

ELLORA'S CAVE FUSION

MEMPHIS  
*Rising*

HAVEN ISLEY

## Memphis Rising

*Haven Isley*

Jury Yates is a corporate attorney who has a thing for one of the most powerful men in Memphis – her boss. But there’s a problem with pursuing – and being pursued by – a man with such wealth and power, especially when his family once owned hers. Still, Jury cannot deny her attraction for the CEO of Wainwright Construction, whose hot bod and deep, sexy voice get her juices flowing. Can she find a way to accept that the past is the past and her future is what she makes of it?

Beauregard Charles Wainwright is the epitome of a Southern gentleman. But this modern-day Rhett Butler is more than just a gambler, he is a collector of sorts, acquiring properties and developing multimillion-dollar dreams. So he knows a sweet deal when he sees one. And Jury Yates is awfully sweet. She’s exactly what he wants, and he is determined to have her. Now all that’s left for Beau to do is convince Jury that he shouldn’t have to pay for the sins of his father.

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Memphis Rising

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Yale: Yale University

## **Chapter One**

Jury Yates knew it was not the smartest thing to talk back to her boss, but at the moment the man was being a corporate prick.

Frowning at the tired look on his otherwise handsome face, she could see that he was obviously stressed. No, on second thought, he was irritated at having to call an emergency staff meeting so late on a Friday afternoon.

Still, it didn't give the man the right to direct his anger at her. He was the one who made the costly mistake in the company's latest attempt to acquire undeveloped acreage just outside Miami. And the sooner he admitted it was his mistake, the sooner the executive team could devise a strategy to recoup the lost revenue.

Of course, maybe his anger was somewhat justified, since she had just reminded him in front of his entire executive team that only six months ago she had predicted the Miami deal would go bust. Then, to make matters worse, she went on to tell her boss—in front of the team—that he should be spanked for not heeding her warning or following her sound legal advice.

Because if there was one thing that everyone in the room knew, it was that Beauregard Charles Wainwright didn't take orders. He gave them.

"Pardon me, what did you say, Miss Yates?" Rising up out of his chair to stand at the head of the conference room table, the chief executive officer of Wainwright Construction was a force to be reckoned with—all six feet, three inches, one hundred and ninety pounds of him.

By anyone's standards, but especially Jury's, he was a tall drink of water, with thick, black hair and piercing gray eyes that narrowed as he zeroed in on her. She sat across the room from him in the seat reserved for those who arrived late. Jury liked to call it the tardy seat—which was where she sat most of the time. But she didn't mind

one bit. The tardy seat did have an advantage over all the rest in the conference room—an unobstructed view of the finest man in Tennessee.

Mr. Wainwright growled, “I’m still waiting, Miss Yates.”

Caught like a deer in a pair of headlights, Jury stared at her boss with a confused expression.

“For you to repeat what you said,” Mr. Wainwright huffed, his patience worn thin.

Jury sighed, prompting every head in the room to turn and look at her in utter disbelief. She glanced at the faces of two vice presidents and four senior managers, all of whom were signaling with pained expressions that she was only making matters worse.

Tilting her head to one side, Jury studied her boss’s demeanor. After a few seconds, she decided his attitude had absolutely nothing to do with her insubordination, and everything to do with her big brown booty.

She sat up abruptly in her chair and held her head high. “I think you heard me,” she answered, certainly not stupid enough to repeat what she’d said. And the rest of the members of the executive team froze in their seats. Suddenly you could hear a pin drop.

Jury looked on in silence as Mr. Wainwright raked his fingers through his hair and then exhaled his frustration. He glanced quickly at the faces of the executive officers seated on either side of the table, then blew his top. “Everybody get out! Go home. Now. Except you, Miss Yates.”

Jury jumped to her feet to protest. “But it’s Friday night. And it’s after nine o’clock.” She looked to the other executives for support, only to find them rushing out of the room for the elevators.

“Close the door, Miss Yates,” her boss ordered.

Jury hesitated for a second before she marched over to the only exit, grabbed the brass door handles and shut the oak double doors with a thud. She slowly turned around and found herself immediately confronted with a look of outrage on her boss’s face.

“Who the hell do you think you are to talk to me like that?” Mr. Wainwright shot at her from across the room.

Raising a sculpted dark brown brow, Jury smirked as she looked straight in the eyes of one of the most powerful men in Memphis and said, “Well...I would be the woman you violated last night. And this morning...just before the crack of dawn.”

“Jury! I’ve had about enough of your smart mouth today.”

Licking her lips enticingly, Jury waited a beat before she stuck her index finger in her mouth and slowly began to suck on it. She started at the base and worked her lips with a kneading and rolling motion, all the way to the tip of her red-painted fingernail. It was a calculated move, meant to remind her boss of other skills that she had mastered beyond her expertise in corporate law. She made a slurping sound and stared with hooded eyelids as Mr. Wainwright’s face turned the shade of a pomegranate. On the inside, she was elated.

“Stop it, Jury,” her boss warned.

“What? You did violate me, Mr. Wainwright. Over...and over...again.”

Jury stifled a giggle. Seeing the rather serious CEO lose control always did something for her. He lost it so rarely.

Turning back around, Jury faced the door and slowly bent forward to reach for the lock, giving the man in charge a generous peak at the junk in her trunk. She was not a heavy woman, but she did have killer curves, ample breasts and a small waist that all came in handy if and when it was necessary to work it.

She didn’t usually mess around in the office, where the workload on her desk kept her more than busy. But tonight she was making an exception.

Pressing her body against the cool wood of the door, Jury turned the lock and then cast a glance back over her shoulder. “Now don’t you think you’ve done enough yelling at me, Mr. Wainwright?” She pouted. “Here’s a suggestion, instead of yelling, how about you come over here and we climb on top of this long table and you take it out on me in a way that we both can enjoy?”



“That’s not a good idea, Miss Yates.”

But the man’s lust-filled eyes said something entirely different.

Suddenly, the boss man cleared his throat and looked down at the papers in front of him on the conference table. Then he adjusted his tie. Then he looked at his watch. And Jury realized he was doing anything he could not to look directly at her. He reached down and picked up his leather case from the floor, placed it on the table and started shoveling documents inside it in no particular order. *He’ll be pissed about that on Monday, Jury thought, when he has to read wrinkled contracts.*

As Beau continued with his haphazard cleaning, Jury said nothing, knowing eventually he would have to look at her. She was standing between him and the door.

Finally, after closing and locking his leather case, Mr. Wainwright glanced over at Jury.

“Do I need to remind you this is a place of business? And your behavior today was way out of line. And you know it, Jury!”

Ouch. That hurt. Even from across the room, Jury felt the sting of Beau’s words. He really was mad at her. Okay. So yes, she showed out, acted less than professional, but only because he didn’t take her advice about the Miami deal. She wanted his attention – wanted him to know she was upset. And yes, she had picked the wrong time to let him know how she felt about the whole sordid mess. But it was going to be a pain in the butt to legally undo that deal. A deal that never should have happened in the first place.

“Well, you owe me an apology.” It was Jury’s best attempt at a preemptive strike.

“I owe you nothing.” Beau’s nostrils flared. “You just told God and country and every executive in this room that I need my ass whupped.”

Jury clamped her lips tight to keep from laughing. There was just something so wrong about Beau speaking slang. Slowly, she moved toward the head of the table and stopped at the halfway point between them.

"Well, you do owe me an apology," Jury said, reaching out to run her fingers across the smooth surface of the wood table. Then she started walking again, this time swaying her round hips in a way that said in no uncertain terms, "Oh yeah, I'm coming for you, baby". And with each step she took closer to Beau, Jury could feel the temperature in the room rising.

She stuck her tongue out and wet her top lip, but never took her eyes off the prize.

And when Beau began to shake his head, a seductive smile crept across Jury's face. There was no way he could stay mad at her for very long. She wouldn't let him.

"Beauregard," Jury said in a sultry voice. "I told you that lame-ass venture in Miami was going to cost you. I personally did the analysis. I reviewed the due diligence and made my legal staff research the property owner's past transactions, in-depth. And there was no way that deal was ever going to be in our favor. Besides, the owner was too desperate to sell, and the timing was all wrong."

"Maybe. Maybe not," Beau said, tossing a flippant answer back at her.

Jury rolled her big brown eyes. "So you decide to gamble, and it doesn't matter if we all lose in the end?"

She took a deep breath and watched Beau's gaze go straight to her cleavage, which was pushed up and exposed much more than she realized. She had worn a blazer to the office over her spring dress, but left the blazer in her office when she ran to the emergency meeting. Now, standing directly beneath one of the custom light fixtures that illuminated the room, Jury recalled why she had worn the blazer in the first place. The fabric of her dress was so sheer it was practically see-through, and no match for the protruding nipples that were crying out for attention and some tender loving care.

And by the way Beau's eyes were feasting on her double Ds, Jury could predict they would get just that before the night was over. "Now tell me I'm right, like you should have in the meeting," Jury said.

Beau's gaze moved slowly from her breasts up to her face, looking at her with adoration. Then he glared at her. "No. Because you said I would lose my shirt. And I only lost two and half million."

Without warning, Beau moved out from behind the head of the table, stalked straight up to Jury and stopped in front of her. He made no move to touch her or apologize. But he did grin, and Jury's temper flared.

"You smug bastard," she said, reaching out and straightening Beau's tie. She'd given it to him for Christmas last year, and it was the perfect complement to his gray eyes.

"You really are something else, Beauregard Wainwright. You can't even admit that you were wrong." Jury yanked on the Windsor knot and Beau's eyes darkened. She leaned into him and pressed her breasts against his arm. "I'm glad I said what I did in the meeting. You do need your ass whupped. So do you want me to do it now or later?" Jury laughed, turning away to gather her things. She shrieked as a muscled arm snaked around her waist and yanked her backward.

"Where do you think you're going, you little tease?"

"Let go." Jury tried to pull away, only to find her butt prodded with a bulging erection.

"So, you want to whup my ass, huh?" Beau breathed out as he slid his hand up the front of Jury's dress. And like heat-seeking missiles, his fingers knew exactly where to go. He tightened his hold around Jury's waist, slipped his hand inside her panties and began frigging her clit with lightning speed, setting her pussy on fire.

"Stop! Stop. This is a place of business." Jury giggled as she struggled to break free, but Beau wasn't laughing. He slipped two fingers in between her burning folds, and she went from giggling to all-out groaning.

"Ohhh, you don't play fair," Jury said, trying not to double over as Beau dug his fingers deeper. He ground his cock against her and she started to panic.

"Beau... Oh God." Jury realized then what he was planning to do. He was going to make her come. In the office. She tried again to break free, but Beau was all up on her. Surrounding her. Engulfing her with his massive height and strength, and she was more than hot and bothered. Already she could feel the juices flowing out of her wet mound. Jury tried to squeeze her legs together, thinking it would slow Beau's stroking. But it did just the opposite. He stuffed one more finger inside her, and then another, leaving only his thumb to place constant pressure on her clitoris.

Jury threw her head back and howled, "Owwww. Owwww. Don't make me come. Not here. Someone might see us...and how professional will that look?"

Beau moved his arm from around her waist and up to her generous breasts. He squeezed them through the thin fabric of her dress and pulled on her stiff nipples. Jury was panting now, exhausted from all the wrestling that was of no use since Beau's grip was like a vise. She stopped struggling and started begging.

"Oh God. You have to stop." Jury stomped her high-heeled pump on the carpeted floor.

Bending his head down close to her face, Beau whispered, "Yeah, where's the tough talk now? You love pushing my buttons, Jury. But not at work! Not anymore, do I make myself clear? Hmmm?"

Using his knees, Beau pushed Jury's legs farther apart, removed his fingers from her sex and yanked her panties down. He bowed her back and spanked her clit, hard and swift.

Jury jerked. "Stop that!" She stomped her foot on the floor again and Beau chuckled. He licked the side of her face and spanked her clit again. This time harder and quick as a whip.

Jury yelped, but she knew there would be no mercy for her as Beau inserted two fingers inside her throbbing pussy and curled them.

"Such a juicy, tight little cunt," Beau rasped. "And it is *allll* mine, Counselor."

Jury's mouth fell open but she couldn't speak. She could barely breathe with Beau's fingers now digging deeper into her molten core. She was drenched—so wet that she could feel her essence running down the inside of her thighs.

"Oooooooo, Beau, you have to stop," she begged, reaching out to clutch one of the leather chairs. "I feel as if I'm going to faint." And she would if he kept her in a heightened state of arousal for much longer.

Beau thrust his erection against her back. "Not until you apologize... For showing out like you did this afternoon. Or so help me, I'll throw you up on this table, fuck you in the middle of this conference room and fulfill my fantasy of inching slowly into your sweet behind." And with this final demand, Beau rammed his long fingers home as he lowered his head to Jury's neck and bit her.

"Owwwww. Okay. Okay, I'm sorry. I won't do it again, I promise," she yelled as the pain from his nip began to throb. Jury's body started shaking uncontrollably, seeking release. "Oh God, I'm coming."

"Yes you are," Beau confirmed as Jury's body quaked with the intensity of a rapturous orgasm. He pressed his face to the back of her head as she rode out the wave. And when she slumped, Beau removed his hand from her mound and slid a cream-covered finger into Jury's asshole.

She tensed, gritting her teeth as Beau began to nuzzle her neck. "Soon, my beautiful brown-eyed girl."

Objecting, Jury shook her head wildly from side to side as she tried to fight the feelings Beau was evoking with his probing.

"No," she managed to say. But her voice was weak.

Beau chuckled. "Yessssss, Jury. Soon I'm going to stick my cock in your tight ass, darling," he said. And his words felt like flickering flames against her damp skin. "Ahhh, Jury, when I take you here," Beau said as he inserted a second finger into her asshole, making Jury shudder, "you'll want it more than you know."

Beau kissed her on the cheek then, and Jury closed her eyes as the invading digits moved in and out of her taboo hole. Her breathing hitched in her throat and Beau stuck his tongue in her ear. He licked the sensitive inner shell and Jury's pulse raced. He grabbed the soft lobe between his teeth and nibbled. Jury hissed. When he moved to the tender flesh of her neck, Jury flinched.

"I won't bite you again. Not this time, darling," Beau said quietly.

Relieved, Jury exhaled. "I can't take any more."

"Shhhh." Beau rubbed his cheek against hers.

Not knowing what else to expect, Jury started to tremble.

Then Beau removed his fingers from inside her anus and reached down to pull her panties back up over her ass. He turned Jury around and hugged her to him. She rested her head against his chest, sighed and closed her eyes. After a few minutes she felt his hand under her chin and he lifted her head to look down at her face.

"Hey, don't fall asleep on me," he said softly. He captured Jury's bottom lip between his teeth and chewed gently on the plump flesh before he shoved his tongue in her mouth and kissed her passionately, fueling the fire that had cooled only seconds before.

And much to Jury's astonishment, she found herself lifting her leg and riding Beau's muscular thigh like a dog humps, without shame.

"Do me!" she shouted and Beau grabbed the back of Jury's thighs and lifted both her legs to wrap around his waist as he shoved his tongue deeper into her mouth.

He was lowering her on top of the table when they heard a noise outside the double doors.

"Shit." Beau released Jury and moved away from her at the exact moment when one of the cleaning crew unlocked and opened the door.

"Oh, excuse me, Mr. Wainwright," the startled maintenance man said, his face turning bright red as he clearly put two and two together.

He stared at Beau with an apologetic look. "Excuse me, sir. I thought everyone had left the building already."

Jury looked over and realized that Beau was now standing back at the head of the table, behind his strategically placed briefcase.

Beau nodded at the maintenance supervisor. "We're almost finished here, Duffy. Give us thirty minutes, then come back."

"Yes sir. I'll do that." The maintenance supervisor started backing up into the hallway with a vacuum cleaner in tow. He glanced at Jury for only a split second, then looked back at Beau.

"Again, excuse me, Mr. Wainwright," he said, quickly closing the door behind him.

In a flash, Beau was all over Jury.

"Hands off, Wainwright. Or I'll scream," she said. "And you know how much I like to scream." Jury pried Beau's hands off her person and finally broke free. She headed for the door, stopping to pick up her purse and briefcase from beside the tardy seat. When she turned around, she could clearly see Beau's irritation at her sudden, impending departure.

"Where do you think you're going?" he asked.

Jury sighed, taking in the sight of her man standing with his clothes a bit rumpled and his hair mussed. Damn. He still looked fine. Doggone Rhett Butler look-alike. What ever made her think she could resist his debonair charm? She never stood a chance.

Batting her eyelashes as she stuck out her ass, Jury began to flirt. "I'm going on an adventure. You want to come?" And the way she asked was more a proposition than an invitation.

But Beau said nothing so Jury took it upon herself to make the decision for him. "Meet me downstairs on the alley side of the building in fifteen minutes. I'll be waiting for you in a black limousine."

After opening the door, she stopped and turned to look at him. "Oh, by the way, what time do you have?" Jury asked, lifting her wrist to look at her gold watch. She wanted to make sure that it was synchronized with Beau's watch, exactly.

"Nine thirty-five," Beau said as he eyed her suspiciously.

"So that means I'll see you at nine fifty." Jury smiled. "And if you're one minute late, it's your loss," she warned, as she walked out of the conference room with a great big smile on her face.

Beau waited until he was sure Jury was on the elevator before he left the conference room. He hurried to his office, hoping not to run into Duffy along the way because one embarrassing encounter was enough for the evening. Beau had known the older man all his life. Duffy Calhoun was as much a part of Wainwright Construction as Beau was. He had kept maintenance operations running smoothly for over forty years at the construction company and in some ways, Beau had more respect for the maintenance supervisor than he did for his own father.

Though, James Wainwright used to bring Beau in to the office and let him run in the halls—so long as he did not get underfoot—it was Duffy who took the time to pull Beau aside and show him how to fix things. Duffy even took Beau to various departments in the company and introduced him as the boss' son to other company employees, something Beau's father never had the desire or patience to do.

As Beau grew up, he visited the office less and less. But he always remembered Duffy, and often asked his father about him. So after his father retired and Beau took over the company, he set up a special trust fund for the maintenance supervisor. Upon his retirement, Duffy would lack for nothing monetarily for the rest of his life. That's how much Beau respected and appreciated the man's kindness toward him. So Beau was more than a little embarrassed by his slip-up and the fact that Duffy had almost caught him with his pants down. Literally.



Entering his office, Beau quickly stored his briefcase in the safe, then opened the middle drawer of his desk. He pulled out a small white envelope, removed a set of keys and placed them in the inside pocket of his jacket. Just as he was about to close the drawer he caught a glimpse of a photo. He reached for it and smiled. It was a Jury at the company picnic last summer. She was standing at home plate with a baseball bat raised and ready to zing one out of the park. As he recalled, she had, laughing and running from base to base to the cheers of the executive team, who were getting their asses kicked by the office staff.

He didn't know how she did it, but Jury had a way about her that made everyone love her. And she had made him fall in love with her. Now it was nearly impossible for Beau to refuse her anything.

Like what just happened in the conference room. The only reason he was almost caught in a compromising position was because of Jury. It was all her fault. The minute she started climbing on him, there was little else he could do other than surrender. The woman was insatiable. And lately, all he wanted to do was satisfy her. In the shower. In the car. In the backyard. His cock should be in traction—even now, he was semi-erect.

