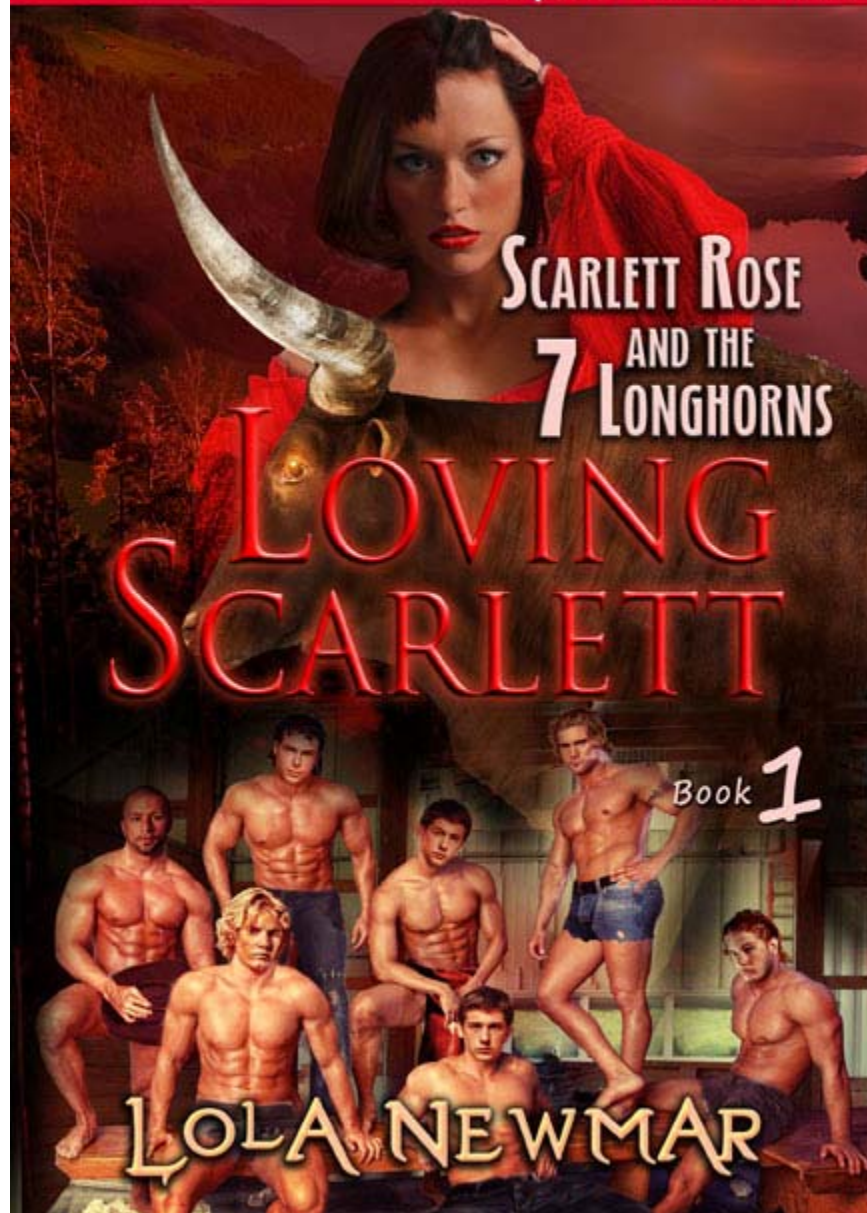


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LoveXtreme Forever



SCARLETT ROSE
7 AND THE
LONGHORNS
LOVING
SCARLETT

Book 1

LOLA NEWMAR

Scarlet Rose and the Seven Longhorns 1

Loving Scarlett

After a traumatic and mysterious fall off a cliff, which results in amnesia, virginal twenty-one-year-old Scarlett Rose is saved by seven sexy cowboy brothers. Frightened and disoriented, her confusion peaks when she immediately feels an inexplicable, intense attraction to the beautiful strangers, including a doctor, a mysterious nightshift ranch hand, a set of triplets, and a set of twins!

Scarlett's reality receives another sucker punch when she discovers her heroes are actually Texas longhorn-shifter cowboys who claim she is their destined, life-long mate.

The Lenox brothers have waited their entire lives to find the one woman they were born to share. Their newly discovered mate exceeds their wildest dreams. She's gorgeous, witty, and her blood-red lips drive their bulls wild with passion.

But this Texas yellow rose has thorns. She demands outside contact, but the men insist on protecting her from the mysterious person who hurt her. They decide the only way to get their stubborn mate to stay is if they make sure she never wants to leave.

Genre: Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Shape-shifter, Western/Cowboys

Length: 26,506 words

LOVING SCARLETT

Scarlett Rose and the Seven Longhorns 1

Lola Newmar

LOVEXTREME FOREVER



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LOVING SCARLETT

Scarlett Rose and the Seven Longhorns 1

LOLA NEWMAR

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Chapter 1

She awoke, pain coursing through her veins as she looked around. Confusion and fear took over when she realized she was lying in the woods, the morning wildlife and nature conducting themselves as if she was just another creature.

Her hand shot up to the side of her head, a sharp stab of pain suddenly hitting her like a diesel truck.

What happened? Where am I?

Her eyes could barely stay open with the harsh glare of the rising sun shining directly over her. The pain continued to throb in her temples. Another pain grabbed her attention. She looked down and saw a large gash going down her arm. The blood had already clotted and had begun to dry on her skin. She'd obviously been there for some time.

She went to stand, but vertigo overtook her as she found herself looking down at a steep continuation of the cliff ledge she stood on. She threw herself back with a gasping shriek as she retreated to the safety of the rock wall behind her. She felt lightheaded, her vision momentarily tilting the world around her. She struggled to return her rapid breathing to a manageable pace.

A few small rocks fell on her hair from above, and she lightly shook her head to rid it of the pests. She looked up, and her jaw

dropped in horror. She stared up at another high cliff above her. Several branches that had grown from the wall looked as though they had recently been snapped from something falling down the side.

Oh, my God, I must have fallen.

But what had caused her to fall? She racked her brain to make out a face, but she came up with nothing. Where was she?

No, wait, *who* was she?

Holy shit, she couldn't remember. She didn't even know her own damn name. Tears of frustration began to build behind her eyelids.

She looked down and saw she wore stiletto-heeled, black patent leather pumps. Her beige fishnet stockings were torn in various places, several bloody bruises and scrapes poking through the openings. The fitted, black pencil skirt she wore was tattered and torn up one side. She wore a cream-colored, sleeveless, turtleneck silk blouse with a large, black silk flower on the side of the neckline. It was only half-tucked in, and it, too, was adorned with dirt stains and tears.

Maybe she was a professional. But a professional what?

She studied her body, patting down her skirt as she searched for a name tag or an ID of some sort, but it didn't appear there was anything on her.

She lowered her head in preparation for a crying fit, but as she did so, a silver and red glimmer caught her attention. Around her neck was a beautiful silver locket with the name "Scarlett Rose" formed in beautiful script by tiny rubies. She repeated the name over and over in her mind.

Scarlett. Scarlett. Scarlett.

Relief warmed her as the name sounded more and more familiar and comforting in her head. That must be her. She was Scarlett.

Okay, so that was one piece of this bizarre puzzle.

Scarlett took a deep breath for bravery and inched her way back to the next cliff edge in front of her. The side of the cliff was pretty steep, but upon closer inspection, Scarlett realized she would more

than likely be able to make her way down. But where was she going to go?

She shielded the blinding sunlight from her eyes with one scraped-up hand. Her heart skipped when she saw that not far in the distance lay a vast ranch with a huge, two-story Southern plantation house at the center of the fenced-in property. It didn't look too far at all. In fact, she could even make out a man on a horse herding four huge longhorns. Three red and one black and white.

The man on the horse looked shirtless, and even from afar, she could make out the chiseled muscles and the massive, broad chest and shoulders he possessed. The only thing he wore above his waistline was a white cowboy hat. Seeing that he was about to be her white knight, whether he liked it or not, his attire seemed more than appropriate.

* * * *

Another full day of bullshit-ass training. Devlin Lenox snorted in frustration, his front right hoof digging into the field.

It's Sunday, for Christ's sake.

He should be watching pigskin on ESPN with a Shiner in one hand.

The toe of a cowboy boot tapped his rump, interrupting his inner complaints. He turned his head left toward the asshole. His twin brother, Denzel, in his human form, sat atop Wayne, their largest black stallion. Devlin did his best to throw a glare his brother's way. The best way a longhorn could manage, anyhow.

"Don't look at me like that, brother," Denzel said, his lips forming a slight smirk. "Now, go on and join the triplets, but first, you need to jog around the ranch a few times for a warm-up."

This was complete bullshit. He was already prepared for the rodeo tour for the upcoming weekend, and the bull-riding finals were two months away. Devlin was the bull to beat, not that it had ever

happened. He defeated every rider who tried to challenge him at the rodeo. He was the meanest, strongest bull in Texas, so why the fuck did he have to condition with the triplets?

During conditioning, those who were training had to remain in their bull forms as much as possible. Their shape-shifting strength was a matter of supply and demand. The more they remained in their bull forms, the stronger their strength and the sharper their minds when they allowed their inner beasts to be unleashed.

Devlin looked around and saw his other brothers Rhett, Sonny, and Levi, the red longhorn triplets, chewing on a pile of hay to fuel up for the busy day that lay ahead. Devlin felt satisfied when he heard Denzel curse and sputter as he made extra sure to kick dirt toward his twin with his hind legs as he took off to get to work.

“You’re a real dick, Devlin. You kicked dirt in my goddamn mouth, you mean ol’ shit. You’re the only longhorn I know that lives on a luxury ranch and still manages to find a reason to be grumpy,” Denzel called out as he trotted away.

Just as Devlin was about to approach the group, a glimmer caught the corner of his eye. Something shiny. He looked over to the wooded cliffs to his left and was shocked to see a small woman trying to make her way down the steep cliff. The silver necklace she wore reflected in the harsh sunlight. Then something else caught his attention.

Red.

A long, bright streak of it on her arm.

Devlin immediately felt the beast that had already taken over his body begin to savagely take over his mind. As if someone else were controlling his actions, he let out a hard snort before taking off into the woods, his hooves working faster than they ever had.

“Devlin! What the fuck are you doing? Get the fuck back here!”

He heard Denzel’s shout, but the meaning didn’t register.

He saw only red.

He ran quickly, other livestock scrambling to get out of his way as he thundered past. He reached the ranch fence and leapt over it without hesitation.

“Devlin! Leo’s going to kill me! What the fuck!”

Yeah, what the fuck *was* he doing? He didn’t know. And if he was honest with himself, he didn’t care. He didn’t even bother to look over his shoulder. He knew from the volume of Denzel’s voice that his twin was racing Wayne as fast as he could toward him.

Knowing his brother, at any moment, Denzel would allow his own inner beast to come out, shifting him into a black and white longhorn like himself. He was way ahead of him, but it would just be a matter of seconds before his brother would catch up.

He wasn’t sure why, but his only focus was on that color. Red. He had to get to this woman. He worked his way up the steep hill toward her. Suddenly, he stopped in his tracks.

No fucking way.

That scent. He’d never smelled it before, but he knew what it was. He knew exactly what it was.

Our mate. You’ve finally come to us.

* * * *

Scarlett was getting mighty torn up as she made her way down the rocky hills. Luckily, she was able to find a patch of downward land that wasn’t so steep. She focused on reaching the large ranch she had spotted so she could ask the sexy cowboy for help.

She did her best to ignore the creepy crawlies around her, but shivers went down her spine with every foreign noise that came her way through the woods. She obviously had not been much of a hiker before.

At least I know I can rule out park ranger on my list of possible careers.

Relief came over her as she neared the bottom of the hill. Stability. It seemed like it had taken hours to get to the bottom, and she was proud of herself for going through with it. She had a gut feeling she wasn't normally the kind of woman to do such a crazy thing out in the wilderness.

Suddenly, Scarlett pitched forward onto the ground as her foot caught against a giant, protruding tree root. She landed with a thud, pain searing through her as her sore body made contact with the sharp rocks. She lifted her head, gasping for the wind that had gotten knocked out of her lungs. She planted her hands on either side of her face and pushed herself up onto her knees.

Just as she was about to get to her feet, she froze at the sound of a deep, terrifying, angry growl. A rancid skunk smell filled her nostrils. Slowly, Scarlett turned her head. A band of four javelinas had found her, and now, they all stared at her like she was breakfast.

Scarlett gripped the earth beneath her and screamed as loud as she possibly could, hoping the cowboy at the ranch would be able to hear her. As soon as she began screaming, the largest of the group began to sprint right toward her, its giant husks aiming for a kill.

But he never got to reach her. Scarlett's eyes widened in complete shock as a gigantic black and white longhorn came rushing through the curtain of trees. He let out a ferocious growl as he ran up to the javelina, threw his head to the side for momentum, then impaled the wild animal right in the gut with one of his incredibly long horns, lifting the limp body in the air before throwing his head to toss it. The javelina landed against a large boulder with a gross smack.

Scarlett lunged to her feet and took off into the woods as fast as she possibly could. Warm wetness pooled in the bottom of one of her stilettos, the blood oozing from the intense abuse. Still, she ignored the agonizing pain and sprinted despite every inch of her aching body begging her to stop.

Terror gripped her by the throat when she sensed something right on her heels. She thought a silent prayer as a large body lunged

against her back and thick arms encircled her torso. Again, she screamed as death hung tightly on to her. Her consciousness faded out a split second after she heard a seductive voice against her ear.

“It’s okay, my mate. You’re safe.”

Chapter 2

Doctor Leo Lenox unbuttoned his medical coat, revealing his tight, white T-shirt and blue jeans underneath. He hung it on the coat hook with a smile, glad the morning appointment hadn't taken long. A buttermilk short stack and a healthy helping of bacon he'd made before his first patient had arrived waited for him in the house. That was the advantage of having his own office on his ranch. Leo loved the fact he could see his patients while his cattle roamed just a few steps from him. It made him feel relaxed to be by his animals. And for his own to be by them.

He looked up out the window just in time to see the twins and the triplets running full force toward his clinic. Devlin carried a gorgeous, dark-haired woman in his arms. Scratches and bruises covered her face and body.

"What in cowboy boot heaven?"

Leo hurried outside to meet his brothers just as they approached the door. But he stopped in his tracks as the angel's scent enveloped his entire body, instantly giving him a heady feeling that trailed the rush of blood straight to his cock, making it grow as hard as a rock in seconds.

Leo's heart sank to his feet as he looked her over. His hand fell to his throbbing cock. Her hair was such a dark brown it almost looked black. Her pillowy lips looked soft but pale, and he wondered just how long the small woman had gone without food or water. He then noticed the scabbed gash on her arm, and the sight of the crimson

color had his inner beast growl loudly in need to mate with the stunning stranger.

His head snapped up in disbelief. “Good God, she’s—”

“Our mate. Yes, we know that. Thank you, Captain Obvious. Now, open the fucking door. She’s hurt!”

Leo shot Devlin a harsh glare then hurried to open the door to allow his five younger brothers in. He made a note to himself to have a good talk with the old grump later about learning some damn manners. Not that the previous talks had ever worked.

“What the fuck is going on?” Leo’s head was swimming with confusion, fear, and excitement, completely overwhelmed with the beautiful, perfect creature lying on his medical table.

