

A romantic couple is shown in a close embrace, about to kiss. The woman has long, dark, wavy hair and is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, strapless top. The man is shirtless. They are positioned in the foreground, with their bodies slightly out of focus. In the background, a cityscape is visible, featuring a prominent tower that resembles the Leaning Tower of Pisa. The sky is a mix of soft pinks and purples, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is romantic and intimate.

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The steps of a Good man are ordered by the Lord.
(Psalms 37:23)

To my sister Jackie who encouraged me to follow my
dream and to Jayha Leigh AKA Fearless Leader for
helping me make it happen.

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This work of erotica contains adult language and sexually explicit scenes, which are smoking hot. This book is intended only for adults, as it is defined by the laws of the country in which the purchase is made. Keep this book out of the hands of under-aged readers.

CHAPTER ONE

Alisha sighed as she steered her car into an empty parking spot at Starbucks. By this time she had already expected to be at her law office. She really had intended to be on time today, but as usual she had gotten caught up in a phone call from her sister, who was griping about being tired of modeling. Alisha didn't have time to stop this morning, but of course she needed her morning fix—a tall Caramel Macchiato. She stopped at this particular Starbucks every morning before going into the office.

She smiled as she entered the establishment and noticed her friend Tavia behind the counter. Tavia was the manager, and often helped make drinks during the morning rush. Looking around as she made her way to the line, Alisha gave a silent prayer of thanks that the coffee shop wasn't that busy this morning. There were only four people ahead of her. Hopefully she would be in and out in about five minutes. Today was just not the day to be late. She'd heard from Lorna that Tristan

Cameron would be making an appearance today. Why? She had no idea. The man was intimidating. He walked around with a sour look on his face all the time.

But as long as “Mr. Bad-attitude-I-don’t-give-a-damn-who-you-are” Tristan Cameron stayed out of her way, she would stay out of his. She had a full calendar and an appeal to get out. Never mind that the guy only showed his face in the New York office about twice a year; once during the holiday season, when all the Cameron clan were present, and again, whenever Brandon Cameron took off for wherever it was he disappeared to every year. Brandon disappeared and Tristan appeared. Go figure. She liked Brandon. He wasn’t as intense as Tristan, yet he had a quiet authority about him. She was brought out of her musing when Tavia said, “How’s it going, Alisha?”

“Hi, Tavia, not too great today,” she found herself saying.

“Running late?” Tavia asked.

“Unfortunately,” Alisha replied, looking at Tavia with a frown on her face. “It doesn’t help my cause

that the 'big man' will be putting in an appearance at the office today."

"Which one?" Tavia asked.

"Tristan," Alisha replied.

Tavia's face brightened and she smiled. "Oh, yummy!"

Sometimes Tristan and Brandon came into Tavia's Starbucks when Brandon was in Long Island for a court case. The two would often stay to have coffee with other attorneys or sometimes just to hang out together. Ever since Tavia had first spotted the two, she would make comments about them to Alisha. Shaking her head and laughing at Tavia's pretend swoon, she added, "Tavia, only you would think of Mr. Too-much-testosterone as yummy."

"Girl...you know that man is hotness personified."

Tavia was right—the man was a hottie, which only added to her annoyance with him. He could walk into a room and make a girl's heart go all pitter-patter, even with that permanent frown on his face. Most of the other attorneys in the office steered clear of him. The man never seemed calm...walking around

growling all the time...well, at least what she considered growling. Alisha never had to work directly with him, so whenever she spotted the other attorneys coming out of his office looking as though they had peed in their pants, she would just shake her head, go into her office, and close the door.

“The usual?” she heard Tavia saying.

“Yes, please.”

Handing Alisha her coffee, Tavia said, “See you Monday, girlfriend.”

“Yeah,” Alisha said. “Hopefully I won’t be late today too.”

Tavia smiled and replied, “Go get ‘em, tiger!” followed by some growling noises that had Alisha shaking her head and cracking up, laughing.

Alisha got into her car and headed to the office. She usually took the train into work, but since she was running late, she was driving in. This could be good or bad, depending on traffic. She wasn’t worried about parking, since everyone at Cameron, Cameron & LaSalle, P.C., owned the parking garage that the employees parked in. They had bought the garage because they didn’t want clients who didn’t want to

take the train in to have to drive around trying to find parking.

Alisha steered her car onto the expressway, merging into traffic.

* * *

Tristan hated this shit. He was going to kill Brandon. What the hell was so important that Brandon needed him to put in an appearance? Hell, that's why his law firm was based in Atlanta. He hated New York. Why the hell they had to open a New York office in the first place was beyond him. Tristan didn't have the patience or the time to deal with the New York attitudes.

Brandon better have a good reason for getting him to come to New York earlier than his usual time. Tristan had had a reputation for getting things done when he worked undercover as a drug enforcement agent, but no one but his brothers, Brandon and Sinjin, knew about his dealing with the FBI. It was the FBI's idea to use his law degree as a cover for helping them with several sting operations.

Tristan had joined the Atlanta Police Department after receiving a degree in criminal justice. Few people there knew that he had a law degree from Duke University. He was forced to use his law degree, though, after an undercover drug operation that he and his partner were on was compromised, resulting in a career-ending series of bullets in his partner's chest and leg. After a collapsed lung and a shattered leg, Sal left the Atlanta PD.

After his partner's cover had been blown, and not knowing if the leak was Atlanta PD or the FBI, Tristan was called in. Not long after the incident, he left the Atlanta PD, but not the FBI. He'd been determined to find out where the leak had come from that had resulted in Sal losing his career and almost his life.

Brandon had been working in the Atlanta-based law firm at the time and when Tristan left the police department, Brandon left the Atlanta-based firm in Tristan's hands and moved to New York to start another firm with his best friend, David LaSalle. Tristan had to admit his little brother hadn't done a bad job—not a bad job at all. The New York firm

employed several associates working in different areas of law.

Pulling into his designated parking spot in the parking garage, Tristan parked his car, got out, and walked around the corner to their office building. When he opened the glass door, Tristan nodded to Lorna, the receptionist, as he passed, heading straight for his brother's office. Striding forward, he noticed the scattering of employees as he approached, but didn't give them a second glance as he proceeded towards Brandon's office. He knew most of them thought him to be mean as hell and couldn't care less how they perceived him, as long as they stayed out of his way.

Not bothering to knock, Tristan opened the door to Brandon's office and walked in. Brandon was sitting behind his desk and David was in one of the chairs in front of the desk. Brandon and David both turned to look at him.

"You mind telling me what the hell was so important that I had to come to New York?" Tristan asked.

David put his head down, trying to hide his smile. He looked at Brandon from the corner of his eye to see what he was doing. Brandon was sitting there with a shit-eating grin on his face, like his brother didn't look like he wanted to rip his throat out.

"Well, hello to you too, big bro," Brandon said, smiling and coming from behind his desk to stand in front of Tristan—but not too close. When Tristan was in one of his moods, he was a force to be reckoned with. But then again, Tristan was always a force to be reckoned with, so why stop now? Tristan didn't suffer fools—and in his opinion, most people were fools. Brandon looked up at his brother standing at six feet and three inches tall and shook his head. Even at 37, Tristan still had his fair share of admirers...in fact he had more than his fair share. Apparently women loved the dangerous-looking type of man... but Brandon hadn't seen Tristan with a woman either of the times they had hooked up last summer. He, Tristan, and Sinjin made it a point to get together for at least a week of guy stuff in the summer, usually before Tristan came to New York to oversee things while he took care of other business—.

“Well, are you going to stand there like an idiot smiling at me, or are you going to tell me what was so all-fire important that I had to come here?”

Brandon didn’t answer but grabbed Tristan hugged him and patted him on the back.

“Glad you’re here, bro.”

“You knew when you called I would come.”

“Tris, man, with you I couldn’t be—”

“When have I ever not come when one of my brothers needed me?” Tristan asked before Brandon could finish his sentence.

“Oh, you would come if you thought one of us was in trouble...but to come to New York... especially knowing how much you hate New York...I had my doubts,” Brandon said.

“Which brings me back to my original question: what the hell is so important I had to hightail it to New York on a moment’s notice?”

“Tris, man, you know I wouldn’t call you if I didn’t need you,” Brandon said.

With a long sigh, Tristan looked into his brother’s blue-grey eyes and noticed that his brother looked stressed. “You in trouble?”

“No. Just need to take care of something that came up unexpectedly.”

Tristan nodded his head at his brother and turned to acknowledge David with his hand outstretched for a handshake. “How’s it going, David?”

“Good, can’t complain,” David said. “Can’t wait for Nadia to have the baby.”

At the mention of the impending birth of Nadia and David’s first child, Tristan smiled at David. “Oh yeah—not long now— when is the baby due?”

“Any day now,” David answered.

Both Tristan and David took a seat in front of Brandon’s desk and Brandon went to sit behind his desk. Looking at them both, Brandon studied his best friend and his brother, shaking his head. Brandon remembered when David had somewhat of the same attitude that Tristan had now before he met his wife of two years, Nadia. Now the two were expecting their first child. He was happy for his friend...happy for him but wouldn’t want to be him. He was happy being single and had no intentions of marrying for a long time to come...if at all.

“Are you going to sit there with that goofy look on your face all day, or are you going to tell me why I am here?” Brandon heard his brother saying.

Brandon shook his head, frowning at his brother. “You know, brother, maybe while you’re in New York you can get laid—you are one ornery dude. Like I said, there are some things I need to take care of, and I need you here while I’m gone.”

Tristan studied Brandon through narrowed eyes, noticing his sudden interest in the papers on his desk. “Is there something going on at the firm that I need to know about?” Tristan asked.

Brandon didn’t reply but instead cut his eyes over to David.

Looking from one to the other, Tristan’s frown deepened “Is there something going on at the firm that you two need to clue me in on?”

“No, not really,” Brandon said.

“What the fuck does ‘no not really’ mean?” Tristan asked.

“Man, Tristan, this is a law firm, not the Bureau,” Brandon said. “You know you are a lawyer—why, I don’t know. You haven’t actually set foot in a

courtroom in I don't know how long." Looking frustrated, Brandon leaned his head back and pinched the bridge of his nose, and after taking a deep breath, replied, "Okay, here's the deal— there has been a sort of situation that David and I were in the process of handling, but with Nadia due to give birth any day and on bed rest for the remainder of her pregnancy, today will be David's last day for the next few weeks and—"

Brandon stopped short when he noticed the look of horror on his brother's face, holding up his hands to stem off any outburst that his brother was getting ready to have. "No, Tristan, we do not expect you to stay in New York for a month. God forbid," Brandon added, mumbling under his breath.

Tristan began to relax, not realizing that his body had become ramrod straight at the prospect of having to stay in New York for any extended period of time.

"What's the situation, Brandon?" Tristan asked. "What kind of situation can we have at a law firm?"

"One that can get very ugly," Brandon replied.

“Dammit Brandon! Just spill it, why don’t you? I don’t have the time or the patience to play guessing games.”

“The law firm is not the only thing that I am worried about,” Brandon continued. The situation here involves one of the senior associates that we had been thinking of making a partner. As a matter of fact, there have been several discussions in regards to his partnership. David has informed him on several occasions that we would discuss it with him once he reached his five-year mark at the firm, which will be next month. I don’t want the fact that we promised him a partnership to factor into any litigation that may arise out of this mess. He has been accused of sexual harassment by two women: his secretary and an intern who worked for the firm. Unfortunately for us, when the secretary reported the incident to Human Resources, it was blown off as a disgruntled employee because she was being let go. I wasn’t aware of the situation until the next incident happened with a young lady interning here. The young—”

“Who’s the asshole?” Tristan shouted.

Brandon went on, ignoring his brother's outburst. "The intern apparently isn't going away as quietly as the HR manager thought. She has threatened the firm with a lawsuit and says she'll go to the media if the situation isn't resolved. With that threat, one of the young ladies in HR thought it best to advise me of the situation, since her idiot boss didn't. With our clientele, I don't have to tell you how much damage this could cause the firm. I've spoken with the intern and have convinced her that we are taking her allegations very seriously. I convinced her to hold off with any legal action for awhile. She has agreed to do so, with a promise from me that the situation will be remedied."

"Who is it? Fire his ass and be done with it!" Tristan shouted.

"Will you keep your voice down, Tris? We don't want the whole office to know what's going on. Although, at this point there is no doubt they do, since I've noticed a great deal of whispering going on over the past few days. As for firing him, it might not be that easy. If it was up to me, his ass would have been gone yesterday. But for the sake of all involved, we

need to go about this situation quietly and aggressively, which brings me to the other reason you are being called in. I would never leave this mess for you to clean up, but Sinjin called, and it seems our little brother needs me.”

That news caused Tristan’s body to tighten. “What’s up?”

Brandon shrugged and replied. “Don’t know yet. He called and said he needed me.”

“Needs you for what? What the hell is going on? I’ve been trying to reach him for weeks—ever since he told me he was going on some assignment and wouldn’t tell me where it would be. And why would Sinjin call *you* and not *me*?” Tristan bellowed, jumping up from his chair.

“Tris, calm down!” Brandon yelled right back.

“I’ll calm down when you stop pussyfooting around and tell me what the fuck is going on! First, who’s the asshole that’s putting the firm in jeopardy of being sued? Not to mention causing your credibility as a firm and an attorney to be questioned. Then you say our brother needs you, the ‘lawyer’ and yet you can’t

tell me *why* he needs you!” Tristan yelled even louder this time.

At this point, David jumped up to face both of them. “Hey! Calm down you two, before you have the entire office in an uproar. Now I suggest y’all sit down, stand up, or whatever, but just lower your voices,” he said, looking from one to the other.

In this mood, both of the brothers were forces to be reckoned with. Tristan was, well...Tristan was always wound up tight as a rope, but he was even more so now with the notion that their little brother was in some kind of trouble. Brandon didn’t anger quickly, but when he did, watch out. He could be just as bad as Tristan. The brothers stood there, breathing deeply, and David knew that they were both trying to rein their tempers in. When he saw Brandon’s body relax, he felt a little better. He could stand there all day and Tristan would still do what Tristan wanted to do.

Brandon was the first to speak. “You’re right, David. Sorry. And Tristan, if you would stop cutting me off, I’ll tell you everything I know so far.”

With that, Tristan nodded his head, first at his brother, then at David, as he and David both waited for Brandon to speak.

“First, Sinjin didn’t say what he needed me for; just that he needed my help. Since Sin is not one to ask for help, I thought I’d better haul my ass out there.”

“And where exactly is ‘there’?” Tristan asked.

“New Mexico,” Brandon mumbled.

Frowning, Tristan asked, “Did I hear you correctly? D-did you say New Mexico?”

“Yes, you heard right—I said New Mexico.”

“The hell—what’s he doing in New Mexico?”

“I don’t know yet—he promised to fill me in this evening. He wants me to fly into Albuquerque, where a car will be waiting to take me to a hotel in Santa Fe. I’m to call him once I’m checked into the hotel. I’m booked on the Red Eye.” Sighing deeply, Brandon continued, “I know Sin wouldn’t have me walk into a dangerous situation unawares. Still, I don’t like surprises.”

“If you don’t like surprises, then you don’t have any business getting involved with whatever Sin has going on. Sin is one big surprise after another. You

never know what the hell that dude's up to. So, if you don't want a surprise, I suggest you keep your ass at home and stay the hell away from Sinjin. You don't think he's over there chasing some woman, do you? He can't be in some jail because he called you. By the way, you still haven't said why he called you instead of me," said Tristan.

"Like I said, Tris, I don't know. Trust me, I'm just as curious as you are as to why he would call me and not you. He didn't sound like he was hurt or in trouble. However, he did sound rushed."

"A woman," both Tristan and David said at once. All three looked at each other and burst out laughing.

"Well, whatever the case may be, I'm headed for New Mexico," Brandon said.

Tristan didn't like it, but he had to accept the fact that both his brothers knew how to handle themselves. All the same, he thought he'd be checking on Sin himself. Woman or not, Sin didn't ask for help unless absolutely necessary. Maybe he'd give Domino a call or better yet email him. Neither of his brothers knew that Tristan helped his friend out from time to time doing investigative work. Domino Longhorn was

a former Texas Ranger who had opened up a security and private investigation service. Tristan would call Domino from time to time to help him out with difficult cases and to use his contacts. Domino could get information that neither he nor the Bureau could.

Tristan wasn't too happy with Brandon going down there by himself, but what could he do? Short of hog-tying his ass up, he couldn't stop him from going. When it came to family, honor and obligations, Brandon was just as stubborn as he and just as bad-assed when provoked. He would deal with the problem with Sin later. Now he needed to handle the asshole here so he could get back to Atlanta. He'd gotten his first break in years as to who the mole was in the department that had blown his and Sal's cover, and he needed to get back to follow up on it.

He found himself asking Brandon, "So who's the problem here?"

Brandon sighed. "James Langston."

"I should've known," said Tristan. James Langston was the son of one of the city's wealthiest business moguls, and rumor had it that they were well-connected. No wonder the young ladies' claims

had gone by the wayside. Nobody wanted to deal with the golden boy. Well, that was just too damned bad—that little shit had to go, thought Tristan.

“I know what you’re thinking, Tris, and believe me, I would like nothing more than to toss the little shit out on his ass, but that asshole is one of the best litigators around, and if we fire him without proof, it can get real messy. That’s why I called you here. I need you to handle the situation by doing what you do best—investigating the little creep without him knowing it. I’m sure if two women have already come forward, there are more. As far as I’m concerned, his days of intimidation are over. I never liked the little prick, but this is beyond ridiculous. When he leaves this firm, I want him gone—with the stench that he created following him, and him only. As of now, I’ve heard that he assigned one of the junior associates to help him work on an appeal. I didn’t think anything of it until I found out who the associate was.”

“Who is it?” Tristan asked.

Tristan heard David clearing his throat and looked over at him, curious as to why David appeared to be trying to cover a smile. Tristan knew the man

well enough to know he was smirking, which had him even more curious. Puzzled, he turned away from David to look at his brother, who wasn't even trying to hide his smile. As a matter of fact, Tristan could probably count most of Brandon's teeth, his smile was so broad. "What? And what the hell's got you two grinning like Cheshire cats?" Tristan asked, clearly puzzled as to why his question would garner such a reaction from his brother and David. "Well, who is it?" Tristan asked, losing patience with both Brandon and David. Brandon, unfazed by Tristan's scowl, replied, "Alisha Carrington."

CHAPTER TWO

After parking her car in the garage, Alisha hurried into the office building, hoping that she wouldn't run into anyone before making it to her office—particularly that slime ball, James Langston. The man was a creep. Why she would be working on an appeal with James was beyond her. James had given her the appeal yesterday, as she was gathering her things to leave for the day. Alisha knew that James expected her to work on the appeal over the weekend, since today was Friday and the appeal had to be filed next week. If James thought that she would be in an office alone with him, though, especially after hours, he had another think coming. She had no intentions of being alone with the man for any reason.

There were rumors going around the office about James being accused of sexual harassment by two former employees of Cameron, et al., a secretary and a law intern. If the rumors were true, James was either an idiot or he thought himself to be

untouchable. “Mr. I-think-I’m-God’s-Gift-To-Women.” PuLEEZE! As if. More like “I’m gonna get my ass kicked by the Cameron men,” if the rumors were true, and that wouldn’t surprise her one bit. Especially knowing Tristan Cameron was crazy as all get out. Nah, ain’t happening here. No way would those dudes tolerate something like that.

Alisha wasn’t the only African-American attorney with the firm, but she was the only African-American *female* attorney here. Alisha knew that she was damned good at her job. A graduate of St. John’s Law School in Queens, New York, she’d started her career as a lawyer in a small firm in the suburbs of Long Island, but after five years had decided she needed a change and had applied for and been hired on at Cameron, Cameron & LaSalle, P.C. three years ago. And they hadn’t hesitated to hire her.

Alisha opened the door and began to walk through the reception area. She noticed that Brandon’s door was closed, and could hear him and his partners yelling. A few attorneys were standing around looking rather anxious. Alisha waved at Lorna, the receptionist, stopping to talk to her for a minute.

“Hi, Lorna. What’s going on?” Lorna, a petite Hispanic woman, attended paralegal school at night. Not many people knew that about her, often assuming her to be just another pretty face looking for a husband, which was far from the truth. Lorna had just gotten out of a bad relationship and wasn’t looking to get into any relationship right now. The two women would sometimes meet after work on Fridays for dinner and drinks. Sometimes, Alisha’s sister Asia would join them if she was in town.

“Hey, chica! I don’t rightly know what’s going on. All of the partners are in there, and you can hear the two brothers screaming their heads off,” Lorna said.

“Hmmm. Well, I’m sure it’s nothing that has to do with us. Maybe it’s a sibling thing—you know, too much testosterone and all,” Alisha replied and proceeded to walk towards her office, nodding at the other employees as she passed them. Alisha always pasted a smile on her face before facing anyone in the office. She never entertained office gossip, like most of the other attorneys and secretaries did. Every time she went into the break room there were always two or

three of the secretaries there dishing dirt on each other or some other office personnel. Alisha only ever went into the break room to heat her lunch or to get an occasional cup of coffee when she was working on a case. Many of Alisha's cases settled before going to court. When she did have to appear in court, she liked to be well-prepared. Several of the other attorneys preferred having the paralegals do their research. Not her; she preferred hands-on information, wanting to make sure all of her *t*'s were crossed and *i*'s dotted.

Alisha walked into her office and placed her coffee on her desk so she could remove her coat. She then straightened out the jacket of her Jones New York navy suit. The skirt reached about an inch above her knees, and Alisha found herself pulling at it a little bit, looking down at herself to see if maybe she was showing a little too much leg. After examining her appearance, she found that all was in order. Standing at 5 feet 6 inches, Alisha was considered average height—neither short nor tall. She often wore three-inch heels that made her appear much taller. Although she was often complimented on her looks and her appearance, she never took advantage of it. At 33, she

wanted to be known for her brains as well as her beauty. People often thought she was of mixed heritage because of the texture of her hair and her coloring. She had long curly hair—when she didn’t blow dry it to straighten it out—and her skin was about a half a shade darker than caramel. She wasn’t of mixed heritage, nor was she from the Caribbean. Though she didn’t consider herself beautiful, many did and that bothered the hell out of her, as men often acted the damn fool in her presence. Like women couldn’t have beauty as well as brains. *They just want a beautiful dummy—yeah, right. Not bloody likely.*

As Alisha sat behind her desk and booted up her computer, a knock sounded on her door. Her secretary, Betty, stuck her head in the door, asking, “Can I come in?”

