

The image is a book cover. It features a romantic couple in a close embrace, about to kiss. The woman is in the foreground, her back to the camera, with long dark hair. The man is behind her, facing her. They are both shirtless. The background is a composite image showing a classical building with columns at the bottom and a dark, textured sky above. The text is overlaid on the couple's bodies.

TRISTA ANN MICHAELS

DIVINE

INTERVENTION

Divine Intervention

Trista Ann Michaels

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Blurb

As head of Senator Prescott's security detail, Walker had kept an eye on the Senator's daughter, Heather, since she was twelve. When she turned eighteen, his feelings for her became way too inappropriate, so he put another team in charge of her and focused more on the Senator, but his thoughts were never too far away from Heather.

Now she's twenty-four and the target of the men her father is trying to expose. Walker is once again put in charge of her protection. Unfortunately, Walker's attraction to her hasn't lessened and Heather knows it.

Heather has been in love with Walker since she was a teenager, so she sees this joined-at-the-hip thing as the perfect opportunity to get him to see her as something other than his job and the child she used to be. She knew he wanted her, it was just a matter of time before he gave in.

The men after her may put a kink in her seduction plans but with a little divine intervention, they may just survive the flying bullets.

Prologue

"This is just too freakin' easy," Heather Prescott murmured to herself.

She smiled with wicked amusement from her hiding spot as she watched her newly assigned security team swing back and forth through the crowded mall like bloodhounds that had lost the scent. It was the third time this month Heather had lost the security guys assigned to her.

Who did Scott think he was dealing with? She'd been trained by the best security man in the business, Walker Moore. He was head of her father's security team as well as his business partner in one of the world's most elaborate and high tech security firms. She'd cut her teeth on outwitting that man.

Heather turned to leave the mall before they spotted their prey and her one chance at freedom would be shot to hell. She grabbed her keys from her purse and jogged across the parking lot as fast as her three-inch Jimmy Choos would allow. Okay, maybe the shoes had been a bad choice, but if she'd worn sneakers, her team would have been suspicious. She hardly ever wore sneakers. Matter of fact, the last pair she'd bought four months ago were still in the box unopened.

With a sigh of utter contentment, Heather climbed into her tiny BMW convertible and put the key in the ignition. She glanced over her shoulder, making sure no one had followed her or thought to check the parking lot. Knowing those halfwits, they were still searching the halls, not once thinking she might have actually left the building.

You'd think after three times this month, they would have figured it out by now. With a flip of a switch, the canvas top slid open with a soft roar and she smiled up at a beautiful, clear blue sky.

She adjusted her sunglasses before putting the car in gear and quickly speeding out of the crowded parking lot and onto the main highway. She turned up the radio so she could hear the music over the rush of the wind. Nickelback blared loudly through the speakers and she laughed, throwing her hands briefly to the sky with a squeal. She loved driving with the top down, but her security team usually forbid it. Too dangerous, they would argue.

She scrunched her nose. Sometimes ... no scratch that ... most of the time, she hated being Senator Prescott's daughter. She loved her dad, she really did, but this public life was not for her. She hated it with a passion. She had no privacy, no freedom. Every move she made was scrutinized.

"Don't do that, it makes you look trashy."

"Don't wear that, it makes you look inappropriate."

"Don't say that, you might ruin your father's chances at reelection."

Heather rolled her eyes. The only bright spot to going home anymore was Walker.

Glancing in her rearview mirror, she noticed the same Chevy Explorer she'd seen when she'd left the parking lot. She frowned, suddenly becoming a little nervous. Walker had taught her to watch her back, to always check behind her and she did it now religiously.

Wondering if the car was following her, she took a quick right onto another four-lane road. He turned right as well and her hands tightened around the steering wheel in alarm.

"It's probably nothing," she chided, keeping an eye on the vehicle.

He kept a good distance, never increasing his speed or slowing down. She moved to the left lane to circle around a large eighteen-wheeler. The SUV did the same and she scowled. Up ahead was an exit. She sped up, veered in front of the semi, took the exit, then made a left onto a two-lane highway heading south toward Richmond.

So did the SUV.

"Shoot," she sighed as she adjusted her seat, sitting up straighter. "This isn't good. Daddy's going to kill me. That is if there's anything left once Walker gets done with me."

She glanced around, wondering where to go next, then realized her mistake. They'd left the city and the scenery was becoming much more rural, the houses much further apart. What the hell had she been thinking? She knew better than to do this.

"Okay, okay," she said to herself. "Don't panic. Think. What would Walker do?"

She needed to get back to the city, crowded roads and lots of public eyes ... fast. The SUV increased its speed, coming up fast in her rearview mirror. There was no one else on the road. She was completely alone and the fear suddenly gripping her chest made her want to hurl.

She pressed on the gas, making her convertible BMW's engine rev. The SUV behind her had a more powerful engine and overtook her quickly—a little too quickly. He tapped at the rear of her car with his chrome grill, forcing her car forward with a jerk. She gasped, moving her hands to the ten and two position on the wheel and holding tight.

What the hell should she do?

She glanced in her mirror again and an idea came to her. She braced herself, slamming hard on the brakes. She gasped as her car's rear end fishtailed slightly but she held the wheel steady, as well as her breath, as the SUV zipped past her on the right-hand shoulder to avoid hitting her.

Turning the wheel hard, she swerved into a gravel drive, then back onto the road, doing a complete one-eighty just like she'd been taught. The back tires sent gravel and dust flying as she returned to the concrete highway. Behind her, the SUV was much slower to turn, giving her several precious minutes to hopefully outrun him.

Walker had always warned her this could happen. She knew her father was constantly investigating criminals, both blue collar and white. He had a reputation for going after the bad guys both in and out of Washington. Walker had been worried someone would try to get to him through her, hence the ever-present and overprotective security detail. Why the hell hadn't she listened?

She reached forward and pressed the OnStar button. A voice broke through and said, "This is OnStar. How may I help you, Ms. Prescott?"

"Scott Wilmington's cell, please."

Scott was over her security detail. He'd be pissed as hell, but maybe he could help her out somehow. The SUV was quickly gaining ground, its silver grill coming up fast in her mirror.

"Damn son of a bitch," she yelled. "What the hell do you want?"

Scott answered after the second ring, "Heather, this had better fucking be you."

"Scott, I'm in trouble!" she yelled over the wind.

She squealed as the SUV bumped her car. Sweat made her palms slide along the wheel as she tried to get a better grip. Her heart raced wildly as she glanced at the speedometer in surprise. Eighty?

"What do you mean you're in trouble? Where are you?"

"I don't know; some two lane highway. I was headed home when... Oh, shit, shit." She braced for another hard tap of the SUV's grill.

"Heather!" he snapped.

"Some idiot in a black SUV is trying to run me off the road," she snapped. "I can't get away from him."

"Outrun him."

"Oh, yeah," she snarled sarcastically. "Like my little six cylinder is going to outrun a SUV with a damn Hemi engine!"

The Explorer came around to her left and she swallowed hard against the desire to scream. She could try the brake thing again, get behind him.

"Scott," she squealed, her fear showing in her shaky voice. "He's gonna knock me off the road."

"What road are you on?"

The front end of the Explorer smacked the side of her car, just behind the driver's door. He pushed her to the right, but she swerved back, hitting his passenger door. The whole idea of fighting back in her tiny little car was ludicrous. It was like a Chihuahua trying to fight off a Doberman.

The trembling in her hands made it hard to keep the wheel straight, but she refused to give in to panic. She could do this.

"*Heather*," Scott yelled.

She'd forgotten about him. "I'm still here," she said as she braced for another hit from the SUV. "At least for now."

Groaning, she held the wheel straight, fighting the car's desire to go to the right. She shook her head, realizing she was going to lose this one. The SUV jerked to the right, clipping her hard at the front wheel. She swerved, losing control and skidding off the road and into the woods. A tree hurtled toward her, and locking her arms on the wheel, she braced for the impact.

Metal screamed, glass shattered, her head hit the wheel. The airbag exploded, burning the inside of her arms. Her car shuddered, then died. Smoke drifted around her nose and she coughed, squinting against her blurring vision and the blinding pain in her forehead.

Blood trickled down her face and into her eyes but she couldn't seem to raise her arm to wipe it away. The SUV had turned around and sat just a few yards away idling on the side of the road. It just sat there, as though waiting. Her heart fluttered like a captured bird. If he wanted to finish her off, she didn't have the strength to fight him.

"Heather!" she heard Scott yell.

"Ms. Prescott," the OnStar voice came through the car speakers, effectively cutting off Scott. "I received a signal your airbags have deployed. Do you need assistance?"

"Yes," she whispered, barely able to speak as darkness closed in.

"Ms. Prescott, if you can hear me, help is on the way to your GPS location."

The SUV drove away and she breathed a small sigh of relief.

"Tell Walker I'm sorry," she whispered, then everything went black.

Chapter One

"Good morning, Walker."

"Good morning, Senator," Walker replied as he folded his newspaper and laid it on the table next to his coffee cup.

The morning sun felt good against his face, but his tranquil mood faltered the second Senator Jack Prescott walked onto the patio. Jack had been pestering him for days to once again head up the security taking care of his daughter, but Walker intended to refuse.

What he felt for Heather ... the things he imagined doing to her every time he set eyes on her were not professional. Hell, considering their difference in ages, it was damn inappropriate.

He was thirty-seven and she was twenty-four. Until recently he had seen her as the little girl he'd taken care of, the teenager he'd fought with and helped with her homework. It had been his job and she his responsibility. At least, until he'd found himself thinking things he shouldn't have. That's when he'd assigned someone else to watch after her full time and fast. He remained in the shadows, close by but not close enough to get himself into trouble.

His feelings hadn't lessened over time. This past Christmas party had certainly made that loud and clear. The second he saw her across the room, he couldn't take his eyes off her. Gone were the gangly legs he remembered from her youth and in their place they had become long, muscular and tan. She'd ditched the braids for long, softly curling auburn hair he itched to slide his fingers through. Beautiful green eyes that could pierce a man with a look, or narrow seductively to set his blood on fire.

The last thing he needed to be was head of her security detail. Unfortunately, he'd had a hard time coming up with a good excuse for turning the senator down.

"Where did you run off to yesterday?" Walker asked. "You know I'm supposed to know every move you make."

Jack patted Walker's shoulder as he walked by. "We'll get to that. Have you thought any more on my proposal?" The Senator sat down across from him.

"Yes and while I appreciate the offer—"

"It's not really an offer anymore. It's more of a ... demand."

Walker raised an eyebrow. "Excuse me?"

"Someone ran Heather off the road."

Walker sat forward in his chair, his body tense. "What? When?"

Jack held up his hand. "She's fine. It happened yesterday. That's where I went. I didn't say anything to you because I wanted you to remain here in my place and finish up the company business. I also didn't want you to worry, which I knew you would. I believe the same men that have been threatening me are now trying to go after her."

"Where the hell was her security when this happened?"

"Where do you think, Walker? Trying to find her."

Walker rolled his eyes in frustration. "She ditched them again?"

The senator nodded and Walker sighed, knowing what was coming and knowing without a doubt, he'd agree to it. He couldn't let anything happen to Heather and he didn't trust anyone else to do the job right. Hell, no one else could keep up with her. If he was

correct and the men who'd been threatening the senator were now after Heather, she was in serious danger.

"I need you on this, Walker. I trust you. You're probably the only one I trust."

"I'll do it," he conceded, albeit reluctantly.

Jack sighed in relief. "Thank you, Walker."

Walker nodded. "Where is she now?"

"Still in the hospital."

Walker tensed. "The hospital? Just how bad was this wreck, Jack?"

The senator raised an eyebrow as eyes so much like Heather's watched him with interest. "When her airbags deployed, OnStar sent an ambulance to her location. When the paramedics found her, she was still unconscious and they transported her immediately to the nearest hospital. She took a pretty hard hit to her forehead, so the doctors kept her overnight for observation."

Walker frowned and Jack sent him a small smile of understanding. "She's fine otherwise, but will be sore for a day or two. The police believe she was doing about sixty when she hit the tree. The car's pretty much totaled."

"Good. I hated that damn thing anyway. It's was death trap," Walker grumbled.

"Who's with her? Not the idiots who lost her, I hope."

"No. We posted two guards outside her room from our company. Everyone but Scott was let go."

Walker nodded in agreement. "When is she coming home? I assume you're having her brought here?"

Jack unfolded his napkin and placed it across his lap. "I just received a call from Scott, they should be headed home within the hour. He also informed me she's not happy about this."

"Great. She's run off the road and still doesn't see a need for bodyguards."

Heather was stubborn as hell. If she wasn't happy about this, more than likely that meant she was fighting them on it.

Jack snickered. "That's our Heather. You know her better than the other men. You've been with us since she was twelve. You'll know how to handle her."

Yeah, put her over his knee.

The very image made his cock twitch in his pants. "Disciplining a twenty-four-year-old, my guess anyway, is slightly different than disciplining a twelve-year-old," Walker replied with humor.

A cat-that-ate-the-canary grin played about the senator's mouth, making Walker frown. "Well ... I'm sure you'll manage," Jack replied.

Walker snorted. "Knowing Heather, I doubt it."

The senator turned serious as he stared at Walker. "Keep her safe. Whatever it takes. Put her in hiding, kidnap her if need be, but don't let them get their hands on her. Whatever you need is at your disposal."

Walker grinned. "I think I'll be fine. Belts, ropes and ball gags are relatively easy to get a hold of."

Jack chuckled. "Surely you're not saying Heather is difficult, Walker? I thought the two of you got along quite well."

Too well.

"We get along well enough, I suppose. The few times I've seen her lately, anyway. I

just remember those teenage years and that stubborn streak that made me want to strangle her."

"Oh, God, I remember those days as well. She really knew how to push your buttons, didn't she?"

"It was more the games of hide and seek she used to play. She was way too good at sneaking off."

"She still is. This was the third time this month she was able to ditch her team."

Walker sighed. Some things never changed. Reaching out, he picked at the linen napkin lying next to his coffee cup. "She always hated the security around her, the constant watching of everything she did."

Until she turned eighteen and she realized what he felt for her went far beyond protector—realized he found her attractive and felt things for her he had no business feeling. That was the night he'd kissed her—the night he'd almost done something he could have been fired for.

He'd never forgotten the feel of her soft curves beneath his hands, the feel of her mouth against his, the sweet taste of her lips or the sound of her whimpers as he'd pressed her against the wall, showing her with his body exactly what he'd wanted to do to her.

He'd shocked her that night. And himself. He could still see clearly her wide eyes full of desire, love, and innocence. It was that small hint of innocence that had brought him to his senses—that had made him stop. She was his boss's daughter, his job.

He'd yelled at her more harshly than he'd meant and the hurt that had clouded her eyes still made his gut clench. She'd wanted him, he knew that. And after that night, she'd never let an opportunity pass to taunt him. Even in her sexual innocence she'd been a force to be reckoned with. But he had no business touching her, wanting her.

She was now an adult. A very gorgeous, very sassy adult and he still wanted her, but he also still felt she needed to be hands off. She was still his boss's daughter and still his job. Nothing more and he needed to remember that.

* * * *

Heather sat in the back of the black SUV and rubbed her hand over the bruise discoloring her forehead. What a homecoming, she thought to herself as they pulled into the drive.

Would Walker be there? Probably.

Her heart jumped in her chest at the thought of seeing her gallant protector again. She'd first met him when she was twelve. She had been his first assignment when he'd signed on with her father's staff of security. He hadn't been happy about it either, but he'd grown to like her.

He'd teased her often, like a big brother teasing his little sister. He was thirteen years her senior but that didn't stop her from increasingly finding him attractive. As she got older, she'd gone from wanting good-night hugs, to good-night kisses. She'd fantasized about his touch, his kiss, his embrace.

She'd fallen in love with him at an early age and she still loved him.

Closing her eyes, she remembered last Christmas. He'd stood talking to her father, his dark black hair cropped short, tiny flecks of gray tickling his temple. He used to always tell her she'd make him gray before his time, but she liked the gray. It made him look distinguished.

Gray-blue eyes had met hers across the room and smoldered like molten metal. She'd smiled and he'd returned that smile, deepening the lines around his eyes, and she'd wanted nothing more than to run to him, touch him, feel his body against hers. Memories of that night weren't enough anymore.

While away at college, she'd always been so afraid he'd meet someone else—fall in love with someone else. But he hadn't. She'd always tried to tell herself it was because he loved her too, he just didn't want to admit it. More than once that night at the party, she'd caught glimpses of the same longing in his gaze she felt in her heart. He still wanted her.

During the months since Christmas, she'd worked out her plan. She was determined to make him admit it, to finally get him to lose his control and finish what he'd started that night when she was eighteen.

She frowned. Coming home with a bruised face wasn't exactly how she'd wanted to start this plan off, but you work with what you're given. She'd make the best of it.

The car came to a stop in front of the two-story New Orleans-style house. This is where she'd been raised—high in the mountains of Virginia, far from the prying eyes of Washington. It was home.

With a sigh, she straightened her back in preparation for facing her father again and winced at the dull ache traveling her spine. He loved her, she knew that. But he'd left no doubt in her mind at the hospital yesterday he was furious with her shenanigans.

"No more ditching your team, Heather, and I damn well mean it," he'd shouted. "You were almost killed this time."

Now that she'd had time to think about it, she didn't think it had been that close, although at the time, she might have thought differently. Yes, the car had deliberately run her off the road, but into a tree not off a cliff. Nor did he stay to finish the job, thank God. He'd driven off. His intent hadn't been to kill her, but to send a warning.

But a warning for what?

Unfortunately, her father hadn't been too forthcoming with any details. Just an order that her team would bring her back home and she would from now on be glued at the hip to Walker.

She smiled slightly at the image. She could certainly handle being glued to his hip. Looked forward to it, even. With a snort, she wondered what Walker thought of all this. He was livid, she was sure. Both at her antics and the fact he was now back in charge of her.

The driver opened the door and she glanced up at Scott, the only member of her team left. His glare said everything.

"I hope Walker knows what he's in for," he snarled.

"He knows," Walker replied from behind him and Heather's breath caught at the sound of his deep, raspy voice.

Scott turned to stare at Walker and when he did, it gave her a perfect unobstructed view and her breath caught in her throat. God, he looked so damn good. She rarely saw him in jeans, but he wore them today. His beige T-shirt stretched tight across his chest, outlining his pecs. Strong, muscular arms flexed as he pulled them behind his back, clasping his hands like a kid trying to not touch something. His gun was close by at his trim waist. He never went anywhere without it and vaguely she wondered if he slept with it as well.

She glanced back up at his face, which had the stern, disapproving look she

remembered from her teenage years.

Oh, yeah. He was pissed.

She swallowed, positive the heat in his eyes would singe her if she got too close. Even his full lips were thinned out, clamped tight as he stared down at her, the muscle in his cheek jerking as he worked his jaw in anger. She was sure she would get it and the thought disappointed her somewhat. This wasn't how she'd wanted things to start out this trip.

"Welcome home, brat," he said and she cringed at the name he'd given her as a child. It was a constant reminder that's how he preferred to see her. As a child.

"Brat's right," Scott snarled. "Do have any idea how much trouble she is?"

Walker shot him a glare. "Do you have any idea how close you are to losing your job?"

"Stop, seriously," Heather snapped as she climbed slowly from the SUV. "It's not his fault, it's mine and you know it. Or you should know it, you were certainly the recipient of my behavior enough. Besides, I have a killer headache and don't want to listen to it. Walk with me to my room, Walker," she ordered a little more harshly than she'd intended.

Scott snorted and Walker raised an eyebrow, a slight hint of amusement darkening his eyes. "Excuse me?"

Heather sighed and gave him her best apologetic smile as she rubbed at her sore neck. "I'm sorry. I'm tired, I have a headache and my body feels like it's been beaten with a bat. That came out way more bossy than I intended."

Walker frowned as he studied her forehead. He raised his hand, gently brushing her bangs from her brow. He touched the bruise with his thumb and she winced, pulling her head back in reflex, hissing softly through her teeth at the stab of pain that one gentle touch caused. His hand fell away and disappointment tightened her chest. He didn't touch her often but whenever he did, it never failed to send a stream of fluttery sensations to every part of her.

"Did they give you anything for that?" he asked.

She'd swear she saw concern in his gaze, and her heart leapt in her chest. "Yeah. I think that's why I'm so moody."

Walker grunted. "What's your excuse the rest of the time?"

"Ha, ha," she snarled. "Aren't you the clever comedian?"

Walker smiled and heat pulsed through her veins. He was so gorgeous when he smiled. "Just like old times," he replied.

"Ugh! I just want to go to bed, Walker." She turned and trudged up the front porch steps, Walker following along behind. "I've already had a thorough chewing out by Dad, please don't give me any grief. Save it for when I'm more myself and can better retaliate."

"Yes, ma'am," he replied sarcastically.

She stopped with her foot on the last step and turned to glare at him. He was close enough to be eye level with her, close enough she could see the tiny flecks of deep blue in his irises, close enough she could smell his musky scent. Words immediately failed her.

"Do you need something ... Heather?" he asked.

His voice had a deeper, huskier tone and she wondered if their closeness was affecting him like it was her.

"Yeah, I need something." She frowned. "It's doubtful you'll give it to me though, if past experience is any indication."

His lips twitched as though fighting a smile. "If you're referring to the spanking you deserve, you're liable to get that sooner than you think."

Her stomach flipped at the thought of being spanked by him. "Careful, Walker. I'm not twelve anymore and the threat of a spanking is no longer punishment, but foreplay."

Walker swallowed and she mentally tallied up the score with satisfaction.

Heather one, Walker, zero.

* * * *

Walker stood half in and half out of Heather's bedroom doorway, his hand rubbing at the back of his neck. The last thing he needed was to see her standing next to a bed—a bed he wanted desperately to throw her on and have his way with her, show her how damn much he'd missed her and that sassy mouth. He sighed and ran his hand down his face.

He was too old for this teenager-type lust. He had better control of himself than that, so why did he get a hard on every time she was within ten feet of him? His reactions to her drove him insane.

He heard her wince and chastised himself for being such a horny ass. She struggled to get out of the short-sleeve jacket. She moved slow, too slow. It was obvious she was in discomfort and here he was thinking about screwing her. Putting his never-ending thoughts of sex aside, he frowned and walked forward.

"I've got it," he said as he grasped the back of the jacket, and helped her slip it off her arms.

"Thanks, Walker," she said softly.

She threw him a tired smile over her shoulder that made him want to cradle her in his arms.

He looked away, clearing his throat. "Do you need anything? I can have one of the kitchen staff bring something up."

"No." She sat on the edge of the bed and looked up at him. "I just want to know what's going on. Why would someone run me off the road? What's Dad investigating this time?"

Walker's lips lifted into a sideways grin. "Hedge funds and naked short sales."

"Two things that go together like peanut butter and jelly," she replied sarcastically.

"Let me guess. He thinks the two banks that failed were brought down by an onslaught of anonymous naked short sales."

"Yes. Deliberately brought down and from the looks of things," he said, nodding his head toward her. "He must be getting pretty close."

"Great," she said with a sigh. "Does he know which hedge fund is behind it?"

"He suspects Clauson and Stine."

She raised an eyebrow. "That's where I interned. Jeez, Walker. Those people have more power than the president. Is he insane?"

"You know your dad, Heather."

"Just the hedge fund or does he suspect anyone else?"

Heather rubbed at her forehead, then winced. He wanted to go to her and hold her, take her pain away somehow. Or at least make her forget about it. He walked a few feet

to the other side of the room, then laid her jacket over the back of one of the wing chairs facing the fireplace.

"Yeah, there's a Senator from New York he suspects."

"What would be the point behind that? That's an awful lot of money just to take down some competition."