“I was overlooking the group during their conditioning training, and out of nowhere, Devlin took off toward the woods like a bat out of hell,” Denzel said.

“I saw her coming down the cliff,” explained Devlin. “When I went to help her, I found her about to be attacked by a group of javelinas. She ran, and just when I caught up with her, she went into shock and fainted in my arms.”

Leo positioned the overhead light and looked down on his poor little mate. She was like a dream, a fantasy incarnate. Her soft, symmetrical features looked like they belonged more on a baby doll than a human woman. Her skin was so creamy, the alabaster coloring a shocking contrast to her dark hair. Even though her hair was disheveled from the fall, Leo could tell it was an expensive haircut. It ended just at her jaw line, and straight, blunt bangs hung above her perfectly waxed eyebrows. His little mate was a privileged woman. And he knew just from her soft, warm scent that she was theirs.

And only theirs.

“She’s even more beautiful than I had dreamed,” commented young Levi as he stroked a finger lightly down the side of her dirty cheek. “So damn soft, like a baby,” he whispered as he knelt down and buried his nose in her silky hair.

At the contact, he grunted as he spurted shorter versions of his longhorns on either side of his head. It was common shifter knowledge that this would happen when they became aroused at the touch of the mate they were destined to be with. It was a controllable reaction, but it eased the ache of torturous lust if one allowed it to happen.

“Hey!” Levi screamed out when Devlin slapped him on the back of the head with a loud smack, instantly causing him to retract the horns.

“Lay off, Romeo,” Devlin snapped. Leo watched Levi’s body tense as Devlin let out a low growl that rumbled through the clinic room. “She hasn’t even come to, and you’re already pawing at her.”

“I’m not *pawing* at her. I just wanted a touch. She’s my mate just as much as she’s yours.” Young Levi puffed his chest out in challenge.

The other two triplets, Rhett and Sonny, stepped up to the table, a look of awe crossing their boyish features.

“Don’t pay Devlin no attention, Levi,” said Rhett as he ran a hand across her bare knee. “He’s just upset that we triplets will have more in common with her than he does, seeing she’s our age while she’s young enough to be his daughter.”

Devlin then slapped Rhett’s hand away. “I said knock it the fuck off. She’s hurt, and all you pigs can think about is ripping her clothes off.”

With that, the room exploded into a yelling and denying fit.

“Hey! Hey! *That’s enough*,” Leo demanded then growled in warning, instantly ceasing the chaos of curses. “No one is touching her until I look her over. If she wakes up and finds you all fighting like a bunch of sex-deprived teenagers, we’re liable to lose her within minutes. She’s a human, and in case you’ve forgotten, that makes her fragile. Not to mention, in complete control.”

* * * *

“Is she hurt?” Scarlett heard a man’s voice in the room. Her eyes just barely opened, but her vision was too blurred to make out the figures scattered throughout the room. The overhead light was much too bright for her sensitive eyes, so she shut them once again.

The room was cold, and she could feel her bottom lip trembling from the chill. The room vaguely smelled of rubbing alcohol and Band-Aids, like a clinic or something.

“I hope not, but she looks like she had a pretty nasty fall.” Concern laced another man’s words as he moved around her.

“She’s like a real-life fallen angel,” said yet *another* man.

“Every part of her face is just perfect. Look at those lips. My God.”

“Holy shit, I just cannot believe it’s really her.”

“So we’re keeping her, right?”

“What’s her name?”

Goodness, how many of them were there?

“She was wearing a locket when I found her.” She could hear one of the men shuffle through the change and keys in his pocket. She assumed he was pulling out said necklace. “It says ‘Scarlett Rose.’”

Blackness once again.

Chapter 3

Scarlett awoke again, relieved to find herself in a large, warm bed with a thick quilt pulled up to her chin. This room was not at all the one from before. It was comforting and inviting. The pillow her head lay upon was made of down feathers. Scarlett snuggled her cheek a little deeper into the softness and kept her eyes closed. Before she could allow herself to fall back to sleep, she was suddenly overtaken by intense thirst, forcing her to open her eyes.

It was a much easier feat this go-round. As she looked around the room, she observed a very large master bedroom that seemed it could serve as more of a ballroom than an actual bedroom.

The slight overcast outside the window told her many hours had passed since she'd woken that morning on the bottom of a cliff. It looked to be about late afternoon by now, and Scarlett was puzzled as to why she remembered fainting into a handsome man's arms before losing consciousness.

She brought her focus back to the room she sat in as she tried to figure out where she now was. A cobblestone fireplace burned bright on the far side of the room, keeping the large space toasty and comfortable. A huge glass case stood nearby, full of tall trophies and intricately designed rodeo belt buckles. All the furniture was a dark cherry wood and very luxurious.

To her immediate right was a nightstand with a chic crystal pitcher and a large wine glass sitting next to it. She eagerly poured the water into the glass and gulped down two servings before allowing herself to come up for air. She felt instantly refreshed as the ice-cold liquid made its way through her body.

Panic should have dominated, but for some reason, the atmosphere seemed so safe.

How did I get here?

Scarlett tried to rack her brain for an answer but found nothing. Not even a shred of memory could be beckoned. She remembered a car ride. A long car ride. Then blank.

She looked around but saw no phone in sight. She reached down to search for a cell phone in her skirt pocket.

It was then that she realized she was wearing a man's pearl-button Western shirt. It was long enough to reach mid-thigh, so she was thankful for its modesty. The extra-long sleeves were rolled up several times to rest just below her elbows. She could smell the laundry detergent and sunshine on the material as if it had been hung outside to dry.

Scarlett rose from the bed and began to look around. On top of the fireplace were five framed pictures, each looking like they ranged from the Old West to the fifties eras. Each one was a picture of a different woman standing next to several longhorns.

"Well, that's nuttier than a fruitcake," she voiced aloud.

She gasped and covered her mouth in realization she had spoken in a deep Texan drawl. *Texas! I'm Texan!* She felt a little triumphant that she'd solved another small piece of the mysterious puzzle of her amnesia.

She then noticed to the right of the pictures hung a large mirror on the wall. She took a breath for courage and slowly walked up to stand in front of it. Was she ugly? Fat? Old? Young? She was about to find out...

For a second, it was like meeting a stranger. But the more she stared at her petite frame and soft face, the less her reflection felt unfamiliar. She could see she was a very young woman, perhaps in her early twenties, and her artfully cut bob and bangs looked as though she'd recently gotten her hair done. She wasn't an unattractive

girl, much to her relief, but she scrunched her nose at the pale, ashy complexion she wore as if she hadn't eaten in a long time.

She was hesitant to look around the other parts of the house, but she didn't hear anyone else in the background. She assumed she must have been left alone. She tiptoed to the large wooden door, still listening for any trace of activity beyond the walls of the room.

When she opened the door, Scarlett realized the room she stood in was located at the end of a very long, narrow, dark hall. She began to slowly make her way down it toward a bright light coming from what she assumed must have been the front of the house.

Suddenly, a curtain of masculine laughter and booming voices seemed to enter the house, making Scarlett stop in her tracks.

"I *smoked* your ass, Levi," exclaimed a man with a cheerful country drawl. "I think MeeMaw can run faster than you!"

"Screw you, Sonny. I know you cheated. Don't even *think* about falling asleep tonight."

More masculine laughter came from several men. Scarlett pressed her body against the hall wall as she listened intently, anxiety swirling in her tummy. Who in the hell were these men? Had they kidnapped her?

"Shh, shh, *quiet!*" A man's sudden yell made her flinch, and all laughter ceased. "Do you smell that?"

"Smell what, Leo?"

"Honeydew and cinnamon."

Her entire body stiffened with fear, beads of sweat forming on her forehead.

Then all the voices chimed in at once. "*Scarlett.*"

That was all it took for her to run as fast as she could back to the room she came from. She slammed the door shut and leapt back on the giant bed, pulling the covers over her while her entire body shook with terror as she waited for them to come in.

Were they her kidnappers? Her would-be rapists? Murderers?

She held her breath as she heard the door open. Her heart raced frantically as the floorboards squeaked from heavy footsteps moving in on her. Suddenly, she flinched at the hand that touched her through the thick quilt.

“Get away from me! I have a gun!” She screamed her lie as loud as she could, but her scratchy, dry throat didn’t provide her much volume. She realized how ridiculous her little threat must have sounded, but it was the first thing that had instinctively come to mind.

The man chuckled. “Um, no, actually, you don’t.”

Rage filled her as he continued to laugh at her, but for some strange reason, she began to relax as the hand began to gently rub her back as if to comfort her.

“Scarlett, honey? My name is Leo. We found you at the bottom of the cliff several hours ago. Your name was on the locket you were wearing. You’re at my ranch now. It’s okay, darlin’. We’re not going to hurt you.”

He sounded so genuine, but still, she cautiously and slowly lowered the blanket. Shock overtook her when she was faced with a large, smiling cowboy. She swallowed hard as she took in the beauty of the friendly man.

“Fuck me twice,” she whispered before she knew what she was saying.

He was the most beautiful man she’d ever seen, almost warrior looking. He had a very short buzz cut, a rugged five o’clock shadow, bright, light-brown eyes, and a muscular body dusted with a light coat of salt-and-pepper hair. She could tell he was much older than she, maybe in his early forties.

He laughed, and then his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “Excuse me, ma’am?”

She shook her head to ease any more psycho talk. She sat up straighter and smoothed down her tangled hair as she averted her gaze from his. “I—I’m sorry. Excuse me, sir. I’m just incredibly shaken up right now. I’m afraid I have very little memory of what happened

before I awoke at the bottom of the cliff. I do remember having a locket when I awoke, though.”

He reached in his pocket and handed her the locket. “The chain was lost, but that’s what you were wearing,” he said as he turned his back, seemingly giving her a little privacy with what she might find inside.

Scarlett was happy to have it back, anxious to finally have the chance to look in it. She held her breath as she slowly opened it. Although the faces in the pictures looked vaguely familiar, they weren’t familiar enough for her to think of their names.

One side was a picture of an elderly man sitting as he posed proudly with a baby girl. A balloon that read “Congrats, New Daddy!” was tied to the handle of the cane resting at his side. The other was of a young woman who looked to be about Scarlett’s age. Both pictures seemed to be taken during the same era. She was astounded at how similar she and the woman looked, only the woman in the picture had a fabulous mane of dark blonde curls. The woman’s outfit was very eighties with a pink neon tank top peeking through an oversized, sea-foam green sweater that hung off one shoulder. There was no doubt this perky-looking woman was her mother. But what about the man? She recognized they had the same eye color, but if he was her father, she had a hard time imagining the blonde Valley girl in the photo being married to such an older, distinguished-looking man.

Frustrated she was only confused further, she set the locket down with a soft clack against the wooden table. “That didn’t help any,” she said bitterly.

As if on cue, Leo turned back to her. Concern crossed his features, creasing his prominent forehead as he pressed his fingers softly against the pulse on the side of her neck. It was obvious the move was only meant to check if she was doing okay, but she felt the channel of her pussy begin to subtly contract from that single innocent touch.

She didn't understand why her body was having such a reaction to a perfect stranger, even if he was as sexy as sin.

"Excuse me one moment, darlin'."

She watched as Leo got up from the bed and walked over to the large closet at the end of the bedroom. He moved with confidence, like he was so completely sure of every move he made. His mature ways caused a flash of memory, and somehow, she knew she'd always loved the idea of an older man, a man who knew exactly how to take care of her, how to set every inch of her body on fire with the slightest touch, much like he had just done.

"All right, here we are." He walked toward her holding a doctor's bag. He sat back on the edge of the bed and opened the bag to pull out a stethoscope.

"You're a doctor," she observed as he put in the earpieces.

"That's right. My patients know me as Dr. Lenox, but please just call me Leo."

A flood of relief washed over her at knowing a doctor had rescued her. She watched him place the end of the stethoscope against his lips, and then he blew. He gave her a soft smile, and she suddenly realized she had been staring at his sexy lips.

"Just trying to warm it up for you," he explained with a wink. "Now, could you undo the first few buttons, please, Scarlett?"

Without thinking, she clenched the upper part of the shirt in a fist, suddenly incredibly afraid and self-conscious at his request. "Dream on, pops," she snapped in anger, taking her frustration out on the innocent cowboy doctor.

She immediately felt guilty for the way she spoke to him, but as beautiful as he was, he was still a stranger, and she wanted him to know she had boundaries even if her memories were patchy.

Her reaction seemed to have come out of nowhere, surprising even her. She briefly wondered why she reacted so uncomfortably to the thought of him seeing her without a shirt on. She looked like a young woman, but she thought she was decent looking enough to

have had some kind of experience with a man seeing her without a shirt on. Right?

He must have realized she was only trying to shield the fact she was scared, because he placed a large hand gently on her fist, immediately scorching her icy skin with sexual heat that spread to her beaded nipples. He looked deeply into her eyes. There was something in them that told her she could trust him.

And there was something else. Something familiar, as if she'd known him her whole life.

"Scarlett, my dear, I just want to listen to your breathing. I'm not asking you to take your shirt off, just to undo a button or two." He gave an encouraging smile when she nodded and unclenched the material of the shirt.

She did as she was told and undid the first few buttons, holding her breath as he reached to hold the edges of the shirt open enough for him to place the stethoscope inside. She immediately became annoyed at the odd way her body seemed to react to him. She gasped at the icy feeling of the metal against her skin.

"I guess you suck at blowing," she sassily joked to try to lighten the mood. She was beginning to feel embarrassed from her ridiculous reaction.

His amber gaze looked up into hers as he laughed. "Yeah, I guess I do. I apologize for that."

Damn it if he didn't take her breath away with that seductive smile.

"So where am I?" she blurted out, trying to distract herself from the urge to hump his leg right there. Her memory was completely shot, but she still knew this was a place she had never been before.

"We're in Knotty, Texas, about two hours east of Dallas. This is my ranch. I share it with my six brothers—"

"Brothers? Are those the men I heard a while ago?"

"Yes. They tend to get a little rambunctious at times. I guess we all can."

She noticed he was now staring at her lips, as well. “Well, where are they? They were just here. I heard them.”

Leo took the earpieces out and pulled the stethoscope from around his neck. “Probably just outside running around.” He leaned down to place the tool back into the bag then leaned back toward her. “Your lungs sound good. Doesn’t seem like there was any damage to them from the fall. When my brothers found you, you looked like you were in pretty bad shape. But after I examined you, it seemed like it was just a lot of bumps and bruises, no broken bones. I cleaned and bandaged your wounds then brought you straight over here to my bed so you could get some proper rest.”

“Wait! I remember a clinic now.” Scarlett held a hand over her forehead as she racked her brain for any information. “Or I think it was a clinic.”

“I examined you in my onsite clinic on the other side of the estate. Most of my patients are from here in town, and since the ranch tends to take a lot of time and maintenance, it just made it easier on us all when I decided to move my office here.”

“So how many of you are there?”

“Seven, including me.”

“Sounds pretty crowded.”

Leo smirked with a shrug. “Not once you adjust.” He moved closer when Scarlett placed her fingers on her temples. “Are you feeling okay, Scarlett?”

“Yes, it’s just my head. And I can’t seem to remember anything about what happened before the fall, either.”