“Of course, don’t be silly. Come on in,” Alisha said. The only time Betty used the intercom system to buzz Alisha was if she had someone in her office, which was hardly ever, since they had four large conference rooms to meet with clients.

Betty walked into Alisha's office and stood in front of her desk. "You've been summoned by James to see him as soon as you get in."

"What the hell could that a—? Sorry, Betty. What could Langston want with me this early?" Alisha tried to hide her annoyance.

"Don't know. He told me to advise him as soon as you got in. I just wanted to prepare you, since he was acting as though it was a matter of life and death."

"Oh, all right. Let's get this over with," Alisha said, and pushed her chair back.

"Alisha, you know I love you like a daughter, right?" Betty said, and at Alisha's nod continued, "Don't get too close to Langston, and don't go behind closed doors with him. I know you've heard the rumors about him. Well, let me tell you, I've been around for a while and I know a lot of people here. The rumors that are floating around here about him are kids' play compared to some of the things his father and his money have gotten him out of. Be careful, is all I'm saying." With that, Betty turned and walked out of Alisha's office, with Alisha close behind.

"Thanks, Betty. Duly noted."

* * *

Tristan looked at his brother and his friend, confused. “Who’s Alisha Carrington? And is there something I should know about her?”

“Ah...no, not that I’m aware of. We can set up a meeting with her, if you want.”

“Should I have a meeting with her?” Tristan asked.

“Maybe, since she’ll be working closely with Langston.”

“Is she capable of getting the job done?”

“Not sure—it’s a big case; that’s why Langston has it, he’s a good litigator and this is a very big case. Alisha’s good at her job—just not sure if she can handle this appeal. There have been several attorney changes. Most are using trial attorneys. This case is big and messy. ”

“Then why let her? You have the authority to go over Langston’s head,” Tristan said.

“You know I don’t like to throw my weight around. Besides, we have to let Langston keep

thinking that he's in for the partnership if we want to catch his slimy ass."

"I agree," David said. "If we start taking cases and people away from him, he's going to start getting suspicious. If we let him think that we don't care and don't listen to office gossip, he's bound to slip up."

Brandon added, "Better keep a close eye on him with Alisha. She's single, attractive, a nice girl and a very good worker. Haven't had any complaints about her since we hired her three years ago."

"Which one's Alisha, anyway? I've been in this office several times over the past few years, and I don't think I've run into an Alisha."

"Tristan, who *do* you know? Other than David and me, you don't socialize with the other employees at all. Hell, you barely acknowledge that they work here. With you being all pissy and whatnot, everybody in the office is afraid to get within ten feet of you."

"Fuck you, Brandon. Anyway, I don't have time to babysit."

"Tris, half the people in the office go the other way when you come into the office. You don't talk, you growl, and you stay holed up in your office the entire

time you're here. You don't allow the other attorneys, or clients, in your office unless absolutely necessary—which is almost never."

"I've had people in my office," Tristan said with a smile, remembering the last time he was in town. He had hooked up with a good-looking attorney from another firm—hey, a man has needs—and although he wasn't looking for any long-term commitments, he did enjoy sex—enjoyed it a lot.

"I'm not talking about banging your flavor of the month after working hours, Tris. By the way, that shit is just nasty. Why couldn't you take her back to your condo?"

"Hell, no! You know I don't take women back to my place. She offered and I took her up on it. We both got what we wanted. End of story."

"Apparently, you have a lot of 'end of stories'," Brandon said.

"As if you don't," Tristan replied with a sarcastic smile.

"He's got you there, Brandon," David said. "You're just as bad as Tristan. You were dangling so

many women at one point I thought you'd opened up an escort service behind my back."

Tristan's lips twitched at the scowl on his brother's face.

"I wasn't that bad," Brandon said.

"Of course you were," David said. "And by the way, you've only slowed down; you haven't stopped."

"That's because I'm not dead," Brandon said, under his breath.

This had Tristan and David doubled over in laughter.

"Man! And you talk about me," Tristan said. "At least I can name mine."

"No, I believe that I said that you are one mean asshole, bro."

"Prick," Tristan fired back at his brother.

Before Brandon could say anything, David was holding up his hand, "Children, children, let's not start."

"Fine. When can I meet Ms. Carrington?" Tristan asked.

Brandon and David looked at each other. "Nothing like the present time," Brandon said.

Tristan looked from one to other with a raised brow and asked, "What?"

Both Brandon and David shook their heads and simultaneously said, "Nothing."

Brandon buzzed Alisha's secretary. "Good morning, Betty. Can you send Alisha down to my office?"

"Sure, Brandon. She was just on her way down to Mr. Langston's office," she said with distaste evident in her voice.

"Can you catch her before she reaches James' office and ask her to stop by my office?" Brandon asked.

"Sure. She just left so she shouldn't be too far. I'll go and grab her now."

"Thanks, Betty," Brandon said, and disconnected the call.

CHAPTER THREE

Alisha was rounding the corner on her way to James' office when she heard Betty calling her. Alisha stopped to acknowledge her. "Yes, Betty? What is it?"

"Brandon wants you to stop by his office before you go in to see James," Betty said.

"Oh, okay," Alisha said. "Did he say what he wanted, Betty?"

"No, he just asked that you stop by his office."

"Okaaay," Alisha said as she turned and headed towards Brandon's office, wondering what in the world he could want with her. She liked Brandon—he was a good boss to work for, as far as bosses went. He never gave the impression that he was better than the other attorneys. Neither did David, the other partner. Both were nice guys...and both were ladies' men. Well, David had been, until he got married about two years ago. Most of the attorneys had been invited to the wedding, but Alisha had not gone because her father had suffered a minor heart attack. David's wife, Nadia,

was of mixed heritage, African-American and Native American. Alisha had met Nadia at one of the office's Christmas parties before she and David had married. Nadia was beautiful inside and out. Alisha was happy for David and even happier that they would welcome the birth of their first child any day now.

Alisha approached Brandon's office with trepidation. She had never been asked to see him on such short notice. Other than a quick hello or goodbye, Alisha's only other conversations with Brandon were at meetings or occasionally, when he wanted to run case law by her. Alisha had such a heavy caseload that neither Brandon nor David bothered her much. That's why she was completely surprised when James had asked her to do his appeal. Alisha was a defense negligence attorney and would do some plaintiff's work on occasion, but most of her time was spent defending insurance companies and their clients.

Alisha knocked on Brandon's door and waited to be invited to go in.

"Come in," she heard Brandon say, so she opened the door.

“Brandon, Betty said that you wanted to—.” Alisha immediately came up short as she noticed that Brandon was not the only one in the room. David and Brandon’s brother, Tristan, were seated in front of Brandon’s desk. David smiled at her and Tristan looked at her in a way that could only be described as lustful. Alisha looked back at him. *Damn! Dude is hella fine.* She had never been close enough to Tristan to notice how good-looking he truly was. His office was far from hers, and they really didn’t have any reason to meet.

Tristan noticed the ebony beauty as soon as she opened the door. He sucked in his breath in admiration. He’d noticed Alisha every time he’d come into the New York office, but had kept his distance. She was the reason he stayed away from the office...well, her and the fact that he hated New York. He knew that she had no idea of his interest in her and wanted it to remain that way. Anyway, it seemed whenever he came within a few feet of the lady, she would turn and go in the opposite direction. His brother, knowing him as well as he did, had evidently picked up on his interest in Alisha. So that’s her

name—and she’s single, apparently. He’d never known her name. He just knew that he had a strong physical attraction to her. Up close, she was really hot!

Staring at the beauty before him, Tristan thought to himself, maybe New York isn’t so bad after all. Tristan heard her speak and was floored. Her voice, all smoky and hot, was turning him on. He couldn’t keep his eyes off her. He could feel Brandon’s eyes on him and could care less. “Well, damn!” Tristan heard himself saying, as he couldn’t resist looking her up and down in admiration.

Alisha, looking at David and then Tristan, said, “Hello David...Mr. Cameron.”

“How are you, Alisha?” David said.

“I am fine. How are you?” she said. She was starting to feel uncomfortable and self-conscious under Tristan’s scrutiny, and a little irate, but she couldn’t help feeling a bit flattered and turned on at the same time. Resolutely, she turned and looked at Brandon, “Hello, Brandon. Betty said you wanted to see me?”

Brandon put on a straight face and got up, looking Alisha directly in the eyes. There she was in

the office of the partners, standing tall with her head up, like she didn't have a care in the world. Most people when called to his office were scared shitless that they had done something wrong, but not Ms. Alisha Carrington. In fact, she looked mad as hell that Tristan was gawking at her openly. "Uh, yes, Alisha. Thank you for seeing me on such short notice. Have a seat," he said, motioning for her to take the unoccupied seat next to David.

"Thanks. Is there a problem?" Just as Brandon was getting ready to answer, David's cell phone went off, but he was so busy smirking at Tristan he didn't realize that it was his phone until Alisha brought it to his attention.

"Uh, David...I think that's your phone ringing." Alisha said.

"What? Oh yeah," David sputtered before reaching inside his jacket pocket to retrieve his cell phone.

"It's my wife." Hurriedly, David answered his phone, speaking quickly with his wife, and disconnecting his call and looking at the others.

“What’s wrong?” both Alisha and Brandon, asked at once.

“Nadia’s in labor. I have to go.” He rushed out quickly.

Brandon yelled after him. “Hey, man! Call as soon as you can. I’ll stop by the hospital before I leave tonight.”

David yelled, “Okay,” on his way down the hall.

Brandon looked at Alisha, “Have a seat, Alisha,” he said, realizing that she was still standing.

Alisha looked over at Tristan as she sat down. He looked at her with a raised brow. Alisha tried not to let his intense scrutiny fluster her, as she turned back to Brandon, waiting for him to tell her exactly why she was here in his office. Alisha stole a discreet glance over at Tristan and gave an inward sigh of appreciation...talk about bringing sexy back. He wore sexy like a GQ model, in a military sort of way. She pulled her legs tighter together trying to stem off the throbbing that had started between her thighs. Alisha pulled her thoughts away from Tristan to focus on what Brandon was saying.

Brandon began, "Alisha, I am not sure if you're aware of the rumors going around about James Langston, but I know he asked you to work on an appeal with him."

"Yes, he gave me the Manzini appeal."

"Why?" It was Tristan who asked this.

"I have no idea." Alisha answered, turning to look at him fully. Tristan had to be at least six three or four, European features, with brownish blond hair and light blue-grey eyes framed under long, thick lashes. The man was downright gorgeous. If it wasn't for the permanent frown that he seemed to wear all the time, the man could definitely give the younger male models a go for their money. He had that bad boy persona down pat.

"When did he give you the appeal?" Brandon's question brought her back to the issue at hand.

"He gave it to me yesterday, and it has to be served and filed by next week."

"So that means you would have to stay late with him to get this done," Tristan said, barely containing his anger. It wasn't a question but a statement.

Glaring at Tristan, Brandon said, “Alisha, with all the rumors going around about James, if you don’t feel comfortable doing this, you don’t have to. But I’d appreciate it if you’d give the appearance of helping him. If you’ve heard the rumors, then you know that he’s been accused of sexual harassment. Tristan and I are trying to gather enough evidence against him to throw him out on his sorry ass. But I won’t wait around and put your safety at risk to do so. Just so you know, I didn’t override James’ decision to give the appeal to you because I didn’t want him becoming suspicious of my actions. I have never done that before unless the person was totally incompetent. Unfortunately, that is not the case with you. I have to leave tonight and Tris—“

Brandon was cut off by Tristan loud, “She’s not doing it!”

Both Brandon and Alisha were surprised at Tristan’s outburst and it showed on their faces.

“Uh, Tris...,” Brandon began.

“No, Brandon, and it’s not up for debate,” Tristan interrupted, growling at his brother.

“Oh boy, here we go,” Brandon muttered looking at Alisha’s mad as hell expression.

“Excuse me!” she said in a quiet but obviously furious voice, turning to glare at Tristan.

Tristan stood up and grabbed her by the hand and pulled her up out of her chair so that they were facing each other. “I said, sugar, and read my lips: hell no! You will not go near that little weasel as long as I’m still breathing, and if you want him breathing, you’d best be advised not to go near him!”

Alisha’s chest was heaving up and down and she looked as though she was about to explode she was so angry, Brandon noticed. His brother didn’t know it yet but he was getting ready to get a cussing out by one beautiful, but very angry, woman. Brandon had no doubt that Tristan had already laid claim on Alisha when she’d first walked through his office door—and if he was honest with himself, even before that—but his brother was going about getting his woman the wrong way. Alisha was very attractive, but she was also very intelligent and had a hellacious temper when provoked. He’d learned that one day when some bozo kept trying to cop a feel. She not only gave the idiot a

cursing that would have had sailors fleeing, she did some move that brought the silly idiot to his knees when he got up in what Alisha called “her personal space.”

Things were going to go from bad to worse if he didn’t get his brother to calm down. Tristan was a real hot head and was the type of person to kick ass first and ask questions later. But right now his Alpha male brother was in danger of being knocked upside his thick skull or, at the very least, cussed out. With a sigh, Brandon intervened. “Okay, Tristan, calm down.”

Tristan turned on Brandon, eyes blazing and yelled, “Get out, Brandon! Now!”

“The hell I will, brother! It’s my office!” Brandon yelled back.

“BRANDON! OUT!” Tristan shouted even louder.

“You can’t tell him to leave his own office!” Alisha was yelling now, too.

Tristan, looking down at Alisha’s pouty mouth, said, “I can and I will. Brandon, leave now!”

“Hell no! Not until you calm down and we come to some sort of agreement!”

Tristan realized that his brother could be just as stubborn as he, and let go of Alisha's hand but didn't move from in front of her. "Okay, Brandon, let's hear what you have to say, and trust me, it'd better be damned good." Tristan folded his arms across his chest, waiting for his brother to speak.

Oh, brother, thought Brandon. Tristan was in full pissed off mode...and appeared to be getting more pissed by the minute. "As I was saying, Alisha, you—"

"Discussion over, Brandon. Leave now, or I won't be responsible for what happens next." Tristan turned back to Alisha.

Alisha looked at Tristan in astonishment. *Seriously*, she thought, *who the hell does this man think he is?* Maybe the family had a history of mental illness. You never know with rich people. Black, white, no matter, rich folk were crazy as hell, and this was one crazy-assed rich dude. He was double crazy if he thought that he could tell her what to do with her time. Well, he could actually take her off the case, but only if it was what Brandon wanted. After all, Brandon was the one who'd hired her. As she stood there looking at the crazy dude, she started to get more pissed,

especially since Brandon wasn't making any moves to straighten this jackass out.

"You can't tell me what to do," Alisha said to Tristan. Alisha whipped her head around to face Brandon. "Brandon, you can take the case from me or you can even fire me—actually you can't fire me unless you have a damned good reason—but you cannot order me around. And nor can you," she said, turning to Tristan. And before either of them could utter a word, she continued, "First, I am a grown woman. Second, the last I checked my daddy was in South Carolina along with my momma; and third," she looked at Brandon, "as far as I'm concerned, your brother here is a complete jackass."

Brandon, recognizing that his brother was barely holding onto his temper, decided it was time to take control of the situation before his secretary called the police on all of them. Tristan really needed to learn how to control his temper, and he didn't want to see what Alisha would do if provoked. After witnessing her anger that once, he didn't want to get her pissed at them.

“Can we all take a seat for a minute? Please?” Brandon looked from one to the other. Neither Tristan nor Alisha looked ready to concede. This should be a very interesting relationship, Brandon thought. His brother didn’t know it yet, but it looked like he had met his match with Ms. Carrington. Brandon couldn’t wait to call their parents and tell them his thoughts on the two people standing in front of his desk. Yep, he was almost certain that Cameron was going to be attached to Alisha’s name. Provided Alisha didn’t brain his brother, which she looked about ready to do. Brandon was grateful that Alisha finally took her seat, but Tristan, being Tristan, kept standing with his arms crossed over his chest.

Well, Brandon thought, I’ll take what I can get from Tristan. I’d better get this show on the road before Tristan forgets that we’re brothers and really starts getting difficult. Sighing, he said, “Look, you two, I realize we have a situation here with the problem with Langston. We don’t need another one with you two about to tear into each other. Let’s handle one situation at a time. Okay?” He looked pointedly at Tristan, who barely nodded. “Now, as I

was saying, Alisha, James has a reputation, and I would prefer that you not be alone with him. We need a way to prevent that from happening without him getting suspicious. Unfortunately, I'm on my way out of town for a few days, but Tristan is here to handle this situation."

Alisha opened her mouth as if to protest, so he hurriedly continued, "And before you say anything, Alisha, even though it doesn't look like it," Brandon shot Tristan a warning glance, "Tristan is very capable of handling the situation. I'll let him go over his qualifications with you, because quite frankly, the two of you are beginning to give me a headache. I think an early lunch is in order, so I'm going to get out of your way and catch up with David at the hospital to see if Nadia's okay. If she's having the baby now she is about two weeks early and if I know my partner, he's making everybody crazy there. I'd hesitate to leave you alone with my brother, Alisha, but I have a feeling you can handle him!" Brandon said with a grin. Grabbing his suit jacket and coat from the coat rack in his office, he put it on and walked towards his office door to leave.

Tristan felt like an ass. He had forgotten all about David and Nadia. “Sorry, bro; give David and Nadia my best. Are you coming back to the office or are you going home?” Tristan said.

“I’m coming back, if for nothing else than to make sure you two haven’t torn apart my office. Besides, we need to have a meeting with James before I leave today.”

“No problem. See you later, then.”

Alisha got up also, “I’ll come back when you get back, Bran—”

“Sit down, Alisha, please,” Tristan said, his temper rising again.

She responded by sucking her teeth. “Whatever,” she said and proceeded to follow Brandon out the door, but Tristan was too quick for her.

“I don’t think so, Beauty,” he said coming up behind her and pulling her back against his frame and locking his arm securely around her waist, preventing her escape. “Let’s talk. Please.”

Pulled against the tight confines of Tristan’s rock hard body a moan slipped from her lips. Not only did

he look good, but damn he felt good too. He was gentle, yet firm, in his hold on her.

Alisha's entire body went on full alert at first contact with his. Her nipples pebbled against the silkiness of her demi bra. For once she was grateful that she had on a jacket. There was no doubt in her mind that Tristan had felt her body's reaction to his closeness, and from the growing bulge nestled against her ass, she knew she was getting to him also.

"Hold on, Beauty," Tristan said. "Brandon, we're straight here."

"Alisha, you sure you're okay?" Brandon asked.

"Of course. I can handle your brother, Brandon," Alisha replied.

"Okaay," Brandon said, smiling and shaking his head as he went to open the door to his office.

As Brandon opened the door, Tristan kept his hold on Alisha, simply spinning her around and turning her in his arms and out of the view of the open doorway. "We don't want to give the office anything else to gossip about, do we, Beauty?" Tristan said.

Brandon rolled his eyes. "You have one hour, Tris, two tops. After that, you're on your own and I

want my damn office back.” Brandon quit the room, closing the door behind him.

“You can let go of me now,” Alisha said, looking up into Tristan’s face.

“Can I, Beauty?” he said with a raised eyebrow. “I don’t think that I can, actually,” he said, knowing in his heart of hearts that he meant it literally. He pulled her more closely into his embrace and swooped down to take her mouth. “Open,” he said. Alisha’s mouth opened on his command. He was taking her mouth with a hunger that was reserved for her only. Never had he felt anything remotely like this with any other women. His mouth mated with hers as would any man claiming his woman. Before Alisha knew what was happening, Tristan had deftly divested her of her jacket, tossing it across the room and onto the leather couch. He pulled her blouse out of the confines of her skirt with both hands, then slipped his hand underneath her bra cup and grasped the full globes in the palms of his hands. He massaged her breasts from the base of the round mound to her long, hard, erect nipples, pulling gentle on the nipples.

Alisha thought she would die from the sensation as their tongues continued their mating dance and his fingers continued giving her nipples pleasure never known before. Her already soaked panties got wetter as her cream seeped from her vagina onto her barely-there thong.

As their tongues mated, something jolted through Tristan. He knew that this was one woman that he had no intention of letting go. Yes, Ms. Alisha Carrington was his full mother-fucking stop. He would kill anyone and anything that tried to come between him and this woman. He had never laid claim to any woman before, but he knew without a shadow of a doubt, as soon as she walked her fine self into Brandon's office, that she was going to be his. Deny it all she wanted, she was his. The kiss lasted for what seemed like an eternity. Tristan could feel Alisha's body began to tremble, indicating that she was close to an orgasm. *Wow, this lady is responsive!* he thought. He wanted to give her pleasure and was about to take it up a notch when Alisha broke free of their kiss.

Alisha pulled her mouth from his. "Wa—wait! What are we doing? Oh my God! We can't do this

here!” She dislodged herself from Tristan’s grasp and looking at her disheveled appearance, she began pacing back and forth, running her fingers through her hair. “This is an office—shit! Do you think they heard us?” she asked Tristan. Not giving him a chance to answer she continued, “This is all your fault!” She turned fiery eyes on him. “Oh man, I have to get out of here,” she was saying as she continued pacing the room.

“Not before we get a few things settled, darlin’.”

“What things?”

“James,” he said as he slowly approached her. “You will not be working with him.”

“And just how am I supposed to get out of it now? I was on my way to his office when I was summoned here.”

“You were not summoned; you were asked.”

Alisha arched her brow and scowled at him. “Semantics...it’s the same thing when it’s coming from your boss.”

Tristan had to smile at her gutsiness. Ms. Carrington was one hell of a woman.

“Stop smirking, and tell me what I am supposed to do now.”

“I’ll handle it,” Tristan said.

“And again...how? I was supposed to meet him in his office over a half hour ago.”

She was so busy pacing back and forth and throwing her hands up in the air that she didn’t see how much her actions were turning him on. Her shirt was still hanging free of her skirt and she hadn’t pulled her bra down over her breast, and each time she lifted her arms he could see the outline of her pointed nipples through the thin ivory silk shirt she was wearing. Each move caused his erection to get stiffer. If his dick got any harder he wouldn’t be able to stand, let alone sit down. If that wasn’t bad enough, as she paced around, she turned her back to him, giving him a nice view of her full ass. Damn! Her ass alone was enough to make a grown man cry. It wasn’t big, nor was it small, but it was round and firm with a softness to it. Tristan began to shift from one foot to the other while reaching down trying to unobtrusively adjust his erection, without success. A desire so potent surged

throughout his body that he found himself saying, “Come here, Alisha.”

Alisha, picking up on the desire in Tristan husky voice, found herself walking towards him, stopping just in front of him. He looked into her hazel eyes and whispered. “Closer.”

