally honest with each other no matter how scared either one of us is. How about that, babe?"

She nodded against his neck. "Okay. This is your last chance, Navarro. If you hurt me again nothing will get me back. Am I totally clear on that?"

"I swear I won't mess up ever again. I'm tearing up that damn loan statement that says we were even. I still owe you seven weeks and that's not up for debate. In exchange for those seven weeks I want you to open yourself up for the idea of taking it a hell of a lot farther to a full-blown relationship."

She pulled away from him, his hold on her eased but he didn't let her go. She met his gaze. "I don't want to pay you for sex anymore."

"You aren't. It's a damn loan that I've always planned on paying back. Every dime. But I want the contract in place. That way I'll know you're mine for at least that much time." He stared into her eyes. "I'm afraid you're going to walk away from me before I can convince you that those weeks will never be enough between us."

Trina stared into his hopeful expression and her heart squeezed hard. She wasn't falling in love with Navarro Raine. She already was in love with him. How could she not be? They were both wounded by their pasts. He'd believed she was married and using him. She'd believed he didn't really want her. She didn't think seven weeks would ever be enough between them either. She took a deep breath.

"Will you sleep here with me tonight? I just want to hold you and I want to be held by you."

"Show me to your bedroom, babe."

She climbed off his lap and held out her hand. He rose from the couch, taking it as his larger one closed over hers tightly. Trina knew she'd made the right decision. She could get over the hurt that he'd caused her. What she couldn't do was lose him.

Chapter Twelve

It was eight o'clock Sunday night when Trina walked up onto the Raine porch. The door opened before she even reached it and Navarro grinned at her. His hair was wet and free, brushing his bare shoulders. He was just wearing a pair of boxers. Her gaze raked down his body slowly. He was so damn sexy that just looking at him turned her on. She loved every muscle, every curve, and every scar that she could see.

"Hi, babe. Come on in. You're just in time."

She smiled. "I try." She walked into the house and turned around to watch him as he firmly closed the door and locked it. Her amused gaze met his. "So, what's the plan?"

He chuckled. "Well, since you left me on Saturday morning..." He paused, his eyes locking with hers as they both silently agreed to the lie. "The mail came. Remember those surprises I told you about? They arrived. Let's go to my room."

Her heart pounded. "I'm not sure I like surprises." She walked toward the stairs with Navarro behind her, walking close. They went into bedroom and she saw a box, about the size of a boot box, sitting on his dresser, the seal opened but the lid shut. She turned as he closed and locked the bedroom door. "Is anyone here besides us?"

"I told you that Ryder is gone." His mouth tensed and his eyes seemed to darken with anger. "We're alone in the house." His tense body relaxed and he smiled. "It's just you and me again and that's the way it should be, babe." He paused. "Strip."

She laughed. "You know you order me to strip every time we get in your room, don't you?" She started to unbutton the front of her dress.

"And you listen so damn well." He chuckled. "Thank you for that."

"You told me I have to listen to you in here and you're in charge."

"Damn, I get hot as hell when you say something like that." He walked to the bed and opened the box.

Trina was dying to know what was in it as she saw him reach inside the package. She paused and then let her dress drop to the floor, revealing she wore a matching bra and pink thong. She cleared her throat. Navarro turned his head and his eyelids narrowed as they slid slowly down her body, taking in every inch of her. She had his full attention as she slowly turned around, doing a full circle, putting her hands on her hips, and pushed out one hip. She had kept the high heels on.

"Are you sure you want me to take it all off, cowboy?"

His gaze locked with hers, desire showing clearly on his features with the passionate look he gave her. "Just take off the thong. Leave on the push-up bra and keep the heels, babe. Fuck, I'm hard."

Her gaze lowered to his tented boxers. She grinned, hooking her thumbs on the thin thong straps at her hips, bending forward as she shoved them down. She stepped out of the scrap of fabric and dropped it on top of her discarded dress. She straightened to find Navarro still watching her. He pointed to the floor in front of him. She didn't hesitate to walk to him.

"You still trust me?"

She stared up into his eyes. "What's in the box?" She smiled.

He grinned as he lifted a scarf. "A blindfold is the first surprise. This is about sensations, babe. Remember when I told you I'd never do anything that would hurt you because I want to be able to do it to you again?" He chuckled.

Taking a deep breath she closed her eyes and turned her back to him. "Okay. Blindfold me."