“You’re suffering from retrograde amnesia. This means that although you can remember basic skills and knowledge such as walking or operating basic technologies you’re accustomed to using, the events directly associated your trauma may be very difficult to remember. Remembering people and faces will be especially hard. Over time, your memories will begin to return, some slower than

others. Here,”—he handed her two tiny pills—“these will knock the pain right out.”

Scarlett raised an eyebrow, suspicious of what she should be accepting from a man she didn’t even know.

He playfully rolled his eyes. “Relax, darlin’. They’re just a strong form of aspirin.” He handed her a glass of water from the table nearby, and Scarlett graciously swallowed them both. “How ’bout you go take yourself a shower over in the master bath while the fellas and I round up some supper?”

Scarlett sat up in excitement. “Shower? Supper?” She had been contracting her stomach muscles for the last five minutes to try to silence the ongoing hunger rumble building in her abdomen.

Leo laughed, the distinguished creases at the corner of his eyes reappearing. “You’ll find another button-down shirt hanging on the hook behind the bathroom door. You can throw your dirty clothes down the laundry chute located on the left of the sinks. I can’t provide you new underwear until I go into town, but—”

Leo stopped midsentence when Scarlett gasped in utter humiliation. “Oh, my gosh!” She buried her face in her hands. She immediately felt Leo rush toward her.

“What is it, Scarlett? Did I say something? Come on, honey. Talk to me.”

Scarlett looked back up into Leo’s eyes, and she was surprised to see how worried he looked. “No, of course not. It’s just—” Scarlett pulled on the hem of the giant shirt she wore.

“Aww, honey.” Leo grabbed her and pulled her close, comforting her with his warm, hard body. He obviously understood the source of her embarrassment. “When we found you, your clothes were practically in shreds from the fall. I wrapped you in a throw and carried you back here. I used a warm cloth to wipe your face and hands—”

Scarlett buried her face deeper into Leo's chest. "You saw me! You saw everything!" Instinctively, Scarlett knew she was not used to any man seeing her naked.

His arms tightened around her body as he whispered in her ear, "Scarlett, baby, you can trust me, okay? I promise I have absolutely no ill intentions toward you. I'm a doctor, and I was only trying to make you comfortable. I swear I only stripped you down to your panties and bra before putting my shirt on you." That didn't make Scarlett feel better at all, and she squealed in humiliation as she shook her head frantically. She wanted to run and hide. "Besides, when you think about it, I didn't see anything more than what a bikini would cover up, right?"

Hmm, the man had a point. "Really?" she asked as she raised her head once the heat in her cheeks had receded from his comforting words. She didn't want him to see her blush. Why was she acting like a virgin who had never been touched by a man? Was she one?

"Of course," he confirmed, smiling again. He reached over and grabbed the glass of water on the table and began to drink.

"I guess...virgins can tend to be a little skittish when it comes to nudity," she said under her breath as she scooted back from his embrace. The word virgin seemed to roll off her tongue easily. At that moment, she knew she had never been with a man.

Leo began to choke on the water he was drinking.

"I'm so sorry." Scarlett grabbed the handkerchief lying atop the nightstand and rushed over to hand it to him. "I've obviously embarrassed you. I didn't think you'd hear me." *Goddamn it*. What the hell was she thinking saying something so indecent to a perfect stranger? "I know it's not normal to think aloud like that, but my head is just a little messed up still from the accident, and it seems that's all I've been doing since I woke up."

Leo finally composed himself, his breathing returning to normal. Scarlett looked him over in confusion when he began to laugh hard as

if what had just happened was comical. “Well, I’ll be damned. Rhett was right.”

She didn’t know who the hell Rhett was, but she was not about to put up with anyone laughing at her. “Do you make it a habit of laughing at women in distress, Dr. Lenox? If so, I feel incredibly sorry for your patients.” She crossed her arms over her chest as she glared at him.

“No, Scarlett. I apologize.” He gave a slight bow of his head, but she could still see the slight smirk on his lips. “I only meant Rhett could tell you were a spitfire when I brought you in. Said you had that look about you.”

She rolled her eyes but decided against arguing any further. The anger was only making her head hurt worse.

“Now, hurry on up. Supper will be done before you know it. There’s a fresh, warm towel from the dryer hanging by the shower.” He then turned to walk away, and, again, a wave of guilt washed over her. Why was she sassing him when he had practically saved her very life? She wouldn’t even be sitting there had it not been for his and his brothers’ heroic reactions.

“Leo?” she called before he could walk out.

“Yes, darlin’?”

Her chest tightened with more guilt when she saw warmth radiate from his eyes despite her being such a damn brat. “Thank you. For being so kind. I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t scared out of my wits right now.” She looked down at her feet as she continued, “Obviously, I’m not exactly a sugar-sweet Southern belle, and for that, I’m sorry. I’m willing to guess my mouth tends to get me in trouble more often than I’d be proud to learn.”

Leo walked over to her and tilted her chin up so she was staring up into his face. His gaze went from her lips to her eyes. “It looks pretty good to me.”

And with that, he turned, walked out the bedroom, and closed the door behind him, leaving her dumbstruck at his statement. She closed

her eyes and shook her head at the embarrassing way her pussy couldn't seem to stop creaming. This was going to be a tough stay.

When she walked into the monstrous bathroom, her breath was taken away. It was as big as another bedroom. Every surface was made from white marble, and the massive, four-foot-high, vintage-style bathtub sat in the very center. Bulb-encircled mirrors adorned every wall, and a chandelier hung in the middle of the ceiling, giving off a dim light to add to the romantic ambiance of the room.

In the corner was an extra-large shower stall with ten showerheads inside. Some of the showerheads hung high, and some were positioned low to spray their user's body straight on. There was also a small first-floor window inside that allowed the person using it to look out over the vast acres of Leo's beautiful ranch.

As tempting as the bathtub looked, Scarlett decided her sore and aching muscles could use some extra help from the pressure of the ten showerheads. She turned toward the closed door, and, sure enough, there hung a clean, baby-blue Western shirt for her to put on when she was done.

Next to the door was an array of switches, each with a gold plate above it to label its function. Her gaze stopped at the one that said "Floors," and she switched it on out of curiosity. Within seconds, Scarlett felt the cool marble beneath her bare feet grow warm. She could only imagine how amazing that function must be in the winter.

The faceless women lucky enough to share this amazing room with these men had to be the envy of every woman in town. Scarlett turned the water on, and all ten faucets sprang to life with great force. She quickly stripped off Leo's giant Western shirt and her dirty bra and panties, threw them down the laundry chute Leo had indicated, then stepped into the heaven of the confined space.

Her muscles instantly began to relax under the warm, firm pressure. She allowed her head to fall back under the water as it cascaded down her dirt-streaked body. Her peace was interrupted

when she thought she heard a ruffling sound outside the window to her right, and her eyes immediately shot open in surprise.

The window allowed her to see far out in the ranch, but she saw no one. All she saw was a large, red longhorn bull standing about fifty yards away, staring at her intently as he chewed on grass. He must have been the hugest longhorn she had ever seen. His massive size almost made it hard to believe he was real. His horns were long and ended at two razor-sharp points, a warning to any predator without enough sense to stay away. His coat looked smooth, immaculate in color, and without a hint of blemishes or flaws.

She shrugged and again went back to bathing, scrubbing her body with a soapy washcloth. She worked the wet cloth over her arms then began to work her soapy tits. She slowly circled around her dark pink areolas, watching them tighten as the terry material softly scratched across her aching nipples. Closing her eyes, she imagined how work-roughened Leo's palms would feel caressing them. How deep and masculine his voice would sound as he growl with lust, her heavy breasts in his hands. She imagined how good it would feel when he bent down to take her nipples into his mouth, humming delicious vibrations through her body.

Scarlett allowed the washcloth to skim down her torso, over her navel, and over her warm pussy, now contracting with need from her fantasies of Leo. She dropped the washcloth, and it landed with a loud smack on the hard tile of the shower floor. Keeping her eyes closed, she snaked her fingers from the tops of her thighs to in between, tracing along her moist folds. Her mouth dropped open, and she released a moan as she toyed with her swelling clit.

The blissful sexual fantasy suddenly disappeared when she heard a low, animalistic groan coming from outside, and she again looked to her right, out into the ranch field. There stood the same longhorn as before, only he now stood halfway closer to the window, and Scarlett could have sworn she saw something in the longhorn's eyes. Hunger? Scarlett shook her head. She had obviously hit her head pretty hard.

How could a longhorn be looking at her with lust? She was officially out of her mind. She bent down to turn on more of the cold water then splashed her face as she tried to get her head straight.

She looked out the window again and rubbed her eyes, hoping she wasn't really seeing what she thought she saw. There, in place of the longhorn, stood a shaggy-haired, blond, tan young man in an ivory cowboy hat, tight Levi's, and no shirt. He was just as gorgeous as Leo, only this one was much younger, closer to her own age. The perverse longhorn was nowhere in sight.

His welcoming air and friendly gaze hypnotized her. If she didn't know any better, she'd be willing to bet he'd been *waiting* for her. Then she turned her back on the window as quickly as she could and ducked. She was so enraptured by his beauty she had completely ignored she was standing naked in front of another man! But then she sighed with relief when she realized the window only went down a tad past her shoulders, so he wasn't able to see much. She slowly straightened and turned her head back to the window, wondering if he was still standing there.

He was. He waved a hand gloved in brown leather and smiled bright. He was such a vision as he stood in the sunlight of the autumn season.

Scarlett should have been revolted. Offended. She should have felt violated. She was a virgin, for Christ's sake. At least, she felt she was a virgin. So why was she smiling back?

When she realized what she was doing, she snapped back around, butterflies swarming in her womb in reaction to the golden god outside her window. The thought of this dashing young man probably being the first man to see her naked instantly made her pussy clench. Despite the guilt of how naughty it would be to tease him, she couldn't help but slowly turn back to the young man once again. She smiled wider when he tipped his cowboy hat, and then she giggled when it accidentally fell to the ground from his sudden movement. She put a hand over her mouth and laughed when the wind kicked it away

from his reach, causing him to chase it several yards before grabbing it from the grass.

“Levi!”

The young, blond man looked up past the corner of the house as he placed the hat back on his head. Another gorgeous man came into view and walked straight up to Levi. She couldn’t hear what he was saying to him, but she watched with great interest as Levi interrupted the raven-haired man, tugging on his arm as he pointed to her in the window. The man turned to see what Levi was pointing at, and he immediately pulled off his hat to rest on his chest at the sight of Scarlett in the window, waving flirtatiously under the shower. He made the move as if it was a natural reflex at noticing her presence.

Once again, her breath was taken away. This one was classically beautiful, like Michelangelo’s *David* or some other great masterpiece of art. His black hair was short and spiky. His skin was paler than Levi’s but still radiated a healthy, blue-collar worker glow. His eyes sparkled like two jade stones, completely blinding even from a distance. But that wasn’t the sexiest part of his face. His lips were the most tempting she had ever seen on a man. Two perfect, high peaks of flesh formed his top lip, and a pillow of thick flesh formed his bottom.

She looked back and forth between the two shirtless men and compared their delectable bodies, so well formed and hard worked.

She wasn’t sure why she was being so bold. She was certain it was not a usual part of her everyday personality. But there was something magnetic about these two men, and it seemed to go way beyond the fact they had huge muscles and modelesque faces. It was much more than that. She felt she was being pulled toward them, and her clenching, wet pussy couldn’t help but agree with her.

As the dark-haired stranger continued to smile in awe at her, Levi, the blond, bent down to pick a daisy from the grass. He smiled as his eyes met hers when he straightened. He held out his arm as if he wanted to hand her the flower, and then he hooked the index finger of his other hand and beckoned her to come to them.

Deciding she liked this little game of dangerously flirting with two half-naked cowboy strangers as she herself stood completely nude under a running, hot shower, she shook her head playfully as she pretended to reject their advances.

She watched them look at each other and chuckle at her teasing. Levi grabbed at his heart, allowed his eyes to roll back, and slowly fell to the ground, acting as if he had died from the heartbreak of her rejection. Just as she covered her mouth to muffle another laugh, a loud knock at the door made her practically jump out of her naked skin.

“Scarlett? Sugar? Are you doing okay? You’ve been in there a while.”

Scarlett’s hands fumbled to turn off the water. She quickly stepped out and walked over to the warm towel hanging on the doorknob to wrap herself in.

“Yes, I’m all right. Must have lost track of time.” She took a quick glance in the mirror to make sure she was as well covered as she could be wearing a towel and opened the door to allow Leo to walk in.

Chapter 4

When Scarlett opened the door, Leo's breath caught in the back of his throat. Despite his large, black towel covering her petite frame from her upper chest to her lower shins, just the sight of her bare shoulders, arms, and feet was enough to make him wild with lust.

The clean scent of bodywash and shampoo mixed with her heated, natural scent, forcing him to inhale deeply to savor her essence. It was amazing how a shape-shifter could spot their mate from their scent alone. It was like a drug he could never dream of quitting. He tried his best to maintain his composure. He cleared his throat and took his Stetson off, settling it in front of his painful hard-on. He hoped his "chivalrous gesture" hid his angry erection.

"Leo!"

His head snapped up to meet her confused eyes when she shouted his name. "Yes, what?"

Her eyebrows furrowed. "I just asked you what was for dinner twice, and you didn't even acknowledge my question." She narrowed her eyes suspiciously at him. "Are you okay?"

"Um, I'm not sure." Leo rubbed a hand over his face, trying his best to collect himself and ignore the tightening in his balls.

Look in her eyes. Look in her eyes.

But as his luck would have it, his treacherous eyes dropped to those juicy lips of hers. They were still just a bit too pale to unleash the uncontrollable beast within him, but he still felt it stir his insides.

Once again, the trance was broken when Scarlett snapped her fingers right in front of his face, another whiff of cinnamon and

honeydew enveloping him with the close proximity of her skin. "Earth to Dr. Leo."

He shook his head and quickly rambled, "Cornbread, fried pork chops, mashed taters, and jalapeño jelly."

He held his breath, waiting for the offended facial expression his mate was sure to be wearing in point-eight seconds from his obvious ogling, but instead she gave him a warm smile. He smiled back as her bright, crystal-blue eyes looked him over. He couldn't help but graze over her exposed flesh, and suddenly, he noticed for the first time she was wearing red toenail polish.

Shit. She's wearing the color.

Leo turned his back toward her as he felt the fire behind his eyes spark to life. He knew they were probably glowing dark orange, and he knew there was no way he could let Scarlett see it just yet. He'd purposely taken the chain off her locket before giving it back to her so this very thing wouldn't happen should she put the ruby-encrusted necklace on.

"Leo, what's the matter?"

Leo concentrated on his breathing. Being older than the others, he had enough experience to slightly control the bull even if just momentarily. He felt the burning heat in his eyes slowly cooling to normal.

"Just got something in my eye," he replied as he turned back to her. But horror soon consumed him when he turned to see she was now wrapping a bright red ribbon around her hair. He noticed the open Poe book on the nightstand and realized she must have taken out the ribbon for her own personal use. Before he knew what he was even doing, he reached his arm behind her small body and pulled her toward him, his mouth crushing hers instantly, desperately. A soft moan immediately came from them both. He pushed his tongue between her sugar-sweet lips.

He was shocked when an image flashed before him. A man stood behind Scarlett as she looked down on the dirt ground, searching for something.

He rolled his tongue over hers.

