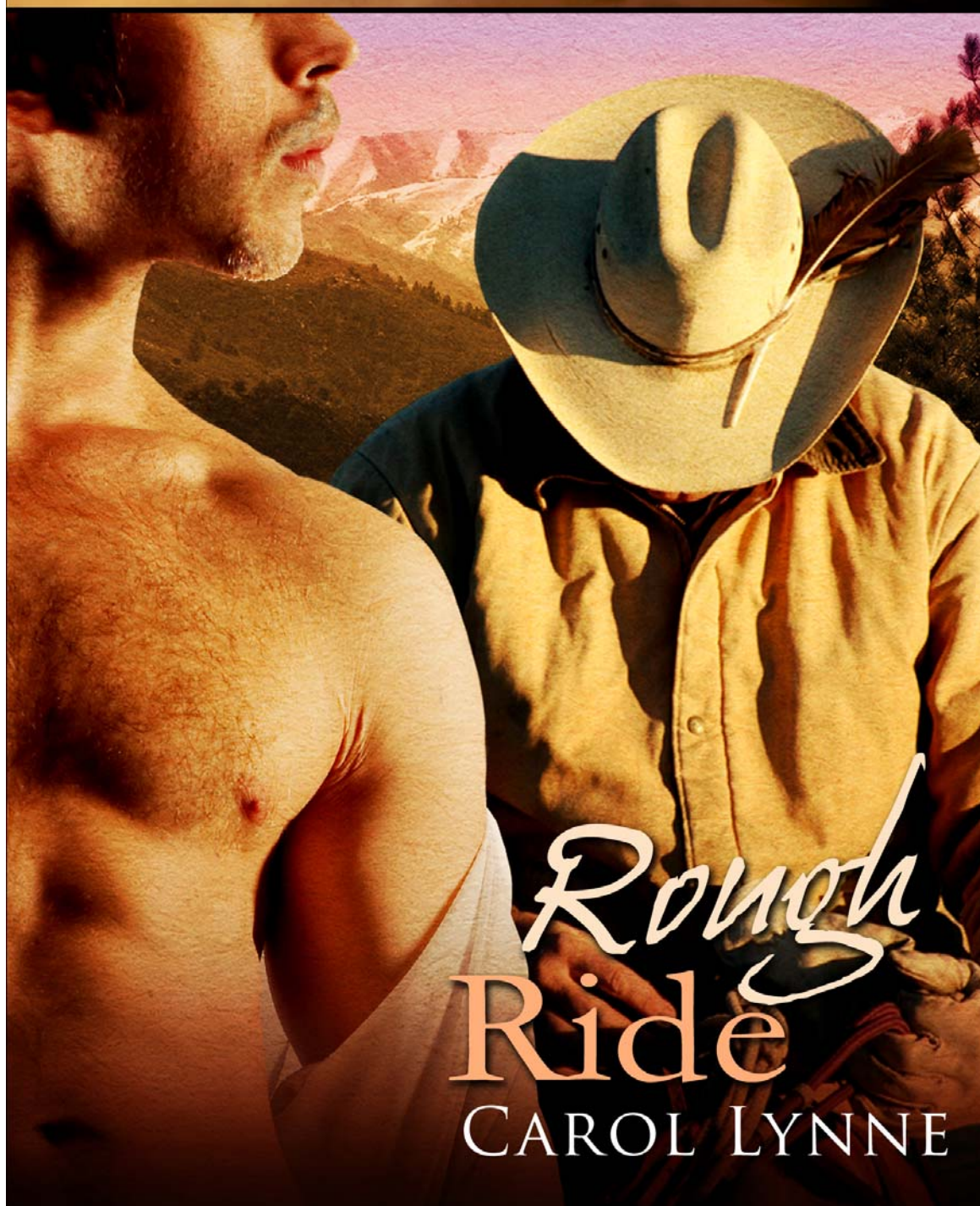




CATTLE VALLEY



Rough Ride CAROL LYNNE

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Cattle Valley: Rough Ride

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

Cattle Valley

ROUGH RIDE

Carol Lynne

Dedication

For my dearest friends Richie and Chad, thank you for all of your help. I'd also like to thank Mark and Scott from the real Club Maverick in Tulsa, Oklahoma for letting me use your wonderful club in my book.