Apparently she wasn’t moving fast enough for Tristan, because the next thing she knew he was pulling her closer to him and taking her mouth with a fierceness that aroused her all over again. Alisha lifted her arms, encircling them around Tristan’s neck and running her fingers through his hair.

Tristan’s hands roamed slowly over the globes of Alisha’s ass, squeezing its firmness. Pulling her lower body into his, grinding his erection into her pelvis caused the friction of panties to rub against her clit and send sensation after sensation throughout her body. It was Alisha’s turn to moan then. Tristan knew that he had to stop before he had her spread out on that leather sofa underneath him and stuffed with nine inches of rock-hard cock. Besides, he would disrespect his lady by taking her in his brother’s office—his office maybe, but not his brother’s. “Mmmm,” Tristan was

moaning, drawing his mouth from hers, nipping her bottom lip with little love bites in the process. “Babe, we have to stop. If we don’t stop now, I’ll do something we’ll both regret by taking you right here in my brother’s office.” He took hold of one of her stray curls and placed it behind her ear, kissing her softly on the forehead. “Besides, Brandon will be back soon, and as much as I love my brother, I don’t want to have to put his eyes out for daring to look at my woman in the buff. I don’t think our momma and daddy would appreciate me blinding their son.”

Alisha reluctantly unwound her arms from around his neck, her chest still rising and her breath coming out in spurts she was so turned on. After taking a couple of deep breaths, she looked up at Tristan, embarrassed that she had gotten so out of control. She was dry humping the man in his brother’s office. “Oh my God!” she said covering her face with her hands. “I can’t believe this!”

Tristan removed her hands from covering her face, took her chin and lifted her head so that they were looking into each other’s eyes “Don’t ever be

embarrassed about what we shared. From this day forward, you are my woman. Got it?”

Nodding her head in agreement, she surprised herself by her ready compliance. Alisha released a breath that she wasn't aware that she had been holding and went to move out of his embrace, but he stopped her by pulling her closer to him and tucking her head underneath his chin. “I have a feeling that this is the beginning of something special for the both of us, Beauty, and I won't let you or anyone else cheapen what we're feeling. I know it's sudden—on your part, at least, but I noticed you a while ago.” He continued on, ignoring her gasp. “Yes. I noticed that you would always go in the opposite direction when I approached. And although I admired you, I never imagined that our connection would be as instantaneous or as potent as it is. And I can tell you're as attracted to me as I am to you...you just need to come to grips with it. Now, we need to fix you up and get this discussion on the way before my brother returns. You can use the bathroom in here to fix your clothes if you want.” At her nod, he took her hand and

directed her to the bathroom on the other side of the office.

CHAPTER FOUR

After Alisha closed the door to the bathroom Tristan made his way over to the sofa and sat down with a thud, running his hand down his face and sighing. Man, he had to get himself together, he thought. If his erection didn't go down soon he would have to take his shirt out of his pants to cover himself. Maybe that wasn't such a bad idea, anyway. He pulled his shirt free of his trousers. Tristan was so caught up in his musing that he didn't realize Alisha had come out of the bathroom until she appeared before him.

"How do I look?" she asked, not making eye contact with him.

Tristan looked up at her flustered face and her kiss-swollen lips, smiling inside. He didn't think it would go well for him if he told her she looked as though she had been well and truly kissed. So he said instead, "Simply beautiful." Tristan reached out to take her hand into his, bringing her down beside him on the sofa.

Blushing, Alisha asked, "Okay, where do you want to start?"

"First, let me make myself clear. You will not be working with James on the appeal or anything else for that matter. Got it?"

With a deep sigh, she responded, "Okay, I got it. If you and Brandon don't want him finding out that you are onto him, you are going to have to stall him. I think I know how, if Brandon is agreeable."

"I have to agree first," Tristan said, "and if you have any ideas of using yourself as bait, you can forget about it."

"No. Believe it or not, Tristan, I never trusted the man. I am not stupid. I know he's a leech. I just didn't know how much of a leech he was. It wasn't until my secretary warned me this morning and then you pulling the he-man stunt that it finally hit home. I'm simply saying that I know a way to stall him while you get the evidence you need to put him out of the firm and hopefully brought up on charges. If he's done this to office personnel, there's no telling what the man has done to others outside of the office. He makes me uncomfortable, and I've never allowed myself to be put

in a position where I would have to be in his company for any extended lengths of time, never mind behind closed doors. So you have no worries there. I would've explained it all to you, had you given me a chance."

Tristan was seeing red, his eyes darkening with every word that came out of Alisha's mouth. She didn't realize it but she was revealing a lot to him. In fact, he was pretty sure that the man had tried something with her before and that made him want to walk down the hall and beat the hell out of him. "Alisha, if James made you uncomfortable, then why the hell were you going to his office? And when did the little shit make a pass at you?"

She looked at him as if he were crazy. "Wh—when?"

"Don't insult my intelligence by even trying to deny it. So now let's start again. When did he try something with you?"

"Tristan, that is not the point—"

"WHEN!?"

"A few times... nothing serious—just standing too close to me, and I can feel his eyes on my butt when I walk past him."

“That’s enough, Alisha. I don’t want you alone with him for any reason. Understood?” He was about to say something else when there was a brief knock on the door. It opened and Brandon stuck his head into the office.

“Am I allowed in my office now?”

Alisha smiled and Tristan lifted a brow. “Hmph. Either you forgot how to tell time, or you never left. What happened to the hour or two you promised?”

“Yeah, well I like Alisha, and Mom and Dad love you, so I figured I’d better stick around to make sure you both were unharmed.”

Tristan frowned. “I would never intentionally hurt Alisha. What the hell are you talking about?”

“I know you wouldn’t, but she looked as though she was about to brain you when I left, so I wanted to come to her defense if anyone saw fit to call the police. But it looks like things have taken a turn for the better,” Brandon said, with a huge grin on his face, looking from one to the other. “Uh huh.”

Alisha, with haughtiness only she could pull off, sniffed and held her head up high, like she didn’t have a care in the world.

That had Brandon bending over laughing and Tristan smiling at his woman and bending down to plant a kiss on her lips—which she gladly received and was about to return when Brandon coughed loudly, drawing both of their attention to him.

“Save it, you two,” he said and went to sit behind his desk, since Tristan and Alisha had his sofa. “Have you two decided on a course of action for this James situation?”

“Yes,” Alisha said.

“No,” Tristan said, at the same time.

Brandon looked at them. “Which is it? No or yes?”

“Yes,” Alisha said before Tristan could say anything, and got up from the sofa and walked over to stand in front of Brandon’s desk. “I was saying to Tristan before you came in that I think I have a plan for how to stall James so Tristan can do whatever it is that he does.”

“Go on,” Brandon said, looking at his brother.

Tristan came to stand next her. “Don’t even try it,” Alisha said, eyeing him suspiciously.

“What?” Tristan asked innocently, moving to stand directly in back of her.

“You know what...Anyway, Brandon, I have a—”

Tristan began to blow in her hair, causing a wisp of air to touch her neck. Alisha looked back at him. “Stop it, Tristan. You are not going to sidetrack me.” She then moved to stand by Brandon, which caused Tristan to let out an exasperated sigh.

He threw up his hands. “Okay, let’s hear this famous plan you have.”

Chuckling, Brandon put his head down and waited for Alisha to begin.

“Thank you,” she said, turning back to Brandon. “Okay, since we only have until Tuesday to get this appeal out to all parties involved...we can do a motion to extend our time. We can do it by stipulation or by cause, dependent upon how much time we would need. If we do it by stipulation, we have up to 60 days to perfect the appeal. I suggest we do it by cause. That will give us enough time to perfect. Since we can establish reasonable grounds as to why we can’t reply within the allotted time limit, I can’t see a judge not

allowing it. With what's going on here, I say we have cause. What do you think?"

Both Brandon and Tristan were looking at her with renewed respect.

Brandon spoke first. "I think it's perfect. I'll have Julius work on the enlargement on Monday. Alisha, I might need you to cover a few things for me next week. Can you clear your calendar?"

"No problem."

"You can leave early today and I'll tell everyone that you have a family emergency. We need it to look legit. Meanwhile, Tristan and I will meet with James to inform him of the change in plans, amongst other things.

"I'll have what I need by the end of the day."

With a nod, Brandon continued, "Alisha, you won't have to do the appeal. Julius Bracchard is very capable of doing the appeal—he's done them before. Julius is a good man and a great attorney. He's also licensed in several different states. He's an asset to the firm, and it's about time we started using him to his full capabilities. I don't want this fallout to interrupt the office. I can't have the entire firm falling apart

because of that fool. As it is, I hate to leave Tristan here to handle this mess by himself.”

“You just go handle your business down there. As far as I’m concerned, James is already handled. By the time I’m finished with him he’ll wish he wasn’t born, let alone have pulled the shit he pulled here. And by the way, that fool in HR is gone, correct?”

“I have his replacement already in place for Monday morning. David hired someone yesterday. No one in the firm knows about the new hire. So far, everything is covered. I would’ve taken care of this situation too, had it not been for Sinjin needing my help and David having to be with his wife. I hated to have to call you in, Tris, man... but thanks all the same for coming. I know how much you hate New York,” Brandon said, and then winced once he realized he’d voiced Tristan’s hatred of New York in front of Alisha.

Tristan looked over at Alisha, trying to gauge her reaction to his brother’s outburst. Not being able to read her, he looked at Brandon.

“I’ll do anything for the people I love. Like I said, James is already handled.”

“Good enough,” Brandon said. “Alisha, are you okay with everything?”

“I’m good. I’m going back to my office and pack up my things if I’m to leave early,” she said, making her way towards the door.

As she was leaving, who was standing at the door about to knock, none other than the man himself, James Langston. Before she could make a comment, Tristan was there in between her and James like lightning.

“How can we help you, James?” Tristan asked, barely able to control his anger as he noticed James eyeballing Alisha’s breasts. If this dick-head looked at his woman one more time with those beady little eyes, he would waste his ass. Evidence or not, when he got finished with the little shit, there wouldn’t be a body to take to trial.

“Alisha, you can go do what you need to do before you leave. I will meet you at your office to get the information that I need,” Tristan said, hoping she would catch on.

Alisha looked up at Tristan and then back at Brandon, “Yes, I’ll see you later Tristan.” “Bye,

Brandon. Thanks for the help with my personal problem. I'll let my sister know what you said," she replied as she stepped around James to walk out the door.

"Good girl," Tristan mouthed with a wink when James had looked over at Brandon.

"I needed to see her. It was Alisha I was actually looking for. Betty told me she was in here. Thought it must have been important—but we really need to get started on the appeal, as it's due on Tuesday," James said to no one in particular as he watched Alisha leave the room.

Tristan looked James in the eye, not giving anything away in his facial features. "Yes, and apparently you only advised her of this just before she left for the day yesterday. If it was so important, why did you hold onto it until the last minute?"

"Well, that was an oversight," James said walking further into the room and closing the door behind him. "I got distracted by the Wilson trial and forgot that it was due. My fault," James said holding up his hands as a sign of surrender. "Won't happen again." Looking at Brandon, he said, "In case you

didn't hear yet, Brandon, the jury came back in our favor on the Wilson matter."

Observing Tristan's *I will fuck you up* look at James' flippancy, Brandon answered with little enthusiasm, "Yes, I've heard. Congratulations."

"All in a day's work," James replied, then looked at Tristan with a smirk on his face. "So, Tristan, are you planning on staying in the Big Apple long?"

"As long as I have to. Why?"

"Just asking. I seem to remember that you don't care for New York City."

"I like the city well enough; it's some of the people in the city that I can't tolerate."

"Being a native New Yorker, I would have to agree with you to some extent. We do have some beautiful women though. Real classy. Speaking of classy, I better go and catch Alisha. It sounded like she was leaving. I need to get—"

"I don't think so," Tristan said, stepping closer to James.

Brandon, gauging his brother's intent by the stiffening of his body, quickly jumped in front of Tristan. "Ah, James, I'll have Betty help you with

anything you may need from Alisha. She has an emergency and will be leaving early. I would appreciate it if you didn't bother her at the moment. She has enough to deal with at this time."

"Is everything okay? I mean...there isn't something wrong with her sister, is there? I know she mentioned you helping her with something with her sister. Is it something I can help with?"

"As far as I am concerned, it's personal and not up for discussion. It's Alisha's story to tell. Anything that she discusses with me is confidential unless she states otherwise. All I can say is that she should be back in the office by Monday. If not, she has it on my authority to take all the time she needs. As a matter of fact, I was going to seek you out before I left. I too have an emergency and will be going out of town for a few days; hence, Tristan's appearance in New York and in the office. As you are probably aware, David had to leave and will be on leave for a few weeks with Nadia. She went into labor earlier today—"

"Isn't she early? Is everything okay?" The man's concern lacked sincerity.

“Not sure yet. We’re waiting on a call from David. I’m sure that if anything was wrong he would’ve called by now. Anyway, as I was saying, Tristan will be here until my return. If any problems should arise, Tristan will be the go-to man while I’m gone. If Alisha is not back by Monday, get Julius to work the appeal. Julius can help with it. He is more than capable. In fact, I’m surprised you didn’t seek his assistance from the beginning. He has quite a bit of experience with appeals.”

“Uhhh, yes. I thought of Julius but as he was...involved in a trial. He wouldn’t have been able to meet the time constraints. I asked Alisha because although she doesn’t have any experience with appeals, her research abilities are impeccable.”

Brandon had to give it to James; he had all the right answers. Brandon was even more convinced that Tristan had to pull up something on James that they could use. He knew James would not go down without a fight. The man wasn’t called a shark in the courtroom for no reason. Not only did James know the law, but he knew how to manipulate it to work in his favor. The man was brilliant; unfortunately he was

also a slime—and stupid. Since he decided to use his firm to get his rocks off, he was going down hard.

Brandon and his brothers were probably some of the biggest players that there were. Being rich and successful, it came with the packaging. Women were attracted to that and without any conceit, Brandon knew that they were handsome as well as successful, which made the package much more appealing, as far as women were concerned. With that being said, they never took what wasn't offered, and they always made their intent perfectly clear with any woman they were with; and they were always careful. Neither of them had any baby-mamma drama going on in their lives. Their father had taught them to always hold women in the highest regard. "Respect and protect women," was their motto. He had no respect for any man who abused women in any shape, form or fashion.

"I believe Julius' case has settled. In any case, you can check with him or wait until Monday when Alisha gets back. But as you said, this has to be done by Tuesday. I'll let you decide which way you want to go. Now if you will excuse me, my brother and I have things to discuss." With that Brandon turned his back

on James and walked back to his desk, letting the man know that as far as he was concerned, the discussion was over. James was good, but he was better and James knew that.

“Okay. I guess I can wait until Monday to get with Alisha. I have some things to discuss with my dad anyway. I think I’ll go give him a call. Have a safe trip, Brandon. See you later, Tristan.” With that, James turned on his heels to leave, but Brandon stopped him.

“James, talk to Julius,” Brandon said with finality. “And close the door on your way out.”

“Sure, Brandon, no problem.” James said and left the office hurriedly.

After James had shut the door, Brandon turned to Tristan. “Man, I thought you were gonna kill him.”

“I was.”

Brandon hated when Tristan got like this. *Shit!* “Listen, Tris, don’t kill the man—at least not before I get back,” he said with a smile.

“As long as he stays away from Alisha, he’ll live. He comes on to her again and I will shank his ass. As a matter of fact, let me get back with you later. I need to make sure my lady gets to her car safely. I don’t trust

that little shit as far as I can throw him. I am telling you right here and now, brother, if I have to, I will take him out—with or without evidence. I won't put Alisha or any other woman at this firm at risk to avoid a legal confrontation with James. He's good, but we're better, and we know people that are much better than him or his crazy-assed father could ever wish to be. He was baiting me with Alisha. I have a feeling he suspects I'm interested. What he doesn't know is that he should know I don't make threats, I make promises—and he has a promised ass-whipping coming to him.”

“I agree. Go see your lady off and we can catch up when you get back. I only need about an hour or so of your time, then I have to clear my calendar and reassign some files to other attorneys.”

“Already on it, brother.... By the way, where's Florence? I know James wouldn't have gotten that close to your door if your secretary was around.”

“She went to pick her granddaughter up from school. The nurse called while you and Alisha were in here having your...uh...discussion. They couldn't reach her daughter, so they called her. The child has a fever. I told her to take the rest of the day to do what she had

to do. I can get one of the other secretaries to help me if I need it. I am pretty self-sufficient anyway, so I should be okay for the next few hours.”

“Are you going by the hospital to check on David and Nadia before you leave? I know you never went, being as you were only gone for about twenty minutes—a half hour tops.”

“I plan on it, since I have a late flight. He’s supposed to call me and let me know what’s going on. If I don’t hear from him soon, I’ll text his cell phone. I know he would want to be kept in the loop on the James situation. I won’t bother him with it today. I’ll text him your cell number too, just in case he needs something, and I’ll give you his before I leave.”

“No problem. Tell him to only use my cell phone number if it’s an emergency. Other than that I don’t want to hear from him. I won’t call unless it’s absolutely necessary. I have plans this weekend and I don’t plan on being disturbed,” Tristan said.

“Those plans wouldn’t happen to include Alisha, would they?”

Tristan smiled and said, “You bet.”

“Is the lady aware of your plans for the weekend?”

“No.”

“Good luck—you’re going to need it, bro. Now get out of my office so I can get some work done and you can see your lady safely to her car. Oh yeah, Tris,” Brandon said, smiling, “bro, you might want to tuck your shirt back in before you leave this office.”

“Piss on you, Brandon. I’m going to give Domino a call. He’s the fastest one I know to work on this thing with James. If there is some dirt to be found, Domino Longhorn will find it.” With that, Tristan walked out of Brandon’s office in search of Alisha.

CHAPTER FIVE

Sitting behind her desk in her office, Alisha began to go over the day's events. She couldn't believe that she'd let Tristan kiss her like that, and in the office no less. Her reaction to Tristan had caught her by surprise. She hadn't been attracted to anyone since being badly hurt by her previous boyfriend, Wayne, who had cheated on her. But Tristan—Tristan had just awakened long dormant feelings in her. Just thinking about Tristan made her wet. The man was *fine* with a capital "*F*". One kiss had her body tingling. Two kisses had her dry humping him in Brandon's office. There was no doubt in her mind that she would have come right then and there had they not put the brakes on things. She could feel his heat when he had taken hold of her hips and ground his erection into her crotch. The man was seriously packing some heat. She had no doubt that Tristan was very well endowed. When he had kissed her, the places on her body that she thought were dead had come alive—big time! The man

could kiss. Mercy! Mercy! The man had places on her body tingling that hadn't been touched in so long she could claim she was still a virgin. Well, almost—her toys kept her occupied.

Alisha jumped at the sound of her intercom humming. She'd been so busy reminiscing, getting herself all hot again, that she hadn't realized that her secretary was buzzing her. She picked up her extension, "Yes, Betty?"

"Alisha, Trevon is on line four. It's his second time calling. I left you a message. He called while you were in Mr. Cameron's office," Betty advised her.

"Oh shit! I forgot to call him back. Ugh! I don't have time for my overprotective brother right now! Dang! Thanks, Betty. Put him through," Alisha requested.

"Hello, Alisha speaking. How may I help you?" she said primly.

"Stop being a smart ass, Lisa. I know Betty already told you who was on the other line, and she also told you that this is my second time calling your office. Why didn't you ring me back?" Trevon barked.

Because, brother dear, I have been doing what I was hired to do—work. What’s up, Trevon?” Alisha retorted rather smartly.

“I’ve called you more than once at home and haven’t received a call back. Then I call you at the office to find out you were in with the bosses and couldn’t be disturbed. What’s up with that?” Trevon sounded concerned.

“There’s something going on here that I can’t get into with you over the phone, Trevon, but I promise to give you a call when I get home. How’s that?” she asked.

“Close but no cigars, sis. Is it something that involves you?” Trevon asked.

“It kind of, sort of does,” she replied reluctantly.

“What do you mean, Lisa? Is someone giving you a hard time? You seem to like Brandon and David,” he said. Alisha started at the sound of someone knocking on her door. Before she could say hello, Tristan stuck his head in, his eyes roaming her office, then stepped inside and closed the door. Alisha raised her brow at Tristan curiously when he came to stand in front of her desk. “What?” Alisha whispered to Tristan.

“Who’s on the phone?” Tristan inquired.

“My brother, why?” she asked, eyeing him defensively.

“Lisa, are you still there?” Trevon questioned.

“Y-yeah, Trevon, I’m here. Listen, I’ll give you a call as soon as I get home. There’s something I need to take care of,” Alisha answered.

“Make sure you do, Lisa, or you will most definitely be seeing me,” Trevon barked out before hanging up.

At the sound of the dial tone in her ear Alisha replaced the phone on the receiver and then turned to address Tristan.

“Tristan, what are you doing here?”

“You didn’t think I was going to let you get away that easily, did you, Beauty?”

“What in the world are you talking about?” Alisha asked, puzzled.

“We have unfinished business, you and I, and I’ve come to finalize our plans.”

Alisha was confused. “I don’t remember making any plans with you.”

“That’s why I’m here, Sugar. We need to finalize our plans for the weekend.”

“Again, and read my lips... I-did-not-make-plans-with-you-for-the-weekend! The thing with me leaving early was a ruse for James’ benefit. You and I both know that. And doesn’t Brandon need to see you before he leaves? Don’t play with me, Tristan.” Alisha retorted, trying to sound stern but her voice sounding husky—needy, in fact. Oh yeah, her body was still on fire from his ministrations earlier, so having him in her office now only added to her excitement.

“First, I don’t intend to ever play when it comes to you and I, and second, those kisses we shared that had you on the verge of coming, and my dick so hard I had to use my shirt to cover my hard-on from my brother, sealed our plans for the weekend,” he said walking behind her desk, lifting her out of her chair, sitting down, and placing her on his lap, facing sideways. Once she was seated on his lap, he lifted her chin so that their mouths were leveled. “Open,” he commanded.

She opened her mouth without protest, parting her lips, then groaned as Tristan sucked her tongue

into his mouth. He kissed her so well, using his tongue to stroke various parts of her mouth to bring her the most intense pleasure. He wanted her to come and he knew just how to do it.

Her groans became louder as the kiss went on and on. Her hands started to roam over his rock-hard abs and back up to entangle her fingers in his hair, wrapping a lock of hair around her fingers, pulling his head in closer for a deeper kiss.