"We think there's a little more to it than that, but we're not sure what. Politics and the economy are your dad's area. But from what I understand, because of the abundance of short sales, Clauson and Stine are now head of the SEC committee that will oversee new legislation to make short sales more transparent."

Heather raised an eyebrow. "You're kidding ... right? Put the men responsible in charge of the very organization they scammed? Or was that the intent all along? To get inside and gain control of the Securities and Exchange Commission?"

Walker tilted his head, nodding once but didn't really answer. Heather was smart. Sometimes too smart.

"Just imagine what you could do if you controlled the SEC," he said.

"I'm not sure I want to. The very idea makes my head hurt even worse than what it does now."

"Why don't you try and get some sleep. You look like you could use it." She scowled up at him and he grinned. "A little make-up will do wonders for that though."

"Kiss my ass, Walker," she sneered.

"That's the best you got?" He chuckled. "You really must be feeling under the weather." At least she still had her spirit and that was a good thing. He loved her spirit. He walked over and tipped her chin up with his finger. He couldn't leave the room without touching her at least once. "Get some rest. I'll make sure everyone stays out. If you need anything, you know where to find me."

He dropped his hand and walked away before he did something stupid ... like kiss her.

"No lectures?" she asked. "No yelling about how I could have been killed or kidnapped, or worse?"

"There's something worse than being killed?" he asked with amusement. "Sounds to me like you got it covered. Do you really need to hear it all again?"

She shook her head.

"Besides, yelling at you now, while you're hurt would be like lecturing someone about drinking when they're drunk. I'd rather wait and do it when you're all better and fully capable of comprehending."

"So I'm not off the hook?"

"Not a chance in hell."

Her expression sobered. "I'm sorry you got stuck with me again, Walker," she said quietly and he turned to look at her in surprise.

"Don't be. Things were getting a little dull around here, anyway."

Her lips twisted and he almost chuckled at the sour face she made. "Well, livening things up is what I live for."

He snorted. "Brat, you don't know any way to be, other than infuriatingly crazy. It's what makes you, you."

She smiled slightly and a vise wrapped around his heart, squeezing hard. He'd fallen in love with a teenager and damned if he wasn't even more in love with the adult she'd

grown into.

Chapter Two

Heather sat in the leather chair, rapping her nails against the end table. Nervous energy was getting the best of her. She'd been home almost two days now. Most of the first had been spent in bed—the second had been spent trying to loosen her sore and tightened muscles.

Walker sat behind the desk, his full attention on the computer screen in front of him. He wore his reading glasses, which only made him look even more sexy, at least to her. He'd followed her around pretty much all day, never giving her a moment of solitude.

The constant attention had been both a blessing and a curse. She loved the fact he stayed close, but hated the fact he never got close enough to touch her.

Several times she'd deliberately brushed against him as she'd passed. His blue-gray eyes would darken in lust before he would lower his lashes, hiding his gaze and the emotions that shone within them.

She frowned at him as he sat studying the screen, for the most part ignoring her. He was so damn stubborn, either that or she was an idiot—seeing things that weren't really there, wishing for something that would never happen.

She wanted so badly to touch him, to run her fingers through his short hair and smooth her palms down along his strong, wide chest. Maybe she should just grab his face and kiss him, take matters into her own hands. She twisted her lips. Knowing him, he'd run screaming.

He saw her as his job, his partner's daughter, a child.

What did she have to do to prove to him she wasn't a child anymore? What did she have to do to get him to throw her on that desk and fuck her mindless?

She took a deep breath, almost sighing at the images running through her mind and her fingers increased their tapping yet again.

He glanced up, lowering his glasses to stare at her over the rim and butterflies leapt to life in her stomach.

"Heather ... stop."

Her hand froze. "Stop what?"

He raised an eyebrow, leaving no doubt he didn't find her the least bit amusing.

"I'm bored," she cried.

"Then be bored quietly."

She huffed in exasperation and stood. She began pacing the floor, swinging her arms restlessly. Her heels clicked against the hardwood, echoing within the paneled walls of the large home office her father shared with Walker.

"Heather," he snapped.

Now what? "Glued at the hip, Walker. You said it, not me." She resumed pacing, ignoring his irritated glare. "And stop looking at me like you want to throttle me."

"I do," he snarled.

"So what's new?"

Walker sat back in his chair and dragged his hand through his short hair. She used to love pushing his aggravation buttons when she was a kid. Now she just wanted to push his sexual buttons. Unfortunately, she was so restless and bored at the moment, she was

sure she was frustrating him instead of turning him on. Hell, she was frustrating herself.

She never handled cabin fever well. That's why she'd ditched her team so much growing up. She'd felt trapped, smothered. Like now.

"I swear, Walker, if I don't get out of this house I'm going to scream."

"It's not even been two days yet, Heather," Walker replied. "What's the matter with you? You took a nap and now you think you need to run the roads? Your claustrophobia is in your mind, relax."

"In my mind?" she snapped.

Hands on hips, she turned to glare at him. He still sat back in his chair, his hands clasped on his stomach, his eyebrow raised in amusement. His glasses were lowered on his nose as he watched her over the rim. God, he was so sexy when he looked at her like that and she had to swallow a lump of growing desire.

"I need something to do," she grumped. "Or *someone* to do."

"I beg your pardon?" Walker asked.

She grinned and opened her mouth to repeat it, but he held up a hand, stopping her. "Never mind. I heard you the first time."

She snorted. "I don't know why you're acting so offended."

"I'm not offended," he argued.

"No?" She strolled over and sat on the edge of the desk, crossing her legs.

She didn't miss the way his eyes traveled the length of her jean-clad legs all the way to her three-inch scandals, making every part of her body heat with unanswered longing and need.

"Still wearing those damn 'fuck me' heels, I see," he grumbled.

She frowned, glancing down to study her feet. "What's wrong with my shoes?"

"Not a damn thing," he snarled, scooting his chair closer to the desk and returning his attention to the computer.

"Why do guys call them 'fuck me' heels anyway?" She watched him from the corner of her eye.

"Why do girls wear them?" he countered.

"Because we want guys to see them, get turned on, then fuck us like a man starved," she replied, lowering her voice to a deep, sexy timber she hoped would catch his attention.

Apparently, it did. He swallowed and his fingers clenched where they rested against the desk.

"I walked right into that one, didn't I?" he mumbled.

Feeling reckless, Heather reached out and pushed the laptop closed. Walker sighed and removed his glasses with one hand. He dropped them onto the desk and sat back, scowling at her.

"You're just blatantly asking for it, aren't you?"

"Of course, I am. Haven't you been paying attention?" She winked, then laughed, kicking his leg with the toe of her shoe. "Come on, Walker. Do you seriously expect me to sit here and watch you work all night? Let's do something."

"Like what?" he asked in exasperation.

"My God. Are you such a workaholic you can't think of anything to do for fun?"

"We're not leaving the house, Heather."

"I'm not talking about leaving the house. There's a pool table downstairs, one lane of

bowling, a pool outside, a movie theater." She grinned. "Ever watched porn on a big screen?"

Walker stood and walked around the desk, clearly flustered and she smiled. "What?"

"From here on out, I don't even want to hear you say the word 'porn', much less watch it."

"Oh, give me a break."

Walker sighed. "For God's sake, Heather. I used to bandage your scraped knees and help you with your homework. Forgive me if I have a problem with the fact you watch porn."

"Is it truly the fact that I watch it, or that the idea I watch it turns you on?"

He pointed a finger at her. "Don't start."

She grinned. "You're too easy, Walker. Like I'm going to pass that up." She jumped from the desk and walked toward him, watching the heat in his gaze grow. He wanted her. Now if she could just get him to do something about it. "Let's go downstairs and play around."

Walker snorted. "Play around, huh?"

She reached out and touched his T-shirt, pinching the material between her thumb and forefinger. Batting her eyelashes, she looked up at him with big eyes she knew never failed to do him in. "Don't make me sit here and watch you work. As much as I enjoy looking at you, I have nothing to do." She leaned closer, lowering her voice. "I'll lose my mind and take you with me."

Walker's deep laughter rumbled through his chest. "All right," he cried, holding up one finger. "One game of pool."

"Three."

"Two."

She smiled. "You're so easy."

* * * *

Walker wiped at his lips, watching Heather as she leaned over the pool table, her gaze intent on the white ball, her stance damn near perfect. He'd taught her well to play pool and somewhere along the way, she'd learned how to seduce. It was subtle, low key—a look here, a touch there.

She'd grown up while she'd been away. She still had that playful, teasing side, still liked to have fun and laugh, but there was a very adult hunger in her gaze that set his blood on fire.

She glanced at him through her lashes and one side of her full lips turned up, creating that damned dimple in her cheek. He leaned his hip against the side of the table, trying his best to ignore what her smile did to his libido.

"Black eight in the right corner pocket."

Walker raised an eyebrow and glanced down at the table. "Not a chance in hell," he said with a chuckle.

"If I make it what will you give me?"

"If you make that shot, I'll kiss you," he said, almost positive she wouldn't make it.

She stood straight, set the end of the pool cue against the hardwood floor and leaned on it.

"Let's clarify this."

Walker smiled and rolled his eyes. "How's this for clear, sunshine? You make that shot and I'll give you a kiss that will set you on fire."

She snickered. "Set me on fire? I'm already on fire, Walker. You gotta do better than that."

She grinned wickedly, devilment sparkling in her eyes and Walker wanted nothing more than to douse the fire that burned inside her. Douse it with his cock inside her, her lips screaming his name.

"Take that shot, Heather," he ordered, doing his best to keep his lust for her in check.

She studied him for a few seconds before she picked the cue back up and repositioned herself. Walker watched, bouncing between hoping she missed the shot and hoping she made it. He wasn't sure he could stop with just one kiss.

She pulled the pool-stick back and took the shot. The white ball whacked the black one, sending it hurtling toward the left where it bounced off the side and headed straight for the right corner pocket. He closed his eyes, sighing in defeat as it fell inside the pocket with a thud.

"Relax, Walker. You don't have to pay up," she said with amusement as she reached into the pockets pulling out the balls and rolling them to the center of the table.

She walked by him and he grabbed her wrist. She turned to look at him questioningly and he wanted nothing more than to lose himself in her eyes, her body, her soul. He'd wanted her for so long. At the moment, he wasn't even sure why he'd denied himself all this time.

He pulled and she moved toward him willingly, her green eyes fields of beautiful summer grass. He dropped his cue and raised his hands to cup her cheeks. Her hand rested at his waist as he lowered his head, brushing his mouth across hers. Her lips were soft, and supple, easily conforming to his as he applied more pressure, parting her lips with his own.

He slid his tongue inside, barely able to stifle a moan as her taste filled his mouth and her tongue glided along his. She stepped closer, sliding her palms up his back and flattening her breasts against his chest. Her nipples hardened against him and he deepened the kiss, moving one of his hands to the back of her neck, holding her steady.

He knew it. One kiss wasn't enough and one turned into two, which turned into three and before he knew it, one melded into another and another. Her fingers dug into the material at his back, her moan of pleasure and need vibrating against his chest.

God, what the hell was he doing? It was that night when she was eighteen all over again. His hands lowered along her back toward her firm ass. She felt so good—he wanted her so bad. He cupped her ass, holding her against him as he ground his hard cock into the soft flesh of her stomach.

Quickly coming to his senses, he cupped her face and pushed her away from him. "Goddamnit." He growled, breathing hard.

"Don't do this, Walker," she panted.

He glanced at her eyes—her half-closed lids did nothing to hide the raging lust in her gaze. It was like looking in a mirror. He shook her shoulders, much like he had that night. "You're my job, Heather. Your dad is my friend. I'm thirteen years older than you."

"Damn you, Walker. Go to hell," she snapped and turned to leave the room but not before he saw the tears gathering in her eyes.

Walker gripped the bridge of his nose, squeezing hard against the pain in his balls

and the one in his chest. He hated that he'd hurt her ... yet again. This was an impossible situation.

He wanted her ... she wanted him. She was an adult, a grown woman. Why the hell was he fighting this?

With a sigh, he dropped his hand and ran up the stairs to the main level of the house.

"Heather," he called as he jogged into the foyer.

He didn't see her and assumed she'd gone upstairs. Taking the steps two at a time, he stopped outside her door and gripped the door handle. It wouldn't budge and he scowled down at the brass knob.

"Heather," he said through the door. "Come on, Heather, open up."

"Go away, Walker," she grumbled and his chest tightened at how defeated she sounded.

"We need to talk. Don't shut me out." She didn't answer, nor did she open the door. He placed his palm against the wood and listened. No sound came from the other side and he sighed.

"I don't want to hear it, Walker. Just let it go."

"I'm not leaving this spot until you open the door."

He heard footsteps on the other side and took a step back, waiting. She opened the door, then without warning threw a pillow into his face.

"Then you'll be needing this," she snarled.

He had quick reflexes and grabbed the pillow, shoving it from his face just in time to see her glare at him then slam the door.

"Damn it, Heather!" he snapped. "Stop acting like you're twelve and open the fucking door!"

She didn't answer and he grit his teeth in frustration. She never was afraid of him, even as a child.

"Heather!" he snapped again.

Music blared from her room and he raised an eyebrow in surprise. Shaking his head, he almost laughed at the situation. She'd turned the music up loud enough so she wouldn't hear him yell at her.

He could break down the door. That would really get her goat and probably make things even worse. He'd hurt her and come hell or high water, she'd defy him because of it. It was the way she'd always been.

Turning, he leaned his back against the door and slid to the floor, making himself comfortable enough to wait her out.

Chapter Three

Heather turned off the radio and strolled to the window overlooking the woods in the back. It was a full moon, so silvery light shone across the lawn, lighting the paths and pool. Going for a cool swim sounded like a good idea at the moment. She needed to do something to get rid of her nervous energy, to try and forget about Walker.

God, she was so stupid. She did it time and again. She loved him so much, but he refused to accept that love. He still saw her as a child, as his job and nothing she did seemed to make a difference. She needed to move on, she really did, but she was doubtful she would find anyone who could make her body feel alive like he did.

With a sigh, she turned from the window and walked to her bedroom door. Grabbing the handle, she opened it, then jumped back with a gasp when Walker fell backward onto her bedroom floor.

He glanced up at her warily and she had to bite back a startled laugh.

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

"My job," he replied.

Heather harrumphed. "This house is more secure than Fort Knox, Walker. You do not need to sleep outside my door. Besides, what if someone came through the window?" she asked, waving her hand to the other side of the room.

"Then I would be close enough to hear them," he replied as he climbed to his feet.

Heather snorted. "You didn't even hear me cross the floor, otherwise you wouldn't have fallen when I opened the door."

Walker put his hands on his hips and glared. "Are you going to continue being flippant or are you going to shut up long enough to hear me out?"

"If you're going to continue telling me how I'm too young for you or how—"

"Damn it, Heather," he snapped angrily, then stepped forward, cupping her face in his hands.

He gave her no warning, no chance to get away before he slanted his mouth across hers, his hands holding her captive. She tried at first to fight him. She was still angry, but the feel of his lips on hers, the heat of his body, the way his tongue swiped across her bottom lip just sapped every bit of anger out of her.

"I give," he whispered against her lips. "I can't fight you anymore or what I feel for you."

Her heart stopped and breathing became extremely difficult as she stared into his tortured eyes. What was he saying? Did he love her too? Was it more than just physical for him as well?

"What do you feel for me?" She rubbed his biceps with shaking fingers.

The muscles bunched beneath her exploring touch and she squeezed.

"God, help me, Heather. I've loved you since you were eighteen."

His lips covered hers, swallowing her sigh as he immediately deepened the kiss, twirling his tongue around hers, stroking, teasing, tormenting. She slid her hands to the side of his ribs, fisting her fingers in the material, terrified he'd try to pull away from her again.

Raising his hands to the back of her head, he grasped fistfuls of her hair. He tugged,

tilting her head back so he could trail a line of soft, nibbling kisses down the side of her neck. Her knees shook and her eyelids fluttered closed as he bit at the sensitive spot below her ear.

His teeth scraped along her skin, making her shudder from head to toe. She knew it would be like this, but the reality was so much better.

He moved one of his hands to the small of her back, pressing her stomach against his hard, thick cock. She moaned, wiggling just a little. His answering groan set her blood on fire and made her hips jerk toward his.

"I want you naked, Heather," he growled against her lips as he gripped the edge of her shirt.

She lifted her arms, allowing him to tug it over her head. He tossed it to the floor by the door almost angrily and stared at her chest.

His hands cupped her breasts, then pressed upward. Heather gasped, reaching behind her to undo the bra clasp. He tugged at the bra, pulling it down and off her arms. The cool air of the room hit her nipples, making them harden and tingle. With a hungry growl, Walker lowered his head, covering her nipple with his hot mouth.

He sucked hard and she moaned, the pleasure-pain sending hot currents of need to her womb. Her hands buried in his hair. She needed to hold him to her almost as much as she needed to hold tight to something to keep from falling, to keep from melting into a puddle on the floor, and she probably would have if not for one of his hands at the small of her back.

"Walker," she pleaded.

"What, baby?" he whispered as his lips worked a path up her chest and back to her mouth.

"Don't be slow, please. I've wanted you too long."

With trembling fingers she groped for the button of his pants, jerking it open. She slid her hands inside and wrapped eager fingers around the thick girth of his velvety rod. God, he was big.

He panted, closing his eyes in pleasure as she stroked his cock, working her fist from balls to tip. She'd swear he got bigger and her pussy clenched in undeniable need.

He used the heel of his foot to kick the door closed. He didn't lock it, but they were alone in the house so she wasn't worried about someone walking in. She wasn't sure at the moment she really cared all that much anyway. Truthfully, she had forgotten the door was even open.

He pulled her hand away and walked her backward toward the bed. She struggled to breathe, she wanted him so much. His steel gray eyes narrowed, focused on her, stealing what was left of her breath. Never taking her eyes off his, she kicked her shoes aside, losing at least two inches of height as her feet flattened against the soft carpet.

He gripped the waistband of her jeans and quickly unzipped them before tugging them off her hips. The cool air of the room hit her fevered flesh and she shivered, momentarily gripping his strong shoulders for support.

In her growing haste to feel his naked skin against hers, she reached for her thong, but he stopped her.

"No," he said. "I do that."

She smiled and lay back on the bed, watching him through half-closed eyes. He looked so good, so delectable as he slid her underwear down her legs, exposing her just-

waxed pussy to his heated gaze.

He spread her thighs, his eyes locking with hers as he lowered his head. Heather's breathing became shallow and she dropped her head back slightly, squinting her eyes shut as she waited for his mouth to cover her pulsing mound. But he didn't. She opened her eyes and looked at him.

He kept her gaze captive as he placed the palm of his hand against her labia and applied gentle pressure. She sighed, pressing herself against his hand. He lessened the pressure, then pressed again, simulating his hips brushing against her. She gasped for air and lifted her hips from the bed.

"Walker, please," she begged.

With the most devilish grin she'd ever seen on his face, he removed his hand and licked his tongue through the juices coating her pussy. Slowly, deliberately, he pressed the tip between her folds and moved upward toward her clit, where he flattened his tongue and pressed gently.

Heather bucked and whined, her pussy walls clenching at empty space. She needed him inside her ... now.

"Damn it, Walker," she snapped.

He rose above her, resting his elbows by her head and pushed the head of his cock into her opening.

"Take me, Heather," he whispered.

She lifted her hips, forcing his cock deeper through the wet walls of her pussy. Walker groaned and pulled back, then with a twist of his hips, thrust balls deep. Heather screamed, panting as his thick girth stretched her almost painfully.

"God, I've waited too long for this," he sighed, then rose up to his palms. "Lift your legs around me," he ordered and she complied, wrapping her legs around the small of his back and her arms around his shoulders.

It wasn't enough and she moved them further up, putting her knees almost to his shoulders as he pounded into her. Over and over he thrust hard, pushing her back on the bed as he gave her all of him, forcing her to take every last inch.

Her release built from deep inside, tightening her walls. Juices leaked out to slide down the cleft of her ass, easing his way in and out of her body. She dropped her hands to her sides, her fingers fisting in the comforter, holding tight as her body shook with the intensity. Her hips bucked, lifting from the bed and meeting his powerful thrusts.

He was pounding into her so hard, she was convinced he would split her in two, but it felt so good, so amazingly good, she would die if he stopped.

Tingling began at her clit, then moved outward. She screamed his name as her pussy clenched and pulsed, the throbs of her orgasm sending her soaring. Walker thrust harder, his own moans lost behind the sound of her cries of release as he spilled his seed inside her.

She sighed and loosened the grip she had on the blanket. "I love you, Walker."

Heather woke with a start and gasped. She felt like she was suffocating and rolled to her side, taking in slow, deep gulps of air as her body floated back down from the mind-blowing orgasm she'd just had. With a frown, she stared at the empty sheets beside her.

Walker was gone? Where had he gone?

She rolled to her back, then sat up, scanning the room. Her gaze moved downward, over her shorts and tank top. She touched the material with growing disappointment. It

had all been a dream?

A dream!

"Argh!" she cried and fell onto her back. "Oh, God, it was a freakin' dream?" she sobbed, drawing her knees up to her chest.

She slammed her fists against the mattress in frustration, and kicked her feet in disgust. A freakin' dream!

It had been so real.

She sighed toward the ceiling and suddenly felt an overwhelming urge to cry.

"I need a drink," she grumbled. "A big, strong, knock-me-on-my-ass drink!"

With a huff of exasperation and total disgust with herself, she stood and walked to the door. With her hand on the knob, she froze, wondering if Walker was still on the other side. Was he still out there waiting for her?

She hoped the jerk was. She needed to vent some anger. She could use his big, wide chest as a punching bag.

She threw the door open with a flourish ready to tell him where he could go and stared at the empty floor. "Hm." She stuck her head out into the hall, half expecting him to grab her.

He was nowhere in sight.

"Chicken," she murmured.

Oh, well. After that dream, she wasn't ready to face him anyway. She needed a few minutes to get herself together. If she looked at him now, all she would be able to see would be his naked image in her mind.

Sighing, she brushed her bangs from her eyes and stepped into the dark hall. The carpet felt soft beneath her feet as she silently strolled to the stairs that would take her to the foyer. She decided to use the main stairs since Walker almost always used the servant's stairs. That way, she was less likely to run into him.

A thud sounded from downstairs and she stopped, straining to listen. The hairs on the back of her neck stood on end as a cool draft blew across her legs. There was a window open somewhere. Why was there a window open?

"Walker?" she yelled.

A hand clasped over her mouth from behind and she gasped, struggling to get free from the arm wrapped tightly around her ribs. He hauled her against his chest, keeping her immobile.

"Be still. It's me," Walker hissed in her ear and she almost sagged in relief.

He dropped his hand from her mouth, but kept his arm around her ribs, holding her close. If she hadn't been so concerned, she would have paid better attention to the hardness of his body, the feel of his arms around her, his hot breath on her cheek.

"What's—"

"Shh, someone's in the house. Come on," he said, pulling her with him to the servant's stairs at the back of the hall.

"Wait," she whispered. "Don't you need to see who it is?"

He stopped and turned to stare at her, his face stern. "My job is you and your safety. Whoever's down there can tear the house apart, so long as you're not in it when he does."

Heather swallowed as fear gripped her chest. Was he here to get her? Was it the same man who ran her off the road? Or were they after her father this time?

"Dad's not here is he?" she asked as he began to drag her along behind him again.

"He's still in Washington, now be quiet."

She clamped her mouth closed, holding tight to Walker's hand as they slowly made their way down the stairs. Something fell over with a loud crash. Glass shattered, making a whooshing sound as it slid across the hardwood floor. She jumped at the noise and Walker turned to study her over his shoulder.