He carefully tied the soft fabric around her head, testing it to make sure she couldn't see and made sure it was comfortable. His hands touched her hips as he moved her. Her thighs touched the footboard of the bed when he had her stop walking. He released her hips, his hands running down her arms to her wrists.

"I'm going to tie your wrists to my bottom bedposts so your arms are spread wide apart. I want you just to be able to feel. After that I'm going to put pillows in front of you so when I bend you over the bed you're comfortable against the footboard. It's the right height for you in high heels. Are you with me so far?"

She was. "I'm getting turned-on."

His fingers brushed her wrists over her pulse. "I'm already there, Trina. I love looking at you and I've never wanted anyone more than I want you. I think you're so damn sexy."

She bit her lip and nodded. "Tie me up. I'm ready."

She let him tie her wrists with a soft material but he made sure she had a little give in her arms for some movement. They were tied to the footboard at the posts so her arms weren't able to go above her ribs in height. His large hands moved her a few inches from the bed while he pushed a pillow between her thighs and the wood of the bed. He had her move forward against it to make sure the pillow was thick enough to be comfortable. His fingers caressed down her ass until he gripped her inner thighs.

"Spread for me."

She got the best kind of chills at the husky tone of his voice while she spread her thighs. She could just feel as his strong hands helped her adjust to where he wanted her. She ended up standing with her ankles about two feet apart. Navarro released her.

"Now for the toys."

She swallowed. "Can you at least tell me what they are or what you're going to do to me?"

He moved behind her. "Do you know what a butterfly is?"

She nodded. "I haven't used one but I've looked online at those sex shops."

"You're about to experience one. I'm putting gel on it right now. I got warming lube so it won't be cold. This is a strong little vibrator and it's going to just cover your clit, babe. It's going to feel damn good."

She shivered. "I can't wait."

He touched her as his hand brushed up her lower spine to the center of her back. "Bend over for me...all the way."

She leaned over his bed, feeling exposed as he moved behind her. She jumped a little when his fingers brushed between her thighs but she held still as he put the butterfly against her pussy, adjusting it firmly against her clit. It had a soft rubber feel and not the hard plastic she expected. Next, he put thin straps around her hips and upper thighs.

"What—"

"The straps help keep it in place. This one has a remote so I can hold it in my hand to control it."

She swallowed, knowing she was getting wet just thinking about how enjoyable it might be. She'd always wanted to try certain sex toys but besides her vibrator, she hadn't had the chance to test out anything else before meeting Navarro. He stood when he was done and moved closer to her.

"Ready?"

She nodded. "Yeah."

"I'm going to fuck you, babe. First I'm going to go slow and then when you're really worked up I'm going to ride you hard and deep. I want you to know what is coming."

Trina gasped as the butterfly jerked to life. It was a soft, slow vibration that teased slightly and made her very aware of her clit. She shifted a little and rolled her hips to see if it would move. It didn't, thanks to the straps holding it securely against her body. The vibrations suddenly increased strongly, coaxing a moan of pleasure from her.

Navarro's hand cupped her between her thighs to grip her firmly at the vee. He pushed the butterfly tighter against her clit causing her to moan louder until his hand eased off, taking most of the pressure with it. His fingers spread her sex lips wide apart as he pushed a digit inside her slowly. She moved her hips back, pushing against his hand.

"You're already wet, babe."

He withdrew his finger from her pussy, releasing her. The vibrations on the butterfly slowed enough to let Trina relax. As soon as she did the vibrations increased to a pace that had her panting and tensing as she almost came. The vibrations totally stopped as the toy shut off. She groaned in frustration that time.

"You're going to torture me, aren't you?"

"If I do, I'm torturing myself along with you. I'm so damn hard for you. I'm getting rid of these boxers and I'll be with you in a second." His fingers brushed her ass, slid

down the line of her seam, and then he let the back of his knuckles trace her mound. His fingers rubbed the insides of her thighs, high at the crease of her legs. "Fuck, you're so wet you're starting to trickle down your thighs."

The vibrator came on softly. Trina moaned as Navarro moved behind her and his hands gripped her hips. He rubbed the hard crown of his cock against her slit, slowly breaching her. She moaned as he inched his way into her pussy until he was seated fully inside her, pressed tight against her ass. He held her there, not moving while she moaned, wiggling her ass.