Another flash. He was spying around a wall on a skunk-haired young woman with platinum blonde hair and black streaks handing that same man a pile of money. Leo suddenly broke away from the shock of it all.

Scarlett's eyes flew open, but they remained slightly sleepy and sated from their kiss. She grabbed the back of his neck gently and tried to pull him back down toward her. "Why did you stop?"

He grabbed her arms and gently tugged them down. "We can't do this right now," he whispered.

A stubborn, offended look came over her features, and she lifted her hands right back to the back of his neck. "Why, of course we can. It's okay, Leo. I know I'm young and probably inexperienced, but I'm not afraid—"

"But I am," he interrupted her. He hated how hurt she looked, but she just didn't understand. He reached for the red satin ribbon in her hair, silently cursing the way his fingers shook, and pulled it loose. "How 'bout you get ready for dinner, and I'll just keep this as a reminder to pick up where we left off?"

It wasn't a total lie, but the truth was chaos would erupt if his brothers saw her wearing it. He instantly felt his body calm down when the ribbon broke contact with her head. It was as if he'd swallowed a Vicodin, the difference so sharp as his inner beast retreated. She seemed to buy it because she gave him a sexy, sly smile and bit her lip as she nodded.

Fuck, she was so damn adorable. It made Leo want to wrap his arms around her small body and protect her forever. Love her forever.

"Again, thank you so much for your hospitality. Now, if you'll excuse me." She indicated the restroom with a tilt of her head.

"Oh, right!"

So much for the smooth, charming doctor he used to be just a few hours ago. Now, here he was, a forty-two-year-old, grown-ass man brought to his knees by this little thing who was young enough to be his own daughter. She smiled suggestively as if she could read his thoughts.

“Here.” He handed her a pile of clothes, making sure he had included a pair of socks to cover her toes. “I grabbed you a pair of boxers from the back of Rhett’s closet. He’s always screwing up his laundry, so these should be shrunken down a little, but the shirt on the door should still be long enough to cover what you need. And, here, Rhett washed your bra and panties—”

“He what!”

Ruh-roh.

“Who the hell is this Rhett, and why in the hell is he handling my underwear?” Her eyes widened in horror, and her chest heaved with anger. But all Leo could pay attention to was the way her full tits moved up and down with each breath. They were such a delicious contrast to her tiny little waist.

He held his hands up in defense. “Look, he did it before I could stop him. I mean, he just hand washed them then put them in the dryer on high heat. Besides, he said it was his pleasure.”

Scarlett scoffed. “Oh, I bet it was.” She narrowed her eyes at him, those adorable lips of hers pursed in anger, and snatched the pile of clothes from his grasp. “I’ll be out in a few minutes,” she said before slamming the bathroom door in his face.

Whoa, she sure was pissed. He had to make sure they were extra careful with the way they were with their little mate. She was no ordinary Southern belle. This Texas yellow rose had thorns.

Chapter 5

Rhett just about jumped out of his seat at the dining room table when Leo walked in.

“Is she coming out yet?” he asked as he reached down and gripped his hard-on to ease the ache of it being stiff for so damn long.

It hadn’t gone down since the first moment he saw her. The ache had morphed from dull to torturous when he’d washed her panties and bra, reveling in their smell before he got them clean. Fuck, her scent was so damn sweet and tempting. Musky honeydew and warm cinnamon, all Scarlett. The squeezing wasn’t enough, so he undid the top button of his jeans to release it a little.

“Good God, Rhett, put your fucking dick away before it kills somebody!” Devlin scolded from the other side of the table. He was surrounded by his brothers, the large, custom-built dining area often the chosen place to fraternize. Where there was food, there was a Lenox longhorn nearby.

Rhett shrugged. “Sorry, fellas. You know my boners happen at the worst of times. Just something our sexy little mate will have to get used to.” He had always had a problem with his raging erections popping up at random times, and now that his mate was finally under his roof, he was prepared for that pesky little problem to grow further.

“Come on, guys. Give him a break. It’s not like it’s something that’s entirely new,” said Denzel from the refrigerator in his defense. He had an armful of snacks and beer to put out for everyone.

Sonny suddenly broke out in laughter from the chair he lounged in. “And this coming from a guy who had to jack off three times in the last hour from just *thinking* about Scarlett?”

Denzel's face turned bright red with his embarrassment as he pretended to busy himself with packing ice into the double sink for the beverages. His head then turned to the sound of footsteps entering the room. "Holy bull-god, Leo, what's the matter?" asked Denzel when he turned his head towards Leo. He looked worried sick over their eldest brother. No one had seemed to notice Leo's state before. Denzel had always been the one to pick up on people's emotions, probably because he was so honest and in touch with his own.

Leo sat down on the chair at the head of the table and dropped his head in his hands. "Something's wrong, partners. Scarlett's in danger."

A wave of questions hit the air as each man demanded Leo explain himself.

"Calm down. Fuck! I can't fucking think when you all are yapping like that!" All the men went silent. Leo rarely yelled, so it immediately had them all shutting the hell up. "Our mate didn't just fall from that damn cliff. She was pushed."

Rhett's eyes widened, and he felt his blood boiling with anger at an intensity he had never experienced. Rhett always had sex on his mind too often to ever really get that angry, so it was a foreign emotion. His anger was so intense he felt he could strangle an ox with his bare hands.

When he looked around the room, all the men's faces were red with their obvious ferocity. Devlin leapt to his feet, his fists hanging at his sides as his knuckles turned white from the force. "I'll kill them. I swear to God he'll be castrated within seconds of me finding him. Who the fuck was it?" His eyes looked wild, glowing dark orange with the beast fighting to come out. Rhett gulped nervously. Devlin was the last longhorn anyone would ever want to piss off unless one had a brain-dead death wish.

"I saw it in a vision," Leo replied. "I'm not sure how, but when I kissed her—"

“You kissed her?” Levi didn’t look jealous so much as he looked disappointed. He was just bragging about how he and Denzel had seen Scarlett in the shower through the bathroom window, claiming they had “a moment.” Rhett was willing to bet he’d hoped to be the first to get that kiss. But then again, hadn’t they all?

“I couldn’t control myself,” Leo explained. “She was wearing a red ribbon in her hair, and my bull just came out. It was as if I was a puppet, but someone else was pulling my strings. Before I knew it, my lips were pressed against hers, and the visions just started flashing. Nothing like that has ever happened. It must have been from the contact.”

“But we’ve all touched her before, and that didn’t happen at all,” Sonny pointed out.

“Well, I’m sure you were both aroused, prepared to mate, so maybe that has something to do with it,” Rhett suggested. “What exactly did you see?”

“Well, she was wearing the same clothes we found her in, only she looked immaculate. Like a career girl. It seemed like she was searching for something on the ground, and then suddenly, I see the man behind lift his hands to push her. I then saw another vision, a blonde woman close to Scarlett’s age handing the man money. I broke the kiss before the vision finished.”

Devlin was now pacing back and forth in front of the marble kitchen island. He shook his head frantically, his face and neck cherry red with his anger. “She’s not going back. I don’t give a shit if I have to hog-tie her to the damn bed, she’s not leaving our sights.”

The men all mumbled their agreement, but Leo just shook his head. “You don’t know what you’re saying. You all haven’t met her yet. She’s far from a shrinking flower. If we force her to stay, she’ll leave just because we told her not to. I can see the rebel in her. And we all know human mates don’t have the same permanent bond shape-shifters have. Without her close by, our insides will be in a painful torture, and we could all literally die from heartbreak. But a

human female has to constantly be courted, just as she has to in any other normal relationship. If we fuck up, she can leave at any time. And I know that's what *none* of us want."

Rhett never did understand the logistics behind the mate bonding between a shifter and a human. It didn't seem fair that her bond wasn't as permanent as theirs, but that was something they just all had to deal with.

His thoughts were interrupted as the dark-haired angel walked into the room. There was no door to the dining area, only an opening at the end of the hallway that led to Leo's master bedroom, so he didn't hear her come in at first. All six men in the room removed their hats in unison out of habitual respect for having a woman in the room. He felt his heart jump at the excitement of seeing she was awake.

Her face looked shocked, her eyes darting back and forth from Denzel to Devlin then among Rhett, Levi, and Sonny. She then turned her attention to Leo, who was just pulling the cornbread from the brick oven in the wall. "Exactly how hard did I hit my head, Doc?"

Rhett felt his face soften as he joined the other five men in laughter.

"Pretty hard, darlin'," answered Leo as he cut the cornbread into portions. "But your eyes are fine. You're looking at a set of triplets and a set of twins."

Her gaze skimmed over them again. "I thought seven of you live here."

"Byron works the night shift calve-cow operations on the ranch, so he's usually asleep when the sun's up," answered Sonny with a wide smile. He paused briefly to look her over, joy radiating from him. "He's a man of few words, very few words, but I can't wait to see the look on his face when he gets a whiff of you." Sonny winced and bit his bottom lip, immediately receiving glares from the other men over his careless choice of words.

Her eyebrows furrowed in confusion. "Wait, when he gets a wha—"

“All right, boys, dinner is ready,” Leo interrupted then shot Sonny a dirty look. He gave an apologetic smile and shrug in response.

“Wait.” All the men paused and turned to look at Scarlett. Rhett’s heart raced frantically, and his cock began to throb in his jeans when she settled that crystal-blue gaze on him. “You must be Rhett.”

“How did you know?” asked Rhett in surprise.

“I figured the man who would volunteer to wash a perfect stranger’s dirty panties would have to be the biggest pervert in the room. And seeing how you’re pitching a tent big enough for a small family,”—she pointed to the massive hard-on in his jeans—“I’m willing to guess you’re the culprit.” One sassy eyebrow shot up as she waited for his reply.

“Hmm, I’m impressed. Very observant little girl.” Sonny chuckled.

“A small family, huh? I’ll take that as a compliment.” They all laughed at Rhett’s reply.

She rolled her eyes and crossed her arms in front of her chest. “Kind of hard to miss a monster like that.”

Rhett held up his hands. “Caught me red-handed.” He laughed when she rolled her eyes again. He could already tell he was going to have to be the one to win her over. She’d fight his advances, but just the thought of that chase made his cock twitch painfully against the denim.

They all gathered around the table, taking their seats in front of the massive feast the men had all gone in on to prepare. Rhett watched Scarlett’s round little butt swagger over, and his mouth watered with hunger when the shirt of his she wore inched up to reveal a set of creamy thighs when she sat down. His desire skyrocketed when she swung her left leg over her right to cross them. That motion sent a wave of the sweet aroma of her pussy through the room. He watched as a few of the men briefly glanced at each other, and Levi began to choke on the beer he had started to chug. He knew right then they had smelled her, too. She was getting turned on just

from having them in such close proximity. She didn't even seem to notice the effect she had on them at all.

Rhett paused right before he sat down, a genius thought suddenly hitting him. "Um, I'll be right back. I need to, uh, wash my hands."

He hurried out of the dining room to jerk off but not before he heard Devlin grumble, "Wash his hands, my fucking ass."

* * * *

As beautiful as the men were, there was something very strange about them, but Scarlett couldn't seem to put a finger on it. It was as if they were familiar to her somehow.

"Did you enjoy the shower?"

She turned her head toward the voice and was excited to see it belonged to the same blond cowboy from the window earlier, now wearing a clean, white undershirt. Although his two identical brothers sat on the other side of the table, she knew from his suggestive tone that he'd been the one looking in on her.

"Yes, I did. Thank you for asking."

He winked at her, and she smiled wide in response. The other man from the window, the quieter of the twins, chuckled in his beer next to him. She knew he, too, was thinking about her in the shower earlier, making her smile wider.

"How rude of me," Leo said from the head of the table. "I haven't properly introduced you to everyone, Scarlett."

He then gestured a hand toward the twins. "This here is Devlin and Denzel." She smiled at Denzel, the one from the window, but he immediately broke eye contact with her, a blush forming in his cheeks as he pretended to busy himself by opening another beer bottle. "As identical as their looks are, their personalities are just as opposite. Denzel here is sweet as honey."

Devlin snapped his head toward Leo. "So what in the fuck does that make me?"

Leo seemed unfazed by Devlin's attitude, ignoring it to continue with the introductions. "And the young lads over there." The triplets all bowed their heads simultaneously when she turned her attention to them. "Rhett."

"Pleasure's all mine." Rhett winked at her just as he was sitting back at the table. His eyes seemed to undress her right then and there.

She lowered her eyes, as well, pausing at the left nipple ring that could be made out through his tight undershirt. She was disgusted with herself for taking in the view when she looked up to find him smirking at her, letting her know she'd been caught.

Ugh, what a womanizer. He might be gorgeous, but he sure as hell knows it, that's for sure.

"Levi, the wild man of the group."

"Nice to have you, ma'am." Levi reached across the table and grabbed her hand snugly.

Scarlett was shocked at how she had to squeeze her thighs together for fear of staining the cushioned chair with the juices that had now begun to creep from her pussy. Maybe it had a lot to do with the fact he was the first man to see her while she was naked even though he hadn't actually gotten to see any of her assets. It didn't go unnoticed that he was holding her hand a little longer than necessary.

"What the fuck!" Levi cried out when a square of cornbread socked him on the side of the face. He turned and glared at Devlin.

"I don't recall the lady giving you permission to put your grubby hands on her," Devlin said angrily, holding up another piece of cornbread as if he was prepared for Levi to talk back.

"Oh, I don't mind, really," she said in Levi's defense and was ecstatic to get another smile from him. She glanced at Devlin, shocked to see a brief flash of jealousy in his breathtaking green eyes.

"And last, but most certainly not least," Leo continued, "we have Sonny."

Before Scarlett knew what was happening, Sonny had made his way over to her chair and lifted her in his big arms, a squeal escaping

her lips from the surprise. He held her tight and whispered, "I'm so, so happy you're here."

"I, uh, thank you." Scarlett's body tingled everywhere with sexual electricity from the feel of his hard, muscled body pressed against hers.

Again, Devlin sent another piece of bread flying their way, hitting Sonny square in the jaw. "All right, all right, jeeze." Sonny gave her one final squeeze as he inhaled the scent of her hair before slowly lowering her back down to her chair.

Scarlett looked over at Leo, confused with Sonny's reaction. He twirled a finger in the air on the side of his head and mouthed, "Just a little crazy." She laughed.

She then shifted in her seat when she noticed how closely they'd been watching her. "Well, I don't know about you guys, but I'm starving."

"Oh, please, eat!" Denzel quickly insisted as if suddenly broken from a daze. "Don't wait on account of us."

She smiled as they all began to eat the delicious food. She closed her eyes in ecstasy and moaned. But when she heard several husky, animalistic growls, her eyes flew open. They all sat frozen in their motions.

"What was that?" she asked, frantically looking around the room for the source of the terrifying sounds. When the men didn't answer, she turned her attention back to them, noticing they were all now staring at her lips. "What?" she asked as she pressed a few fingers to her mouth.

"Your lips," Levi whispered as he licked his own. "They've become *so red* since you started eating."

Before Scarlett could say anything, they all turned toward the sound of heavy footsteps coming down the hall. Suddenly, a large man came walking through the kitchen, heading straight to the refrigerator as if there were no one else in the room to acknowledge. Scarlett looked him up and down, snapping her jaw shut when she

realized it had been hanging open. He looked to be around Leo's age, and Scarlett's pussy throbbed when she thought about all the ways he could teach her how to be a good girl for him.