No other woman did it for him like Jury Yates.

From day one, she drove him to distraction with her brilliant mind, quick wit, big tits and ass. Fuck! Just thinking about her was making his cock twitch. It was one thing for the woman to be beautiful and hot as hell in bed, but she was also a genius—third in her graduating class from Yale Law School and a published author.

In a nutshell, Jury Yates was his dream girl.

She was exactly the kind of woman he wanted to be his wife and the mother of his children. But at times she was truly as stubborn as a mule.

For months she had been avoiding the subject of marriage, and Beau was tired of waiting for her to come around. It felt as if he had been waiting all his life for Jury, even though he only met her three years ago. Now he couldn't imagine what his life would

be like if she hadn't agreed to come work for him. But he was convinced that it had been their destiny to meet.

## **Chapter Two**

*Three Years Ago*

When Michael Tetherington, head of legal, announced his retirement, Beau had been more than a bit disappointed. He and Michael had worked together for ten years, and prior to that Michael had worked for Beau's father some twenty years. So finding the man's replacement was not going to be an easy task. At the recommendation of a member of the city council, Beau contacted a young attorney who was making a name for herself in Washington, D.C. She was a native of Tennessee, and apparently eager to move back to Memphis. So Beau had his executive assistant make all the arrangements necessary to set up an interview with one Miss Jury Yates, attorney-at-law.

The minute Beau laid eyes on Jury, he knew his goose was cooked, but good. It was the way she walked into his office wearing a white silk blouse, a booty-hugging black skirt and a pair of black, high-heeled pumps that made his dick go *schwing*. Thankfully, he was sitting down for most of the interview, because if he had been standing up, he could never have denied his physical attraction to her.

It was more than just the counselor's looks that Beau found appealing. He loved the professional way she presented herself and her ideas for broadening the role of the legal department. At the end of the interview, Beau already knew he wanted to hire her, but it wasn't solely his decision. He needed feedback from the rest of the executive team.

So Beau cleared his calendar on the day the second interview was scheduled, even though it wasn't necessary for him to be there. He was glad he did. It gave him a chance to see Jury in action, and he was completely amazed by her ability to impress his executive team—six of the toughest sons-of-bitches in the construction business.

It would have been so easy for her to simply rely on her looks, to charm the old codgers. But instead, Jury used her knowledge of corporate law to win them over, and expressed a genuine desire to learn the construction business.

At the end of the day, every single man on the executive team told Beau that not only should he hire Miss Yates, but to pay whatever she was asking. They all wanted her on board.

Since nothing had stood out as a problem after his cursory glance at the attorney's background check, Beau felt that he should let his father know of the decision to hire the company's first female and African-American executive.

Beau never anticipated his father's vehement reaction.

"I forbid it!" James Wainwright had said adamantly, as Beau looked at his father in total disbelief.

"You forbid it? Daddy, I don't think you understand. Jury Yates is the one and only candidate I want to replace Michael. She is a brilliant attorney," Beau said, with no hesitation.

His father shook his head. "I don't want to hear it. Find somebody else." Suddenly, he stood up from the dining room table in the house where four generations of Wainwrights had lived, and headed out of the room to the parlor across the hallway.

Family dinners were a tradition on the third Sunday of every month in the Wainwright household. When his mother died, Beau had vowed that he would continue to spend the time with his father, even though they had very different philosophies about life and people in general. People of color in particular.

James Preston Wainwright was raised in an era when segregation was the norm. Beau never felt it was right to judge people because of their color and he thanked his mother for that. Eleanor Wainwright had always tried to find the good in everyone. She had attempted often to persuade her husband to reconsider his dislike of others solely because of skin color. But she never was able to get through to him.

After his mother's death, Beau's father just got meaner and more ornery, to the point that few members of the Wainwright family spent any time with him at all. Still, Beau loved his father and continued to hope that someday he would see the light and change. That day had yet to arrive.

Beau pushed back his chair from the dining table and followed his father into the parlor of the two-hundred-year-old house. It was a place that held memories of a happy childhood for Beau. As an only child, he was much-loved by his mother, but never spoiled. And she encouraged her son to always do the right thing. Especially when it came to affairs of the heart.

"Son, you must always follow your heart," she used to tell Beau, and then she would smile and everything would be right as rain.

From an early age, Beau sensed that his mother was unhappy because her love for his father was never returned. Yet, she continued to be a caring wife and mother until the end. Sadly, his father, who seldom showed any real emotion because he was not an affectionate man, didn't even shed a tear at his own wife's funeral.

Surprisingly, since his father had turned the construction company over to Beau, father and son had been getting along much better. Until now. Beau tried once more to appeal to his father. "Daddy, if you would just meet Miss Yates, you would see that she is perfect for the position as head of the legal department."

His father sat down in one of the two wingback chairs by the fireplace and turned a cold stare on Beau. "I am telling you not to hire her."

"Why?" Beau hunched his shoulders. "What could you possibly have against her? You haven't even met her yet."

The elder Wainwright's hatred reared its ugly head. "I don't want to meet her. Do as I say or else I'll disinherit you."

Beau exhaled loudly. "Jury Yates is the best lawyer for the job and she has excellent credentials. And I'm not asking your permission to hire her. I don't have to, as you well know, sir. I'm only telling you this as a courtesy."

Beau shook his head. Why did he continue to believe that his father was capable of change? All these years, Beau had held out hope that his father would see things differently. But the mighty James Wainwright clearly didn't want to let go of the past. Beau crossed the room to a mahogany sideboard where an array of hard liquor in crystal decanters sat on a silver tray. He reached for the bourbon, then grabbed a short glass and poured himself a shot of the smooth, amber liquid. He downed the drink quickly before he turned to face his father – who was now silently seething.

"Daddy, the decision is as good as already made. Jury Yates is going to be the new head of Legal."

Beau's father looked over at him with pure disgust on his face. "You'll regret your decision to hire that girl. Mark my word," his father warned.

Beau raised an eyebrow. Hearing his father's use of the word "girl" pissed him off and he decided then and there to put an end to the conversation. He set his empty glass on the silver tray. Then he sat down on the antique settee that faced the fireplace and the chair in which his father was seated.

"First off, Jury Yates is not a *girl*. She's a woman. A very interesting one at that," Beau said, surprised at just how much he felt the need to defend her. "Everyone on the executive team is ready to work with her, and that in itself is a miracle since those old codgers are suspicious of everyone. So I'm not letting Jury Yates go. And you can live with that. Or not."

Wainwright Senior jumped to his feet, but his action failed to affect Beau. No longer was his father the towering, formidable man who'd put fear in the hearts of real estate investors and bankers when he used to wheel and deal throughout the state. But Beau soon realized that while old age and poor health had diminished his father's size, it had not diminished his voice, as he bellowed, "Damn you, son."

"Enough!" Beau shouted. "You've said enough, Daddy. This discussion is over."

"Then get out!" His father pointed to the door. "Until you get rid of that...that girl, I don't want anything to do with you."

Beau felt as if he'd been sucker-punched. "Daddy, you can't be serious? What the hell is this?"

"Just get out," his father said with a disgusted expression. Then he turned and stormed out of the room.

Two days later, Beau was sitting in his office when he received a call from a hospital attendant telling him that his father was in the emergency room.

Immediately, Beau left the office and drove like a madman, screeching into the hospital parking lot and jumping out of his car to search for his father. When Beau found him, the nurses were having a hell of a time holding the old man down. He was wrestling with them and yelling incoherently as they tried with no success.

One of the nurses standing by his father's bed rushed over. "Are you the son?"

"Yes. I'm Beau Wainwright. What's happened?" he asked as he stared down at the young nurse, who appeared a bit frazzled.

"Mr. Wainwright, your father has been fighting us. And it has been difficult for the nurses to get him to calm down. Perhaps hearing your voice will calm him. It's important that we assess the situation as quickly as possible," she said anxiously.

Beau nodded. "All right." He slowly approached his father's bed. "Daddy? Daddy, it's Beau."

"Beau! Son. Come here, boy," James Wainwright said, waving away the nurses who were crowded around his bed. He reached out and grabbed Beau's arm, clinging to it like a life preserver. Most of the nurses who had been trying to calm the patient quietly but gratefully left the room.

"Son?"

"Yes, Daddy?" Beau leaned forward to hear his father better.

"You can't do it. Odessa's people will ruin us," his father said and began to cough. He took a deep breath and then he seemed to calm back down.

"Daddy?" Beau called. "Daddy, what are you talking about?" Beau tried again to understand what his father meant. When he said nothing, Beau glanced at the two nurses who had remained in the room. They stared at him with blank expressions and it was obvious they didn't know either.

Beau looked back at his father, who suddenly began to toss his head about on his pillow and mumble, but he wasn't making sense. "Odessa's people. Get her out. Get her out," he shouted.

"But Daddy, I don't understand what you want," Beau said.

"Send her packing. Get her out," his father shouted. Beau threw up his arms.

"Daddy, who? Send who packing?" Beau began to yell. One of the nurses, the older woman, tapped Beau on the shoulder to quiet him down.

"Sir, your father is delirious. And we need to have your permission to treat him," she said softly.

Casting a glance at his father, who had stopped shouting and was now quietly resting, Beau took a deep breath and exhaled. Then he nodded and said, "Give me whatever forms I need to fill out. Just do something for my father, please."

\* \* \* \* \*

It was over a week before Beau returned to the office after learning that his father had suffered a partial stroke. At the recommendation of the family's private physician, Beau made arrangements for his father to receive around-the-clock medical care. The senior facility he chose was located in a retirement community that offered services for both actively mobile seniors and those who required constant monitoring. Now Beau just had to wait and see.

Once back in the office, he quickly returned to work mode and was grateful that it was business as usual. While Beau was resting in his chair after reviewing a number of emails and signing a few contracts, his eyes fell upon the extensive background check on Jury Yates. Background checks were required of all employees before Wainwright



Construction would hire them. Reviewing Miss Yates' information more thoroughly had been on his list of things to do the day his father was admitted to the hospital. But after learning about his father's serious health condition, Beau had decided he would have to put the young attorney's job offer on hold. He had telephoned her personally the day after his father went into the hospital to let Miss Yates know that, due to unforeseen family circumstances, he would be out of the office for several days and that there would be a delay in her hiring process as a result.

Thinking that she might be annoyed at having to wait longer than originally promised for a decision, Beau was completely surprised when Miss Yates asked if she could be of any assistance.

"I know we don't know each other very well, but you seem upset. I can hear it in your voice," she said softly. "So if there is anything I can do, just know that I'm only a phone call away."

Beau felt a pang in his heart at hearing the concern in the woman's voice. "Thank you, Miss Yates. I appreciate that."

"Well, I know how my family can be. And even though I love them, it doesn't stop them from driving me a little crazy at times," she laughed, and Beau chuckled in response.

"By the way, please call me Jury."

Holding his cell phone to his ear, Beau suddenly felt a desire to smile. "All right, Jury. So did you always know you would end up in the legal profession?"

"You mean, because of my name?"

Beau thought about it for a minute. "Well, it is unusual."

"It definitely was when I was growing up. I don't know why my mother chose it. Except she said the name just came to her late one night."

"Well, it's a beautiful name." Beau had to stop himself from saying, "for a beautiful woman", which is what he wanted to tell her. There were other things, too, that he

wanted to say. He wanted to tell Jury that there was something about her—he didn't know quite what—that made him want to get to know her better. How he'd thought of her often since they first met in his office. And how much her voice soothed him whenever he heard it. It just made him feel good. Feel great, even.

"Hello... Mr. Wainwright, are you still there?" Jury asked.

"Yes! Yes, I'm here." Beau laughed out loud. "But call me Beau."

"Oh... Okay. Did I miss something?" she asked.

"No. I was just thinking about the last time I actually sat and had a leisurely conversation on the phone." Which was a complete lie, but what else could he say? *I was crushing on you, Jury? I might be falling for you, Jury?*

"Well, Beau, if you need to postpone the third interview, just let me know. Oh goodness, look at the time," Jury said, and Beau could hear papers rustling in the background. "I wish I didn't have a prior engagement, but unfortunately I have to cut short our conversation. But call me if you need anything, okay?"

"I will. And thanks, Jury."

"Anytime. Bye."

"Bye."

Little did Jury know Beau had already decided there wasn't a need for a third interview. In fact, once he signed off on the paperwork, he could officially offer Miss Yates the position of head of legal. However, since his initial review of her file was rushed, he decided before signing he should review the file once more, thoroughly this time.

Reaching for the heavy binder, Beau began sifting through the information gathered by the private investigator the company used for background checks. Beau already knew a lot of the information about Jury. She was twenty-nine. Seven years younger than him. She was Tennessee born and raised. Attended public schools. Beau

snorted when he saw her grades. Of course she would have been valedictorian, with a 4.0 grade point average. She attended Yale as an undergrad, then Yale Law School.

"She graduated with honors from law school," Beau said aloud, and something stirred deep down inside him. A sense of pride for the woman. Something he had absolutely no business feeling. He told himself that once Jury Yates was hired, she would be his employee and off-limits. How he was feeling at the moment had more to do with his being tired than anything else. And perhaps she was on his mind after thinking about the telephone conversation he had with her.

Beau turned a few more pages in the black binder, then smiled as he stared at a photo of Jury in her cap and gown at her law school graduation. God, she was simply beautiful. He brought it closer to look at the faces of those surrounding the graduate. Probably family and friends. They looked as if they were having a good time. He looked on the back, but there were no names written. He flipped it back over and decided that the beautiful older woman Jury looked so much like was her mother. All Beau knew about her was that she was a single mom and had passed away shortly after Jury graduated from law school. Placing the picture back in the plastic sleeve, Beau quickly leafed through the rest of the binder.

Apparently Jury had spent some time in Europe after graduation. *Probably after her mother died to deal with her grief*, he thought. When Jury returned to the U.S., she went to work for a top-notch law firm in Washington, D.C. Beau browsed over numerous articles she had written on corporate law, then he looked at the clock on his desk. It was well past ten o'clock at night. No wonder he was so exhausted. He was almost finished, then he could go home, have a drink, kick back and watch a game on TiVo.

Beau reached for the copy of Jury's birth certificate and his mouth fell open when he saw the name Odessa. How was it possible that this legal document had the name of the woman his father had shouted while in a state of delirium? And the name was mentioned not in one place, but two. Jury's middle name was Odessa and her mother's name was Odessa Jane Latimer.

Beau sat up in his seat as his heart began to thump loudly. What did it mean? What did his father mean when he said, "Odessa's people will ruin us?" Surely he didn't mean Jury?

"Not my Jury," Beau said aloud. *Oh shit.*

Sinking into his chair, Beau buried his face in his hands and groaned. This could not be happening. How could he have fallen for a woman he didn't even know three weeks ago? But he already knew the answer. Jury did it for him. She excited him and he wanted her. He wanted her to work for him, yes. But he also wanted to lay her down on his bed, spread her legs and cover her body with his. He wanted to feel her move beneath him and hear her moan his name. How many nights had he dreamt of touching her smooth, brown skin? Wondered how deep he could thrust to drive her over the edge and make her cling to him as she quaked in his arms.

"Not my Jury," he said again. There was no way. It was just a coincidence.

He snatched a loose page out of the binder and read what the private investigator had written on the yellow Post-It. *Winning essay entry. Three-thousand-dollar college scholarship winner – Jury Yates. Age 17.*

So Jury had a true gift for writing.

Beau held on to the essay as he stood up and walked over to the mini-refrigerator. Maybe if he had a drink it would ease the strange feeling of foreboding that had suddenly come over him. He opened the door, grabbed a bottle and quickly mixed an Atomic 7 and 7. The drink hit the spot as he sauntered over to the couch, polished off the entire drink and set the empty glass on a side table. He stretched out on the length of the couch, then held up Jury's essay so he could read it. *What It Means to be Born in Tennessee*. Once again, a sense of pride came over him as he read about Jury's love of her home state. His home state. Beau imagined that Jury was in his arms, snuggling with him on the couch and listening to him talk about his love of their home state. Suddenly, that idea wasn't so farfetched or even hard to imagine. Not at all.

As he neared the end of Jury's essay, Beau was filled with admiration. As crazy as it seemed, he knew without a doubt he had fallen in love with the young attorney. But for the life of him, he didn't know what he was going to do about it. He continued to read the final paragraph of her essay.

*And yes, my family roots run deep in the rich soil of Tennessee, where my ancestors were slaves on a plantation. Though they were considered as property of the richest slave owner in the county, my family persevered until they were freed, so that one day I could become a doctor, or a schoolteacher, or even a lawyer. But what they endured at the hands of their owner did not break the spirit of my ancestors, because their spirit still lives in me.*

Scanning down the remainder of the page, Beau's eyes spotted a note in Rinshaw's handwriting. It was hard to read at first. Still, Beau was able to decipher what the private investigator had scribbled. *The name of the plantation owner was Thaddeus Jebediah Carlisle.*

"No!" Beau shouted. "No. This is crazy. There has to be a mistake." He quickly sat up on the couch then rose to his feet. His family couldn't have owned Jury's family. And yet the Wainwrights were indeed descendants of Thaddeus Jebediah Carlisle.

Never in a millions years would Beau have imagined that his ancestors had once owned Jury's. His heart sank. Grabbing his jacket, he headed for his car with heaviness weighing on his shoulders. The only way he could verify that any of it was true was to check the Wainwright family history, which was maintained in several journals at his father's house.

Beau called ahead and told his father's housekeeper that he was on the way. He didn't want to take the chance of frightening the woman to death by showing up and letting himself inside the house.

"Is there anything I can do?" the housekeeper asked, surprised to hear from him at such a late hour.

"No. I don't think so, Mrs. Jordan." Beau checked his speed and eased up on the accelerator.

"Well, I'll turn on the lights downstairs for you and make a pot of coffee."

"Thank you. I should be there shortly."

When Beau arrived, he proceeded straight to the library and the section of books that he needed. As he ran his fingers over the yellowed pages of the journals, he actually hoped that he wouldn't find any connection. He was on the third journal in a set of four when he saw the name of a slave called Percy Latimer. Beau remembered that Latimer was Jury's mother's maiden name. It was true. His ancestors once owned Jury's mother's people.

Beau hurled the book across the room and watched it hit the wall then drop to the floor like a brick.

"Is everything all right?" Mrs. Jordan asked as she hurried into the room.

Beau looked up to see the housekeeper retrieving the leather-bound book from the floor. She set it on a small table next to the door, just within reach of where she was standing.

Beau sighed. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Jordan. I've been dealing with a lot lately."

The woman nodded. "I know you have, Mr. Wainwright. Would you care for a cup of coffee? Or something to eat? How about a hot meal?" Mrs. Jordan smiled.

Beau took a deep breath and exhaled. The woman was a godsend. "I wouldn't want to put you to any trouble," Beau said. But, he thought, a good home-cooked meal and a drink would definitely take some of the edge off.

Mrs. Jordan shook her head. "Trouble? I would be happy to fix something. Now why don't you sit and relax. I'll come back and get you as soon as the food is ready."