Chapter One

Cradling his sore jaw, Wyn picked up the phone and called his best friend, Nate.

"Hello?"

"Hi, it's Wyn. I hope I didn't catch you at a bad time."

"Nope, just getting ready for bed. How're you doing?"

"Not good. Dad's funeral was tough." Wyn knew if Nate was getting ready for bed, it was indeed a bad time to call. Still, he needed help. "I got jumped when I went into town for supper."

"Jumped? By who? I thought you said Pamona was a sleepy little town in the middle of nowhere?"

"It is, but there's a group of guys that don't think much of the town queer coming home."

"Damn."

"Yeah. Anyway, I was wondering if I could get you to come down until I can get things wrapped up around here. I hate to sound like a wuss, but I'm no match for a group of rednecks."

"I'll come if Ezra won't."

"Ezra? Who said anything about him?" Wyn had tried his best to not think about that man, or the tender kiss they'd shared on Christmas Eve.

"Look, Wyn, you gotta call him. Not only is he the right man to help you get the ranch in order, but he's been walking around like a bear with a sore paw since you left. Besides, do you know anyone more intimidating than him? He'll keep the rednecks at bay."

"He won't come. I imagine he's still mad about that little prank you pulled with the cookie bouquet."

"Naw, I finally got that all worked out. Cost me a couple bottles of single malt scotch, but it was worth it to get the dragon off my back."

"Ezra giving you a hard time was he?"

"No, Ryan. He said it was my mess to clean up and nagged for days on the subject."

Wyn chuckled. God he missed Nate. No matter what, Nate could always make him laugh. "So you really think I should call Ezra?"

"Yeah."

"You don't think he'll see it as me chasing him?" That was the whole reason he hadn't called Ezra after Christmas Eve. The kiss had been phenomenal, but as soon as they parted, Ezra gave him a funny look and walked out of the hall. He'd waited for several weeks for a phone call or visit from the big man, but nothing.

"Just do it, Wyn. You and I both know he's the best person for the job. If you two can't get your shit together, give me a call back."

"Thanks."

"Don't mention it. Ever. Especially to Ryan," Nate added.

"My lips are sealed."

Wyn hung up and looked at the clock. Deciding it was too late to call Ezra, he turned out the lights and headed upstairs.

* * * *

The ringing phone woke Ezra from a sound sleep. With a growl, he reached over and fumbled with the cordless handset. "Hello," he grunted.

"Ezra?"

Ezra sat straight up, wide awake. "Wyn? Is that you?"

"Yes. Sorry to call so early. I forgot about the two hour time difference."

"No matter, I'm due up anyway. Where are you?"

"I'm in Oklahoma, north of Tulsa at my father's ranch. Oh crap, Ezra, I hate to ask, but I need you...uh, your help."

"Huh?" Ezra scratched his bushy beard.

There was a moment of silence on the other end of the phone. "My dad died. I came down to make burial arrangements and see about the ranch. But things keep going wrong, and there's a group of guys in town that keep threatening me. I'm sorry, Ezra. I know you have your hands full with the EZ Does It, but I don't know who else to call for help."

Ezra felt his blood begin to heat. "What's going on with the guys from town?"

He heard Wyn breathing heavy like he was getting worked up again. "I grew up here. They didn't like me then and they sure as hell don't like me now."

"Because you're gay?"

"That's part of it, but I never fit in here. It's the reason I left home as soon as I was old enough."

"Have they hurt you?" Ezra asked around the lump in his throat. If there was one thing he couldn't tolerate, it was big folks pickin' on littler folks. It was worse this time, because it was Wyn these town fellas were harassing.

"Nothing permanent. I know we haven't exactly been friends, but I really would feel safer if you could come down and help me get the ranch ready to sell."

Nothing permanent? "I'll be down as soon as I can get a flight."

"Thanks. Hopefully it'll only take a week or so. Will that put you into a real bind with your place?"

"No. I've got people to look after the ranch. Can you pick me up at the airport, or should I rent something?"

"No, no, I'll be there. Just let me know what time."

"I will. Hang on and I'll find a piece of paper to write your number down." Ezra swung back the covers and climbed out of bed. Digging through his top dresser drawer, he came back with paper and a pen. "Okay," he said.

Wyn rattled off his cell and the ranch numbers.