"I want to come, Navarro. Please?"

"Me too."

His hand left her hip for a second. The butterfly hummed to life full blast and then Navarro gripped her hips with both hands. He almost totally withdrew before thrusting into her hard and fast.

It was too much with the powerful vibrator doing a number on her clit and the added sensation of him fucking her hard and deep. The feeling of being bound, of being totally under his control, flipped her switch on big time. Trina's body tensed as her vaginal muscles went nuts, twitching violently and she knew she was done. She came so hard she screamed out and bucked frantically, trying to survive it.

"Oh damn," Navarro groaned loudly. "Oh fuck, babe. Fuck!" He pressed hard against her ass, almost collapsing on top of her.

His hand left her hip as the vibrator motor died on her clit. Navarro was a big guy, almost crushing her to the bed where she was bent over with him draped over her back. They were both breathing hard as Trina turned her head so she didn't suffocate on the mattress.

"Son of a bitch," he rasped. "I like that damn toy. I love it when you come and I feel you clamping down on me but that was just...fuck. You were like a vibrator around my cock that was squeezing and fisting me."

She didn't move, unable to, feeling exhausted while he lifted from her. He untied her wrists and removed the blindfold. Navarro bent over her again to brush a kiss on her shoulder, chuckling as his tongue darted out to teasingly trace the curve of her neck. His long hair tickled her skin and she grinned, just enjoying the moment.

"Tomorrow night we'll try another toy."

She turned her head a little, glancing at him over her shoulder. "Shit. How many toys did you buy? I don't know if I want to give this one up. I think it's a winner."

He laughed. "I bought four more. One is a dildo vibrator with a clit stimulator that I want to fuck you with while I take your ass. I thought you'd like that way better than my finger against your clit and this vibrator is specifically shaped to stimulate your G-spot."

"Oh wow."

"Yeah." He winked, grinning widely. "I'm excited about that one too." He moved behind her, slowly withdrawing from Trina's body.

"Climb up on the bed for me, babe."

Groaning, she forced herself to move. She lifted up to her hands and knees on the bed and started to crawl away. Navarro laughed while he pulled off her high heels. After tugging back the covers, she sat on the sheet. She removed her bra, just tossing it toward the floor, as her gaze went to Navarro before she looked down.

"Um, how do I take this off?" She eyed the small toy still strapped to her.

"You don't."

"The straps aren't that damn comfortable to sleep in."

He chuckled as he walked naked toward her. "Who said we were going to sleep right away? I want a repeat in about fifteen damn minutes when we're both recovered." He climbed on the bed next to her and sat facing her to take her hand while he played with her fingers. Their gazes locked. "Just to make sure that is a winning toy and it wasn't a fluke we need to try it again." He opened his other hand, which held the controller.

She laughed. "Okay. Tell me about the rest of the toys you bought."

He shook his head. "You'll find out later this week."

"Tease."

"I aim to please, so I'm not one."

She stared into his eyes. "You always do please me. I never knew sex could be like this. Thank you."

"It's not always like this." His look softened. "It's us together, babe."

She smiled at him. "You make me feel special when you say things like that."

"You are."

She gazed into his eyes, seeing sincerity there. "So are you."

"I missed sleeping with you." His fingers stopped playing with hers. "How would you feel about sleeping here every night?"

Her heart almost stilled. "If I did, it would be like we lived together and you said you needed a few nights to rest."

He chuckled. "River called today and he's coming home for a while. Adam and I will have extra help so I can take naps during the day if I need them and hell, I don't sleep so well without you. I think about you and just wish you were in my bed when you're not with me."

She swallowed. "If I'm here every night we'd be living together, right?"

He nodded. "Is it such a bad idea? I admit, I never thought I'd want to live with a woman again but hell, I want you here with me. I love waking up with you in the mornings."

"You just like my omelets."

Laughing, he leaned over to brush his lips over hers. "Let's try it. I'm a little afraid myself and I'm sure you are too, but hell, I still want to give it a try. It..." He hesitated. "It feels right."

"This is really scary."

"I know." His hand tightened on hers. "Take a chance with me."

She found herself nodding as she stared into his eyes. "Okay but we're being totally honest, right? If one of us needs a break, we'll speak up."

"We'll be totally honest."

"Okay."

Grinning, he chuckled. "Tomorrow, bring your clothes here."