Beau half smiled and nodded. "Thanks. Thanks a lot," he said, sitting down in one of the wingback chairs as Mrs. Jordan left the room. She would be about his mother's age if his mother were still alive. Over the years, Beau had developed a fondness for the housekeeper because she took such good care of the Wainwright family home and also

kept an eye on his father, making sure he ate properly, went to his doctor appointments and even sat and talked to him on the porch in the afternoons.

Not realizing that Mrs. Jordan had returned, Beau was a little startled to see her standing in the doorway again.

"Well, everything is started, so it won't be too long before the food will be ready," she said.

"Thanks, Mrs. Jordan."

"It's my pleasure." The housekeeper smiled again before she turned to leave. But she hesitated briefly and looked back at Beau. "You know, Mr. Wainwright, I might be out of line for saying this, but I believe when you find yourself faced with all kinds of things, coming at you from every which way, the best thing you can do is always follow your heart."

And the next morning, Beau did just that.

## **Chapter Three**

### *Present Day*

Jury stepped off the elevator and ran through the maintenance door that led to the alley. Outside, she was greeted by the cool night air. Off in the distance, live music was playing on Beale Street. She recognized the tune and hummed along for a little while. It was late spring and everybody was making the most of being out and about with such good weather. And the start of the weekend was well underway.

Jury hurried over to the waiting black limousine. When the driver saw her, he was Johnny-on-the-spot, hopping out of his seat and opening the back door for her. She slipped inside the warm compartment of the limousine and was bathed in soft light. As promised, it was definitely large enough for what Jury had in mind.

"Plenty of room," the driver had informed her when she reserved the car earlier in the week. He was polite but stuffed into a tired black suit.

Jury nodded at the driver as he grinned down at her before shutting the door. He returned to his place behind the steering wheel. Jury leaned over and pushed the button to lower the solid privacy partition. A pair of ice-blue eyes stared back at her in the rearview mirror. Jury fidgeted uncomfortably for a second as the driver looked at her. He sort of gave her the creeps, but she shook it off and raised her voice to speak to him. "Now don't you forget what we agreed to, all right?"

The driver nodded. "I remember, ma'am."

"Thank you," Jury said, raising the partition back to its original position. She had very little time to waste, she had to get ready. Taking off her high-heeled pumps, Jury quickly unbuttoned her dress in the front, all the way down to expose her scantily clad body underneath. She was wearing her favorite bra and panty set made of white French lace, with no slip and no hosiery.



She looked at her watch and realized it was time to open the sunroof. Jury gasped as cool night air rushed in and filled the compartment immediately, but after a while the temperature in the car adjusted. She reached down and quickly took her panties off before she got up on her knees on the backseat. Then she stuck her hand and arm through the opening of the sunroof. In the next instant, the maintenance door at the side of the building opened and Beau stepped outside into the alley.

Jury could see him clearly out of the back window of the limo. At first, he looked surprised to actually see the car waiting, just where she said it would be. Then Beau saw her panties in her hand, sticking up through the sunroof, just waving in the air.

Jury banged on the roof of the car a couple times, signaling to the driver to go. As soon as the limo started to move, she opened her fingers and let the wind carry her lace undies away. They floated like a winged creature for several seconds, then drifted to the ground and lay at Beau's feet. He bent down to pick up her parting gift and without hesitation, he brought them up to his face and took a deep breath. When he lowered them to his side, the expression on his face was one of sheer desire. Jury laughed out loud, rather pleased for thinking up this game, until the limousine came to a sudden stop. She lowered the privacy partition, just a tad.

"Why are you stopping? Keep going!"

"But, ma'am, the alley is blocked. I'm sure it won't be but a minute."

"A minute!" Jury turned and glanced out the back window to see a slow smile spreading across Beau's face as he realized her quick getaway was stalled. Stuffing her panties in his jacket pocket, he started to run.

"Get me out of here. Now," Jury shouted to the driver.

"There's nowhere for me to go, ma'am."

Glancing back, Jury realized it was too late anyway, because Beau was closing the distance to the limousine at breakneck speed. She shut the sunroof, then leaned forward and spoke in a harsh tone to the driver. "You just remember what I told you."

Then she raised the partition just as Beau reached for the handle on the back door. Finding it locked, he started to tap on the dark-tinted window. Jury waited a few seconds before she reached over and whirled it down. She didn't open the window very much, just enough so Beau could see her sprawled on the backseat.

She looked at her watch and pouted her moist red lips. "Oh, so sorry. It's nine fifty-one. You're late," she taunted.

Beau's temper flared. "I am never late! And you know that, Jury. So open the door," he demanded.

Jury stared back at the pair of steel gray eyes in the window. "Well, Beauregard, my love, until you apologize for not admitting I was right about the Miami deal, you'll just have to stay outside."

"Come on, Jury, enough playing around. I'm not apologizing," Beau declared as he tried to open the door again. Much to his dismay, it wouldn't open.

Raising an eyebrow, Jury leaned back on the big leather seat, facing Beau. She rested her head against the door on the opposite side of the limousine—a move that drew him closer to the window. Actually, his face was pressed to the glass, and this time she could see his forehead, eyes and the bridge of his nose as clear as day.

"Well, if you don't want to apologize..." Jury's voice trailed off as she slowly began to peel back the panels of her spring dress to reveal shapely, toned thighs spread wide and a silky cooch for Beau's viewing pleasure.

"Jury, what the hell! Have you lost your mind?" Beau roared. He started to bang on the window again. "Jury, open this door or so help me I am going to break this glass."

Jury shook her head. "Oh, as legal counsel, I wouldn't advise that. It might make a scene," she said sweet as pie, making Beau so mad he actually snarled like a dog. He tried to reach his hand through the opening and unlock the door, but the action was wasted. His gray eyes appeared in the window again. "Jury, I'm going to tear your ass up when I get my hands on you."

Seeing Beau losing all control, Jury couldn't help but laugh. "Hmmm, payback is a bitch, isn't it? Oh, and speaking of my ass," she said in a soft, gentle voice, reaching into her purse for a little surprise. A silicone vibrator.

"Hellll no," Beau yelled. "You are not about to do what I think you are. This is going too damn far now, Jury."

"Maybe. But all you had to do was apologize." Jury lifted up the vibrator to inspect it. "Oooooo, baby," she crooned, then made a big show of reaching into her purse again for a tube of KY Jelly. She started to coat the phallus and Beau completely freaked out, running to the front of the limousine and knocking on the driver's window.

Jury sat up to eavesdrop.

"Excuse me, sir."

Hearing the sound of Beau's voice, which was oddly calm and collected, Jury frowned. Then she heard the driver lower his window.

"Yes sir, can I help you?"

"I'm sorry about this, but the lady in your car is off her rocker. So if I were you, I would kick her out of your limousine immediately. She's trouble," Beau said with an authoritative tone.

The driver started to chuckle and Jury smiled, because she knew what was coming.

"Well, sir. The lady said you would try something like this. So she paid me double my standard fee to ignore you." And with that said, the driver rolled up his window.

Jury quickly lay back down on the seat. Suddenly Beau's gray eyes appeared again in the window, looking just pitiful.

"Baby? Jury, I'm sorry. You were right. I apologize. You were right about the Miami deal. I should have listened to you. So why don't you unlock the door and we can discuss this further, in private."

Jury smiled as she listened to the highs and lows in Beau's speech pattern and the almost sincere tone of his voice. The man could charm the skin off a snake. She raised one eyebrow and slowly shook her head.

Beau cut the act and exploded. "Jury Yates, if you don't open this door this instant, I'm going to fire your ass!"

"Well, seeing how I'm a lawyer and all, and can represent myself, go ahead and fire me. And my ass too," she shouted, snapping her fingers in the air.

The gesture only made Beau snorting mad. He pressed his mouth to the crack of the open window. "I am so going to fuck you in the ass," he spewed.

"Allow me to oblige." Jury laughed and twisted her body from the waist down to reach back and hold the vibrator near her anus. "Should I or shouldn't I?"

"Jury, stop," Beau shouted. "Don't do it," he warned. Suddenly the car lurched forward and the vibrator slipped from Jury's fingers. When she looked up, there were no gray eyes looking back at her and she was disappointed. That disappointment was short-lived as Beau began a full-blown assault on the limousine—yelling and kicking at the driver's door. He even dared the driver to get out of the car. This was something Jury had not anticipated, so she was completely at a loss about how to defuse the situation.

She heard the driver's door open, and the next thing she knew, there was the sound of scuffling as Beau and the driver went at it. There was a muffled exchange of words that Jury could not make out until the driver told Beau to fuck off or he'd call the police.

After that, Jury heard as well as felt the driver's door slam, and suddenly the limousine was pulling out of the alley and into the street.

By the time Jury sat up and scooted across the seat to roll down the window, there was no sign of Beau anywhere. He had already walked away. She pressed the button to roll up the window, then reached into her purse for a piece of paper. Lowering the privacy partition an inch, she slipped the directions to the location where she wanted to be driven to the driver.

"Please go directly to this address." She closed the partition and leaned back against the seat. Things definitely had not gone as she imagined they would.

Refusing to get upset about a joke that had gone terribly wrong, Jury chastised herself for trying, yet again, to get Beau to loosen up. Why couldn't he just let go sometimes? Enjoy coming out of his comfort zone? She guessed dating a black woman was at least a step in the right direction.

Actually, Jury was the only nonwhite woman Beau had ever dated, and when they first started going out together, on the sly, she was excited at the prospect of teaching a straitlaced white guy how to get his freak on. And three years ago, Beau was about as straitlaced as a white guy could get, with a white car parked in the driveway of a white house and a white dog running in the front yard. With her big, dark brown eyes, long chestnuts curls and skin the color of caramel, Jury was the first real color infused into Beau's colorless world.

As a couple they looked good together because she was cute and he was so fine that the color of their skin didn't come into play. The entire time Beau was interviewing her for the position as head of legal, all Jury could think about was how beautiful he was, with his thick, black hair and piercing gray eyes. It was both exhilarating and alarming that a complete stranger could have such an effect on her mind and body at first sight. He was a modern-day version of Rhett Butler, tall and masterful, with that same bad boy streak she discovered one year after taking the job at Wainwright Construction.

On that occasion, Jury had finally agreed to go out with Beau after being pursued the better part of the workday to have drinks and dinner with him to celebrate her one-year anniversary with the company. Expecting to be wined and dined at one of the trendier restaurants downtown, Jury dressed to the nines in a sexy little black dress with a plunging neckline. She had straightened her hair with a flat iron until it was smooth and flowing over her shoulders, and at the last minute, chose a pair of black stilettos that showed off her long legs and hitched up her ass.

Just the expression on Beau's face when Jury opened her front door told her all she needed to know. She was lethal, packing and Beau wasn't bulletproof.

When they arrived at the eatery, it turned out not to be an upscale restaurant, but a blues club in a seedy part of town.

When they walked in, everybody knew Beau's name, so perhaps Beau wasn't as straitlaced as she thought. If Beau had been there before, maybe he was a bad boy, could dance and kick ass. But Jury didn't care after a while, because she was having such a good time laughing, talking and getting loose as they ate soul food and drank bottles of champagne. It was that night, their first date, when they both realized what they felt for each other was more than a working relationship and more than just a black/white *thang*.

Prior to that night, Jury had told herself that she only wanted to work alongside Beau Wainwright for his connections and business savvy. But that night in the blues club, Jury was in for the shock of her life when Beau pulled her into a stall in the ladies' john and fucked her hungry pussy with a cock that left her dumbstruck and standing in a puddle when she came.

That night, all the talk about white men with tiny dicks was put to rest in her mind forever.

Jury picked up the unused vibrator beside her on the seat. No, it could not compare, but you work with what you got. She unfastened the hooks at the front of her bra to set her breasts free. In only seconds, she had discarded both the bra and the dress on the limousine floor.

She picked up the vibrator and stretched out on the leather seat with her head at one door and her feet at the other, bending her knees slightly as she spread her legs. Bringing the vibrator to the opening of her pussy, Jury slowly pushed it inside with gentle thrusts.

"Oh. Yes." She sighed, letting the feel of the smooth vibrator massage just inside her cooch. After a while, Jury forgot about her foiled plans for the weekend and relaxed, genuinely enjoying the ride in a luxury automobile. When the limousine accelerated, she knew they were getting on the highway and it would be a while before they arrived at the intended destination. A bed-and-breakfast, meant to be a surprise for Beau. A place far away from the office, where they could chill, eat some good food and have lots and lots of sex. Just thinking about what Beau might have done to her was making her horny. The thought of his hands on her body. Her tongue in his mouth. His toe in her... Well, it didn't take much for her imagination to go into overdrive, and Jury pushed the vibrator in deeper to satisfy her need.

It wasn't the same, but it helped. She thrust the vibrator inside her pussy and began to moan as she pulled it back out and then thrust it harder.

"Ahhhh. Ooooo."

Jury lifted her hips as she began to pump the vibrator faster between her legs, driving it inside her wet pussy. She used her other hand to finger her clit, which gave her even more pleasure. Soon she was dripping wet, and when she closed her eyes, images of Beau's naked body flooded her mind. She wanted what she was doing to be him doing it to her.

"Ahhhh, Beau. I love you, baby. Ohhhh, baby," she groaned. "Fuck me, Beau," she rasped, panting and thrusting her pussy up to meet the downward push of the vibrator. Simulating sex with her man and getting as much as she could out of it, Jury didn't fight what she was feeling, but let go. She got into it as the vibrator fueled her fantasies. She was with Beau. And he was in her and she loved it.

"Oooooo, do me good, Beau. Do me, baby." Jury dug her nails into the side of the leather seat as her body raised up. "Oh. Oh God," she cried out as she climaxed and collapsed on the damp seat.

## **Chapter Four**

Jury lay quietly with her eyes closed as she tried to get her head wrapped around what just happened. No longer on the highway but on a private road, Jury wondered why the driver was slowing down. Perhaps he was lost, she thought. Suddenly the limousine stopped, and the next thing she heard was the driver's door open and shut. Jury froze in place and held her breath. She wondered what was happening, but told herself she was not going to think the worst.

Nothing could have prepared her for what came next. When the back door flung open, Jury screamed and immediately jumped up and starting crawling across the seat to open the opposite door. She pulled. She pushed. But the door wouldn't open and the driver climbed into the backseat and captured her from behind. He put his hand over her mouth to muffle the sounds being ripped from her throat. Then he bent forward and breathed in her ear, "I love you too, Jury."

As every muscle in Jury's body unclenched, she started swinging. "Beau! You bastard! Why would you do that to me?" she shouted, slapping his face and hitting him on his chest.

"Jury, stop. Stop it!" Beau shouted, laughing as he tried to capture Jury's hands and hold her off.

"You ass!" Jury yelled, popping him upside the head.

"Baby. Hey, that hurt. Stop hitting me," Beau warned, but not before Jury's fist connected with his nose.

"Damn it!" Beau tried again to grab Jury by the wrists, but she was like the Tasmanian Devil, whirling in one spot.

"You scared the shit out of me, you jackass!"

Beau cursed, then dragged Jury down on the seat and pinned her beneath him.



"Let me go."

"Now, Jury, stop it. I'm sorry. I'm sorry, sweetheart," Beau said louder as he stared down into her face.

Jury was so relieved that it wasn't the driver who had climbed into the backseat that her eyes filled with tears, which shocked her because she so seldom cried. Beau must have sensed how truly frightened she was by her reaction.

"Oh God. Jury? Baby? I thought you knew I had switched places with the driver. I'm sorry," he said quickly. "I only did it to play a joke on you, sweetheart." Beau lowered his head to place kisses on Jury's cheeks, her eyelids and her lips, where he lingered.

"But I didn't know." Jury sniffed as she tried to stop crying, but the tears were still rolling down her cheeks. "I thought you were the driver."

Beau reared his head back and looked at her, clearly angry now. "You thought I would let you go off half-dressed with some strange man in a car?"

Jury shrugged, which was probably the last thing she should have done. But she really hadn't thought about it. Her nonchalant attitude only infuriated Beau even more. He lost it.

"I really ought to beat your ass, Jury, and then fire you," he said, his eyes blazing with fury. "Don't you ever do that again. Never again. Do I make myself clear?"

Hearing the threatening tone in Beau's voice would have bothered Jury were it not for the fact that she could hear so many other emotions coming through. Love. Fear. Pain. Possessiveness.

Jury turned her head and looked away, no longer able to stand the intensity in Beau's eyes as he continued to stare at her. She hadn't considered the possibility of the driver doing her any harm, even though she had felt peculiar, almost creeped out, after getting into the limousine.

Beau squeezed her arms. "Look at me and answer me," he said, his breathing coming sporadically now. He was a man on the verge. Though Jury knew Beau would never hit her, she considered that he was probably as close to whupping her as he would ever get. She had scared him, and she couldn't think of anything that scared Beauregard Charles Wainwright. Jury turned her head to look up at his face.

Beau's eyes were wild and she could feel his heartbeat just racing.

"Don't you ever do that again, Jury. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes, perfectly clear. I won't do anything like this again. Now can I get up?" Jury tried to move but Beau didn't budge. He glared down at her with the strangest look on his face. Then he crushed his lips to hers and ground his teeth against her mouth until she cried out in real pain.

"I ought to beat you for making me run after you," he said, reaching down between them to find her pussy sopping wet. He shoved two fingers inside her and Jury's mouth opened wide. "Ohhh." She breathed out. "Fuck!"

"I told you I would tear your ass up, didn't I?" Beau whispered. His breathing was much quicker now and his body felt a lot heavier. "Or maybe...I should just tie you up and lock you away somewhere. Nobody knows where you are, now do they?"

Beau bent his head and started sucking on Jury's neck as his fingers stroked her quivering walls with a slow, steady rhythm. "What you did tonight was dangerous. And foolish. Anything could have happened to you. And there would have been nothing that I could do to stop it."

"Beau, I—"

"No! No more talking," Beau said, thrusting his fingers into her pussy. Jury gasped as Beau curled his fingers and dug deep, making Jury clench the muscles in her vagina. He moved his fingers to her clit and pinched it first, then pulled and tugged until Jury cringed. The pain was bearable, but growing less so as he shoved his fingers back into her hot canal and rammed them deeper and deeper until she cried out again. Jury's instinct was to push back, but doing so only hurt more, as Beau grunted and subjected

her to pain. It was the roughest he had ever been with her, as he took his anger out inside her, in the worst way. It was more painful than a punch to the gut. This wasn't foreplay, this was punishment.

"Beau...Beau, you're hurting me," Jury whispered. "Don't."

And the pain stopped.

"Oh God, what am I doing?" Beau removed his hand from inside Jury and gathered her in his arms. He rested his forehead on hers, and in the next moment he was kissing her all over, sucking on her nipples, licking her stomach, rubbing her clit, grinding his bulging erection against her and tangling his fingers in her hair.

It was madness.

It was temporary insanity on both their parts as they started playing a dangerous game.

Jury let her hands wander down Beau's back to his muscular ass and squeezed his hard cheeks. She parted her lips and used her tongue to beckon his, and Beau gave her what she wanted, delving deep inside her mouth with his warm, hungry tongue. They stabbed at each other until Beau slammed his mouth down on her mouth and Jury's body arched. He slid his arms beneath her back, lowered his head and circled her stiff nipples with his tongue.