His wavy hair hung a little below his ears, dark with faint streaks of caramel. He looked so rugged yet so incredibly gorgeous. He was much taller than the others, about six foot five, despite the fact they all towered over her like giants. His skin was very tan, but his eyes were where it was at. He epitomized "bedroom eyes." His thick yet groomed eyebrows didn't lose their tired look as he continued with his actions. His chocolate eyes were mysterious and almond shaped, giving him a sexy, sleepy look.

"Is that Byron?" Scarlett whispered to the men at the table. They all nodded. He was as beautiful as he was scary.

Byron located a large carton of orange juice in the fridge and began to chug straight from the carton. He wasn't drinking for more than a few seconds when his body froze. He slowly lowered the carton of juice. It suddenly seemed like he was sniffing the air as he turned toward them, and his face took on a thoughtful look. His eyes rested on her face and then widened for a split second before he quickly turned back around and took another chug of the juice.

"Hey, Byron. This here is Scarlett," Leo said to him in a chipper voice.

But Byron just kept his back facing them. "Joy," he mumbled sarcastically before all but throwing the juice back in the fridge, slamming the door shut, then stomping back out of the room.

"He's just a little tired. It's nothing personal." Levi smirked. "Trust me."

For some reason, she felt a pang of disappointment, maybe even hurt, that Byron had seemed indifferent to her being there. But why should that matter? She'd leave soon and needed to figure out who she was and where she'd come from.

She looked through the windows behind the table, noticing how beautiful the huge ranch was, so green and so full of life as several

horses and cows walked leisurely around the property. “You cowboys have a breathtaking place to call home,” she observed aloud.

“Maybe I can take you on a horse ride later.” She looked over at Levi, his smile temporarily paralyzing her. She could feel herself liquefy under the power of his charm.

“I’d love that.” Scarlett then reminded herself to focus on what was important in the situation. “But I’m going to need a ride into town once we’re finished with dinner,” she said as she brought a small piece of pork chop to her lips.

“No!”

Scarlett nearly jumped out of her skin from the sudden yell from all six men, dropping her fork in the process. Fear quickly turned to irritation from being startled. “And why the hell not?”

All the men visibly struggled to form replies, making her angrier as she realized they were simply trying to control her. “This is insane,” she began. “I don’t even know any of you. I appreciate y’all helping me, but I have a life I need to get back to. I could have a family—maybe a husband.” She didn’t know why she wanted to provoke them, but that’s exactly what she’d achieved.

She gasped when she heard several low growls rumble through the room at the mention of a husband. They all looked angry, and she felt her body tense. No matter how good-looking or sweet these men were, they were still strangers who could snap her in half in the blink of an eye. “I want to go *now*,” she demanded, her voice shaky from nervousness.

“No, no, no,” said Denzel as he walked over to kneel down at her side. “Just one night, okay? We just want to know you’re safe.”

“Why should I?” she snapped angrily.

“Well, it’s just so late, and you’ve been through so much in the last twenty-four hours,” said Leo as he stood from his chair and came to walk behind her, placing a large hand on her shoulder. “How ’bout we all just relax tonight, and in the morning, we can get everything sorted out?” When he said those last words, his thick, callused fingers

crept up her shoulder and grazed the sensitive flesh of her neck. It felt like a bolt of lightning had struck her.

She tried to keep her cool and ignore the waves of sexual hunger pounding through her body.

These men were only strangers, but she trusted them for some inexplicable reason. Logic told her she was stupid for handing her trust over so easily. Okay, so it was crazy, but she knew they held something, some piece of information, that could help link her to her life. Being on their good side could serve her well. Even if she didn't feel a connection to these men, it wasn't like there were many options for her to take other than staying with them until they could give her a ride into town. If only she could remember *something*.

She nodded her agreement. "Okay, I'll stay. But just one night."

Sonny ran over and scooped her body in his arms once again. "This is the best day of my life!" His happiness was so contagious that she couldn't help but squeal in delight. She could feel his presence warming the cautious icicles around her heart. After another long hug that left her breathless, he carried her over to his chair and placed her on his lap as he sat down. In an odd way, the closeness felt natural to her, as if they were a long-term couple who were comfortable with their affection. He pulled out a deck of cards from his back pocket and reached around her body to shuffle them on the table. "Wanna learn a game?"

Chapter 6

“What the fuck do you mean you can’t find the body?” Alisa whispered in her cell phone from the corner of the large study but made sure her tone delivered a poisonous bite of rage. “I pay you a quarter million dollars, and you still can’t complete the job? Are you fucking retarded? This is bullshit!”

“I’m sorry, dear Alisa. I don’t know what to tell you.”

“You can tell me the fucking truth!” She winced when she realized how loud she was becoming and lowered her voice again. She couldn’t have her fiancé or any of his meddling staff overhearing what she’d been up to. “Where the hell is Scarlett Rose?”

“I told you,” continued the voice on the other end. “On the ride in yesterday morning, I acted as though I accidentally lost the press release report out of the car window while we were driving, and then I insisted she help me find it on the side of the road. Once she was close to the edge of the cliff, I pushed. It was just like you ordered. I saw her fall with my own eyes, heard her scream until she reached the bottom. I left her there to finish dying, but when I returned to check on her this morning, the body was nowhere to be found.”

“And you’re sure you went back to the exact same spot?” She gave the maid a dirty look when she opened the door and walked into the study. The maid immediately got the message and retreated back out of the room.

“I’m positive.” He sighed heavily. “I don’t understand it. Maybe a coyote dragged her away.”

“Well, until I know for sure, I’m not taking any chances. I need to be positive this spoiled little bitch is *dead*. I can’t risk her coming back here and taking what is rightfully mine.”

“I don’t know what else to do, Alisa.”

Alisa groaned in frustration then cursed under her breath in rapid Russian. “Of course you don’t. You’re obviously a complete waste of space. I’m just going to have to bring in the big guns. Someone smart, ruthless, quick, and above all, evil.”

“So you’re hiring a professional hit man this time?”

“No. I’ll be making an urgent phone call to Little Russia, New York, and I’m bringing in Mother.”

The loud gasp on the other end made her grin. “Not Dasha!”

Chapter 7

Scarlett's deep suspicion of Sonny couldn't be ignored. She kept her eyes on his every move, watching him as he fidgeted with his playing cards. Something was definitely off about this one. Then she watched as he began to chew on his bottom lip, already swollen from his previous abuse. That's when Scarlett realized she had discovered his secret signal.

"Peanut Butter!" Scarlett screamed out as she pointed to Sonny across the table.

"Goddamn it, Sonny!" Devlin rose to his feet, throwing his cards down on the table. "I told you not to be obvious."

"Yes!" Scarlett fist-pumped the air in triumph. She then reached across the table, wrapped her arms around the huge pile of playing chips in the center, and dragged them closer to rest in front of her. "He wasn't obvious at all. I'm just smarter than you," she teased with a happy giggle.

This game they called Peanut Butter was starting to grow on her. Each player had a partner they shared a secret signal with. Once a person had a completed hand, they were to send their signal to the partner, but if the hand or signal was discovered by another player first, the team was to be called out, and the game was then over with the other team winning.

"Wow, Scarlett," said Sonny with a large smile. "That's four wins in a row. Must be beginner's luck."

"It is not!" she protested, softly nudging him under the table with her foot. "Don't be mad that I'm a fast learner."

“Oh, I’m sure we’re *all* counting on it,” said Rhett with a wink. “Somehow, I think you’d be a natural at a lot of things you’ve never done before.”

Scarlett gasped at his perverse reference to her purity then narrowed her eyes on him when he began to laugh. “You sure are a charmer, you know that?” she bit out sarcastically.

“No. I’m not,” replied Rhett flatly. “But for you, Scarlett?”

Scarlett’s jaw dropped at Rhett’s boldness as he came over to her chair, knelt down on one knee, and grabbed her hand. Her body singed with the warmth his body sent through her palms. The channel of her pussy was already contracting as it begged to be filled.

Damn it, what kind of virgin slut am I? He’s only holding my damn hand!

“I’d change my ways for a mere minute alone with you.” He brushed his lips with her fingertips before kissing them lightly.

Hating the way her body responded to his like a bitch in heat, she snatched her hand away. “You don’t even know me, Rhett. You don’t know what I’ve done with any man—”

“There’s never been a man,” he cut her off.

“Rhett, knock it off.” Denzel’s quietly spoken words had her turning in his direction. A deep red filled his cheeks as he looked down at the table, and she could tell he was embarrassed by his brother’s rudeness.

Scarlett turned back to Rhett’s kneeling form. “How would you even know that? Do all insecure perverts have a built-in virginity tracker for better hunting?”

She watched as he inhaled deeply, much like Byron had just done. “I just know.” With that, Rhett stood back on his feet and walked back over to his chair to sit down.

Scarlett could feel the anger coursing through her blood as it began to boil with his pompous attitude toward her. Not knowing what else to do, she stood to her feet, stomped over to Rhett, and

placed her hands on her hips. “Tell me where your bedroom is,” she demanded.

Rhett looked up at her with a puzzled look. “What? My bedroom?”

Scarlett crossed her arms over her chest. “Did I stutter? I asked where the hell is your goddamn bedroom.”

Rhett looked at the other men and began to laugh, but Scarlett could tell it was a nervous laugh. When the other men just shrugged instead of joining in on his amusement, he looked back up to her and cleared his throat.

“It’s the second door on the right,” he said as he pointed down the hall.

She quickly walked down the hall toward the way he had pointed.

“Hey, you’re not going to go all *Fatal Attraction* on my pet bunny rabbit now, are you?” he called out as he continued to laugh at her.

That only made her more pissed off. She didn’t give a fuck how hot or attractive a man was. No one spoke to her like that without being punished.

The men’s eyes were wide in shock when she returned to the kitchen with a pile of Rhett’s clothes she found in the dressers, along with a small throw she had found draped over a chair in the room. She watched Rhett’s smile disappear as she dropped the pile at his feet.

“Men who act like dogs should be treated like dogs. And until you can act like a grown man, you can sleep like a dog, too. I’ll be sleeping in your room tonight, and you’ll be sleeping on the couch.”

For a moment, Scarlett felt a very brief tinge of fear as his large form rose from the chair to tower over her. But there was something in his blue eyes, his own fear, maybe, that had her raising her chin bravely to convey she was standing her ground. He raised a finger to point within an inch of her face.

“Hey, now, you listen here, little missy. This is *my* goddamn house—”

“Or maybe you’d prefer if I leave?” she cut him off calmly. She watched his mouth close, his jaw tightening in frustration. “Hmm,”—she purposefully gave him a degrading once-over—“that’s what I thought.”

She turned to the other men, amused expressions on all of their faces. The ranch was completely dark through the window behind them, and she yawned as her exhaustion took over. “I’m tired. I’m going to take a nap. Can one of you boys please come wake me in an hour?” She grabbed the plastic drugstore bag off the kitchen counter, thankful Denzel had been kind enough to buy her a few essentials earlier in the day.

“I will!” the other five men all exclaimed simultaneously, their hands all raised like good little schoolboys. Scarlett couldn’t help but laugh as she purposefully swayed her hips back to Rhett’s room.

Chapter 8

Once inside, she closed the door and leaned her back against it as she sighed deeply. What a hell of a day. But, wait...how in the hell did she know to threaten Rhett with her departure to get him to shut his mouth? She wasn't sure why, but something told her Rhett, along with each man in that room, would have rather chewed off his own arm than allow her to leave. Scarlett felt a pang of anxiety. Something was off. Surely, she'd been attracted to men before, but what she felt for the seven men in that house went beyond attraction. It felt more like *need*.

I must need some sleep.

She shook her thoughts away as she looked around the dim room. The curtains were drawn from the huge floor-to-ceiling windows, but the moonlight still streamed through the curtain edges. Rhett's room wasn't as big as Leo's, but it was still huge by any standard, only his was extremely minimal compared to Leo's cozy décor.

She went into the bathroom and opened the drugstore bag. She smiled when she noticed Denzel had bought her a pink toothbrush. Somehow, she wasn't surprised he'd kept her femininity in consideration when he picked it out. She also found a bar of Ivory soap, generic brand eyeliner and mascara, cherry ChapStick, and a stick of Secret deodorant. It seemed he'd forgotten about the face powder and blush on her list, but her heart warmed at his effort to make her stay comfortable.

After cleaning herself up, Scarlett pulled back the thick, lush comforter on the bed and settled herself underneath it. The pillow was

soft and cool against her cheek. But as she lay there, all she could think of was the predicament she had found herself in earlier that day. The thought of being completely ignorant of who she was made Scarlett sick to her stomach.

She tossed and turned as anxiety continued to settle in her mind. Even creepier than the amnesia was the way these men made her feel. It was as if they'd put a spell on her, forcing her to want to be by their sides every second she was awake. Not to mention, she just couldn't get past the fact she had an extremely intense connection with these men. They swore she didn't know them before her accident, and she believed them, but she could also sense they were hiding something from her.

Finally frustrated she was going nowhere with her nap, Scarlett crawled out of the bed and quietly made her way out of Rhett's room. As she slowly walked down the long hallway, she heard the men deep in conversation with each other at the dining table.

"I think we need to tell her when she wakes up," said Levi. "It's not right, us keeping the truth from her."

"You damn young bloods are so fucking impulsive," she heard Devlin say. "There's no way in fucking hell I'll sit here and watch you frighten my mate away." *Mate? What the hell is he talking about?* "Stop listening to your dick, Levi, and use your damn brain for once. Can't you see that it is too soon for her to know who we are? She's been to hell and back in the last day. She needs time."

"Look, you both have a point," Leo added. "If we wait too long, she could lose any trust she has in us. While it's almost impossible for us to fall out of love with her, the same is not guaranteed for her. That being said, if we go too quick with all the information, she's sure to become overwhelmed. And that also goes for your horns during mating. For now, keep them under control until she gets used to the idea."

Love? Horns? Mating? What the fuck is going on?

Scarlett quickly stormed into the dining room where she heard the voices coming from. The six men were still seated around the table playing a card game. She cleared her throat to gain their attention and watched as they all snapped their heads in her direction. The shock on their faces had them looking like they had just seen a ghost. It was obvious she'd walked in on a conversation that wasn't meant for her ears.

All the men were frozen in their chairs until Leo finally stood up and came over to stand in front of her. "Scarlett, my dear, you should be resting—"

"Can someone please tell me what the hell is going on here?"

Leo briefly rubbed a finger across the bottom of his nose for a second before he opened his mouth.

"And don't even think about lying to me, Leo," she snapped before he could form a word. "You just rubbed your nose like you're preparing for a lie, so don't while you're still ahead." She wasn't sure when she had learned the signs of a liar, but she knew them for sure.

"Shit," she heard Denzel softly hiss out as he slumped lower in his chair, a hand covering his cherry-red face.

Leo's jaw dropped in shock. He shook his head as he dropped it in his hands. "It's not that simple, Scarlett. It's just too soon."

Scarlett reached up and pulled his hands away so she could look him in the eyes. "It may be, but it's also too late. I heard you discussing something you don't want me to know. Now, I demand you tell me what it is this instant before I walk out that door without so much as a backward glance."

Levi jumped up from his chair like a rocket and threw his playing cards on the table. "Goddamn it, Leo. Tell her! I can't risk losing her."

Scarlett was confused as to why his voice sounded panicked.