Reality sank in for Trina at that moment, the full weight of it making her heart speed up. "We're really going to do this, then? We're really going to try to live together?"

He nodded. "We sure are."

The moment of panic that had hit her started to ease. This was Navarro and he wanted her. This was her chance to be happy with a man she'd fallen in love with.

"So what do you want me to do around here to help out?"

He laughed. "You could always bake but if you do you're going to have to help me work it all off or you're going to have to put me on a diet."

"I'd lo—" She slammed her mouth closed, horrified at what she'd almost said.

Navarro's eyes narrowed. "What?"

"Nothing."

He arched a black eyebrow. "Total honesty, babe. Finish what you were going to say."

She looked away from him, her cheeks warming as she blushed.

"Trina... Don't make me get it out of you." He smiled and hit the button on the remote.

She jerked at the startling sensation of the vibrator against her clit on the strongest setting. She closed her eyes, bit her lip, and let the pleasure grip her. The vibrator turned off suddenly. Her eyes opened.

"That was mean." She smiled.

"Babe, if you don't tell me what you were going to say I'm going to hog tie you and do that over and over until you finish that damn sentence. We're being totally honest with each other, remember?"

"I was going to say..." Her eyes met his and she blushed again. "I'd love you even if you gained a ton of weight."

She waited for him to tense, frown, or react negatively to her words but instead he smiled, his eyes lighting up. He dropped the remote on the bed, reached for her and his hand cupped her face.

"Do you love me?"

She tried to look away but Navarro moved closer, putting his face inches from hers, holding her face immobile as she gazed back at him. She loved his damn eyes, could stare into them all day long, she decided. He smiled at her.

"Say it to me, babe. Please?" His voice lowered to a husky tone.

Trina knew he had her and she had given herself away by a slip of the tongue. She took a deep breath and expelled it slowly. He had asked for the truth so she'd give it to him.

"I...love you. I don't know how it happened so damn fast but I do."

He grinned. "Thank God."

Her eyebrows shot up in surprise. "Thank God?"

He nodded, grinning. "You think I just wanted you to live with me for sex every damn night? I'm so damn nuts about you that it isn't funny. I knew I loved you the night you let me rope and brand you. I suspected then that I was falling for you hard and fast but I'm a fighter. I resisted but when you straddled my lap to let me brand your skin with that rope... Damn, babe, you branded me right back."

She reached up to grip his jaw. "Say it to me."

He moved closer so their lips almost brushed. "I love you, Trina."

She threw herself at him, her body slamming into his. He laughed and caught her as they tumbled back on the bed, his body cushioning hers as they fell flat. Trina ended up sprawled on top of him as she kissed him. Navarro reached for something, his arm stretching out, and suddenly she cried out into his mouth as her clit started to vibrate hard. He'd found the remote.

Navarro rolled them so he was on top of her. He spread her thighs, entering her in one hard motion, burying his cock deep. He pinned her under him with the vibrator on high. Trina tore her mouth from his so she didn't bite him and threw her head back from the sheer pleasure he was giving her. Navarro started to ride her hard and fast, his body powered against her and inside her.

"Oh God."

"Say my name," he ordered as he twisted his hips, changing the angle of his cock inside her, driving into her over and over.

"Navarro!"

She cried out his name as she came minutes later, feeling him coming with her as he jerked on her, groaning softly.

When she opened her eyes after recovering from the intense orgasm, Navarro was smiling at her. He still had her pinned under him and she realized he'd turned off the vibrator. She reached up since he'd lifted his chest a little off her body to give her plenty of breathing space and teased his nipple. Their gazes locked.

"You know this is crazy, right?"

He chuckled. "So?"

She nodded. "We'll be crazy together."

"It is going to be a hell of a lot of fun."

She laughed. "Yeah. It will be. I have the best time with you."

He slowly withdrew from her body to sit up on his knees. He gripped hers and pushed them up. "I love that you're flexible."

She laughed. "Is there a reason you're shoving my knees to my chest?"

"You said this thing wasn't comfortable enough to sleep in."

She laughed as she shifted around to help while he unhooked the vibrator straps. He winked at her and leaned over to set the small vibrator on the table by the bed.

"You get the light."

"Me?" He grinned. "I did the work."

"You're the big badass who used to play with bulls. I hear you have rodeo championship buckles. Someone said you were some rodeo star." She was never going to stop teasing him about that.