Jury's pussy clenched and she groaned as Beau used his weight to press her body back down on the leather seat and thrust against her. He ground his crotch in between her thighs and burned her pussy with the rough fabric of his pants. The sensation was teasing and arousing, and Jury spread her legs wider to get closer to it. To feel the friction. When Beau reached for his belt buckle, Jury was panting. "Beau, do you have a condom?"

"I didn't think I'd need to bring one to an emergency staff meeting."

Which immediately translated in Jury's mind as, *No, he does not have a condom.*

"Then for God's sake get off me," Jury shouted. Beau ignored her request and unzipped his pants.

"If we were married, I wouldn't need a condom," he said, and Jury knew exactly where Beau was going with his logic.

She pushed on his chest as he started to thrust against her with his pants open. "But we're not married, Beau." Jury found herself pushing harder and harder against Beau's chest and making absolutely no progress. She finally resigned herself to the fact that she would get better results if she were pushing on a brick wall. She gave up and decided she had better put the brakes on this little game that was out of control or else.

"Beauregard, this is not the time to talk about marriage again. You know the rule. No condom. No cooch!" Jury shouted.

That did the trick.

Beau swore and sat up, and Jury noticed his breathing was completely normal. She, on the other hand, was exhausted.

"You know," Beau said, looking down at her, "we could be dead right now, had I seen you naked like this while I was driving."

Jury quickly sat up and Beau looked at her as she tried to cover herself with her arms. He began to shake his head. At that moment, Jury realized the man she loved was indeed a man at the end of his rope.

"Jury Yates, you have to marry me tomorrow."

Reaching down to pick up her dress off the floor of the limousine, Jury slowly slipped it on as Beau waited for her to say something. Lately, marriage was the only thing on his mind. Well, not the only thing. But what was she supposed to do if she was afraid that commitment meant losing a sense of who she was?

And she, Jury Yates, was a descendent of slaves. A fact she was proud of because it was through her ancestors' perseverance, their hopes and dreams, that she had become a successful black woman – a lawyer. A damn good lawyer, at that.

She wondered what her ancestors would think if they knew she was sleeping with a descendent of the man who once owned them.

## **Chapter Five**

It came as a quite a shock when Jury learned one afternoon of the history between her family and Beau's from her Aunt Birdie. Aunt "Birdie" was more prominently known as Dr. Bertha Latimer, a retired college professor of literature. She was four years older than her sister, Jury's mother, and so Aunt Birdie had been given the honor of preserving the Latimer family history. Journals. Photographs. The family tree. And whatever else that might need to be saved for future generations. So naturally, if there was anything to know about her mother's side of the family, Jury just had to ask Aunt Birdie.

Jury was acutely aware that certain members of the Latimer family were less than impressed by her executive position at Wainwright Construction. While Jury's friends and others considered being the head of legal a huge achievement for someone so young and a woman of color, the older Latimer family members all but ignored her success. They offered no congratulations or any support.

So Jury invited Aunt Birdie to brunch one Sunday and coaxed her to tell what the rest of the family wasn't saying. She thought whatever the reason for giving her the cold shoulder, it would end up being just some kind of misunderstanding. However, it turned out to be much more than that, as Aunt Birdie told Jury about an old plantation that once stood where the new library was built, and the members of the Latimer family who were once enslaved there by a man named Thaddeus Jebediah Carlisle.

Over the years, the Carlisle mansion and all the land were willed to various descendants to keep the property in the family, and it turned out the Wainwrights were direct descendants of Thaddeus Jebediah Carlisle.

Aunt Birdie shared the history and bad blood between the descendents of the plantation owner and the descendents of Percy Latimer, a slave. After hearing

everything, Jury was left with an overwhelming feeling of sadness. But she was also filled with a sense of great pride for those members of her family who had survived the harsh reality of slavery and risen to high ranks in the community.

Given the lingering resentment within Jury's family for the Wainwright family, Jury was faced with a dilemma—to stay or leave her new job because of what had happened in the past. This, after working so hard to become not just a lawyer, but the best lawyer she could be. And her new job was what she needed to make it happen. As head of the legal department, Jury was challenged daily with something new, and she was finally making big bucks. Money that she could spend to help her family go on vacations together and do other things such as go to expensive restaurants. Being with her family was so important to Jury and the relationships she had with the ones she loved meant the world to her.

After mulling things over, and quite a few restless nights, Jury decided not to quit her job and just wait it out until her family warmed to the idea. In the meantime, she took the opportunity to tell her family about some of the good things Wainwright Construction was doing for the black community and organizations in and around town. Many of which Beau had told Jury about as he tried to persuade her to take the job and join his executive team.

Things were actually better now. Her family never spoke badly about her working for Beau, which was important to Jury. And they were respectful of him and his position as her boss and friend, mainly because Beau had proven to be nothing like his father.

James Wainwright was one of the most influential and ruthless businessmen in the state of Tennessee, and his prejudice had not gone unnoticed, so there were not many in Memphis who spoke of him without a few choice words. Apparently, he particularly didn't like black women, or at least he didn't like her, because James Wainwright—upon hearing that Jury was going to be hired as head of the legal department—threatened to disinherit Beau. Thankfully, Beau's father never got a chance to go

through with the threat. Instead he got sick and spent the past few years in a senior care facility. Beau never told her about the threat. Instead, Jury learned all about it from another member of the executive team, who swore her to secrecy.

"If Beau ever finds out I told you this, Jury, they'll be hell to pay. But I like you and I think you're good for Beau. And he needs someone who makes him happy. He needs you in his life."

Jury was grateful that one of the old codgers had trusted her enough to tell her about Beau's father.

But later that day, as she headed home from the office, Jury suddenly got mad. To think that a father could be so cruel to his only son. James Wainwright should be counting his blessings that Beau even cared anything about him at all, let alone loved him unconditionally. Which was just one of the many things Jury had come to love about Beau, in addition to his big heart and generous spirit, which always inspired her.

Beau did not prejudge or disregard people from different backgrounds or situations. He was nothing like his father in any way. Yet the main reason Jury had reservations about getting married was because of James Wainwright's known reputation as a hater. But she could never tell Beau about it, not knowing how much it would only upset him.

Still, Beau's insistence that they wed was growing more and more each day. How could she make him understand that dating a man whose family once owned hers was one thing, whereas marrying a man whose family once owned hers was an entirely different matter?

As time went on, her friendship with Beau became too serious not to tell him what Aunt Birdie had shared.

"What do you mean you know?" Jury asked as she walked behind Beau up a hiking trail that ended with a spectacular view of the Mississippi River. She waited for Beau to say something. When he didn't, nor did he turn around, Jury instantly went on the offensive. "Beau, what are you not telling me?"



Still hiking up the trail on a slight incline, Beau said, "Well, I've known about it since I read your background check. But no one else knows," he rushed to add. "And Rinshaw did your background check himself. He took care of it personally," Beau said, as if Jury should be impressed.

Stopping dead in her tracks, Jury saw red. "You used that bloodhound Rinshaw to run a background check on me? He's not a private investigator. He's a thug. And if he harassed anyone in my family to pump them for dirt on me, I am suing him. And I don't care if he is the best at what he does in the security business," Jury said as she glared at the back of Beau's head.

"You've used Rinshaw for background checks on tons of perspective clients." Looking back over his shoulder, Beau frowned at Jury. "Lots and lots of times."

"I know. So I know how he works. My question to you is, why such an extensive background check on me?" asked Jury. Beau said nothing as he turned and started walking toward her.

Jury's eyes narrowed. *Okay, he's not talking, so, obviously, he's busted. But for what?*

Beau stopped and stood directly in front of Jury, and still, he said nothing. He stared at her with his head tilted slightly, and Jury realized the conversation was going nowhere unless she pushed.

"Sooooo, you have nothing to say? Well, I'm sure Rinshaw did a thorough job. The bloodhound. He probably even found my first training bra," she said sarcastically.

Beau's gaze fell from her face to — where else? — her tits. He grinned.

"Hey, eyes up here." Jury pointed to her face. "This is no time for you to be distracted. I'm still waiting for an answer."

Beau sighed and glanced at the lookout spot that was only yards away. Then he stared down at Jury.

“Well, darling, as you know, background checks are required for all potential employees. You, of course, were a special case, my beautiful girlfriend, because as a potential candidate head of the legal department—”

“Cut the bullshit!” Jury’s temper finally surfaced. “Did you *tell* Rinshaw to do my background check, personally?” Jury searched Beau’s eyes, but he glanced away for just a second. A second too long, as far as Jury was concerned.

Taking a deep breath, Beau shoved his hands in his pants pockets and stared down at the ground. “Yes. I personally told Rinshaw to do your background check.”

“But why?” Jury asked.

Beau hunched his shoulders as he kicked at the dirt on the ground. “Because I wanted to know more about you. I was curious.”

When Jury said nothing after a while, Beau raised his head and Jury raised one eyebrow.

“Okay,” he said. “I wanted to know about every aspect of your life, because I was falling for you. That’s why!”

Jury’s mouth fell open, but she closed it quickly as she started to shake her head back and forth after Beau’s confession. She was too astonished to believe what she was hearing. “So, you hired me, knowing that at one time your family owned my family?” Jury threw her arms up in a gesture of frustration. “Oh, and by the way, at the same time you were falling for me.”

Beau reached for her. “Jury, listen—”

“No. Don’t touch me. I need a minute,” she said, looking around for somewhere to sit. Noticing a flat rock a few yards away, she walked over and sat down on the rough, hard surface. She sat quietly, trying to process what she had just learned. And looking over at Beau, seeing the anxious look on his face, didn’t make things any easier. So she crossed her arms over her chest, closed her eyes and lowered her head. She took a few deep breaths.

After two or three minutes, she opened her eyes, looked down at the ground and picked up a handful of rocks. She started pitching them at a nearby tree. She kept pitching rocks until Beau walked over and stood in front of her. She glanced up at him and could see that his eyes were filled with apprehension. It was obvious he was thinking of what he could say or do to make things right. But Jury didn't have an answer.

She grabbed her legs and pulled her knees up to her chest as she gazed up at Beau and finally spoke. "I don't even know what to think or how to feel about this," she said, not bothering to mask the confusion on her face.

Sighing, Beau sat down beside her, slowly reached over and pulled down the big sunhat shielding Jury's face from the bright sunlight. He looked into her eyes as he said softly. "It came as quite a shock to me too. But first and foremost, I hired you to work for Wainwright Construction because you're a brilliant attorney. Falling in love with a woman whose ancestors were once owned by mine was a twist of fate."

Jury grunted. Or a nightmare, she wanted to say, but didn't. She reached over and stroked Beau's cheek. He gave her a crooked but endearing smile. There really was no reason for her to be mad at him. It wasn't as if he'd been there or actually condoned the actions of his ancestors. Beau had no more control over what had happened between the Wainwright family and the Yates family on a plantation over two hundred years ago than she did.

Placing her feet on the ground, Jury let her thigh rest against Beau's and he put his arm around her shoulders. She leaned her head against his chest, and for a few seconds neither one said a word nor made a move as the sounds of nature washed over them. Jury's temper ebbed and rational thought returned.

Beau spoke first. "I would never do anything to hurt you, Jury, or to deceive you."

"But you should have told me," Jury said, just above a whisper.

Beau shook his head. "How? What purpose would it have served?"

Jury tossed the thought around, then looked directly into Beau's eyes. "I might not have taken the job."

The announcement was more than a shock to Beau, Jury could tell by his reaction. "And pass on an opportunity of a lifetime, because of history that's already written and can't be changed?" he asked.

Drawing back to see Beau's face, Jury was ready to make her argument when she realized he was right. Being head of the legal department for a corporation was the kind of job most attorneys dream of, but few achieve. Besides, it wasn't as if she couldn't have quit when Aunt Birdie told her about everything.

Reaching up, Jury took off her sunhat and let her long, wild curls fall over her shoulders. Beau's hand went immediately to her head where he began to play in her hair. "Frankly, Jury, I didn't feel that I should have to pay the price for what my ancestor Thaddeus Carlisle did years ago."

"Thaddeus Jebediah Carlisle," Jury corrected. Then her eyes narrowed. "So how did you confirm all this? I know Rinshaw can find out most things as a private investigator, but—"

"I checked in some of the journals that are in the library at my father's house to know for certain. Most of the Wainwright family history is there. So it wasn't hard to confirm. It was just a shock, knowing that my family had caused so much pain and suffering to so many. And I am sorry for that. You don't know how sorry."

Jury took a deep breath and exhaled as Beau slowly moved his hand from her head to her shoulder and began to massage the muscles there. They were bunched into a ball of tension. When Jury moaned, Beau stood up and walked around behind her and began to massage both of her shoulders, squeezing them tight and working his fingers deeper to ease her stress. It was heavenly to feel his hands on her, and she naturally let her head bend back until it fell against his rock-hard abs. The warmth from the sun overhead felt good streaming down on her face. For a minute, she just relaxed with her eyes closed.

"So, are we okay?" Beau asked as he bent over and wrapped his arms around Jury. He rested his chin on the crown of her head and Jury lifted her arms and hugged him.

"Yes. We're fine," she said.

"Are you sure? Because I can't lose you, Jury. You mean too much to me." Beau kissed the top of her head and slowly stood up.

Jury stood too, and turned to face Beau. Immediately, she could see that he was suppressing a wealth of emotions, trying to keep it together. Especially, she guessed, when he really didn't know if she would ever hold this over him or bring it back up in the future. But she wasn't about to do that. So, as it turned out, they both knew about the history of their families. And neither one of them did anything wrong. Beau didn't have to hire her. But he did and she was glad because she enjoyed her job.

Jury stepped around the rock and stood beside Beau. She took his hand in hers, then looked up at him and decided to tell him something that she should have told him long ago. "I am only going to say this one time, so we never have to deal with this matter, ever again. I know that neither one of us is capable of changing the past. We can only live in the present, and I like the present. I like being with you. I love being with you. And I am the happiest I have ever been...because of you."

"Jury," Beau whispered as he pulled her into his arms. He bent his head and kissed her gently on the lips before they held hands and together walked the rest of the way in silence to the lookout spot.

Jury was glad they had chosen to take some time off to see one of the most majestic sights in the country. It meant so much to her to be with Beau, sharing their love for Tennessee and all the beauty it had to offer. The smell of rich soil beneath their feet. The fragrance of passion flowers and trees blooming. She took a deep breath and inhaled the scent of yellow poplars, red clover and critters. It was a scent she had missed so much while she was working up North.

Feeling the moisture in the air from the Mississippi River, Jury realized why she had chosen to leave a prestigious law firm in Washington, D.C. Although it was a job

that paid well and offered advancement, it did not fulfill all her needs. That, she now understood, she could only get at home. In Tennessee.

Jury turned her head to glance at Beau and found him pensive, which was unusual for Mr. Calm, Cool and Collected. The day hike was a surprise suggestion of Beau's. He wanted to play hooky from work, sneak off to enjoy the sunshine and see the woods come alive with the awakening of spring. The second they both saw the view from the lookout spot, they gasped in unison.

"I can't believe there are places that exist like this on earth," Jury said with reverence as she took in the tremendous splendor of the panoramic view.

Beau nodded in agreement. "Well, there is no place I would rather be than right here. Because everything I want is right here," he said, putting his arm around her shoulder. "The best that God has to offer."

Jury smiled. "Now that's what I love about dating a man born and bred in Tennessee." Jury turned around and stood in front of Beau. She grabbed his arms and wrapped them around her waist before tucking the top of her head under his chin. "Is it any wonder you Southern gentleman have a taste for the finer things in life?"

Beau hugged her. "Hey, I want to ask you something."

"Oh, yeah, what?" Jury asked, only to feel Beau pull away from her. "Where are you going..." her words trailed off as she watched Beau sink to the ground on bended knee. He reached in his pants pocket, and in the next second, he was holding up a diamond ring.

"Jury, I never imagined that I would find someone who brings out the best in me...in all areas of my life. With you, I work hard and I play hard. And enjoy every minute of it." Beau chuckled.

"Beau?" Jury whispered.

Gazing into her eyes, Beau smiled. "You're my dream girl, Jury. Will you marry me?"

## **Chapter Six**

Looking back now, with a man as close to perfect as Beau asking her to marry him, in that perfect spot, Jury knew she should have said yes. He had waited breathlessly for her to say yes. But all she could muster was maybe. Then he told her that he would wait. But what he intentionally didn't say was he would wait patiently.

The next day, Beau began a full-court press, wooing and seducing Jury until the sight of him, the scent of his body and the sound of his voice made her weak.

There were days in the office when she was exhausted and she would look up from her desk and find Beau just leaning against the doorframe of her office, smiling. And Jury's heart would skip a beat, then accelerate, as he told her how much he wanted to take her away to a tropical paradise, painting an oasis where they could play in the sea and make love on their own private beach. A place where he would feed her tropical fruits in bed, lick the sweet nectar from between her legs and make her experience sexual bliss unlike anything she had ever experienced before.

Then he would close the door, leaving her hot and bothered until she saw him later that night. At which point, when she finally arrived at his house, she was so sexually charged she practically molested him on the porch the minute he opened the front door.

So Jury had decided this would be the weekend to tell him yes. Yes, she would marry him. But she wanted to marry him quick, fast and in a hurry. And she wasn't above hogtying his ass and dragging him down the aisle. So she had decided to pull out all the stops by booking a room at a bed-and-breakfast and reserving a limousine to whisk them away for a romantic weekend together.

Things couldn't have gone more wrong.

Jury looked over at Beau as he sat, upset, in the backseat of the limousine with her. Somehow she had managed to push his buttons, not one time today. Not two times. But

three times. This had to be an all-time record for her. The first button, of course, was showing out in the emergency executive meeting. Then she let herself be driven off half-naked, in a car by a stranger. The last button would be if she refused to say yes to another one of Beau's marriage proposals.

Well, hell... The man had a right to be upset.

Suddenly, Jury was not proud of herself or her behavior. She was not the kind of person who believed in casting blame on one man for the actions of another. So how could she make Beau suffer for his father's sins? Beau was the most loving, caring human being Jury had ever met. He was no more responsible for the things his father or any of his ancestors had done over the years than the stranger on the corner. And the absolute last thing Jury ever wanted to do was hurt Beau—because she was one hundred percent in love with the man. She adored him.

Reaching out, Jury lightly stroked his face with her hand. Beau slowly turned his head and kissed the inside of her palm. "Marry me, Jury," he said, barely above a whisper.

But Jury still couldn't give him an answer at that moment. What was wrong with her? She glanced down and saw the part of Beau that was straining to get out from behind the zipper of his pants. It took only seconds for Jury to set his cock free and wrap her mouth around the bulbous head and draw on it—making Beau moan. It pleased Jury to see his reaction as his eyelids closed. She slid her mouth over more girth and sucked harder.

"Ahhhh, Jury," Beau hissed as his fingers dove into her head of curls. "Yes, baby. Ohhh."

Slowly, Jury ran her tongue back and forth along the length of the warm shaft, on top and underneath, where she sucked his swollen balls and massaged them inside her mouth. Jury inhaled Beau's musky, male scent that had become an aphrodisiac to her. Beau's breathing quickened as she returned to the tip of his cock and worked the foreskin, flicking it quickly with her tongue.



“Ohhh, my girl. Yes. Suck my cock. It feels so good. Ahh. Ahh. Jury,” Beau rasped.