She turned back to Leo. "What is he talking about, Leo? Losing me for what?"

Leo's topaz eyes bored into hers, making her knees weak despite her trying to come across as the tough little badass. He sighed deeply then said, "Forgive me, my darlin'." Then before she knew what was going on, Leo lifted her effortlessly as she struggled against his strength.

"Let go of me!" She kicked and pounded her fist into his arms, but he remained completely unscathed.

Leo walked back over to his chair, sat down, and laid her stomach-down across his lap. She gasped as his large hands lifted the oversized shirt she wore then pulled down her panties to the middle of her thighs.

"Oh, my God, please. I'm sorry I eavesdropped. Just let me go." She heard the other men move to stand behind her. She didn't understand why that knowledge was beginning to make her pussy cream, but she squeezed her thighs together in humiliation at how exposed she was. She was sure she'd never even examined her own pussy before, much less had it examined by a man. And much, much less six of them.

She froze when she heard a low, rumbling growl in Leo's chest as he began to tenderly caress the exposed globes of her raised ass. She screamed just as his hand disappeared then landed hard, the burning pleasure-pain vibrating straight to her cunt. Just as the sensation began to recede, her body shook with the impact of another, then another. All the men groaned softly as they watched her punishment.

"So perfect and so *red*," Leo whispered as he rubbed over the heat of her skin. "Ours," he growled. "All ours." He then lifted her back to her feet, her panties still bunched around her ankles.

When she looked at all the men, she noticed they had all grasped on to either the table or a nearby chair, their bodies shaking as if they were gripping on with all their strength.

"Please, Leo," Rhett bit out through clenched teeth. "Hurry. I c—can't hold on much longer."

"Yes, please," Levi begged, sweat beading his forehead.

Leo gave them a nod. “Devlin, come hold her down for me.” His eyes never broke eye contact with her as he spoke in a sad tone.

“Wait, what! Why the hell does he need to hold me down?”

Devlin came to stand behind her. He wrapped one large, thick arm around her waist as the other embraced her across her shoulders and chest.

Scarlett immediately began to wiggle in his hold but was barely able to move an inch against his incredible strength. Her pussy was still exposed through the bottom opening of the shirt, and her face burned in shame. “Let go of me! Why are you doing—”

Scarlett stopped her protest midsentence as paralyzing shock took over her body. She watched in disbelief and horror as Leo’s beautiful face sprouted dark brown fur, elongated, and widened, his eyes moving farther apart as his nose grew wide and black. He groaned loudly as his limbs grew, and his fingers molded together to form large hooves. He dropped to the ground on all fours, and she watched his body grow at least eight times its size. Devlin pulled her back as horns sprouted from the side of Leo’s head until they spanned more than ten feet. Scarlett’s eyes took in the gargantuan Texas longhorn that now stood in front of her, and then she opened her mouth to release a blood-curdling scream. The longhorn flinched at the shrieking sound right as Devlin covered her mouth with his large hand.

“*That’s* why, Scarlett,” Devlin stated casually, holding tighter to her panicked, struggling body.

She could hardly believe it when the other men began to chuckle. “Damn, sugar,” said Sonny with a wide smile, “I think that scream of yours scared Leo more than he scared you.”

She could feel her eyes widen at the fact they all seemed so casual about this whole insanity, as if it happened every day.

“All right, fellas. That’s enough. She’s scared,” said Denzel, concern crossing his features as his smile faded. He turned to the

longhorn. “Leo, shift back and hold our mate, please. I can’t stand to see her in this state any longer.”

Just then, the longhorn rose on its hind legs and began to shrink and narrow, slowly becoming the gorgeous doctor she’d known him to be before. For a brief moment, her shock was replaced by lust at the sight of his naked body. His cock hung low, down to mid-thigh, and Scarlett gasped at the realization he wasn’t even hard yet.

He walked over to the pile of shredded clothes he had ruined during his shift and picked them up. “I hate when I forget to undress during a shift,” he said as he placed the pile in front of his cock. “I guess that little spanking I gave you didn’t have me thinking logically.”

At that point, Devlin had removed his hand from her mouth as it hung open in disbelief. She stiffened as Leo knelt down and began to slowly lift her white cotton boy shorts up her legs. She could feel her clit throb violently as he ran his callused fingers along the sensitive skin of her inner thigh as he brought the panties back to position. She licked her lips when he looked up, straight in her eyes.

“Again, baby, I’m so sorry I had to spank you.” He rose back to his feet. “A longhorn shifter goes wild with passion at the sight of the color red on his mate. It makes the shift easier, as well. I had to spank you to see your precious little ass glow with heat.”

“S–so y–y’all—” Scarlett paused, closed her eyes, then took a deep breath to calm her scattered nerves. “Y’all are were-longhorns?”

“Not exactly,” said Levi, stepping forward as he wiped the sweat from his face. Although his blond waves were matted to his forehead, he looked much calmer than just minutes before, right after he had witnessed her spanking. “We’re more like longhorn *shifters* because we don’t need a condition like the full moon to shift. We can do it anytime. But the beast within us claws to get out when we see our mate in red, and it takes all our strength to control it. Seeing your cute, round ass spanked until it was bright pink had to be the toughest point of my life as far as control.”

She noticed Leo had stepped into the nearby bathroom and had quickly returned holding a thick, navy blue robe. “You just turned twenty-one on the Fourth of July, by the way, from what I just saw when I spanked you. You had a huge boat party on Lake Travis to celebrate it. Apparently, we can see bits of your memory when we touch while we’re both turned on, maybe because you’re our mate.”

Scarlett shook her head, confusion swimming through her scrambled brain. “I just don’t understand. Why do y’all keep referring to me as your mate? What does that even mean?”

“Let me give you a bit of our family history first. That might help a little,” said Leo as he slipped on the robe and tied the belt. “Shape-shifters have been around for as long as humans have. They live in all parts of the world, and they range from a variety of different animals. There’re wolves, panthers, stallions, and, of course, bulls. Fate chooses one mate for each family generation, so brothers are always fated to share one woman. She can be a human or a shifter, but she’s born to be theirs until the day she dies. Any desire for other women dies out when the shifters meet their mate.”

Scarlett covered her mouth as she felt her stomach grow sour, vomit threatening to rise in her throat. She quickly walked over to the couch, and all the men immediately surrounded her as she sat down. She shook her head and motioned for them to get away from her.

“Please, I need space right now. I feel sick.”

They all hesitated before backing away from the couch.

Chapter 9

Scarlett rose from the couch and ran outside in tears. She felt all the men coming behind her, so she turned around to face them, stopping them in their tracks before they'd managed to come down the porch steps.

"I'm not leaving, okay?" she screamed as the tears flowed down her face. "I just need time, please!"

She turned and ran behind the house. She leaned her forehead against a giant pecan tree as she sobbed. Everything just seemed like so much. And she couldn't ignore the part of her that seemed to be going crazy from being so completely out of control. She guessed she must have been used to having control in her real life, before the fall.

Suddenly, she felt a light breath on her neck as a strong arm slowly wrapped around her waist. He did it tenderly but almost in a way as if he was afraid to touch her. "I said go away. Please, just let me be," she begged as she continued to cry against the tree.

"I know how you feel," a deep, sexy voice whispered against her ear.

Scarlett gasped and stiffened. "Byron?"

He softly brushed a lock of her hair behind her right ear then trailed his fingers slowly down the side of her neck, sending shivers of heat down her spine and out to her toes. "You feel helpless, cheated that destiny has decided who you would be before you were even given a chance to object." He nuzzled his nose in her neck and inhaled. She couldn't stop the moan that escaped her lips, and she felt her core tighten in response to such a foreign touch. "I never

thought”—he licked a small spot underneath her ear as she groaned—“that I could love someone so much and at the same time hate her for what she is forcing me to become.” He blew on the wet spot, and her body shivered with pleasure.

“You love me?” she asked in her heady state.

“And I hate you.” He nibbled her earlobe, and her body arched back into his as if it had a mind of its own. “I was perfectly fine before you came along. But now that I’ve smelled you, tasted you, I won’t be able to live without you until the day I die.” He slowly trailed his fingertips up either side of her waist, stopping when they reached the plump sides of her tits. “I’m not used to being out of control, Scarlett. Never again will I be able to exist without your love, but you”—he dug his enormous hard-on into her ass as he groaned low—“you’ll be able to walk away whenever the fuck you want should you no longer want us. And for that, I *hate* you.”

Scarlett whimpered as his fingertips moved around to lightly circle her rock-hard nipples through the thin material of the Western shirt. Her pussy was throbbing so fast she was embarrassed at the thought of coming right then before he’d even touched her below the waist.

“Mmm, have you ever let a man do this to you, darlin’?”

“No,” she said breathlessly. And she now knew it was a fact.

His hands were suddenly between her legs, and his fingers began to lightly massage her mound through her cotton panties. “How ’bout this?”

Scarlett squeezed her eyes shut as she struggled to maintain some sort of control over the waves of intense pleasure that were coursing through her entire body. She felt her panties grow wet with her juices, and she squeezed her legs together to hide the embarrassing giveaway. But then Byron wrapped a strong arm around her chest, lifted her slightly off the ground, and shoved his other hand between her thighs before placing her back on the dewy grass with her legs spread wide open. She thought to fight back, but when his fingers

began to inch their way into the seam of her panties, she collapsed into his embrace as she became putty in his hands.

“Don’t fight it, Scarlett. It’s even better than you’d ever fantasized. Let me be the first man to touch your sweet, tight pussy.”

All she could do was nod, and the moment she did, she felt his thick, experienced fingers rub over her wet slit before they slowly spread her pussy lips apart.

Scarlett reached back and grasped Byron’s messy, shaggy hair as her breathing hitched. “Oh, my God.”

“No, baby. This has nothing to do with him.” He circled her entrance with his fingertip, and she began to moan over and over in response. “This is all me who’s making you feel like this.”

“Oh, Byron, yes. Only you.”

She heard his beast snarl, making her gasp in fear. She instinctively reached down to pry his hand from her as fear began to replace the lust, but then he plunged into her virgin pussy with one massive finger. She cried out loudly from how full she easily became. The ecstasy of his touch consumed her vision as she humped her hips against his warm hand.

She heard him rustling with his jeans, the sound of his zipper lowering causing her excitement to peak. She heard him moan in pleasure as the smacking sound of skin let her know he was jerking off while he finger-fucked her.

As much as she tried to stop it, she felt her orgasm come crashing in within only seconds of his single finger being inside her. She screamed out as it began then convulsed with a harsh jerk when, to her surprise, he entered a second finger just as her climax peaked, prolonging it until it was almost a torture-pain. She struggled to return to her normal breathing pattern as Byron continued to gently suck on her neck. He cried out her name as she felt hot, thick liquid shower her ass and upper thighs.

“Scarlett! Scarlett, where are you?” she heard Leo call out from the front yard. She gasped and spun around to face Byron. But all she saw was a large, blue longhorn running away into the darkness.

* * * *

Levi walked out into the front yard to stand next to Leo, who was scanning the darkness for any sign of their mate. “Haven’t found her yet?”

“No, but I can smell she’s near. She smells aroused, even,” Leo answered as he looked to his left then right.

Just then, Scarlett came from around the house. Levi noticed her chest was just slightly heaving as she tried to subtly take deep breaths. He couldn’t help but smile, knowing this could be a sign she’d be staying with them. “Looks like someone had some one-on-one time with Byron,” he said to her as she approached. “He can be pretty sneaky, can’t he?”

He felt a ping of guilt, suddenly realizing he was probably mocking her first sexual experience with a man. At the first sight of her bright red blush of embarrassment, he felt his beast begin to stir. He felt his jaw clench and knew his eyes were glowing burnt orange from the heat behind them.

Scarlett bunched her eyebrows together in confusion. “Levi? What’s wrong with your eyes?” She stepped closer, and the smell of her still-fresh arousal drew a deep growl from the back of his throat.

“Levi, step back from her,” Leo said as he grabbed his arm and began to pull him away. “You don’t have enough experience to control your beast yet.”

But before he could, Levi lunged for Scarlett, drawing a high shriek of fear from her as they dropped to the ground. He sat up straight, straddling her wiggling form as it constantly stroked his rock-hard cock in the process. He reached down and ripped the

Western shirt open. His eyes took in the sight of her pale, round tits, and another growl erupted from him.

“Get the hell off of her, Levi! Can’t you see she’s scared?” Leo tugged the back of Levi’s hair in a violent pull.

“Wait! Stop!” Scarlett cried out as she leaned up to grab Levi’s arm, her beautiful breasts swaying with the movement. Levi and Leo froze. “I–It’s okay,” she stammered then swallowed hard. “I’m not scared anymore. This is...meant to be.” Her voice was barely a whisper, but he still managed to hear her.

“You’re fucking dead, Levi!”

All their heads snapped to see Devlin storming out of the screen door with Rhett, Sonny, and Denzel trailing behind him from the house. Levi was still straddling Scarlett as she lay in the grass with her shirt ripped open.

Leo hurried to stand in front of Devlin. “No, stop! It’s not what it looks like.” Leo turned around to face them, a slight look of amazement on his face. “I think she can feel the bond now because of Byron. She wants Levi.”

Devlin looked over at them, his face suddenly morphing from anger to lust as he watched Scarlett peel away the rest of her shirt.

Levi looked down at his angel mate, returning her innocent smile. She giggled as she threw the rag of cloth at his face, and he easily caught it, holding it to his nose to inhale her warm, clean scent. She then wrapped her hand around the back of his neck and pulled him down to her as she lay back down on the grass.

They began a ferociously passionate kiss as Levi unsnapped the pearl buttons of his own shirt. All the men watched as Levi bent his head down to capture her hardened, pink nipple in his mouth. As he continued to suck on her tit, he looked up and saw her chest and cheeks were becoming flushed with her pleasure. He could hear the other men growling deep in their chests at the sight of the red color on their mate.

He then felt a strong push from his left, and the moment he looked up, Rhett and Sonny were there at his side, crawling up to Scarlett's laid-out body with intense hunger burning in their eyes.

"Hold her hands down, Levi," said Rhett, never taking his eyes off their moaning little mate as he and Sonny licked and nibbled their ways up her inner thighs, making her moan more.

Levi smiled. "I have a better idea to keep her still." He watched Scarlett's eyes widen with sexual curiosity as he unraveled the rope hanging from his belt loop and secured her hands with it. He pulled her bound wrists over her head. "Just enjoy, baby."

She purred in response, obviously loving her restraints.

He felt a little relieved he wasn't the only man in the house who felt such a strong need to touch Scarlett's body. The other men were more experienced and had better control over their beasts. But Levi and his triplet brothers just couldn't wait, and they were more than happy that Scarlett couldn't, either.

Chapter 10

She never expected her first sexual encounters to be outside in the grass. In such a dreamy, lusty state, Scarlett allowed Levi to hold her rope-bound wrists above her head as Rhett ripped her panties off, exposing her freshly shaved pussy for all the men to see.

“W—wait, shouldn’t we go inside?” she asked nervously. She felt so exposed and self-conscious.

“No time.” Sonny growled as he ran his hands down the side of her waist then reached behind to grasp her ass harshly. “I can’t believe you’re ours,” he whispered as he kneaded her ass cheeks, the skin damp from the evening dew of the grass she lay on. Sonny then grabbed one thigh while Rhett grabbed the other, and like rabid bulls, they both plunged their mouths down to her pulsing pussy.

