



A Total-E-Bound Publication



www.total-e-bound.com

The Lieutenant's Ex-wife

ISBN # 978-0-85715-179-7

©Copyright Aliyah Burke 2010

Cover Art by Lyn Taylor ©Copyright July 2010

Edited by Jess Bimberg

Total-E-Bound Publishing

This is a work of fiction. All characters, places and events are from the author's imagination and should not be confused with fact. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead, events or places is purely coincidental.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form, whether by printing, photocopying, scanning or otherwise without the written permission of the publisher, Total-E-Bound Publishing.

Applications should be addressed in the first instance, in writing, to Total-E-Bound Publishing. Unauthorised or restricted acts in relation to this publication may result in civil proceedings and/or criminal prosecution.

The author and illustrator have asserted their respective rights under the Copyright Designs and Patents Acts 1988 (as amended) to be identified as the author of this book and illustrator of the artwork.

Published in 2010 by Total-E-Bound Publishing, Think Tank, Ruston Way, Lincoln, LN6 7FL, United Kingdom.

Warning: This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

THE LIEUTENANT'S EX-WIFE Aliyah Burke

Dedication

To Sam, thanks for everything you do.

Trademarks Acknowledgement

The author acknowledges the trademarked status and trademark owners of the following wordmarks mentioned in this work of fiction:

SIG Sauer P220: SIG Sauer, Inc.

Subaru Forester: Subaru, Inc.

Chapter One

Pete Kysenzki swore a blue streak when he took another look around. Snow and ice as far as he could see. He was in a foul mood and walking off the plane into the cold Alaskan night did little to improve his attitude.

"Deadhorse," he groused. "What a freakin' name."

Clenching his jaw, he shouldered his one bag and headed towards the waiting taxi to

take him to his room. It didn't take him long to get settled, and soon, he was on his way to what he figured was about the only form of fun in the area. Pushing his way through the door into the bar, he scanned the crowd. Music, beer, pool. If he wasn't so pissed he was here, he might have allow himself to have some fun.

Making his way to the bar, he leant towards the woman behind the bar and said, "I'm looking for Sidra... umm...Bonnaire."

The blonde voluptuous woman flashed him a wide grin. "Figures. Hot new guy comes strolling in and wants her. Sorry, I haven't seen her in here tonight, but if she did manage to slip in past me, she'll be in the far corner, playing pool. Otherwise, you can catch her in the morning at the general store."

"General store?"

"She works there. You can't miss it, big sign."

"Thanks."

Pete smiled at her and headed for the corner. Why would Sidra be working at a general store? He made it to the corner and quickly determined she wasn't anywhere around. So he left. Hands shoved deep in his pockets, Pete wished he were back home, in Virginia. This was not his kind of weather.

He got a room at a small hotel and hurriedly got ready for bed. His dreams were restless ones, and he woke up still wishing he were anywhere but where he was. He was hesitant to see Sidra again. He'd spent so many years trying to forget her. It didn't take him long to get ready, and soon, he walked across the frozen ground towards a building that had a cheesy handmade sign over it reading 'General Store'.

The store was warm and clean. He shivered again and pulled the door closed behind him. Shelves were stocked full and he could hear muffled laughter towards the back. Pete removed his gloves while he walked, and when he turned a corner, he stopped at the sight of a large man hovering over a woman, whispering into her ear.

Her laughter, deep and husky, sent spirals of longing through Pete. And he knew who it was. Only one woman's laugh had the ability to make him able to split wood with his cock. Sidra Bonnaire. And it didn't matter how long it had been, his shaft knew it, for it pressed hard against his jeans. Her head was tucked near the other man's and unexplained jealousy washed over Pete. Shoving his gloves in his pocket, he cleared his throat and crossed his arms. The couple sprang apart and looked at him. Pete could only stare.

Sidra Bonnaire. The years had been amazing to her. Her cocoa skin shone with health, those slightly tilted eyes of raw umber stared at him from behind thick black lashes. The coal black, wavy hair cascading around her oval face called to his fingers to sink into it. Her full lips, which could do, and had done, wicked and unspeakable things to his cock, were parted with surprise. She wore a pale brick man's sweatshirt and tight blue jeans which highlighted her curves.

"Pete," she said in disbelief.

"Do you know him, Sidra?" the man beside her asked, placing his hand on her arm in a proprietary action.

Pete growled low in his throat and lifted a shoulder briefly. *To hell with it.* Striding over to her, he jerked her away from the man touching her and pulled her flush to his chest. Delving one hand into her hair, he lowered his mouth to hers and kissed her. He thrust his tongue deep into her mouth, groaning in the back of his throat when his senses were swamped by her addictive taste. *Damn, I forgot just how completely intoxicating she is.*

He plundered, sweeping deep until she sagged into him. Then he ended it, reluctantly—for every inch of his body was ready to strip her naked and sink deep where he belonged. Within her.

"Well, hell, I've missed you baby," he drawled.

Her eyes were wide, and he felt another flash of lust when her tongue snuck out and skimmed her lips.

"Who the hell are you?" the since forgotten man demanded.

Pete turned his head and stared at him. Hauling Sidra back up against him when she made to walk off, he let his fingers caress her ass, claiming her. "I'm Pete Kysenzki, her husband."

He could feel her stiffen beside him but he continued to stare at the other man. "I'd like a moment alone with my wife, please."

Those dark eyes flickered between him and Sidra before he walked away. "I'll see you later, Sidra," he called out over his shoulder.

"You jackass," she seethed, yanking away from him and stomping behind the counter where she pushed into an office.

He followed her, his eyes lingering on the way she moved. Her stride always was full and confident. No prissy little baby steps for her. Sidra faced him and sat on the edge of the desk.

"What the hell do you think you're doing? What are you doing here?"

Pete leaned against the doorframe and ogled her, his mind conjuring up things he'd like to do with and to her. "I've been looking for you and I have to say, you're not an easy woman to track down. I got a letter stating we were still married."

She didn't bat an eye. "I know. I got one. So you sign the papers and we continue on like we have been for the past six years, *not* married to one another."

He narrowed his eyes. For the second time in his life, the feeling of jealousy filled him —from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head—and it was pertaining to the same woman. But this time it was laced with anger and some disbelief that she believed he would just let it go. "You have something going with that guy you were looking all cosy with?" he snarled.

Sidra crossed her arms and glared at him. "That is *none* of your business."

"Why are you here? Who'd you piss off at the DoJ to get stuck up here?"

Her gaze shuttered. "I don't work for them anymore."

Pushing away from the doorjamb, he sauntered towards her, holding her gaze. Pete slid a hand along her face, loving the softness of it on his palm. "I think we need to talk," he murmured, lowering his lips to hers.

"No, we don't," she muttered.

"Fine," he purred. "I have other things in mind to do, anyway." Pete tugged her from the desk and kissed her.

Sidra whimpered shamelessly as Pete kissed her. Engulfed her. Devoured her. In the back of her mind, she knew she needed to stop it. Later. Just a few seconds more. It's been so long. Six years, four months, and thirteen days had passed since she'd been in his arms. If she was keeping track. Which I'm not. Her breasts were heavy and her pussy

gushed. Wrapping her arms around him, she arched into his touch.

"Pete," she gasped, running her hands through his hair, shuddering at the memory of the short spikes against the inner skin of her thighs when he would kneel between them.

His hands, large and strong, cupped her ass and held her tightly to him. His blatant erection pressed into her. The ache between her thighs grew. He nipped her lower lip and growled. Pete ended the kiss and stared down at her, his blue eyes stormy and heated.

"Sidra," he rumbled, lifting her to sit on the edge of the desk before his hands slid up under her sweatshirt.

She bit her lower lip and dropped her head back as he undid the button on her jeans. Her breath came in short gasps when his fingers skimmed over the front of her satin panties.

"Wet," he rumbled.

Sidra bucked into his hand, desperate for more of his touch, deep within her. She shuddered when one finger slid under the edge of her underwear. "Yes," she gasped.

Pete held her gaze as two thick digits slipped over her damp curls and into her core. Sidra clamped her mouth shut on the scream of pleasure which threatened to escape as her body shattered around his fingers.

"So wet, hot and ready, Sidra," he uttered harshly. "And so tight. You're still so fucking tight."

Back and forth, he thrust within her, his thumb working her clit. His gaze was intense and burned with need. She reached for the button on his jeans. Sidra started when his other hand grabbed her fingers. Jerking her gaze up to his, she raised her eyebrows in silent question.

"If you go there, Sidra, you aren't leaving this room for a long, *long* time. To hell if you get a customer." He scissored his fingers in her and sent another orgasm tearing through her.

Damn it all, my day just started. "Fuck," she uttered.

"Oh, I plan on it." His voice was deep and guttural.

She whimpered when he removed his fingers and, holding her gaze, slid them in his mouth and cleaned them.

"Honey 'n' spice, just like I remember." He stepped as close as he could. "We really need to talk, Sidra."

Shoving her lust for this man where it belonged, under lock and key, she did up her pants and arched a brow at him. "No, we don't. Thanks for the fun, but there's nothing we need to discuss. Sign the damn papers."

His eagle gaze hardened and narrowed. "You really think it's gonna be that simple?"

Sidra slid past him off the desk. Moving around to the chair, she sat in it and prayed the throb between her legs would stop. Three. Three orgasms with just his fingers in her and she sat there craving more like a slut.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you file the paperwork before?"

All warm fuzzy feelings fled. "Don't you dare," she bit off, pushing to her feet. "Don't you fucking dare lay this at my feet."

"Well, it ain't my fault," he growled back.

"Of course not," Sidra sneered. "Nothing is ever the fault of the great Pete 'Racer' Kysenzki's fault."

That warning flicker in his eyes went ignored. As did the tic in his jaw.

"Don't," he rumbled.

"Or else what?" Sidra shrugged, palms up. "Hmmm? Gonna report me to your superior? I don't have a boss anymore so what are you gonna do to me?"

Pete moved before she could blink. The air left her when his shoulder connected with her gut.

"Put me down! Damn you, Pete, put me down!" she screeched.

He smacked her hard on the ass and she rose up from the sharp sting only to find the grey eyes of the man who passed as the law around here watching. And they were amused eyes.

"Morning, Sidra," Matt said from where he stood in the doorway, as if it were an everyday occurrence for her to be dangling over some man's shoulder like a sack of potatoes.

"Matt, don't just stand there. Aren't you going to do something?"

"Are you physically in danger?" Matt asked, his lips twitching below his moustache.

Is he fucking serious? Pete's fingers were moving along her leg and she had a hard time following Matt's conversation. Not that it mattered for Pete turned and she could no longer see Matt.

"It's been over six years since I've seen my wife, Matt," Pete said as if he had the right to be on a first name basis with the man. "I would really like to catch up with her."

"No-"

Her words were cut off by Pete tightening his grip on her.

Matt chuckled. "Of course. Don't blame you. I probably stopped you from going upstairs and getting reacquainted. So...I'll leave you to it."