Jury directed her attention to the slit dripping with pre-cum and licked the droplets, enjoying the taste as well as delighting in the feel of Beau’s body as it jerked.

“Jury. I want to come in your mouth, baby.” Beau grunted. “I need to come in your mouth.”

Slipping her lips over the head of Beau’s stiff cock, Jury worked her mouth along the thick shaft, squeezing every inch of the way.

Beau groaned and thrust forward, slowly. “Take it. Take it all in. I want to fuck your mouth like I fuck your hot pussy.”

Jury swallowed the saliva at the back of her throat, then took a deep breath and pulled with the muscles in her cheeks until they burned as she clamped her lips around Beau’s growing erection. His cock stretched the corners of her mouth to the max, and Beau rubbed the roof of Jury’s mouth with the head of his shaft.

“Oh, baby. I want you so. It hurts me that you won’t marry me,” he whispered. Twisting his fingers in Jury’s hair, Beau pulled the wild curls as he gazed down at her. “Jury, I would give up my life to save you in a heartbeat. And you need to believe that with everything in your being,” he rasped as his breathing changed to a rapid pant. He closed his eyes as he strained not to come.

But Jury knew it was time. She took his throbbing cock into her mouth until the head hit the back of her throat and gagged her.

“Oh, fuck. You’re making me come,” Beau yelled, holding Jury’s head as he started to thrust. At first it was gentle, short thrusts. But when Jury moaned and the sound vibrated up his shaft, Beau raised up on his knees.

Suddenly, the compartment was filled with his large frame as Jury pushed her ass back toward the door and placed her hands, palms down, on the seat in front of her. She deep throat his cock as Beau went wild. His first jerking thrusts actually bobbed her head back before he grabbed hold of her head with both hands and hunkered down to set a steady rhythm of thrusting into her mouth. Fast and hard.

“Oh, shit! Shit,” he shouted as he pumped into Jury’s mouth with a force nothing short of mind-blowing. “It’s so good. So fucking good,” Beau growled, holding Jury’s head to his body as she moaned. She lifted her eyes and they locked with Beau’s. In that instant, she knew this man would do anything for her. He would protect her. Be the best husband and father in the world. Care for her when she was old and gray.

Beau closed his eyes and his mouth fell open as his head bent backward. “I can’t...I can’t hold it any longer, baby. Ah, darling!” he yelled, coming inside Jury’s mouth until he was finally spent.

Jury pulled back and collapsed facedown.

Beau got off his knees and sat with his back against the seat, gasping for air. After a few minutes, he took a deep breath before he reached down and zipped up his pants. Then he exhaled so loud it made Jury laugh.

“What’s so funny?” Beau asked. Immediately Jury felt his hand on her head, and his fingers playing in her hair.

Jury licked her lips. “Well...honestly...I didn’t see that coming. No pun intended.” She laughed and Beau roared, grabbing his stomach as if someone had punched him in the gut.

He gripped a handful of soft curls in his fingers and pulled lightly on Jury’s hair. “You are my perfect match. In the bedroom, in the office... I just wish...”

Jury listened as Beau’s voice faded. It was obvious he wanted to say “and at home”.

Beau reached up with his other hand to wipe the sweat from his forehead. “Can it be any hotter in here?” he said, pushing the button to crack open the window. Instantly, late-night air rushed in from outside and the temperature dropped like a stone. Jury started to shiver and Beau shook his head and sent the window right back up.

“I better get you inside.” He reached for the door handle.

“No! I’m half-dressed,” Jury yelled as she grabbed his arm.

"It's just us. But you should put on your shoes. And take this," he said, pulling off his jacket and putting it on Jury. He buttoned her up in it and leaned over to place a gentle kiss on her forehead. He collected the rest of her things and pulled Jury out of the limousine. Handing her stuff over to her, Beau scooped Jury up into his arms and began to carry her down a path in the middle of the woods.

Looking around, Jury quickly realized they were not at the bed-and-breakfast she had booked for the weekend. "Where are we?"

Beau said nothing, just kept walking.

Jury persisted. "I'm serious, baby. Because I know I've seen this trail in a slasher movie," she teased. "Or maybe two."

Beau growled. "Just keep talking, woman," he warned, glancing at her with an evil eye.

Jury sighed because she really wasn't worried. She'd go anywhere with Beau. Reaching up, she tugged on his tie to get his attention. "So tell me, Beauregard, is this your dark side finally coming out? Oops. No. That would be me." Jury giggled.

Beau grumbled but kept walking deeper into the woods. Knowing that he didn't have to carry her but had chosen to do so made Jury feel much adored. She stuck her finger in his mouth and he started to nibble on it.

"So, Beauregard, how much did you pay the driver to give you his limousine?" Jury pulled her finger out of Beau's mouth.

"I paid him three times what you paid him and promised to fill up the gas tank before I returned the limousine to him on Sunday."

Jury gasped. "Well, between what you paid him and what I paid him, we would have been better off buying the thing."

"You could be right," Beau agreed.

To Jury, it sounded like come Sunday, Wainwright Construction more than likely would have a new company car. "It's actually not a bad investment," Jury said. "After all, it is a tax write-off. And the depreciation rate—"

"No shoptalk. We are off the clock," Beau admonished her.

Jury snorted. "You're never on the clock. You own the company."

"So sue me." Beau laughed, lowering Jury to her feet. "Okay, we're here."

Looking around, all Jury could see was trees, trees and more trees.

"So are you ready?" Beau pulled a set of keys out of his jacket pocket.

Jury scooted closer to Beau. "Ready for what?"

Looking down at her, Beau sighed before he pressed a button on a tiny remote control on the key ring, which flooded the end of the wooded path with lights.

"That's a log cabin," Jury exclaimed. Beau grabbed her hand and they started to half walk, half run the rest of the way up onto the front porch.

## **Chapter Seven**

"Welcome to our getaway retreat," Beau announced, unlocking the door. He turned and once again swept Jury up into his arms, carrying her across the threshold. He didn't give her much time to see anything on the first floor, but she saw enough to oooh and ahhh as he carried her straight upstairs. He entered the master bedroom, where he lowered her legs until she was standing on her own, giving her a moment to silently look around the room.

Beau watched Jury's face intently as she took in the enchanting decor. It was one hundred percent Southern romantic, with a queen-size four-poster bed as the main centerpiece. Circa 1850. Wheat carved and pristine. Not a reproduction, but a family heirloom.

Beau waited for Jury to say something, but she seemed to be in a state of awe as she glanced all around the room. So he took the opportunity to get some clothes to change into, considering what they were wearing was by no means practical for what he had in mind.

When he returned, he found Jury still standing in the same spot. "What's wrong?" Beau asked.

"I'm a little afraid to touch anything. These are heirlooms, aren't they?" Jury asked.

"It's furniture. But yes, all this stuff has been in the family for decades."

"Wow. It's beautiful," Jury said, and it was obvious she was pleased. "Every antique in this room is practically in perfect condition. And you know how much I love antiques."

"I do," Beau said, throwing the clothes he'd found for Jury on the bed. He strolled over to the center of the room to fetch his starstruck woman. "Come over here," he said, taking Jury by the hand and pulling her over to the bed. "Now sit down."

Jury pulled on his hand as she tried to back away from him, shaking her head in true obstinate fashion.

Beau exhaled. "Jury, the bed won't bite you," he informed her. But he also knew his woman, and he could see that she would fight him on this. So he decided not to force the matter. Reluctantly, he let Jury's hand go. He would convince her to come around eventually.

Jury frowned at him. "Beau, these pieces belong in a museum, in some sort of collection. They are not meant to be used."

Beau took a deep breath and sighed. "Darling, then where would you propose we sleep tonight?" he asked, reaching over and picking up a gray t-shirt and a pair of gray sweatpants. He handed them to Jury. "Well, in the meantime, here's something for you to put on after we shower."

Smiling, Jury reached for the clothes. "Thank you."

"You're welcome," Beau said, reaching up to tug on his tie. He removed it. He didn't have to look up to know that Jury was watching him. His woman was into watching him undress. He often gave her a little bit of a show when he wasn't too tired from spending hours in the office.

Beau had never been blind to his effect on women, but he did get a little turned-on by Jury's reaction when he was approached by the opposite sex. And he was approached a lot, by all kinds of women who were forward enough to hit on him at conferences, in shareholder meetings, in airports, and the list went on. He always let them know upfront he was spoken for, and he did it before Jury had an opportunity to get involved. Because there was no doubt Jury was a jealous woman, though she would never admit it.

Beau slowly unbuttoned his shirt and exposed his six-pack. He glanced quickly at Jury, who was gnawing on her bottom lip. His little voyeur was enjoying the striptease. So why not give her a hell of a show?

He tossed his white dress shirt on a chair in the corner of the room, but it missed and hit the floor. Then Beau took his time as he strolled over to the chair to retrieve the garment. He bent over, giving Jury a nice view of his butt in a pair of tailored pants, and got a kick out of hearing her breathe out.

Damn if she wasn't drooling when he looked back and saw his woman with her head tilted to the side. She was getting a real good look at his stuff. Spinning around, Beau caught her completely off guard.

Jury screamed and started laughing. "Oops. I am so busted."

Beau just shook his head. "You are an insatiable woman," he chastised. Then he grinned at her from across the room.

"But I'm your insatiable woman," Jury reminded him, pulling her dress over her head to expose her nakedness and making a beeline straight for the bathroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thirty minutes later, Jury was starving. She shuffled over to sit on the bed, no longer anxious about wrecking the furniture. Beau had relieved all her stress in the shower, and then some. Besides, if the bed had managed to last over a hundred and fifty years, surely her sitting on it was not going to do too much damage.

She reached up and touched the towel wrapped around her head and then tightened the second towel wrapped around her body. At that moment, she looked up to see Beau in his birthday suit, unabashed and completely comfortable in his skin as he crossed the room to the closet and hunted around for something to wear. Jury grinned. *Why is it always the unassuming, no-nonsense ones that are the freaky deekies?* She pulled the towel off her head and her hair fell to her shoulders in a tangled mess. She groaned and Beau looked over at her as he pulled on a pair of navy blue sweatpants and a blue t-shirt. He returned to the bathroom, but came back in no time with a blow-dryer and a wide-tooth comb.

When he came over to the bed, Jury smiled and reached for the two items, but Beau shook his head. "I want to blow-dry your hair," he said.

Jury snorted. "You're kidding, right? What do you know about black hair?" Still, she could not help but smile. The man had balls the size of Texas. Jury reached for the comb and blow-dryer again, but Beau held them out of her reach and frowned.

"Well, I do know a little something about black hair," he said, raising an eyebrow and staring down at Jury's lap.

"Ooooooo, you are so nasty," she said, grabbing Beau by his t-shirt and pulling him down for a quick peck on the lips. "Okay then. But it means you'll have to take orders from me," Jury said with attitude.

Beau shrugged. "Well, you don't scare me. So bring it on," he said, lifting the comb and blow-dryer like a man going into battle.

For the next thirty minutes, Jury schooled her man in the nuances of black hair care. It was one of the most intimate moments they had ever shared.

When Beau finished, he disappeared for a while downstairs, long enough for Jury to get dressed in the clothes he had given her. She found that the t-shirt worked because it just hung off her like a nightgown. But the sweatpants looked absolutely ridiculous. She decided the t-shirt would do and put shea butter lotion on her arms and legs. Tonight she would just have to go commando, with her underwear rinsed and drying in the bathroom.

Beau wandered back into the bedroom and Jury's heartbeat raced at the sight of him squeaky clean. "Beau, I'm so impressed," she said, looking in the beveled mirror on the wall at her tamed brown locks. They had yet to recoil into their natural, curly frizz. "Baby, thank you for doing my hair." Jury smiled and Beau's eyes lit up and his face turned beet red.

"You're welcome. Now come with me," he said, taking hold of her hand.

Jury walked behind Beau as he led her down the hallway, then down the stairs, stopping at the bottom. He stood in front of her.



“Okay, close your eyes and don’t peek,” he said, his voice filled with excitement. “Oh, and don’t scream.”

Jury tried to turn around. “Don’t scream... What the fuck—?” Jury never finished her question as Beau’s mouth covered hers and he kissed her passionately to stop her premature panic attack. When he released her, Jury knew she would do anything he asked her to do.

“Trust me, baby,” he said, tucking a long strand of hair behind her ear. “I would never steer you wrong.” He grinned.

Taking Jury by the arm, Beau guided her around the house for a bit. Then they stopped and he stood right behind her and placed his hands on her shoulders. “Okay, open your eyes.”

“Ohhhhh. Beau, what is all this?” Jury asked as she gazed around a room she had not seen yet. It was a small room, but cozy, with a sofa and wingback chairs and a fireplace with a roaring fire. Even though there was heated air now blowing through the wall vents.

“I know you’re hungry. So I thought we could eat in here,” Beau said. He quickly pulled Jury inside the room, where there was a tray with all kinds of food, along with a bottle of red wine and wineglasses. The light of candle lanterns flickered from small tables placed in two corners of the room, with what appeared to be a feather mattress in the center of it all. On top of the mattress was quite a collection of quilts spread out as if on display. These were not the kind of quilts you buy at a department store. These quilts were antiques. Family heirlooms. And they were pristine. Obviously someone had taken the time to have them professionally cleaned and preserved down through the years. Handstitched quilts and hand tied. Jury was amazed at the degree of expertise that had gone into some of the pieces. They were intricate designs—pinwheels, double wedding rings, spider webs, log cabins and crazy quilts—all in glorious colors and patterns.

She turned to Beau. "This is wonderful. These quilts are extraordinary and so rare to see. Thank you for showing them to me." Jury wrapped her arms around Beau and he leaned down to give her a sweet kiss. They walked over and carefully pushed the quilts aside to sit cross-legged on the mattress and to eat cold cuts, cheese, bread, and drink wine. Just a light something to hold them until breakfast, which was not that far away. When they finished eating, Jury stood up to take the dishes into the kitchen, but Beau was right there, taking care of everything. Taking care of her, she realized. And she wondered if he was trying to make up for nearly scaring her to death in the limo.

Jury stretched her arms above her head and yawned. Then she saw something that piqued her curiosity. And then she saw something else. And something else that made her frown. She was still frowning when Beau came back and stood in the doorway. She looked over at him.

"So all these are your family's things? The quilts? And the embroidered pillows?"

"Yes," Beau said as he walked over and stood behind her. He wrapped his arms around her waist and they both looked out at the cozy scene in front of them.

"Then, Beauregard, how is it that right over there I can see three of my family's quilts and one of my great-grandmother's embroidered pillows that I am sure are supposed to be in the guest bedroom at my house?" She pointed to her family heirlooms.

Beau started to fidget. "Oh, well, the thing is —"

Jury leaned to the side to look up at his face. "When did you steal these out of my house?"

Beau tightened his grip around her waist. "First off, I did not steal anything. I simply borrowed them. And I have a good reason for doing it."

"And what reason would that be?" Jury grumbled.

Beau kissed the back of her head. "Because I love you. And this is our history," he said, gesturing to all that lay before them. "Yours and mine."

When Jury really looked at the big picture, all the things Beau had gathered together to show her, she realized what the quilts represented. Who they represented. "It's the Wainwrights and the Yates, together."

Beau bent down and rested his chin on her shoulder. "Yes, it is. Now, to some people these are merely pieces of thread and scraps of material. But to you and me, these things represent family."

Jury took a deep breath and exhaled as she listened to Beau go on.

"All these quilts were made by the women in our families – grandmothers, mothers, daughters, aunts and cousins, all stitching scraps of fabric from the work-shirts and pants of grandfathers, fathers, sons, brothers and uncles. All these people are our people," he said, bending down to pull back the covers to sit on the crisp white cotton sheets of the mattress. He reached out for Jury's hand and she went to him.

They lay down together, face-to-face on the feather mattress. Jury stared into Beau's beautiful gray eyes and she became overwhelmed with the love for her and the need for them to be together she saw there.

"So what made you do all this?" she asked.

"Jury, you've been hesitant about marrying me for a long time. And I realized it had nothing to do with our present and everything to do with our past. I wanted you to see that it is possible for us to be together, regardless of the way things used to be."

Feeling her eyes flood with tears, Jury knew that there was no way to stop them from running down the sides of her face and pooling on top of the pillow. She could not remember crying so much in her entire life as she had in the past few hours.

Beau looked on quietly. "How is it that some women manage to cry and still look beautiful?"

Jury laughed. "It's not easy."

Then Beau's mouth was on hers. His lips were soft and tender and warm. He grabbed the tail end of her t-shirt and started to take it off. Jury rose up a little and lifted her arms, letting Beau pull the shirt over her head and toss it across the room.

He quickly took off his t-shirt and sweatpants, and the sight of his naked form made Jury's heart race. He looked down at her and touched her swollen breasts, making her whimper. Beau's breathing began to grow louder as he flicked Jury's nipples with his thumbs, as if they were light switches. On. Off. On. Off. And he did this until the two dark brown nipples stiffened into little pebbles. Jury reached up and stroked the back of Beau's head as he leaned over and licked one brown tip with his slick, wet tongue.

"I love your breasts," Beau whispered.

"You love my ass," Jury replied, making Beau laugh into her chest. He suckled her nipples and areolas like a baby, and every muscle in Jury's womb contracted.

"Oh... Be careful, Beau... Don't make me come too soon."

"Don't worry. I intend to make you come multiple times tonight. And in many ways," Beau said with confidence.

Jury pulled on his thick hair. "Oooooo. You are so nasty."

Beau chuckled. "I didn't say how I was going to make you come. You're the one with the dirty mind," he accused, and spanked her big ass.

"Ouuuch," Jury wailed. "Do that again."

Beau laughed out loud, but this time he laughed so hard, his whole body shook.

"Jury, I'm trying to do serious work here. And here," he said reaching for her clit. He pinched it and twisted it quickly and Jury squeaked. "And here," Beau whispered, sliding two fingers into her dripping pussy.

Jury gasped. "Ahhh. Beau. Mmmm. You do good work, baby."

Beau kept his fingers going in and out of the warm folds of Jury's mound, never missing a beat. "Yes, that's my brown-eyed girl. You're so hot and wet, I can't wait to slide right in," he whispered, speeding up the motion of his fingers.

Jury's breathing quickened. "Ohhh, yeah, give it to me just like that, Beau. Just like that."

"Jury, you never stop trying to boss me. You're just like a wife," Beau barked. Then he was kissing her the way Jury loved most. Her man was a master at deep tonguing and sensuous kisses that made her greedy and hungry for more. When she groaned, Beau gave her more until he started sucking on her tongue and Jury wrapped her legs around his body. She shook her head to break their kiss.

"Well, you do boss me, Beau. I think every now and then I should be able to return the favor."

Moving to her neck, Beau started nibbling away. "But I own the company, which makes me the boss. And you better start minding me, woman, in the office. That means no back talk," Beau said, as he pinched Jury's ass with his free hand.

Jury squeaked. "Well, what if I have something that needs to be said?"

"I mean it, Jury. I must be crazy to want you, knowing that you have a smart mouth. That you're stubborn. You tease me mercilessly. And still I want to fuck you until my dick falls off. I must be crazy! Crazy as that blind man who fishes over on Mud Island with an invisible fishing rod."

Knowing exactly who Beau was referring to, Jury jumped to the man's defense. "Mr. Crawford is not crazy. He just lives in another time. When life was much simpler. So don't make fun of him."