"Daddy's gun cabinet?"

He shook his head. "Too much glass, not enough thud. The TV in the den."

She nodded and tightened her fingers around his.

He put his finger over his lips and she nodded in understanding. They were almost to the bottom. The last thing they needed to do was attract attention.

From the corner of her eye, she saw a shadow move across the kitchen floor and her heart stopped. She tapped Walker, then pointed toward the shadow that had now stopped moving.

Walker held up his hand, an indication she should stay back, and nodded. It was then she noticed he had his gun. She wasn't sure if she felt more relief or less. He tried to break free of her hand, but she didn't let go. He turned his head and raised an eyebrow in question.

"It's okay," he mouthed and she loosened her hold on his fingers.

He pulled his hand free and placed it around the handle of the gun. Holding it up, he slipped down the last two stairs. Whoever was there must have seen him. A shot fired, hitting the wall by Walker's head and shattering the wood trim. Her hand flew up to cover her mouth just as Walker ducked, then fired off three shots in close succession. The man hit the floor with a thud and Walker turned to grasp her elbow, pulling her roughly down the stairs.

"Come on, let's go."

He shoved her in front of him as they sprinted out the kitchen door.

"Where to?" she yelled, wincing as her bare feet hit the gravel path.

"The Hummer," he replied.

She made a quick left turn, heading into the garage, Walker close behind her. Shouts came from the kitchen just as they entered the garage through the back door. She ran for the Hummer which was backed into its usual spot on the far side of the bay. Walker always backed into his parking space in preparation for a quick getaway. At the moment, she could kiss him for what she always considered overkill.

She threw open the passenger door and literally had to jump into the seat. Walker slid behind the wheel seconds later, quickly starting the engine. Without opening the garage door, he shoved the Hummer into drive and busted through it.

Wood cracked and flew in all directions. Heather gasped and moved to cover her face in reflex as pieces of garage door pounded the windshield. He made a sharp turn to the left onto the main road, shoving her against the door as the Hummer quickly accelerated.

"Jeez, Walker," she yelled and spun in the seat to see if they were being followed.

One car pulled out of the drive, lagging just a few yards behind. "They're following us." She looked at Walker. "You gotta lose them."

"No shit, Heather," he growled.

"Sorry," she grumbled sarcastically.

"Put your seatbelt on."

She glanced at the gun lying on the console next to her then back at the car. She was a good shot. A damn good shot. She could hit that front wheel.

Reaching up, she hit the sunroof switch and it slid open. She grabbed the gun, moving to stand in the seat so she was outside the sunroof, facing backward.

"Heather, what the hell are you doing?" he grabbed her shorts, trying to pull her back in. "Damn it, get back in this fucking car!"

She slapped at his hand. "Stop. I can do this."

"Damn it, Heather!" he yelled, swerving the car to the right to put it back on their side of the road. She squealed and grabbed the edge of the sunroof, trying to keep her balance.

"I swear to God, I'm going to beat your ass till you can't sit for a week!" he yelled.

Heather grinned at the threat, finding at least some humor despite their situation. He couldn't fight with her and keep the car on the road, so he had to give in. They couldn't afford to stop. Besides, she knew he wouldn't with her present. He wouldn't risk her like that.

The night air blew her hair into her face and she angrily brushed it to one side. Holding tight to the handle with both hands, she braced her stomach against the sunroof and took aim.

"Keep it straight, Walker," she yelled.

Walker grumbled something she couldn't make out, but he held the Hummer in a straight line. Three shots from the other car rang out and she ducked with a squeal, silently praying they would miss her.

"Heather?" Walker yelled, worry evident in his voice.

"I'm fine," she replied.

Her gaze landed on a dent in the roof just scant inches from her head and she gasped. She refused to give in to fear and narrowed her eyes toward the car in fury.

"Damn son of a bitch," she snarled, raising her arm.

She got off three shots, one hitting the driver's side headlight. She felt a moment of satisfaction as the car swerved.

"Serves you right," she yelled, then took aim again.

She could do this. She'd been going to a shooting range for over three years. She'd become a damn good marksman. There's the headlight. The wheel will be a little down and to the left. Right there. She pulled the trigger, bracing her wrists against the kickback.

She missed her intended target, instead hitting the edge of the car, just to the left of the headlight.

"Damn," she growled.

Another shot came from the car and she ducked, swearing she heard the whiz of the bullet as it sped by her head.

"Heather, get the fuck in this car!" Walker tugged at her leg and she kicked her foot out, forcing him to loosen his hold. He couldn't fight with her and drive. Whether he liked it or not, he'd have to let her do this.

Raising the gun, she once again took aim. She held her breath, praying she would get it this time as she pulled the trigger. The tire explode with a loud boom and she watched in glee as the car swerved, then rolled, coming to a stop in the ditch, the headlights pointing upward at an odd angle.

With a squeal, she dropped into the seat and smiled at Walker's scowl. "What?"

"Where the hell did you learn to shoot like that?"

"From you," she yelled back.

"The hell I did," he snarled.

"I've been going to a gun club, Walker. I'm good."

He opened his mouth, then clamped it shut again, turning his angry scowl back toward the road. She couldn't remember ever seeing him quite this angry and watched him warily from her position in the passenger seat.

Walker pulled the Hummer to the side of the road and shoved the gearshift into park before the car came to a complete stop, forcing it still with a rough jerk. She braced her hand against the dash and turned to stare at him angrily.

"Damn it, Walker. I just saved our asses back there. Don't you dare yell at me."

"I'm going to do more than yell at you," he shouted, pointing a finger in her face.

Despite the fact he was angry, he looked incredible. Or maybe it was because he was angry. Whatever the reason, she couldn't stop her heart from fluttering in her chest or from wanting to take his finger in her mouth and suck it like she'd suck his cock.

"I swear to God, Heather, if you *ever* do anything that stupid again..."

"You'll what?" she snarled back. "Spank me? Ground me? I'm not a kid anymore, Walker!"

"You don't think I fucking know that?" he snapped. "I practically have to tie my damn hands behind my back to keep from ripping your clothes off every time you're within a foot of me!"

Her eyes widened in shock and she held her breath, waiting to see what more he would admit. "I never asked you to hold yourself back, Walker. That's your own sense of distorted morality."

"Distorted morality?" he cried. "You were a fucking kid, Heather!"

"*Was* being the operative word here, you jackass."

He sighed and ran his hand down his face before glancing back in the rearview mirror. "This is not the place to be having this discussion. There could be more of them."

She turned to face the front and crossed her arms under her breasts. Her jaw ached from grinding her teeth. He didn't thank her, didn't say how proud he was. No. He had to bitch and moan, just like always.

"So what now?" she asked, breaking the tension-filled silence. "I don't even have any shoes."

He glanced down at her bare feet and a small smile tugged at his lips. "When your father told me what happened, I packed us a couple of bags ... just in case we needed to make a quick break for it." He pointed to the back of the Hummer with his thumb.

"They're in the back."

"Oh... Well, that's good, I guess." She tensed, immediately remembering what she had hidden in one of her dresser drawers and her face heated. She said a silent prayer of thanks for the darkened car as she glanced sideways at him. "Wait. You went through my dresser?"

His lips twitched. "Interesting choice of toys you have. Especially the anal ones."

She swallowed as his molten silver gaze met hers and the heat in his eyes practically burned her flesh.

"I packed a couple for you, just in case the need arose and you wanted them. I figured it would save you a trip to the store."

Was he making fun? She scowled and amusement lit up his face, infuriating her all the more. "I hate you, Walker. Do you know that?"

"No you don't," he said with a grin. "Put your seat belt on."

She flipped the safety, then slammed the gun back down on the console before reaching for the seat belt. Once it had clicked, Walker gripped her chin, turning her face toward him.

His thumb brushed over her cheek and her stomach flipped. Everything she felt for him was in her eyes. He knew how she felt and what she wanted. The rest was up to him. He'd already admitted to wanting her, now if he would just take her.

Tilting her head down slightly, he leaned over and kissed her brow. Heather twisted her lips. She would have rather had a kiss on the lips, but she supposed this was better than nothing. He let his lips linger against her skin, taking a deep breath before pulling away and looking in her eyes.

"We should probably get out of here," he said in a soft voice.

Heather nodded, unable to speak past the lump in her throat. He lingered a few seconds longer before pulling away and putting the car in drive.

"What did they want? Were they looking for me?"

He shook his head. "No. I think they were looking for the proof your father has of who was behind the naked short sales."

"How do you suppose they got past the security system?"

"Through a downstairs window is my guess. Until I look, I couldn't say for sure. I know what I would do, but..." He shrugged, keeping his gaze on the road ahead of them.

"What about Dad? Do you think he's okay?" she asked with concern.

"He's in Washington for the week. I'm sure he's fine."

"We need to call him. I don't have my cell and he'll be worried."

"I'd rather not, Heather. They could be tracing calls he receives."

"But to let him worry..."

Walker glanced at her. "He knows I won't let anything happen to you. When he realizes you're not at the house and the Hummer's gone, he'll know you're with me."

She nodded reluctantly. "Where are we going?"

"My hunting cabin for now. We'll get something to eat, shower, sleep a little, then get with your dad through a secure means and see what he wants us to do."

"Secure means?"

"We have a special email set up for this sort of thing. It's untraceable. I can access it through the satellite phone I have."

Heather nodded and drew her legs up, wrapping her arms around her knees. Now that the excitement was over, the chill of the night had begun to set in. Looking up, she realized the sunroof was still open and pushed the button to close it.

"There's a jacket in the back if you're cold."

She glanced back and grabbed the leather jacket lying on the seat. Lifting it to her shoulders, she drew in a deep breath. The smell of leather and Walker invaded her nose and she closed her eyes.

"Try to get some sleep," Walker said. "It's at least a two-hour drive to the cabin."

Chapter Four

Heather climbed out of the Hummer just as the sun began to rise and stared at the small log cabin nestled among the soaring pines on the side of the mountain. A covered porch spanned the front with wicker chairs facing the twenty-foot waterfall just a short distance away.

Its sound soothed her and she envisioned herself dangling her feet in the cool water of the creek as it rushed further down the mountain.

"It's not the Ritz, but it should do in a pinch," Walker said as he opened the back of the Hummer and grabbed their bags.

She turned to stare at him in shock. "Are you kidding me? This is gorgeous. How long have you had it?"

"About five years. It's very rustic, Heather. I have a generator for power, solar hot-water heater. The only heat is a wood stove and there's no air conditioning."

"You don't really need it up here." She stepped slowly through the grass toward the porch.

"There's no TV up here, either," he called out.

She stopped and gasped, throwing her hands into the air in mock outrage. "Oh, my, God! Shoot me now!"

Walker laughed. "Okay, I get it."

She turned to look at him, hands on her hips. "You get what? That you're being judgmental? That you think I can't live without the techy comforts of home? I enjoy this sort of thing, Walker. It's private. It's quiet. There's no security team hovering everywhere. I can wear what I want, say what I want, do what I want. It's absolute heaven." She glanced back at the cabin and smiled. "You know ... this would also be a great place to bring a boyfriend. Nothing to do but lie in bed and have sex all day."

Walker stopped and frowned. "If you want a place to have sex all day with your boyfriend, you can go get your own."

She grinned. "Jealous?"

He walked by her, glaring in his usual annoyed fashion.

"Oh, come on, Walker. Where's your sense of humor?"

"Same place as my patience, I would imagine," he grumbled.

She followed him into the cabin. "Are you always so crabby when you don't get any sleep?"

"Always," he replied with a sigh as he walked across the floor and dropped the bags at the foot of the bed.

Heather glanced around the small, one room cabin. Leather furniture faced the fireplace with the cast-iron insert. A small kitchen was off to the right with a table just big enough for two people to eat a cozy meal.

On the other side of the room, facing the living area was a bedroom area with a large king-size bed covered with a log cabin quilt in colors of navy blue, burgundy and beige. Beside the bedroom, was a small bathroom.

Her gaze moved to Walker. He stood at the back window in the bedroom part of the house, opening the sash to allow a breeze to blow through. He leaned against the

windowsill, inhaling the mountain air. His T-shirt stretched tight across his shoulders and back, the muscles in his arms taunt as he leaned on them, tilting his head to see to the right, then the left.

Her breath caught in her throat as her gaze moved downward, over firm hips and thick thighs. He worked out a lot. He always did.

Wetting her dry lips, she stepped up behind him and wrapped her arms around his ribs. She took a deep breath and rested her cheek against his back, listening to the strong, steady beat of his heart and the slow rise and fall of his breathing.

*

Walker's stomach jerked at the feel of Heather's arms around him. He looked down at her small hand resting against his stomach, just below his pecs. He put his hand over hers, covering her fingers with his.

"What's this for?" he asked softly, not wanting to startle her and make her move.

"Just a warm front, I guess. I don't know what I would have done ... if you hadn't been there."

"If I hadn't been there, someone else would've. You would've been fine."

She snorted. "That's a load of croc and you know it. You're my hero, Walker. You always have been."

Walker smiled slightly and slid his fingers between hers, entwining them against his chest. "I remember when you were thirteen. All legs and arms, a true tomboy."

Heather chuckled. "I remember all the times you made me laugh when I was sad. All the times you would sit up late with me when Dad was gone and I couldn't sleep. All the movies we watched."

"I think I watched more kid movies than a twenty-six-year-old should."

Heather laughed again. The sound vibrated against his back and he closed his eyes in complete surrender. He couldn't fight his feelings for her. He'd been trying for the last seven years and they hadn't lessened, hadn't changed. He still loved her, needed her, wanted her.

She put her forehead against his back. "I'm going to go get in the shower."

He released his hold on her hand and she slipped it free. He felt the loss of her body heat against his back like a punch and he drew in a sharp breath. Turning his head, he watched her remove her top and toss it on the bed. He froze, unable to move as he stared at her.

She had her back to him and he let his gaze lazily roam down her firm back, which tapered to a small waist. She'd always had such a beautiful figure, perfectly proportioned. His fingers clenched at his sides as he fought the need to touch her, to feel her hot body pressed against his, to smell her.

What the hell was she doing? Why didn't she undress in the bathroom?

She pushed her thumbs into the waistband of her shorts and slid them over her hips, letting them fall to the floor. His gaze remained glued to her perfectly rounded backside as she bent over and picked them up. He caught a glimpse of her pussy and his cock throbbed almost painfully, making him grit his teeth.

There were no tan lines, every inch of her flesh the perfect shade of milky cappuccino. God, he could hardly breathe as she turned to toss the shorts onto the bed with her top.

She didn't turn and look at him, but instead headed into the bathroom, leaving the

door cracked just a bit. He stared at the crack, listening to the shower running, imagining the water sliding over her curves and almost moaned.

He flexed his fingers, removing the tips of his nails from his palms. He was tired of fighting it, tired of coming up with excuses why they shouldn't. She wasn't twelve anymore. Hell, she wasn't eighteen anymore. She was a grown woman with a grown woman's wants and needs. Why the hell shouldn't he give her what she wanted?

He tugged at his shirt, pulling it from his jeans, then over his head. He let it fall to the floor by the bed, then removed his shoes, jeans, and boxers. His cock was hard, his balls drawn up tight and hurting like hell. He had a feeling she knew exactly what she did to him—exactly what undressing in front of him would make him want to do.

He pushed the door open slowly, keeping his gaze on the outline of her figure through the glass doors of the shower. She froze, staring at him through the glass. Her hand reached for the edge and she pushed, opening it. Steam flew out filling the small room. Her hair was wet, slicked back from her face. Water droplets clung to her lashes, making them sparkle.

"Walker?" Her gaze wandered down his body, coming to rest at his engorged cock before swiftly coming back to his face.

"Don't give me that shocked look, Heather. You knew exactly what you were doing out there."

One side of her lips tilted slightly. "Never could fool you, could I?"

"No," he whispered.

"Well. Are you coming in or are you going to stand there forever?"

She moved away from the door, allowing him to step inside. With the two of them in there, the shower felt much smaller than it actually was. The rain showerhead poured hot water from above them, covering their bodies. Thank god for the solar hot water. He shut the door and the shower quickly filled with steam again, giving the small space an almost romantic atmosphere.

"Hand me the shampoo," he said, nodding his head toward the tile shelf behind her.

He had to do something to get himself under better control—to slow things down a bit. Otherwise, he'd hurt her in his haste to be inside her. He'd denied himself for so long. Too damn long.

She grabbed the bottle and passed it to him. He poured shampoo in his hand, then reached out to set the bottle back on the shelf.

"Turn around," he said.

She put her back to him, watching him with interest over her shoulder. He smoothed the shampoo over her hair, working it into a lather with soft, circular motions of his fingers. She tilted her head back, the sounds of her breathy sighs pure heaven. He could imagine those same sounds passing through her lips as he fucked her and his balls tightened.

"If you ever decide to leave Security, I think you could get a job as a shampoo boy," she teased.

"I think I'll pass," he replied with amusement.

His soaped-up hands glided over her shoulders and down her back. She moaned softly as he slid them over her hips, then up and around the front to cup her full, firm breasts. They filled his hands perfectly as she arched her back, thrusting them further into his touch. He massaged, kneading them within his grasp, before pinching lightly at her

hard little nipples, drawing another moan from her sexy mouth.

He moved his hands lower, pulling her back against him as he pushed his fingers between her legs. God, he nearly lost it as he realized she was completely hairless. She sighed and dropped her head back against his chest as he dipped his middle finger between her wet folds, gently stroking her opening. She was wet and hot, so ready for him.

He teased the back of her ear with the tip of his nose before closing his lips around her lobe and sucking. Her hips pressed against his cock, trapping it between their bodies and he groaned, grinding himself against her, letting her know with his body what he wanted. Her hand lowered to rest over his between her legs and he grinned.

"Show me what you want, Heather," he whispered.

She took his hand and pressed his fingers into her channel. He thrust two of them deep, sighing as her walls squeezed at his knuckles, sucking his digits deeper.

"Walker," she moaned.

"Turn around, baby," he said and she turned in his arms.

Her cheeks were flushed an adorable shade of pink, her eyes alight with desire and passion. God, she was beautiful. He cupped her cheeks and tilted her head back, allowing the water to rinse the soap from her hair.

If he didn't get inside her soon, he'd combust. They could go slow later. Right now, he just wanted her—wanted to feel her pussy around his cock, wanted to taste her kiss when she came around him.

She slid her palms up his chest and across his rock hard nipples in a deliciously playful move that made blood rush through his ears with a deafening roar. She moved lower and gripped his cock. He had to close his eyes, grinding his teeth to keep from coming in her hands. Her grip was tight, sinful as she stroked her palm up and down his hard length.

"Damn it, Heather. You're killing me," he said as he pushed her hand away.

"I need you. I swear to God, Walker, if you push me away this time, I'll shoot you."

He chuckled and brushed his lips across hers. "No chance of that," he murmured. "I plan on making up for the last six years. I've had a damn hard-on for you ever since that party, that night I had you against the wall and felt how perfect your body fit mine. And we're starting now."

Putting his hands beneath her ass, he lifted her. Strong legs wrapped around his waist as he walked her toward the shower wall, pressing her against the tile. His mouth covered hers, swallowing her moans as he slid his cock through the warm juices coating her pussy. Her hips bucked and twisted and he groaned, grasping her waist to hold her still.

His body felt tense—like any second he would jump clean out of his skin. Every part of her moved against him, her fingers scratched at his shoulders, her hard nipples rubbed against his skin, juices leaked from her opening to coat his cock.

It was pure heaven, just like he knew it would be, how he'd dreamed it would be. Positioning his cock at her entrance, he pressed forward, moaning into her hot mouth as the walls of her pussy clamped down on him. She was tight ... so fucking tight.

He pulled back slightly, then pressed in again, going a little deeper. She broke the kiss and sighed, dropping her head back against the tile with a clunk as he thrust deeper, stretching her slick walls.

Again, he pulled almost out, watching the expressions of pleasure on her face as he

slowly thrust back in, loving the feel of her walls pulsing and sucking at his length.

"Oh, God, Walker," she said, then gasped.

He thrust harder, pushing deeper inside her body until she took all of him. The second he was balls deep, he sighed, closing his eyes. For the moment, he just wanted to enjoy the feel of his cock encased in her pussy, the feel of her legs around him, her hot breath against his neck.

"Don't stop," she cried.

"I couldn't stop now if I tried."

He growled and began a series of pounding, almost punishing thrusts. She took him, begging for more with every twist and arch of her body against his. She bit at his neck and he grunted in pleasure.

Her wild side didn't really surprise him. He'd seen it in her from the beginning. It was in her stubborn streak, her devilish smile whenever she did something she knew would piss him off. It was in the way she watched him, the way her eyes glowed, the way she kissed.

Her lips made their way back to his and he captured her mouth, thrusting his tongue into her mouth with a groan. The silky rough feel of her tongue glided around his and he sucked at it, letting his teeth scrape along its surface as she pulled away.

He squeezed at her ass, digging his fingertips into her tight muscles, holding her to him as he thrust harder, faster.

"I'm so close," she whispered against his lips. "You feel so good."

"Look at me, Heather."

Her eyes opened and stared into his just as her body erupted. Beautiful, full lips parted as she sucked in a breath of air, over and over. Walker gritted his teeth, trying to hold back, to prolong her pleasure as well as his. Just a little longer.

With a groan, he let the pressure in his balls release to spread out his cock, then throughout his body. Thrusting deep twice more, he emptied his seed inside her, sighing as he lost what was left of any resistance he had concerning his feelings for her.

Panting hard, he dropped his forehead to hers and listened to her breathing as it slowed along with his. The sound of trickling water filled the room, covering their bodies with warm spray and steam. He couldn't move—didn't want to move. He wanted to stay right here forever.

"Say something, Walker," Heather whispered. "Please say something so I know this wasn't another dream."

Walker smiled. "Trust me. This wasn't a dream. Feel that?" He pressed his cock deeper inside her. "Does that feel like a dream?"

She moaned and shook her head. "No."

"I could do this all night," he whispered.

Leaning down, he kissed the side of her neck, grinding his groin against her clit.

"You keep doing that and you will be doing this all night. You'll get me turned on again."

"I got news for you," he raised his head and looked into her eyes, "you will be turned on again. Just accept it."

"Really?" she drawled. "Is that a fact?"

He gave her a stern look. "I wouldn't fight me on this, Heather."

She grinned wickedly and his cock twitched. Heather would always fight him if for

no other reason than she found it fun. Truthfully, so did he, but he didn't dare let her know that. He had a feeling that was the primary reason she enjoyed it so much.

"How about I take you to that bed and make love to you the right way?"

She smiled. "I didn't see anything wrong with this way."

He chuckled. "Neither did I. But I haven't tasted you yet ... if you get my drift."

"Ooh," she whispered. "Aren't you naughty?"

"You haven't seen anything, beautiful." He brushed his lips across hers playfully. "I plan on doing things to you—"

She swiped her tongue along his lower lip, making his breath catch in his chest.

"Do your worst ... or your best," she whispered, before sucking gently on his lower lip, then letting it go.

She gazed into his eyes, hers an open book to her feelings. Walker felt a sudden urge to drown in those eyes—to admit things to her he never imagined he would admit to anyone.

He pressed his cock deep, holding her against the wall with the pressure of his hips. Raising one hand, he cupped her cheek, brushing his thumb along her flesh.

"I love you, Heather."

"Do you have any idea how long I've waited to hear you say that?" she asked softly.

His lips tilted into a sideways smile. "Probably as long as I've been denying it."

Chapter Five

Heather tried hard to fight back the tears that threatened to spill over. She had no idea just how much she wanted to hear those words until he'd actually said them. She'd loved him for so long.