No Christmas gift for you, Matt. See if I even talk to your ass again!

Sidra hung there, embarrassed, eyes closed, body growing wetter with the knowledge of what was coming, and tried to imagine what she'd done lately to deserve such a cruel fate. She snuck a glance when Pete took her through the store to the door leading to the stairs to her apartment. Matt stood there with an arrogant grin on his face. Flipping him off didn't make her feel any better.

She grew angrier with each step Pete took. Didn't struggle but she was pissed. Furious even. However, not stupid, she knew better than to fight while they went up a flight of stairs. Pete returned her to her feet after he closed the door behind them. His eyes snapped with fury but beneath the anger lay desire.

"You can't kidnap me like this, damn it!"

The smirk she remembered from days long past filled his expression. "Wanna call the cops? It worked so well in your favour to have him there last time."

Her palm itched to smack the smirk right off his face. Pete flipped the lock and unzipped his jacket. Sidra licked her lips when he shrugged out of it and she saw the tight

long-sleeved, button-down navy blue shirt he wore. He would tempt a nun, and we all know I'm nowhere close to being one. He's still all too fine!

"I don't get it, Pete. Why are you here? Just leave and sign the papers."

He removed his boots before walking towards her. "It's not that simple."

Sidra backed away. "Yes, it is."

Sweet heaven help me! Pete stood there and calmly began to unbutton his shirt. One button. Two. Three. Four. Sidra squeezed her eyes shut to close out the view of his golden chest and ripped abs.

"No, Sidra, it's not."

"Why are you disrobing?" she questioned even as she snuck another peek. *Like a drug addict, just a bit more.*

"Well, darlin'," he drew out in that arrogance-filled, toe-curling drawl he owned, "I find it most pleasurable to make love naked." The shirt floated forgotten to the floor and his fingers moved to his pants.

Her knees shook. "We are not making love, or anything else."

Pants undone but still on, he prowled towards her, his gaze telling her how wrong she was about that. Wetness flowed rampant through her. Her breaths came in short gasps. Her nipples tightened painfully behind her bra. She gulped and stared at him. Just as fucking gorgeous as he had been.

Powerful.

Masculine.

A man's man.

Wide shoulders, an impressive torso which tapered into lean hips. Sidra's fingers itched to touch him. She longed to taste him.

"You're wearing too many clothes, Siddy," he rumbled soft and deep, stopping before her.

"Put yours back on," she countered, backing up even more. The use of his pet name for her made the determined throb between her legs increase.

A wanton chuckle emerged from him. "No."

Sidra knew there was no hope when his strong hands slid under her sweatshirt and settled upon her hips. His blue eyes dripped passion and Sidra ignored the last warning her brain could formulate. A low purr slipped from her lips when her hands came in contact with his chest. The taut skin warm and familiar.

"Siddy," he groaned before devouring her mouth and carrying her to the bedroom.

Somewhere, somehow her clothes disappeared. Sidra watched him approach the bed, naked. His eyes burned with heat and she quivered. But her gaze travelled to and lingered on his hard shaft. Reaching for it, she grinned at his hiss.

Velvet over iron. Sidra licked her lips and began to slowly stroke him.

"Stop, Sidra," he bit off. "I'm not going to last long and I want to be inside you."

She swiped her thumb over the large bulbous head, smearing the pre-come before sucking her thumb into her mouth and cleaning it. "Then get to it." Lying back, she stared at him. Watched him grasp his thick cock and place it at her entrance.

"You know you're mine," he growled possessively as he thrust home in one motion.

I know. I have been since the day you swaggered your fine ass into my life. Sidra trembled around him. Her body exploding as he filled her. So full. He pulled back and she hooked her legs around him, preventing complete withdrawal. Grabbing his forearms, she dug her nails into him as he rose up and began to piston within her.

Eyes rolled into the back of her head as her body flew high. Fiery need spread throughout her body, faster than the blood pumped. Her skin burned and she undulated beneath him, desperate for the feeling only he could give her.

"Uh, uh, uh," she panted as he stroked.

"Siddy," he moaned, his fingers digging into the flesh of her hip.

Wrenching her eyes open, she stared up at him. "I hate that name." A lie but she wanted to complain about it.

"I like it."

"Figures," she groused.

He stopped moving and she snapped her teeth at him. Pete leaned closer. "I didn't know you were into biting, Siddy."

"Fuck you, Racer."

"All damn day, baby, all damn day." He punctuated each word with a powerful thrust.

She trailed her hands over the muscled expanse of his back and moved with him, in tandem as he let her reach for the pinnacle she so desperately needed. Sidra came with a low scream and didn't stop until after Pete had unleashed his own eruption deep within her.

Chapter Two

Pete lay there and watched Sidra as she slept. Her wavy hair spread around her like a black silken cloud. She had exhausted him, but for some reason, he couldn't bring himself to sleep. He thought about their first meeting, when he'd been asked to go undercover and bust some guys for stealing some secrets. At the last minute, his supposed wife had been changed to Sidra Bonnaire.

He'd been captivated by her from the beginning. But she hadn't seen fit to give him the time of day. He was a fast and loose flyboy and she was an uptight member of the DoJ—Department of Justice, Criminal Division. His initial anger at losing the cute redhead as a wife had vanished the second he'd laid his gaze upon Sidra's smooth cocoa skin and endless curves. For two months, they'd been husband and wife, and if he thought things were amazing in the air, they were like ice compared to the heat which had flowed between himself as his on-loan wife.

His Siddy. She'd made it obvious that nothing was going to stand in the way of her career, especially a Navy pilot. No matter how explosive the heat between them was. So he'd left, and done his best to forget her. Pete had believed he'd done well. There'd been a minor setback when he met the wife of the man he shared a plane with. Lieutenant Michael Taylor, the pilot and squadron leader of The Devils. His wife, Ayanna, was a beautiful black woman, and for a moment in time, Pete had been lost in memories.

To say he'd been beyond shocked when he had a meeting with a JAG officer and found out his marriage to Sidra was still legal and valid would be the understatement of

the millennium. But so was the reason he couldn't just sign and move on—he had to see her. An agent he had met before, Agent Larson had been there to give him the papers. So he'd tracked her down up here, north of the Arctic Circle. All sense had left him when he saw that other man hovering over her, and so he'd staked his claim on her. Now, she was sleeping like the dead. Her lips swollen from his kisses, parted slightly as she slept.

He should be waking her and demanding answers, but he liked this side of her. Soft, feminine, not wary. So he let her sleep. Slipping from the bed, he tugged on his jeans and walked through the small apartment to gather his discarded clothing. That done, he put his socks back on.

Fuck, it's cold here. He walked to the small kitchen and opened the refrigerator and peered inside. Pete made himself a sandwich and had taken his first bite when a persistent knock sounded from the door. Snagging a quick drink, he strode to the door and opened it. The man who'd been with her when he'd arrived stood there. Tall, weathered, passably handsome if he wanted to think about it...which he didn't.

"Need something?" Pete asked in a barely civil tone.

The man stared hard, his eyes moving over Pete's shirtless body, nail marks on his shoulders and torso. Pete nearly smirked. Okay, no nearly about it, he did.

"Where's Sidra?" he asked in a deep tone.

"Sleeping in bed last I knew," Pete said with an easy shrug. "At least, that's where she was when I left her."

Brown eyes narrowed and the man stepped closer. "I don't know what game you're playing, but I will find out."

"You need to stay away from my wife," Pete bit off. Each time he said it, the more he found himself liking the sound of it. His wife.

"You've been gone, man. She isn't yours anymore; leastwise it didn't seem that way to me. You're lucky I'm not the law. I would have locked your ass up for touching her like that."

Rage swamped him. "I see you sniffing around her and it won't be pretty. She's *my* wife."

A mocking grin filled the man's face. "We'll see." He walked off without looking back.

Pete shut the door and headed to the bedroom. Sidra still slept, the multihued quilt tucked up to her chin. Had she laid with that other man in this bed too? Blinding jealousy filled him and Pete swore as he stomped back out to where his sandwich waited. He sat, picked at it, trying and failing to stop envisioning Sidra, *his Siddy*, writhing in ecstasy beneath that man.

"You're still here?" Her voice wound around him.

He glanced over his shoulder and his cock stiffened at the sight of her. A loose t-shirt and some flannel pants with moose on them. He groaned when she bent over and pulled up her sock. He got off the stool and walked over to her while she ground some coffee beans.

"Your boyfriend stopped by," he said, jumping up onto the counter beside her.

She turned her head towards him while filling the coffee maker. "My boyfriend?"

"You have more than one?" he snarled low. "Maybe I should say the one who was trying to get in your pants this morning. Or isn't that clear enough either?"

She lifted a black brow at him. "One, the status of my having one or more boyfriends is not your business, Racer. Two, *his* name is Colby. What'd he want?" Sidra opened a container of cookies and placed some on a plate.

"One," he retorted, lowering his head closer to hers, "it is my business, *wife,* if you have boyfriends and how many. And I don't know what he wanted. He left after I told him you were exhausted from our morning romp." Pete grabbed a cookie and ate it with a laugh at her expression.

"You told him what?" she gasped.

He quirked a brow and grinned unrepentantly. "I think he got the message." Pete slid off the counter and grabbed her ass. "The red nail marks you left on my skin helped with the authenticity." He walked to his sandwich, sat on the stool again and finished eating.

"What?" she asked, yanking the plate away from him. "What are you doing?"

"I was eating," he said, swallowing the last bite.

"Knock off the shit, Kysenzki," she ordered. "Why are you here and apparently so goddamn keen on making my life miserable?"

He knew she was pissed. Last name was reserved for times when she was seriously pissed off. His nickname when she wanted him to knock off his attitude. Pete got to his feet and walked around to stand before her.

"Is that what I got finished making you? Miserable? I could have sworn those were screams of pleasure."

She stepped away. "Attraction between us wasn't ever the issue. You know damn well how you make my body respond."

That phrase didn't make him happy like he thought it would. Why not?

"What the hell got you out of Virginia to come above the Arctic Circle?"

He crossed his arms and held her gaze. "Really? You didn't think I'd just roll over and let you get away with it, did you?"

Sidra rolled her eyes. "I don't have the slightest clue what you're going on about."

His muscles rippled as he strove for control. "Don't make this harder than it already is.

"Look, I'm smart but I'm not psychic, so would you just cut the shit and tell me what you're pissed about?"

"I can't believe you actually thought I'd just sign away custody of our kid to you. How dare you keep that from me?"

"Why the hell... What the..." She trailed off and sank to the stool. "Oh no." Lightning flew from her eyes before her face lost its colour.

Pete stared at her. She was too ashen. When her gaze met his, it was full of a gleam he remembered from working with her. Flat, emotionless, and all business.

"I have to get out of here," she muttered, bolting for the bedroom.

Hot on her heels, Pete watched her dress in record time. She reached into the closet and pulled out a pre-packed bag before sitting down and tying on her hiking boots.