She arched her back from the pleasure of having two tongues lick her cunt, only to be pleasantly surprised to find Levi had chosen that opportunity to suckle on one of her tits while he jiggled the other with his hand.

“Oh, my fucking God, look at those titties jiggle. So perfect.”

With that, he took the other one in his mouth and sucked while his tongue lapped around the hardened nub. He gently bit down on one, and that was all it took for Scarlett’s climax to approach. By that time, she’d noticed the other three men had kneeled next to them, their jeans pulled half down as they jerked their hard, enormous cocks.

Scarlett tried to fight against the rope in Levi’s single-hand grasp. She wanted to reach down and clamp on to Rhett’s and Sonny’s heads as her orgasm hit every body part she had in intense waves, but Levi

had secured the rope in an intricate knot. She tried to pull away when she felt the orgasm was just too intense to take, but Rhett and Sonny each held on to her hips to keep her in place. She screamed out when yet another climax crashed down on her, and she took turns looking Leo, Devlin, and Denzel in the eyes as she came.

She loved the way they blushed and licked their lips, but before she could recover from the intense multiple-orgasm, she felt herself being lifted and realized Levi was carrying her into the house, toward Leo's bedroom.

Levi kicked open the door and walked to the end of the room to place her down on the bed. "You still need to take that nap you never finished," he said with a smile as he pulled a blanket up to her chin.

"What? A nap? You must be joking! Are you really going to do that to me then just bring me in here for a nap?" Scarlett was so confused. She couldn't believe how erotic it had been to have three men tug their cocks over her while one triplet sucked her tits and the other two ate her pussy at the same time. It had been more than any fantasies she could ever dream of. And now, they were just going to leave her hanging? If she wasn't mistaken, she'd guess these men were playing hardball.

Levi sat beside her on the bed then grabbed her small hand to press it gently against his beautiful lips. "You've been through a lot today. We just want you to rest for a little bit, and then we can have more fun later, okay?"

She couldn't resist returning his smile and nodding. Once he began to walk out of the room, she hopped up and headed back to that heavenly shower.

* * * *

A squeak at Leo's bedroom door had Scarlett stiffening under the warm comforter. She'd been waiting for him to open that door for exactly forty-seven minutes since she'd lain down. She was thankful

she'd just showered before she got in bed. She had shaved her plump, soft pussy again then applied the cocoa butter lotion she'd found in the bathroom. She also made sure to wear only an extra-large Western shirt, sans panties since Rhett would soon eagerly volunteer to wash them. She'd made sure to leave one single button fastened, right between her breasts, to entice the men further into her bed. In her heart, she knew they were the ones.

They!

What the hell was wrong with her, planning to lose her virginity to one of these seven men? But no matter how much she tried to reject the idea, it felt as natural as breathing. She knew she'd never been here before, but when she walked around the halls, opened and closed the cabinets for essentials, or fought over Peanut Butter with Devlin, this felt like home to her.

After Byron, the twins, and the triplets had all touched her, she couldn't help but feel disappointed she didn't lose her virginity. She'd hoped one would sneak into her room later. She couldn't explain it, but a voice kept yelling in her head that tonight was the night she officially entered womanhood.

The funniest—not to mention most confusing—thing of all was she didn't care which of the seven men it was. Each and every one of them made her body ache with need just from being next to him. It was as if nature were pulling her pussy to their fertile and ready cocks. Only one word came to mind when she tried to describe their attractions to her. Mates. That's what they'd all called her on numerous occasions. She couldn't deny that was exactly what she'd felt when she was near them. Like she was born to spend her life with them, have their children.

After what had happened in the front yard, she knew one of them wouldn't be able to resist completing the undone mission.

Now, whoever had opened the door was just standing there with it wide open, the light flooding in from the dim hallway. The silence of the room was deafening and awkward. The man finally shut the door

softly as if he was sure she was asleep and didn't want to disturb her. She continued to pretend to be asleep as she lay there with her back facing him.

"Scarlett, are you awake?" Leo's voice whispered.

She had already known it was him from the crisp, woodsy smell he had brought in the room. She could even feel his body heat intensify as he slowly stepped closer to the bed.

She swallowed hard before she whispered back. "Yes. I can't seem to sleep."

He chuckled softly. "Yeah, me, either."

Taking a deep breath of courage, she slowly turned onto her back to face where he sat on the bed. She let the blanket fall away from her to reveal her barely covered body. Only one pearl button in the middle of her shirt was fastened, showing off the creamy skin of her taut tummy and the upper mounds of her round breasts.

She heard him hiss softly between his teeth as his gaze lingered on the delicate skin between her breasts. Her virgin pussy was growing wetter just watching him look at her. "My dear God, Scarlett," he said in a husky, sexy tone as he brought his eyes up to her face then gently cupped his warm hand against her cheek. "I think you must be the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my entire life."

Scarlett barely gasped in surprise before he rubbed the back of his fingers down her cheek, slowly down her neck then chest. He slowed as he reached the damp area between her breasts. Letting out a deep growl, he took his time inching his hand down her abdomen.

Her pussy throbbed in anticipation, and she panted with need as he bent his head down to lightly lick her belly button.

"Leo," she quietly drawled out as his tongue began to torpedo around the sensitive nerves that sent a sharp sensation to her clit.

Her chest was heaving uncontrollably as he trailed his long, pointed, wet tongue down from her belly button to her lower stomach. He grasped on to the edge of the comforter that covered her ready cunt but then sat up on the bed to look straight into her eyes. He softly

ran a few fingers through her hair then lovingly pushed his thumb against her full lips. She pursed them for a soft kiss before taking her time to snake out her tongue for a quick taste of his masculine bitterness.

“Don’t be afraid, my sweet little darlin’. I promise this is meant to happen. You’re meant to be here with us.” He leaned down and lightly licked her earlobe, sending shivers coursing through her limbs. “That voice telling you to let me feed on these addicting tits,”—he lightly began to pinch her nipples through the thin flannel fabric—“the one telling you to spread those dripping pussy lips wide for us,”—he pinched hard on one of her nipples when he said those last words, and she let out a soft yelp followed by a deep, tortured groan—“that’s destiny talking, Scarlett.” Leo peeled off his tight, white T-shirt to reveal his chiseled, well-worked torso. As he fumbled with his large rodeo belt buckle, he leaned back down to her chest and bit off the single button holding together the shirt.

The sight of her own large tits bouncing out of the confines of the shirt had her moaning loudly along with Leo. He kicked his pants off then crawled to straddle Scarlett’s upper thighs. He gave her a warm smile then dropped his gaze back down to her naked body. He leaned down to suckle each breast, making Scarlett’s small form writhe beneath him.

He sat up and stared at the wet spots he left on her nipples, and by the way his eyes burned with desire, it seemed to multiply his already intense arousal. He then grasped the comforter with both hands and yanked it down.

“Mmm,” he drawled out as he lowered his body down on the bed then just stared. “Every inch of you is like art. Look at that. Such beauty.”

Her creaming cunt was just a mere few inches away from his face, and she noticed how his eyes seemed to study every part of her pussy.

Suddenly feeling self-conscious, she began to close her legs a little. Both of his hands reached up and firmly grasped on to her inner

thighs. His warm eyes looked up at her. "Let me just look at it for a bit, baby. It's the most beautiful little pussy I've ever seen. And it's about to be *all* mine."

With that, his tongue shot out and did a few quick circles around her clit before sucking it between his lips. Scarlett let out a loud yelp, and Leo growled loudly in response. "You taste so fucking good. Best pussy I've ever smelled," he mumbled between licks and sucks.

His words had her moaning and whimpering uncontrollably as he worked his magical tongue on her pink slit. The intensity of her pleasure spread throughout every fiber of her body. Suddenly, she felt him move above her, grasping one full breast as she looked deep into his eyes.

"I can't believe I've finally found you," he whispered as his erection ground against her wet mound. He pulled off his underwear, and Scarlett gasped at how large he was.

"It's going to hurt," she said, her voice full of worry.

"Maybe." He reached down and began to run the mushroomed head of his steel-hard cock along her slick slit. The realization of how close his hungry dick was to her pussy hole had her breathing going out of control yet again.

"Do you want me inside you, Scarlett?" he whispered in her ear, his own breathing growing erratic. "Do you want me to be the first to put my cock in that tight, innocent pussy of yours?"

"Yes," she panted, "oh, yes, Leo. I want you to take me." She placed a hand on his cheek, his stubble scratching her sensitive palm.

He pushed his lips against hers and kissed her softly as he slowly began to nudge apart her wet opening with his blunt head. Scarlett jumped at the sudden bite of pain and felt his large cock attempt to stretch her tiny pussy.

"It hurts," she whimpered.

"Shh, baby girl. I got you. Just relax," he cajoled her as he lay on top of her.

He continued to kiss her as he pulled out then slipped his hand between her thighs. Using one finger, he plunged inside her tight, wet cunt until she begged for more. When her moans grew louder, he added a second and began to scissor them to prepare her for her first cock. This had Scarlett grinding her mound against the palm of his hand.

“Please, Leo. More. I need you. Make me a woman.”

“How could I even begin to simmer down when you beg like that?”

He slowly, inch by slow inch, began to push inside her. She grimaced from the pain, feeling her pussy stretch for him.

“Shh, shh, you’re doing amazing,” he whispered in her ear.

The concern and care laced in his voice had Scarlett relax enough to allow him to push in all the way. She felt so full, and the feeling of his soft balls against her plump ass added to the sexual bliss she was in. She couldn’t believe this was it. She had her mate’s cock inside her pussy. She was no longer a virgin.

As he began to thrust into her in a soft yet deep rhythm, everything from her fingertips to her ears to her toes began to tingle with a heavenly sensation. She wrapped her arms around his wide neck and held on tight as he rode her gently.

“Are you okay, darlin’?” he asked breathlessly between thrusts.

“Oh, Leo. It’s more than I could ever dream of,” she said quietly as she looked into his darkened gaze. She could already feel small waves of her juices fall from her newly-broken pussy, making a damp spot under her ass.

“Oh, *baby*, I love when you say my name like that.” His face was twisted in a mix of restraint and pleasure. The louder he moaned for her, the louder he called her name, the more she’d arch into him, her cunt cream soaking the pubic hair at the base of his long, pulsing cock.

Suddenly, her head whipped toward the door when she heard it creak open. The twins and the triplets stood there, shirtless, with all

five of their monster cocks jutting out while they tugged, never taking their eyes off of Leo fucking her.

“Wait,” she began to protest when she realized they were being watched.

“No, baby girl. It’s okay. They want to play with their little mate, too.” He gave her a long, hard thrust that had her screaming out as her torso arched up again.

Before her body could fall back to the bed, Leo had her flipped over in an instant using one arm. Her cheek lay flat on the sheet, and he gently raised her ass then rubbed it admiringly.

“Look at this gorgeous ass. Mmm.”

He bent down and gave her right cheek a soft bite then plunged himself back into her, drawing out a moan from them both. Her cunt was so dripping wet he had little trouble going balls-deep this time. He grunted as he grasped her hips and began to move her up and down his hard cock. The sounds of wet flesh and his balls slapping her swollen clit echoed around the bedroom walls.

Before she realized it, Devlin had come to stand by the head of the bed as he started removing his clothes. “Let me take you to heaven, sweet darlin’,” he said. “But first, I want to feel that pretty mouth around my throbbing cock.”

“I. Don’t. Know. How.” She managed to communicate as best as she could as she panted for air while Leo fucked her from behind.

“I didn’t ask if you knew how,” Devlin replied, now completely naked. “I’m *telling* you that’s what you’re about to do.” He walked closer to her and placed the large, smooth head of his cock against her lips, waiting as she opened her mouth obediently. “Now, just wrap your lips around it. That’s it, darlin’. Now, suck it while you run your tongue along the length. Mmm, fuck yeah, Scarlett. Holy shit!”

The tangy taste of his cock and pre-cum had her moaning with a more intense pleasure. Devlin thrust his huge cock into her virgin mouth while Leo pounded his into her no-longer-virgin cunt.

“Can I play with you, too, baby?” Denzel purred as he crawled to them across the giant bed.

Scarlett watched with wide eyes as Denzel lay on his back then slid underneath her while Leo was still fucking her pussy, the squishing sound of her juices serving as the only soundtrack to their lovemaking. Denzel positioned his head directly under her swaying breasts then leaned up and gently clamped down on a nipple with his smooth teeth.

“Oh, fuck!” she screamed out as his tongue began to strum her hard, sensitive nub like a violin. He took turns alternating his hot, pussy-dripping titty kisses from one breast to the other. Devlin immediately forced her head back to his dick, roughly shoving his cock back into her mouth and almost making her gag.

“Make”—loud grunt—“her”—moan—“come with me,” Leo managed to get out between his thrusts.

Scarlett could hardly believe her eyes as Sonny and Rhett came to kneel on either side of her hips then used their fingers to torture her puffy clit. She moaned and whimpered as her body tried to comprehend the plethora of sensations she was feeling.

Devlin suddenly pulled away. “I have a better idea of where I want to come,” he said as he moved out of her sight. Where was he going?

Smack!

The stinging on her ass had her yelping loudly. She looked back over her shoulder to see Devlin spanking her with his bare hand as he stood next to Leo fucking her. Another slap, then another. She felt her body heat rise, and she began to grind her clit against Sonny’s and Rhett’s hands then pushed back onto Leo’s large cock.

“Oh! Oh! I’m *coming!*” Her announcement had Sonny squeezing her clit harder while Rhett gently tugged on her outer lips, each jerking off as they did so. Leo sped up his thrusts as his own moans got louder, Denzel began to pull on her nipples with his teeth as he sucked hard, and Devlin spanked her ass harder.

“Oh, oh, *yes!*” she screamed out as the orgasm hit her like a freight train. She shook her head, trying to end the ongoing and now almost painful climax that just wouldn’t recede. It was like she wanted more. But after all that, how could she?

Devlin and the triplets moved back to watch while Leo’s cock pulsed eagerly inside her as he came, a long, drawn-out moan letting her know he was in bliss. Then she felt Leo shift from behind her while another body replaced him. She knew it was Devlin by the way he eagerly dug his fingers into the flesh of her hips then plunged his unbelievably girthy cock into her still-throbbing newbie pussy.

“You think you have a lot of power, don’t you? Making all these men go insane with the sight of those red lips, this amazing body”—he slapped her hard on her right ass cheek—“or the”—he inhaled deeply—“sweet, musky scent of that pussy.” He kissed her tenderly on the neck as he held still inside her, but she could feel the pulsing of his veiny cock. “Well, guess what, darlin’?”

Scarlett shrieked as he roughly and quickly pushed her facedown hard on the bed, her cheek resting against it, allowing her to still see the other men jerk their own cocks at the sight of her being dominated. He held her head still with his giant hand.

“I’m a Dom, and now, I’m the one in control of this pussy.”

Using his knees, he spread her wider then spanked her wet folds. “This is my pussy, understand?”

“Yes, Devlin.” His dominance was causing her juices to run down her leg. She never thought she’d get so damn turned on by being used for a Dom’s pleasure.

Keeping his one hand pressed on the side of her head, he used the other to grasp her hips as he thrust into her hard and rough.

Smack! Another spank.

“Tell me who you belong to, Scarlett.” Devlin panted between the quick thrusts.