She was so close he could tell. He needed to help her along before she had Betty knocking on the door thinking something was wrong. He put his hand up her skirt, which had ridden up, and was pleasantly surprised to feel a garter and stockings. He raised her skirt farther to have a look! *Sweet!* “That’s nice, babe! Very sexy! Were you expecting me?” His hand stroked her inner thighs, then moved up to her crotch, and he was further turned on to feel a barely-there, lacy thong covering the treasure that lay beyond.

“Bad girl,” he whispered, as his finger probed past the thong then continued to ravish her lips, tongue, and the inside of her mouth, bringing her extreme pleasure as she began to writhe and moan

under his assault. His middle finger gently probed her sopping wet sex as she moaned in pleasure, spreading her legs a little and moving around on his lap. “Wow, is this all for me, Beauty?” he asked, hooking the end of his finger and scooping out some of her moisture. He brought it to his lips, licking her cream from his finger erotically, then inserted it back into Alisha, and started stroking her again, in and out, in and out. Alisha, panting and moaning, squirmed and ground herself into his erection. When she almost came off of his lap, he held her down with his other hand. “Shush, honey. Remember Beauty, you have to keep quiet—you don’t want company...or do you?” Tristan asked, looking mischievously into her eyes.

Alisha would have answered if she could, but she could only shake her head no, as she was panting too hard.

Tristan reclaimed Alisha’s lips—sealing them in a mind-tingling kiss while simultaneously adding another finger to the one that was already inside of her, and gently curling his fingers upward while pressing the palm of his hand down on her almost

bare mound, creating friction with his hand and fingers, his thumb stroking her clit.

She made a strangled noise, as her body began to trembling non-stop. Tristan added a little more pressure to her clit and then it happened—she flew apart in his embrace, crying out her surrender into his mouth then going limp against him. “Ah, what a beautiful sight to behold,” he said, looking down into the face of his future bride and removing his fingers from inside of her. Tristan felt like thumping his chest, he was so proud. Tristan knew that he shouldn’t have done this to her in the office but he needed to show her real quick that he had no intentions of letting her go. He gave her a chance to recover. Gently rubbing his hands up and down her spine, he whispered to her, “You okay, Beauty?”

“Omigod, Tristan! What did you do to me?” she gasped.

Chuckling, Tristan kissed her already upturned lips. “You’re even more beautiful when you climax, you know that?” he murmured against her lips.

“My God, Tristan! I almost blacked out there! You have very talented fingers—and that thing you did

with your tongue in my mouth was a real turn-on! I've never experienced that before while kissing," she murmured, her body still tingling.

"I kissed you in a special way to stimulate your arousal even more. It's a very intense orgasm that causes you to climax faster than you normally would. You're so responsive that I didn't want to give you too much too soon. Gloves off when we leave this office today," he muttered softly.

A blush appeared on Alisha's already flushed face. She was blushing profusely under Tristan's intense gaze. "So you've kissed like this before?" She spoke rather quietly.

"Don't ask questions that you're not ready to hear the answers to, Beauty. But you can be sure that what's between you and me is only between you and me. I don't cheat. Cheating is a waste of time and energy, and quite frankly, I'm too old to play stupid games like that," he stated, adjusting her on his lap as he tried to get comfortable. He was still sporting a hard-on.

Alisha felt his erection still against her bottom when he adjusted her, "But you didn't—"

“Oh, don’t worry, I will. Not here, though. This time was for you. Now get your sexy ass off my lap before Ms. Betty comes in here and sees more than her aging eyes can handle,” he said, laughing. Lifting her off his lap, he tried to adjust his cock in his boxers as much as he possibly could. The darn thing had barely gone down. Looking over at Alisha, he found that she had adjusted her clothing and was now pinning her hair back. Her lips were still swollen from their kisses, causing her to look even sexier than she already was.

Tristan and Alisha both heard the noise at the same time. Someone was turning the doorknob of her locked door. When it didn’t open, whoever was on the other side of the door, knocked. Tristan raised his brow apprehensively at Alisha. She shrugged her shoulders in an “I don’t know” gesture. Tristan nodded towards her desk, motioning for Alisha to sit behind it.

“Why?” she whispered.

Tristan shook his head at her and gestured with his finger on his lips to be quiet. At her nod, he quietly unlocked the door and stood behind it, motioning for Alisha to answer the knock.

“It’s open, come in,” she said.

The door opened to reveal James Langston standing on the other side.

“James, what are you doing here?” she asked giving him a puzzled look.

“Couldn’t stay away. I was looking forward to the two of us working together tonight. I thought you knew I’d do anything to have you—I mean help you.” he said, correcting his slip of the tongue. “I’m disappointed that I won’t be working with you yet.” he said suggestively, as he licked his lips, then smiled, his eyes roaming over the contours of her breast. “Maybe I can assist you to your car? I hear the parking garage can be dangerous for a beautiful woman like you—you never know who might be lurking about.” His suggestive words and leering tone made Alisha’s skin feel clammy, as a shiver of apprehension coursed down her spine.

“What do you mean? I’ve been here for five years and have never had a problem before.” He stopped smiling and his eyes went cold.

Tristan had heard enough. He shot out from behind the door to confront James. “What the fuck are

you doing here, Langston?" He shouted so loud that Alisha came from behind her desk to go stand at the door, only to have Tristan block her way, pushing her behind him, and away from James.

James didn't answer Tristan; he just stood there looking shocked and suddenly nervous.

"Tristan, calm down," Alisha said anxiously from behind him.

"I am calm," he said to Alisha, yet looking at James. "I asked you a question, Langston, and I expect an answer. Now!"

"A-Ah...I just came by to see if I coul—"

"If you could what, James?" Tristan bellowed, not letting James finish what he was about to say. "I could have sworn that you were advised to not bother Ms. Carrington, as she was leaving early for a family emergency." Tristan stood there staring at James staring him directly in the face

Betty and almost all the office staff had gathered around outside of Alisha's office, no doubt wondering what was going on. Most were trying to see what was going on inside of Alisha's office since no one had bothered to shut the door after James.

“Man, I’m sorry. I just offered to assist her to her car,” Langston went on. “Besides, I didn’t know you and Alisha had a thing going on—I mean Ms. Carrington,” James replied smartly.

“Excuse me! I dare you to repeat what you just said, James,” Tristan commanded, his voice deadly. So deadly, in fact, that James backed up a bit with fear in his eyes. James’ slight retreat wasn’t enough to detour Tristan. James backed up and Tristan approached him. When he was close enough to James, he bent down and whispered in his ear, “If you ever try to disrespect the lady like that again, I’ll bury your ass. You got that, you little prick? Now apologize to the lady.” Tristan waited to see what James would do.

Clearing his throat, James timidly said, “No disrespect, Alisha. I hope all is well at home,” then turned and walked away nervously.

After James’ departure Tristan gave the hangers-on a look that had everyone scattering at once. Alisha’s secretary approached them.

“I’m sorry, Mr. Cameron, Alisha. I had just stepped away from my desk. I never would have allowed him in her office,” Betty said. “That man has

some nerve. I'm just glad you were here, Mr. Cameron. I don't trust that man."

"I'm glad I was here as well, Betty. No need to apologize. James had been given orders earlier. He should have heeded them," Tristan commented.

"Yeah, Betty, it's not your fault. Don't worry about it," Alisha said, stepping from behind Tristan.

"Okay. If you need me, I'll be at my desk," Betty replied.

Tristan guided Alisha back into the office and closed the door. "Appears as though our boy James has a hearing problem," Tristan remarked.

Scowling, Alisha asked, "What do you mean?"

"Brandon specifically told him to get someone else to work on the appeal with him—one of the male attorneys—and he even told him who to speak with. It appears James has his mind set on having you. Doesn't take orders very well, our James. Let's see if I can help him along. Gather your things, Alisha, and wait for me," Tristan was saying. "I have to stop by to see Brandon and then James, and then we can leave."

"W-what, I can't leave with yo—."

Someone was knocking on her door again.

“Who is it?” both Alisha and Tristan barked out.

“Brandon. Can I come in?” Brandon asked.

“Sure,” Tristan responded. “It’s open. Come on in.”

Alisha glowered at him. “Tristan, this is my office.”

“Oh, so you don’t want Brandon to come in?” he asked.

“Stop being an ass,” she said as Brandon opened the door and walked in, closing it behind him.

“You two still at it?” Brandon remarked. “Save it,” he replied before they could protest. “What was all the commotion about?”

Tristan answered before Alisha could. “Langston was here. He tried to walk right into Alisha’s office without knocking.”

Brandon looked angry. “I thought we told him that—”

“Yeah, we did. Seems he’s made up his mind on some things,” Tristan commented, nodding towards Alisha.

“What?” she asked, clearly frustrated.

“He’s still standing?” Brandon asked angrily dismissing Alisha’s outburst in favor of looking at his brother.

“It took all of my control and then some not to knock him on his sorry ass. This is your office Brandon, you asked me to wait and I did this time, barely. I can’t promise that I will for long though.”

“Good enough. We need something quickly, Tristan. This dude is getting bolder,” Brandon said. “I’ll go see James now. Tristan, I’ll meet you in my office afterwards,” he said.

Alisha turned on Tristan as soon as Brandon closed the door. “I’m not leaving with you, Tristan, especially after what James implied in front of everyone,” she retorted hotly.

“And you won’t. Listen darlin’, I don’t trust Langston. The only way I can assure myself that I won’t kill the man is to get you away from here until I can put a plan into action. It’s Friday, and you don’t have to be back until Monday. Hopefully I’ll have enough on Langston to have him out of here by then. If not, I’ll take matters into my own hands. Now, as soon as I leave, gather your things and I’ll meet you in

the garage. At no time—and I repeat at no time—are you to go to that garage by yourself. Do I make myself clear, Alisha?” he asked.

Tristan’s tone brooked no argument and Alisha could only nod her head in agreement.

“Good girl,” Tristan said, quickly kissing her on the lips and slipping out of her office.

Alisha felt she could take care of herself, but she was too smart to put herself in unnecessary danger either. She knew when to act and when not to. And right now, she needed a shower. After what she had experienced with Tristan, she needed a long soak. Gathering her things, she buzzed her secretary, “Betty, I am leaving for the weekend.”

“Sure. Have a nice weekend, honey. Enjoy yourself,” Betty said with a smile.

Alisha smiled blushing slightly, knowing that Betty had to know what she and Tristan had been doing in her office. Especially since Tristan was acting all possessive and protective now. Oh well, she would worry about all of that on Monday. She was going home. Retrieving her coat, she put it on, then grabbed her handbag and briefcase, locked her office door and

left. Saying goodbye to Betty, she went through the reception area, and passed Lorna, waving goodbye, “Bye, Lorna. See you on Monday,” Alisha said on her way out the door.

Lorna looked at Alisha in surprise “Oh, you’re leaving for the day?” she asked.

“Yes. Something came up and I’ll be starting my weekend early,” Alisha replied.

“Is everything okay?” Lorna asked with a worried look.

“Everything’s fine, but if James asks, I have a family emergency. I’ll call you once I get home, okay,” Alisha pleaded.

“Yeah, you do that, Chica. I’ll be waiting,” Lorna replied.

CHAPTER SIX

Upon entering the parking garage, Alisha saw Tristan leaning against her car. As she approached her vehicle she came to a stop in front of him. “How did you know which car was mine?”

He smiled sheepishly, “I asked Betty.”

“Oh great!” she muttered, trying to sound angry and throwing up her hand for added effect.

“Come on, Beauty, you know you’re not angry. Besides, I needed to give you something,” he said.

“What?” she asked.

“The key to my apartment,” he told her.

She opened her mouth to object but Tristan cut her off.

“Before you object, I’m worried about your safety. I want you to go there and wait for me. I can’t leave yet. I have to take care of some things first. You have your BlackBerry with you?” he asked her. At her nod, he continued. “Good, program my number into your phone.”

With BlackBerry in hand, Alisha entered the digits as Tristan said them aloud. She then gave him her cell phone number.

“Good. Call me when you get to my apartment,” Tristan said, handing Alisha a piece of paper with the address to his apartment.

“Tristan, I know where your condo is. After all, you and Brandon are in the same building. I can’t go to your apartment now, though—I don’t have any clothes with me,” she muttered.

He looked at her like she had grown two heads. “My unit is 29D and you won’t need any clothes, darlin’,” he said rather knowingly.

“I can’t go without clothes the entire weekend. I have to come in to work on Monday. What am I going to do about th—”

Tristan pulled Alisha’s body into his, leaning forward to capture her lips, stopping her flow of words. He had cased the garage before she had entered, confirming that no one was about. Grabbing hold of her buttocks, he ground his erection into her. Removing his lips from hers, he bent down and whispered in her ear, “Beauty, unless you want to be

thoroughly fucked inside this parking garage, I suggest you get in your car and head over to my apartment. Trust me, I am so hard right now I can hammer nails with my dick, and I don't have a problem with lifting that cute little skirt up and pushing myself so deep inside of you, folks will think we're Siamese twins—stuck together. Got it?" he grunted.

Tristan's suggestive words and his hard cock pressing at her had her breathing hard and creaming, juice flowing down between her thighs. Trying to hide his effect on her, Alisha turned away from Tristan and opened the door to her Lexus SUV. "You better have something for me to wear to work on Monday," she said, to cover her obvious arousal as she got into her car and fastened her seatbelt. Then she flashed him a smoldering look and started to drive away.

"Remember to call me when you get to the apartment, Beauty," he called after her, a big smile on his face.

Tristan and Brandon both owned apartments in one of New York's more trendy condominium complexes. She was glad the apartment offered valet

parking—trying to find parking in New York was a nightmare.

Arriving in front of Tristan's building, she gave the doorman Tristan's unit number and her keys for parking her car, then entered the elegant lobby complete with concierge. "Damn, this place is awesome!" she whispered.

Alisha took the elevator up to Tristan's unit, opened the door, and walked into the most gorgeous and emptiest apartment she had ever seen. She started laughing hysterically. She was still laughing when she felt the vibration of her cell phone in her handbag. Taking it out and looking at her caller ID, she saw that it was Tristan. She stopped laughing long enough to answer. "Hello."

"Hello, Beauty. Are you in the apartment?" Tristan asked.

"A-Ah, Y-y-yes," she acknowledged barely keeping another round of laughter from spilling from her lips.

"Beauty, are you okay?" he asked.

"Yes, Tristan, I got here okay and all is well. That is...Tristan, can I ask you something?"

“You know you can. What do you want to know?”

“Why isn’t your apartment furnished?”

“I only stay in it when I’m in New York, which isn’t often. I never got around to furnishing it. Never gave it a thought, to be honest. The master bedroom is completely furnished. I eat at the island in the kitchen, and that has seating. By the way, I may be here for a while. I can bring home dinner or order out once I get there. Which do you prefer?”

“Bring something. There’s this nice Italian place close to the office that I love. If you wouldn’t mind I’d love something from there?”

“Mario’s or Luigi’s?”

“Luigi’s.”

“Luigi’s it is. The building has maid service, so the fridge should be fully stocked. Brandon usually lets them know when I’m coming to town. Fix yourself lunch if you want—I know you didn’t get a chance to eat. The master bedroom has a television. Feel free to use it. Make yourself at home.”

“Okay. Thanks, Tristan. I think I’ll make a little lunch and then call my sister. Tristan, is everything

okay at the office?" Alisha asked, the concern evident in her voice.

"Everything is fine, Beauty. Don't worry. Everything is under control. I'll catch you up to date when I get home. Relax," Tristan responded.

"Tristan, please be careful," Alisha said.

"I am always careful, Beauty. Listen, I need to get going. The longer I'm here means the longer I'm away from you. If you need me, you have my cell...use it," Tristan said, disconnecting the call.

Closing her phone, Alisha stepped out of her pumps to avoid scratching Tristan's floors, which seemed to be made out of a very dark maple/walnut. She then went in search of the master bedroom. She would give Tristan the honor of showing her around the place when he got home. She didn't have too far to go. The master bedroom was to the right of the living room and dining area. "Wow!" was all she could say. Tristan's huge bedroom more than made up for his scarcely furnished apartment. In the middle of the room sat an oversized maple and oak sleigh bed with glass-shelved nightstands attached. An Italian area rug sat in the middle of the room with a coffee table in the

middle. The bedroom had oversized windows with a picturesque view of Manhattan. Walking across his bedroom and into the en suite restroom, she was again in awe of the lavishness of the room. “Sweet!” A spa bath and Jacuzzi shower. *Oh, my damn!* If Alisha didn’t know any better she would have thought she had walked up into MTV Cribs. Alisha’s family was very well off, but not this well off. This was *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* kind of wealth.

Alisha’s stomach grumbled, reminding her that she hadn’t had lunch. “Oh well, time to go search for food,” she mumbled, as she placed her pumps next to a pair of Tristan’s shoes and walked in her stocking feet back to the kitchen area. With her cell phone still in hand, she dialed her brother Trevon.

“Hello, Lisa,” Trevon said. “What’s going on at the office?”

That was Trevon for you, straight to the point. “There’s this attorney at the firm, James Langston, who has been accused of sexually harassing two former employees. Brandon, David, and Brandon’s brother, Tristan, are investigating the allegations. They are trying to keep the investigation on the down

low because of James' father's connections and because James is a cracker-jack attorney and this could become a nasty litigation," she said.

Trevon whistled loudly. "Man! How did Brandon and David get mixed up with this dude?" he asked. "Wait a minute—does that mean this James has been hassling you, too? Is this what your involvement is, Lisa?"

Alisha began to go over what had transpired over the last few days, including what had happened in her office earlier today, then held the phone away from her ear as Trevon began to call off a few choice words of what he was going to do to James.

"Honestly, Trevon, I didn't know the man was fixed on me. I've never felt comfortable in his presence, but that was mainly because he thinks he's God's gift to women," she said, trying to calm her brother down.

"I don't like this, Lisa. If he's been accused twice of this already, and considering his actions in your office, he could be dangerous. I don't like the fact that you're in New York alone, Lisa. I think I'll get Darion and come pay you a visit. Darius is not due to leave for

a few more weeks,” Trevon said. Alisha’s brother Darius was Special Ops for the Navy.

“Trevon, please don’t come,” Alisha pleaded. “The Cameron men seem to have it all under control.” Alisha hoped he would accept her explanation and not question her further. No such luck. “The Cameron’s are protecting their investment. Who’s protecting you? No, I’ll be in New York tomorrow morning,” he said.

“Trevon—”

“That’s final, Lisa,” he said cutting off her next words. “You said you pretended you had a family emergency. Are you at home now?” he asked.

“Yes,” she lied.

“Good. Make sure all of your windows and doors are locked, and don’t answer the door unless you are absolutely sure who’s on the other side of it,” he said.

“Trevon, I’m not stupid. I know how to take care of myself,” she said.

“I know you’re not stupid, Lisa, and I know you can handle yourself, but you’re still a young woman living alone with this man’s attentions on you. I’m worried that sexual harassment is not all this man has done. Usually there’s more,” he said. “Practice

precaution, sis, that's all I'm saying. See you tomorrow. Please be careful. Love you."

"Love you too, and I promise I'll be careful," she said. "Bye."

"Bye, sis."

Alisha placed her cell phone on the kitchen's island and went over to the fridge to grab a bottle of water and the fixings for a sandwich. After making her sandwich, she sat down to eat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

After seeing Alisha to her car, Tristan had gone in to see Brandon. While in the office with Brandon, David had called in a panic saying they were going to have to take the baby by cesarean section, so Brandon left to go be with him until his and Nadia's families got there.

Leaving Brandon's office, Tristan went back to his office to call the Atlanta-based office to see how things were going and to check his messages and call Alisha. After talking to Alisha, he dialed Domino's private line. Using Domino's private line would clue him in on that fact that it was an emergency.

"Speak," was all Dom said.

"Dom, I need a favor, man, and this one's personal," Tristan replied.

"What?" Dom asked.

Tristan began to give him the particulars about James and what had transpired in Alisha's office earlier.

Domino let loose a string of expletives, “Son of a bitch. How did Brandon and David get hooked up with him in the first place? Hell, they could have had you investigate him, Tristan. You still have as many connections I do.”

“Dom, nobody has as many connections as you do, and besides, I think his daddy did a little fudging for him. He came highly recommended, so Brandon and David just did the basic stuff—a mistake they won’t be making in the future, I can guarantee that. Dom, just between you and me, this is personal, man.”

“Yeah, I heard you the first time. How personal?” Domino wanted to know.

“Very.” Tristan said.

“Alisha? Name sounds familiar. What’s her last name?”

“Carrington,” Tristan answered.

“Shit. I knew the name sounded familiar. Man, two of her brothers, Darion and Trevon, were Texas Rangers. The younger brother, Darius, is a SEAL. All three are crazy as hell and very protective of their two little sisters. Haven’t met the younger sister. I’ve met Alisha—she’s stunning. No wonder—”

“Watch it Dom,” Tristan warned his buddy.

“Cool your britches, old man. No disrespect. The lady is beautiful. No wonder Langston has his sights on her. Be careful, man. Trevon let me in on a little bit of something that went on with her about ten years ago,” Domino said.

Tristan’s whole body stiffened “What?”

“He didn’t go into detail. Just said she caught her long-term boyfriend in bed with another woman. Trevon had gone to New York and came back saying he’d taken care of the situation. Didn’t ask him what he did to the man because I know what I would have done in his situation,” Domino said.

It was Tristan’s turn to let loose then. “That sorry excuse for a man! He’d better hope I never run into his worthless ass while I’m in New York, ’cause I am definitely going to finish what her brother started. You get his name?”

“No, I didn’t. Man, listen, let me get to checking on this dude. I should have something for you in about ten or fifteen minutes. Sit tight. Can I call you back on this line?”

“Yeah, it’s my cell.”

“Bye,” Domino said, disconnecting the call.

Tristan had to shake his head at Domino’s abrupt good-bye. “And they say I’m intense.” Tristan leaned back in his chair, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Man...what a day.” When Brandon had called for him to come to New York yesterday, he’d had no idea that his life would change in the blink of an eye. But yet, here he was waiting on information from Dom, so he could get back to his woman. Yes, she was his. He had claimed her on sight. The fact that she was there in his apartment should make anyone who knew him realize that she was special. He never brought women back to his apartment. Hell, he was only there to sleep when he was in New York. He wanted Alisha to get used to him because he had no intentions of going anywhere and intended to make sure she wouldn’t want to go anywhere either. They were both in this for the long haul. Whatever it took, he would see to her happiness. The fact that she had been hurt before really pissed him off.

Tristan never understood why men, or women for that matter, entered into relationships with no thought of ever remaining faithful to the relationship.

True, he and his brothers loved women but they made sure that the women they dated knew the score—that they didn't do commitment and weren't looking for anything permanent.