"Sidra?"

"Who gave it to you? Who delivered it to you?"

Pete frowned. "Agent Larson." He couldn't miss the shudder which passed over her.

She stood and moved to within inches of him. Her gaze was totally serious. "Listen to me, Pete. There is no child, never was. I would have told you that. It was a trap. Larson used you to find me. I have to go."

He grabbed her arm. "What do you mean he used me to get you?"

"Larson went rogue. And has been after me because I found him out. I've been about six months at a place before I have to move on. He must be desperate if he gave you a document claiming a child."

Pete dressed quickly while she made a call and he heard her talking to Matt. His heart pounded hard as the magnitude of what she'd said sank in. He sought her out in the kitchen and watched her pour coffee into a big 'I e ALASKA' mug. In silence, he stared when she withdrew a SIG Sauer P220 nine millimetre and shoved it in the back of her pants.

"You should be fine," she said, looking quickly at him, "but I'd get back to a military installation as soon as possible."

Pete followed her down the stairs and to a garage behind the shop. "What about you?"

She pulled a cover off a sage green metallic Subaru Forester. Sidra tossed in her bag, unplugged the engine block heater, reached in her pocket, and pressed her automatic start. "I'll find somewhere else." Her shoulders drooped. "I liked it here, too."

"Then don't run."

"I can't put the people here in danger. Can I drop you at your room?"

"Yes. You can then wait while I get my bag. I'm coming with you."

Sidra looked at him over the roof. "You don't need to do that. Don't you have a jet to be screaming across the sky in?"

He walked back around to her and pulled her against him. "I helped him find you, Siddy. I'm sorry about that, but I won't leave you to face him alone." Pete closed his eyes and enjoyed her body along his. Protectiveness washed over him. "Think we can make it to Washington?"

"What are you thinking?"

Pete was pleased she stayed in his embrace. "My brother has a cabin in the Cascades. We could hole up there."

"You know you don't have to do this, right?"

Tipping up her chin, he kissed her lightly. "You're still my wife, Siddy. I can do no less."

"Minor technicality."

We'll see. "You can fill me in on the way."

"Right."

Pete thought she may leave when he went for his bag and couldn't begin to express his relief when he saw her waiting. Strain was evident on her face, and in that second, he vowed to restore happiness in its place. Whatever it took.

She drove them down the Dalton Highway towards Fairbanks then on towards Washington.

* * * *

Washington, somewhere in the Cascades

Sidra was exhausted. She drove slowly up the snowy driveway and stopped before the stairs. Her emotions were a mess. Even though it had been a good number of years, Pete 'Racer' Kysenzki still affected her on so many levels. Sneaking a glance at him, she stared at the expression on his face. He seemed happy.

There was no arrogant look, what she referred to as his 'flyboy smirk' on his face. Just one of contentment.

"Come on," he said. "I think a good rest is in order."

They unloaded the newly purchased groceries, and as he put them away, Sidra put the vehicle in the garage. Thick flakes fell heavily, already beginning to mask the tire tracks. The cabin was two storeys and very nice.

Sidra walked back into the warm house and her eyes landed on Pete. He moved easily as she watched him. Quintessential hottie. Navy pilot. Blond hair, blue eyes, tanned skin, amazing physique, and a smile which could soak her panties.

What am I doing here with him?

It was like he felt her watching him for he turned around and met her gaze. Her belly tightened at the heated and possessive look which appeared in his eyes. Pete closed the cupboard, strode to her and his hand cupped her cheek.

"Why don't you go lay down? I have a few more bags to put away."

Sidra nodded, too tired to argue. Lifting her bag, she headed for the polished stairs. She stopped with her foot on the bottom one. "Pete?"

"Yeah?" He stuck his head around the corner of the open pantry door.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome, Siddy." He vanished again.

Siddy. Pete Kysenzki was the only man, *person*, in the world who could get away with calling her that. She walked up the stairs and quickly made up the master bed for Pete then made up one for her in another room. Her eyes were closing even as she slipped into the bed wearing an oversized t-shirt and panties.

There was something hard and warm pressed against her back when she stirred awake. Sidra cracked open her eyes and looked down. Along her midsection lay a golden tan muscular arm. She shifted slightly and it tightened. Her gaze moved to the window where she could see big flakes still heavily falling. With a yawn, she burrowed back against the man in bed with her. He may not be hers except for the legal snafu, but he sure was lovely to be curled up against. Sleep lingered just around the corner for her.

Next time she woke, it was with a loud yell as an orgasm crashed over her. She arched against Pete's mouth as he lay between her spread legs eating her pussy like a starving man.

"Fuck!" she yelled as he sucked her sensitive clit into his mouth.

She thrashed as he hummed and purred when he stroked two thick fingers deep within her. Grabbing his head with her hands, Sidra held him where she wanted him. Not that he needed any help; he knew exactly how to make her explode.

"Pete...I...please...you..." she babbled as another orgasm roared down on her with

the force of an avalanche.

He swapped his fingers with his tongue and flicked her clit with his digits at the same time he stabbed her with his tongue. She wailed as she disintegrated into a million brilliant pieces. Pete moved up over her and slid his cock inside her with one smooth thrust. She stared at him through lowered lids. He tried to remain in control, his strong jaw set and the cords in his neck stood out.

"Pete," she moaned as he stroked slowly within her.

"Sidra."

She cupped his face and tugged him down for a kiss, tasting herself on him as their tongues danced with one another. Skating her hands over his muscled shoulders, she dug her nails in and undulated against him. Her quiet need was understood and she groaned in approval when his hips drove him in faster.

Without breaking stride, Pete positioned one of her legs up over his shoulder. Her eyes bore into his, revelling in the raw hunger she witnessed. Tightening her internal muscles, Sidra gripped his forearms as he grunted and pounded harder. She rolled her hips and moved with him, taking all he gave and asking for more. The fire within her burned out of control. Pete understood, for he pistoned harder.

Deeper he sank. Harder he stroked. He nipped her ear and ordered, "Come for me. Come all over my cock, Siddy."

"Pete!" she wailed as she did. Muscles gripped and milked him as he released streams of come deep within her setting off another orgasm of her own.

He almost crushed her when he fell on top of her, catching himself at the last second. His face buried in her neck, she could feel the harsh pounding of his heart.

"Mmm," she moaned, her body still quivering.

"I think you killed me, Siddy," he rasped.

"Oh, so this is my fault? I was just sleeping here minding my own business."

Pete kissed her before pulling out and tucking her close to his side. "Well, yeah. You look so hot, I can't keep my hands off you."

She chuckled. "I'm sure somewhere there I should feel sorry for you."

"You mean you don't?"

"I made up a bed for you. In a different room."

His hand teased her hip. "I like sleepovers better." Pete nuzzled her neck.

"Incorrigible."

"See, I'd use the word adorable or irresistible."

"Well, of course you would," she said in a droll tone. "Being a fighter pilot, you have an inflamed sense of worth."

He nipped her skin. "So I don't deserve my arrogance?"

"Doesn't matter what I think. You have to live with yourself."

Pete readjusted and tucked her head under his chin. "You're painful on a man's ego, Siddy. Can we just stay like this?"

"We'd get hungry eventually. Plus, I think Michael would like you back at some point."

She wriggled her butt against him. "And as far as your ego, I don't think I could ever punch a hole in it."

"Naw, I think he'd be fine staying at home with his wife and two kids. You are the only one that I care about impressing, Siddy."

She smiled. His words made her feel fuzzy. Her mind recalled what she knew about Michael. She'd never met him but Pete had spoken about him fondly and often so she felt like she did. "Good for him, and Pete, don't try to impress me."

He rolled her so she faced him. "We need to figure out what we're going to do."

Sidra sighed. "See, I was thinking of more sex but you just killed and buried the moment."

Pete pressed closer, his drawl even thicker when he said, "Let's see if we can't unbury those feelings."

Sidra kissed him and they did just that. It was a few hours later when they left the room and walked downstairs. Piano music flowed from the surround sound and helped keep the mood quiet.

"Why aren't you with the DoJ anymore?" he asked when they sat to eat.

Sidra took a deep breath before stabbing a spear of asparagus. "We had an irreconcilable difference."

"Which means what exactly?" he questioned one blond brow rising.

"It means I couldn't compromise my beliefs for them any longer."

"Did Larson have anything to do with it?"

She sighed. "Not at the time."

Chapter Three

Pete wanted to shake her. Sidra Bonnaire was entirely too calm and accepting of the fact a rogue DoJ agent was after her. It didn't help his feelings to know he'd done the dirty work for Larson. How long has this been going one?

Siddy had hugely affected him and he'd never gotten over her. There was no way in hell he was going to abandon her now. Married or not. She was back in his reach again. After the assignment, she'd been spirited away and he'd never heard from her again.

He'd done his best to forget the cocoa-skinned beauty whose passion matched his. Her job had come first, so for her to quit... Pete looked at her. Siddy had her head down and she played with the pile of rice on her plate.

"Helps if you actually eat it, Siddy."

She jerked her head up to meet his gaze and forced a smile. "Guess I'm not as hungry as I thought I was." Sidra put her fork down and stood. "Excuse me." She hurried off up the stairs.

Pete cleaned up slowly and ground some coffee beans before starting a pot. Sidra hated pre-ground coffee. If the beans were not freshly ground, she would assume pass versus drink 'nasty' coffee. He pulled down two mugs and stared out the kitchen window while he waited for the java to brew.

He thought back to the time he and Sidra had been together. A smirk filled his face.

Their time in the room had been nothing short of explosive. He had loved it, and her, so much so it wasn't difficult to play devoted husband. He tried to think of the women he'd been with since her and he honestly couldn't.

"Siddy," he whispered. I have to help her. He had eighteen days left on his leave.

Outside the snow still fell, the setting sun casting deep shadows around the mountains. Turning, Pete went into the living room and turned on the gas fireplace.

I want you in front of the fire, Siddy. Pete shook his head. Hell, he wanted her everywhere. He readjusted his hard cock within his jeans and headed to the kitchen to get the coffee. Mugs in hand, he headed up the stairs and walked to the room Sidra had taken. He wouldn't tell her she picked his room for herself anyway.

Crazy woman. Like I won't be in whatever room she is.

He approached the door which was cracked open. Pete looked in and immediately more desire hit him. Sidra stood there, shirtless with her back to him and drawing up her pants. Along the lower portion of her back, he noticed her tattoo. An edgy star with flames cradling it. The waistband of her pants hid the lower portion of the tattoo but the bright flames curled up over her hips, holding her like he had when his hands had gripped her hips as he pumped in and out of her.

"Knock, knock," he said, pushing into the room.

Sidra pulled on a shirt and faced him. "Why are you—"She broke off when he held out the coffee. "Ohhh, coffee." Her eyes narrowed.

Pete knew exactly what the look was for. "Freshly ground just like you taught me."

His cock throbbed when she captured her lower lip in her teeth and waggled her eyebrows. Her hands beckoned for it. Pete watched the damn near orgasmic bliss fill her features when she took the first sip.