He laughed as he climbed off the bed. "I think we need to install one of those sound-activated, on-and-off controls in here for the lights."

Trina rolled on her side, laughing. "We can't."

He stopped by the light switch and turned to face her, smiling. "You're only saying that because you're over there and my ass is up to shut off the light."

She rolled to her knees. "Imagine this. You have already installed that device on the light."

His grin widened and he nodded. "I'd be imagining it from the bed since I wouldn't be standing over here."

She laughed. "So it's installed and we're in bed. We're going at it." She bent over, bracing one hand on the bed to brace her upper body. "And you're behind me."

"I love this. Keep going. I can totally picture it."

She slapped her ass and then slapped it again, then again. She started to laugh. "Remind you of a sound we make?" She dropped down, laughing. "The light would be turning on and off so damn fast it would blow up."

He threw back his head and laughed. His eyes sparkled with amusement as he stared at her. "Maybe that isn't such a hot idea in the bedroom after all."

"Or the living room or the dining room."

He chuckled as he flipped off the light. "Okay. No sound-activated lights in our house."

Trina stretched out on the bed and it dipped as Navarro climbed on it with her. She lay back as he curled next to her, pulling up the covers to tuck them both in, and then he tugged her into his arms so she was curled into his side with her head on his chest.

Trina placed her hand on his lower stomach, loving the feel of his warm skin. His arm was wrapped around her back and his hand rested on her hip.

"I'm glad you're here. This feels like the most right thing in my damn life, babe."

Hot tears pricked Trina's eyes. "I know, but I feel a little guilty."

"Why?" He rubbed her hip as his other hand curled over her hand on his stomach, holding it.

"I was married to Ted for sixteen years. I loved him. I really did. It's just that..."

"You can tell me anything, Trina. I know how much he meant to you. It's okay. I'm a little jealous but I know it's possible to love more than one person."

"I feel more for you. I never curled up with him at night and felt like it was the one and only place I really belonged." She hesitated. "You feel like..." She paused.

"It's where you belong and who you belong with?"

She nodded. "Yeah. How did you know?"

He squeezed her hand. "That's how I feel when we touch."

Trina pressed tighter to him. "I feel more for you, Navarro. I feel guilty as hell about that but there's no reason for you to be jealous over him. Ted never had this. He never made me this pure rightness that I have with you. It's so damn intense."

"I love you, babe. Thank you for that. I feel the same."

"I love you too."

Epilogue

Eight months later

Navarro closed the bedroom door and grinned at Trina. "Strip."

She turned, smiled up at him, and arched her eyebrows. "Now? Are you serious?"

"Rules...bedroom...do what I say..." He leaned against the door, crossing his arms over his chest.

Trina's heart sped up as she glanced at the bedside clock. She looked back at Navarro. "We have about fifteen minutes."

"I only need ten." He winked. "Take it off, babe. Stretch out on the bed on your back and spread those lovely thighs for me."

She moved, kicking off her high heels and reaching behind her for the zipper of her dress. "I am just saying this is nuts but I'm game if you are." She laughed though as she shimmied out of the dress, carefully placing it over the chair next to the bed. "I'm blaming you if we get caught."

The sound of Navarro's shoes was loud as they hit the floor. As Trina wiggled out of her panties she heard his zipper go down. Excitement raced through her as she unfastened her bra, tossing it with the dress. She turned then to watch Navarro shove down his black slacks. He shoved his boxers down with them, totally baring his body from waist to the top of his black socks. Her attention instantly went to his aroused cock—full, thick, and standing up proudly, pointing right at her.

"I'll risk us getting caught. Hell, what are they going to do?"

She grinned. "Be shocked?"

He laughed. "No way." He crossed the room, unbuttoning his shirt. "These are my brothers we're talking about. They'd be disappointed if we didn't sneak up here the second we got home."

Trina climbed on the bed and rolled over to stretch out on her back. She cupped her breasts and started playing with her nipples to warm herself up as she bent her knees. She spread them wide open, lifted her hips a little, and wiggled her ass to taunt the man she loved. His passion-filled gaze locked on her pussy.

"Hurry up. I'm staring without you."

The black jacket went sailing across the room to land on the dresser. The unbuttoned dress shirt was almost torn off of his body as he jerked it down and tossed it over the end of the bed, just climbing over the footboard to get to her. "We do everything together now so wait for me."