Beau frowned. "Jury, is there anybody you don't know in Memphis?" he asked, rubbing her clit now with increasing pressure. Jury's breathing quickened.

"Well, I am a lawyer. And it is my business to know everybody. Besides, you ought to thank Mr. Crawford. He told me to marry you. And I quote, 'You should go ahead and marry that white boy, because he loves you, gal, in spite of your color.' And he was

right, you do love me," Jury said, rocking into Beau's touch. "Oh, Mr. Crawford was soooooo right about you."

Beau laughed and squeezed her clit. "Jury, you don't know how happy you make me," he whispered.

Jury smiled.

Beau kissed her nose. "I love everything about you. And I wouldn't change a thing," he said, as he plunged his fingers deeper inside Jury's juicy pussy. Feeling her orgasm rising to the surface, she dug her fingernails into Beau's back. "Oh God. Oh. Oh. I'm coming."

Which is the last thing she said as her back arched up and off the mattress and Beau drove his fingers home. Jury clutched the sheets and quilts as she cried out with the top of her head pressed into soft pillows and her breasts jutting up toward the ceiling. With her release, she covered Beau's fingers with her milky essence.

"Ahhhh, baby. My beautiful Jury," Beau said softly as his mouth moved down her body and in between her thighs. He slid his fingers out and his tongue in, sending Jury completely over the edge again.

She pounded her fist into the mattress, then started slapping Beau on his back as he devoured her pussy like an animal. He ran his tongue up and down her slit, in between the folds and nibbled on her clit in succession. Gently raking his teeth on her labia and then sucking her flowing juice.

"You taste so sweet," Beau rasped. "You're always so sweet. Mmmmmm, sweet oranges." Then Beau started all over again, saying in between breaths, "Sweet, sweet oranges."

Jury bucked her hips. "You're driving me crazy, Beau. Please, fuck me."

She didn't know if he heard her or not because he didn't stop eating her pussy, and Jury's heart was beating so fast now that she began to worry whether she could stand much more of Beau's love marathon. Another wave of ecstasy hit her, she dug her nails into Beau's back and he thrust forward into the mattress. But still he didn't stop.

In the next instant, Jury came with a gushing orgasm as she cried out Beau's name. That moment, she was convinced, was when she passed out.

## **Chapter Eight**

Jury's eyelids fluttered open to see Beau on his side, leaning on his elbow and looking down at her. The man had a grin on his face that was priceless.

"Did I faint?" Jury asked, mortified at the thought.

"Maybe." Beau leaned over and kissed her quickly on the lips. "I thought I would give you a break."

"A break!" Jury gathered the covers around her naked body as she tried to get to her knees and back away. Only her knees were so shaky that she couldn't get very far. "Oh my God. What have you done to me?"

Beau roared with laughter. "Ohhhh, we're not done by a long shot, woman. My beautiful, sexy, hot-as-hell, brown-eyed girl."

"You have got to be kidding." Jury scrunched up her nose and mouth and looked at Beau. "And what's with that grin on your face? You look like a cat that's caught a canary."

Beau slowly licked his lips. "More like a cat that's gotten into the cream."

Jury's mouth fell open. She was shocked. She was stunned to hear such talk from Beau. This was not a side of Mr. Wainwright that she had seen before. He wasn't a bad boy often. Never, really. "Now stop acting. This is not like you. You're not a bad boy. You're a good boy." Jury nodded her head quickly, waiting for his confirmation.

Beau shrugged. Jury witnessed the playful gray color of his eyes suddenly turn ominous as he reached over and started pulling on the covers and quilts, dragging her slowly toward him.



"I guess I can be good. When I want to be," he said, and his grin grew wider as he continued to drag Jury to him. "But you know what, darling? You bring out the devil in me. And I'm... Well... I'm gonna slap that ass!"

"Whaaaaat?" Jury was shocked. "Now you get down the vernacular?" Before she could grasp what was happening, Beau wrapped his arms around her and proceeded to kiss her senseless.

When he finally let her go, Jury couldn't utter a single, solitary word.

Beau turned his 100-watt smile on her. "Look at you. All wrapped up in the Wainwrights." The look in his eyes was more than just lust. Jury's fingers clutched even tighter to the soft fabric and she realized her hands were shaking.

Beau stared into Jury's eyes. "All this history surrounding us is great, but I'm more interested in our future," he said, pulling Jury down and moving on top of her. Slowly, he spread her legs with his, and Jury could feel the strength in his calves. The fine hairs on his legs. His sweaty thighs. Damn, if her man wasn't freaking hot.

Barely able to catch her breath, Jury became even more excited when Beau nudged her mound with his erection—and she realized he was not wearing a condom.

She opened her mouth to say something, but instead she turned a beguiling smile on him. "Then have your way with me, Beau Wainwright."

"It'll be my pleasure, ma'am," Beau whispered, sliding his rock-hard cock into her wet, craving pussy. "Yessss," Beau hissed.

"Ohhhhh, baby," Jury shouted.

"Oh, hell yes," Beau yelled, pulling back and then easing his shaft inch by magnificent inch into Jury's warm, wet canal.

Everything about the way his body was moving told Jury that he loved it. She loved it. It was a new feeling for both of them, Beau's raw skin against her raw vaginal walls. And everything about doing it without a condom was intensified. The pleasure. The

friction. The penetration. It was dangerous, and she had never taken such a risk before. But she had never been in love with anyone as much as she was in love with her Beau.

“Damn, Jury. You feel so fucking good. Ohhh, I’m taking it real slow.”

Jury shook her head frantically. “I want you to go fast. You have to go faster!”

Beau groaned. “Helllllll no, darling. I’m making up for all the times I never came deep inside your honeypot.” When he drew back and slowly eased in, inch by inch again, Jury protested.

“You can’t make me wait like this, Beau. I’ll die,” she sighed.

“You’ll die?” Beau mimicked, as he bent his head down to lick her glistening breasts.

“You don’t play fair. What kind of Southern gentleman are you?”

Beau lifted his head and stared at her questioning glare. “I’m the best kind,” he said, reaching back and wrapping his arms under her knees. Before Jury could voice her opinion, Beau lifted her legs up on top of his shoulders and she opened for him like a flower.

Beau stared down into her expectant face with adoration. “Don’t ever forget, Jury, I am always a Southern gentleman. And...I...am never late!” Beau plunged forward and nailed Jury to the floor.

“Aghhhh. Fuck. Fuuuuuuck,” Jury shouted as Beau began to pump into her like a piston. Hard and fast.

“You’re finally mine, Jury. Your heart. Your soul. And your body,” Beau declared.

Jury believed it to be true, completely caught in his spell as he whispered words of love and lust, thrusting deeper and grinding his balls against her buttocks, evoking sounds from her throat that were in no way human.

Jury closed her eyes and bit down on her bottom lip as she breathed through her flared nostrils.

“Open your eyes, Jury. Look at me,” Beau commanded. “I’m fucking you tonight like a man possessed.”

When Jury lifted her eyelids, she was struck by the sight of Beau’s wild gray eyes, filled with passion and longing. Right then, she decided to give him whatever he wanted. Everything she had to give.

“Jury. Aghhhh. Oh, baby, I want to spend the rest of my life with you,” Beau yelled as he pounded into her. “I have to have you, Jury. Aghhhh. I have to have you.”

Jury dug her nails into Beau’s ass and he pumped into her. “I’m yours, Beau,” she said, clinging to him because she felt as if she were falling. The heat between them was unbearably hot—and being a Southern girl, she knew all about heat. On top of everything else, the room was spinning and she was starting to hear things.

Beau licked her mouth and then his tongue raced over her chin and underneath to her neck, where he bit her.

“Damn, Beau! You just bit me? Have you lost your mind?”

“No, darling. I’ve just been saving it up for this moment. Tell me it feels good,” he commanded, rocking Jury back and forth, pushing deeper to get closer to the goal. “Tell me!”

“Yes. Hellllllll, yes. Ohh, you’re busting me wide open. I swear you’re bigger.”

Beau chuckled, tapped her G-spot, and sent Jury’s head spinning. He tapped her G-spot again, making it a target as he repeated the move and Jury just groaned.

“Oh, yeah. Baby, I’ve wanted this for a long time,” he said and Jury squeezed his shaft. Beau clenched his teeth and sucked in a ton of air.

“I don’t think I can take much more of this, Beau. I’m hearing voices, baby,” Jury said.

Beau was pumping into her so fast now she wasn’t sure if he could hear her or not. Evidently he did, because he said, “That’s fine. But my voice is the only one that matters.”

"Well, at least one of us should be in our right mind at a time like this," Jury scolded him.

"Darling, would you stop talking! I'm a little busy here." Beau said, thrusting hard and breathing heavily.

Jury stretched up and bit Beau on his shoulder.

"Owwww." He cursed.

"Beauregard, you can be such an ass sometimes," Jury blasted.

The last thing she expected from her outburst was to see Beau's grinning face as he stared down at her. "But that's just one of the many, many things that you love about me." And before Jury could muster a comeback, Beau started hammering her sacred spot so hard he was bouncing on her.

"Ooooooooo. Fuuuuuuck," she wailed. "Damn, Beau, you're hitting my G-spot."

"Don't I know it!"

When they came together, they both hollered so loud that things started rattling all throughout the cabin.

"Hold on," Beau yelled, as the ground beneath them shook and the wooden planks stretched and creaked. Suddenly, the light of every candle was extinguished and the room was cast in darkness as tremors rolled across the floor, out the cabin and off the porch.

Jury screamed. "Oh my God what was that? Did you feel that?"

The shock on Beau's face told her he did.

Beau tightened his hold on Jury and the two clung to each other in the dark until the room fell silent. Then the strangest feeling came over Jury. A feeling of peace moving through her body, and she knew the moment when it hit Beau because she could see it in his face. It was the most wonderful sensation as their bodies melted into one another. Mending. Healing. Transforming. And finally, uniting them as one.

"Amazing," Jury said softly.

A tear spilled onto her cheek and rolled down her face, but it was not hers. It was Beau's. She reached up and stroked his face.

"They're gone," she whispered as Beau stared back at her, bewildered.

"We've been blessed," Jury said. *But how, she thought, do I explain this?* Watching myriad emotions wash over Beau's face—shock, then revelation, then understanding—she realized she didn't have to.

"I love you, Jury."

"I love you, Beau."

Rising up on his elbows, Beau glanced around the room and stared out into the dark hallway. "I don't see anything," he said. He started to get up and check but Jury held on to him.

"No. Don't go," she pleaded.

Beau squeezed her tight. "Shhhh. It's okay. Are you scared?"

Jury nodded. "A little."

Beau sat up and pulled Jury into a sitting position. He tugged on a strand of her hair and then started to stroke the side of her face.

"Well, first off, I will never let anything happen to you. And secondly, you mean more to me than anyone in this world."

"But Beau—"

"Shhhh. Put your arms around me and just listen."

When Jury hesitated, Beau growled, grabbed her arms and placed them around his waist.

Immediately, she felt calmer. She was glad that he could make her feel safe. It had been that way between them since the beginning.

Beau pressed her head down on his chest, just under his chin. Then he raised his right hand in the air. "Miss Jury Yates, I solemnly swear to be your knight in shining armor, 24/7. And I vow to never let a hair on your head be harmed in any way, even if

it means giving up my life to stop it from happening. So help me God." He lowered his hand and began to rub Jury's back. "Now did you hear that, Miss Yates?"

"Yes," Jury whispered.

"Do you truly believe what I just said?"

"Yessssss." Jury took a deep breath and exhaled.

Beau moved his hand down Jury's spine and squeezed her ass. "That's my girl. Now why don't we just lie here for a minute and relax. And after a while, we'll go upstairs and pick up where we left off."

Jury gasped and Beau roared with laughter. "What? Are you tired of me already, woman?"

Reaching up, Jury pinched his nipple until Beau hissed. He swatted Jury's backside. "God, I am so crazy about you, counselor."

Suddenly, Beau sat up. "I'll be right back," he said, taking off before Jury could protest. He disappeared into the dark hallway and Jury lay back down and snuggled under the sheets and quilts. When she finally got comfortable she looked up only to find Beau looking down at her.

"I kind of thought I would do this differently, but..." Beau stopped talking and once again pulled Jury into a sitting position, stacking pillows behind her back to prop her up.

Holding the covers up to hide her naked breasts, Jury watched Beau's pensive actions. He was nervous. And Beau didn't get nervous.

"I want to make this official," he said, staring at Jury. "A binding, verbal agreement, as you lawyers like to say."

When Beau reached for her left hand, Jury gasped. Then, as if out of thin air, a huge diamond ring appeared and Beau was holding it at the end of her ring finger.

Jury's mouth fell open, then she shut it quickly.

Beau took a deep breath and exhaled. Then he said, "Miss Jury Yates. Will you please marry me?"

Jury didn't even give Beau time to doubt her answer. "Yes, Beauregard Charles Wainwright, I will marry you...Southern gentleman and bad boy." Jury smiled as Beau placed his ring on her finger and kissed her. There was absolutely no way she could ever explain the feeling of joy in her heart at that moment.

It was immeasurable.

Beau pulled Jury to her feet and they walked upstairs to the bedroom where they climbed into the heirloom bed, curled up in each other's arms and fell fast asleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jury knew when she saw the early morning sun shining through the cabin windows she had only slept a few hours. As her eyes focused, she recognized the drop-dead handsome face of her man and frowned.

"You have got to stop watching me sleep, Beauregard."

Shaking his head, Beau smiled as he reached over to run his fingers through her hair. "Never. Not going to happen. No way. You are mine now, Jury Yates."

Pursing her lips at him, Jury made smooching sounds and Beau leaned over and gave her a quick peck.

"You were right, you know," Beau said.

"What!" Jury sat straight up and started looking around frantically. "Are there pigs flying today? I know you did not just say I was right." Jury started to laugh and Beau's long arm snatched her to him. He pinned her in a wrestling move that placed one powerful thigh and leg over her, making her his captive.

Jury looked at him and there was, oddly enough, a hint of worry on his handsome face. But she kept playing. "Soooo, tell me how brilliant I am. Come on. Come on," Jury teased and then Beau's face turned deadpan serious.

"Jury, I know the main reason you wouldn't marry me is because of my father."

"Oh, this is a serious conversation," Jury said, as she lifted the covers up until only her eyes and forehead were sticking out. She took a deep breath and exhaled. "Okay, I'm listening."

Beau scooted closer to her, bringing his face next to hers until they were eye-to-eye. "Jury, you agreeing to marry me, and knowing that we are about to build a life together and someday have children is the best thing I could ever hope for... And I want my father to know about it. So I'm going to see him, today, this afternoon, and I want you to come with me."

Of course, Jury's first reaction was to say no. But there was so much tension in Beau's face that she simply couldn't do it. It was no secret around town that James Wainwright's last days were fast approaching. And regardless of whatever had happened in the past, the man was still Beau's father. So how could she not support the one person she loved more than anyone else in the universe when he needed her most?

Jury sat up. "All right. Then we'd better get up, get dressed and have some breakfast before we get on the road," she said, and all the tension in Beau's face melted away.

"So you'll go with me?"

"Just try to stop me," she said, moving to get off the bed. But Beau grabbed her and hugged her to him. "Thank you," he said. Then he kissed her gently before he let her go.

Jury made another attempt to get off the bed. Then she stopped and knelt where she was. "Shoot! I don't have any clean clothes to wear."

Strangely enough, her announcement made Beau chuckle.

"What?" she asked, giving Beau the evil eye because he suddenly looked guilty as sin.

"Ahhh, some of your clothes are stashed in the back of the closet over there," he said, pointing across the room. "I sort of borrowed them when I borrowed the pillow and the quilts from your house."



Jury held her tongue and squeezed her lips together until she thought she would turn blue. Then she exhaled rather loudly and looked at Beau. "I am not going to ask when you startled stealing things out of my house without me noticing, Beauregard. Not at this moment. But we are going to talk about this," Jury said as she jumped out of bed and headed to the closet.

## **Chapter Nine**

By the time Jury finished taking a shower and getting dressed, the fact that Beau had fleeced her crib didn't matter in the least to her anymore. She was getting married to a thoughtful, amazing man, who she positively adored. At the foot of the stairs, Jury was greeted with the aroma of a traditional Southern breakfast, and it made her mouth water and her stomach growl. She was starving.

Looking around the living room on the way to the kitchen, Jury could see it clearly now in the light of day. It was beautifully decorated—just what she would do. There were warm earth tones with splashes of orange and red. Fat cushioned furniture. Nothing cold or stainless steel, which just was not her style at all. She had always believed a home should welcome you. Pull you in and make you comfortable, whether you lived there or not. Jury walked over to the wall of books and ran her fingers across the spines. Classic. Contemporary. Modern literature. A perfect collection of a little of everything. Shakespeare. D. H. Lawrence. Tennessee Williams. She turned and headed to the kitchen, passing by the love nook and noticing that the feather mattress and all the quilts and pillows were off the floor. Yippee. Her man was neat, and capable of making a mean breakfast by the look of the spread on the kitchen table.

"Well, somebody worked up an appetite," Jury said, looking down at the table set for two with serving dishes of eggs, bacon, grits and toast. And to drink, there was coffee, juice and milk. "You can't possibly be missing anything."

"Oranges," Beau grinned and Jury blushed. "But they're in the refrigerator," he quickly added.

"Thank you, my fiancé," Jury said, walking around the table and stretching up as Beau bent down and let her kiss him on the cheek. She took a seat at the table and Beau

sat down next to her. Grabbing a clean plate, Jury watched as Beau started to pile food on it, more than enough to feed an NFL linebacker, then passed it to her.

"Baby, that's too much food for me. Why don't you take this one and I'll make mine in half-size portions." She handed the plate over to Beau. He passed her another clean plate and waited for Jury to pick and choose what she wanted, then they said grace before digging in.

"Oh my God," Jury exclaimed after the first bite of eggs. "Since when do you cook like this? This is absolutely delicious," she said, practically dancing in her chair. "Mmm-mmm good."

Beau reached over and stroked her cheek. "Well, I'm glad you like it. I just decided to make breakfast the way my grandmother showed me when I was a kid."

"This is so yummy. I'm not cooking anymore at my house or yours," Jury declared, reaching for her cup of black coffee.

Beau shrugged. "Most of the time we eat at your house, so I have never felt the need to tell you about this hidden talent of mine."

"Humph. Well, it's not hidden anymore. So you can just make the food for the Fourth of July picnic," Jury said, nodding her head. "Uh-huh."

Beau frowned. "That's a big deal. Can't we at least negotiate over it or come to some shared arrangement?" he asked, trying to persuade her with his natural charm.

"You are so smooth, Beau Wainwright. I like that, baby." Jury snorted. "But I'm still not cooking this Fourth of July." She reached over and pinched his nose. "However, if you do make the food for the Fourth of July picnic, I will take it upon myself to make sure you see fireworks later on that night," she said, doing a little shimmy in her chair.

"Can I get that in writing, counselor?" Beau asked. Then, without warning, he reached over and squeezed her breast, rubbing the nipple that was protruding through her bra and her cotton blouse.

"Stop that!" Jury swatted at Beau's hand. Then she stopped to gaze at her diamond engagement ring and sighed.