“Y–You,” she said between big gasps of air.

Smack! This one much harder.

"I'm yours, Devlin. My fresh pussy is all yours." She began to scream out as another orgasm took over her reality.

Before she could come down from her orgasmic high, she felt a warm hand behind her neck. She could tell it was Levi by the way he touched her. He ran his hand down her back in a slow motion as he trailed his nose along the same path, inhaling her scent.

"Mine." She heard him growl in an intimidating tone, but his touch was so gentle and caring.

Suddenly, Levi was in front of her. He lifted her upper body, her pussy still clinging to Devlin's cock, and lay between her thighs before lowering her back down quickly to straddle him. She gasped at the sudden movement, but she felt her face soften when she was met with his large, boyish smile.

"Forgot to mention we move much faster than human men." He leaned up and kissed her gently then whispered in her ear, "I want to see your face when you come all around my cock."

A low moan escaped her lips at the sound of his words.

His eyes fell to her heaving breasts, and he immediately reached out and squeezed the large globes of soft flesh together. "Damn, baby," he mumbled as his hands trailed down her waist then gave her curvy hips a brief but tight squeeze. "Look at you. You're like a goddess."

Scarlett smiled at his compliment then reached down to squeeze her own tits. She heard every man in the room shift and moan when she began to fondle both her tits in her hands.

She whimpered when she felt Devlin remove his hard dick from her pussy. She tensed when she felt his cock brush against her asshole.

"Wait, I'm scared," she protested. She yelped when he smacked her ass hard.

"It's mine. And if you were so scared, the scent of your pussy wouldn't have intensified when I brushed against your asshole."

Devlin grunted as he pressed against the tight ring of muscle. “Do you want me and Levi to fuck you at the same time?”

She gasped at his words. Two men inside her at once? She’d never even considered the notion, but before she knew what she was doing, her head was nodding frantically in affirmation.

She watched Rhett open the drawer of the nightstand and pull out a bottle of a clear jelly substance. He handed it to Devlin with a mischievous smile. She flinched as cold wetness covered her asshole. She held her breath as she felt Devlin inch his cock into her ass. A bite of pain hit her, but he was being surprisingly gentle. Within seconds, the pain turned to ecstasy, and she soon found herself meeting his slow thrusts as he fucked her ass in front of his five brothers.

“Fuck, you’re the tightest, most beautiful thing I’ve ever fucked.” Devlin began to pant loudly. “*Mine*,” he growled as his dick throbbed in her tight channel.

She looked down at Levi as he placed several pillows below his ass to raise his cock closer to her cunt. He then reached for the beige Stetson he had placed on the nightstand next to Denzel’s and placed it on her head.

“There,” he said with a smile. “Now, you can really ride this cock like a cowgirl should.”

She giggled as she allowed him to raise her hips up then impaled her with his giant, long cock, already leaking with pre-cum.

“Oh, Levi!” she called out as she lowered herself completely atop him.

“Now what?” She panted as she reveled in the amazing feeling of his mushroomed head hitting her G-spot perfectly while Devlin made small thrusts inside her ass. She felt their cocks rub against each other through the thin membrane that separated her ass from her cunt.

“Now, you just use us as your own personal sex toys,” Levi replied as he bit his bottom lip. “Do whatever makes you feel good, baby doll.”

She knew all the other men had come in closer to the bed for a better look, but she suddenly felt too confident to care. She whipped her head back, one hand on the cowboy hat to keep it in place and one hand on Levi's chiseled chest. She began to grind her hips back and forth, forcing his huge cock to caress every inch of her weeping pussy channel until it socked her sweet spot with an electric jolt of sexual pleasure. But each time she retreated, she forced Devlin's cock to plunge into her ass harder, making his moans erratic.

"Ride that dick, sugar. Let me see those titties bounce as you ride it." Levi was panting heavily, and Scarlett could feel his body tense up. "Yeah, baby. Ride it till you scream."

A loud shriek of intense pleasure escaped her just as Devlin began to spank her ass again.

"Oh, cowgirl. Look at those tits. Come on, sugar. Ride me harder." Levi clenched onto her hips and began to move her back and forth rapidly, his cock hitting that sweet spot harder each time.

"I-I'm coming again, cowboys."

"Yeah, baby, I want you to cream all over that dick." Sonny's voice took her by surprise, but she realized he, Rhett, and Denzel were now standing right next to her.

Scarlett leaned back, holding on to Devlin's shins as she continued to ride them both. "Oh, Levi! Devlin!" she screamed at the same time they yelled, "Fucking amazing!" as they both came.

She felt hot, thick streams of cum spray across her tits and ass as Sonny, Denzel, and Rhett all ejaculated on her while Devlin and Levi came inside her.

But before she could enjoy the post-orgasmic bliss of losing her virginity, a bright light flashed before her eyes and then a vision. She scrambled off of Levi and Devlin then screamed when the vision wouldn't disappear.

Chapter 11

Clenching the covers tight, she tried to shake the thought away, but it still remained.

“Scarlett, what’s wrong?”

“Baby, did we hurt you?”

The men were throwing concerned questions after concerned questions at her, but all she saw was that vision. She saw herself on top of the cliff, bending down to look for something. Suddenly, the person behind her pushed her hard. She remembered grabbing on to his pant leg as her legs dangled from the edge. She remembered screaming for him to help her, remembered her attempt to plead for her life as she squeezed her eyes shut, her phobia of heights paralyzing her. Then a big kick to the face before she fell.

All of a sudden, the vision was gone. She looked around to see all the men around her with shock and deep concern on their faces.

“Jesus, Scarlett.” Leo placed the back of his hand across her forehead. “You’ve broken out in a cold sweat. Let’s get you dressed, and we’ll head over to my clinic to—”

“I saw it,” she cut him off. “I saw someone push me.”

She began to sob as she buried her head in her hands. She immediately felt all the men sit on the bed around her, comforting her with tender touches. She shook her head frantically in disbelief that someone would want her dead. She didn’t remember much, but she knew in her heart she wasn’t the kind of woman who deserved such a thing.

“So you finally saw it, too?” asked Denzel, a trace of hope in his voice.

She didn’t look up from her hands but just nodded. “Why would someone do such a thing to me?” She felt several arms embrace her as the men whispered comforting words in her ear. “I can’t leave,” she finally said, lifting her head to look at the six naked men around her.

She watched as they all sighed in relief, and Leo held her close to his chest. Each twin took one of her hands, Rhett and Sonny leaned down on the bed to embrace a leg, and Levi settled between her legs to lay his head on her lap.

“We’re all so sorry about what happened to you, Scarlett,” Leo said quietly in her ear as she continued to sob. “We’d all happily die in an effort to make sure no one ever hurts you again.”

That comment had her immediately sitting up straight as she pulled from Leo. She looked around at all the men, their eyes tender as she studied their faces. “You’d really do that for me?”

Devlin pulled her hand to his lips, closed his eyes, and gave it a kiss before rubbing it on his cheek. He opened his eyes and looked straight into hers. “You’re our mate, Scarlett. I think I can speak for us all when I say we’ve loved you since we first laid eyes on you.”

All the men nodded their agreement.

“And Byron?” she asked, almost afraid of what their answer might be.

“Byron loves you, too, baby,” said Leo as he grabbed her chin to face him. “In fact, I caught him ordering a state-of-the-art alarm system and security gates tonight before his shift when I had told him about the vision I saw of you in danger.”

Scarlett felt her eyes widen in shock and excitement. “Really? And you sure it was on account of me? You’re not just saying that?”

All the men chuckled softly at her obvious enthusiastic rambling. She couldn’t mask the fact that knowing she’d gained any attention from the mystery man made her as giddy as a schoolgirl.

“Yes, darlin’, he really did,” Leo replied with a warm smile. “Byron has a few issues he needs to get through, but please believe me when I say it has nothing to do with you.”

“What is it, then, if it’s not me?” She watched as all the men gave each other knowing glances. Scarlett was beginning to realize secrets were not something she did well with. “Please tell me. I”—she paused and sighed—“I need to know.” She knew she sounded desperate, but she had to understand why Byron was pulling away from her. She assumed a relationship was supposed to be easy between soul mates, but this was anything but.

Leo looked hesitant but answered anyway. “Scarlett, when a bull-shifter conceives children with their mate, whether the mother is shifter or human, the babies will always be born shifters.” He shrugged slightly. “It’s not the easiest life, and I just think he’s fearful of having his children go through the life he’s had to go through.”

Scarlett suddenly felt a wave of compassion for Byron. Who knew underneath that mysterious exterior was a man consumed with concern over his unborn children?

She looked down at her twiddling thumbs. “But you’re sure he loves me?”

“I know I do, darlin’.” All their heads snapped to the doorway, and she was shocked to see Byron standing there. He brought the carton of orange juice to his lips and drank before walking away to go back to his calving operations outside.

She smiled widely, thrilled at his admission, but she couldn’t fight the disappointment she felt at Byron not being excited to father her children. “So there’s nothing we can do to have normal babies?” she asked sadly.

“Not unless a shifter is mated to the strawberry girl,” said Rhett as he began to massage her aching feet.

“The what?” she asked, confused.

“The strawberry girl is the only one who can break the shifter cycle in the lineage,” Rhett continued. “Some shifters believe she’s

only a myth, but legend has it that a single woman is born every generation who has the ability to break the shifter cycle of the bloodline she is mated with. But the world is a big place, and since she is such a valuable commodity, her identity is always kept secret by her mates so that jealous shifters won't try to abduct her. Last I heard of an American strawberry girl was back in the early twenties, and she'd been mated with four brothers up in Harlem."

"But why is she called the strawberry girl?"

"The woman is born with a crescent moon-shaped strawberry mark somewhere on her body," explained Sonny.

Scarlett lowered her head, suddenly very insecure at the thought of the men being disappointed with fate's choice. Denzel must have sensed it because he immediately came to wrap his arms around her and held her close for comfort.

"None of that matters, Scarlett," he whispered in her ear. "Having you is more than we could ever dream. What we feel for you is real."

He gently pulled her face to his and kissed her deep as if trying to express his words through his sweet taste. Just as she began to feel her clit tingle again at the sensation, Denzel suddenly pulled away with a gasp.

Scarlett's brows burrowed. "What is it?"

He looked dumbfounded, hand covering his mouth as he slowly shook his head.

"Speak up, boy," Devlin demanded. "What's gotten into you?"

"More like what's gotten into her." Denzel gently held Scarlett's face in one hand. "Stick out your tongue, baby."

Scarlett was as confused as the other men looked but did as he said.

All the men's jaws dropped.

Sonny was the first to snap out of it. "She's the one!" he exclaimed as he jumped to his feet. She could already see his eyes had grown slightly misty, and his grin spread from ear to ear. "Our mate is the strawberry girl. Holy shit!" He ran for the door. "Byron! Byron,

come quick!” she heard him call out as he closed the front door behind him.

Without a word, Scarlett wrapped herself in the flat sheet of the bed, ran to the mirror on the other side of the room, and opened her mouth. She felt like her heart was beating a million times a minute as hope filled her entire being. All the men gathered around her as they stared at her tongue in the mirror.

“No fucking way,” Levi whispered.

There on her tongue was a crimson-red, crescent moon-shaped mark. She touched the small, protruding shape with her finger. “How did I not notice this before?”

“It wasn’t there before,” Leo replied, his eyes fixed on the mark until she closed her mouth again.

“The strawberry girl.” Levi’s whispered words made it clear. She was the chosen one, the one who could give them human children. The one that could break down Byron’s walls...

Scarlett twirled to face the five men. “Tell me what’s going on. What’s happening to my body?”

“The strawberry girl’s symbol doesn’t appear until after she’s been marked by all her mates,” Denzel explained. “That must have also spurred the vision.”

“What do you mean, marked me?”

His face immediately flushed bright red as he broke eye contact with her. “You know, when we all *came* on you.”

He was right. First there was Byron, then she’d made love to Leo, Levi, and Devlin before Rhett, Sonny, and Denzel had all sprayed their cum on her. It was then that the vision had come back to her.

Rhett held her hand tight. “So you’re staying for sure? To be our mate forever?”

She smiled at the fear she saw on his face. Although they were mates, she still felt a little satisfaction at seeing his usually overgrown ego shrink a bit on account of her. “Of course I will.”

Each man kissed her one by one until she felt her head go dizzy with lust.

“I saw the same vision Leo described when I came,” said Levi, and the twins and other two triplets all said they’d experienced the same thing. “So either we transferred the memories we saw back to you, or your memories trickle back little by little when you’re marked by us all. I’m not sure yet, but it’s obvious that when one of us is aroused and touches you, we see it.”

Just then, Sonny and Byron entered the room. The sight of them made her smile, but it slowly faded away when she saw Byron was still staring at her with a frown. But before she could ask what was still bothering him, he suddenly ran over, lifted her in his arms, and buried his head in her neck as he held her tight.

“My angel,” he whispered in her ear as he squeezed her. “I saw what happened when I touched you, and it was just like Leo had said.” He placed her sheet-draped body back down and held her face gently in his hands. “I’m not very good at this whole communication thing.” Scarlett lifted a brow at him at that, and he sighed in response. “Okay, so I suck at it, and it may take time for me to change.” Then for the first time since she’d met him, he smiled at her. “But I do know I love you, and I know you’re the greatest blessing any of us could have ever hoped for.”

She felt the tears streaming down her face, and she began to laugh as she shook her head back and forth. “Damn it, this is crazy. But”—she looked around the room at her seven longhorns—“I love you all, too.”

The men all jumped up and gathered around her to embrace her, whispering sweet nothings as they each took turns showing their affections toward her.

“Come on,” said Sonny as he grabbed her hand and pulled her out the bedroom. “Let’s all have some Shiners, and I’ll heat up the leftover chili from yesterday.”

They all joked and laughed as they gathered in the living room, happy and content with their new lives as mates. They all stood in the kitchen and discussed plans to bring her back into town the next morning to put together the pieces of where she'd come from, but of course, they had all insisted on at least three of them being with her at all times to ensure her safety.

"Oh, shit!" She giggled. "I forgot my panties in the front yard. I'll be right back."

She heard all the men's inner beasts growl deeply as she sauntered to the front door.

"Damn, baby, you're so fucking sexy," Rhett called out then let out a loud whistle. She smiled and shook her head as all the men laughed at his catcalling.

As she stepped out into the Texas summer air, she realized she'd never been so content in her life. She chuckled when she saw her white cotton panties lying in the grass. But as she bent down to get them, she noticed a small note was pinned to them.

Confused, she removed the note and unfolded it.

My work with you isn't over, bitch.

Her heart sank as she looked around the ranch, but there was no one in sight. She heard the Hank Williams music grow louder as the front door opened behind her.

"Come on, darlin'. Come celebrate with us," Sonny called out cheerfully. "I've thought of a few ways to play with that new tongue of yours, and I'm expecting a few table dances from you by the end of the night, as well."

Scarlett decided she'd die before she'd let anyone ruin her first night with her mates, even if it was her attempted murderer. Taking a deep breath, she wiped the concern from her features and turned to smile at her happy new mate, now wearing his cowboy hat again.

“Oh, cowboy,” she said as she sauntered over to him. She took off his cowboy hat and put it on her head with a wink. “I’ve got moves you’ve never seen.”

End of Book 1: Loving Scarlett

**To be continued in
Book 2: Leo’s Crown**



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