He pulled from her body and she sighed in protest, wanting to feel him back inside her as her feet again touched the floor. He was huge and truthfully, at first, she wasn't sure she was going to be able to take all of him but she had and it had been amazing. Whoever said size didn't matter was full of crap.

He turned off the water, then bent to pick her up in his arms. She gasped and wrapped her arms around his neck, holding tight as he carried her to the bedroom. She dipped her head, burying her face in his neck and inhaling his scent. He smelled like the shampoo, woody and musky.

She placed a soft kiss beneath his ear and smiled at the feel of his shudder.

"Minx," he growled.

She giggled and crossed her feet at the ankles.

"Don't get too comfortable," he whispered.

"Why not?"

He dropped her onto the bed and she bounced with a squeal. "Walker," she cried. "I'm wet. I'll get the bed wet."

"Heather," he said as he climbed over her, settling next to her on the mattress. "Don't worry about the bed."

She smiled, sliding her palms up his hard biceps and across his wide shoulders. His skin was so warm and still slightly wet from the shower. She leaned forward and licked a drop of water that clung to his collarbone.

Walker's hand slid up her ribs, his fingers flexing as her tongue flicked along his flesh. His thumb brushed the underside of her breasts and she sucked in a gulp of air, arching her back slightly for more.

"Lie back," he whispered in her ear and she rested on her back, staring up at him.

She let her hands fall to her sides as he leaned down to bite at her shoulder, his teeth scraping along her skin. She drew in shaky breaths as his lips moved lower, slowly working a path to her breasts. She could feel them swelling, the ache building as his mouth moved lower.

He raised his palm, cupping her breast from underneath. His thumb swiped across her nipple and she moaned, arching her back. He moved his thumb, replacing it with his hot mouth and she cried out, burying her fingers in his hair to pull him closer.

Lifting his head, he grasped both her hands and held them over her head with one of his. Her heart skipped an excited beat at the show of dominance.

"Walker?" she questioned, shocked at her body's reaction to the restraining hold.

It turned her on.

Walker had always been dominant, forceful, demanding, and the fact that part of him came out when he made love just made those traits all the more exciting.

Every part of her suddenly felt the need for his touch, his kiss. But more than that, she needed to touch him. She tried to tug her hands free, but he held firm.

"I've waited a long time for this," he whispered against her lips.

He drew teasing circles over her nipple with the palm of his free hand and she had to swallow back a scream of utter delight. The touch made her tingle all over. Her womb clenched and she lifted one knee, rubbing her thigh along his. His body hair scratched at her flesh, making her shiver.

"So have I," she panted. "I want to touch you, Walker."

"In time," he replied, brushing his lips across hers.

He pinched her nipple and she moaned as the pleasure-pain intensified her lust to a fever pitch.

"Walker," she sighed.

"Shh," he whispered as his lips moved back to her breast.

He covered her nipple with his mouth and swiped his tongue back and forth over the tight bud. She cried out, thrusting her breast further into his mouth and he rewarded her by biting down. She gasped at the sharp bite of pain, then moaned when he licked his tongue across, soothing the pain away and replacing it with a burning need.

"Keep your hands there," he ordered as his kiss worked its way down her stomach.

He released his hold on her hands, moving to climb over her, spreading her thighs with his shoulders. She raised her hands without thinking, intent on touching those wide shoulders, pushing him exactly where she wanted him.

"Heather," he growled and she dropped them back down, fisting her fingers into the quilt above her head.

"I like that you shave," he murmured, nuzzling her with his nose, just above her clit.

She moaned and bucked her hips. "I overheard you say you liked that," she whispered.

He glanced up at her with a frown. "When?"

"We can talk about this later, Walker," she cried.

"Why not now?" he said before flicking his tongue out, swiping it over her clit.

She sighed. "Because I'm not sure I can speak right now."

"You sound fine to me," he murmured, sliding his tongue lower, toward the leaking opening of her pussy. "Matter of fact, I like your breathless sound. The way you gasp when I do this." He drew his tongue up her slit, then circled her clit with the tip.

She gasped and lifted her hips clear off the bed.

"Now when did you hear me say that?" He smiled wickedly at her from between her legs.

"Walker," she growled.

"Come on, baby," he whispered, separating her labia with the tips of his fingers.

"Tell me."

She screamed loudly, twisting her head from side to side. "You were talking to Scott. You were..." She swallowed as he thrust his tongue into her channel. "You were..." She panted, finding it hard to catch her breath as he pulled his tongue back out, licking at the juices slipping free.

"Spit it out, Heather," he teased.

"Damn you," she hissed. "You were talking about women and what you liked."

"And thinking about you the whole time," he whispered. "I remember that conversation. It was just after you'd turned eighteen."

He thrust two fingers inside her passage, pushing deep and she bit down on her lower

lip to keep from screaming.

"I've thought about doing this to you so many times," he whispered, his own voice sounding slightly tense and breathless. "Tasting you." He licked his tongue across her clit, thrusting his fingers in and out. "Making you scream."

With a moan, he sucked at her clit and she gasped, grinding her pussy against his face. She was so close, so damn close.

"Walker," she squealed as her release slammed through her.

Blinding light exploded behind her eyes as he rose above her, settling his thick cock at her entrance. Before her orgasm was even over, he thrust into her, stretching her throbbing walls and beginning her orgasm all over again.

She screamed, bucking beneath him wildly as she rode out the waves. It ended only to begin again, as he pounded into her, thrusting deep, then pulling back, her thick cream easing his way.

She wrapped her legs around his back, forcing him deeper. Lifting her hands, she gripped his shoulders, digging her fingers into his flesh. He groaned and she swore he hit her womb, sending sharp tingles of pleasure throughout her body.

"Heather," he hissed, then tensed above her.

He shoved into her hard and deep, emptying his seed. His arms shook with the strain, his neck muscles corded and bulging. God, he looked incredible and she couldn't stop staring. He opened his eyes and stared down at her, his breathing just as harsh and erratic as hers.

"I love you, Walker," she whispered.

He dropped to his elbows, covering her lips with his in a kiss so sweet she wanted to cry. With a tired sigh, he rested his forehead against hers. His cock was still buried inside her and she lifted her hips, rotating them against him.

He moaned and ground his hips in time with hers, matching her movements. He stopped and stared at her. "Do you know what I just realized?"

She frowned. "What?"

"I didn't use a condom," he whispered. "I don't even think I have any here."

She smiled slightly. "I'm on the pill and I've been tested." Her smile faded slightly. She'd been so excited to finally have him, she hadn't even thought about him and all the other women he'd been with. "Have you?"

He nodded just a little. "Yes and everything is fine." He chuckled softly. "It's a damn good thing too. Now that I've had you without one, I'm not sure I could use one."

Heather laughed softly. She knew exactly how he felt.

"I think we should probably eat something before we go for round three," he whispered. His lips lifted into a grin that made her melt. "I'm not as young as you. I may need a little time to recoup."

"Are you trying to say you're old?"

"I feel old sometimes," he said as he rolled to his side, pulling her with him.

"Walker, you're not old," she chided, settling against his chest as his arms wrapped around her back. "Are you still fixated on our age difference?"

"Not anymore," he said. "I love you, Heather. I can't change that. I've tried, believe me." She frowned up at him and he kissed her nose. "You're stuck with me. When you're sixty and I'm seventy-three and you're changing my old-person diapers, you'll still be stuck with me."

Heather laughed. "Well. I may be changing your diapers later, but for right now I think you should feed me breakfast."

Walker sighed. "It never ends. Walker, I'm hungry. Walker, I'm bored. Walker, where's my homework, I know I left it on the table. Walker, teach me to drive—"

Heather swatted at his chest, making him laugh.

"I've been following your demands since you were twelve. I think it's time you took care of me for a while."

Rising to her elbow, she studied him thoughtfully. "Was I really that bad?"

"You were adorable. I loved every minute of my job," he replied so deadpan, she couldn't help but chuckle.

He touched her cheek and smiled. "No. You weren't bad at all. I fell in love with you, Heather. At fucking eighteen, I fell in love with you. In some people's eyes that makes me a sick pervert."

"Not in mine. And mine are the only ones that matter."

His expression turned sober. "Your father's matter."

"Oh, please. He adores you."

He leaned over and nuzzled her neck. "He might not adore me so much if he knew what I'd just done to you."

She took a deep breath. "Daddy knows, Walker."

He pulled back and stared at her. "Excuse me?"

"He saw us the night of that party, when you had me against the wall."

He swallowed, his eyes widening. "Are you serious?"

She nodded. "He talked to me about it the next day. I assured him you'd never done anything like that before. I told him I was in love with you and pushed you to it." She watched him, then continued. "He said he suspected as much. He'd seen the way you looked at me and the way I looked at you."

"Son of a bitch," he said with a sigh. "He never said a word. Never let on at all."

She shrugged. "I guess he trusted you."

Walker rolled to his back and threw his arm over his eyes. "I'll never be able to look him in the face again. I can't count the number of times I masturbated thinking of you."

"Lots of men have fantasies about teenagers, Walker," she said with a giggle. "It's not that big a deal. Later, if you want, maybe I'll dress in a school-girl outfit."

"You're not helping," he grumbled and she laughed even harder.

"Come on," she said, shaking his chest. "Walker, I'm hungry."

Walker laughed and wrapped his arms around her shoulders, pulling her close for a hug.

"You're a fucking mess," he said with a chuckle, then slapped her ass hard with his palm.

"Ouch," she yelped with a laugh.

"I'll tell you what. You find us something to eat and I'll email your dad."

"Deal," she said with a smile. Jumping from the bed, she grabbed his T-shirt lying on the floor and threw it on. It hung halfway to her knees, completely covering her naked body.

She pulled her damp hair from underneath it and headed to the kitchen.

"I think that looks better on you than it does me," Walker drawled as he sat up, watching her from the bed.

She smiled at him over her shoulder. "No. Trust me. It looks much better on you. It outlines those muscles you have perfectly."

He grinned, setting her blood on fire. "Why do you think I wore it?"

"Oh, so that's how it was, huh? Sounds like you were teasing me just as much as I was teasing you." She threw open the refrigerator door to rummage through the contents. She frowned and stared at the door, running her finger along the edge. "Wait a minute," she said. "I thought you said there was no power except for the generator. How's the fridge running?"

"Propane," he said as he walked to the foot of the bed and pulled a cell phone from his bag.

"A propane refrigerator?" she asked skeptically.

He nodded as a small smile played at his lips. "They're designed for cabins like these. The stove and oven are propane also."

"Interesting. You could live completely off grid up here."

She turned back to the fridge and moved a few things around. Sandwich meat, mayo, eggs, bacon, beer. Of course, there's beer, she thought with a shake of her head. Men never seem to go anywhere without beer.

"How often do you come up here?" She continued to study the contents.

"It's not just me that uses it. Your father does, my father does, my brother does—"

"Ah," she said with a nod. "So who stocks the fridge?"

"We all do."

Closing the door, she opened the freezer, examining the contents there as well. She spotted a bottle of Jack Daniels and held it up, watching Walker over the edge of the door.

He shrugged and grinned. "I finished off most of that the day I found out you were back under my control."

She gave him her best "yeah, right" look and he chuckled.

"That's actually been in there a while. I think I got that after the Christmas party. Don't let anyone tell you a man can't get a hard-on when he's dog ass drunk."

She frowned. "And why did you have a hard-on? Who was here with you?"

"Just you."

"Me?"

"Yep, you and my very vivid imagination." He walked over to her and touched her cheek. "I've dated other women, Heather. Slept with other women. But I was never in a serious relationship with anyone. I couldn't get past you."

He chuckled her under the chin and her heart warmed.

"So you pined for me?" She smiled.

He sat down at the table and glanced at her in amusement through his lashes. The morning sun shone through the window, highlighting the gray around his temples. His hair was so short, almost a military cut, so it never looked mussed or out of place. His blue eyes twinkled as they slowly moved down her body before coming to rest again on her face.

"I'm a man. I'll never admit to pining."

"Oh, of course not," she replied, rolling her eyes.

"Besides," he said as he flipped the phone open. "Do you really need me to admit such a thing? You have enough power over me as it is."

She laughed and grabbed one of the bags of Jimmy Dean Breakfast Skillets from the freezer and shut the door. She searched the cabinets for a skillet and after finding it, placed it on the stove.

"That stove doesn't have an electric start, so you'll have to use a match. They're in the top right drawer."

She nodded and pulled some matches from the drawer. She lit one and held it against the burner while at the same time turning the knob. It started instantly and she grabbed the skillet, placing it over the flame.

"Looks like your Dad emailed us," Walker said and she turned to look at him.

"You're connected already?"

He nodded, still staring at the screen. "It's satellite, baby. It connects instantly."

"What does he say?"

"Notified about the house. I assume Heather is with you, since neither of you were found and the Hummer is missing. Must step things up. Take care of our girl. Jackie." He frowned at her. "Jackie?"

"It's what mom used to call him back before she died." Heather's mind drifted back to her mom. It had been fifteen years since she died. Sometimes, she could barely remember what she looked like. "Is that all he says?"

"He sent a link."

Heather stepped away from the stove and stared at the small screen over Walker's shoulder. "It's an online storage site."

"Yeah. Unfortunately, we need a sign on and a password."

"Try Jackie as the sign on."

He typed in Jackie, then glanced at her over his shoulder. "Okay. What about the password?"

"I don't know," she said, as she stood straight, thinking. "It has to be something in that email if you don't already know what it is."

The sizzling skillet caught her attention and she moved back to the stove, stirring the contents.

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Walker stared at the email with a frown. Two words stuck out—our girl. Could Heather be right?

He typed in our girl under the password then hit enter. After a couple of seconds of thinking, it took him to the site and all the information Jack had uploaded.

"Son of a bitch," Walker whispered as he looked through the pages of scanned documents.

Stock reports, bank statements—it was all here. Everything they needed to point the finger at the men responsible. How the hell had he gotten all this?

"What is it?" Heather asked as she read over his shoulder. "Oh my God. Is that who I think it is?"

"Who?"

She pointed to a name in the middle of the screen. Walker squinted to better see it and Heather snorted. "Where's your glasses, Walker?"

"Hell if I know," he replied with a grin. "To be honest I was thinking more about getting you in bed than finding my reading glasses. But unless I'm completely blind, that's Mark Wiggs, the Fed Chairman."

"How did Daddy figure out who was behind the short sales? They're usually done anonymously."

"He followed the money. They made billions off those short sales."

"And killed two banks in the process." Heather shook her head, her eyes filling with worry. "Walker, Daddy's in way over his head here. These people are above the law. There're almost untouchable."

Walker tilted his head in acknowledgement. "Almost."

"Who are you going to get to arrest these people?" she demanded.

"We don't need to have them arrested ... just exposed. Once it all comes to light, the FBI and the SEC will have no choice but to do something."

She patted his shoulder and replied with sarcasm. "You're real cute when you're being naive."

He sat back in his chair and looked up at her. "You have a better idea?"

She sighed. "Not at the moment."

She chewed on her lower lip as she walked back to the stove to continue stirring breakfast. The smell of sausage, peppers, and onions filled the room, making his stomach growl. He didn't realize just how hungry he was.

He studied her profile. He'd known her for a long time and to him, the worry on her face was evident. He stood and strolled to stand behind her. He slid his arms around her stomach, holding her against his chest.

"I know you," he whispered, nuzzling her neck. "You're going to worry yourself sick over this."

"Of course, I'm worried," she whispered. "Aren't you worried?"

He rubbed his palms up and down her arms. "I think your dad's going to be fine, sweetheart. He can take care of himself."

"I know," she said with a tired sigh.

"You just need to worry about you and how you're going to keep me satisfied over the next few days."

She snickered and turned in his arms to face him. "Is sex all you think about?" she asked playfully and he was happy to see the worry leave her eyes, if only temporarily.

"When you're dressed like that? Walking around in my T-shirt?" He brushed her bangs from her eyes with the tip of his middle finger. "I use to fantasize about you wearing just what you're wearing. Looking just like you look right now."

"And how do I look right now?"

"Like a woman well loved."

"Well ... I was well loved."

"Yes," he said with a grin. "And you will be again."

Chapter Six

Heather watched Walker dry the dishes and smiled to herself. This is what she'd fantasized about for years—acting like a couple, doing dishes together, talking, laughing ... kissing. He glanced sideways at her and winked before turning to open the cabinet to place the plate inside.

Her gaze dropped to his tight ass and she snickered at the tan line separating his hips and waist. He looked at her over his shoulder, his eyebrow raised in question.

"What the hell do you find so amusing?" he asked.

"You're drying dishes in the nude."

"So..." He dropped the dishtowel on the counter with a grin. "You got a problem with that?"

"No. Not when your ass looks like that. Although, you should probably lie out in the nude more. Your butt's a little whiter than the rest of you."

He chuckled and leaned against the counter. "Can't say as I'm very worried about whether or not my ass is tanned."

Her gaze wandered down his chest, over the ridges of his stomach and came to a stop at his cock. She licked her lips, then stared at him coyly through her lashes. It was amazing how sure of himself he was, although sometimes his arrogance could drive her to drink. But there wasn't any arrogance in his stance today, just casual amusement and a confidence that made her mouth water.

"What?" he asked softly and she smiled just a little.

"I'm just enjoying looking at you. Did you email Dad and let him know we were okay?"

He nodded. "Enjoying looking at me, huh?" He glanced down at his cock, then back at her with a grin. His eyes widened slightly before taking on a wicked gleam that sent her pulse racing. "I just remembered something."

He walked toward the bed and she watched him go with a frown. "What did you forget?" she asked.

He grabbed her bag off the floor and dropped it onto the foot of the mattress. He unzipped it and she raced forward, remembering with growing embarrassment what he'd said last night about her toys.

"I thought you were joking," she said as he pulled her unopened anal wand from her bag. She snatched it from his hand with a scowl. "I had this hidden. You had to have really been snooping to find it."

"I wasn't snooping." He snatched it right back and she gasped at the speed at which he did it. "I must admit. It shocked the hell out of me. Have you ever used one of these or did you buy it on impulse with the intent to use it, but chickened out?"

She snorted and crossed her arms over her chest. "I did not chicken out. I just hadn't opened that one yet. The one I usually use is back at my apartment." She stepped closer and lowered her voice. "The one I have at home is a double penetration one. This one isn't, nor is it as big as I like."

He visibly swallowed and she smiled to herself in satisfaction. He glanced at the package, then back at her, his eyes glowing with a dark need that made her insides

quiver. His cock, she noticed, had also shown signs of interest, thickening right before her eyes.

"You wait here," he said as he walked past her and into the kitchen.

With a quick tug, he pulled open one of the kitchen drawers and grabbed a knife. He made quick work of the plastic packaging, throwing it in the trash as he pulled it apart.

She swallowed as his gaze met hers. Excitement skimmed through her veins at the thought of him using that thing on her. He moved to his nightstand and pulled out a bottle of lube, spreading the cream around the long rod with his fingers before tossing the toy on the bed.

"Come here," he ordered with a crook of his finger.

Her skin tingled at the look in his eyes. She moved to stand between him and the bed. His hands touched the side of her thighs, his palms slowly sliding up her legs, dipping beneath the edge of his shirt to smooth over the rise of her hips.

She slid her hands up along his chest and wrapped them around his neck as his head lowered to hers. His lips were soft as they brushed over hers, gently caressing her mouth. Hers parted on a sigh, eagerness for him to deepen the kiss tightening her stomach. She loved the way he kissed, whether it was wild and hard or gentle and soft like now, she could never get enough. He always left her wanting so much more.

He dug his fingers into her ass, pulling her against him as he deepened the kiss. His tongue slid along hers, teasing with light, swirling strokes.

Gripping the edge of the shirt in his fists, he broke the kiss. He lifted the shirt over her head and tossed it to the floor as his stare dropped to her breasts.

"Bend over," he commanded.

His voice was rough, gravely and left no room for argument. Wow, she liked it when he was like this. She liked it a lot.

Taking a deep breath, she turned and put her back to him. Glancing briefly back over her shoulder, she put one knee on the bed and climbed onto the mattress on all fours, anxiously awaiting his next move.

He leaned over and placed a kiss on her ass, then bit it, sinking his teeth into her flesh. She yelped, then giggled as his palm slapped her hip.

"Like double penetration, do you?" he asked, his voice deep, dark, sensual.

"Sometimes," she whispered, almost breathlessly.

She'd actually only used the double penetration toy a couple of times and both times had given her an orgasm to rival the one he had. That was another one of the things she'd heard him say he liked—anal sex or screwing a girl's pussy with a dildo in her ass.

"I had no idea you were so kinky," he said, running his palm over the rise of her hip.

"I heard about it from you."

"Yeah?" he said. "I assume from that same conversation with Scott. I need to remember to not drink so much when you're that close by."

She laughed softly at his dry tone. He reached past her to grab the wand and her breathing suddenly increased.

"But on the other hand," he murmured as he used his hands to spread the cheeks of her ass.

He pressed the tip of the wand against the tight hole of her anus and she gasped in anticipation. Every inch of her tensed, waiting for that initial thrust, that full feeling she knew would only add to her pleasure. He pushed it forward and she pressed outward,

relaxing the muscles, easing the toy's way inside.

Walker moaned as he pressed it deep, filling her with the wand. "Damn," he whispered as he slid his hand between her legs and cupped her pussy.

Her juices flowed to coat his palm and she groaned as he used the tip of his fingers to separate the folds of her drenched labia.

"Roll over," he said in a hoarse whisper.

She quickly rolled to her back, watching as he settled himself over her. "You're a hell of a lot better than the fantasy," he murmured as he trailed soft kisses along her neck. "A hell of a lot hotter." He nipped at her ear lobe and her breath caught.

His cock slid enticingly against her pussy, teasing her and she lifted her hips, rocking them along with his movements.

*

Walker could hardly breathe he wanted her so bad. His balls practically exploded with the need to feel her wet walls wrapped around his throbbing cock. He'd gone from mildly amused at her calling his ass white to full blown horny in a matter of seconds. The fact she liked this sort of stuff only intensified his desire.

He always imagined his little angel as innocent. Damn, not anymore. She was hot, wild, obviously open minded and adventurous, at times infuriating, but that just made him want her all the more.

Her juices coated her pussy, making it slick and ready for him. Her body undulated beneath him like a vixen, setting his blood on fire. He cupped her breast and kneaded the firm mound within his grasp. She moaned and her nipple beaded beneath his palm. He used his thumb and forefinger to roll the little nub, making her gasp.

He raised up slightly, watching her face. She was so beautiful he couldn't stop looking at her, couldn't stop needing her.

"Walker," she sighed, lifting her hips against him. He moaned.

"Keep that up, baby and you'll get more than you bargain for." He pistoned his hips against her clit, making her buck wildly. "Do you think you can take me and the toy?"

He dipped his head and bit at her chin.

"Yes," she hissed, wiggling her pussy, trying to get the head of his cock to enter her.

All her little sighs, groans and movements made him crazy. Her appetite fit his own and he smiled, anxious to feel that pussy clamping down on him. Repositioning his cock, he set it at her wet entrance, pushing the head just inside. He groaned, stopping partway.

She was tight without the toy, with it, she was absolute blessed torture.

"Walker," she begged, lifting her ass from the bed and forcing him a little deeper.

He gasped and pressed back down on her hip with his palm, pushing her back to the mattress. "Damn it, be still," he panted. "Or I'll fucking lose my mind."

He rested his forehead against hers, trying to get his breathing and lust under control. "God, you feel good," he sighed. "You're so tight."

He pulled back, then ever so slowly buried his cock balls deep. He groaned as her pussy encased every inch of him with warm, wet heat. She cried out, lifting her hips from the bed to meet him as he tried to force himself even deeper.

"Oh God, Walker!" she screamed.