Suddenly remembering that she wanted to talk about what happened the night before, Jury turned her head to smile at Beau. "Oh, and speaking of your grandmother. You do know what that was last night, don't you?" Jury asked, anticipating Beau's answer. Beau said nothing—he had gone back to eating breakfast. Still, it didn't stop him from casting glances at Jury every few seconds after she failed to advance the conversation.

"Well, are you going to answer me?" asked Jury.

"I don't have a clue," Beau replied.

Jury could tell he was lying. "Beau, sweetheart, now that you're going to be my husband... I probably should let you know that you have what in card circles is called a tell. And whenever you lie, this little muscle right here twitches," she said, touching a spot on the left side of his jaw.

Beau put down his fork, sat back in his chair and stared at Jury with a curious expression. "And how long have you known about this?"

Jury shrugged. "That really doesn't matter," she said, reaching for a slice of wheat toast. She lifted her knife and dipped it in the apple butter to spread it good and thick on her toast. She took a quick bite and realized when she glanced over at Beau he was still waiting for her to talk. "As I was saying, that really doesn't matter. But what does matter is that I believe last night was the beginning of things being...put right. And I also think that last night a miracle occurred. We made a baby."

Beau's eyes briefly lit up. "A baby?"

"Yes. Is that so hard to believe? I mean, last night was...intense." Jury reached over, picked up a slice of bacon left on Beau's plate and fed it to him. She found herself fixating on his mouth as he chewed. His scrumptious mouth, she thought, that was capable of ravishing her body and devouring her most intimate crevices. Just watching his mouth move made Jury's mind fill with wicked, wicked thoughts.

Then Beau cleared his throat, drawing Jury's gaze from his mouth to his eyes.

He shook his head. "You are an insatiable woman!"

Jury leaned over and gave him a quick kiss on the lips. "But I'm your insatiable woman. Now where is the hot sauce?" she asked, getting up from the table. Beau leapt out of his chair and stood in front of her.

"I'll get it. What are you looking for? Hot sauce?" he asked nervously. "I thought I put everything on the table." His last comment was almost an afterthought.

Jury lifted her head to look up at Beau and her eyes narrowed. All her years of training as a lawyer had given her keen insight into human behavior, and Beau's behavior was suspicious. Actually, he looked as though he was about to jump out of his skin.

"Are you okay?" she asked, reaching quickly around him and grabbing the doorknob to a tall cabinet by the stove. "You know, maybe you should take a nap before we get on the road. You're awfully jumpy, and I don't want—" Jury stopped in mid-sentence and blinked. Then she blinked again as her eyes adjusted to the sight of tons and tons of food in cans, bottles, boxes, jars and packages. She grabbed the knob on the next cabinet over and opened it. And it was the same thing. Different food, but loads of it. Then she opened the third cabinet and there was even more food.

Jury's head jerked back as if someone had punched her in the nose. "Why the hell do you have so much food?" She turned around to face Beau. He said nothing, but the sheepish look on his face spoke volumes.

"And why is this all my favorite foods?" Jury asked with an accusatory tone. Already she could tell by the expression on Beau's face that this was going to be some heck of an explanation. "Well?" she prompted.

Beau shrugged. "Oops. I'm so busted."

Jury could have hit him. "Do I need to sit down for this?" she asked.

Beau nodded. "It might be best."

Settling down at the kitchen table, Jury watched Beau take a deep breath, exhale and start to talk. "Well, I wanted to—"

"Are you really crazy? Were you planning to kidnap me?" Jury heard herself ask, but she really didn't want to know.

Beau—who appeared to be a man with not a worry in the world—leaned against the kitchen sink, ever cool, confident and collected. Much the same as he usually was in the office, except for when she pissed him off. And just like in the office, Beau didn't bother to respond to her questions with a dignified answer, because he was the boss.

But Jury could read between the lines, and Beau Wainwright was guilty as sin for something. She started to hum as she revved up for the next go-round. "Look, you might as well tell me whatever it is, because I've already started adding things up, and baby, there's something rotten in Denmark," she said, sitting back in the chair and putting her hands on her hips.

Beau still said nothing.

Jury was beginning to boil. Now she was going to have to get rough with his ass. "Okay, you want to play hardball? No sweat. First off, we are in the backwoods. God knows where. And nobody knows I'm here. You even told me as much. Second, my personal things are here. My clothes. My pillow and quilts. And lastly, this kitchen is filled with my favorite foods. Not just some of my favorite foods, but almost all of my favorite foods. Stuff that I can't even get shipped to my house. So start explaining yourself, mister, right now." After a couple of minutes, Beau strolled over to the table and with one sweeping motion, picked up his empty plate and hers and carried them over to the sink. He turned around, leaned back against the counter and stared at her for moment.

"You forgot to mention that I was thinking about tying you up, remember? Maybe I was serious," he said with a completely straight face.

Jury stomped her foot on the floor. "Aaagh. I should never have told you about that tell." She sighed, gnawing on her bottom lip, then pouted. "Already it's gone."

Beau laughed and shook his head. "So are you through with your moment of temporary hysterics?"

Rolling her big brown eyes at him, Jury stuck her tongue out. "Yes." Grabbing a slice of toast from the table, she began to munch on one corner of it to ease her nerves. A few seconds passed and then Beau sighed as he continued to lean against the kitchen counter in a casual and relaxed manner. For the life of her, Jury could not figure out what he was thinking or about to tell her. Then Beau smiled and all was right with the world again.

"You know, I remember the exact day I knew I wanted to marry you," he said. "It was three months after I hired you. On that day, you were wearing a black suit with pinstripes. The jacket was tight across your breasts. And your skirt, well...frankly, hugged your ass in all of the right places. It was the day you called me a hustler. Me? Of all people."

Jury grimaced. "Yeah, that might have been a bit harsh."

Beau tilted his head and looked down at the floor. "No, it wasn't at the time. But I've grown up finally and I know what I want," he said, lifting his head to gaze at Jury's face before he stood up straight and strolled to a floor-to-ceiling cabinet on the opposite side of the kitchen. He opened it and reached inside—taking out several items and lining them up on the closest counter. He turned each glass jar and metal can so the labels were facing out for easy readability and pointed to the first can.

"Black olives from Tuscany—because you loved them so much when we went to Italy last summer."

Jury frowned but Beau continued and pointed to the next can.

"Macadamia nuts from Hawaii—because you cried when you found them stuffed in your Christmas stocking," he said.

Jury bit her bottom lip and Beau lifted the third item. "Sun-dried tomatoes—the ones you order online, that are bottled and shipped from an organic farm in northern California."

"But Beau—" Jury started to say something, then shut her mouth when Beau turned around and walked over to the refrigerator. He opened the door and pulled out a bottle of champagne.

"I took you out to celebrate your first-year anniversary with the company and seduced you by plying you with Cristal and then fucking you in the ladies' john at my favorite blues club. I lost my mind that night," Beau said with a huge grin on his face.

Feeling somewhere between a complete ass and a raving lunatic, Jury's stomach dropped. "Oh my God... I don't know what to say. Beau, I'm...so sorry."

Smiling like a man completely vindicated for a crime he did not commit, Beau crossed over to the table and pulled Jury to her feet. He wrapped his arms around her and Jury rested her head on his chest as Beau began to stroke her hair. He placed soft kisses on top of her head and then whispered in her ear, "And one of the reasons you have the sweetest pussy is because you love to eat oranges. Of which, there are a dozen or more in the refrigerator."

Tears welled up in Jury's eyes and she made no attempt to stop them from rolling down her face. "Beau, you are the most amazing man. And I am a complete idiot!"

Beau laughed. "You, Jury Yates are one of the most brilliant attorneys in the country. You could never be an idiot. You are, however, prone to act out in Oscar-award-winning fashion. And you know what?"

"What?" Jury sniffed.

"It's just one of the many, many things that I love about you," Beau said, covering her mouth with his. Jury melted as he slipped his scorching tongue in between her lips. Oh, she ate it up.

"Mmmm," she moaned, closing her eyes and enjoying the taste of pepper and apple butter. When they finally came up for air, Beau hugged her tight.

"You know, up until you agreed to marry me last night, I was a half-crazed man, trying to find a way to show you how much I love you. This place was supposed to be a surprise for your birthday."



Jury was taken aback. "My birthday? That's next month."

Beau rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I know. And I wanted us to celebrate it here. In our summer retreat."

"Our?" Jury shook her head. "This is your family's summer place."

Beau looked insulted. "No, it's not. The Wainwright summer retreat is in Knox County. It's a rambling monstrosity that's cold and damp." He looked down at Jury and began to twist soft strands of her hair around his fingers. "I have never cared for that place and I know you would hate it. So I bought this cabin a year ago and had it restored and decorated for us."

Jury gazed up at her fiancé. She could not remember ever feeling so cherished and the feeling was overwhelming.

Beau stopped playing with her hair and stared back at her and Jury could tell he was trying to read her reaction. When he could not, he began to look disheartened. "You don't like it?" he asked, shaking his head.

Hearing the disappointment in his voice, Jury quickly snapped out of her silent reverie and threw her arms around Beau's neck. She began to cover his face with kisses.

"Are you crazy? I love it!" Jury started jumping up and down. Then she took off running through the house as if her hair was on fire, in and out of rooms with a confused Beau right on her tail.

"I love this place. I love this house!" She threw her arms in the air and dashed up the staircase to the second-floor landing, back down the stairs, out onto the porch and back into the house. Beau was laughing the whole time as he ran behind her, trying his best to catch her. Jury was completely out of control and she didn't stop running until she came to the love nook where Beau had proposed to her.

She took a deep breath, letting her eyes roam around the room. "It's me. It's so me, it's scary. I mean, your books and my food and our quilts and pillows, all mixed together. It's so...us! At least, what it would look like if we lived here, together."

Beau could only laugh. Mainly because he was out of breath after chasing Jury all over the house. "We do live here. Or we will," he said. "Whenever we get tired of the city or the office and want to get away."

Jury turned and looked up at Beau, and at that point there was absolutely nothing left for her to do, but fling her arms around his neck. She peppered his face with kisses as Beau chased after her lips. But she was already moving on to bigger and more enticing locations. She brushed her lips over the moist skin of his neck and bit him.

"Owwww," Beau howled. "I like that." He nodded.

Jury laughed, then started sucking Beau's Adam's apple as her hands grabbed the ends of his t-shirt and lifted it up. She pulled back and Beau grabbed the bottom of his shirt and pulled it over his head. He tossed it to the floor. Jury smiled as she resumed where she had left off and began to lick her way down his chest to a pair of stiff nipples.

"Wow! I should buy you a house more often," Beau said as he began to breathe heavily.

Jury grabbed a nub between her teeth and tugged lightly.

"Damn! Ahhhh, baby? Jury?" Beau rasped.

"Hmmm?"

"Don't you think it's a little hot in here, darling? Can we move this upstairs to the bedroom?"

Jury stuck out her tongue and began sliding it slowly down his chest, over his pecs, to his bellybutton, only stopping there to thrust inside for a little while, and then she moved on.

She stopped when she reached the waistband of Beau's jeans and listened to his heavy breathing.

"Now is when it gets real hot, baby," she said, unzipping Beau's jeans and exposing a thick, sweaty cock. Before she could wrap her mouth around Beau's big stick, he shouted, "No."

Grabbing Jury by the arms, Beau half carried, half dragged her toward the bedroom, but they only made it to the fourth stair. Then they both went down. Luckily, Jury landed on top of Beau and he took the brunt of the fall. But he wasted no time snatching Jury's drawers down and hoisting her on top of his erection.

"Beau!" Jury shouted, more shocked by his aggressiveness than by being impaled on his swollen cock.

"Fuck me!" he ordered and Jury's heart began pounding in her chest. "Fuck me, Jury, because I sure as hell am going to fuck you." Beau yelled, bucking like a bronco and pumping his cock into Jury's tight pussy. Releasing the fantastic beast in him.

"Oooo, Beau. Oh, yeah. Oh, hell yeah." Suddenly, Jury caught the fever. "You want it, baby? You want me to fuck you? Then you got it, big boy," Jury announced to the world.

And the match was on.

Jury braced her hands on the stairs, at the side of Beau's shoulders to give her some leverage. Then she rode his cock like a damn jockey racing for the finishing line. Bouncing faster and faster, undulating and grinding her pussy down on his stiff rod like a stripper grinding on a pole.

"Ride me. Ride me, darling." Beau slapped Jury's ass and made her squeal with delight.

"Yessssss, spank me. Spank me again. I love it, Beau. You're out of control."

"Because I'm fucking my brown-eyed girl." Beau grunted, and Jury bent her head down to kiss him on the mouth at the same time he thrust up and came inside her with a whoop and a holler.

The rush of his seed and the limitless peak of her arousal made Jury come just as quickly, gasping for air and smacking Beau on his chest. When her orgasm subsided, Jury laid her head down on Beau's shoulder and he wrapped his arms around her. They said nothing, barely able to function as they held each other quietly.

Jury was the first to realize that not only were they on a downward slope, but there was an obvious reason why people didn't sleep on staircases. She rubbed her hand over Beau's pecs and sighed. "We've got to get up. If we lie like this for much longer, you are going to have back problems. As for me, my ass is freezing." Jury laughed and Beau kissed her on the forehead.

"Okay. Just give me a second. I'm trying to get over what just happened," he said.

"Shiiiiit." Jury chuckled. "That was hot, baby," she said, thrusting against Beau one more time before she lifted up off him.

"Easy, darling. I think you broke it." Beau groaned as he tried to sit up and failed. He reached his hands down and fixed his jeans blindly. "Hell, I'd say that wasn't just hot, baby. That was fucking hot!" They both burst out laughing.

"So, I take it you like the house?" Beau asked.

Jury reached over and punched Beau on the shoulder before she reached out a hand to help him up. She had to put all her weight into it. Once he was standing, she placed her hands on the sides of his face and brought his head down to hers for some deep tonguing. When she released him, Beau staggered and Jury grinned.

"Now does that tell you how much I love our house? And how much I love you, Beau Wainwright?" Jury put her arms around Beau's waist and began guiding him to the kitchen. "Now it's time to do the dishes."

"Noooo," Beau protested. "Just leave it. We can do that later."

Jury shook her head. "Noooo. Now. I am not about to leave dirty dishes in the sink and turn our house into a pigsty."

Beau chuckled. "Yes ma'am. Can I help?"

Jury shook her head. "Not this time. You made the breakfast, so I'll clean up."

She pointed to a chair at the kitchen table. "Why don't you just sit there and...watch me like you always do." She smirked as Beau took a chair and she headed over to the sink. Jury pulled on the pair of rubber gloves that were stuffed behind the faucet, then

got started by washing the dishes first. She did the silverware, then the glasses and plates, the pots and pans.

After forty minutes or so of complete silence as she cleaned around the kitchen, seeing what was where and wiping down the countertops, stove and refrigerator, Jury returned to the sink and gave it a good scrubbing. She lifted her arm and wiped the sweat from her forehead, then peeked over her shoulder to see Beau resting his arms on top of the table, with his head resting on his arms.

At first glance, she thought he was asleep, but his eyes were not closed, just narrowed and focused straight ahead on her ass in a pair of black shorts. A pair of shorts that she, quite frankly, had forgotten she even owned. How Beau found them in her walk-in closet back at her house, she couldn't guess.

Suddenly, Jury decided it was time to have a little fun. Whirling around unexpectedly, she startled Beau, who jumped in his seat.

"What!" he said, now wide-eyed and alert.

Jury smiled. "Oh, nothing really," she said in a nonchalant tone, pushing her chest out a bit as she batted her eyelashes. "I was just thinking..." She put her hand on one hip for emphasis as Beau's eyes caressed her body from head to toe. "Isn't this some kind of picture? Here I am general counsel of a major U.S. corporation, with a background in financial analysis, and look at me now. Barefoot. Probably pregnant. And doing the dishes. Tell me I'm your biggest fantasy, Beau Wainwright."

Then...Jury winked.

Before she could move, Beau was out of his chair and on her. She never even had a chance to take off her yellow rubber gloves.

"Baby," Jury cried out. Her surprised cry fell on deaf ears as Beau turned her around and snatched her black shorts and panties down to the floor. When she felt his tongue licking between her plump, round cheeks, she started to struggle out of his grasp. "Beau. Oh my God. What are you doing? What's gotten into you?"

"You, Jury!" Beau snapped as he unzipped his jeans and pulled them down. He started grinding his semi-erect cock against Jury's bottom. "You've gotten into me, Jury Yates. And you're all I want."

Hearing desperation in his voice, Jury's heart began to race. "Beau, we don't have time to do this. Not now." She shook her head.

"The hell we don't." Beau quickly took his jeans and briefs off all the way and tossed them on the floor. He reached between Jury's legs, breathing heavily as he parted the lips of her pussy and slipped his fingers into her slit.

"Come for me, now, Jury," he demanded.

Jury shook her head. "Baby, I don't think I can."

"Come for me, Jury," he ordered, as he fingered her clit. "I need you to come. I want you to come," Beau said desperately. He began to place pressure on the sensitive bud he was now holding and rubbing between his fingers, making it heat up with just rough friction.

Jury winced and her mouth opened as her breathing went haywire. "Damn, baby, slow down," she cried.

Beau was breathing so hard now he was gasping for air. "Jury. My Jury. You're so beautiful. Your body is so beautiful. And you're mine. Tell me I can have it all," he shouted. "I want you to tell me I can have it all." He gripped her to him so hard that he almost knocked the wind out of her.

So Jury quickly nodded her head. "Yes, you can have it all, Beau. Me. Mulatto babies running all around the house. A couple of barking dogs for good measure. And between the two of us, a bunch of crazy-ass, eccentric, swearing-like-sailors, upper-crust, college-educated, dumb-as-a-post, rich-as-Rockefellers, broke and unemployed, non-babysitting relatives on the planet. But you know what?"

"What?" Beau laughed, and the sound of his laughter was rich and genuine as he held on to her like a precious jewel.

"That's...our family!"

"Jury," Beau whispered, and he entered her pussy from behind with a single thrust.

"Ohhhhhhh." Jury exhaled slowly as she let herself go with the rhythm of Beau's stroking. Doggie-style. Slow and easy at first, but not for long. "Ooooooooo, baby."

"Jury, I can't get enough of you. You might as well be in heat...because fucking you without a condom has been my undoing." Beau tightened his grip on Jury's hips and pulled the lower half of her body toward him. Then he jackhammered her pussy until it was sopping wet. Jury clutched the edge of the sink and closed her eyes.

"Ahhhh, Beau. I love it when you fuck me like this."

"Yeah, my baby likes it doggie-style. And you know why I like it?"

Jury laughed. "Because you like to see my ass shake."

"Every time, baby. Every time," Beau breathed in her ear, thrusting quick and hard. "Aaagh, Jury. Damn, your pussy's so wet."

Jury pressed the back of her head into Beau's chest. "Oh, yeah. Harder, baby. Fuck me harder."

Listening to Beau's breathing grow more and more erratic, Jury knew he was going to come inside her soon. But without warning he pulled out and her knees almost buckled beneath her.

"Don't move," Beau ordered, walking away from her.