Tristan dated one woman at a time. Hell, it was hard enough trying to handle one woman, never mind two. How Brandon and Sinjin did it was beyond him. What Brandon and Sinjin did couldn't be called dating by any stretch of the word. What they had were sex buddies.

Tristan's days of meaningless sex were over. Tristan had to smile when he thought about Ms. Alisha Carrington, soon to be Mrs. Alisha Cameron. She didn't know it, but she had sealed her fate to him the moment she was in his arms. Really from the first meeting he knew she would be the one and only one for him. He was just that sure. He hoped she felt the same way about him. Dom had said her brothers were crazy; well, they would have to get used to him because he wasn't going anywhere. If he had to fight for her, he would. He hoped that race wouldn't be an issue. He didn't give a rat's ass if he was Caucasian and she African-American—to hell with all that. She was

his woman, and he didn't care what color she was. He wasn't giving her up and that was that. His family could go to hell too if they had a problem with it. As long as he had Alisha, everybody else, as far he was concerned, could fuck off. Hell, he didn't know if she had ever dated outside of her race, but he hoped she didn't have a problem with that. *This southern boy is here to stay.*

He had to settle this thing with James quickly. There was something very sinister about that dude. Having dealt with all types of people in his line of work, he had a feeling that being a lawyer wasn't all that James was into. He wanted James away from Alisha, the firm, and off the streets. For now getting him out of the firm and away from Alisha would have to do. From the looks of the lust in James' eyes when he looked at Alisha, the man would stop at nothing to have her. The fact that James had gone in search of Alisha, knowing full well that he and Brandon had advised otherwise, let Tristan know that James thought that he was untouchable, which was definitely a mistake on his part. James also made the mistake of seeking his woman out. He would make damn sure

that the little man realized that Alisha was off limits to him—and anyone else who had their sights set on her. Tristan was so engrossed in his thoughts that he didn't realize that the buzzing sound he was hearing was his cell phone ringing. He immediately answered, knowing that it was Dom from the distinctive ring. "Tristan."

"Yeah, man, I got some info. Is there a fax machine near you?"

"Yes, there's one in my office. Why? What's up?"

"Give me the number and I'll fax you what I have so far. Take a look at the report. Afterwards, give me a call to discuss. I should have something else shortly," Domino said.

Tristan called off the fax number to Domino.

"Okay, it's coming over now. I'll be waiting for your call."

* * *

Tristan got up and walked over to the fax machine. By Domino's tone, he had a bad feeling that he wasn't going to like what Dom had found on James.

At the sound of the fax machine ringing Tristan's entire body went on full alert while he awaited the full transmission of the fax. Page after page was being transmitted. After about the tenth page, Tristan let loose, "The hell!" Finally, Tristan retrieved about twenty pages of documents from the fax machine and took them over to his desk to review.

As he was reading, the contents of the pages had the hairs on Tristan's arms standing up. "Dammit! Why didn't anyone pick up on any of this shit before? The fucking man is certifiably insane. My God!" Sexual harassment was the least of their concerns. "There's no way there isn't going to be fallout for the firm when this shit comes out." Slamming his hand on the desk after reading the last page of the documents, Tristan yelled out, "Fuck! This is some sick shit." Running his hand across his face Tristan could have up-chucked everything that was in his belly after reading that report. Picking up his cell, he called Domino.

Domino didn't say hello, just spoke: "Man, is that some sick shit or what?"

"Damn, Dom! How did he keep all this crap hidden?" Tristan asked.

“I surmise that your boy James has greased a lot of palms and has called in a lot of favors in order to keep this stuff covered up. It says here that he took a sabbatical during his last year at Harvard Law and returned to finish his degree two years later. Makes you wonder why a person would need a two-year sabbatical? Nothing in the report says where he took that sabbatical. I’m still working on getting that information,” Domino said.

“You think you can have something for me by Monday? I need this settled with minimal damage to the firm and Brandon’s and David’s reputations. Geeze, David’s got enough on his mind with Nadia going into labor early. Brandon went to the hospital to be with him and then he’s off to New Mexico for some crap Sinjin’s caught up in. I was going to have you check and see what was up with Sinjin, but I need this situation handled quickly and expeditiously. James is very smart, so I don’t want him catching on to what we’re doing before we have enough evidence to charge him with something. I had a confrontation with him earlier. He’s already suspicious about me and Alisha. I don’t care about that, though. This is one sick bastard,

and my threat earlier might not faze him.” Tristan ran his hand through his hair.

“And it looks like the statutes have expired on some of this stuff. But I’m pretty sure that if we can locate them, the District Attorney can use some of these women as witnesses. We would need their cooperation, of course. Says here the mother divorced Langston Sr. immediately after the incident with the sister. Any idea of where the mother is? If we find her, we can probably find the sister.”

“Yes. The mother is married to a lawyer by the name of Bradley Marks and is currently living in Chicago. Doesn’t say where the sister is. As a matter of fact, there’s been nothing on the sister since the incident, no current address, school records, nothing. There has to be something? How can a thirteen-year-old vanish after an incident like that with no mention of where she is now? Something’s up with that,” Domino said.

“Can you blame her, man? How the hell did he get away with that crap? Not even a mention in the papers, nothing. We need to speak with the officers

who handled the incident, the doctors, nurses, anybody on duty that night,” Tristan said.

“That’s the thing, man. The incident was never reported to the police. If it was, there isn’t a police report. Probably why junior is still free today. My guess is that his father covered his ass in high school and in college. I’ll get a man on the college angle too. I bet you ten to one that sabbatical he took was at some fancy hospital to keep from him being locked up,” Domino said.

“I’m thinking the same thing,” was Tristan’s response. “We have a lot of questions and no answers yet. I can assure you more than one head is going to roll because of this. The man’s been accused of stalking, several rapes, drugs, and God only knows what else he has hidden, and has gotten away with it so far. One...two...three...hell, five out of the ten women worked here at the firm! Shit! Sinjin picked a hell of a time to get into whatever he’s up to. I need him and Brandon here. If I go looking into these women’s files, it’s going to raise suspicion. As it is, I’m going to be late getting home and Alisha’s at my place alone. I need to make sure she’s safe, but I have to take

care of some of this stuff before I leave today,” Tristan said, stressed.

“Listen man, I have to go. Call my cell anytime with an update. I’m going to try and reach Brandon before he heads out, to give him a heads-up on what’s going on. He only has knowledge of two women. He and David are going to go ape shit over this. God knows what damage it could do to our firm. They didn’t build up this company from scratch, through hard work and perseverance, for this asshole to tear it down with his insanity.”

“No problem, Tris. Listen, if you need PR help, just let me know, Domino said.

“Thanks, man. I’ll let you know after I speak with my dad. Talk to you soon,” Tristan said.

“Okay. I’ll get back at you with an update,” Domino said.

Tristan disconnected his call with Domino and dialed Brandon’s cell.

“What’s up Tristan?” Brandon said.

“Everything, man, but first, how’s Nadia doing?” Tristan asked.

“She delivered a nine-pound, ten-ounce, 22-inch long baby boy!” Brandon said, laughing. “Doc figured she went into labor early because the baby was so big. They had to take him out fast because he was cutting off her oxygen, which was making the baby’s heartbeat erratic. Mom and baby are doing well now—dad, too!”

“Damn! Nine pounds and some odd ounces? Tristan laughed, “Tell David that’s not a newborn, that’s a toddler.” Brandon joined in on Tristan’s laughter.

“Congratulate them for me. Listen man, sorry to cut in on the celebration,” Tristan said not trying to disguise the seriousness of his call. “I need for you to stop by my apartment before you leave out tonight. I won’t go into it now, but I got the report on James, and it’s not good. Think you’ll have time before you fly out for me to catch you up?”

“I’ll make time. Besides, if it gets too late I’ll just jump on one of dad’s jets that he’s always trying to get us to use.”

“Yeah...about that—I’ll have to give him a call too,” Tristan informed him.

“That bad, huh?”

“Worse.”

“Listen, I can leave the hospital and come back to the office,” Brandon said.

“No, I don’t want to get into anything here. Besides, Alisha’s at the apartment and I have some things to do before I get there. Meet me at my apartment. It’s secure enough—but still, with what I know, I don’t like the idea of her being alone.”

“No problem. David and Nadia’s family are here so I’ll head on over now. Just call her and let her know that I’ll be stopping by.”

“Will do and take care,” Tristan told his brother.

“Will do,” Brandon replied.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Alisha awoke to the sound of voices in Tristan's apartment. She'd fallen asleep on Tristan's bed, watching CSPAN. She looked at her watch—7 p.m. “Oh my goodness! I've been asleep for three hours!” She jumped up from the bed and practically ran to the living area, calling out, “Trist—.” She stopped short at seeing Brandon and Tristan sitting at the kitchen island, each with papers in hand. They both turned to look at her when she entered the room. Alisha squirmed under their intense scrutiny. Embarrassed, she began to run her fingers through her tussled hair.

“DAYUUUM!!” both Tristan and Brandon said at the same time.

Tristan looked at his lady standing there looking more beautiful than ever. Her hair was disheveled, she had pulled her blouse out of her skirt and removed her stockings, and she was standing in her bare feet looking like a goddess. Her legs looked good in her pumps and stockings, but bare they were a sight to

behold, long and shapely. Not muscular but just right. He could see the lace of her bra through her sheer blouse and his mouth started watering as he remembered holding those perky breasts in his hands. Tristan realized that both he and Brandon were still staring when Alisha started fidgeting, shifting from one leg to the other. Shaking himself, he stood up and smacked Brandon upside the back of his head.

“The hell!” Brandon screeched.

“Keep your eyes to yourself,” Tristan said.

Brandon looked at him, frowning, and rubbed the back of his head. “Hell, you were looking too.”

“I’m allowed. You’re not,” Tristan told him.

The look on Brandon’s face sent Alisha into squeals of laughter.

Tristan held out his hand for her to come to him. As she walked towards him, he met her halfway across the room, pulled her into his arms, and kissed her thoroughly. The kiss went on and on.

“Harrumph! Hello! ...Hello! I’m still here, you know,” Brandon said. Caught up in their embrace, they ignored him. He cleared his throat again louder.

“HARRUMPH! Can you two save that for when this horny and hungry dude is not around?”

Alisha giggled. “Go home, Brandon,” Tristan said.

“I can’t. I was invited, I’m hungry, and we have work to do,” Brandon replied.

“Unfortunately, Brandon’s right. We need to get some things settled here first,” Tristan whispered against her lips. “We’ll finish this later.”

“I can hear you, Tristan,” Brandon said, laughing.

Tristan flipped Brandon the bird and they all laughed. Tristan was the first to recover. “Come, Beauty, let’s eat and then Brandon and I can catch you up on what we know so far.” Tristan sat Alisha at the island and began taking dishes out. He handed one to Brandon, but when Alisha got up and reached for her plate, Tristan waved her off. “I’ll fix your plate, Beauty. Just tell me what you want. Sit,” he said.

Both Alisha and Brandon looked at him with their mouths open in surprise.

“Wa-What do you have?” she asked.

“I have a little of everything. Shrimp scampi, rice, garlic bread and three different pastas; lasagna, tortellini alfredo, and penne ala vodka. For dessert we have strawberry cheesecake from Junior’s,” he responded.

“Wine, please,” she replied.

“Brandon, you know where everything is, help yourself,” Tristan said.

“Gee, thanks,” Brandon said sarcastically.

Tristan placed a glass of wine in front of Alisha, then got himself bottled water and sat down to eat.

“Hold on you two, we have to say grace,” Alisha said.

Brandon and Tristan looked at one another, shrugged their shoulders, and bowed their heads as Alisha blessed the food.

When they had finished eating and cleared away the food, Tristan and Brandon retrieved the papers they were reading when she had walked into the room.

Alisha noticed their strained looks. “Okaaaay...you two are looking real strange over there. Am I to assume these documents have something to do with James?” she asked.

“You assume correctly, Beauty. This dude is bad news. I won’t go into all of the details; just know that James Langston is one very sick and very dangerous man. He’s also been associated with some low-lives, so be on alert and be careful. I have at least twenty pages of information on him, including rape, drug use, and stalking, to name a few. There are ten women in this file who have had the misfortune to be in James’ presence—”

“Yeah, five of them worked for our firm,” Brandon said with disgust. “How this got by David and me is unbelievable.”

“It got by you, brother, because you trusted the manager in your Human Resources department. You had no way of knowing that he was in cahoots with James,” Tristan said.

“I should’ve known what was going on at my firm, man. I feel responsible for those women. David and I had a feeling about this dude—that’s why we weren’t in a hurry to make him a partner. I just got so caught up in my own mess that this slipped by me, and I have to tell you, brother, it’s not sitting well with me,” Brandon said.

“Let it go, man. You know now and you’re taking action against it,” Tristan said.

“I agree with Tristan,” Alisha said. “This firm has prospered under you and David. And that’s what HR is for, to take care of things like sexual harassment and the like. At the very least, they’re supposed to report any claims. You did your background check on James and Teddy, the manager in HR, and both came back fine. There’s nothing more you could have done.”

Brandon nodded. “Man, we need to put this dude away soon. This entire incident is leaving a bad taste in my mouth. I have a feeling that things are going to go from bad to worse with James.” He got up. “Listen, Tris, I’m going to go give dad a call and fill him in on what’s going on. I left a message on Sinjin’s cell that I’m taking the jet out in the morning. There’s nothing I can do tonight that I can’t do in the morning. I have to fill David in on what’s going on as well. You go—”

“Everything will work out, trust me, Brandon,” Tristan said.

“You know I trust you with my life, Tristan. But I have to fix this with these young ladies, man. This has

nothing to do with the firm now. It's about honor and rightness. I have to make it right for them," Brandon replied.

At these words, total silence filled the room.

"Understandable. It's how we were raised. I hear you, brother, and I agree. We will make it right, no doubt about it," Tristan said. "Instead of taking Dad's jet out to meet Sinjin, how about I get Dom to send someone down to New Mexico, you stay here, and we'll see this thing through together? Sinjin will understand. Hell, he might be mad that he can't be here to help out. This is just the kind of crap Sinjin loves."

Brandon laughed. "You're right about that. Sinjin would get a kick out of this shit. This is just the type of craziness that he lives for."

"You guys have a jet? As in owning your own private jet?" Alisha asked.

"Technically, our dad owns the jet. It's just at our disposal," Tristan said.

"Wow. Technically, if your father owns a jet and you have access to it whenever you want, then you own a jet. You two are very wealthy, aren't you?" she asked.

Both Tristan and Brandon began to look uncomfortable. Tristan was getting ready to speak when Alisha stopped him by raising her hand, palm facing him.

“It was a rhetorical question. I know you guys are wealthy, I just didn’t realize *how* wealthy.”

“And just how do you know we’re wealthy?” Tristan asked.

Alisha laughed right out, “Tristan, you both have apartments in an Upper New York City high-rise that has to cost if not two million then close to two million. Although why you would buy a luxury apartment and only furnish the bedroom is beyond me. By the way, it’s very beauti—”

“I’m glad you like the bedroom, because that’s where we’ll be spending most of our time,” Tristan said, pulling her into his arms. “Brandon, see yourself out.”

Brandon cracked up laughing at Alisha standing there with her mouth agape blushing ferociously. “I’m going. Alisha—see you, hon. Tristan, if Domino can get someone to help Sinjin, I would appreciate it. I trust

Dom's men. I'd feel better staying here and helping clean this mess up. I appreciate it, brother," he said.

"No problem. Oh, by the way, Dom has a man on James and I've called locksmiths to come in and change the locks on his and Teddy's offices. Security has been informed to not let anyone in the building over the weekend, per my orders, just in case James or Teddy tries to get into the office over the weekend. Now get out. I need time alone with Alisha," he said.

"Thanks, brother," Brandon said, as he quit the room.

Tristan locked up after Brandon left and looked over at Alisha, "Come on, Beauty, let's go to bed. It's been a long day." He went back to Alisha, grabbed her hand, and led her to the bedroom.

CHAPTER NINE

Alisha saw the desire in Tristan's eyes as he led her towards the bedroom and it made her both nervous and excited—nervous because she hadn't been with anyone in a while and she didn't want Tristan to find her lacking in any way; and excited because she wanted Tristan with a fierceness not known to her before.

Once in the bedroom, he turned her to face him. "What's wrong, Beauty?" he asked.

She looked down at the floor. "Um...I don't have anything to sleep in and I need a shower," she said.

"Are you serious? Beauty, I've walked around most of the day with a semi hard-on. Baby, I want you so bad now, my cock is weeping to be inside of you. Trust me, you won't need anything to sleep in," he said.

"Oh," she said, her lips formed the perfect "O".

"Oh is right, Beauty," he said. He let go of her hand. "Hold on, I need to grab something." Walking

over to his chest of drawers, he retrieved about a half-dozen condoms and walked back towards her.

“Geeze, Tristan, you think you have enough condoms? Just how many of those things are you planning on using?” she asked.

“Not nearly enough; and all of them and then some. Besides, the way I’m feeling right now, I might need to use two of the damn things,” he said with a smile. “You have a problem with that?”

“I might,” she said.

“You’ll get over it soon enough. I plan on exploring every inch of that delectable body of yours, so start undressing,” Tristan said as he began undressing as well.

The sight of Tristan’s bare chest had the area between her legs throbbing. *Man he’s hot!* Wayne had never made her body tingle like Tristan. With one look, Tristan had her all hot, wet, and panting for him to take her where she stood. *Oh my god! Where did that come from?* Alisha could do nothing but stare at him with her mouth agape as Tristan stood all proud in nothing but a pair of black silk boxers, his arousal evident through the thin material. From the looks of

him, he was huge. *My goodness, there's no way that thing is gonna fit in me!* Her heartbeat started to accelerate, her palms became sweaty, and her breathing became labored.

“Beauty, you have about thirty seconds to get out of your clothes. Or do you need help?” Tristan asked giving her a smoldering look, his gaze filled with passion and desire.

“Um... Um... Ah... Ah, N-no...No, I can do it,” she said, her voice shaky as she unzipped her skirt, stepped out of it, and let it fall to her feet. Her blouse followed. Reaching behind her, she unhooked her bra clasp, releasing her breasts from their confines, and letting the bra fall to the floor, joining the rest of her clothes.

His eyes roamed over her hungrily. He was damn near speechless from the sight of her standing there with nothing on but a sexy little thong. He could tell from the little piece of material covering the triangle between her thighs that she was almost bare and he couldn't wait to lick her from top to bottom. He was definitely going to enjoy tasting every inch of her. Just the thought of his tongue fucking her pussy had

him stepping out of his boxers and fisting his cock, pre-cum started to seep out through the slit.

Letting go of his erection, he began to walk towards her. When he stood directly in front of her, he cupped the back of her neck and brought her head up to his lips. The moment their lips met, strong feelings of desire coursed throughout his body. Passion ignited every cell in his skin. He inserted his tongue into her mouth and their tongues began dueling for supremacy. Her complete surrender was what he wanted and what he intended to have. He took control of the kiss by strengthening his hold on her neck and deepening the kiss.

Her response was immediate and absolute. She'd tried to wrap her arms around his neck, but his hold on her was too strong so she placed them on his shoulders. Putting all of her emotions into the kiss, she tried to kiss him just as deeply, but he wasn't having it. He deepened the kiss until he felt her body relax as she surrendered control to him.

"I need you, Tristan," she moaned into his mouth and grabbed his ass, rubbing her aching groin into his.

He sucked in a deep breath from her bold actions and looked down into her passion-filled eyes. "I know baby, I need you too," he whispered huskily against her mouth while grinding his erection into her pelvis. "Feel how much I want you. I want you so much I'm about to burst, Baby. Beauty, I know you want a shower, but babe I don't think I can hold on that long. If I go anywhere near that shower, I will have you on the sink, in the shower, on the floor, against the wall, every damn place in that bathroom. I plan on doing that anyway, but not yet. No, the first time we make love will be in this bed." Picking her up, he carried her over to the bed where he placed her, then lay gently on top of her. Bringing his lips down to hers, he kissed her intimately.

He released her mouth. He was breathing hard. She sucked in her breath. She was so turned on. "Mmm...you taste so sweet," he said. "I'm going to enjoy tasting every inch of your delectable body. Beauty, how long has it been since you were with a man?"

Alisha frowned. "Why? Did I do something wro—? Ahhh!" She nearly came off the bed when she

felt his hands cupping her breasts his fingertips gently caressed her hardened nipples.

He met her gaze, then lowered his mouth to her breast, sucking the enlarged nipple into his mouth, “No, Beauty. You are doing everything right,” he whispered as he reached past her thong to insert his middle finger into her moist center then began to stroke her intimately. She grasped his head and lifted her hips off the bed as she held his head. She didn’t know what she was trying to do. The only thing she knew was that he was giving her immense pleasure and she wanted more. He inserted another finger and started stroking her harder. She almost lost it, the pleasure was so intense. She was panting so hard you would have thought she was having an asthma attack. Her eyes were rolling to the back of her head as she held on. She was so close to orgasm she could feel it. Her body started tingling, and her hands were shaking so bad she could barely hold on to Tristan’s head.

He lifted his mouth from one breast and blew on the wet nipple before taking the other nipple into his mouth while simultaneously, yet softly, scissoring his fingers inside her. Pulling his fingers out of her, he

flicked her clit lightly using his middle finger and thumb. She cried out her release. Her womanly juices were saturating his fingers. She couldn't think. She could only feel her desire was so intense. Her mind went totally blank as she tried to pull air into her lungs.

Before she had fully recovered from her orgasm, he removed his mouth from her breast and used the same fingers that were inside her to rip her thong off, and then threw it across the room. Moving down her body, he lowered his head to her center, inhaling her scent, "Ummm...you know what I want to do, Beauty?" he asked. Without giving her time to answer he continued on, "I want to taste you, Beauty. Your womanly scent is intoxicating and extremely arousing. I can't wait to lap up every drop of your juices. Ummm, you're so nice and wet, darlin'."

Why was he asking her foolish questions now? If he didn't get on with it she would have to take matters into her own hands. *Oh my, where did that come from?* She had never been the aggressor in her relationship with Wayne. Now...oh goodness...Tristan was having her wanting to do things that she had

never done before. She lost all coherent thought when Tristan suddenly parted her nether lips with his lips and ran his tongue up and down the inside of her vaginal lip. As he licked her, she felt extreme pleasure down to her toes.