Her nails dug into his back, scratching at his skin. He put his hand at the back of her thigh, lifting it around his back. Reaching down, he gripped the edge of the toy, pulling it out, then pressing it back in while he remained deep inside her. She gasped, staring up at

him with wide, shocked, passion-filled eyes.

"Like that?" he asked.

She nodded, her eyes closing on her quiet sigh of bliss. He sighed as well, enjoying the feel of the toy as it rubbed against his cock through the thin membrane that separated one channel from another.

He thrust the toy deep and left it there, his hand supporting her ass as he began to move himself. Pulling his cock almost all the way out before thrusting back in hard. With every pump of his hips, she screamed, her cries begging him to keep going, to not stop. She even yelled at him to fuck her harder.

He gave her exactly what she wanted, pounding into her harder and deeper with every stroke. The walls of her pussy clenched around him, sucking at his cock till he thought he'd die from the pleasure. He couldn't breathe, couldn't think. He could only feel. Feel her body tense and pulse, feel the juices pour from her pussy to coat his cock, easing his way deeper.

Rising on his palms, he pistoned his hips into her over and over, answering her cries for more. My God, he never thought it would be like this, never imagined it would be this good. The fantasy never even came close to the reality of the two of them together.

Heather shouted, and he closed his eyes, groaning himself as the walls of her pussy rippled around him, milking him until he couldn't hold it back anymore. With a growl, he pumped hard three times, emptying his seed inside her.

He kept his weight off her as he breathed deep, trying to catch his breath. Her leg slid from his hip to lie on the bed next to his. He glanced down at her, wondering if he'd been too rough, forced her to take too much.

"Are you okay, baby?" he asked.

She opened her eyes and smiled up at him. "I'm fine," she said and he smiled at how drunk she sounded. "Oh my God. You're so much better than any toy."

Walker laughed and rolled to his side, pulling her with him. "So are you," he murmured, kissing her neck. "You're a hell of a fuck, Heather."

Heather snorted, slapping at his chest. "See what you missed out on all this time?" she chided with a grin.

He chuckled and held her tighter, covering her swollen lips with his own. As he kissed her, he cupped her cheek with his hand, deeply inhaling her scent mingled with his own. Breaking away, he smiled.

"We should probably get that wand out," he whispered. "I don't want you sore for later."

"Why? What's later?" A cheeky grin tugged at her lips making her look adorable.

"Me in that ass."

"Oh," she breathed, a spark of heat igniting in her eyes.

Oh, yeah. She was definitely made for him.

Chapter Seven

"Burgers are ready," Walker yelled from the other side of the porch.

Heather turned her gaze away from the creek and the sparkles on the water, created by the mid-afternoon sunshine streaking through the canopy of maple and pine trees. It had turned into such a beautiful day but she couldn't seem to keep her mind off her father and the danger they were all in.

With a sigh, she grabbed the empty plate sitting on one of the wicker chairs and handed it to Walker without really looking at him.

"You okay?" he asked.

She nodded. "Yeah. I'm sorry," she replied with a light laugh she knew would come across as fake. "I'm just thinking."

"About what?" He used the spatula to place the hamburgers on the plate as he waited for her to answer.

"This whole situation. How long are we going to have to stay in hiding? As much as I love it here, I'll go stir crazy before too much longer."

Walker snorted. "You? Get stir crazy? I would have never imagined." She scrunched her nose at him and he snickered. "We'll just have to follow your dad's lead on this one, Heather. It shouldn't be too much longer."

"I was supposed to start a job next week."

He raised his head, looking at her in surprise. "Really. Where?"

She cringed, turning to pluck a splinter from the porch railing. He would be livid, she just knew it and to be honest, she hadn't really decided whether or not she would take it. She had a degree in economics and business. She didn't know how to run a security company. "At Moore-Prescott and Associates." She glanced at him from the corner of her eye and almost grinned at the shocked look on his face. Oh, yeah. He was pissed.

"You were going to work for the security company your father and I own together?"

She nodded and turned to face him. Leaning her back against the railing, she braced herself for one of his infuriated tirades. Although she hoped that after today, he might take the news a little bit better.

"Daddy didn't tell you?"

"No," he replied, narrowing his eyes. "What happened to wanting to work the stock exchange?"

"I hated the internship, Walker. I love economics, numbers, but I hated the floor of the exchange. Daddy offered me a job as vice president of the security company, just until I decided what I wanted to do. He thought my minor in business would be good—"

Walker tossed the plate onto the ledge extending from the side of the grill with a clang and she flinched. This wasn't going well at all.

"Why are you angry?" she asked, becoming angry herself. She thought about telling him she hadn't decided if she would take it and truthfully, she doubted she would, but after seeing his reaction, to hell with it. She'd take the damn job just to spite him.

"I'm not angry."

"Yes, you are."

He sighed and silently stared at her. He'd dressed finally, in jeans and another T-

shirt. His stance was one of annoyance, aggravation. She'd known him a long time. She knew the signs.

"Your dad told me a week ago he'd found someone for the position, but when I asked who, he skirted the subject. Now I know why. When were you going to tell me?"

She smiled in guilt and lifted one shoulder. "The day I started."

He snorted and shook his head.

"I can't believe you're so mad about this," she cried, waving her hand palm up. "It's not like I'm going to be in the field. I'll be behind a desk."

"I'm not mad."

"Then what are you?"

"Pissed!"

"Why?" she asked.

"This company does dangerous things, Heather. Top secret things for the government. I don't want you involved in any of that."

"Oh, it's okay for you, but not for me. God, I just love that chauvinistic mentality!" she snarled in aggravation.

He dragged a hand down his face, mumbling curse words as he turned to stare out toward the trees. "What the hell was your dad thinking?" he griped.

"What's so bad about this, Walker?" she demanded.

"What's so bad?" he cried as he turned to face her. "The last vice president we had was shot, Heather. That's why the position was open. Because, despite the fact it's primarily a desk job, there's field work involved. I was planning on taking over the position when your father retired from the senate, but I'll be damned if you'll take it. I'll take it first."

He walked toward her, coming to stand very close, pinning her against the railing. Anger deepened the blue of his eyes, and tightened the muscles of his neck and face and despite her growing anger, the look in his eyes made her heart pound.

"Do you have any idea what it would do to me if you got shot?" he growled.

"Is that what this is about?" she asked. "Me getting hurt?"

"Yes," he replied, cupping her face. "Heather, it took me six years to come to terms with what I feel for you—to finally admit to you and myself that I love you. The last thing I want is you at the helm of that security company and in the line of fire. I can't believe your father would put you there."

Heather had suddenly begun to wonder that herself. Could it be her father was using this as a way to get Walker to admit he had feelings for her?

"Promise me you'll not do this. Take any other job but this one."

She nodded, albeit reluctantly, then scowled as something he had said finally registered. "Wait a minute. You said you were planning on taking over."

"Later," he said with a nod.

She shoved at his chest angrily, pushing him away. "The hell you are. If this job is truly that dangerous, you're not about to."

He put his hands on his hips, opening his mouth to say something, but Heather held up a hand stopping him. "Same goes for you, pal. If I can't put myself in the line of fire because you're afraid I'll get hurt, then I can make the same demands of you."

"It's different—"

"The hell it is," she snapped. "Using your argument, it took me six years to get you

to admit your feelings." Lowering her voice, she admitted. "I can't lose you now, Walker."

He sighed and pulled her into his arms, holding her close. "I wish I'd never brought it up," she said softly, wrapping her arms around his back. "I don't want to fight with you."

"Who are you kidding?" he said with a chuckle. "We always fight. It's who we are and I don't want that to change. I love your spunk, I always have." He pulled away and gave her a sweet, loving smile that sent butterflies in her stomach fluttering. "I don't want you to change a lick. I want you to keep pestering me, keep teasing me, hell, even keep nagging me."

She laughed and dropped her forehead against his chest. "I don't nag."

"Oh, please. You nag. But you know what?" He used the pad of his finger to tip her chin up, forcing her to look at him. "It has always made my life interesting. Come on." He leaned down and placed a quick kiss against her forehead. "Let's forget about this for now and eat."

"I am starving," she replied as she followed him to the grill.

She ran her hands along his strong shoulders, smiling as the muscles twitched beneath her touch.

"You should be ... especially after earlier," he replied, shooting her a wicked grin over his shoulder.

"Is that all you think about?" she teased, slapping at his back before turning to open the front door.

He walked past her into the cabin and grinned. "I always had problems not thinking about sex when you were around. Damned if earlier didn't make it all the harder. You know if all you ever did was walk around naked, ready to come to me at my beck and call, I'd be a happy man."

"Well, I got news for you..." she said as she grabbed the mayo and mustard from the fridge. He didn't have any lettuce or tomatoes, so they just made due with the buns and whatever else they could find. "You know. If we stay here too much longer, we'll need to find a store."

Walker sat down at the table and opened his beer. "I was thinking the same thing. There wasn't much here, was there? And what do you mean, 'I have news for you'? You wouldn't wait around the house naked for me?"

She snorted, dropped into the chair across from him, and adjusted the skirt of her short sundress before crossing her legs. She met his smile across the table and took the bag of buns he handed her.

Walker's satellite phone beeped, indicating he'd received a text message. He picked it up and read it.

"What is it?" Heather asked.

"It's your dad. Meeting with the VP later. Jackie." Walker set his knife aside and sent a quick message back.

* * * *

Jack glanced down at his phone and grinned.

The security co? R U out of ur damn mind?

With a grin, Jack flipped his phone closed.

"Something funny, Senator?" his assistant asked.

"Just some good news, Mike."

Mike nodded and they continued down the hall. Walker took the news of Heather's job offer just like he thought he would—like the man in love he knew he was. Jack had no intention of letting Heather actually take that job. He'd just planted the seed in her mind, knowing she would go to Walker with it. She had no idea what the company truly did and that it would be entirely too dangerous for her, but the offer was a means to an end. And the end was seeing his daughter together with the man who was perfect for her—Walker.

He walked into his office and dropped his briefcase on the desk. He knew his daughter was in good hands. Walker loved her, whether he admitted it or not. Hopefully, while sequestered together, he would.

He sat down and opened the small safe in the bottom drawer of his desk. Reaching in, he grabbed his wife's engagement ring. He knew Heather would want it and had saved it for her. Rummaging through the top of his desk drawer, he pulled out a small envelope and scribbled a quick note. With a smile, he put the ring and note into the envelope, then dropped it into his jacket pocket.

Mike walked into his office and came to stand before his desk, a frown creasing his young brow.

"Is there a problem Mike?"

"The vice president's staff just called and asked if they could reschedule tonight's meeting till next week."

Jack slammed his fist on the desk, making Mike jump. "Didn't you tell them no? We can't reschedule this meeting. It's too important."

"I tried to explain that, Senator, but they were insistent."

"Fine," Jack replied with a sigh and waved his hand in dismissal. "It will have to be fine. Nothing more we can do."

* * * *

Walker dropped onto the couch with a sigh and lifted his beer bottle to take a sip. He watched as Heather flipped through his collection of DVD's. Sometimes he would watch one on his laptop while here. He let his gaze wander down to her long, tan legs. He grinned, remembering the feel of those legs wrapped around his waist earlier.

No doubt about it. Heather was a handful, both in and out of bed.

"Walker," she chided. "Really?"

She held up a Bugs Bunny DVD and smiled.

"What?" He took another sip of beer. "Name one guy my age who doesn't love the bunny?"

The sun was beginning to set, casting a soft reddish glow around the room. The wind had been picking up most of the afternoon. More than likely they would have a couple of storms move through. But that was fine with him. It was doubtful they would be doing anything other than screwing anyway. They'd just had sex a few hours ago and already he wanted her again.

Her smile, her body, the way she touched him—everything was like an aphrodisiac, throwing his body into a constant state of need.

She placed the DVD back on the shelf and reached for the lighter. Walking around the room, she lit a few candles, their light casting a soft glow and chasing away the

growing shadows.

"I have a couple of oil lanterns," he offered. "Or we can just turn on the lights."

She grinned and placed the lighter back on the shelf where she found it. "This is nicer."

"Are you still mad at me?" he asked. "About the job?"

"I wasn't really all that mad," she replied with a shrug. "I was more hurt at first, thinking you didn't want me there."

"That's not it, Heather, and you know that. I just don't want you to get hurt. When I first started that company, it wasn't my intent for it to become what it did. It just happened that way. Have you heard of Black Eagle?"

"The group that goes to the Middle East and does things similar to the SEALs and such?"

He nodded. "They're part of our company. A group, as vice president, you would be in charge of, and meeting in the Middle East to give them their orders. Now do you understand why I didn't want you there?"

"If that's true, why do you suppose Daddy offered me the job?"

"If what you said was true about him knowing about me and you, then I think I know why the jackass did it. He wanted me to imagine you in that position and realize the thought of you getting hurt would destroy me."

She crossed her arms just under her breasts, pressing them upward. His gaze dropped to her mounds before shooting back to her face.

"You didn't know that already?" she asked.

He blinked, unsure what she'd said since his mind had been on licking her nipples. He couldn't seem to stop thinking about that stuff. He felt like a horny twenty-year-old rather than the mature age he was. She had that affect on him. She made him feel years younger, but at the same time, years older.

She scowled. "Are you even listening to me?"

He grinned mischievously. "Honestly?" He lifted the beer bottle to his lips for another sip.

She reached for the pillow in the leather chair and tossed it at his head. He ducked, laughing.

"I was thinking about you." He chuckled as she threw another pillow.

"I know what you were thinking about, you dirty old man," she chided, but he didn't miss the sparkle of devilment in her eyes that made his heart race.

"Can we please have one serious conversation?" she pleaded.

"Okay, okay," he replied, smiling. "I promise, no more thoughts of licking your nipples ... or your pussy." She slapped at his shoulder as she walked behind him and he smiled from ear to ear. God, he loved teasing her like this.

"Damn it, I'm serious," she snapped.

He reached behind him and grabbed her wrists, pulling her over the back of the couch to land on his lap with a squeal.

"Walker!" she shrieked.

He held her down with a palm to her hip, despite the fact she barely struggled at all.

"I can be serious," he murmured, nibbling at the side of her neck.

She smelled of dial soap and mountain air with just a hint of charcoal from earlier.

"I don't want you to treat me like a child, Walker," she said, a bit breathlessly.

Her hands gripped his biceps, tugging gently at the sleeves of his shirt.

"I'm definitely not treating you like a child, Heather," he mumbled as he slid his hand up the outside of her thigh and under her skirt.

Her skin was so soft and warm, like velvet beneath his touch.

"I'm not talking about sex." She backed away from him slightly and looked into his eyes. "I'm talking about life in general. I don't want you to think you can order me around and tell me what I can and can't do. That worked when I was a kid, but it won't work now."

"I know that," he said with a frown. "I'll admit, there may be times I'll come off more demanding than I intend to and I'm sure you'll let me know it. But I also know you're your own woman, with her own mind and her own desires in life. I won't stand in your way ... unless it involves a job that requires you to be in the line of fire, then just except the fact it will be war."

Heather giggled and cupped his cheek. He turned his head and kissed her palm, trapping her hand against his mouth.

"Now," he said as he put her hand back on his shoulder and returned his to her thigh. "Can we get back to sex?"

Chapter Eight

Heather laughed and twisted on his lap, moving to straddle his thighs, her knees on either side of his hips. She'd never been happier than she was right now. Walker had finally admitted he loved her, wanted her. He made her feel things no other guy had, but then she knew he would. She'd known it since that night at the party, that night when she'd turned eighteen and learned firsthand what it felt like to be kissed by a man who truly desired her.

"I think I like this," he murmured as he pushed her skirt up around her waist exposing her bare bottom.

The material of his jeans separated her warm, naked pussy from his cock but despite that, she could still feel his heat, his thickening girth. She tugged his T-shirt from his pants, pulled it over his head.

"I definitely like this," she whispered, lightly brushing her lips over his as she dropped the shirt to the floor behind the couch.

"I can't get enough of you, Heather. You're like a damn addiction."

His hands messaged her ass, gently kneading and rocking her against him. She smiled and sucked on his lower lip, shivering as the material of his pants tickled her clit.

"I think I could come just doing this," she murmured.

"Hmmm," Walker growled as he gripped a handful of her hair and tugged her head back.

His teeth nipped at the sensitive spot where her neck met her shoulder and she moaned, pressing her pussy harder against his cock. Her womb contracted and she gasped, digging her nails into his shoulders.

"I have plans for you first," he whispered.

He slid his fingers through the cleft of her ass and she drew in a gulp of air. The desire she felt cursing through her to feel his cock there surprised her. She knew he liked it and because of that, had never let anyone else touch her there. He wasn't her first, but she wanted him to be the only one she took inside her ass.

"Do you think you can take me here, Heather?" He gently circled the tiny whole with his middle finger.

She swallowed and nodded, unsure she could speak out loud past the lump in her throat.

"Are you sure, baby? I'm pretty big."

She grinned and wiggled her pussy along his length. "I know exactly how big you are. And I like it."

Cupping his cheeks, she gave him a quick kiss, teasing him by dipping her tongue into his mouth, then quickly retreating.

"I like it when you wiggle against me like that," he growled, his hot breath teasing her lips. "It makes me want to throw you down on that couch and just take you."

"I always fantasized about you just taking me. The reality is so much better."

He smiled and lifted her dress over her head. "It certainly is, baby," he whispered, pulling her mouth down to his for a wild, hot kiss.

His tongue thrust into her mouth, twirling around hers and making her whole body

burn. She loved the way he kissed, his taste, the way he nipped playfully at her mouth. He could make her want him with a hunger that defied anything she'd ever experienced.

Breaking the kiss, she pushed against his shoulders, putting some space between. She slid back along his thighs and put her feet on the floor.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

She smiled and tugged at the band of his pants. He raised an eyebrow adorably as she popped the button of his free. Heart racing, breasts aching, she leaned forward and gripped his zipper between her teeth, tugging it down.

His cock sprang free, long and thick and hot. She flicked her tongue out, licking at his engorged, glistening head and he moaned, clenching his fingers in her hair.

She slipped her hands beneath his hips and grasped his jeans. He helped her, lifting his ass off the sofa so she could pull his pants down his legs, leaving them on the floor by his feet. He sat before her in all his naked glory, and God, was he glorious. Just looking at him made her stomach clench.

"I've always liked your muscles," she said, feathering her fingers through the prickly hair on his legs. "When I was younger, your size made me feel safe."

"And now?" he asked, panting as she placed a kiss against his balls.

"Now those muscles make me feel wanton. I used to watch you work out. The fine sheen of sweat that covered your chest made you glisten like a God."

He snickered and she smiled up at him through her lashes, then slowly dragged her tongue up along the length of his cock.

"I use to watch you swim," he admitted, then hissed as her tongue circled the tip.

She stopped what she was doing and stared at him in surprise.

"I use to watch you do a lot of things."

"Like what?" she whispered, resuming her gentle exploration of his stomach and chest.

"Paint your toenails in that abandoned cabin you found on the property. Giggle with your friends at the mall when you thought you'd outwitted me."

Her eyes widened as she glanced into his smiling ones. "You were always there?"

He nodded. "You never once lost me. I just let you think you did. Even after that party, when your new team took over, I still stood in the shadows. Always watching."

"I never once lost you?"

He shook his head. "Not once. Although, I'll admit. There were a few times you gave me a hell of a run for my money."

She laughed and leaned forward to lick her tongue across his nipple. "That just makes me love you all the more. Do you know that?" she whispered.

She worked her lips over his collarbone, then across his shoulder to his neck. She tasted the salt on his skin and smiled at the tiny tremors she could feel running along his flesh. His hands moved slowly up her thighs and the small of her back, stroking softly and making blood rush to her pussy.

"Heather," he growled. "You're driving me fucking crazy."

"Good," she whispered before covering his mouth with hers.

He parted his lips, allowing her to control the kiss ... for about a second. With a groan, he sat up straight, pulling her back to his lap and deepening the kiss. It went from soft and gentle to almost brutal in its hunger. She couldn't get enough of his taste.

"Walker," she moaned.

He stood and twisted, setting her down on the couch. She stared up at him and pouted as he pulled from her arms.

"Don't move," he ordered.

"Where are you going?" she whined.

"You'll see," he replied, winking.

"If you're going for the lube, use lots. I think I'll need it as big as you are."

He glanced back at her with a wicked gleam and she giggled. "You just sit there and behave."

She moved to her knees and leaned against the back of the couch, watching him over the back of it. His skin gleamed in the glow of the candlelight and his muscles flexed as he walked, making her heart skip an excited rhythm. He bent over slightly, pulling the lube from the nightstand drawer, and she pursed her lips, admiring his hard ass. He looked incredibly good and her pussy tingled just watching him.

She licked her lips as he turned to face her. His cock jutted upward, hard and thick against his abdomen, the tip glistening with pre-cum.

"You're looking at me like you could eat me," he said.

She smiled, moving her gaze back to his face. "I could."

"Hold that thought." He wiggled the tube of lubricant. "I have other plans right now."

Heather bit down on her lower lip, never taking her eyes off him as he strolled closer. She leaned heavily against the back of the sofa, her elbows denting the soft leather. He came up behind her and placed his knee on the cushion next to hers. His hand rested against her hip, while the other tossed the lube to the sofa beside them.

She glanced down at the lube, then at him through the corner of her eye. He had such a dark, sexy look about him as he leaned down to place a soft kiss against the back of her shoulder, she couldn't help but sigh as his lips brushed her oversensitive skin.

"If I hurt you, Heather, say something," he began.

Heather shook her head, smiling slightly. "I know you won't."

He kissed her neck, his hot breath tickling her flesh.

"I trust you. I want you," she whispered. "I want you there."

His fingers tightened on her hip. His teeth scraped along her neck and her eyes drifted closed. She tilted her head to the side allowing him better access and he moaned his approval.

Every inch of her body trembled in anticipation as his hands feathered down her legs, then back up again. His touch sent her heart racing wildly, his lips sent blood coursing through her veins.

Placing her hands against the back edge of the couch, she pressed herself upward, only to be pushed back down by a palm in the center of her shoulder blades.

"Stay where you are," he said.

She smiled slightly and sighed as his hands came around to cup her breasts. He kneaded gently, pressing upward with his palms as he squeezed. Breathing became ever more difficult as he used his fingers and thumbs to pinch her hard nipples. Sharp pleasure-pain tightened her stomach and she arched her back, thrusting her breasts closer to his touch.

His hands slid lower along her abdomen and she held her breath. She could feel the wetness between her legs, the throbbing need that built from deep inside her as he brushed his fingers over her pussy. She moaned, biting down on her lower lip as her hips

jerked in reflex.

Sex with him was so much more than she ever imagined. She wanted to experience everything with him. She trusted him. She needed him. She loved him. She always had.

He separated her labia, circling his middle finger around her clit. The tight bundle of nerves tingled with every brush of his fingertip. His thick cock pressed into the side of her hip and she wiggled, smiling when he groaned and jerked himself against her.

In retaliation, he sucked at the back of her neck, making her gasp in surprise at the tingle that traveled down her spine.

"Walker," she whispered, almost desperate now to feel him inside her.

"God, I almost hate to stop now," he sighed, reaching beside him for the lube.

He quickly smeared it all over his cock, then used his fingers to spread it around her tight anal opening. Heather gasped as two of his fingers teased, then gently pushed inside, past the tight ring of resistance. He bent down and kissed her spine as he added a third finger, slowly stretching her, preparing her.

She swallowed a small lump of trepidation as he stood straight and pulled his fingers from her ass. Using his hands, he separated her cheeks, settling the head of his cock at her entrance. Her fingers tightened on the back of the couch as he slowly thrust forward. The burning sensation tightened her womb, but the slight bite of pain quickly morphed into something more sensual, dark, and demanding.