"Perfect," she said on a sigh. "Thank you."

It was like he'd given her the moon. He loved that feeling. "Come downstairs. Fire's going, and we can figure out how we're doing this."

"I don't want you in this, Pete. You have a life and I don't relish the idea of you being injured and unable to fly again because of me." She walked by him out the door.

Pete frowned at her response and hastened after her. He held his tongue until they were seated in the living room. "I'm not letting you do this on your own, Sidra. I told you so and I meant it. What the hell kind of man would I be if I left you alone?"

"The same one you are now. I don't need a saviour."

Her words fell like cement in his belly. "The same one I am now? What the fuck does that mean?" he bit off.

She drank some coffee and stared at the fire. "Not everything is meant as in insult, Racer."

Pete arched a brow. She used his nickname only when exasperated and as if pointing out his cocky flyboy attitude. He opened his mouth to respond but she spoke again.

"I don't need your being hurt or killed on my conscious."

"What happened to you, Sidra? You were so passionate about your job. And now you ...you seem so tired."

"Things change. And what happened to me or not holds no bearing on the fact I don't

want you hurt or dead. I never would wish that on you."

"Let me help you, Siddy. We worked well together before."

"We had a team and backup then. This is...different."

"Can you call in the DoJ?"

"Sure. If I wanna be locked away or used as bait in a poorly laid trap." She drank some more before shaking her head and running a hand though her hair. "You know how things, unwanted things, are handled."

He did. And he bristled over it. Especially when it pertained to his Siddy being in the 'unwanted things' category.

"I'm not hanging you out to dry here, Siddy. Are you planning on killing him?"

"No, not unless he leaves me with no other choice. But I'd prefer not to."

"What does Larson want from you?"

Her body stiffened and Pete narrowed his eyes. Setting down his cup, he moved beside her legs where she sat on the loveseat and crouched on his haunches. Pete brought her face to his.

"Sidra?"

"A chip. A computer chip. The only remaining copy of all his contacts."

Jesus! Running a hand over his face, Pete searched for the right words. And failed miserably. "How come you didn't give it to them?"

Flames flickered in her exotic eyes. "Because I *tried* my damndest to warn the bastards I worked for and they didn't believe me. In fact, they thought I was going crazy and sent me to the department shrink. Long story short, they realise I was right and I don't trust them to protect me."

"Where's the chip, Siddy?"

"Near."

Pete sighed. He could still read her body language. She was shutting down. Withdrawing.

"Will you turn him in?"

"I have no use for him otherwise, Pete. I'm not blood thirsty."

"I am."

A small smile turned up her mouth. "I know you are."

Pete slipped onto the love seat with her and wrapped his arms around her. Resting his chin on her shoulder, he stared at the fire. "Sidra. Trust me to help you."

She relaxed into him. "What happened to the overly arrogant flyboy who cared only about himself? And sex?"

He sighed. "I always cared about you, Siddy. I just didn't know how to show you other than with sex."

"Make me a promise," she said, setting the cup on the coffee table before settling back against him.

"What?"

"You'll stay safe. Don't let him hurt you."

Pete kissed her cheek. "I'll do my best, Siddy."

She manoeuvred so they where chest to chest. Lips touching, she murmured, "I couldn't handle it if he hurt you."

I feel the same way. Pete nipped her lower lip while he slid his hands up the shirt she wore. "Siddy," he whispered.

"I'm addicted to you, Pete Kysenzki. I can't say no even though I should."

He groaned when her nails connected with skin. Pete moved them to the floor. Soon after, their clothes disappeared and he was treated to her naked, silken skin along his. He shuddered with pleasure as Sidra teased him with her mouth on the thick rug before the fire.

"Shit!"

Her tongue swirled around the crown of his stiff cock. Up and down the shaft she licked. Long, leisurely strokes which drove him crazy. Pete grabbed her hair, but she moved at her own pace, refusing to listen to his direction. He almost lost it when she finally sucked him in her mouth, the warm haven nearly too much.

More and more she took until every hard inch he had was sunk between her full lips. Tightening his hold on her hair, Pete began to flex his hips. A throaty purr left her, vibrating his length.

"Siddy!"

Her lips tightened as she drew harder. Her tongue continued to torment him. His balls tingled as she worked her magic, her nails lightly trailing over them. Pete felt delirious with lust. He thrust harder, wanting to lose himself. Sidra allowed him to take over the pace.

"Shit, Siddy, baby, I'm about to come."

Her response was to increase suction. A low roar welled up and spilled over as he powered into her mouth twice more and came hard. Sidra took it all, her eyes closed as she milked the last bit she could from him. Pete loosened his hold on her hair and eased from her mouth. Need and passion dripped from her eyes as they followed him getting up from where he'd lain on the floor. With a jerk, he flipped her over onto her hands and knees. Gripping his shaft, he fisted it and stared at her.

"Pete," she begged.

"Tell me you want me, Siddy."

"I want you, Pete. Please, take the ache away."

Positioning himself at the entrance to her wet pussy, he thrust home in one stroke. Grabbing her hips, the flames of her tattoo under his palms, Pete began to drive hard and deep into her.

"So tight, Siddy. You're so damn hot and tight."

He watched her as he made love to her. The firelight glowing off her cocoa skin, head down, hair in disarray, a sexy mewl with each propel he delivered and her amazing tattoo before him.

Sidra came with a loud scream, her pussy walls rippling around him. He followed suit with a hoarse shout soon after. Sweaty and exhausted, they collapsed to the floor. At some point, he reached up to grab a blanket down from the furniture and covered them.

Then he cuddled up to her and held her as close as possible.

This is where you belong, Siddy, in my arms.

Done in, Pete fell asleep.

* * * *

"Well now, ain't this interesting." A drawling masculine voice broke through the shroud of sleep cocooning Pete.

He opened his eyes to see a tall blond cowboy sitting on the arm of a chair, arms and legs crossed, staring down at him, eyebrow raised in amusement. At *them*. He felt Sidra stiffen beside him and knew without looking at her, she was wide awake. *Aww shit!*

"Hello, pretty lady," the man said, nodding.

Pete ground his jaw. "Go away, Cort."

"This is my house, Petey."

He sighed. "I'll blind you if you so much as look at her before she gets dressed."

He laughed but touched two fingers to his head. "I'll be in the kitchen. Ma'am." Without another word, he disappeared.

"Oh my God." Sidra moaned. "Who is that?"

"My brother, Cort."

"I can't believe he caught us like this."

Pete looked at her and kissed her quiet. "Let's get dressed. You lying there naked is too much temptation for me."

Sidra stared at her reflection in the mirror as she stood in the bathroom. Freshly showered and dry, she was just delaying the inevitable. *I can't believe we were caught by his brother*! She jumped when a knock came on the door.

"Come on, Siddy," Pete said.

She groaned but opened the door. Immediately her heart rate sped up and she licked her lips. Pete had showered as well and looked yummy for a lack of a better word. Distressed jeans and a sweatshirt.

"I really don't want to see him. He caught us in his living room. Naked!"

Pete smiled and kissed her before dragging her out of the room and towards the stairs. Muttering to herself, she allowed him to pull her down the stairs and to the kitchen. Sidra lifted her chin and stared across the large area to gaze upon Pete's brother.

Damn! The Kysenzki genes were hot. Cort was a bit taller and broader than Pete. They both sported the same blond hair, although Cort's was longer and rakishly messy. The same blue eyes as well. Tight jeans and a snug grey long-sleeve button-down hugged the powerful physique.

Pete's hand settled familiarly on the small of her back and he said, "Cort, I'd like for you to meet Sidra Bonnaire. Sidra, my older brother, Cort Kysenzki."

A flash of pain lanced her heart at his omission of her being his wife and she didn't want to begin to explore when that minor bit of information had begun to mean something to her. Reaching out her hand, she smiled. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Kysenzki."

He flashed a grin which she would bet anything sent women into fainting mode and

bent over her hand. "Please, I think we've passed the need for formality here. Call me, Cort. Or something entirely more personal if you wish, darlin'," he added in his slow drawl with a wink.

Pete walked to the counter and glared. "If I wouldn't share a girlfriend with you, Cort, why the fuck would you think I'd share my wife with you?"

"Wife?" Cort's eyebrows shot skyward.

Didn't think that was going to happen. Sidra looked at Pete unsure of what he was doing.

"Wife," he reiterated. "As in married, binding and legal. Oh yeah, and mine."

Cort glanced between the two of them. "Why'd you get married without telling the family? Is that what you're doing here, having a honeymoon?"

"Siddy's been my wife for over six years, Cort."

Oh, how she longed to sink below the floor. Cort's eyes honed in on her and she forced herself to meet his gaze unflinchingly.

"You've been married to my brother for over six years?"

Can't lie about that. "Yes." She licked her lips. "Perhaps you two need to talk. I can leave—"

"I don't think so, Siddy," Pete broke in. "Nice try though. You're staying right here. Cort, there's nothing to talk about, other than we need to use your cabin. And I don't think you should be here."

The cowboy crossed strong arms over his chest and merely arched a brow. Good looks ain't all the Kysenzki boys have in common. Apparently stubbornness is another attribute they share.

"Maybe we should tell him," she said. "After all, it is his home." Both brothers looked at her and she held up her hands. "Or not. In fact, this could be better. If he's here, that means he has a vehicle and I can go." Sidra nodded. "That sounds like a much better plan."

Sidra didn't even make it to the stairs before a strong hand latched onto her wrist and spun her back around. Pete stood there, eyes shooting blue flames and his face set in a mask of anger.

"Not funny, Siddy," he growled low.

"I wasn't laughing, Pete. This is for the best. I don't want you involved, much less getting your brother involved. He's innocent and I can't have his blood on my hands."

"It's my fault that bastard found you and I am not letting you do this on your own."

"Your concern for me is thoughtful, darlin', but I'm not an easy man to kill," Cort drew out.

She looked past Pete and saw his brother standing there, hands in his pockets. Sidra shook her head. "Lucky for you. It doesn't matter." Putting her eyes back on Pete, she said, "I'll not have more blood on my hands, Pete. I won't do it."

"Siddy, wait. Cort's not just my brother; he's also a US Marshal."

Fear slammed into her. Jerking away from Pete, she stared briefly at Cort before looking back at the man she'd trusted. "You bastard. You fuckin' bastard!" She dashed up the stairs and into the room where her things were. Heart pounding and palms sweating,

she grabbed her bag and began shoving things into it. The bitter taste of betrayal seeped into her taste buds.

The door swung open and her hand curled around the butt of her SIG as she waited for whomever it was to enter. It was Cort. Sidra didn't draw on him, but neither did she let down her guard.

"Care to explain what's going on?" he asked, closing the door most of the way behind him.

"Nope." Sidra forced herself to step away from the gun and continue refilling her bag.

"I'm here to help, Sidra. My brother seems to think you're in danger. That's why he called me, no other reason."