“Tristan,” she moaned, closing her eyes and sighing breathlessly. Her hips were moving and she couldn’t think straight. “Tristan,” she whispered again. His name was the only thing she could think of to say, he was loving her so good. He continued to lap at her labia, bringing her closer to yet another mind-boggling orgasm. She let out a high-pitched scream when he sucked her clit into his mouth. It was brief but it was enough to have her grabbing hold of his head and holding it in place. He continued to suck on her clitoris, pulling it into his mouth and flicking his tongue over and around it. She couldn’t hold out—the sensations were running wildly through every part of her body, “Trist—I—I can’t take it. Oh! Oh my! Uh... Uh...Uh, can’t take it—too much—” She ground herself into his face. He inserted his tongue deep within her and started rolling it back in forth within her. She tightened her grip on his head then shattered under

his ministrations. She felt as if she was having an out-of-body experience. She could feel herself floating, or what she thought was floating. She wasn't quite sure, since her eyes were closed and she was holding onto Tristan's hair so tightly she was afraid she may have caused some damage.

With a quick swipe of his tongue, he licked her remaining juices from her and lifted his head. She was sprawled out on his bed, her hair in disarray, the covers scrunched up from her pulling on them, well that was before she decided to use his head as leverage. It's a wonder she hadn't pulled his hair out of his head. Licking his lips and tasting her juices sent him into overdrive. "Hold on Beauty, we are definitely not finished yet," he said. Tristan sat up on his knees and grabbed a condom. Ripping it open he slowly rolled it over his erection. Kneeling in between her legs, he gave his erection a few pumps before guiding it to her entrance. "Not nearly finished." He lay back on top of her, reached for her mouth with his, and kissed her deeply.

She tasted herself on his lips. It was exotic and erotic. She shivered at first contact. Tristan was

holding nothing back as he poured everything he had into the kiss. Reaching in between them testing her readiness, she was still wet and getting wetter, if that were at all possible. Slowing inching his way inside, he stopped when he heard her sharp intake of breath as she tried to lift him off of her.

“Oh my God, Tristan! You’re too big...it’s not going to work,” she said. It felt like he was ripping her he was so big. She couldn’t help it. She tried to move him off her.

Lifting his mouth from hers, he whispered against her lips, “Relax baby, you are so tight. How long has it been?”

“It’s been a while...a long while, Tristan,” she answered.

“Okay, relax baby,” he said while running his fingers through her hair, raining kisses over her eyelids, mouth, and neck as he continued to talk soothingly to her, trying to get her to relax. If she didn’t relax it wouldn’t work. She had tensed up too much. He continued to sooth her with his words until she relaxed beneath him.

“Babe, you okay now? Should I stop?” She was fitting him like a glove, and he wasn’t even halfway in her. He almost came on the spot but held back. He knew he would have to move soon. “Beauty, I can’t hold back much longer. I don’t want to hurt you.”

It would damn near kill him to stop, but he would honor her wish.

“No. Just give me a minute,” she said.

“Relax. If you tighten up it will hurt more.” He kept whispering words of love to her as he sank deeper into her little by little. “That’s it, baby, relax. You okay?” he asked, slowly pushing deeper still. Finally, he was seated deep inside her, and boy did it feel good.

“I’m good, Tristan. It’s been a long time. I just needed a little time to adjust,” she said as her body relaxed fully, taking him deep within her. She felt him move a little inside of her and caught her breath.

“Good, ‘cause I have to move,” he whispered. He pulled almost all the way out of her only leaving the tip of him inside of her and pushed back in. When he did it a second time, Alisha lifted up to meet his thrust.

“That’s it baby. Stay with me,” he said driving into her to the hilt and bending down to pull one of

her breast into his mouth, while simultaneously bringing his hand up to cup the other. Tristan felt his balls start to tighten when Alisha wrapped her legs around him, locking him in and taking him deeper. The growl that emanated from his mouth sounded tormented. She met him thrust for thrust. She had already come twice and it had taken all that was in him not to follow suit. Her inner walls tightened up again and he quickly let go of her breasts. He grabbed hold of her legs and placed them on his shoulders. Taking hold of her hips, he continued to power into her like a man possessed. The more he powered into her, the harder she bucked against him.

“Shit!” he whispered. He wanted to be so much a part of her body that you couldn’t tell where she began and he ended. He felt a climax ready to hit him. He was teetering on the brink of an explosive release. *“Come on, Beauty come with me.”*

On his command, she let out a hair-raising scream. *“Yes—Yes—Yes!”* she screamed as her body detonated.

They were putting everything they had into each thrust— his sweat mingled with hers. Thrusting in her

once...twice..."Fuck! Fuck! Oh—hell—yeah!" he shouted as he shot streams and streams of his seed into her, sending little aftershocks through her body as she came again. He continued to pump until he felt her body relax again.

Dropping her legs but not pulling out of her, he stretched out on top of her, slipped his hands beneath her head and into her hair and kissed her —harder—faster—stronger. No words were needed—the kiss and the stirring of his member from semi-hard to fully erect in a matter of minutes said it all.

Removing his mouth from hers, he nuzzled her neck. "Damn, babe—I can't get enough of you." He started moving slowing inside of her—nipping at the flesh of her neck and pulling it between his teeth. Oh man, her little hot box had a choke on his cock. "Damn Beauty! Your pussy has a choke hold on my cock—so good—so good," was his mantra as he continued to push into her.

Alisha started responding to Tristan's movements. She brought her legs up, planted her feet flat on the bed, and opened her legs wider, causing him to sink so deep into her he probably touched her

womb. His shout could've shattered the window panes had they not been so sturdy, "OH SHIT!" he shouted.

Alisha followed with an, "Oh Sweet Jesus!" as she sunk her feet further into the mattress and lifted up to meet each of Tristan's thrusts. They were both out of control. He grabbed hold of her hips, not letting them hit the bed again. Tristan had her airborne as he thrust harder into her. He was thrusting into her so hard that when their pelvises met he would grind his into hers, causing Alisha to groan louder.

Tristan's balls began to tighten up as he got even closer to his climax. Alisha was meeting him thrust for thrust. They were like two wild bucks bucking against each other. When he felt her pussy squeeze him even tighter he knew she was close...real close. He bent down and pulled one of her nipples into his mouth and sucked hard. Tristan latched onto her nipple like a hungry baby...sucking....pulling....sucking...pulling.

"Oh, Shit! Tristan, I'm coming!" she yelled out. From the sensations going through her body this was going to be a big one. It felt like he was pulling from her soul. She was giving him everything. Yet it felt like it wasn't enough. She couldn't get close enough to him.

“Ummmm, babe—I—need—to—come,” she panted her head twisting from side to side.

He released her breast from his mouth saying, “Come on, Beauty. Give me everything. Let go. You can do it. Come, Sweetheart,” he said.

She heard the words and felt the sensations in her very being, but couldn’t let go. He had some kind of emotional hold on her. She wanted to let go but she couldn’t. “I...I ca-can’t,” she said and started sobbing softly, tears streaming down her face.

Her sobs broke his heart. Bringing one arm and placing it around her waist he reached between their bodies and massaged her clit while simultaneously pumping into her. She cried harder and her tears were coming even faster now. “Tristan!” she said through her tears.

“Yeah, Beauty, I want to give you so much pleasure. Oh yeah...give it to me. Come on,” he said while rubbing her clit. He felt her body start to tremble and knew that she was getting ready to come real hard. He manipulated her clit and stroked into her even harder. He knew he wouldn’t be able to hold on

much longer. “Beauty, I ca—can’t hold on. Come on—Come now!”

On his command her body exploded into a thousand little pieces as she cried out “Ahh—Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!”

“Mine! Mine! Mine! You—are—mine—forever!” he shouted and released a load so explosive he feared the condom had come off inside of her. Even still, he kept pumping into her. She held him tight, flexing around him and milking him dry. He released her hips, collapsing on top of her.

She held onto him her hands stroking his back up and down until his breathing became even.

He pulled out of her slowly, grateful that the condom was still in place and appeared to be intact. At her questioning look he said, “I came so hard, babe, I was afraid it had come off inside of you. Don’t move. Let me go dispose of the condom before we have a mess on our hands.

Don’t move? she thought. As if she could. Alisha had come so many times tonight that she had lost count. Tristan had worked her body good. She knew she would be sore in places she hadn’t used in years.

But oh boy! It was a good sore. She was so tired. Her eyes drifted closed and she was falling asleep. She opened her eyes slightly as she felt, rather than heard, Tristan return to the room. She tried to lift her eyelids but she was too drowsy to see Tristan with a washcloth in his hand kneeling on the bed in front of her. “What are you doing?” she asked drowsily.

“Shush. Open, Beauty. You are going to be sore down here. I would run a tub of water for you to soak but you’re too tired. The tub will have to wait until morning,” he said, opening her legs to place the warm, damp cloth between them, then he began to wash her gently.

The warm cloth felt so good between her legs. She sighed in contentment as Tristan gently washed her, then placed the towel on the night table, climbed into bed beside Alisha, and pulled the comforter up over them. “Thank you,” she whispered, as her eyes began to drift closed.

Turning her onto her side, he pulled her into his arms spooning with her. Pushing her hair out of his way, he placed a kiss on her shoulders, “Night, baby,”

he muttered to an already asleep Alisha. Pulling her tighter into his body, he too drifted off to sleep.

CHAPTER TEN

Alisha awoke to the sound of running water and sat up quickly. Her body protested immediately. “Uhh,” she groaned, remembering the things that Tristan had done to and with her body, and fell back down onto the bed.

“Sore?” Tristan asked her as he walked out of the bathroom and into the bedroom.

Blushing, she responded “Yes, a bit.”

“Come on,” he said. He walked over to her, and lifted her out of the bed and into his arms. “I have a nice bubble bath waiting. I took a shower earlier.”

“What time is it?” she asked.

“It’s almost noon,” he responded.

“Noon!” she shrieked. “Tristan, why did you let me sleep so long? I never sleep this late.”

“You’ve probably never had a workout like I gave you last night either,” he responded smugly.

Alisha was getting ready to respond when she heard voices in Tristan's apartment. "Tristan is there someone in the apartment?" she asked.

Tristan walked with her in his arms towards the bathroom. "Yeah, about that...you need to get in the tub, Beauty. We have company." He placed her in a huge tub filled with warm water and scented bubbles.

The water felt so good. She sighed in contentment. "Oh, this feels so good. Thanks, Tristan." She smiled at him.

"You're welcome, Beauty. Enjoy. I will be back to get you out. Just let me take care of our company," he said, smiling down at her.

"So who's out there, anyway?" she said.

"There have been some new developments since last night. The people out there are here to help us out. Just soak and relax for now. I'll be back in a few minutes to catch you up on things, Love." he said, as he bent down to place a quick kiss on her lips, then went out and closed the door behind him.

Alisha lay back against the tub relaxing and letting the jets of the tub soothe her aching muscles. She had just started to relax when she heard the

bathroom door open again. She opened her eyes to see Tristan taking off his sweats and pulling his t-shirt over his head.

“Tristan, what are you doing back so quickly? I thought you were taking care of your guests? You can’t leave your guests alone,” she said.

He smiled. “Of course I can. They can wait—I can’t. Scoot over—I’m joining you,” He climbed in the tub behind her and pulled her back against him.

“Tristan, you crazy man...you can’t leave your guests!” she said, sitting up straighter. The water glistened on her breasts, as the suds dripped off her nipples. The cold air hitting her nipples, along with Tristan’s heated stare, had caused her nipples to pebble. His fingers skimmed her neck then cupped her breasts, as if to warm them. She sucked in a deep breath, then sighed and relaxed against him.

“Your hair is getting wet. Do you want to tie it up?” he asked her, lifting her hair up off of her neck.

“I usually don’t let it get wet, but I need to wash it. I sweated it out las—” she stopped when she saw him smirking at her.

“Finish what you were about to say, Beauty,” he said still smiling.

“Never mind... stop fishing for compliments, Tristan. You’re arrogant—you know that, right?” But she smiled, remembering how well he had loved her last night.

“Not fishing. This white boy’s got skills, darlin’,” he said.

Alisha cracked up. “Oh, no you didn’t just say that? Hmmm, I guess you did, all right,” she said teasingly as she smiled at him over her shoulder.

He looked at her through squinted eyes, smiling down at her, “That sounds like a challenge to me, babe,” he said, kissing her neck and kneading her breasts.

“Tristan, if you start that, we’ll drown in this tub,” she said moaning from the sensations that were causing her juices to flow all over again.

Tristan lifted a bath sponge, lathered it with soap, and began to wash her. Starting at her neck, moving over her breasts, her stomach, and down between her legs, paying special attention to the area

between her thighs as he moved the sponge back and forth, parting her nether lips in the process.

“Mmmm,” she said, her voice getting huskier by the second. “That feels so good.”

“You like that?” he asked, repeating the motion with the sponge.

“Oh, yeah,” she responded.

“If you like that, then I know you’ll like this,” he said, replacing the sponge with his hands. He stroked her crotch then squeezed it a little with his hand, using his finger to draw circles around her wet center, then teasing her clit with his thumb and forefinger.

“Ohhh!” Alisha moaned from the pressure of Tristan’s fingers inside of her.

Tristan added another finger and began moving them in and out of her, while simultaneously pinching her nipple with his free hand.

Alisha started gyrating herself against his fingers, moving back and forth with each movement of Tristan’s fingers. “Ahh...don’t stop...please don’t stop, Tristan,” she pleaded, moving faster against his fingers, getting closer to her climax. Suddenly he removed his fingers from her. “Huh? What the—?”

“Don’t worry. I’m not done with you yet, Beauty. I need to be inside of you now,” he said huskily. He lifted her up, turned her around to face him, spread her legs to either side of him, and impaled her on his cock.

Alisha sucked in her breath as Tristan lowered her down onto his cock in one thrust.

“Ride me, babe,” he said, lifting her hips and bringing them back down while simultaneously thrusting up into her. She groaned in pleasure, then planted her feet on the bottom of the tub and lifted her ass and plunged it back down.

Water began to splash everywhere from their vigorous movements in the tub. They didn’t care.

Still pushing up into her, Tristan pushed back against the tub to gain better leverage and Alisha grabbed hold of the sides of the tub and bent her knees so Tristan could sink deeper inside of her. They moaned and groaned at the sensations filling both of them.

Alisha lifted herself up until only the tip of Tristan’s cock was still inside of her, then slammed back down on his cock, grinding against him.

“Oh hell yeah!” Tristan shouted as Alisha repeated the movements. He could feel her vaginal walls tightening against him. “Fuck me, babe. You’re so tight,” he said, holding her hips in place as he thrust up into her.

“Oh my damn!” she moaned as she came all over his cock, then fell back against him in an exhausted heap.

“Shit!” he yelled, shooting stream after stream of his cum into her. Tristan wrapped his arms around her waist and squeezed her. “It’s a good thing I work out regularly, or we would’ve drowned. Wow, you worked my ass, babe.”

Alisha responded by elbowing him in the stomach. “You started it,” she said playfully.

“So I did,” he said rather smugly. “Just remind me to eat my Wheaties the next time I want to make love to you in the tub.”

“So I guess a sistah’s got skills, huh,” she retorted playing along with him.

He kissed her firmly on the mouth. “I’ll say. Come on, Love, let’s take a shower and get out of here. We have business to take care of. I already have food

waiting for you.” He stood up in the tub, pulling her up with him. He then let the water out of the tub and turned on the shower. After adjusting the temperature of the shower, they began to wash each other. He shampooed her hair, massaging her scalp as he went about it. He turned off the shower and they both got out and dried each other off.

“Tristan, I don’t have any clothes to put on,” she said.

“Yes, you do. I took out some sweats and a t-shirt for you. And I picked up some underthings for you yesterday before I came home,” he said, wrapping the bath towel around her as he finished toweling her off. He took her hand and walked her into the bedroom where he had clothes and several pairs of matching bras and panties in various sizes laid out for her.

“Tristan, these are beautiful,” she said, picking up a set close to her size. She dropped the towel from around her, and quickly put them on, while he watched her dress, smiling.

“Glad you like them,” he said, pleased.

“You did well, Tristan. Thank you.” She smiled up at him.

“You’re welco—”

Tristan was cut off by a firm knock on his bedroom door.

“Who is it?” Tristan yelled.

“You’re needed out here, Tristan,” Brandon said.

“Be right out,” Tristan called out.

Alisha’s eyes had gone wide, staring frantically at Tristan. “Tristan, I forgot they were out there. Do you think they heard us?”

“Relax, Beauty. Even if they did hear us, who cares? Besides, my brother has too much class to say anything if he did.” He quickly pulled on boxers, sweats, and a t-shirt. “Come on, Beauty, let’s go.”

Putting her hand in Tristan’s, she followed him out of the bedroom and into a room full of people. Alisha stopped short, embarrassed, when she saw not only Brandon, but an older distinguished-looking man who looked like Tristan and Brandon, who she guessed had to their father. A very tall, well-built, gorgeous Native American man who looked kind of familiar, and an African American man who reminded

her of someone she knew, she couldn't tell who because his back was to her as he talked on his cell, were there also.

Tristan pulled Alisha close to his side. "What's wrong, Beauty?" he whispered.

Alisha answered with a sharp jab to Tristan's stomach.

"Ouch! What was that for?" he asked her, rubbing the spot where she had hit him and looking very confused.

"For not telling me that there was a room full of people out here," she said scowling at him. "And is that your father?" she hissed.

"But I did tell you," he replied looking at her as if she had lost her mind. "I told you we had company."

"Yeah, but I didn't expect to see your father here," she muttered seething.

"Dad, they'll be at this all day if you don't say something," Brandon intervened.

"No, I don't think I will. I think I'm going to like her. Got a lot of fire in her—reminds me of your mother. By the way, young lady, I'm Spencer Cameron, Brandon and Tristan's father," he said

walking over to her to envelope her in a big bear hug, but not before she had turned to stomp on Tristan's foot.

"Nice meeting you, Mr. Cameron," she said hugging him in return.

"Ouch! Why are you abusing me?" Tristan asked her.

"Because she can, now go get the young lady something to eat, Tristan. And you, young lady, can call me Spencer or Dad—none of that Mr. Cameron stuff. Besides, the way my son's trying to keep you all to himself over there, I have a feeling that we'll be seeing a lot of each other," Spencer Cameron said, gazing at Tristan conspiringly over Alisha's head. Tristan's confirming nod had all of them smiling and Alisha looking from one to the other, puzzled.

Tristan reached out and took Alisha from his father's arms to bring her in close to him, placing a sound kiss on her lips, "Sorry, Beauty," he said against her lips.

"Alisha?" The African American man asked and moved to go to her.

Alisha turned around at the sound of her name being called. “Chad!” she yelled, as she started towards him and was pulled back by Tristan. “Tristan, move,” she said.

“I don’t think so, Beauty,” he said, giving Chad a ‘*don’t even think about it*’ look.

Chad laughed outright. “Tristan, man—chill out! Alisha’s my cousin, man.”

“Tristan, let the lady go to her cousin,” his father said, shaking his head at his son. “Son, what can the man do to the woman with all of us in the room? It’s not like you don’t know Chad, so quit acting up.”

“Damn, he’s got it bad,” the native guy said, chuckling and shaking his head. “Never thought I would see the day Tristan went bat shit crazy over a woman.”

“Me either,” Brandon said. “Maybe now he’ll get some furniture.”

Alisha rolled her eyes heavenward and said hello to Domino, whom she suddenly recognized, then went over to Chad. “How are you doing, Chad? It’s been a while. Last I heard you were in California. What’re you

doing in New York?" she asked him, happy to see her cousin.

Chad grabbed her up, held her tight, and spun her around. "I'm good, cousin. I'm in New York because Spencer is one of my biggest clients and he asked for my help with this. I had no idea you'd be involved! How are you doing? Seems you've been busy since we last saw each other," he said, smiling down at her then looking over at Tristan knowingly.

Alisha was blushing ferociously. "You mean the big possessive guy over there?" she asked teasingly, which had Tristan shooting daggers with his eyes at them. Chad laughed harder and Alisha mimicked Tristan's expression, which had them all laughing.

The moment was interrupted by the ringing of Domino's cell phone. While Domino went to answer his call, Tristan went over to Alisha and took her by the hand. "Come on, Beauty, let's feed you," he said, ignoring everyone else. "My dad and Brandon brought bagels and pastries, and there's fresh coffee. What would you like?"

"I'll just grab a bagel and coffee—I can get it," she said.

“I got it. Butter or cream cheese?” he asked.

“Cream cheese,” she said.

Tristan and Alisha were so engrossed in each other that they didn’t notice that the room had gone silent. As if feeling eyes on them, they both looked up into the staring eyes of everyone else. “What?” they both spoke at once.

No one said anything, just shook their heads, smiling.

Domino broke the silence. “Okay, I’ve got some good news and some bad news. The good news is Langston’s been arrested. Your dad sent a team of lawyers over to handle the media and other legal problems that his arrest is going to cause.”

“Why not use us? We’re lawyers,” Brandon protested.

“Yes, but it’s never good to represent yourselves, Brandon—you know that,” Domino said.

“What’s the bad news?” Tristan asked.

“We have him on a serious charge, but the problem is proving that it was him. He’ll probably make bail tonight. I got this info on a favor. The sexual harassment charges are not going to cut it. Rafe is

bringing in two of the young ladies, who are both willing to press charges against Langston. I have to tell you, this is one sick dude,” Domino declared.

“Why do I have a feeling that you’re leaving something out, Dom? What’s the serious charge that he’s been arrested for?” Tristan asked.

“Alisha’s house has been ransacked. I have it on high authority that Langston hired someone to kidnap her,” Domino said, looking at Tristan.

“What the fuck!” Tristan thundered. “I’ll kill him!

“Oh my God!” Alisha gasped, grabbing onto Tristan for support.

“The hell!” Brandon yelled.

“That sick bastard!” Spencer Cameron whispered.

“Son of a bitch!” Chad shouted.

“According to a reliable source, he’s fixated on her. He has been for a while now. He just upped the ante when you had your encounter with him yesterday, Tristan,” Domino said. “That’s not all...Alisha, your brothers showed up at your house this morning and flipped out when they saw your

house trashed and you not there. They assumed you'd been kidnapped. My men have given them Tristan's address. They should be here soon."

"Oh man! Trevon called yesterday and said he would arrive this morning. I completely forgot," Alisha said in a panic.

"Calm down, Beauty. Brandon, can you please ring down and tell the doorman to let them up when they arrive," Tristan said.

"Done," Brandon said.