Pleasure raced up her spine as he thrust past the tight ring and deep into her channel. She shivered as he pulled back slightly, then pressed deeper, his thick girth pressing against the sensitive outside of the thin wall separating him from her pussy.

She pressed back with her hips, forcing him deeper. He groaned and grasped her hips, holding her steady as he began a slow, sensual rhythm that had her head spinning.

"Oh, my, God," she moaned, dropping her forehead to the back of the couch.

He grasped a handful of her hair and tugged her head and shoulders back upright. "Back up here, baby," he demanded.

His harsh breath blew past her ear as he reached around and cupped her breasts, squeezing hard. She cried out, closing her eyes tight against the onslaught of sensations screaming through her. She never expected this—not in a million years. It was crazy, wild and completely amazing.

"Faster," she gasped.

He increased his thrusts, pushing just a little deeper. His left hand moved to her pussy, his middle finger gently stroking her clit through the juices coating it. She moaned, her hips jerking in both directions, her mind a jumbled mass of nothing but pleasure.

Her pussy clenched, tingling sensations began in her womb and raced outward through her limbs. Heather struggled to keep from passing out as her body exploded into a million pieces. Walker pounded into her harder, deeper. His fingers pinched her clit, starting her orgasm all over again.

She screamed, digging her nails into the couch. She shook from head to toe, unable to move as he pistoned into her harder, emptying his seed deep inside her channel.

"Walker," she cried out, panic filling her voice.

She was going to pass out.

"Shh," Walker soothed, kissing her cheek. "Deep breaths."

Closing her eyes, she drew in one deep breath after another, sighing as her throbs

eased and the intense sensations subsided. Walker slowly eased from her ass and she winced.

"Did I hurt you?" he whispered in her ear.

She shook her head, unable to do much else as she sagged against the sofa cushions. Walker chuckled softly and turned her so he could lift her into his arms. She moved like an under-stuffed rag doll, her arms and legs dangling, her head lulling against his shoulder as he walked to the bedroom part of the cabin.

"I'm not sure I could take that every day, Walker," she whispered.

"Me either, baby," he replied, amusement filling his voice.

He laid her on the bed and placed a soft kiss against her temple. "Stay right here."

Like she could move. She shifted, finding a more comfortable position on her side and waited for Walker to return from the bathroom. Her eyes were getting heavy, her body still weak and sated from earlier.

Through heavy-lidded eyes, she watched him stroll back from the bathroom, a steaming rag in his hand. He bent down and pressed it between the cheeks of her ass, gently wiping away the lube. She would be sore later, she was sure. But right now, she felt wonderful.

"Don't forget the candles," she whispered, drifting off to sleep.

"I won't," he whispered back, his lips gently swiping across her cheek.

* * * *

Jack climbed from his car and trudged tiredly up the front steps of his Washington town home. He missed the mountains, he missed his daughter. Were she and Walker still safe? Had he done the right thing in sending those documents to Walker? If he'd endangered them any at all, he'd never forgive himself.

He'd often thought of leaving the Senate. Especially now, after Heather had been injured. They'd always been able to keep her safe in the past. But this time was different. The criminals were different. Too much was at stake and he was beginning to wonder if he'd gotten in over his head.

Heather would probably say he had.

He smiled as he thought of his daughter. She was so much like her mother—stubborn, determined, and beautiful.

Walker had certainly noticed her beauty. He should have been angry years ago when he'd caught Walker kissing her, but he hadn't been. He'd seen it coming. He saw the way Walker looked at her at the Christmas party and also knew why Walker fought it so much.

Hopefully, he wouldn't fight it anymore. He truly believed the two of them belonged together. He loved Walker like a son and he knew he would be good for Heather. He would keep her in line. Heather, on the other hand, would help Walker to live. Walker worked way too much. A way to keep his mind off Heather, he was sure.

With a tired sigh, Jack used his key to open the front door. He closed the door behind him and the soft bang reverberated through the near empty house. He dropped his briefcase onto the entry hall table along with his keys and frowned. Where was Kyle? His butler always met him in the foyer, regardless of the time. It wasn't something he required, but just something Kyle always did. He'd even met him in his pajamas and robe, which never failed to make Jack chuckle.

"Kyle?" he called out.

Noticing the light under his study door, he walked in that direction.

"Kyle?" he called again as he pushed the door open, then came to a dead stop.

Kyle lay face down on the floor, blood coating the carpet under his chest. Jack's heart stopped as he scanned the room, his gaze landing on the man sitting in the chair behind his desk.

"Welcome home, Senator," he said as he tented his gloved fingers in front of his lips.

Jack frowned, pushed back his fear, and walked toward Kyle. He bent and quickly checked for a pulse. When he didn't find one, he scowled toward the man in anger. Behind him, the door shut and Jack stood quickly, staring at two more men, plus hedge-fund manager, Carl Wetherly.

"Did you have to kill him?" Jack snapped.

"Yes," the man behind the desk replied.

"Why?"

"He could identify us."

"So could I."

"I know."

The man set a pistol on the desk and lightly rested his hand over the handle. Jack's heart jerked. Four against one. There was no way he'd get out of this. He knew it and so did they. The only solace he had at the moment was the fact his daughter was safe with Walker.

"What do you want from me?" Jack asked.

"We came for the proof," Carl said as he walked toward the desk to stand behind the gloved man. "But you've already sent that off, it seems, to Walker."

Jack swallowed.

"The email was tough, but I cracked it. It's only a matter of time before we track him down," the gloved man said. "Heather is with him, I assume?"

Jack scowled in anger. "Stay away from my daughter."

He had nothing to lose, no sense showing fear or begging for his life. It was over. His only hope now was that Walker and Heather could get the info to the vice president and the media.

Carl snorted and adjusted his cuff links. "Tell me something, Jack. Did you really think we would let you stop us?"

"Did you really think you could get control of the SEC?" Jack sneered.

"Oh, yes," Carl replied. "And not just the SEC. I have big plans, Jack. Big. And I refuse to let you, your daughter, or that pain in the ass you call a business partner ruin it."

"Walker's good, Carl. I know it and so do you. He'll find you. He'll make sure you get what's due. Especially, if you hurt my daughter."

"It's too late for threats, Jack. For any of you."

Carl nodded and the man behind the desk raised his gun. Jack braced himself, raising his chin in defiance, refusing to cower before them. He wouldn't give them that. He'd die like a man. Inside, he shook in fear for his daughter. She'd already lost her mother, now him. He prayed she still had Walker.

The gun fired and searing pain sliced through his chest, knocking him back several steps where he fell against the wall. He placed his hand against his heart, blood soaking through his fingers, his labored breathing tightening his chest. The room blurred with

every passing second, the pain fogging his mind. Coldness crept through his body and limbs and he shivered violently.

"Heather," was the last word he whispered.

Chapter Nine

Heather woke with a gasp and glanced frantically around the room. Nagging pain sliced her chest and she raised her hand, absently gripping the sheet and holding it against her breasts, trying to ease the ache. Something was wrong. She knew it deep in her gut.

Swinging her legs around, she placed her feet flat against the floor and took a deep calming breath. Behind her, Walker still slept. She stared down at his tanned chest, one arm over his waist, the other over his head. Should she wake him?

With a sigh, she decided not to and instead walked to the kitchen for a drink of water. A movement out of the corner of her eye caught her attention as she grabbed a glass from the cupboard. She slowly shut the door, staring hard at a darkened corner where she thought the movement had come from. A figure faded in and out of focus and she held her breath, squinting to better see the image.

"Daddy?" she whispered.

Her fingers shook and she almost dropped the glass. Was she seeing things? What the hell was going on? Setting the glass down, she walked closer trying to get a better look.

"Heather?"

A loud squeal tore from her throat as she turned to face a concerned Walker. He stood just a few feet behind her, his brow creased in worry, a strange expression on his face she couldn't quite figure out as he glanced over her shoulder toward the corner, then back to her.

"God, Walker. You scared the crap out of me."

She placed a palm over her racing heart as Walker moved closer and gripped her shoulders, studying her closely. "You all right?"

"Yeah. I had a bad dream and..." She glanced back at the corner and realized the image was gone, but the sense of dread remained. "I have a bad feeling, Walker. I want to call Dad."

"It's three in the morning, Heather. Your dad's asleep."

"I know, but he would answer if it were me calling—"

Walker shook his head. "We'll call him in the morning. Your dad's fine, baby. Come on. Let's go back to bed."

"I..." She took a deep breath and looked one more time toward the corner. Icy fingers of premonition skimmed down her spine and she tried to ignore them. It had to be the dream. That's all. She was just freaked out over the dream.

Walker brushed her hair back then gripped her chin, turning her to face him. Gray-blue eyes watched her closely and she felt like melting into his strong embrace.

"Heather?"

She gave him a small smile. "I'm coming."

She slowly followed him back to the bed. Walker climbed in first and she settled in beside him, nestled close to his chest.

"You're shaking," he said softly.

He wrapped his arms around her and held her close. Beneath her ear, she could hear the beating of his heart and it soothed her somewhat. But not enough.

"For some reason, I'm scared."

"Of what?" he whispered.

"I don't know."

Her gaze moved back to the corner. It was still empty, the ghostly image from earlier gone. Had it been a figment of her imagination? Or something more?

"What was the dream about?" he asked. "If you talk about it you might feel better."

Heather tried to think, but couldn't remember. "I don't know what it was about. I just woke up with a burning sensation in my chest and a terrible sense of dread."

"It was just a dream, baby." He rubbed his hand up and down her back in a soothing motion, trying to put her at ease, but it didn't work.

"Was it?" she whispered.

"You trying to tell me you're psychic now?" he teased. "Seeing the future in your dreams?"

One corner of her mouth lifted into an amused grin. "I saw us in my dreams."

"So did I," he drawled dryly, making Heather giggle.

Unfortunately, her ease didn't last. Her mind kept wandering back to the dream and the corner.

"Stop fretting," he ordered, giving her a slight shake. "When did you turn into such a worrier?"

"I'm not a worrier," she grumbled.

Walker chuckled wickedly, making her flesh heat with a sudden case of lust.

"Do you need me to take your mind off it?" he drawled in a deep, sexy voice that made her heart skip a beat.

Pulling away slightly, she stared up into eyes so full of love it made her melt. "I had no idea you were such a sex fiend."

"Sweetheart, I've lusted after you for so long, I'm going to be on your ass for a long time to come. I'll be bald, humped over, hobbling around on a cane and probably still get a hard-on looking at you."

Heather giggled at the image. "Then I really can call you a dirty old man."

Walker chuckled and kissed the tip of her nose. "Come here," he said with a smile as he rolled to his back, pulling her with him.

She slung her leg over his thigh and rested her cheek against his chest. Her palm settled over his heart, his fingers gently stroking the back of her hand and arm.

"Try to get some sleep," he whispered. "Everything will look better tomorrow."

Heather sighed and closed her eyes, silently praying he was right.

* * * *

Walker woke slowly to the ringing of his satellite phone. At first, he tried to dismiss it, then remembered where he was and sat up with a start, fully awake.

He jumped from the bed and made his way quickly to the ringing phone still lying on the kitchen table. He glanced at the screen, saw it was Jack's residence and flipped the phone open.

"Jack, what's going on?" Walker asked.

"This isn't Jack, Walker."

Walker frowned, recognizing the voice of Jack's assistant, Mike.

"Jack gave me this number in case something happened," Mike continued. "There's

been an incident."

Walker's held his breath, his whole body tense. "What kind of incident, Mike?"

"Jack was shot. Murdered. Last night, sometime after midnight."

"Son of a bitch," Walker mumbled, then glanced back toward Heather.

She sat up in the bed, watching him with big eyes full of worry. He swallowed. God. How the hell was he going to tell her this? She'd known something was wrong and he'd brushed it off as nothing.

He put his back to her and concentrated on the phone call, moving further away from Heather and closer to the front door. "Do the police know who did it?"

"They don't. But you and I do."

"I know," Walker said with a sigh. "Get me a meeting with the VP, Mike. Whatever you have to do, make it happen. These sons of bitches aren't getting away with this."

"I agree. But I'm not sure the VP is the right choice."

"Why? What the hell else is going on, Mike?" Walker asked.

"It's a hunch... I'll let you know more in a day or two."

Walker flipped the phone closed, then took a deep steadying breath before turning to face Heather again. She still sat in the bed, the sheet up around her chest, her eyes tear-filled. She knew. He didn't have to say a damn thing. She knew.

"They got to Daddy, didn't they?" she whispered, her lower lip trembling.

Walker nodded.

Heather dropped her head, the wracking sobs shaking her whole body. Walker threw the phone onto the couch and hurried to gather her in his arms.

* * * *

Walker's brow creased with worry as he watched Heather stare out the window of the limo. She hadn't said much of anything for two days. Nor had she eaten much. She'd taken her father's murder pretty hard.

His funeral had already been arranged, something he'd done after her mother's death years before. He'd be laid to rest beside her, but it gave Heather little solace.

Mike had told him earlier he'd gotten them a meeting with the Director of the FBI. According to Mike, the VP was way too close to the hedge-fund manager. Mike had found out the VP had covered up illegal activities for that hedge fund before and was likely to do it again.

It couldn't get here fast enough for Walker. He wanted this over and the sooner the better.

After what happened to Jack and his butler, Walker decided to give themselves a little insurance. He set the documents up on a timed delivery system. If he didn't punch in a code by a certain time, the documents would be sent to the FBI director and three major news medias—CNN, MSNBC, and Fox. It might take them a while to sort it all out, but eventually they would.

They were supposed to go this afternoon and meet with her father's attorney, but Heather had begged him to reschedule. She didn't want to deal with it right now. Matter of fact, it had taken quite a bit of effort to even get her here for the funeral.

She hated crowds and there was definitely a crowd.

Walker watched as the limo drove past a line of cars already at the burial site. Gray clouds cast a dim, dingy haze over everything. It was as though even nature mourned the

loss of a great man.

Heather sniffed and wiped at her eyes with a tissue. He could tell by the tense look on her face, she wasn't ready for this.

Reaching out, he put his hand on her knee. She glanced over at him with sad eyes that cut through his chest like a jagged knife. This wasn't his Heather. This wasn't the strong girl he admired and loved. For the moment, she was a mere shell of her feisty self.

He touched her cheek with the back of his fingers, but she turned away, staring back out the window.

"Do we have to do this, Walker?" she asked. "I really don't want to talk to these people. God, there's so many."

He put his hand back on her knee and leaned a little closer. "You don't have to talk to anyone you don't want to. Just stay close to me, okay?"

Walker assumed with all the media that had been milling around, no one would dare do anything, but he wasn't taking any chances and had refused to let Heather out of his sight.

She nodded and visibly swallowed. Walker could tell she was trying hard to keep it together and failing miserably. Heather had always hated the media, the constant attention, and now it was even harder on her than usual. He knew her, knew how she reacted to things. Heather would want to mourn alone, but hadn't had much chance of that over the last twenty-four hours. There had been phone calls, visits from other Senators and Congressmen, office staff and White House personnel wanting to give their condolences. Heather had done her best but Walker could see the constant bombardment had begun to take its toll.

Heather needed to grieve in her own way, privately. After today, he'd see she got that chance.

The limo pulled to a stop behind the hearse. Heather sat straight and took a deep breath. Walker silently admired her. Despite the fact she didn't want to be here, she was being brave and making the best of it. He just didn't know how much longer her brave facade would last.

She started to reach for the handle, but he pulled her back. "Let me go first."

A small smile of gratitude pulled at her lips as she sat back, allowing him to exit the car first. He glanced around, nodding to familiar faces and some not so familiar. A few feet away, the media watched like vultures and he scowled in their direction. They had no respect whatsoever.

He turned and held his hand out for Heather. She grasped his fingers and stepped slowly from the car. He didn't miss the slight tremble of her fingers as she held tight to his hand.

"Ms. Prescott," a man said as he came forward. Walker recognized him from one of the congressional committees her father oversaw. "I'm so sorry to hear about your father."

"Thank you," Heather replied softly, but graciously.

Walker pulled her along with him to the seats arranged by the gravesite. She sat on the front row, her eyes straight ahead, her hands clasped tightly in her lap.

The coffin was already there, a huge assortment of roses cascading over the top. Jack loved roses and the garden at his home in Virginia was full of them.

"Walker," Mike said as he grasped Walker's elbow, holding him back. "I've been meaning to give you this, but just haven't had a chance. It was in Jack's pocket when they

found him."

Walker stared down at the small manila envelope with a frown. His name was written across the top in Jack's handwriting. "Thanks, Mike," he said as he took the envelope and opened it.

A small object wrapped in another piece of paper fell into his hand and he stared at it as well as the note in surprise. "My God, Jack," he mumbled to himself. "Why the hell didn't you say something?"

"What?" Heather glanced back at him. "Is something wrong?"

"No," he said with a shaking of his head. He quickly dropped the package back into his pocket. Now was definitely not the time. "Everything's fine."

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Heather nodded but had a feeling Walker wasn't being completely honest. She decided for the time being to let it go. She didn't know what she would have done without Walker here the last couple of days.

He took care of things she didn't even want to think about, much less handle. He'd known exactly when she'd needed him or needed her space. He'd been her rock, but then he always had been.

A low rumble of thunder sounded in the distance and she glanced up toward the gray sky. The weather certainly reflected her mood, she just hoped it didn't rain. It could thunder all it wanted, streak lightening across the sky in fury that matched her own, but please don't rain.

A single tear slipped down her cheek as memories from her mother's funeral came rushing back. She'd been so small then, not really understanding a lot of what went on, but she'd been old enough to know her father was hurting. He'd loved her mother so much. He'd never once dated anyone, at least that Heather knew of. He'd told her he'd already experienced the love of his life; he didn't need another.

Walker had said her father would find someone else when he was ready, but he'd buried himself in his work and his causes instead. Loving Walker like she did, she understood now. If she lost Walker, she wouldn't want anyone else either.

Her lip trembled at the very thought and fear made her stomach ache with dread. They weren't out of the woods yet; not by a long shot. Something could still happen to him.

Keeping her eyes on the lowering casket, she swallowed back tears as she reached over to grasp Walker's hand. He held tight and covered hers with his other hand, sandwiching her fingers between his. She felt safe when he was close, protected.

Glancing toward a large tree just a few feet away, she gasped at the man she saw standing beneath its branches. Her father's face smiled at her. He nodded but made no other moves, no sounds.

She didn't scream or shake in fear. She just stared, calm, collected. He was watching out for her; watching out for Walker. She knew it deep inside.

It wasn't the first time she'd seen him. She knew now it had been him she'd seen at the cabin. Then again she'd seen him at their hotel. He'd appeared briefly at the foot of her bed, calming her as she'd cried herself to sleep.

She'd heard of people seeing loved one's ghosts, but never imagined she would. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Walker shift. She glanced over at him. He stared toward the tree with a frown, then down at her. Had Walker seen him also? If he had, he gave no

indication. Instead, he sent her a reassuring smile.

She leaned her head on his shoulder, letting the silent tears fall down her cheeks, not caring anymore who saw them or photographed them.

He was her dad and she missed him.

Chapter Ten

Heather slipped quickly through the door of her hotel room, anxious for the privacy. It had been a long day and one she was relieved to see the end of.

Walker shut the door behind him and she breathed a sigh of relief. If she'd heard one more "I'm so sorry" or one more "please except my condolences", she would have screamed.

"You okay?" Walker asked.

She glanced over at him where he leaned his back against the door. Crossing his arms over his chest, he watched her, studying her.

He could always tell when she wasn't being truthful, so why lie?

"I've been better. I'm just glad to be back here. Do you think he was there?"

He frowned. "Who?"

"The man who shot him."

She took her suit jacket off and laid it across the foot of the bed. Grasping her white silk shell, she tugged it out of her pants and over her head, dropping it next to her jacket.

"If it was who I think it was ... probably."

She glanced up at him and didn't miss the way his heated stare took in her bra and the cleavage it created. Her heart sped up. If she lost him ... God, she couldn't lose him. It would kill her if she did.

What if this was their last night together? What if something happened to him tomorrow?

"Who do you think it was?" She kicked her shoes off.

"There's only one man out of the three your father was investigating that would have the connections for murder." He shrugged. "My guess is it was him."

"Carl Wetherly," Heather replied with a nod. "CEO of Clauson and Stine. It's rumored he has mob connections."

"I know."

Heather sighed. "God, Walker. This just keeps getting worse and worse."

Walker pushed away from the door and walked toward her. "We're going to be okay, Heather," he said as he rubbed his hands up and down her arms.

It was cool in the room and his body heat warmed her, his touch sent tingling sensations to her stomach. All she could think about was this might be their last time, their last chance. She needed to feel him, taste him, sink into his gaze and never leave.

"Walker," she whispered.

Stepping closer, she placed her hands at his waist and dropped her forehead to his chest. She could hear his heartbeat, smell his musky scent and her fingers clenched in his shirt.

His arms wrapped around her back, pulling her closer. His embrace never failed to make her feel safe and secure. She slid her palms up his back, flattening her breasts against his chest. She felt him stiffen and tilted her head back to look into his eyes. She could see the lust shining in his gaze, but he was holding himself back.

"Heather," he whispered with a slight shake of his head.

"Don't you want me?"

"Of course, I do. But—"

"Don't but, please. I need you, Walker. I need to know you're here. I need to feel you and touch you."

He cupped her face, staring into her eyes. "You're upset."

"I know I'm upset," she said. "I'm also scared and nervous. I'm afraid I'm going to lose you just like I lost Dad. I just need you right now, Walker. I just need..."

A single tear slipped down her cheek and Walker leaned down to kiss it away. Her eyes closed as more slipped free, Walker's lips gently sipping at them as they fell.

"It's okay, baby," he said.

She shivered and fisted her fingers in his shirt. She wanted to rip it off him, feel the heat of his flesh against hers. He pulled back slightly, staring into her eyes. His thumbs caressed her cheeks, softly wiping at the tears that remained.

"I'm not going anywhere," he whispered. "I promise."

Standing on her toes, she touched her lips to his. His hot breath blew across her mouth as he sighed, allowing her to take the lead. With one hand she grasped his tie, tugging at the knot. He reached up to help her and between the two of them, got it off.

Her fingers trembled as she loosened the buttons of his shirt, pulling them free one by one and exposing an expanse of wide, tanned chest. She slipped her hands inside, feathering them over his muscles. He was so warm, so strong. She needed his strength right now, his touch, his support and caring.

Leaning forward, she swiped her tongue over his hard nipple. He sucked in a breath as strong fingers tightened in her hair.

"Come here," he commanded hoarsely as he tugged her up by the hair and slanted his mouth across hers.

He tasted of mint and coffee. His lips were soft and gentle against hers, his tongue wicked as it thrust past her lips to tease her own. Every part of her burned for him. Her pussy clenched in anticipation. She needed to feel him inside her, consuming her, surrounding her.

"Walker," she panted as his lips moved to her neck, his teeth gently scraping along her skin.

Goosebumps worked their way along her spine and she trembled. Gentle hands moved to unclasp her bra. Her arms fell to her sides as he pushed the straps down, his lips following the path of his fingers.

"Promise me you won't let them take you from me," she whispered. "I can't..." Her lips trembled again and she swallowed. "I can't lose you, too."

"Shh," he whispered. "We're going to beat them, Heather."

His gaze held hers as he cupped her breast with one hand. He pressed upward with his palm, squeezing softly and she gasped. Arching her back, she pressed herself more firmly into his hand, encouraging him to squeeze harder. Instead, he teased, lightly plucking at her nipple with his fingers.

"So beautiful," he sighed. He placed a kiss against her eyelids as they closed in pleasure. "You've always been so beautiful."