I wish I could believe that. "Then help him. I've been doing fine on my own."

Cort walked closer, staring at her with those intelligent eyes. "Would it help to think of me only as his brother whose house you're staying at and not a US Marshal?"

Not in the slightest. You're still under the DoJ umbrella. Sidra sank onto the bed, the rucksack between her legs and held his gaze. "You want to do something for me?"

"Yes."

Closing her eyes and swallowing hard, Sidra pushed to her feet and faced him. "Take him away from me and keep him safe. Convince him to sign the divorce papers and get on with his life."

One eyebrow rose. "Divorce papers? It didn't look like y'all need divorce papers earlier in the living room. What's going on?"

She flushed from the memory of her time in the living room with Pete. "Six and a half years ago, Pete and I worked together. For the assignment, we had to get married, so we did. When it was over, we went our own ways, assuming it would be handled. It wasn't, so technically we're still married."

"Looked a bit more than 'technically' to me."

Waving him off, Sidra said, "So Pete still feels like he needs to protect me, or something. He needs to be back in Virginia doing what he should be doing. Flying planes. Serving his country."

"My brother is an honourable man. You're his wife; of course he'd feel the need to protect you. He would protect any woman but more so since you are his wife."

"I wasn't even supposed to be." Sidra ignored the pain at those words. "He was supposed to be with some leggy redhead. I'm not special and I don't want his death or injury on my conscious. Nor yours."

Cort tilted his head and sat on the bed before patting the mattress beside him. "You tell me what's going on and I'll talk to my brother."

"Stop treating me like a child or some stooge. I'm not one of your witnesses you need to coddle." she snapped.

"Fair enough." He dipped his head slightly. "I'm really not a bad guy, Sidra. Give me a chance to help."

"I don't know if I can trust you."

"Do you trust my brother?" Cort asked.

Did she? "Yes."

"Well, he trusts me."

Sidra sat back on the bed and dropped her face into her hands. *Trust me to help you.* Pete's words ran through her mind. Swallowing hard, she looked up and found Cort staring at her with endless patience. "Okay."

"Good." He stood. "I think we should do this downstairs before my brother comes in and kills me for sitting on a bed with you."

"Pete wouldn't do that."

Cort laughed a deep, husky laugh. "You've got a lot to learn about the man you married, darlin'. A lot to learn. Five bucks says he's outside the door right now, with a scowl on his face."

"You're on."

"I'll let you go out first."

Sidra moved to the door and swung it open. Sure enough, Pete leaned against the wall across from the door with a serious scowl on his face. He looked pissed enough to spit nails.

She looked over her shoulder at Cort and said, "Well, damn."

He smiled. "Like takin' candy from a baby."

"You two done playin' house?" Pete snapped.

Sidra frowned at Pete, especially when he reached out and grabbed her wrist. She resisted his tug and arched a brow when he snapped his gaze to her. "No one is playing house, Pete. Your brother was telling me I can trust him."

"I'll be downstairs when you two are ready to talk," Cort said, walking away.

Sidra watched him stride away. The man was coiled power and grace.

"Stop staring at my brother," Pete bit off.

"You brought him here. What, you want me to pretend he's ugly?"

"That works."

Shaking her head, Sidra pushed Pete up against the wall, sliding her hands over his chest. "Pete, I have a crazy man after me. One hell of a man in my bed, what could I possibly want with another one?"

"Some people like—"

"And some people sleep on a bed of nails." She kissed him. "I am not trying to get in your brother's pants. Although, I would like a bit of a heads up before you throw something that damn good looking in front of me." Another kiss. "You know, so I don't act like a love struck teen."

He growled and grabbed her tighter. "So you're trying to get me to fight for you?"

She smiled. "Ain't no reason to fight. I'd never break a wedding vow." Well, not now that I know I'm still married.

Heat flared in his eyes. "That is very good to know."

They walked to the kitchen where she immediately moved to make some fresh java. This could be a long talk and she believed she'd need the comfort coffee brought her.

Behind her, Pete and Cort caught up with one another and she prayed all of this would work out.

The front door slammed. "What the hell is going on here?" Another deep voice demanded.

Before she could get over the shock of hearing another male voice, Pete appeared at her side. "Siddy?" he said.

"Yeah?" She looked at him.

Pete leaned in close and whispered. "Heads up."

Sidra turned and swallowed hard when another buff, blond Adonis strode into the room. *Oh my God!* She couldn't help but shudder. These men were unbelievable. This newest addition had the longest hair of them all, rich golden blond, which hung free to his shoulders. The same chiselled features and impressive tanned body. He wore black BDU's and a navy blue t-shirt which seemed hard-pressed to keep his muscles in. His eyes were a deeper hue of blue than his brothers'.

Did I say oh my God yet?

"What the fuck, Pete?" the man thundered with a thick drawl, similar to the other two. His mouth snapped shut when he spotted her. He tossed his leather jacket onto a chair and did a slow perusal of her.

"I think we need more coffee," she said more to herself than anything.

Pete muttered under his breath and dropped his arm around her. "Hi, Taber."

Taber?

"Pardon my language, ma'am," the now identified Taber said, raking a hand through his hair.

"Forget it, Taber." Cort spoke up. "That little darlin' is Pete's wife."

A blond eyebrow rose before a sexy and disarming grin filled his face. "So then I get to kiss my sister-in-law." He walked towards her, his movement full of masculine swagger. "Where'd you luck out and find her, Petey?"

"Don't make me kill you, Tabby," Pete said on a grumble.

Taber never slowed. Took her free hand and bowed over it. "Welcome to the family..." he trailed off.

"Sidra," she supplied.

"Sidra," Taber said before shaking his head. "Sweetness. I'm gonna call you sweetness. Have any sisters?"

"Back up off of her, Taber," Pete demanded. "Sidra, this is my other brother, the middle one, Taber. He's DEA."

What the flying fuck? She looked at Pete, and from his expression, he hadn't expected Taber to arrive.

Taber stared at her before dropping her hand and hugging his brothers. Then he glanced back at her. "So, fill me in, sweetness."

Pete kissed her cheek. "You wanted backup."

She smiled. "No, I said last time we had backup, not that I wanted it."

"Too bad, darlin'," Cort said as his brothers stood beside him. "You got us."

Sidra stared at the three blond Kysenzki brothers standing before her. Arms crossed, strong bodies, and their handsome faces, although filled with determination and stubbornness, made one hell of a line of eye candy.

"So I have a flyboy, a US Marshal, and a DEA agent. Lucky me." *And new nicknames. Darlin' and sweetness.*

Pete shook his head. "No, Siddy. You have a flyboy. *Only.* We have their skills at our disposal."

More of those warm and fuzzy feelings drifted over her. Walking towards them, Sidra allowed her gaze to move over all three men before coming to a rest on Pete. Skimming her hands over his chest, she linked her arms around his neck.

"There is no 'only' about you, flyboy."

His eyes smouldered as he lowered his head to hers. A large hand shoved between them before their lips could connect.

"Hold on there," Cort's heavy drawl interrupted, "I 'spect this kinda behaviour led to that whole being naked thing I walked in on in the living room." He separated them. "We have talkin' to do."

"See, I miss all the fun," Taber complained playfully, dropping his arm around her shoulders.

Sidra looked up at him and cocked a brow. "Well, that's not making me feel better. You're DEA and you miss things?"

Taber chuckled. "You wound me, sweetness."

"I'm sure," she said, rolling her eyes. "Just like I'm sure you'll get over it."

"Your wife isn't falling for my charm, Petey."

"I married a smart woman, Tabby," Pete said with a wink for her.

"Enough," Cort said. "We have work to do."

Oldest and the most responsible. Sidra nodded. Coffee was poured and some food was out. The four adults sat around the kitchen table. Sidra was grateful for Pete's hand on her leg.

"Fill us in, darlin'," Cort said, watching her carefully over the rim of his coffee mug.

She sighed and snuck a glance at Taber. One the surface, he seemed relaxed but his eyes were hawk-like in their attentiveness. None of these men would she want on her tail.

Chapter Four

Pete listened as Sidra filled his brothers in on her past with the DoJ and of their assignment which led to this current married status he had. Not that he minded.

"So let me get this straight, for the past couple of years this man's been after you and Petey just now decided to help?" Taber asked, glaring at him.

"No, it's not like that," Sidra responded. "As far as either of us knew, we were no longer married. I found out it was still legal about three months ago. So I signed it and left again."

Taber looked at him. "And you?"

"Well, when we got back from our eight-month deployment a few weeks ago, I found out. But in my case, it said I was signing over custody of our kid to her."

Cort and Taber snapped their heads between himself and Sidra. Pete shook his. "My thoughts also. So I tracked her down, not easy, but I did. It was that bastard's way to find her."

"So there's no kid?" Cort asked as he pinned his gaze back on Sidra.

"Not with me there isn't," Sidra said. "I can't speak for any other woman your brother may have been with."

Pete frowned. The thought of a kid with another woman sat ill with him as did the flippant way Sidra said it. But a child with his Siddy, that held promise. *There may not be one yet, Sidra. Not yet.* He wondered where that thought had come from.

"This chip he's after, where is it, darlin'?" Cort questioned.

Pete watched her gaze shutter. "Near," she said.

"That's what you told me, Siddy. Where is it?"

"No, I'm sorry. I can't say."

"You mean you won't."

She shrugged negligently and tried to hide a yawn. Getting to his feet, Pete shared a look with his brothers.

"I'll take first watch," Taber said. "Got plenty of this kickass coffee. Y'all sleep."

Pete fought a snarl when both Taber and Cort whispered something in Sidra's ear. Taking her arm, he said, "Come on, Siddy, bed for you." She went with him, and soon, they were sliding under the covers. He held her close. "Good night, Siddy."

"Good night, Pete. And...thank you."

He kissed her forehead and closed his eyes. Sidra Bonnaire was his. Pete slept for a few hours before he woke and went downstairs in his pants.

Cort was by the coffee pot. Taber joined them soon after, snow on his clothing. Pete made up a fresh pot of coffee, well aware of his brothers watching him.

"What?" he asked. "She is picky about her coffee and taught me how to make a socalled proper pot."

"Pussy whipped," Cort said.

"That may be true but at least I'm getting some," Pete retorted. Cort flipped him off and Pete grinned. "What'd you find out, Taber?"

"Not a goddamn thing. If the chip is in her vehicle, I can't find it."

Pete warded off the next question. "I asked already. She's not willing to tell me." Taber sat at the table and Pete looked at him. "Aren't you going to bed?"

"Not before I hear more about Sidra Kysenzki."

"Bonnaire. Sidra Bonnaire."

"I like it better with Kysenzki added," Taber said.

"Me too," Pete admitted. He looked up towards the second floor as if he could see

into where she lay sleeping.

"What didn't she tell us, Pete?" Cort asked.

"I know what you do. She won't tell me why she left the DoJ. Well, not anymore than they had irreconcilable differences. She doesn't trust them to protect her. And neither do I." He wrapped his hands around the mug and stared at the black liquid in it.