"Come on, Beauty, let's go. Someone let me know when they arrive," he said. His eyes were troubled as they entered the bedroom and he closed the door behind them. Turning her in his arms his hands buried themselves in her hair as his mouth descended upon hers. Her lips parted to receive his kiss. The urgency and passion of the kiss displayed emotions he was too choked up to say out loud as he walked her backwards to the dresser, disengaging his hands from her hair, lifting her up and sitting her upon it. Lifting his mouth from hers he moaned, "I need you now, Beauty," as he pulled her sweats and panties down in one sweep. Testing her readiness and

finding her wet and ready, he slipped out of his sweats and boxers, spread her legs, and, holding her hips, plunged into her.

“Oh yes,” she moaned out loud, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and holding on tight.

“Hold on, babe,” he whispered, sinking deep within her.

Everything and everyone else was forgotten as their bodies met and raced towards completion, until they both shattered together.

* * *

“Hello.”

“It’s me.”

“Did you find her yet?”

“No. A shitload of people just left her place.”

“Did anybody see you?”

“Yeah, but trust me, they have no idea.”

“Make sure they don’t. Remember, you can be replaced, too.”

“So can you, my friend. When do I get the rest of my money?”

“Find her and bring her to me, then you’ll get the rest of your money.”

“Really? I thought you were detained.”

“A short diversion. Call me when you find the girl,” the voice on the other end said menacingly.

“Will do. Just make sure you have my money.”

“Don’t I always? Now hang up and find the girl.”
The line disconnected.

“That’s one crazy-assed dude. Not my problem—all I want is my money then this state will see my back,” he said, turning to walk away.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The next morning Alisha and Tristan were awakened by the telephone. It was Domino saying that everyone would meet at Brandon's place in an hour for updates. They got up, showered, and dressed.

Alisha and Tristan lay fully clothed in each other's arms, talking in soft whispers, while watching the news. Neither wanted to leave the sanctuary of Tristan's bedroom but knew that they would have to. Alisha worried that they were missing something in the whole messed-up situation. She couldn't shake the feeling that something was wrong or was going to go wrong. A cold chill of apprehension caused Alisha to shiver and snuggle closer to Tristan.

Yesterday had been a crazy day and they both knew that today would probably be even crazier. Her brothers had arrived at Tristan's apartment in big brother mode but before they said anything, Domino Longhorn intervened with news that James Langston had posted bond and was now missing in action. The

press was staked out at Cameron, Cameron & LaSalle's office building, hanging out in front of the apartment building, and Alisha's house.

Trevon and Darion stayed at Brandon's apartment, since Tristan had no furniture. The elder Cameron, his legal team, and Chad had gone down to the law firm to handle the situation there. It seemed as if Domino was everywhere at once. Tristan would not leave Alisha's side with James on the loose, and they still didn't know who he had hired to kidnap her. Lorna had come over to Tristan's accompanied by one of Domino's men and brought her a pair of sneakers and a change of clothes.

"What's wrong sweetheart?" he asked, raising his face to hers.

"I don't know. I guess it's just this situation. I don't know. I mean I hate having my parents worry about me. It took me over an hour on the phone to convince them that I am okay and that the situation is under control. The thing is Tristan, I don't know if the situation *is* under control. I have a bad feeling that something is off or wrong. I'm not exactly sure." She shivered again.

“Stop worrying, Beauty. Everything will be fine.” Tristan tried to reassure her. In all honesty he had the same feeling. As if they were missing something. He had been doing this a while now and had learned to trust his gut instinct. Something was definitely off with James and the situation. He just couldn’t put his finger on it. Tristan could see the fear in her eyes and he didn’t like it one bit. He had to convince her to stop worrying.

“I will protect you with my life, Beauty. Trust me,” Tristan vowed, stroking her hair.

“I do trust you. In a matter of days you’ve got me doing things I’ve never done before and feeling things I have never felt or experienced before. I don’t really know you, and yet I feel safe when I am with you,” she said softly.

Damned if he didn’t feel like crying after that. Threading his fingers with hers, too full of emotion to convey what he was feeling, he simply said, “You’re in my heart, Beauty. You’re in my heart.”

Their special moment was cut short with the ringing of Tristan’s cell phone.

“Hello.”

“We’re waiting on you, brother.”

“We are on our way,” he said, closing his cell phone. “Come on, Beauty, they’re waiting on us.”

Alisha and Tristan walked out of Tristan’s apartment hand in hand and down the hall to Brandon’s.

Tristan rang the bell, and the door was opened by Brandon. “Come on in you two,” Brandon said, leading them into the living room where everyone else was.

Tristan and Alisha followed Brandon into the room. Alisha’s two brothers, Trevon and Darion, sat on the sofa looking at Tristan as if they wanted to hurt him. Of course Tristan, being Tristan, ignored them. As usual, Domino was on the phone. It was apparent from his end of the conversation that he was talking to one of his men.

Trevon and Darion got up from the sofa. Trevon looked directly at Tristan. “Hello, you two. Glad you could *finally* make it.”

Darion was giving Tristan the evil eye. “Yeah, what he said.”

Alisha stood there stunned, looking first at Trevon and then at Darion in annoyance. “Cut it out, you guys. You both knew I was staying with Tristan since yesterday.”

Trevon was shaking his head. “No, we knew you were going to his place. We didn’t know that you were actually ‘staying with’ him. Darion and I assumed that it was for your protection.”

Darion was still shooting daggers at Tristan with his eyes. “Yeah, what he said. It seems to me that you were doing more than protecting her. Just what the hell were you doing with our sister?” Darion asked.

“What are your intentions towards her? And you better come right the first time,” Trevon growled.

“Now wait a minute, you two!” Alisha was outraged.

Tristan’s arm tightened around Alisha’s waist. “It’s okay, Beauty,” he assured her.

“No, it is not. I am a grown assed woman, and neither of them have any right to come at you like that,” Alisha said, furious with her two brothers.

By this time Brandon had come to stand by Tristan in a stance to let them know that if they were

spoiling for a fight they would get one. Brandon stepped forward. “Just wait a damn minute—”

Tristan put a restraining hand on Brandon’s arm while still holding Alisha’s waist with his other. Tristan understood Alisha’s brother’s need to protect their sister and he respected that. What he couldn’t and wouldn’t stand for was them upsetting Alisha, which they seemed to be doing. That he wouldn’t stand for and he didn’t give a damn who they were. Tristan turned an angry gaze on Alisha’s brothers. “Darion and Trevon, first of all, brothers or not, I won’t stand for you two upsetting Alisha. Now, you want to pull me aside and have a talk, I welcome the conversation. But neither of you, and I repeat, neither of you, will embarrass her nor upset her. I appreciate the fact that you and her parents have cared for her up until now, but from now on that’s my job. As for my intentions towards your sister, I plan to love her for the rest of our lives. As for protecting her, I will gladly protect Alisha with my life.”

His sweet words made her smile. “Wow,” Alisha whispered next to him.

“Wow, is right,” Brandon said, proud of his brother.

Darion’s frown turned to a relieved smile. “A brother couldn’t ask for more,” he said.

Trevon, always the difficult one, still didn’t look convinced. “Since when? You’ve known Alisha how long?” he asked.

“Get this through your head. I am not giving Alisha up. Get used to it or get over it—frankly I don’t give a damn. Right now, your sister’s life is in danger. I don’t have time to debate with you. I want this situation over with, and standing here arguing with you is not helping anything at all,” Tristan said.

“I agree. Chill out, Trevon, and stop being difficult,” Darion said.

“We’ll see. He seems too intense for her to me,” Trevon declared.

“The pot calling the kettle black,” Darion laughed. “Man, give it a rest.”

Domino had joined them by now. “Trevon, be assured Tristan’s a good man. We need to get moving on this situation with James. Rafe is at a hotel with two of the witnesses. The sister’s been located and

Chad and Dominique are meeting with her. Langston senior will have a pleasant surprise when he goes to help his son...all of his assets has been restrained along with Junior's. By the time he figures out what's going on, hopefully we will have caught up with James," Domino said.

"Where did you find the sister?" Tristan asked.

"In a Convent in Canada. I've flown Chad and Dominique out to meet with her. Dominique will get a sworn statement from her to present to the prosecutor. She will only come to New York if she has to. I will know more after Dominique calls," Domino said.

"Wait a minute! Dominique's back in New York?" Brandon asked frowning at Domino. "I thought she had moved back to Atlanta two years ago."

"No she's not back in New York yet, but she will be returning since she's familiar with New York law not to mention she's an awesome attorney. I wasn't aware that you knew Dominique," Domino inquired.

"Yeah, she did some per diem work for me when she first came to New York. Chad asked me to watch out for her while she was here and that's what I did. I

didn't know that she was still practicing," Brandon explained.

"Hmmm, interesting," Alisha whispered to Tristan.

"What?" Tristan asked Alisha not getting what was supposed to be interesting.

"Oh nothing," she responded smiling. Men could be so dense sometimes.

Brandon's cell began to chirp. He answered and started to listen. "What?" Brandon yelled, closing his cell phone and turning to the others in the room.

Everyone in the room stopped. "What's happened, Brandon?" Tristan asked.

Brandon threw up his hands, "That was the fire department. Apparently the office is on fire! I have to get over there," Brandon said, striding to the door.

"Oh, no," Alisha cried.

"Shit!" Tristan growled.

"I'll go with you," Domino said.

"Trevon and I will go too. The G-man can stay with Alisha," Darion remarked eyeing Tristan's arm around Alisha.

"But of course," Tristan smiled at them.

“No, Tristan you can go with them. I’m safe here. This building is like Fort Knox. Seriously, Tristan, what can happen here?” she asked.

“Nothing, because I am staying,” Tristan said. “Brandon, call my cell to let me know what’s going on. We’re going back to my apartment.”

“Will do. Come on guys, let’s go,” Brandon said.

* * *

Brandon and the others waited on the curb outside of Cameron, Cameron & LaSalle for the fire marshal to come and let them know what was going on. Fire trucks and firemen were everywhere. There was a lot of smoke coming from the office building, but no one could tell how much damage was done.

“Man! Do you think it’s a total loss?” Brandon said to no one in particular.

“Not sure yet,” Trevon said, eyeing the building.

“It’s a great deal of smoke, but where’s the fire?” Domino asked, not sure what to make of all that smoke. “You would think that with all that smoke there would be a lot of flames.”

Darion looked over towards Domino. "I agree. Something seems off about this. I'm getting a bad feeling about this, man."

"Like what?" Brandon asked looking at the three men standing beside him.

"Like why is there a fire marshal and chief on the scene? Something's up," Trevon said not liking this one bit.

The hairs on the back of Domino's neck stood up, a sure indication that something was not right. Domino looked around. Firemen were moving in all directions, people were lined up on the curb of the block trying to see what was going on. There was a man across the street that looked familiar. His height, body build, and hair color drew Domino's attention. As not to alert the man that he had spotted him, Domino whistled softly under his breath. A move he had done often when he'd worked with Trevon and Darion as a Texas Ranger. It was a move to let them know when a suspect was spotted. The whistle did the trick.

Trevon and Darion were on full alert at Domino's silent whistle. "What's up Domino?" Darion asked both in ready mode.

"It appears that someone's come out to play. Don't look around, but Langston's at nine o'clock," Domino informed them speaking in a hushed tone.

"Well, I can go over to the fire chief and have him alert the police without James' knowing," Brandon said. "It wouldn't be suspicious. It's my building."

"Since we don't have anything on him yet, that wouldn't be a good idea," Domino said.

They all looked at Domino as if he had lost his mind.

"What the hell are you talking about Domino? The police are looking for James." Brandon said.

"Yes, yes they are, but it is not James. It is Langston, Sr.," Domino whispered. "Wonder what he is doing here."

"What! You think daddy's got something to do with all this?" Trevon asked.

"Either that, or he's trying to help his son again. I don't know, but I'm about to find out. Be on alert,"

Domino informed them before turning around to make a phone call on his cell.

* * *

Brandon, Trevon and Darion stood around speaking in quiet tones to each other while waiting for Domino to finish his call. They all stopped talking when a rather tall, muscular, bald, African-American, dressed in a fireman's uniform approached.

"Which one of you is Brandon Cameron?" the fireman asked looking at each of them.

"I'm Brandon Cameron. Why?" Brandon inquired.

The fireman extended his hand to shake Brandon's. "I'm Captain Williamson. And these are?" the captain asked as he observed the three men standing with Brandon, one with his back to them.

"I'm Darion, this here's my brother Trevon, and the man on the phone is Domino, we are all friends of Brandon's. Why? Is there a problem?" Darion asked.

The fireman turned his glaze from the other three men and looked directly at Brandon. "I asked

because it appears that the fire wasn't an accident. We've found accelerant in one of the back offices. We're thinking it was started in the wastepaper basket since there were remnants of the device in and around it. We won't be able to confirm that until after a full investigation has been conducted," the captain said.

"You mean someone intentionally tried to burn down my office building?" Brandon said, outraged. "Who the hell would want to burn down my law firm?"

"That's what we would like to know, Mr. Cameron," said two police officers walking up to stand beside the fire captain.

The fire captain spoke directly to the two officers. "Nothing has been determined yet, officers. I believe you will have our full report by tomorrow morning. I believe the chief has already advised you of this, has he not?" the captain said to the accusatory tone of the officers. Granted it was arson but there were other aspects of this fire that were bigger than an insurance claim. He had been doing this long enough. He could tell. This guy had an enemy or someone at his office did.

“Hmm, just a matter of time,” one of the officers said nastily, as he and his partner walked away.

“What the hell is his problem? And why would he think I had something to do with this?” Brandon asked.

“Because it’s his job; but this time I think he’s wrong,” Captain Williamson said.

“Oh why’s that?” Brandon asked.

“Because either you have an enemy or someone in that office building do—”

“Why, what happened?” Domino, who had joined the conversation, asked.

“Well, except for the one office that was pretty badly burned, there were a few other offices that had the smoke enhancers shot through the windows. These are only found in tactical teams, such as SWAT, and from the device used in the trash pail a person would have to have some knowledge of bombs,” Captain Williamson said.

“BOMBS! Are you telling me someone tried to blow up my law firm?” Brandon yelled. “What the hell for?”

“No, I’m telling you that someone wanted you to think he or she wanted to blow up your law firm. Like I said before, the stuff that was used today is used in tactical teams as diversions. I’m no police detective, but I have worked with detectives long enough to know a diversion when I see one. Other than the one office, there is no other damage, other than what was done by my guys. Someone’s trying to get your attention, counselor. I’ll keep you updated on the investigation,” Captain Williamson said as he turned and walked away.

“Somebody went to a great deal of trouble to distract you, Brandon. But from what?” Darion asked.

“Maybe it wasn’t just Brandon that needed distraction. I’m thinking the fire in the office building was intended as a diversion for both Brandon and Tristan,” Domino said looking from one to the other.

All three men stood paralyzed with fear as they realized what Domino was getting at. “Alisha,” they all said at once.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Tristan and Alisha had come back to Tristan's apartment. They were in the kitchen eating lunch and waiting on word of what was going on at the firm.

"Do you think everything is okay with the office?" Alisha asked Tristan, worried that they hadn't heard anything yet.

"I am sure they would have called if something was wrong. These things take time. One of them will call," Tristan tried to reassure her, but wasn't at all sure himself. One of them should have called by now.

Tristan was brought out of his reverie by the sound of the doorbell. "Hmmm, I wonder who that could be?" he said.

"Maybe it's the guys," Alisha said getting up to follow Tristan to the door.

Tristan looked through the peephole of his door to see two uniformed police officers standing on the other side.

“Uh oh, this can’t be good,” Tristan said unlocking the door.

“What can’t be good? Alisha inquired.

“It’s the police,” Tristan responded as he opened the door. “Yes, officers, how can I help you? Tristan asked.

“Hi, we are looking for a Ms. Alisha Carrington. We were told we could contact her here,” one of the officers’ said.

“And you are?” Tristan asked.

“I’m Officer Ramsey and this here is my partner, Officer O’Connor,” indicating the man standing next to him.

Tristan looked at the officers. Something was up with them. One seemed just a little too edgy for his taste. “And, why would you be looking for Ms. Carrington?” Tristan probed.

“It’s about her apartment. We were sent to go over some minor details. If she would prefer we could meet her down at headquarters. The captain thought it would be more comfortable for her to talk here,” Officer Ramsey informed them.

Tristan looked at the two men skeptically but invited them in anyway. Maybe he was being paranoid but he didn't think so. He could agree to go with them but it could be a setup and Alisha's life would be at risk even further because he didn't know who the players were yet. Inviting them in was risky also, but he felt that if something went down he had a better chance of two against one then God knew how many against them. He decided to keep Alisha close to him so when she went to move ahead of him he caught her by the hand and waited for the two to enter before proceeding after them. He closed the door and pretended to lock it by turning the lock back and forth. Just in case he thought to himself.

"As you can see I don't have any furniture so we need to make this quick. Are there any new leads as to who broke into her house?" Tristan questioned.

"Yes, there have been," Officer Ramsey responded.

"Really!" Alisha said excitedly. She went to move away from Tristan only to be restrained by his arm.

“Hold on, Beauty,” he whispered. Tristan saw the officer’s gun come up just in time to push Alisha behind him.

“Tristan what...Oh my God!” she screeched seeing the gun for the first time.

“Keep calm. Beauty,” Tristan murmured, eyeing the one who called himself Ramsey and who had a pointed gun trained on them.

“Listen to the G-Man, lady. Now why don’t you be a good cowboy and send the lady over here,” Ramsey sneered.

“I don’t think so,” Tristan countered.

“You see I’m the one with the gun and if you don’t want me to use it, then I suggest you hand the lady over and we will be on our way,” Ramsey snarled. “On second thought both of you are coming. Let’s go. Any false moves and we will shoot both of you. Lady first, of course, she’s our insurance you won’t do anything stupid. Now, both of you get over here now!”

When Tristan didn’t move, he walked over and snatched Alisha by the arm and pulled her closer to him causing her to cry out in pain.

“Ouch!” Alisha cried out.

“Make one wrong move and she gets it in the head,” Ramsey barked to Tristan with cold, unfeeling eyes.

Tristan had seen this look before on many men. This man had killed before and would have no problem shooting Alisha. He would have to think of another way to get Alisha out of his grip. He could probably take one of them with a gun but not two, and considering the one named O'Connor appeared to be nervous or scared shitless, he wouldn't take a chance. A scared person with a gun was unpredictable and dangerous.

Tristan gave the one called Ramsey a scathing look, his voice deadly. “Hurt her again and you will eat that gun. I can promise you that.”

Tristan noticed that the man's hand shook a little at his words. He recovered quickly enough but not before Tristan had noticed.

“Make a sudden move and you both will be waking up with the daisies,” Ramsey shot back.

“Man we have orders not to hurt the girl, so get them and let's go,” O'Connor said giving his partner a nervous look.

Tristan's cell phone began to chirp startling the two men. "Don't answer that. Give me the cell phone," Ramsey ordered, looking at Tristan. "And remember, any funny moves and you are both gone."

Tristan handed him the cell phone. If it was Brandon he would know something was wrong giving everything that had been going on.

"Now, everyone move towards the door," Ramsey commanded.

Ramsey had his gun in Alisha's side with Alisha standing on the side of him. O'Connor had placed his gun in the middle of Tristan's back.

All four went to make a move towards the door when the doorbell suddenly rang.

"Don't say a word. Got that G-man? Or the lady here gets it," Ramsey whispered.

"My cell phone is ringing and the doorbell is ringing that leads me to believe that whoever is at the door is probably the caller on my cell. If I don't answer one of them whoever it is will know something is wrong and then you won't have a chance in hell of getting out of here. Your call," Tristan informed Ramsey.

“He’s right Ramsey. Let him answer the phone,” O’Connor instructed Ramsey. “We don’t need any problems man. Let’s do this, collect our money and get out of New York.”

Ramsey handed Tristan his cell phone with one hand while still holding the gun on Alisha with the other. “Here. Get rid of whoever is on the other line. Don’t be a hero G-man and talk quietly,” Ramsey said handing the phone to Tristan.

“Hello.”

“Hello brother, you want to let me in?” the caller said in his no-nonsense voice.

“That’s because I am not in Atlanta. I am in New York. I’ll have to get it to you when I get back to Atlanta, Art,” Tristan said not missing a beat, his facial expression never changing.

“Who the hell is Art? I know you’re in New York I’m at your—. Trouble?”

“Of course, listen Art, I was on my way out. Can this wait until I get back in Atlanta? Someone is at my door.” Tristan said not looking at Ramsey.

“You’re inside, Tris?”

“Sure. If you need it before I get back just go to the office and tell my secretary to give it to you. My office should be unlocked, but if not my secretary has a key,” Tristan relayed.

“The door is unlocked. Is there a gun involved?” he asked.

“Yes, no problem. Anytime. Talk to you soon. Bye,” Tristan hung up the phone. “We still have a problem. Whoever is at the door was not the caller.” Tristan looked at the men trying to gauge their next move. The doorbell rang again. Thank God his brother knew what to do.

“Shush. Don’t say a word. Whoever it is will eventually think that you are not home and go away. Since I know for a fact that you were gathered in your brother’s apartment earlier today, they will think you are either not at home or at your brother’s. Either way they will go away and we will leave. We’ve wasted enough time here,” Ramsey said.

“How do you know it is not my brother at the door? He’ll know I’m not at his apartment. What if he doesn’t go away but calls for help?” Tristan taunted.

“Please, your brother is being detained by a nice fire. You were not supposed to be here. We thought you would go with your brother. A small inconvenience but doable just as well. By the time he finishes there and gets back here, we’ll be long gone. Now shut up before I shut you up,” Ramsey muttered.

Tristan’s mind was working fast. Okay, someone’s feeding this dude information and the fire was a diversion to get us out of the apartment. Apparently James wanted Alisha at all costs. He’d better hope the police catch him before I do. When I catch up with him, I can guarantee there won’t be a trial.

“Move slowly towards the door,” Ramsey instructed Tristan pulling Alisha along with him. “Do not open the door. O’Connor, see who is out there.”

O’Connor, with the gun still trained on them, looked over at Ramsey.

“Go ahead. G-man won’t try anything. I have the lady, he’ll cooperate,” Ramsey sneered.

O’Connor moved Tristan towards the door with the gun still pointed and his back and moved around Tristan to take a look through the peep hole. Suddenly

the door was kicked open catching them all by surprise, slamming into the man known as O'Connor's head, knocking him off balance, and causing the gun to fall to the floor. Tristan dove for the gun, picking it up and shooting O'Connor in his knee. The man yelped in pain and lunged for Tristan. One fatal shot and the man fell to the ground.

"I don't know who you are but nice of you to join the party. Now, if either of you makes a move the lady is dead," Ramsey snapped cocking the gun pointed at Alisha's temple.