She skimmed her hands down his stomach to the button of his slacks. With a jerk, she pulled it free and slid the zipper down. She could feel his thick cock through the material of his boxers and rubbed her hand along his length. He moaned, his hips moving toward her touch as his lips blazed a path across her shoulder.

Taking a deep breath, she tried to calm herself down, but it was becoming more and more difficult as Walker dipped his head and circled his tongue around the sensitive tip of her breast. Placing her hands against his shoulders, she shoved, catching him by surprise and knocking him back toward the bed. The back of his knees hit the mattress and she shoved again, this time pushing him to land on his back with a slight bounce.

His lips twitched in amusement as she climbed over him and gripped the waistband of his pants and underwear, tugging them off his hips. He lay before her completely naked except for his shoes and socks and his pants pooled around his ankles. She glanced down at them and snickered before tugging everything off.

She slid her fingers through the hair on his thighs and smiled. "I just love looking at you."

"I hope you're going to do more than look," he murmured.

She met his gaze and the heat shining in it took her breath away. She loved him so much. He sat up, catching her by surprise as he grasped her hips and threw her sideways onto her back. A startled gasp escaped her lips as she stared up at him, his blue-gray eyes smoldering with desire.

Her heart raced in her chest as he slid his palm down the side of her ribs to her slacks. With a wicked gleam, he tugged at them like she had his and threw them to the floor. Next went her thong, but with that, he took his time, letting his palms glide along the back of her thighs as he pushed the underwear down.

She could hardly breathe, she wanted him so much. She just needed to feel him inside her, feel his arms surrounding her.

"Walker," she said, her breath coming out in short, hard pants.

Walker didn't answer, just watched her through his lashes as he brushed his lips against the inside of her knee. Her fingers fisted in the bedcover and her hips lifted in silent invitation.

"I need you," she whispered.

He settled his body over hers, resting his weight on his elbows. He kissed her and she parted her lips to allow his tongue entrance. He leisurely explored her mouth, circling his tongue in teasing swipes around hers. She lifted her hips against him and slid one leg up along his thigh. The hairs on his leg tickled her and she clenched her fingers against his forearms.

His thick cock rested against her pussy and she rotated her hips, rubbing herself against him. He moaned, moving his hips with her, his kisses swallowing her own groans of desperation.

He pulled back and settled the head of his cock at her wet opening. She lifted her hips, trying to force him inside her to little avail.

"Be still," he whispered as he slid his cock slowly, inch by inch into her pulsing pussy.

She sighed, closing her eyes against the stretching of her tight walls as he filled her.

"Just feel me," he said, as he put one hand under her ass and lifted her, pressing himself deeper.

She couldn't get close enough to him and wrapped her arms around his back, holding him to her as she struggled to get even closer, to become a part of him.

"Just feel, baby," he whispered as he pulled out slightly, then pressed back in ever so slowly.

She groaned, rotating her hips against him as he pressed deep.

"Hmm, I like that," he hummed, burying his face into her neck. "I'm not going anywhere," he whispered in her ear as he kept his cock deep and rotated his groin against her clit. Sparks shot out from her womb and she gasped, struggling to breathe through the rising sensations taking hold. "I'm always going to be right here. Right where you want me, need me."

He stopped moving and rose up to cup her cheek with one hand. He stared into her eyes and smiled. "I love you," he whispered.

Leaning down he captured her lips in a slow, sweet kiss that brought more tears to her eyes. She lifted her hips, rotating them and he moaned, pulling back slightly.

"No," she gasped, hugging him to her.

"I'm going to give you what you want," he murmured against her lips as he pressed inside her once again, so slow she wanted to scream. "But I'm going to take my time doing it."

He pulled out and rubbed the head of his cock over her clit, then thrust back inside her aching channel, this time a little harder. Heather gasped, arching her back and undulating wildly as he pressed deep enough to hit her womb.

"Walker," she cried, digging her nails into his back.

"I'm right here, baby." He ground his hips and worked his cock deeper. "I'm right here. Feel me."

Heather wasn't sure she could feel anything beyond the building release. What he was doing was amazing and she closed her eyes, struggling between wanting to feel the release and not wanting him to stop. It felt so good. He felt so good.

"Oh, God. Don't stop," she gasped.

"I'm not stopping," he whispered, then sucked gently on her lower lip. "Not for a long time to come."

He kept the same slow rhythm, driving her crazy with the deep grinds and wicked dips of his hips. Rising onto his palms, he dropped his head and sucked at her nipple. She screamed, arching her back, pushing her breast further into his mouth. He rewarded her by biting the hard little nub, sending sharp tingles of pleasure-pain over every inch of her.

"You're mine, Heather," he murmured as his mouth blazed a path back to hers.

"Don't you fucking forget it."

She nodded, sighing as he kissed her, his tongue mimicking the slow movements of his cock. The release built from deep inside her, starting at her clit, then spreading upward with alarming speed. She tensed, lifting her hips against him as the throbs began. Walker groaned, increasing his thrusts, moving in and out of her a little faster, grinding himself against her clit on the down-thrust.

He broke the kiss and rose on his palms above her, pistoning into her harder and harder. Her legs lifted to circle around his waist, holding him to her as he tensed with a groan, spilling his seed deep inside her.

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Walker closed his eyes, holding himself deep as he rode out the last of the waves of his orgasm. God, sex with her was amazing. Finally catching his breath, he opened his eyes and gazed down at her. She still looked so vulnerable and his heart ached. He knew why she was worried and he wished he could do something to make her feel better, to reassure her.

He dropped to his elbows and brushed her hair from her brow. A thin sheen of sweat dampened her forehead and he smiled slightly. Everything she did, she gave her all and that included sex. Her legs loosened their hold around his waist and dropped back down, sliding along the backs of his thighs, but her arms remained around his shoulders, holding him close.

"Stay like this all night," she whispered.

He snorted softly. "I'll flatten you, baby. I'm heavy."

She shook her head. "It feels nice."

He placed a kiss on her forehead. Letting his lips linger against her skin, he inhaled her scent mingled with his own.

"I love you, Walker," she said, then sniffed back tears.

He cupped her cheek and stared down at her with a small smile. "What do I have to do to get you to stop crying? Hmm?" He lowered his head. "Kiss you?"

He brushed his lips over hers and felt the shudder that ran through her limbs. "I can't seem to help it," she said with a sigh. "I feel like I've been beaten emotionally."

"I know," he replied, kissing her cheek. "I'm here for you, Heather. Whatever you want. Whatever you need."

"I just need this," she whispered. "Just stay with me. Hold me."

He started to pull his semi-hard cock from her warm body, but she lifted her leg, holding him inside her. The pleading look in her gaze tore at his heart and he nodded silently. Rolling to the side, he pulled her with him.

"It won't stay there forever," he murmured in amusement. "Eventually he'll go soft and fall out."

"I know," she whispered, laying her cheek against his chest and wrapping her leg over his hip.

Walker rolled to his back, pulling her on top of him. Her warm wet pussy cradled his cock as her body snuggled over his like a contented kitten. He smiled, rubbing his hand up and down her spine in slow motions meant to sooth, but in the back of his mind, soothing her was the last thing he wanted to do. He wanted to make love to her again.

Chapter Eleven

Walker woke slowly. Warm gentle lips moved over his chest, long soft hair tickled his ribs. He smiled and buried his fingers in Heather's hair. Was this a dream? A sweet, heavenly dream?

Her hips shifted and he moaned, bucking upward and burying his hardening cock deeper into her hot, wet walls. Oh, no. This wasn't a dream. This was his Heather.

She placed another kiss just above his nipple and Walker shuddered. "Heather," he warned.

She pushed up onto her palms and rose above him, sliding her hips back just a little more. Her wet walls clamped down on his length and his balls tightened. He brushed her hair from her face and gazed into sleepy eyes so full of love he wanted to shout.

He'd fought his own emotions toward her for so long, he'd refused to see hers. He knew they were there, but now, staring at her, he felt humbled and unworthy of what she offered him.

"You slept entirely too long," she pouted, and rocked her hips once, making him sigh.

He grasped her thighs, digging his fingertips into her flesh. "I like how you wake me up."

She lifted up, then sank back down along his length slowly and he grit his teeth to keep from rolling her onto her back and slamming into her.

"I definitely like how you wake me up," he said with a grin. "Do that again."

She smiled and lifted up, then slowly sank back down. Her walls slid along his length, pulsing and rippling against him. Reaching up, he cupped her breasts and she sighed, dropping her head back. He used his palms to push her up straight, his fingers squeezing at her full, firm breasts. They fit into his hands so perfectly and he loved how her nipples hardened against his palms.

With a moan, she rocked her hips, forcing him deeper. He breathed deep, forcing himself to let her do her own thing, let her take what she needed. She placed her hands over his, squeezing with him and he swore it was the hottest thing he'd ever seen.

She dropped her head back, her mouth open, her eyes closed, her long auburn hair falling to brush his thighs, her skin flushed pink and glistening with a fine sheen of sweat.

He'd known for a long time he'd had the hots for her. He'd also known it was more than physical, but he'd spent so much time trying to deny it, so much time fighting it because he'd thought he was too old for her, that Jack wouldn't approve. He'd never imagined that once he'd given in to his feelings, given up fighting them, that he'd grow to love her even more, that she'd come to mean so much to him.

Suddenly he wanted nothing more than to kiss her, to taste her lips and swallow her sighs as she rode his cock. Sitting up, he cupped her face and pulled her mouth to his. Her lips parted, allowing his tongue to swoop inside. She returned the kiss, demanding even more from him as she rocked her hips and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Stop holding back, Walker," she whispered against his mouth.

He feathered his hands down her sides to her hips. "Do you want me to fuck you like I want to fuck you?" His lips moved against hers as he spoke.

"I want you to stop coddling me," she moaned. "Don't be so gentle. Take me."

Walker groaned and chuckled in delight, both at the same time. His heart raced and his balls tensed as he gripped her waist and turned her, throwing her to her back. If she wanted to be taken, by damn, he'd take her.

Shifting slightly, he moved her legs over his shoulders and rested his palms by her head. She stared up at him in startled surprise as he thrust his cock into her pussy hard and deep. She gasped, crying out as he did it again, slamming in harder, forcing her to take every last inch of his cock.

Over and over he thrust. Juices poured from her pussy to coat his balls and ease his way deeper. Her nails scratched at his arms as she screamed at him to not stop, to fuck her harder. Her breasts jiggled with their movements, her skin flushed pink in the glowing light of the rising morning sun. Walker could hardly breathe he was so close. If the tensing of her pussy walls was any indication, she was just as close.

Her breathing increased, became more shallow. Her hands drifted above her head, fisting into the blankets as she screamed his name, her release racing through her and he'd swear, into him. He groaned, pumping faster, his release just out of his reach.

Her walls sucked at his cock, making his balls tighten. With a shout, he let loose, his orgasm screaming through his limbs like burning lava. Once, twice more, he thrust spilling his seed deep into her channel.

Breathing hard, he stared down at her startled face and tensed. "Did I hurt you?" he asked in alarm, moving to allow her legs to fall back to the bed.

She shook her head. "No. That was just ... wild. It just kept going and..."

"Going?" He grinned.

She frowned. "Don't get too cocky."

"What?" He smiled. "I was the one doing all the work, after all. I think I deserve the credit."

"I'll give you half the credit."

He smiled and dropped to his elbows. "You seem a little more like yourself."

"I feel a little better. I'm ready to go after these assholes, Walker. I want to see them pay."

"They'll pay, sweetheart. I promise."

"Daddy wouldn't want me to wallow in self pity and sadness. He'd want me to get back out there, live my life and see that what he'd started was finished."

"I agree," Walker said.

He cupped her cheeks and smiled down at her pretty face. He was anxious for all this to be over, anxious to see those adorable dimples that never failed to make his heart pound. Especially when she was being mischievous.

She reached up and traced his lips with her finger, a thoughtful look on her face.

"What?" He nipped at the tip of her finger with his teeth.

"I was just thinking about how many times I'd day-dreamed about this over the years." She grinned. "Older men are definitely better in bed."

Walker's lips twisted making Heather giggle.

"Do you have any idea how much I beat myself up over my attraction to you when you were younger?"

"I have a pretty good idea," she said, her smile fading a little. "But you know what? It's in the past, Walker. Besides, you're not the first guy to fantasize about a younger

woman. I had a massive crush on you and shook my ass in your face at every opportunity so it wasn't all your fault."

Walker chuckled and nodded in agreement.

"I would have given anything at eighteen to have you make love to me."

"I know," he said and kissed the tip of her nose. "But I'm here now. And I'm not going anywhere ... ever. Besides, knowing what you know now, are you sure I wouldn't have scared you off at eighteen?"

"You can be pretty overwhelming at times."

He smiled slightly. "I'll take that as a compliment ... I think."

Heather giggled softly, but despite that little spark of life, sadness still clouded her eyes. Her gaze moved to the morning sun streaming through the small gap in the curtain.

"We should probably be getting up. We have a lot to do today."

He leaned down to nibble along her jaw and reveled in the tremor he felt skimming through her body. "Are you trying to get rid of me?" he teased.

"Not on your life," she said, her voice breathy and sexy. "I could stay here all day."

"But..." he pressed, lifting his head to gaze into her face.

"I want to get this over with. I want to move on with our lives. Besides," she drawled playfully. "Isn't twice in one night enough for you?"

He shook his head. "Nope. I'm afraid I'm going to wear out my new toy."

She laughed. "New toy? I am not a toy, thank you very much."

"You're my toy," he said with a grin.

Her hands slid down his back, making his muscles twitch beneath her touch. "So does that mean you're my toy?"

"I am whatever you want me to be," he replied seriously.

And he was telling the truth. He'd be her toy if she wanted. He'd be her support, her cheerleader, her rock ... whatever she needed him to be. He loved her that much and always would.

"You've been everything I needed you to be, especially the last few days. I'm not sure how I would have gotten through if not for you."

"You don't give yourself enough credit, Heather."

"Maybe. I've leaned on you a lot the last couple of days."

"I don't mind," he said and grinned. "You lean on me as much as you need to."

"But I'll become this weak, sniveling little wimp that can't do anything for herself," she whined, making him chuckle.

"You weak and sniveling?" He snorted. "That'll be a cold day in hell."

Her palm landed on his ass with a stinging slap. He raised an eyebrow, then pursed his lips thoughtfully. "Hmm ... I think I might like that."

Heather laughed. A real laugh for the first time in two days. It sounded good and made him smile to see her finally returning more and more to her old self. Her laughter made his soft cock slide from her body and he sighed, missing the heat of her surrounding him.

"You, little minx," he growled, kissing the tip of her nose. "Go get a shower while I order some breakfast. You didn't eat dinner yesterday so you have to be starving."

"You know, now that I think about it, I am."

"Good." He lifted himself off her and stood, reaching his hand out to help her up as well.

She smiled up at him adorably, making his gut clench. He loved it when she smiled like that. If she added staring at him with those big, beautiful eyes, she could have anything she wanted. And she knew it.

Standing on her toes, she placed a quick kiss on his lips before sashaying to the bathroom. His gaze watched the sway of her ass until she disappeared behind the bathroom door.

Damn wench. He smiled.

* * * *

"So do you really think this idea of yours will work?" Heather asked just before she placed a bite of crescent roll in her mouth.

She couldn't help but sigh at the buttery flavor. She believed they were some of the best ones she'd ever had.

Walker shrugged one shoulder and sighed. "What choice do we have really? The FBI is our best option."

"What about the vice president?" She lifted her coffee cup.

Walker frowned, which made Heather's stomach tighten. "I'm not so sure about him. He's too tight with the hedge-fund managers."

"Do you think he's in on it as well?"

"No, but I don't think he would be as much help as we would like for him to be."

Heather watched him closely, wondering at the worry etched in his brow. Walker usually kept his emotions well hidden. He would be great at cards, for he had that poker face down pat, but today, that face was faltering and that, more than anything, had her worried.

"What changed your mind?"

Walker pursed his lips briefly before answering. "Just call it a hunch."

Heather frowned. "Don't keep me in the dark, Walker."

"I'm not," he replied firmly, then laid his napkin on the table as he stood. "This was your dad's thing, Heather. My job was to keep everyone safe and when things got a little too close for comfort, my focus was shifted to just you. I knew what your father was investigating, but to be honest, I stayed out of the political end of it. I wish now, I hadn't because to be honest, I'm a bit out of my league here. I truthfully, don't know who to trust the most."

Heather's lips twisted. "Actually, I'm not all that sure myself. When it comes to political criminals, you have no idea how deep it goes or how high up the chain."

"We'll get through this," he said as he leaned down and placed a quick kiss on her brow. "One way or another."

Heather nodded and gave him a weak smile. Unfortunately, it was the best she could muster up at the moment. Walker's lips lifted into a sideways grin as he stood, making him look years younger.

"I'm going to jump in the shower. We'll head out as soon as I'm done."

With a frown, Heather watched him stroll into the bathroom. The running water broke the silence of the room and for several minutes, she sat and listened as it pelted into the tiles.

Would they truly be safe? Would this ever truly be over?

A movement to her left caught her attention and she turned, slowly studying every

corner of the room. Paranoia had become a constant state of mind over the last couple of days. Every bump and rustle required in-depth scrutiny.

Her gaze landed on a tall figure standing by the dresser. She tensed, staring straight into the worried gaze of her father. She stood and walked toward the wavering figure and reached out a hand. As she approached, the air surrounding her became colder, crackling with what felt like electrical current.

She jerked back with a startled gasp and just stared. There was something different this time. He wasn't just here for comfort, she felt as though he was here to tell her something.

"Daddy?" she whispered.

His gaze lowered toward the dresser. Heather looked as well and noticed Walker's pocketknife lying next to his wallet and keys. He always kept it with him. Damn thing had come in handy for any number of things over the years.

Her stare flitted back to her father. What was it about the knife? Did he want her to take it?

He glanced back at her, then back toward the knife, then back to her. His eyes appeared haunted, fearful. There was an urgency to his movements, his stare.

The shower water stopped running. Walker would be out soon. If she took the knife, would he notice it was gone? Of course, he would. He kept it with him all the time. She knew he wouldn't mind that she took it, but how would she explain it? She could never lie to Walker. He saw right through her, always had.

Her father took a step closer to the dresser and glanced again toward the knife. Heather stepped forward and grasped it, sliding it into her pants pocket. Her father appeared relieved as he nodded his head. She'd done what he wanted, but what did he know?

"Heather, have you seen—"

Heather squealed and spun around to stare at Walker in surprise. He frowned, watching her closely as he buttoned his shirt.

"You okay?" he asked with a just a hint of amusement.

"You startled me," she replied as she placed her palm against her erratically beating heart.

"No, shit. You look like you've seen a ghost."

Heather swallowed and tried to cover up her discomfort with a snort. "A ghost. Really, Walker."

He put his hands on his hips and watched her in that all-seeing, all-knowing way of his that never failed to make her want to come clean. And she opened her mouth to do just that.

The door to their hotel room burst open and instead of the truth, a scream tore from her throat. Walker turned to block the intruders, but it was five against one. Impossible odds even for Walker.

One of the men stuck a needle into Walker's neck and Heather rushed forward in fear. A man grabbed her on either side, holding her still. She could only watch in growing anger and frustration as Walker sank to the floor unconscious.

She sobbed his name, struggling against the hold on her arms.

"I swear to God, you'll pay for this!" she yelled at a man who strolled toward her in a black leather jacket and gloves.

His cold eyes held hers as he smiled. It was an evil smile. One of glee and menace. It would be a sight she would not soon forget.

"Really, child? And who will make me pay? You?"

She spit in his face and he reached up to wipe the spittle away with the tip of his finger.

"Just like your father," he murmured. "I admired that about him. His refusal to show fear even when staring down the barrel of my gun."

Heather's heart stopped. So this was the man who'd shot her father?

"You'll pay for his murder," she snarled.

"Maybe," he drawled as he lifted his hand.

Grasped between his fingers was a long, thin needle. Heather's heart began to race wildly. Were they to be poisoned? Or knocked out and taken somewhere else?

The point of the needle sank into her neck and she flinched at the sharp bite of pain. The medicine burned as it entered her veins, making her gasp and her legs began to tremble. Her limbs became heavy, her eyelids slowly started to close. She felt herself falling toward the floor, but couldn't raise her hands to stop herself from hitting hard against the carpet.

"But I won't pay today," she heard the man reply as her mind drifted into darkness.

Chapter Twelve

The pounding behind his eyes was excruciating and he rolled to the side to try and ease the ache as well as the nausea eating away at his stomach.

What the hell happened?

As he rolled, he noticed the cold from the concrete floor as it seeped into his bones. Light from the small window close to the ceiling pierced his closed lids and he squeezed them tighter to try and block out the brightness.

Where the hell was he?

Snippets of memory began to play through his mind like scenes from a movie. Men bursting into his room, Heather's voice as she screamed, the burning sensation of the tranquilizer as it worked its way through his veins.

Heather. Where was Heather?

He shifted to his back and groaned as his muscles protested the movements. What did they give him? And how much time had passed? Was it still today or had several days gone by?

"Heather?"

His voice croaked. His mouth felt dry. He worked his lips, trying to moisten them, but his tongue felt heavy and thick. Damn, he felt like he'd been on the worst bender in his life.

"Heather?" he called again, this time a little louder.

He heard a rustling close to his side and he turned his head, squinting to try to see through the blurring of his vision. Reaching out, he placed his hand on her side. She still felt warm, but he could feel the slight tremor. She was cold. He rolled to his side and slid his hand up to her neck. Her pulse was slow and steady, her breathing shallow.

"Heather," he said and gave her a slight shake. "Come on, baby. Answer me."

"Walker?" she replied groggily and he gave a slight sigh of relief. "Walker?" she called out a little more frantically.

He rose to his elbow and leaned over her, trying not to put too much of his weight on her. His arm muscles screamed in protest, but he hoped that would soon pass once the foggiest began to wear off.

"I'm here," he said.

"Where's here?" she asked sleepily. "And why are we on the damn floor? It's freezing."

"What do you remember?"

"You were in ... in..." She rolled just a bit and squinted up at him over her shoulder. "Who were those men? One of them admitted to shooting Daddy."

"The man in the black jacket, I've seen before, but I don't know who he is. The others, I have no idea."

Walker rolled to his back and stared up at the ceiling. It looked like it was about seven feet high. The walls were cinderblock. The floor concrete. His gaze moved to the door on the darkened side of the room. He squinted, trying to make it out but eventually determined he couldn't do it from here. He would have to get up and unfortunately that would require a little more strength than he had at the moment. Hopefully, a few more

minutes and he'd feel much better. At least the nausea and head pounding had begun to fade.

"Where are we?" Heather slowly sat up.

She instantly bent over slightly, holding her stomach and moaning. "Oh, God. I feel sick."

"Take it slow. It's a side effect of whatever they gave us."

"Any idea as to what?"

"No on the meds and where we are." Walker looked over at her pale face and worry tightened his chest. "Lie back down for a few minutes, Heather. It passes."

Nodding, she slowly sank down to her back next to him. "I'm not sure how much longer I can take this cold floor," she grumbled.

His lips twitched as he lifted his right arm. "Roll this way."

She snorted softly. "I'm not sure I can."

"Yes you can," he replied.

With a groan, she shifted, curling her body next to his. Despite their clothes, the cool air of the room penetrated straight to their bones. He was grateful for the heat, but her trembling had him a little concerned. He wrapped his arm around her shoulders, holding her close as she rested her head against his chest.

"What are they going to do with us?" she whispered.

"I don't know."

"You know you could lie to me."

Walker snickered. "You're a big girl, Heather. You don't need or want me to lie to you."

"I guess you're right. You've got an idea to get us out of here, right?"

"Oh, yeah," he drawled.

"I get it," she snipped. "I'm expecting a bit much."