"What are you going to do once this is over?" Taber leant back in the chair and looked at him.

"Go back to work."

"And Sidra?"

There in lay the question. If he wanted to be honest with himself, he fell in love with her the two months they were together. And he hadn't gotten over her, that much was obvious. He'd been merely ignoring his feelings. And it was past time for him to run anymore.

Pete stared at his brothers and shrugged. "She's my wife."

"So it's like that, huh?" Cort asked with a slight grin on his face.

"Yeah, it's like that."

Taber stood. "Good. I like her. Now, I'm gonna get some sleep."

"Night, Taber. And hey," Pete grabbed his arm, "thanks for coming."

Taber nodded once and walked away.

Cort gestured to the stairs. "Go curl up to that wife of yours. I've got this watch."

Pete didn't have to be told twice. He sent his brother a grateful nod and jogged up the stairs. Pushing open the door, he slipped in and padded silently to the bed where Sidra slept. Sidra. His wife. Siddy. His Siddy. His. And he had no intentions of letting her go again.

He stripped off his pants and slid into bed. Her warm body immediately curled up against him. Holding her close he kissed her temple.

"I love you, Siddy," he whispered, closing his eyes as her scent washed over him.

He woke alone and immediately panicked. Shoving into his jeans, Pete bolted down the stairs, his bare feet skidding to a halt on the polished hardwood floor before the kitchen. Cort sat there staring at him, eyebrows lifted in silent amusement.

"Where's the fire?"

"Where's Siddy?" Pete asked.

Cort chuckled and ate another bite of his breakfast. "She's outside with Taber."

He relaxed. For about one second. With Taber? What the fuck? Swallowing hard, Pete headed back up the stairs to the room. He showered, shaved and dressed. Then he made his way back downstairs. Cort still sat at the table and Sidra still remained mysteriously absent.

"Hungry?" Cort asked. "There's a plate in the oven for you."

Pete walked over and got it. "Thanks." Eggs, bacon, and toast.

"Don't thank me, Sidra made sure to set some aside for you. Me 'n' Taber were ready to eat it all."

Pete smiled and picked up the fork. He ate in silence but his heart sped up when he heard the front door open. Taber's deep voice intermixed with the softer one of Sidra. His breath caught when she preceded his brother into the kitchen. She wore black fitted pants and a cream-coloured turtleneck. Her hair was unconfined, falling about her face in gentle waves.

"Mornin'," Taber said.

He nodded at his brother and continued to stare at Sidra. Her eyes had a sparkle in them.

"Morning, Pete," she said, heading for the coffee pot.

Pete slid his chair back and blocked her way. He tugged her down on his lap. "Why didn't you wake me?"

"I got up to pull my watch." She kissed him on the tip of his nose and jumped off his lap.

"She's pulling a watch?" he demanded.

Taber and Cort stood near Sidra as she poured coffee. "She doesn't take orders very well, Petey," Cort said.

He snorted. "Don't I know it."

"Maybe the redhead would have followed orders better."

Pete arched a brow at her. "Is that jealousy I hear in those dulcet tones, Siddy?"

"Aww, flyboy needs his ego stroked?" Sidra turned and walked towards him, an exaggerated swing in her hips. "Tough shit, Racer," she said, stopping before him. "I don't do that anymore than I do orders." She walked away into the living room.

Ignoring the smirks on his brothers' faces, Pete rested his arm on the back of the chair and rested one ankle on his knee. "Not true, Siddy," he drawled. "I remember a few orders you have no trouble followin'. Need I remind you?"

She never slowed, never looked back. "Depends. You plan on sleeping alone tonight?"

His mouth clamped shut. Pete had no intentions on sleeping without her in his arms.

"Pussy whipped," Cort muttered, sitting at the table.

"Oh yeah," Taber added, joining them.

Running a hand over his short hair, Pete grinned. "Happily so."

"Okay. We'll pull watch at night; that way you're with her. I think y'all can handle the daytime and we can sleep then," Cort informed him.

"Sounds good to me."

"Assuming y'all stay alert 'n' don't spend all your time...ummm...fucking," Taber said.

Pete got to his feet and took his dishes to the dishwasher. Then he topped off his coffee. Heading to the living room, Pete halted behind Taber and placed his hand on his shoulder, squeezing in a falsely conciliatory manner.

"I know it sucks having to jerk off, but hold out hope, Tabby. One day you just may get to experience a woman's touch. And a real one at that, not the one you pay for or a blow-up doll."

With a chuckle, he left, Taber's growl audible. Pete scanned the living room for Sidra.

She sat on the tan cushion of the window seat. Knees drawn up, arms on them, and her coffee mug held between her hands. Her head leant against the window as she stared at something only she could see. There sat upon her face a longing, an intense longing which broke his heart to see.

"You okay, Siddy?" he questioned, sitting down at the other end of the window seat. He ran one hand up the inside of her calf.

She focused on him and he could see the lingering sadness in their depths. "I feel bad your brothers and you are being brought into this."

"Don't do that, Sidra. No point in feeling bad. We're gonna help you."

"Wake us if we're needed," Cort said.

Pet glanced over to see his brothers going up the stairs.

"You wake Cort, Petey. I want sweetness to wake me," Taber informed him.

"Did you ever want to wake again, Tabby?" he growled.

Taber grinned rakishly and disappeared up the stairs.

Sidra fought back her smile. She honestly enjoyed watching the interaction between the three Kysenzki brothers. Their support and love for one another blatantly obvious. With a sigh, she rested her head against the window again. A nagging urge to tell Pete where the chip was rose up within her, but she battled it down.

The back of her neck tingled and she knew Larson was close. It was the same feeling she got before each move she'd made. She needed to get him to agree to a meet. Closing her eyes, Sidra took some deep breaths as Pete's hand moved up and down the lower portion of her leg, soothing her.

It's going to be so hard to walk away again.

"Siddy?"

Tucking some hair behind her ear, Sidra placed her empty mug on the cushion and looked at him. "What?"

"We need to talk about after."

After. As if they had one. She forced a grin. "Don't worry. I am sure they'll give you a proper document to sign this time."

His beautiful blue eyes hardened. When he shook his head, Sidra put two fingers over his mouth.

"I need to not think about anything else right now." Truthfully, she didn't want to think on it at all. Her insides fluttered when he kissed her fingers.

"When are you telling me where the chip is?"

"I...just don't know."

"Come on," he said.

She let him pull her up. "Where are we going?"

"For a walk."

"Are you sure that's wise?"

Pete cupped her cheek. "Positive. Come with me, Siddy."

She never had been able to tell him no. Soon, they were bundled up and walking through the woods around the cabin. Snow still fell and they were surrounded by silence. Glancing at him, she smiled.

"You're looking all serious and pensive over there. Why?"

"Not pensive or serious, Siddy. Just enjoying spending time with you."

His thick accent made her toes curl in her boots.

"Is that a fact?"

He looked at her, eyes searing. "Yes, ma'am, that's a fact."

She nudged him with her shoulder. "Promise I'm not keeping you from work? I don't want you in trouble."

"No need to worry, Siddy. I'm on leave."

On leave. Yet another reminder of how different their lives were. Pete *had* a job. She didn't.

"Okay. If you're sure."

"I'm sure I want you."

"You are completely crazy if you think I'm stripping down out here. Winter. Snow. Cold. Any of that ringing a bell?"

He pulled her close and kissed her nose. "Heat. Undeniable passion. Adventure."

Her body quivered. "Oh no, you are not sweet talking your way into my pants. Not out here."

Pete lifted her over his shoulder, eliciting a scream from her.

"What are you doing?"

"Taking you inside," he said calmly.

This time she did struggle. Soon, they fell to the snow-covered ground. Laughter burst from her mouth as she jumped up and ran.

"Siddy!" he hollered.

Sidra didn't look back, just pushed harder across the landscape, struggling through the deep snow. There was little warning before he tackled her. They rolled through the snow 'til they came to a halt. She laid on her back, looking up at him, chest pounding from the run. The cold seemed to drift to the back of her mind as he stared at her. His eyes heated her up all over.

"Does this count as spousal abuse?" He lifted a brow, and Sidra continued biting back her laughter at his expression. "I was fearful. Running for my life and—"

Pete kissed her silent. She moaned into his mouth and wrapped her arms tight around him. Her body ached for more of his touch. Breaking the kiss he bit her lower lip. Longing pulsed through her and her pussy creamed.

"Pete," she whimpered.

"Oh, I'd love to, Siddy. I'd love to drive my cock deep into your hot pussy. Fuck you long and hard."

Her nipples hardened to painful points. "Yes," she sighed.

"I want you to come all over my cock."

Yes! Her belly quivered.

"Then I want to come deep within you. Coat your womb. Make you understand no other man will *ever* be what you want, that I'm the only one for you."

I don't want any other man but you, Pete. Haven't since I met you. And you are the only one for me. But she couldn't say that aloud.

His head dropped by her ear and he whispered in a darkly seductive voice all of the things he longed to do to her. Flames flowed through her veins as she arched into him.

"You said no, Siddy, not out here." He drew back and looked at her.

She watched his face from beneath lowered lids. With a tortured sigh, she wrinkled her nose. "So I did." Sidra locked her desire up in a box. She wasn't sure how long it would stay there but it was worth a shot.

"Come back inside with me, Siddy."

"You were the one who wanted to take a walk. And as long as I'm down here, I may as well make a snow angel."

"You truly are hell on a man's ego, Siddy." He shook his head and got off her.

Her eyes drifted up his body and lingered over the evidence of his desire pressing against his jeans. She licked her lips and stood. Stepping in close to him, she put her hands on his chest.

"I'm sorry, Pete. Trust me, I want you just as much, but I'd kinda like to stay outside for a while. Can I make it up to you tonight?"

His gaze darkened with longing. "You can make it up to me whenever you want, Siddy."

"I'll even ask your brothers if they have handcuffs with them," she said with a wink before walking off and finding a pristine spot of snow.

Sidra fell back and laughed at the cloud of snow which floated up around her. She made her snow angel, thinking back to the last time she'd done one. Many years. Pete came into view and he reached out a hand to help her up.

Wrapping her arms around his waist, she stared at her creation. "That was fun. I haven't made one of those since I was a little girl."

Pete held her tight and kissed her cheek. "Are you ready to talk, Sidra?"

She hung her head. "Sidra, huh? Must be time for serious-talk."

"I can't let you vanish after this is over, Siddy. Not like last time."

"What do you think is going to happen, Pete? Really. We wouldn't have been brought back together if not for the false document you were given."

His eyes narrowed. "What are you saying?"

"I'm saying that if the paper you were given hadn't said we had a child, you wouldn't have sought me out. You would have signed and gone on your way." Sidra forced out the words as she stepped away from him and crossed her arms. "Can you honestly say I'm not right?"

"I don't know, Sidra. Did you ever think that maybe we're still married because it's supposed to be that way?"