"Got 'em. Let me get showered and make a few calls. I'll let you know when I have a time."

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate this," Wyn said.

The tone of the man's voice almost broke his heart. Usually Wyn seemed so confident, but just now, he sounded like a lost little boy. Right or wrong, Ezra couldn't wait to wrap him in a protective embrace. Just let one of those fuckers try to touch his Wyn with him around. It had been years since he'd had a good fight.

"I'm glad you called," he said. Ezra wanted to say more, but his own pride stopped him. "I'll let you know as soon as I find a flight."

He hung up the phone and headed towards the shower. As he passed the mirror, he caught his reflection. Stopping, he turned and scrubbed at his beard. Maybe he should shave? The thought shocked him. He hadn't even considered shaving in nearly twenty years.

In the past, a trim a couple of times a year was as close as he got. Hell, he didn't even remember what his face looked like under all the hair.

Bending over, he dug in under the sink for the first aid box. Finding the little pair of scissors, he started cutting. With every snip, a part of his past guilt faded. Maybe this was just what he'd needed.

* * * *

Wyn's muscles hurt so bad, he thought he might cry. He was too damn old to be mending fences by himself. He would've gladly waited for Ezra if it weren't for the gaping hole between his dad's land and Frank Johnson's. Frank was known for being a grade A asshole, and Wyn didn't have the energy to fight with him.

Throwing the post-hole digger down, Wyn set the new wooden pole in the hole. Kneeling in the red Oklahoma dirt, Wyn began backfilling the hole, tamping it down with a pipe he'd found in the back of the truck. He threw in a couple of scoops of gravel for good measure, before continuing with the backfill.

As the dust kicked up he began to cough. He closed his eyes and tried to clear his lungs. He couldn't help but imagine the cool interior of his store back in Cattle Valley. He wondered if Gavin was getting along okay managing the store. He'd made a point to call at least once a day in case there were any problems, but you never knew for sure. Gavin was a good guy and an even better employee, but Wyn was used to overseeing everything that went on.

He looked around him—nothing but cattle and work. He'd been right to get out when he'd turned eighteen. His dad hadn't been happy, but they both knew his sexuality would never allow him to fit in if he'd stayed.

Once the hole was filled, Wyn stood and tested it, pushing against it with all his weight. When it didn't move more than an inch, he deemed it good enough. He went to his dad's truck bed and picked up the spool of barbed wire. He wasn't a weak man by any means, but that spool nearly toppled him several times.

He was lucky the broken post was close enough to a brace that he didn't need to build a new one. Starting with the bottom strand, Wyn nailed the wire to the brace with two staples, taking the time to wind it around the bracing post.

Picking up the pipe he'd used on the hole, he stuck it through the centre of the spool and rolled out the needed length of wire. He was getting the wire stretcher out of the truck when his cell phone rang.

Grateful for the break, he dug his phone out of his pocket. "Hello."

"Hi, it's Ezra."

Wyn rolled his eyes. Like anyone else on the planet had Ezra's unique gravely voice. "Hi. You caught me fixing a fence."

"You're fixin' fence?" Ezra sounded shocked.

"Yes. I grew up here. I do remember a few things from my youth."

"Sorry, just surprised me, is all. I'm arriving on the seven o'clock flight. Can you pick me up?"

Wyn took out a handkerchief and wiped his brow. "Sure. I'll even take you to dinner."

"I'd appreciate it. Well I got to get moving so I'll see ya later."

"I'll be there." Wyn hung up and tossed the phone through the open window to the truck's bench seat.

Grabbing the stretcher, he went back to work. He finished up the bottom and top wires and was stretching the middle one, when all hell broke loose. Wyn still wasn't sure what happened. One second he was bracing the stretcher with his leg to nail in the final two staples and the next thing he knew, he felt the wire break, snapping back to catch him in the shoulder, face and neck.

Wyn was knocked to the ground by the impact, his hand immediately going to his face. His leather-gloved hand came back with a good amount of blood. "Shit!" he yelled at the top of his lungs.

He pulled the handkerchief back out of his pocket and held it to his face, noticing his shirt was already getting soaked through with blood.

Managing to get to the truck was no easy task as he started to feel a little wobbly on his feet. "Don't pass out now, old man," he mumbled.