Walker patted her shoulder. "No, you're not. We'll figure a way out of here, just as soon as I can muster up the energy to stand and determine where we are."

"Looks like some sort of bunker or shelter."

"Maybe. Reminds me of a military storage bunker." He tensed. "Shit."

Heather lifted her head. "What?"

"Let me up. I need to see if I can see out that window."

"Why? Walker?" she prodded as she slowly struggled to come to a sitting position.

"What are you thinking?"

Walker didn't answer her question as he came to his feet as quickly as his spinning head would allow. Staggering, he made his way to the window, but it was too high for him to see out of and a quick glance around the empty room revealed nothing he could stand on.

"Heather, I'm gonna need you for a sec," he said as he leaned a palm against the wall, silently questioning whether or not he would have the strength to lift her. "Be careful standing, though. It'll make you dizzy."

Taking a deep breath, Heather staggered drunkenly to her feet. Once standing, she bent back over, resting her hands against her knees.

"Geez," she hissed.

"It gets better ... I promise."

"When?" she snapped. "If I had to fight for my life, I'm not sure I could right now."

"Me either," he said with a sigh. "If anyone comes in here now, you're on your own." She glanced up at him through her lashes and he smiled, letting her know he was teasing.

"Glad to know you can keep your sense of humor at a time like this," she sneered half-heartedly.

"It's better than wallowing in fear and doubt." He waved his hand. "Come on, pokey. Get a move on. We need to figure out where we are."

"Where do you think we are?"

Walker pursed his lips, trying to determine just how much to tell her. "Come take a look, Heather. See if you see anything."

She shot him a scowl as she walked over. "I hate it when you do that," she growled.

"Yeah, I know," he replied as he bent down and linked his fingers together.

Heather removed her shoes and braced one palm against the wall, another on his shoulder and set the ball of her foot within his clasped fingers. With a low groan, he pushed her upward and she grasped the edges of the windowsill, allowing her to peer out.

"What do you see?" Walker asked.

"A few tanks, another building. We're in a field. Some of the stuff looks burnt. It's like a junk yard out there."

"Damn it," Walker growled. "Hop down."

Heather dropped to the floor and leaned heavily against the cinderblock wall as she slipped her shoes back on.

"Please tell me we're not on an Air Force target range," Heather murmured as she dropped her forehead against the wall.

"Sorry, baby," Walker said and sighed. "Wish I could."

"How often do they use these things?"

"It depends."

"If they put us here, they must be expecting them to use it fairly soon," she said.

"That would be my guess, as well. Have to admit. Great place to hide a body."

"That's not funny," she snarled.

Walker didn't miss the crack in her voice and strolled over to gently massage her shoulders in support.

"We're going to get out of here, Heather. I promise."

She sniffed back a few tears. "Damn right we are. I wanted a lifetime with you. I fought for it too hard to lose it."

Walker grinned and kissed the back of her head. "That's my girl." He patted her shoulders, then turned to see about the door. He walked over and then gripped the handle and pulled. It gave way a little but whatever excitement he may have felt, was immediately trampled when the door came to a stop, refusing to budge any further.

"Damn," he sighed, studying the three-inch gap. "Should have known it wouldn't be that easy."

"What's holding it?" Heather came over to study the door as well.

"Looks like a chain. They probably have a lock of some sort on it to hold it closed."

"My hands are small," she offered as she pushed him out of the way and tried to slide her hand through the gap. "I think I can reach it..."

She frowned and winced as she pushed her hand through further. Walker watched, trying to not get too excited as she got her hand through.

"I got it," she said with a smile as she pulled the lock through the gap.

"Great," Walker drawled. "But can you unlock it?"

"Hey," she snapped. "I at least got the damn thing in here. What have you done?"

He shrugged one shoulder. "I got the gap."

"Ha, ha," she replied sarcastically. "Come on, Walker. You're the big security guy. Surely you can pick this."

"Sure I could, if I had something to pick it with." He studied the lock with a frown. "Even a pocket knife would work."

Heather reached into her pants pocket and grinned. "You mean one like this one?"

Walker's heart jerked at the sight of his pocketknife in her tiny hand. "What the hell are you doing with that?"

She scowled. "I know you're not seriously going to yell at me now."

Walker snorted. "Not likely. But I am going to kiss you."

He leaned forward and grasped the knife at the same time he planted a big, wet kiss on her lips. Heather giggled, but then frowned and placed her palm against her head.

"I swear, this feels like a hangover," she said with a sigh.

"Try to think about something else," he said as he studied the lock, sliding the tip of the blade into the keyhole.

A low rumble began to build from somewhere outside. Walker tensed as he recognized the sound of an approaching plane. He glanced at Heather, noticing her widening eyes full of surprise and fear. She heard it too and knew what it meant. They had little time.

He pushed the blade further into the lock, feeling his way. Finally, it clicked and he pulled it free, releasing the lock from the chain. They both clanged to the floor as he tugged at the door handle, pulling it the rest of the way open.

The plane was getting closer, the roar louder. A hiss sounded and Walker quickly grabbed Heather, pushing her against the wall and shielding her with his body just as a loud explosion shook the entire building. Heather screamed, covering her ears with the palms of her hands. Walker winced as the sound vibrated through his ears, temporarily damaging his eardrums. Sounds from here on out would be muffled. He might lose his hearing all together if they experienced any more like that one.

"Go," he yelled. "We've got to get out of here."

He shoved her through the door and into the dark hallway. She turned one way, then another, confusion wrinkling her forehead. "Which way?"

*

Heather struggled to get her bearings. Her hearing was muffled, her head still spinning. She wasn't sure where to go—how to get out. At the far end of the hall, she noticed the ghostly figure of her father and took off toward him at a full run. Walker coming up close behind her.

He didn't say anything. Didn't question her, just followed her lead as she sprinted toward her father. Once at the end, he disappeared. The hallway split off into two directions. One going right, one going left. She glanced to the left and once again saw her father.

He was leading her out.

She ran toward him and the end of another hallway. To her right, she could see light coming in through a gap at the bottom of a large door. That had to be the way out. She

ran forward, but the sound of another explosion rattled the rafters and she screamed, scrunching down and covering her head to try to avoid the pieces of falling drywall falling from the ceiling.

Walker pulled her back just as a large piece dropped where she'd been standing.

"That was too fucking close for comfort. Go," he snapped, shoving her forward toward the door.

They both reached it at the same time and began to tug. Just like the other, it only gave way a few inches before stopping.

"No!" Heather snapped, slapping her hand against the door.

"See if you can reach the lock," Walker said as he pulled his knife out of his pocket.

Heather reached through and felt for the cold piece of metal. Once in her fingers, she pulled it inside. Her fingers shook as she waited in tense silence for Walker to pick it, hoping he got it done before the planes flying over dropped another missile.

In the distance, she could hear the distinct roaring thump of a helicopter as it approached and her heart pounded.

"Oh, God," she groaned, looking up toward the ceiling. It sounded as though it would be on top of them any second.

Walker stared at her in slight confusion.

"You don't hear that?" she asked in surprise.

He shook his head. "I feel it."

He turned his attention back to the lock and quickly pulled it open. He pushed Heather through the opening, yelling at her to run. They hadn't got ten feet from the building when another explosion rattled the ground, this time sending shrapnel headed right for them. In the back of her mind, she heard Walker shout at her to drop to the ground, then a horrifying yell as pieces of metal and dirt rained down on them from above and the side.

Once the dust had settled, she turned to find Walker, then screamed at the sight that greeted her. Blood literally pumped from an open wound in his thigh as he struggled to sit up and stop the bleeding.

"Walker," she screamed.

"Get the hell out of here, Heather!" he yelled over the loud thumping of the helicopter.

It was close enough now she could feel the breeze from the blades, but she stamped down her fear. Walker needed her. She pushed to her feet and ran to his side, dropping to the blood-soaked ground next to him.

"Your artery has been severed," she yelled over the noise.

She placed the flat of her hand over the gaping wound, then her other palm over that one and pressed hard, making Walker moan. It didn't help, blood continued to seep through her fingers with every pulse of his heart. If she didn't stop the flow of blood, he would bleed out.

She pressed harder, saying a silent prayer. She could hear the helicopter and looked up as it passed over them, then circled back around.

"Oh, shit." She glanced back down at his leg and the blood oozing through her fingers. "Damn it," she growled. "Walker. I can't get it to stop."

She looked up at him and realized he couldn't hear her over the noise. He continued to stare up at the sky, his pale face contorted in pain. She couldn't lose him.

Determined to do what she had to, she took a deep breath and gripped the edges of his torn pants, opening them more. Blood squirted out the wound, hitting her chest and arms.

"They see us," Walker said, but she couldn't look up. Not yet.

She could hear the chopper close by, feel the vibration in the ground, but right now, she just needed to take care of him. If they died, at least it would be together.

Once his pants were open enough, she pushed two fingers into the wound, feeling for the flow of blood. Walker groaned, scrunching his eyes closed against the pain.

"I'm sorry," she said as her fingers clamped down on the artery, temporarily stopping the flow of blood.

Walker's face contorted in pain at her searching fingers. Her heart stopped in fear as she leaned over him, yelling in his face. "Damn it, Walker, you keep those eyes open!" She cupped his cheek with her free hand, turning his face toward her. "Walker!"

He half opened his eyes, staring into hers and she sobbed in relief. The chopper hovered above them, watching. She knew they saw them now. It was only a matter of time before help came, if he could just hold out that long.

A jeep barreled through the trees to her left and she breathed a sigh of relief as two soldiers jumped from the vehicle and ran forward. Looking up, he waved off the chopper, allowing them to better hear each other.

"What the hell are you doing here?" he demanded.

"It's a long story. He needs help. Please. His artery has been severed. He's gonna bleed out."

He glanced down, then dropped to his knees beside Walker to study the wound. "He won't make a jeep ride back," he said, but Heather had to strain to hear him. The chopper was gone, but the damage to her ears was not. The soldier looked to the other one and ordered, "Call a medivac; severe laceration to the thigh with arterial damage. Tell them we're going to need blood." He glanced at Heather. "Do you know his blood type?"

Heather shook her head with growing worry.

He held up his hand. "It's okay. We'll figure it out." He gripped her wrist gently. "You did good, but I need to get in here."

She nodded and hesitantly pulled her hand away, allowing the soldier to do what was needed. Walker again groaned as the soldier poked and studied the wound before slipping his finger back inside to clamp down on the artery.

Heather gripped Walker's cheeks, forcing him to look at her. "You stay with me, do you hear me?" she said. "You're not leaving me, Walker. I won't allow it, damn it. Do you understand?"

Walker nodded, a weak smile tugging at his lips.

"We need to get him to a hospital if he's going to keep this leg," the soldier said as he waved upward toward a smaller chopper making a landing in a clearing close by. He studied her as three men rushed forward carrying a gurney. "You're Senator Prescott's daughter, aren't you?" he asked.

She nodded. "Yes."

"The same man who killed the Senator do this to you?"

She stared at him in surprise, but nodded again. "Yes."

He prepared to stand keeping his fingers in Walker's wound as they loaded him on the gurney in preparation for transport. "We'll do the IV's in transit. We don't have time to

do them on the ground."

Heather started to follow, but one of the soldiers grabbed her elbow, holding her back. "Ma'am, you'll have to stay with us. There's not enough room on the chopper."

"No," she cried, struggling to get back to Walker, who raised his hand.

Was he telling her bye or wanting her next to him? Her heart broke that she couldn't be with him. That she wouldn't know what was happening.

"Please," she whispered, turning pleading eyes to the soldier.

"I'll get you there in the jeep, Ma'am."

Heather watched them load Walker into the chopper as tears streamed down her face. Tears she'd refused to let Walker see, but now she could let them lose, and did. The wound on his leg was bad. She feared they wouldn't be able to repair the damage. As the soldier tugged her along, she walked backward, keeping her eyes on the chopper as it lifted from the ground, the man she loved inside it, hanging onto life by a mere thread.

* * * *

Heather paced the small waiting room, her shoes clicking against the tile floor, her jeans rubbing, making a swooshing sound as she walked back and forth along the length of the room. They were borrowed clothes gotten for her by her father's assistant, Mike, who stood close by, occasionally offering her coffee, which she always refused.

They'd been in that military warehouse at the target range unconscious for almost thirty-two hours. Over a full day. Her body still struggled with the affects of the drug, but they said that would soon pass. It would improve much faster if she would eat and sleep, but right now she could do neither. Her hearing would improve as well, with time. No permanent damage.

Walker was still an uncertainty. He was still in surgery. Almost eight hours had passed while the doctors tried to save his leg and the waiting was driving her insane.

"Heather," Mike said from his position on the small sofa along the wall. "You need to eat something. Have you even eaten at all since you've been here?"

"I had a few crackers when I first got here," she said with a dismissive wave of her hand.

"Crackers?" Mike asked. "Come on, Heather." He stood and held out a sandwich for the second time in less than thirty minutes. "Either eat this or I'll sit on you and force it into your mouth."

She stopped pacing and turned to stare at him in surprise. "Excuse me?"

"You heard me. Walker would expect no less from me. Neither would your father."

She sighed, her shoulders sagging in defeat, but she still made no move to take the sandwich.

"Walker is going to need you when he comes out of this, Heather. And he'll need you strong and healthy, which means you have to eat."

Heather nodded in agreement and took the sandwich. Dropping onto one of the chairs, she ate slowly, not really tasting it.

"What do you think, Mike? Do you think he'll be okay?" she asked around a bite of ham.

"I think you were lucky it happened where it did. The surgeon just got back from Iraq and has a lot of experience dealing with these types of wounds. If anyone can save his leg, I think he can."

"I hope you're right."

But truthfully, to her it didn't matter. She would love him anyway, regardless. She just wanted him to live. Swallowing around a bite of sandwich, she tried to fight the tears that threatened to flow. Her emotions were raw and uncontrollable. It was the fatigue, but rest eluded her right now.

The FBI had come and gone, except for her ever-present guards. Something that would be here until all parties involved had been caught. Walker's emails had gone out to the media, but the vice president had put a hold on anything being said to the public. They wanted to catch the men responsible before they had a chance to run. Even Heather and Walker's survival had been kept quiet. The FBI wanted them to believe, at least for the time being, they'd been successful.

"Ms. Prescott."

Heather almost dropped the sandwich in her haste to stand and hear what the doctor had to say. "Yes?" she replied breathlessly, anxiously awaiting the news.

The doctor stepped forward, a small smile of comfort lifting the corners of his lips. "He came through just fine."

Heather breathed a loud sigh of relief. "Can I see him?"

"Shortly."

"His leg?"

"We were able to save it, but he's going to need months of rehab. He may also keep a limp."

Mike snorted. "Not Walker."

Heather giggled, knowing exactly what Mike meant. Walker was stubborn and he'd walk without a limp come hell or high water.

"That was a hell of a wound and you did a very brave thing, Ms. Prescott. He might not have made it if not for your quick thinking to clamp down on the artery with your fingers."

"I'm just glad I was able to find it."

The doctor gave her a soft smile and patted her shoulder. "A nurse will come get you when he's settled in recovery."

Heather nodded and jumped forward to wrap her arms around the doctor's neck.

"Thank you," she whispered.

* * * *

Walker woke to a throbbing pain in his leg and head. His mouth felt as though it was full of cotton. He licked his lips, trying to moisten them and remove the nasty taste. Unfortunately, it didn't work.

Where am I?

The last thing he remembered was Heather yelling at him to stay with her and a helicopter. Someone had his or her fingers in his leg. He winced at the remembered slicing pain and the coldness that had seeped into his very bones. He was losing a lot of blood. That he remembered clearly.

Where was Heather? Was she okay?

Worry tightened his chest as he tried to open his eyes, squinting against the bright florescent lights above him. Well, at least he'd made it to the hospital and if the jarring pain in his leg was any indication, he apparently still had it, but he put his hand against

his thigh just to be certain.

Yep, still there.

He blinked, trying to focus more clearly. A figure moved to stand over him, blocking some of the light.

"It's about time you woke up," Heather said.

Walker smiled weakly in relief and lifted his hand to touch her soft cheek. She looked tired and pale, but to him, she'd never looked more beautiful.

His hand dropped back to the bed, his body still too weak to hold it up for long.

"Hey, brat," he croaked, his eyes drifting back closed.

"I'll let that slide today," she whispered as she softly brushed his hair off his forehead with the tips of her fingers. "You gave me quite a scare. How are you feeling?"

He snickered. "Like I almost lost a leg. What the hell hit me?"

"I think it was part of the jeep that blew up a few yards away from us. You were lucky. A few more inches, you would have lost it completely."

"How bad is it?"

"You'll have a nasty scar and probably a limp. The bone was broken."

Walker nodded. He'd expected as much.

"What about you?" He fingered her shirt in confusion. Is that what she'd been wearing earlier?

"I'm fine."

"Heather—"

"I'm fine, Walker. I promise. No cuts, no broken bones. Maybe a bruise here and there and I'm sure I smell like day-old scraps, but I'm fine."

He heard a rumble coming from her stomach and he peered up at her through heavy lids. Despite his fatigue and pain, he found that sound amusing.

"When did you eat last?"

He knew his Heather. When she worried, she starved herself.

She shrugged and pursed her lips. A sure sign she was trying to determine how much of a lie she could get away with.

"I had part of a sandwich earlier," she finally replied.

"Part?" he asked, closing his eyes, fighting hard to stay awake despite the pain.

"I promise I'll eat later, okay?"

"Heather..." he whispered.

"Well, look who's finally awake," the nurse spoke as she came to stand by his bed and check his vitals. "How's the pain?"

"Tolerable, but I think it's only because I'm not fully awake."

The nurse smiled. "We have you connected to a morphine drip. When you need it, just press the button."

Walker nodded, swallowing past the dryness in his throat.

"Can I get you anything?" she asked.

"No," he whispered, then raised his hand, weakly grabbing the sleeve of her scrubs. "Wait. Make her eat."

"Walker," Heather chided.

"Make her eat," Walker said again, this time with more force.

He heard the nurse chuckle and Heather's frustrated huff. He smiled slightly, thinking that had to be the most adorable sound he could hear right now.

"All right. I'll eat," she grumbled.

"Good. I'll need you well. After all, who else is going to wait on me hand and foot?"

"Oh, as if," Heather replied, but he could hear the smile in her voice and his widened as he drifted back off to sleep.

* * * *

"The court hearing of Carl Wetherly starts today in Washington. The wealthy hedge-fund manager is on trial for numerous crimes, one of which the murder of Senator Jack Prescott and the attempted murder of his daughter, Heather and business partner, Walker—"

Heather pressed the off button on the remote control and threw it to the other side of the couch. Walker stared up at her with a mixture of aggravation and amusement from his reclined position on the sofa.

"I was watching that," he said.

"I know you were, but don't you think we've seen and heard enough about that? We have to actually be there in person in a few days, do we have to watch it on TV too?"

Walker nodded once. "Point taken."

"Good. Why don't you go for a walk with me?" She grinned playfully. "The fresh air will do you some good."

Walker curled his lip. He was all for hard work and the physical therapy had definitely been hard, he just hated trying to walk in that damn sand.

Heather studied him, her hands on her hips, her head tilted slightly to the side. She wore her hair up, her denim shorts showing off long tanned legs, her tank top teasing him with glimpses of her bare stomach.

His cock stirred to life and he grinned. "I have a better idea."

"We just did that," she argued, taking a step back from him. "And if I recall, you convinced me to do all the work." Walker's grin widened as he remembered all her work. She slapped at his good leg with the dishtowel she held in her hand.

"Hey," he chided. "Wounded man here."

"Oh, wounded my ass," she snapped, albeit playfully. "Stop milking it."

He chuckled. He couldn't help it, she was so adorable like this. He held his hands up in surrender. "Okay, okay. I'll go for a walk." He held his hand out, smiling mischievously. "Could you help me up, though?"

Heather just shook her head, fighting a smile. "Get your own self up."

With that, she turned away and walked back to the kitchen, waiting for him to join her. As she did, she could hear Walker's chuckle. The jerk was perfectly capable of getting up on his own, walking around, and doing most all the things he normally did. Except for the slight limp, he was pretty much back to normal. He just liked antagonizing her.

"Lead the way," he said, then slapped his palm across her ass.

The sting traveled all the way up her spine, making her squeal in both surprise and truthfully, just a little excitement. Smiling at him over her shoulder, she opened the French doors leading to the deck.

The ocean breeze blew through the opening, ruffling her hair and bringing with it the smell of the warm ocean. The sky was a beautiful clear blue, the water just a hair shade deeper, the white caps creating a stark contrast. She'd always loved the ocean and they'd

spent the last several weeks here, recouping, relaxing, and just generally enjoying their time together worry free.

She stepped down the steps leading to the sand, then turned to watch as Walker worked his way down, taking his time. She knew the sand made his limp a little more apparent and the walk a tad more difficult, but the therapist said a little more difficulty would only help him in the long run.

He made it to the bottom and smiled at her as he came to her side, taking her hand in his. She smiled back, turning to lead him toward the water, where the sand was more firm and flat.

Standing within the waves, just offshore, was her father and Heather came to a stop, staring at him. She fought back tears as she looked at her father's smiling face. It was the first time she'd seen him since the shelter. He looked happy.

She smiled slightly, wistfully, wishing he could be here with them.

"Bye, Jack," Walker whispered from his spot behind her as he wrapped one arm around her waist, holding her close.

She snuggled against his chest, smiling as her father faded from sight. But her smile quickly faltered as she realized what Walker had just said.

Turning, she stared at him.

"You saw him?" she whispered.

"I've seen him all along. Why do you think I didn't question where you ran in the shelter or whom you were staring at during the funeral? I wasn't sure you saw him, until that day in the shelter."

"Why didn't you say something?"

He shrugged and squinted toward the sky. "I wasn't sure what I was seeing was real." He dropped his gaze back to hers. "You know ... I've been trying to figure out the right time to do this."

Her stomach knotted at his serious expression. "To do what?"

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a ring. Holding it up to her, he gave her a sideways smile that made her knees quiver.

Oh, my God.

"I would get down on one knee, but ... I might not get back up."

Heather laughed through the tears sliding down her cheeks. He slid the ring onto her shaking finger and it was then she recognized it and her heart stopped.

"My mother's?" She looked up at him in surprise. "How did you get this?"

"That thing Mike gave me at the funeral?"

Heather nodded, anxiously waiting his answer.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out a small manila envelope. "It came in this, with a note wrapped around it. The note's inside."

Heather opened it with shaking fingers and stared at the familiar scrawl in surprise.

Walker,

Ask her, you jackass. We both know you want to.

Jackie.

"Oh, my God," Heather whispered, laughing through her happy tears.

"Looks like you were right. The ass knew all along and never said a damn thing."

Heather shook her head and folded the paper back up, then stuck it in her pocket. She planned to keep it somewhere safe.

"Marry me, Heather," Walker said in a soft voice, barely audible over the crashing waves. He grinned, making her heart stop. "Be my young, chick-a-dee."

Heather laughed, throwing her arms around his neck. He stumbled back a step, but quickly righted himself, wrapping his arms around her back to hold her close.

"Is this a yes?" he asked.

"Yes," she said as she pulled away and smiled at him. "Absolutely yes."

The End

About the Author:

Trista Ann Michaels can be found deep in the mountains of Tennessee writing her stories by a swift, flowing stream. The sound of running water has always relaxed, as well as inspired, her.

Before becoming a writer, she worked as a paralegal for a prominent prosecuting attorney; that is until she met the man of her dreams, her very own airline captain by the name of David.

When she isn't writing, she can be found piddling about in her garden or watching movies. Her favorite pastime is traveling, and you can always find her at a RWA meeting, sharing her writing experiences and encouraging fellow writers to follow their dreams.

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