Jury called after him but he didn't answer and she quickly wrestled with the rubber gloves. She was pulling them off when she caught a glimpse of Beau coming back, carrying the tube of KY Jelly that had been in her purse. Jury said nothing, only prepared herself mentally for what was coming. She didn't have much time before Beau was behind her, his fingers coated with lubricant. Slowly he parted the fleshy cheeks of her ass and circled his fingers around her hole.

"Beau...?" Jury tensed.

"It's gonna be okay, baby." Bending forward, Beau placed kisses on her back through her white cotton blouse. "Try to relax, darling. I want this to be good for you. I want you to like it."

Jury could tell that Beau was trying to keep his excitement in check as he gently slipped his index finger into Jury's asshole.

"Oooo. Baby... Ahhhh," Jury breathed out as she started to panic a little.

Beau waited a few seconds before he began to massage the sensitive muscles in her anus, rotating his hand to begin to stretch the tight little hole, burrowing deeper each time. He continued to place kisses on her back and her blouse was damp with sweat. When she felt a second finger slip inside her anal canal, she gasped and tightened her grip on the sink. He coaxed her quietly to release the tension in her body. Jury tried, but having two fingers in her ass was definitely an unusual feeling—and she knew more was coming. Beau bent over and kissed her ass cheeks. "I am honored to be the first and only man to get inside your ass," Beau whispered.

Jury snorted. "You're right about that. But what you're doing feels good," Jury said softly, giving her approval.

"That's what I want to hear." Beau quickly inserted a third finger and Jury clenched, but it was only for a couple of seconds. Then she moaned for a long while.

Beau lifted his head and stood up again. "Better?" he asked, stroking a little faster with his fingers in and out of her ass. "I'll stop if you want me to, Jury. I don't want to stop, but if you—"

"Don't stop. I like it. And... I want you to keep going."

"Jury," Beau rasped. "You don't know how long I've dreamed about fucking you in the ass, darling."

Jury laughed and Beau removed his fingers and brought his swollen cock to her anus. He tapped against her plump bottom and when Jury felt the head rub against the opening to her ass she tried to relax, but she'd never had anal sex before, and well... Beau was a very big boy. But...she did just tell him he could have it all.



After a few moments, Jury reached behind her to touch Beau on his thigh because he wasn't moving. "What's wrong?"

"Baby, I don't want to hurt you," Beau said, and Jury could hear the concern in his voice. "I'm too —"

Jury shook her head, rushing to ease his worry. "You won't hurt me. You're my knight in shining armor," she said with much amusement as she rubbed Beau's thigh.

"This is no time for jokes, Jury. If I hurt you, I will never forgive myself."

Jury looked back at him for a second over her shoulder. "Who's joking? Now enough, Beau. I am giving you my virgin ass. And I have never trusted anyone enough to be taken like this. But I trust you. I trust you with my life!"

Hearing Beau take a deep breath, Jury closed her eyes and pushed back as the head of Beau's enormous cock poked through the opening to her asshole. She lowered her head to hide the grimace on her face as she was stretched to the point of bursting. But Jury said nothing because Beau was trying to be so gentle. His groans were low and guttural as he eased into her, pushing the head of his big, stiff shaft deeper inside her.

Jury winced as her body tried to adjust. Eventually it did, spreading a wave of warmth from the center out. She knew it was because Beau's cock was unsheathed, and the raw skin of his shaft heightened all her senses at once as he continued to penetrate her. It was unlike any feeling she had ever experienced, and it made the corners of her mouth creep upward as Beau added a little grinding motion. He stopped moving and Jury realized that of all times, this was not the time to stop.

"Beau? Baby, it's okay now. Come on, fuck me in the ass. I want you to." Jury pushed back. "Come on, baby," she coaxed.

Beau, apparently unable to hold back any longer, began to thrust with controlled strokes. Long, controlled strokes.

"Ooooo," Jury crooned as Beau moved inside her. Filling her. Stimulating a part of her body that had been off-limits. Anal sex was better than anything she could ever

have imagined. “Ohhh, baby,” she moaned, bending her head forward and lowering her shoulders as she pushed her hips up for better penetration.

“More,” she rasped. Beau took full advantage of her request and shoved his enormous cock to the hilt. “Aghhhh, Beau.”

Grunting and snorting as he fought to stay in control, Beau ground his balls against Jury’s round ass. “Mine. Your ass is mine, Jury.”

“It feels so good, Beau. Ooooo. You’re all the way inside me.”

“Yesss. I’ve fantasized about fucking you in the ass for so long, darling. Aghhhh, you’re so tight.” Beau slid one hand between Jury’s open legs and stroked her engorged clit.

“Ah, shit, Beau. Baby, you’re fucking the hell out of my ass as it is. What are you trying to do to me?”

Beau began to place warm kisses on her spine. “I have never loved anyone the way I love you. I can’t keep my hands off you. Squeeze my cock, darling. Yes, keep doing it like that.”

Jury squeezed as hard as she could.

“Fuuuuccck. Oh, milk it. Yeah, do it. Hot damn!”

Jury did exactly as she was told until Beau changed the game plan and slowly pulled out—only to surprise her by pounding her ass three times.

“Oh. Oh. Ohhhh.” Jury began to tremble. Again, Beau pulled out slowly and pounded her ass three more times. This went on, and on, as beads of sweat rolled between Jury’s double Ds and down her stomach and ended at her mound. As for Beau, she could feel the sweat dripping off his chest and plopping on the fabric of her cotton blouse as it hit her back.

*This, she thought, is as hot as it gets.*

Licking her lips, Jury relished the delicious pleasure of being taken anally. It was both primitive and titillating. And oh so erotic. And yes, she would be doing this again.

"Mmmmm. Baby, after this, you can fuck me in my ass whenever you want. Well... Maybe not at the office." Jury giggled and Beau couldn't help but laugh out loud.

"Jury, I'm standing here giving it to you and you're making jokes?"

Glancing back over her shoulder, Jury smiled. "But that's just one of the many, many things you love about me," she said.

Beau lowered his head and exhaled. "I knew those words would come back to haunt me. Now hold on, baby." Picking up speed, Beau's breathing changed as he surged forward with a slick cock buried to the hilt in Jury's aching hole. She slapped her hand on the counter and growled.

"Look at all this ass," Beau yelled, whacking Jury's behind, one quivering cheek and then the other, until his spanking started to sting. Jury howled, which only seemed to spur Beau on and he spanked her faster.

"Owwww. You're tearing my ass up." But it didn't stop Jury from pushing back to meet Beau's thrust, squeezing his cock until she made him shout. And when he pulled back and rammed into her, every muscle in Jury's ass quaked.

It drove Jury right over the edge and she came only seconds before Beau yelled as his cock erupted like a volcano inside her ass.

Beau held on to Jury as his body continued to shudder all around her, until finally they both slumped forward, barely able to breathe, sated, wet and deliriously happy.

Beau exhaled, lowering his face to rest on Jury's damp back. "So in answer to your question, yes," he said. "Yes, you are my biggest fantasy, Miss Yates."

"You know, Mr. Wainwright, I do believe you have a crush on me," Jury replied, smiling. Soon she felt Beau rest his head on her back.

"Baby? Beau?"

"Hmmm?"

"I was just thinking about what you said earlier. Maybe I am in heat." Jury undulated against him.

"Ohhh, give me strength," Beau groaned. He pulled out of Jury, then turned her around and dipped her back over the sink. When he brought her upright, Jury was laughing and Beau was grinning from ear to ear.

"Or maybe." Jury hesitated. "I just want my husband every which way there is." That comment rewarded her with a humdinger of a kiss and in exchange, she gave Beau a whole lot of tongue. When their lips separated, Jury sighed and reached down to pull up her panties and black shorts. It took a few seconds for her to smooth the creases in her cotton blouse, which was worse for wear at this point.

Beau grinned. "My, aren't you the proper wife?"

Jury stared up at him and rolled her eyes. "Yes, I am. And your proper wife says we really do have to shower, change and get going." She slipped out from under Beau's arms to head upstairs to change. At the last second, Beau pulled her back to him and whispered in her ear, "I hope you are pregnant."

\* \* \* \* \*

Jury noticed that Beau did not have a lot to say on the ride over to the senior care facility. He seemed to be lost in thought as they neared Pelham Bluffs, a retirement community situated on a plantation estate, with wrought iron gates and a long drive. Their arrival in a limousine did draw some curious glances, but it was the only transportation they had, so as the old saying goes, you work with what you got.

Jury wasn't sure what to expect when they stepped out of the limousine, but certainly she did not expect Beau to reach out and take her hand in his as they entered the exclusive facility where the rich came to die in Shelby County. Of course, there were looks and stares at the sight of them together. But many of the residents had lived through turbulent times of segregation. So seeing a white man holding the hand of a black woman was still painful for some. Even though Jury had come to understand their thinking and feeling the way they did, she would never condone their actions.

Once inside, they walked a good while until they stopped outside a door with a little brass plate that read J. Wainwright. Jury stood to the side, prepared to wait for Beau, who needed to do this. Beau needed to let his father know, before it was too late, that he was moving on with his life and starting a family of his own. The next generation of Wainwrights.

But there was something about the way Beau was standing. His resolve told Jury that there had been a shift because of what they had experienced and knowing now that they were one. So when Beau knocked on the door and opened it, Jury did not hesitate when he reached out to her. She grabbed his hand and then she followed right behind him into his father's private room.

The first thing Jury noticed was that James Preston Wainwright was not a strong man. Truth be told, he looked frail and small. Glancing over at Beau, Jury shook her head, not wanting him to wake his father. But Beau just ignored her, leaned over and touched his father on the arm.

The oldest living Wainwright in Tennessee stirred, then opened his eyes and Jury got the shock of her life. She was so familiar with the color. Beau had his father's eyes.

Watching the elderly Wainwright struggle to sit up, Jury's natural desire to help kicked in, but she knew it wouldn't be welcomed. She waited alongside Beau as his father used a special remote control to raise the head of the bed slightly, so he could see his two visitors. Mr. Wainwright's gaze focused on Jury first, and not his son.

"Odessa?" he whispered.

Jury was stunned, because Odessa was her mother's name. She tried to move closer to the bed, only Beau would not let go of her hand.

Jury turned her head to frown at him and tugged on her hand again. This time, Beau shook his head and mouthed, *No way*.

Jury got as close to his father as Beau would let her and she smiled. "I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Wainwright. My name is Jury Yates."

Beau's father suddenly smiled. "Your name is Jury Odessa Yates. And your mother used to call you Joy."

Jury's mouth fell open and she looked at Beau. "Did he know my mother?"

Her heart skipped a beat when Beau nodded.

"It's going to be okay, Jury," Beau said as he squeezed her hand and stared at her with a look on his face that, for the first time, Jury couldn't read. "Talk to him, darling."

Slowly, Jury let her gaze drift back to Mr. Wainwright's face. "Yes sir. My mother did call me Joy."

"I know. And she loved you so much," Beau's father said quietly. I met you once when you were a little girl. Your mother introduced us. She told me your name was Jury but that she had taken to calling you Joy."

Stepping closer to the bed, Beau said, "Hello, Daddy."

"My boy. It's good to see you." Beau's father lifted his trembling hand to his son, and Beau reached over and grasped four thin, fragile fingers.

As Jury watched the reunion, it seemed odd, knowing how affectionate Beau was, that he and his father would only shake hands. It was sad to think this was what it had come to in the end.

When Beau stepped back, Mr. Wainwright once again focused his attention on Jury. This time he was pulling her down with his other hand, which left her with two choices. Either pull her hand away from Beau's father or kneel. So she knelt. It took all her strength to pull on Beau's hand to make him kneel beside her. So there they were, kneeling together next to a dying man.

Beau's father looked at them both. "I just wanted to let you know how happy I am that you two have stopped by. I see my son has given you a ring." Mr. Wainwright pointed to Jury's left hand.

"Yes sir. And I'm going to marry him," Jury said, prepared to challenge his disapproval. She didn't have to, as it turned out.

"It's a good thing because my son loves you. And he's a good boy. A good man."

Then Mr. Wainwright reached over and touched Beau's arm.

"She's as beautiful as her mother. We all loved Odessa from afar. White men. Black men. But I loved her more than all of them. I loved her the most."

Jury gasped and looked quickly at Beau, who nodded.

Mr. Wainwright sighed and slumped down in the bed as he began to speak out loud with a faraway look in his eyes. "I wanted to marry Odessa. But my family wouldn't allow it. They threatened to disinherit me and I turned my back on the only woman I have ever loved." He shifted his frail body to stare at Beau with eyes filled with regret. "And then I did the same thing to you, Beau. And I am truly sorry that I did."

"Daddy—" Beau began, but his father shook his head.

"No, let me speak while I still can. I know I never said it. But I love you, son. Too much to see you unhappy. And Jury makes you happy. I can tell. Now promise me that you'll take care of her. I know that she is a remarkable woman and a top-notch lawyer."

Beau nodded and Jury witnessed a change in his demeanor as he patted his father's frail hand. "Daddy, I promise you, I'll take care of Jury. But she can be a handful sometimes." He laughed.

"I'll bet." Beau's father smiled. He looked off for a second, just over Jury's shoulder. Then his gaze rested on the couple again. "Oh, and Beau, you're to take care of the children too."

Jury slowly looked behind her as a chill ran down her spine, but saw nothing.

"You can count on that, sir," Beau said, leaning over to kiss Jury on the cheek. She closed her eyes and reveled in the moment.

When she felt Mr. Wainwright's light touch on the top of her head, she startled.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to frighten you, Jury. I just wanted to tell you that this one...is a boy. Now don't ask me how I know," he grinned, looking over Jury's shoulder again.

Jury didn't have to ask, she already knew. The oldest living Wainwright was talking to those who had gone on before them. "Beauregard?" she said softly.

Beau quickly kissed her again on the cheek. "It's all right, darling," he whispered. Helping Jury to her feet, Beau put his arms around her waist and pulled her close to his side. She couldn't help but glance down at Beau's father's withering limbs that were so thin, they were almost nonexistent beneath the blankets on the bed.

"Daddy, we're going to leave now. We don't want to tire you out too much," Beau said.

"Well, I'm glad you both came by to see me." Again, Mr. Wainwright stretched his hand out to his son. This time, Beau stepped up to the bed and leaned down. He placed a gentle kiss on his father's forehead.

It took everything inside Jury to hold back the tears. She turned to leave but Beau pulled her back to his side, leaned over and whispered close to her ear, "Don't forget to kiss Daddy goodbye."

Jury turned her head to glance at Beau. And in that instant, she was overwhelmed with so much love for him. A love that was so powerful that it had changed her life, and his and the lives of everyone around them.

She scooted past Beau and held his father's hand as she bent over and kissed James Wainwright lightly at his temple. When she stood up, there was the most serene expression on the man's face.

"Thank you, Jury. Now you two get going. I know you have a long drive back to Memphis."

Beau and Jury turned and walked hand in hand out of the room.



## Epilogue

Jury married Beau a month later, and it was the happiest day of her life. The wedding was romantic and intimate, with close friends, work colleagues and members of both Beau's family and Jury's family, all celebrating the love of two people so perfect for each other.

Sometimes, Jury couldn't believe how happy she'd been ever since. Of course, there were times when the man tried her patience.

"Beauregard! Get in this kitchen and dry these dishes," Jury yelled at the top of her lungs. In only minutes, a pair of strong hands encircled her waist.

"You called?"

Glancing back over her shoulder, Jury smiled. "I'm not calling you. I'm calling your son."

She turned her gaze back to sweep the sunlit woods and the trees with leaves that in the fall would be every color in a rainbow. At this time of year, summer, it was sweltering outside, especially when the ground was wet and the steam started to rise in Memphis and in the woods.

Seeing their children all the way at the end of the drive just dawdling, Jury took a deep breath and hollered again. "Beauregard James Wainwright. I know you can hear me. Get in here and do the dishes, and bring your sister with you." Jury stomped her foot on the front porch for emphasis and Beau laughed. Bending his head, he nuzzled Jury's neck and she instantly felt tingly all over.

She leaned back against Beau's broad chest and sighed. "Your children can be so stubborn and willful at times, Mr. Wainwright."

The sound of Beau's rich laughter next to her ear made Jury laugh under her breath.

“Well, they didn’t get that stubborn streak from me. So that would mean they got it from you, Jury Odessa Wainwright,” Beau said softly as he stroked her belly above the waistband of her shorts.

Jury closed her eyes and moaned as her breathing quickened. When she opened her eyes, she could see their children still dawdling up the path toward the cabin. She decided that it was probably best for her to keep her wits about her and said, “Okay, I concede.”

Beau chuckled and slapped her on the ass. After eight years of marriage, his genuine affection for her was even stronger, his passion more consuming and his lovemaking...amazing.

Jury tilted her head and beamed. “Will you just look at our babies? They’re so beautiful. Absolutely gorgeous.” Finally, Jury understood what her mother must have felt for her, because Jury was indeed a mother who was filled with pride and joy.

Beau squeezed her tight. “We do make beautiful babies,” he confirmed proudly.

“But we really do have to stop coming out here to the cabin. It seems as if every time we do they get bigger, and I want them to stay small.” Jury sighed.

Beau snorted. “You want them to stay babies.”

Resting his chin on the top of Jury’s head of short curls, Beau said with a hint of bad boy in his voice, “You know, there is a way we can remedy that, my brown-eyed girl.”

Suddenly, Beau was grinding up against Jury in a most suggestive way. Oooooooo. The man had some serious moves. It felt so good that Jury almost forgot they were on the front porch. “Unh-unnnnh. Not now.”

Beau kissed her neck and poured on the charm as he whispered, “There’s Cristal in the refrigerator. And sweet oranges.”

He stuck his tongue in her ear and Jury sucked in the moist summer air through clenched teeth. Already, she could feel her juices just churning down below.

"Beau..." she warned, because the children were much closer to the cabin now.  
"We can't."

But the man was unrelenting. He captured her earlobe in between his teeth and tugged.

"Of course, there are tons of quilts in the cupboard," Beau said in a voice so sexy it melted her drawers.

At that point, Jury turned completely around to face six feet, three inches, one hundred and ninety pounds of gorgeous man. Definitely not the smartest thing to do.

"Meet me upstairs in our bedroom at midnight. Naked. And if you're one minute late, it's your loss," she said.

To which her husband replied, "Jury, you should know by now... I am never late!"

*The End*

## About the Author

It was a true case of puppy love for Haven Isley, when she was seven years old and set eyes on her piano teacher's seven-year-old grandson. Sadly, it was an unrequited love, but it did have a happy ending. It gave Haven the desire to write all about it in her diary. Not just a few words, but lots and lots. And when she finished writing the tall tale, guess what? She got the guy. This is the reason Haven thrives on writing romances—everything from nice boy meets sweet girl to sizzling, hot Tarzan wants sexy-as-hell Jane. Now!

Haven is a marketer. She is also a songwriter, an antiques huntress, and an eager traveler in search of hidden oases and down home cooking. She thinks of herself as a perfect blend of a little bit country (because of her southern roots), and a little bit suburban (because of where she lives). Nevertheless, Haven feels most at home, no matter the locale, when she can grab a pen and paper, or her computer, and create stories that EC readers will love and remember. So email Haven and let her know which one of her tall tales you enjoyed the most.

Haven welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at [www.ellorascave.com](http://www.ellorascave.com).

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