Tristan stopped dead in his tracks. He knew he could take the man called Ramsey but he wouldn't risk it with that gun pointed at Alisha's temple. Tristan looked at his brother. He didn't know why his brother was here but he sure as hell was grateful. Sinjin was a master marksman.

Alisha looked at the tall, imposing figure standing close to the opened doorway in a stance as to block them from leaving. Damn. If the situation wasn't grave she would be drooling. The same blue/grey eyes as Tristan's but face sharper, tanner, short military haircut that only accented his eyes and damned if he

didn't have dimples. His frown had dimples. Wow, he was gorgeous and dangerous looking. Oh well, it was time for this nonsense to end. If she ever caught up with James she would kick his ass herself.

"And just how do you plan on getting out of here?" Sinjin asked in a voice that sent chills down Alisha's spine.

"Oh I will leave. G-man won't shoot me. He has a thing for the lady here. But then again so does my boss and I'm being paid a nice piece of change to bring the lady to him. Must be one fine piece of ass to have so many wanting her," Ramsey said giving her the once over. "Maybe I'll try her out before I hand her over to the boss."

Tristan went to make a move.

Ramsey put his free hand around Alisha neck, jerking it back, and pushing the gun into her temple. "Don't try it G-man. So you two are going to drop your guns, back up, and move out of my way. Now! Or I will splatter her brains all over this apartment," Ramsey yelled looking from one to the other hurriedly. He didn't trust either man. The one that had busted

through the door looked very dangerous but he wasn't worried, he was a skilled sniper and hit man.

Tristan gripped his gun tighter. Sinjin just looked at the man. "Put the gun down now!" Ramsey shouted at Tristan and turned on Sinjin. "You too."

Alisha looked at Tristan as he bent to put the gun on the floor.

Sinjin just snarled.

"Don't play the hero, Cowboy, or you and the lady will be dead. Trust me you don't want to take the chance. You kick your gun over here," Ramsey told Tristan.

Sinjin tipped his head back and laughed a deep hair-raising laugh that had Ramsey's eyes bugging out. A laugh that if you heard it on the streets and didn't know who it belonged to, you would turn and go the other way.

Alisha's breath caught in her chest.

Tristan glanced at his brother from the corner of his eye. What in the world was Sinjin up too? He'd better not be playing one of his crazy games or he'd shoot Sinjin himself for putting Alisha's life at risk.

Sinjin laughed harder, never putting down the gun.

Ramsey's hand shook for the briefest of moments and Alisha took advantage of it. Slamming her foot down on his and jabbing him in the gut, she threw her body on the floor.

Ramsey raised his gun to shoot but Sinjin was too fast for him. Sinjin had gotten a shot off before Ramsey could raise his hand, shooting the man right between the eyes. Ramsey hit the floor in a swoop.

"Yippee Ki-Yay Mother Fucker!" Sinjin snapped as he watched the man fall to the floor.

Tristan ran to Alisha, picking her up off the floor and embracing her. She was shaking like a leaf. No doubt from all of the blood on the floor. He ran his hands all over her body checking for damage, finally coming back up to her head, he ran his fingers through her hair and began to kiss her passionately.

Sinjin just stood back looking at his brother in shock. "Damn brother can you let the lady breathe?" Sinjin remarked shaking his head. "In case anybody's interested I'm going to get someone to clean this garbage up." Shaking his head again he went to get

help but met the police, his brother, Domino, and two African-American men that he had no idea who they were. He waved them in. The police, with weapons drawn, assumed the two on the floor were fallen cops yelled. "Police nobody move!"

"Are you for real?" Sinjin asked the officer looking at the officers as if they had lost their everlasting minds. "These men are not cops. They were holding my brother and the young lady over there hostage."

"Put your hands up in air where I can see them," the officer commanded Sinjin.

Complying with the officer, Sinjin raised his hands, "You have to be kidding me. I am not the criminal here. Tristan can you let go of the lady long enough to tell these officers what happened!" Sinjin shouted.

Brandon and Detective Rodriguez walked over to the officer and informed him that Sinjin was not the responsible party and that the men on the floor were impersonators, hired guns.

After giving Alisha and Tristan the once over, gauging that they were alright, Domino, Darion, and

Trevon went to talk with the other detectives trying to ascertain who the imposters were. Police were all throughout the apartment.

Tristan and Alisha continued to stand in the middle of the floor, kissing. A flurry of activity escalated around them. Not caring, they continued to kiss passionately.

Tristan could hear his brothers speaking to one another and couldn't care less what they were saying. Tristan continued kissing her deeply. He could have lost her. Lifting his head from her he asked, "You okay baby?" Tristan whispered against her lips. "I could have lost you. Are you sure you're okay? You hit the floor pretty hard baby." Tristan began to run his hands all over her body checking for injuries.

"Tristan I'm fine. I didn't hit the floor that hard. I did that on purpose. It's a move I learned in my Tae Kwon Do classes," Alisha assured him, still physically shaken from the incident.

"Is she hurt? We need a statement from the both of you." Detective Rodriguez informed them.

"Listen, we will give you guys whatever you need, but at this moment I need to get her out of

here,” Tristan advised the detective while still holding a very shaky Alisha.

“I don’t think that will be a problem,” the detective advised.

“Good, because I wasn’t asking,” Tristan said, eyeing the detective while guiding Alisha out the door. “Brandon you can bring them to your apartment when you’re done. Detective, you can follow us down the hall if you want. If not...”

“Hold on brother, I’ll follow you down. Brandon and the rest can handle things here. That way you can catch me up on what the hell’s been going on,” Sinjin commanded.

Tristan took in Sinjin’s gruff appearance. Sinjin’s six and a half foot frame was heavily-muscled. With his military style haircut, deeply-tanned skin, and five o’clock shadow, Sinjin gave off the appearance of a very dangerous soldier. The only discerning features he had of the Cameron’s right now were his grey-blue eyes and the firm set of his jaw. Sinjin was an enigma. However he was fiercely loyal to his family and loved ones. “Welcome back. How did you know that you

were needed?" Tristan asked as he let them all into Brandon's apartment.

"Domino got word to me that Brandon wouldn't be coming, that he would be sending one of his men instead. Since neither you have ever let me down before, I figured something was up. So I finished up most of what I could, left the rest to the others, called in a favor, and came here. I went to Brandon's first. I got worried when he wasn't home, came down to your apartment, rang the doorbell, and when you didn't answer, I called your cell. I could hear voices in the apartment but not well enough to make them out. Thought you were occupied—," Sinjin stopped what he was about to say looking at the beauty his brother was holding onto so tightly. "I had no idea what was going on until I spoke with you. And you always said I get shit started brother. Apparently it's in the genes. Exactly what the hell is going on anyway?"

"I think we would all like to know what is going on," the detective spoke up.

Sinjin, Tristan, and Alisha all turned to the detective, startled by the intrusive voice. All looking at the detective as if they had forgotten he was there.

“Come on in detective and have a seat,” Tristan said still holding onto Alisha’s hand.

The detective, along with Sinjin, followed Tristan over to the sofa.

Alisha broke free of Tristan’s grip and went to face the man that no doubt was Tristan’s younger brother. Walking over to Sinjin, she stood in front of him and held out her hand. “Hello. My name is Alisha Carrington. Nice to meet you,” she said.

Looking down at the extended hand of the beautiful woman that his brother kept calling Beauty, and boy was she beautiful, he decided to forego the handshake. Pulling her into a tight, yet brief hug, “welcome to the family,” was all he said before he released her and sat down next to the detective.

Alisha was so stunned by the abrupt hug and the giant of a man’s words that she stood in the middle of the floor with her mouth hanging open. Alisha gave Sinjin a puzzled look before taking her seat next to Tristan, her hand automatically seeking the comfort of his. Alisha had never seen so much blood before in her life. Tristan could have been killed. She could have been killed. This situation was getting worse and

worse by the minute. She didn't know how much more of this she could take. She had been moving, non-stop, for two days now and it was beginning to wear on her nerves. She hoped they would find James and solve this thing quickly so she could get her life back. She couldn't understand how someone could be so mean and evil. Alisha hadn't realized that Tristan was speaking to her until he shook her a little. Looking up into his face Alisha could only see the scene at his apartment and the two men that lay dead on his floor. She started to feel clammy, then nauseous. She needed a bathroom before she embarrassed herself. "Ah Brandon where's your bathroom?" she whispered, her voice shaky. Alisha stood up, but when she went to move, she began to shake uncontrollably then the room began to spin before her. She thought she heard voices but they sounded so far away. The next thing was total blackness.

"Grab her Tristan, she's going to crash," Sinjin yelled out just before Tristan had swept Alisha up into his arms.

"Dammit, that little fuck better pray to whoever it is that he prays to that I don't catch him before the

police do,” Tristan bellowed as Sinjin handed him a cool towel to place on Alisha’s forehead.

“Should I get an ambulance for her,” the detective asked looking worried.

“No, she will be alright in a minute. Come on Beauty,” Tristan soothed as he rocked her back and forth in his arms trying to acclimate her with his body heat to bring her around. Tristan began to relax when he felt her body relax and noticed her eyes fluttering. “Come on baby everything is fine. I got you.”

Alisha awoke sitting on Tristan’s lap. “What happened?” she whispered, still too weak to lift her head.

“You passed out Beauty. You were going into shock. That happens once the adrenalin rush wears off. The body crashes,” Tristan informed her as he continued to rock her back and forth.

Everyone looked up at the sound of the door opening, Sinjin went on full alert. It was Brandon and the others. Darion and Trevon started to go to Alisha when they saw her sitting on Tristan’s lap visible upset.

“Don’t,” Sinjin commanded in a firm voice. “Let him handle it. She went into shock.”

“Tristan,” she called.

“Yes Beauty.”

“There was so much blood...and...and,” Alisha began to cry deep, heart wrenching tears.

“I know Beauty, I know.” Tristan clutched her tighter against him, running his fingers through her hair and kissing her on the top of her head.

Her tears were tearing him apart. He began to tear up as he consoled her.

Everyone in the room started to tear up at Tristan’s consoling words to Alisha.

“We need to catch this son of bitch Langston. He will not hurt my sister,” Trevon muttered. “He had better hope that the police catch him before I do.”

The detective had heard enough. He couldn’t blame them for wanting to hurt the person that was trying to hurt their loved one. As a police officer he had to warn them against taking the law into their own hands. He didn’t have a wife but he did have two younger sisters and he would probably want to do the same thing. “Since that is the second time in a manner

of minutes that I have heard that, I will warn all of you about taking the law into your own hands as I am required to do. As a man I will tell you that I have all the information that I need so far. I will say off the record, “handle your business.” With that he walked out of the apartment.

Sinjin was not one for showing emotion. “I’ll be back.”

“Where are you going?” Brandon asked mystified. “You just got here.”

“Fishing.”

“Fishing!” Brandon, Darion, and Trevon roared.

“Let me know when you catch something,” Domino remarked.

Brandon and Trevon were clearly baffled at the two men standing there talking about fishing at a time like this.

“Should I come along on this fishing expedition with you,” Darion asked.

“Nope, everybody stay close to those two. I’ll let you know what I find, maybe.” With that Sinjin was out the door.

“Man that dudes even more intense than Tristan,” Trevon said.

“Definitely,” both Brandon and Domino countered.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

One month later

Slamming the phone down on its cradle, the angry man sitting behind the desk in his study began to get anxious. “Those blundering idiots!” Why? Why? Why, couldn’t anybody do anything right? “Must I do everything myself!” he shouted to the empty room, totally out of control. After the botched kidnapping attempt twice, he had hired someone else to find Ms. Carrington and bring her to him. After a month of lying low, he had thought that she would finally be his, just to be told that she had been moved again. She had become his obsession. He wouldn’t stop until he had her. Her security and the fool, Cameron, would slip up and she would be his for the taking. He began to salivate just thinking about all the fun he intended to have with her.

The door to his semi-darkened study opened and in walked a tall figure. “What are you doing here?” he

yelped. His frown deepened the lines that already marred his face.

“What do you mean what am I doing here? You sent for me,” the figure said.

“What the hell are you talking about you imbecile, I never sent for you,” the man began to panic. “You cannot be here! Do you want us to get caught, you idiot?” he yelled.

“Well if you didn’t send for me...who did?” he asked.

A lone figure appeared out of the shadows of the semi-darkened room, gun in hand. “Why, I did of course,” said the figure.

“Who the hell are you?” The man shouted.

“Your worst nightmare, Langston.”

“Wh—What are you talking about? How do you know my name? Who are you?” Sweat was popping off of his forehead in buckets, as if he was on drugs or some type of medication.

“Oh, I am familiar with both of you. It took me a little while to figure it out...once I did, everything was simple. As for my name, I’m Sinjin Cameron,” Sinjin informed them with a sneer.

“Bu—But you were in New Mexico. Wh—When did you—“

“Get back? Oh the day those two goons showed up at my brother’s place to try and kidnap Ms. Carrington and tried to burn down the law firm, of course.” Sinjin’s voice was low and deadly. “You know attempted arson is a serious crime.”

Sinjin watched the man standing there with his eyes bugging out, shifting from one foot to the other in a very nervous gesture. “Kidnapping. Arson. What are you talking about? I never tried to kidnap anyone or burn down the law firm.” James turned to face the other man with a perplexed look upon his face, “What is he talking about father?”

“Shut up James,” he shouted.

“No. I didn’t kidnap anyone and I sure didn’t start any fire. I am not going down for something I did not do. Enough is enough. I told you to leave it alone. But you just had to have her just like everything else,” James screamed.

“Shut up you stupid little shit. He has nothing. He can’t prove a thing. Keep your mouth shut,” Charles Langston roared at his son.

Sinjin stood looking from one to the other, very interesting. So it had been the senior Langston that planned this. It still didn't explain the sexual harassment charges against James and all the other crimes that he had been accused of. Sinjin decided to let them banter back and forth. Neither James nor Charles had noticed the officers standing off to the side in the doorway. Sinjin had signaled them to stay where they were. He needed Charles Langston to confess.

"No. I'll pay for my past sins but I won't be accused of kidnapping nor will I take the rap for attempted arson. I have taken the blame for you long enough. It stops now!" James screamed, tears rolling down his eyes. "For years I've done things and have hung around the wrong people because you had me believe that I was this monster." James turned towards Sinjin, "I will tell you and the police everything you need to know."

"No you won't! I will kill you first!" Charles Langston howled.

Sinjin had been so occupied with letting them talk that he hadn't seen the senior Langston's gun until it was drawn.

"Die you stupid little shit," Charles said before pulling the trigger.

Sinjin was quick and on point. He fired just as Charles did, shooting the man in his gun hand. The senior Langston yelled out in pain before his gun dropped to the desk. Sinjin raced over and grabbed the gun from the desk over a crying Langston, senior.

The police officers had rushed in when they saw what Charles Langston was about to do. Sinjin's shot had caused Charles' shot to miss James and hit the wall behind him. Had the officers not rushed, the bullet that went through the wall probably would have hit one of them.

"An ambulance is on the way," the officer said.

"Arrest him. He shot me!" an irate Charles Langston screamed.

"You'll live," the officer said to Charles Langston while another one cuffed and arrested a dejected looking James.

Taking out his cell phone Sinjin placed a call.

“Hello.”

“Yeah, it’s over. James Langston and Charles Langston have both been arrested,” Sinjin related.

“Charles Langston. So he was the one who set the building on fire? Wow, I have heard of giving your child whatever he or she wants, but there are limits to everything.”

“All wrong brother. It appears that it was Charles pulling the strings all the time. Charles is on his way to the hospital and James to the police station. James has agreed to fully cooperate, so I suggest you get Brandon and make your way down there,” Sinjin said.

“I won’t ask how you got all this information, but thanks all the same. You said Charles Langston was on his way to the hospital, why?” Tristan asked.

“He tried to kill his son...I had to shoot him. It’s a hand shot, he will live for now. I don’t know how he will fare in prison though...I will make sure he meets the right people in there. Trust me he will wish he was dead.”

“Damn, they are both crazy. I owe you one brother. Thank you,” Tristan remarked, relieved that this was finally over.

“No thanks necessary. I am leaving out tonight. Let me know when the wedding is brother,” Sinjin countered.

“Will do, take care.”

Sinjin disconnected his call with Tristan and placed another one.

“Hello.”

“On my way back in.”

“So you caught your fish?”

“Yes, both of them.”

“I am sure there is a story in there somewhere. Brief me when you get here.”

“Will do. Bye.”

“Bye.”

* * *

Tristan hung up with Sinjin and turned to Alisha pulling her into his arms and kissing her thoroughly.

“Umm, who was that and what was that for?” she asked him huskily.

“It’s over Beauty. Both James Langston and his father have been placed under arrest.”

“His father...for what!” Alisha sat up in bed and shrieked.

Tristan explained everything that he knew so far. Instead of going down to the police station he called Brandon and asked him to go and if they were needed to call.

“Now that everything is over I want to start planning a future with you,” Tristan said.

“What kind of future are you talking about?” she asked just to be clear that they were on the same page.

“The kind of future that entails a ring, marriage, and a few kids, and very soon,” he replied.

“Tristan you live in Atlanta and I live in New York, how are we going to work this out? Or are you suggesting something long distance,” she asked him serious now.

“Long distance...what the hell. No. I. Do. Not. Want. A. Long. Distance. Relationship. I want a marriage and either I will move here or you can move

to Atlanta, or we can move somewhere else. I don't care as long as we are together. Married," Tristan declared.

"Okay."

Tristan gazed up at her, "Okay what?"

"Okay, we can live in Atlanta. Since my house is already on the market. You have been in New York over a month and I know it's killing you," she said smiling at him.

Tristan was ecstatic. She had agreed to marry him and move to Atlanta. "Yes. We can be married in a week's time. I will take you for your ring in the morning."

"I am not getting married in a week's time Tristan. My parents would kill me. I want a traditional wedding," she exclaimed.

Frowning he looked at her, "How long are we talking? I am not waiting a long time to be married," he said.

"It is going to take at least a year to plan."

"Hell no! I am not waiting a year to marry you."

"Six months."

"No."

“Tristan a wedding takes time to plan and by the time my mother and your mother get a hold of this, who knows how long it is going to take.”

“No Beauty. I will give them three months at the most and that is it.”

She shrieked, “Tristan I can’t—”

Shaking his head, “Three months, Beauty, and that is final or I will march both of us down to the Justice of the Peace. Choose,” was Tristan’s firm reply.

“Okay. Okay, but you’re telling our parents. You know they are going to think I am pregnant and that is why we are in a rush, don’t you?” she said.

“So we are getting married and living in Atlanta,” he confirmed, pulling her underneath him, spreading her legs, and sinking into her moist heat. “Beauty I am so potent now that you probably will be pregnant by the time we get married.”

“Ummm, if not, at least we will have fun trying,” she moved in time with his movements.

“Damn straight.”

EPILOGUE

Three months later

Jamaica, West Indies

Tristan lay naked in bed waiting for his wife to finish in the bathroom and wondering what was taking her so long. His wife, boy did that sound good. The wedding had been a glorious occasion. It had been a wedding that would be talked about for a while. The wedding had taken place in Georgia at a private dining hall owned by his family. They'd had to have it there because the media had gotten wind of Alisha's sister, Asia, and cousin Diamond Shaw's famous status as super models. That wasn't all that would be talked about. One of his presents to his wife was to recite his vows to her. Everyone in the church was surprised. Hell, he had surprised himself. It wasn't something that he had rehearsed. He had gone with what his heart was saying. They were very emotional words that went like this: *From the moment that I met you, I knew that you were a special gift sent to me from*

Heaven above. Each day of my life, and yours too, I will cherish you as the special gift that you are. Every breath I take after pleasing God will be to please, honor, and take care of you. With everything that is within me I will make sure that you are treated like the queen that you are, for you are my queen, my reason for living. To say I love you is an understatement. So I will say this, not only are you in my heart, you are my heart. God has brought us together and only God can tear us apart. Because what God has joined together no man can put asunder. You are SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL and I cherish you.

There wasn't a dry eye in the place until Alisha's younger brother, Darius, yelled out. "That's my brother-in-law! Represent the fellows! Show 'em how the fellows do it!" Alisha's parents reprimanded him, "Darius!" That wasn't the bad part. Sinjin being Sinjin yelled out "Damn straight...that's my brother!" and did a full bellied wolf whistle that had the entire younger crowd on their feet and his father boxing his ears in the hall. "What? It's not church Pop, it's a dining hall," Sinjin informed his father, rubbing the spot on his ear.

All in all, it was an excellent wedding and an even better reception. Tristan and Alisha had snuck away and left everyone there to continue to party.

Tristan turned his head at the sound of his name being called. “Wow,” he said looking at his wife coming out of the bathroom with what he guessed was supposed to be a nightgown, he couldn’t tell. It was long and sheer, low-cut down to her navel, and had long slits up the sides, back and front, and from what he could tell she had nothing else underneath.

Twirling around, she asked him, “So what do you think husband?”

“Come here. I can show you better than I can tell you wife.”

Alisha walked over to Tristan and he pulled her down on the bed beside him. “Are you happy baby,” he whispered.

“More than you could know.”

“Good, I’m glad. Is this sexy number one of your bridal presents?”

“Yes, it is another one from Asia,” she said laughing. “Tristan, why didn’t you tell me what those things were that Asia gave me before I announced it to

the entire family? Oh my God Tristan, I announced to everybody that you said you were going to show me how to use the Ben-Wa balls that Asia gave me. I was mortified when Diamond whispered to me what they were.”

Tristan laughed so hard tears were streaming down his cheeks. “Babe, I had no idea you didn’t know what they were. Sinjin and Darius thought it was funny.”

“Well, they would. They are demented. I am going to find a way to get Asia back for that. She knew what she was doing,” Alisha said.

Kissing her soundly on the lips he whispered, “I love you Beauty. Besides, think of all the fun we are going to have learning how to use Asia’s gift. Trust me, by the time I’m done we’ll be sending Asia a thank you gift.”

“I love you too Tristan, with all my heart,” she declared.

“Good, because by the time our two week honeymoon is up you are going to be good and pregnant,” he promised.

“Then stop talking and get to work husband.”

Tristan proceeded to make love to his wife all through the night.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Serenity King is a new author of interracial/multicultural erotica and contemporary romance who has been reading romance novels since her auntie placed a Harlequin in her hands at the age of sixteen.

Serenity is fiercely devoted to her characters and has a strong passion for Alpha males. Her males are Alpha, family-oriented men who Live, Love, and Fight for their women. She lives in the New York area with her husband and children.

Be on the lookout for more of Serenity's works for your reading pleasure. She loves feedback from her readers, so she'd welcome your e-mails to serenity.king088@gmail.com.

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