"No. I didn't think that. Pete, let's look at this logically. You're a Navy pilot stationed out in Virginia Beach. I'm sure you never lack for female companionship. If you were ready to settle down, don't you think you would have married one of them by now?"

"You are talking nonsense, Siddy." Pete shook his head. "Absolute nonsense."

"I don't think I am. Pete, we're too different. I saw the look on your face when they told you Julie wasn't going to be working as your wife. I don't want you to wake up from this a year from now and hate me because I kept you from going out and dating as you have been doing."

"So sure I've been out dating, Siddy?" he asked on a low growl.

"Yes. You're a single, damn good-looking male. Not to mention a pilot."

"And that's okay with you? Me out with other women?"

No! Hell no! "It doesn't matter, Pete. The point is you went back to that after we parted ways. So that's what you want. Not to settle down. Plus, I don't know if I am ready to."

Rage filled his expression. "Listen to me, Siddy. It doesn't matter how we got brought back together. We are back together. And we're still married." He stepped closer to her. "I find I like that a lot. A hell of a lot." One hand reached out and wrapped in her hair. "I like knowing you're mine, Siddy. That I get to lay beside you at night, that I am the man who makes you scream to the heavens in ecstasy. All of it makes me arrogantly proud."

Her knees trembled and her heart rate increased tenfold. "Look, this just—"

He kissed her. Held her head in place with the hand in her hair and plundered her mouth like a dying man searching for thirst. Sidra gave in with a whimper. Grabbing onto his coat with her hands, she returned the fervour, submitting to his domination of her mouth.

He tore away from her lips and stared down at her, eyes alive with blue lightning. "I'm gettin' mighty tired of you making excuses, Siddy. Simple question. Yes or no. Do you want a divorce?"

She swallowed a few times, trying to get moisture into her mouth. "I've already signed them."

The muscles in his jaw clenched and his gaze narrowed. "That wasn't my question, Sidra Bonnaire. I asked you, if you wanted a divorce from me. Tell me if you want to remain married to me or not."

He dropped his arms then crossed them. His eyes refused to release hers. Sidra opened her mouth to answer when a movement behind him caught her eye. Dread filled her.

"No," she said on a half whimper.

Chapter Five

There was no way he could explain the pain which lanced through him at the single word that slid from her mouth. No. She said no. As in, no, I don't want to stay married to you. Being told he could no longer fly couldn't have hurt as much as that one word did from her lips.

"I see," he bit off.

"No, Pete, he's here." She spun him around. "Larson's here."

The second he laid his gaze upon the man, protectiveness roared to life within Pete. Reaching into his pocket, he swore when he realised he had left the phone which would alert his brothers there was trouble in the house. Then he focused on Sidra.

Her body was tense but it was her eyes that snared him. Never before had he seen such anger and rage in them. He watched her briefly close them, take a deep breath and open them again.

"Larson!" she yelled, heading off towards the cabin.

"Sidra, no," Pete said reaching for her.

She shook him off and continued on her way. There was a bad taste in his mouth as Agent Larson, former Agent Larson, began to walk towards them. It wasn't hard to recognise the shape of the object in his hand. There was a gun pointed at them.

"Sidra Bonnaire," Larson said as he neared. "You are a hard woman to catch up to." Those green eyes looked at Pete. "And you, Lieutenant Pete Kysenzki, had I known that's all it would take to get you to find her, I would have done it sooner. Damn, you were like a bloodhound tracking her down."

Pete put himself in front of Sidra. "It won't work, Larson."

The man tsked. "See, this really doesn't concern you, Kysenzki. I never had any use for you anyway. I didn't want you on the case to begin with. I knew you were going to be trouble. That's why I had to get rid of Julie. I knew she would fall for your charms and pick you over me. I just didn't expect Sidra to be such a slut with you."

Pete barely kept the snarl from slipping up past his teeth. "Watch how you talk about my wife, Larson."

Thin lips peeled back into a nasty smile. "So you're claiming her now? Well, should have known. She looks like she'd be a hot piece of ass."

Sidra's hand on his arm stopped him from jumping at Larson. "Don't give him a reason." She stepped up beside him. "I think we need to talk, Larson."

"Not really. I just need the chip."

"Hmm," Sidra said. "And I need assurance that you won't kill him once you get it."

Pete lifted a brow at her choice of words. She wasn't bargaining for herself, but for him. Oh no, Siddy. I'll not let you bargain yourself away for me.

"I don't know about that. I really don't like leaving witnesses."

Sidra shrugged. "Fine. But you'll live the rest of your life uncertain when and where it will pop up."

"I don't think so," Larson said.

Pete flinched when something hit him in the back of his neck. Reaching back he felt a dart sticking out. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Sidra weave and fall forward. Larson was there to grab her.

"No," Pete slurred as the ground rushed up to meet him.

* * * *

"Wake up, Pete." A large hand on his shoulder shook him, bringing him back from the fog surrounding him.

Pete groaned and opened his eyes to find both brothers hovering over him. Past their

blond heads, he could see the ceiling of the cabin. His mind was foggy. "Siddy?"

"She was gone when we found you. What happened?" Cort asked.

Pushing to a sitting position, he moaned. "Larson. But he's not working alone. We were facing him when I got hit."

He ran a hand over his face and swore. He had to get to Sidra before she gave Larson the chip. There was no doubt in his mind Larson would kill her once he got what he wanted from her. And Pete wasn't about to let that happen.

"I have to find her."

Taber disappeared only to return carrying guns and ammunition. "Let's go bring her back."

Cort looked between the two of them. "There are plenty of old logging cabins dotting these mountains. We need to split up."

A cold anger settled around Pete. He had always joked about being blood thirsty but for the first time in his life, he could say he was, without a doubt, looking forward to spilling that man's blood.

"Fine," he snapped. "But...if either of y'all find that bastard, you bring him to me. I want him." He reached for a rifle and also took Sidra's SIG Sauer Taber must have found and brought along, and shoved it into the back of his pants. Spearing Cort and Taber a look, he reiterated, "I mean it. That fucker's mine!"

They bundled up in and headed out. Cort pointed them each off in a direction and they made sure they had working coms. Pete smiled at Taber, grateful his brother always packed like he would be on an op whenever he went somewhere.

"Let's go," Pete said.

He shared a look with his brothers before, as one, they split off. He moved in the direction where he'd been hit with the dart. Crouching down, he scanned the ground. It may have been a few years since he'd gone hunting, but he could still track. Moving swiftly yet cautiously, Pete proceeded deeper into the forests of the Cascade Mountains surrounding his brother's cabin.

Up ahead, he saw a small rundown shanty perched on the hillside. "I've found them," he whispered, knowing the microphone against his throat would transmit the message clearly.

"Coordinates?" Taber's voice reached him.

Checking his watch, Pete relayed them even as he put his eyes back on the cabin. There was no smoke coming from the chimney but the unbroken windows were fogged up and the snow on the front step was cleaned off. He wanted to rush in there, but the knowledge Larson wasn't working alone kept him back.

Moving slowly, Pete began creeping closer to the cabin. Loud voices came from inside, and each time one echoed through the air, he flinched. Jesus, I don't know how much more of this I can take without running in there.

"Bitch!" the pissed off masculine voice streamed out from one broken pane.

"Fuck you!" Sidra hollered just as loudly.

Pete was glad to hear her but not pleased she seemed intent in pissing Larson off.

"I'm on the south side," Taber said.

"Coming up from the north," Cort added.

"She's alive, I heard her yell, but she's not happy and neither is he." Pete slung the rifle over his shoulder and put the SIG in his hand. "I have to get to her."

"We've got you covered, Pete," Cort said. "On your mark."

"Don't forget he's not working alone. I'm moving on three. Three. Two." He went. Low and fast through the snow to the wall of the cabin. The noise coming from the building didn't much register; Pete was focused on one thing. Getting in there to Sidra. Crouching, he moved to the door and hesitated before he kicked it hard and rolled in, coming up, gun palmed and ready to fire. A quick survey of the room told him Larson and Sidra were the only ones there.

A low roar of anger left him as he saw Larson on top of Sidra. They were fighting and Larson obviously had the upper hand. Even so, Sidra didn't appear to be going down without a fight.

"His partner's not here," he muttered before he fired two quick shots into Larson's shoulder, knocking him off of Sidra.

His rage grew even more when he took in the battered condition of her body. Not that he got to see it much, for when Larson flew back, she rose up and followed him down, continuing to strike at the bleeding man.

Pete reached for her and pulled her off. "Stop, Siddy, stop."

Her body shuddered against his and he longed to let her finish beating him until she was content. "Cort. Siddy's hurt and I need you to cover this piece of shit."

"On my way."

He refused to look at her again until after Cort had entered and trained a gun on Larson. Then Pete put on the safety and shoved it in the back of his pants. Cupping her bruised and bleeding face in his hands, he stared down at her.

"Siddy? Oh my God, baby, I thought I'd lost you."

She pulled away from him and jerked the gun from his waistband. "I need to borrow this."

He restrained her. "No, Sidra. Not like that." Pete wasn't going to let her go against her beliefs.

Sidra shook. "He was going to rape me," she said in a monotone voice.

Pete looked at her clothing and noticed her turtleneck was ripped almost apart. Was going to. As in hadn't. He kissed her cheek careful of the bruising. "Don't stoop to his level, Sidra."

"Get him out of my sight," she snapped, "before I shoot him in a place where it won't ever stop hurting."

Cort jerked the man to his feet and slapped a pair of cuffs on him with an ease that Pete would have admired on any normal day. "Let's go, you bastard," Cort growled.

"My arm," Larson wailed. "You can't do this!"

"I'll let her shoot you if you prefer," Pete offered.

Larson shut his mouth quickly, but continued to glare at Sidra. Cort herded him out and Pete followed with Sidra. He was shocked to see Taber waiting there, for he didn't know the man had moved from his position, but he was glad he was there.

Taber's eyes narrowed as he skimmed over Sidra's body. Then he pulled out a sidearm and shot Larson in the leg. The man went down with a scream.

"Oh my God! You shot me!"

Taber shrugged unrepentantly. "You tried to run."

There were times when Pete truly loved his family. This was one of them. Beside him, Sidra shook again and he immediately removed his jacket to put around her. Cort stood overlooking the man still whining like a baby on the ground, bleeding into the snow.

And it was like in slow motion. A feminine wail filled the air grabbing everyone's attention. A shot was fired. When he looked at his brothers all he could see was Sidra in front of Taber, pushing him out of the way, then her body arched and she fell towards the ground.

Pete was in front of her, stopping her from collapsing. Her face pale and eerily serene looked up at him, her head wobbling as if her neck unable to support it. His hands were around her back and his heart stopped as he felt the warm stickiness of her blood run over his skin.

Out of the corner of his eye, he watched as Taber fired a shot. When his brother crouched beside him, he assumed he'd gotten the sniper.

"Hang in there, Siddy," Pete begged. "Please. Just hang in there."