The hand that brushed her thigh made Trina softly moan as his roughened palm teased her softer inner thigh. "Higher."

A chuckle escaped his parted lips. "I was going to kiss you."

She lifted her head and released her breasts as her hands reached for him to pull him down on top of her but instead he crouched down, his face going level with her spread thighs. A flash of arousal burned through her as his breath fanned her skin, realizing his intention. Her clit started to throb. She loved his mouth and that strong tongue of his that could lick her within an inch of her life. Her vaginal walls clenched in anticipation of what was to come—Navarro inside her really damn soon.

"I love your kisses."

Navarro lifted his chin, his attention wandering all over her body. "Thank you, babe." His expression grew serious.

"For loving you going down on me?" She laughed. "My pleasure. Really."

"No. For selling your place so you were totally committed to making us work. Thank you for making me the happiest damn man alive." He paused. "Thank you for loving me and letting me love you."

Hot tears filled Trina's eyes as she slowly sat and tugged Navarro up enough to cup his face. She moved in closer until their noses almost met, their gazes locking.

"I'm the one who is thankful. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me, Navarro."

"You didn't have to pay for Dusty's rehab either but I'm glad you did. He's doing really well, so not only did you give me your love, but you gave me my brother back."

"Shut up. I just wrote a check. He's the one who decided to change his life when you and your brothers inspired him with the intervention you had."

"You inspire me." His hand moved and his thumb found her swollen bundle of nerves to tease by lightly rubbing her there.

A door slammed loudly in the house. Trina wanted to groan in frustration.

"Shit. Your brothers are home a few minutes early."

"I don't give a damn."

"But—"

Navarro cut her off. "They can amuse our guests as they arrive. They are all big boys. Besides, the guests won't arrive for another half hour so it's just them in the house right now." He paused. "Do you know all four of them are in love with you, babe? They kept asking me how the hell I got lucky enough to find you. You won every damn one of them over before you even let them taste your baked goods. I thought Drake was going to propose to you over dessert the night he arrived."

As she caressed Navarro's face she grinned at him. "Besides Ryder, do any of them know the truth about how we got together?"

He chuckled. "Do they know about you propositioning me? Oh yeah. That damn Ryder somehow copied our contract and he had the thing framed. He's springing it on us as a wedding gift later today. Dusty warned me in the limo on the way to the church

because he didn't want me to ruin my suit when I kicked Ryder's ass if I don't see the humor in it. He'll give it to us when the reception starts downstairs."

Trina laughed. "Shit. He wouldn't. What if someone sees it besides us? How did your other brothers take it when they found out about our arrangement? I hope they don't think bad of me. I am family now."

"Well, according to Drake, you paid way too much for me and River said if you'd seen him first you'd have married him. Dusty just grinned and said I was a lucky bastard. Ryder still thinks he's better in bed than I am and you got the wrong brother."

Trina laughed. "Well, I'll be sure to tell them that you are worth every damn penny, River never had a chance because you're the only man for me, and as for that last part..." She winked. "I'm old. I'm having a senile moment so I need reminded." She spread her thighs wider. "Show me how damn good in bed you are. That way I can be sure to tell your damn brother how wrong he is. I'm pretty certain I got the best of the bunch with you."

Navarro chuckled as he lowered himself down her body again. "I remember something about my kisses..."

She grinned. "Navarro. Navarro. Navarro. I'm saying your name now while I can still talk."

Navarro laughed, gripping her thighs. He spread them a little more, adjusting her legs until her heels rested on his wide shoulders. Trina looked down at him, staring into his beautiful blue eyes. He winked at her as he lowered his mouth slowly to her inner thigh to brush a kiss on her skin. Grinning, Trina closed her eyes to clutch at the bed.

Propositioning Navarro was the best damn thing she'd ever done in her life.

About the Author

I'm a full time "in-house supervisor" (sounds *much* better than plain ol' housewife), mother and writer. I'm addicted to caramel iced coffee, the occasional candy bar (or two) and trying to get at least five hours of sleep at night.

I love to write all kinds of stories. I think the best part about writing is the fact that real life is always uncertain, always tossing things at us that we have no control over, but when you write, you can make sure there's always a happy ending. I *love* that about writing. I love it when I sit down at my computer desk and put on my headphones to listen to loud music to block out the world around me, so I can create worlds in front of me.

Laurann 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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