"Pete," she rasped. "It's in the star. It's in the star."

Sinking to the ground and holding her close, one hand against her wound, the other stroking along her face, smearing her blood, he said, "It doesn't matter. We'll talk about it later."

"No." She took a deep, shuddering breath. "It's in the star." Then her eyes closed.

"No. No. No!" he hollered, pushing to his feet, with her in his arms.

"Take her and go," Cort ordered. "I'll be behind with these two."

Pete took off without waiting another second, Taber running beside him. Pete was breathing hard when his brother's cabin came into view. Barely slowing, he headed for the garage. In the earwig, he heard Taber say, "I got her keys, it's open and starting."

He slid in the back and pressed his face to her still one. "Hang in there, Siddy. Oh please. I love you." The tears ran unchecked down his face. Pete removed the rifle from around his shoulders and gathered her close.

Taber jumped in the driver's seat and they tore out of the garage. Pete was barely aware of the trip to the hospital. He just held Sidra close and whispered to her. Ignoring the help from Taber when they arrived, he followed his brother who was yelling, "I've got a gunshot wound victim here!"

A gurney appeared before him and he laid her unconscious body upon it. "Let go of her, Pete," Taber said. "They have to get her into surgery."

It took Taber forcibly removing his hands before he released her. Pete watched them roll her and cut the turtleneck in the back. Her tattoo became exposed and he frowned. *It's in the star.*

"Taber," he said quietly, taking the wipes from a nurse to clean up the blood on his hands. "The chip is in the star."

"In her tattoo. She had it with her all the time. They need to remove it while they are doing surgery."

"I'll go tell them. You stay here." Taber shook his shoulder when he began to move forward. "Pete, you can't go in there."

Standing at the door, he stared through the glass and watched the small hospital staff as they worked on his wife. He refused to leave, just stood there watching. Afraid if he left, so would she.

My Siddy. Hang in there, baby. Don't leave me.

Chapter Six

She opened her eyes and frowned. The sterile surroundings told her where she was. A hospital. Sidra hurt everywhere. In the corner of the room sat a hunched figure. She wasn't sure who it was. At the slight moan that slipped from her mouth, the person pushed easily from the chair and strode into the dim light in the room.

Taber Kysenzki.

He had a few days growth on his face and he looked tired. Good, damn good, but tired.

"You're okay," she said gratefully.

His intense blue eyes softened as he held a straw up to her lips and gave her some water. "You saved my life, sweetness. I can't thank you enough for that, but it almost cost you yours." He frowned. "And that we weren't too fond of."

"We?" she asked after swallowing the cool liquid.

"Us, sweetness. Your family."

My family. Except for Pete who's not here. "You have a family, Taber. I don't."

"Don't talk like that, darlin'," another voice drawled from the doorway. "You are our family."

"Cort," she said. Two of the handsomest men in the world and she didn't want either of them. She wanted their youngest brother.

"He'd be here if he could, darlin'," Cort assured her, stepping up to the other side of her bed. "They're deployed."

"Is he okay?" she questioned.

"He'll be better now that you're awake," Taber said.

She struggled to sit up and both of them helped. "Don't you two have somewhere else to be?"

"Nope." They answered as one.

"This is one of those things I'm not going to win, am I?"

Both men shook their head. And that's how it went for a few weeks. One or both of them were around. She also got to meet their parents, Bernard and Thalia Kysenzki. Cort had introduced her as Pete's wife and they had welcomed her with open arms. Of course, it may have been because she saved Taber's life, but Taber assured her it wasn't that.

The day she was getting discharged, Cort was the only one there with her. She sat on

the bed tying on her shoes. Still stiff but ever so grateful to be getting out of the hospital. "I can drive myself you know."

The large man leaning against the door merely raised an eyebrow at her. Sidra sighed. These men were immoveable when they wished it.

"So am I taking you somewhere?" she asked.

"Not quite."

She lifted her eyes and stared at him. "What does that mean exactly?"

"We're going to DC."

Sidra nodded. She had known this would happen. It was inevitable; she would have to face the ramifications for her actions. Slipping off the bed, she said, "Let's go then."

Cort held her coat for her and walked her out of the hospital. She withdrew into herself and was silent for the five-hour plane ride. A black sedan with tinted windows waited for them when they exited Dulles. Fear began to knot in the pit of her stomach and she wondered how much shit she was truly in.

She stood before the building on Pennsylvania Avenue and took a deep breath. Cort placed a hand at the small of her back.

"Come on, darlin'," he said softly.

He escorted her to her former boss's office. Director Adam Willis. Cort took her hand and gave it a gentle squeeze as he winked at her. Then he left her alone.

"Sit down, Bonnaire," Willis said, his voice as gruff as ever.

She sat carefully on the edge of the chair, wishing Pete were with her. Sidra held Willis' gaze without flinching and waited for him to speak.

Lacing his hands behind his salt-n-pepper haired head, he stared back. "You know what you did, right?"

"You mean protected my ass when you tried to hang me out to dry and sent me to a shrink?"

He shrugged and readjusted so his elbows rested on the blotter on his desk. "Still bitter about that?"

Oh you fucker! She arched a brow but declined to answer.

"You brought in Larson." One hand waved around. "Or rather you were integral in his apprehension. And that of Julie Bicker, who was apparently working with him."

Stifling a yawn, she blinked a few times. "I'm assuming there's a point to this drivel somewhere."

"I want you back."

"No."

"No?" Willis asked frowning.

"No. As in no, hell no, not-even-if-hell-froze-over no."

"Pay raise and better benefits?"

She shook her head. "Not a chance. You didn't trust me, thought I was crazy. I won't work in that situation."

He sighed loudly. "Is this because of that incident between us?"

She lifted an eyebrow. "You mean where you tried to use your position to get me in your bed that Christmas party?"

The door crashed open and Cort stood there, his face set in anger. "You did what?" he thundered.

Sidra covered her eyes and shook her head. Pushing to her feet, she walked to Cort and laid a hand on his arm. "Let it go, Cort, please. And don't tell Pete. It's not worth it. He was drunk and stupid."

"Yes. he was." Cort snarled.

Willis flushed, but with only a minor straightening of his tie which betrayed his nervousness, he said, "You will always have a job available here if you want it, Sidra Bonnaire. You're one hell of an agent and having that chip back in our hands is a huge relief for us all. Thank you."

She stared at her former boss and blinked once. "Goodbye, Willis."

Beside her, Cort still remained stiff in anger. She knew he wanted to know more about the incident between her and Willis, but when she squeezed his arm, he led her from the office and back outside into the winter DC night. "You know, Virginia Beach isn't that far away."

"I need to go home, Cort."

He turned her towards him and lifted her chin. His blue eyes gleamed in the night light. "Where is your home, Sidra?"

She licked her lips and thought about his question. A smile lifted her lips when she nodded. She knew where her home was.

* * * *

Pete was in a foul mood. Back from his most recent deployment, a shorter one of three weeks, he'd gone up to Washington to see Sidra only to find she'd checked out. Taber didn't know where she was, and he couldn't get a hold of Cort.

He parked his car before his townhouse and opened the door. The smell of cooking food reached him and he frowned. *Was my mom coming for a visit?* "Mom?" he hollered.

"Well, that's a new name. I'd really prefer Siddy to Mom, but we can go with whatever."

Sidra walked out into the sitting room and smiled at him. He dropped his bag and ate up the vision of her like a starving man. His legs shook and he wasn't entirely sure they would hold him up. She wore one of his button-down shirts and a pair of his lounge pants.

"Siddy?" he rasped.

"Hey," she said with a slight smile.

He walked to her and pulled her tight into his arms, burrowing his face into her hair, revelling in the familiar scent of Sidra. Tears pricked his eyes when her arms slipped around his waist.

"I'm so sorry I wasn't there when you woke, Siddy."

"I know, Pete. They told me you were deployed."

Lowering his mouth to hers, he kissed her. Gently at first, but it quickly grew heated.

Pete forced himself to end it.

"Are you okay?"

"I am now."

"When I saw...all your blood...Siddy..."

"Yes, Pete. My answer to your question is yes. I want to stay married to you." She stared up at him. "I love you."

"Oh my Siddy, I love you too."

He pressed their mouths together again. The purr from the back of her throat shot pulses through him. His cock went rigid in his jeans and he ground his hips against her.

Her hands made short work of unbuttoning his jeans and he groaned in pleasure when her warm hand touched his length through his boxers after shoving his pants down over his hips. He toed off his shoes and stepped out of his jeans and socks, then ripped his shirt off over his head.

Naked, Pete pushed hers down too and grunted his approval of her lack of underwear. Backing her up against the wall, he lifted her slightly and teased her wet entrance with the head of his cock.

"Please," she whimpered.

"Siddy, did you mean it?"

"Yes, Pete."

He lowered her slowly on his shaft, gritting his teeth as her tightness gripped him. His skin prickled and he groaned in pleasure. Deep within her, he carried her to his bed, not wanting to aggravate her injury.

"Ohh yeah," she mewled.

Back and forth, he moved within her. Her strong legs wrapped around his waist, an action which allowed him deeper penetration. The walls of her pussy held him like a vice and he could feel his eruption coming close. There was no way he was going to last long.

Pete nibbled along the skin of her neck as he thrust within her. Sidra dug her nails into his shoulders and undulated against him. The room was filled with their moans and cries of passion. She screamed as she came on his cock and he soon followed with his own release.

Heart pounding, breath coming short and fast, Pete readjusted them on the queensized bed. Covering them with a blanket, he stared into her eyes. "Do you know I'm never letting you go?"

Sidra snuggled into his chest and he could feel her smile against his skin. "I like that sound of that, Pete."

"Me too, Siddy." He stroked a hand up and down her hand. "Are you okay, in any pain?

"I'm good. I get a bit stiff some days, but it's all good."

He kissed her. "Yeah, I get a bit stiff too, and it's all good."

She chuckled. "Incorrigible."

"You love me," he said confidently.

"I do."

"So what happens now?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. All I know is I'm with you."

"Now and forever, Siddy. Now and forever." He held her close.

Over dinner, he stared at her endlessly. He was scared to look away for fear he'd wake and find it all a dream. That night in their bed as he came deep within her body, Pete realised nothing else mattered but the woman in his arms. She was his love. She was his future. Sidra was the lieutenant's wife.

About the Author

Aliyah Burke loves to read and write.

She is married to a career military man, they have a Borzoi, German Shepherd, and a DSH cat. Her days are spent sharing her time between work, writing, and dog training.

Email: aliyah burke@hotmail.com

Aliyah Burke loves to hear from readers. You can find her contact information, website and author biography at http://www.total-e-bound.com.

Also by Aliyah Burke

Seducing Damian
Through the Fire

Camouflaged Hearts: A Marriage of Convenience

Total-E-Bound Publishing



www.total-e-bound.com

Take a look at our exciting range of literagasmic™
erotic romance titles and discover pure quality
at Total-E-Bound.