He started the truck and pulled out onto the old dirt farm road that led to the gravelled driveway. His vision began fading as he started towards town. Knowing he could pass out at any minute, he made a quick decision to ask his dad's neighbour for help.

Shivering, Wyn pulled in the long gravel drive and laid on the horn. He saw a figure running towards him from the area of the barn and slammed on the brake, putting the truck into neutral.

As the figure neared, Wyn knew it wasn't the Frank Johnson he remembered.

"What happened?" the guy yelled from ten yards away.

"Stringing fence," Wyn managed to get out before his world went black.

Chapter Two

By the time Ezra walked into the terminal, his legs were numb. Damn cramped seating. They definitely weren't designed for a six-foot-eleven-inch man.

After picking up his bag from the claim area, he made his way to the front of the airport. He saw no sign of Wyn. His hand went to his face to scratch at his beard. He was momentarily surprised when his fingers encountered freshly shaven skin. Chuckling to himself, he walked towards the information desk.

"Excuse me, Ma'am?"

The information clerk smiled. "May I help you?"

"Someone was supposed to meet me here, but I don't see hide nor hair of him. I was wondering if you could page Palmer Wynfield for me?"

"Sure," she said and did what he asked.

He looked around, nothing. A tap to his arm caught Ezra's attention.

"Are you Ezra James?" the tall cowboy asked. The guy was about six-foot-three with dark brown hair and a goatee. Ezra knew he'd never seen him before.

"That's me," Ezra replied.

"Sorry, you don't look like the description Palmer gave me. Well, except the size, he was spot on with that."

Ezra ran his hand over his face. "Yeah, well, I thought I'd surprise Wyn. Where is he?"

The cowboy looked uncomfortable for a moment. "I'm sorry to be the one to tell you this, but Palmer's had an accident."

Ezra's hand immediately clenched into fists. "Who hurt him? I'll kill 'em."

The man beside him held up his hands. "No, he was fixing a fence and the barbed wire snapped back on him. He's in the truck. They've got him pretty drugged up." The cowboy thrust out his hand. "I'm Richard.. My grandpa owns the farm next door."

"Which way to your truck?" It wasn't that he didn't appreciate Richard coming to get him, but he needed to see that Wyn was okay. He'd seen quite a few cowboys have run-ins with barbed wire and it was never good.

Richard pointed the way. "The doctor said he'd be fine. He's got a mess of stitches though. The wire caught him in the shoulder, neck and face. He seems to be most upset about the cuts to his face."

As they walked across the parking lot, Richard continued to fill him in. "He lost a good bit of blood, but the doc said he got to the emergency room in plenty of time. He was smart enough to come to grandpa's house before he passed out."

They reached a beat-up shit brown truck and Ezra swung his bag in the back. Richard unlocked the passenger door and gave Ezra an apologetic look. "I figured he'd be asleep and I didn't want anyone messing with him."

Ezra nodded his head. "I appreciate it."

Opening the door, Ezra felt his throat constrict at the sight Wyn made. His shirt had been cut up the middle, dried blood made the otherwise soft cotton stiff. White gauze bandages seemed to cover the much smaller man from armpit to temple.

Taking a deep breath, Ezra gently picked Wyn up and cradled him in his arms. He sat in the seat and held Wyn on his lap. He could tell Richard wanted to say something about the lack of seat belt, but Ezra gave him a look, daring him to comment.

With a shrug, the cowboy shut the door and went around to the driver's side. "It's about an hour's drive once we get outside of the city."

Ezra nodded but said nothing. Wyn was truly out of it. Ezra longed to kiss him, but wasn't sure how the man driving the truck would react to such a thing. He wasn't sure why he cared, except he knew Wyn would.

Richard must have seen his dilemma. "Are you Palmer's partner?"

"Not yet," Ezra replied. He narrowed his eyes at Richard. "You got a problem with that?"

Richard chuckled. "No, but I'm probably the only one in town. I didn't grow up in Pamona. I came down to help grandpa tag and castrate the spring calves."

With that information in mind, Ezra gave into temptation and kissed Wyn's forehead. "Wyn tells me he was jumped in town. You know anything about it?"

Richard nodded. "I heard a few guys laughing about it when I went into Jenny's for breakfast."

"You know the names of the guys who did it?" Despite Wyn's present condition, Ezra couldn't help but get turned on by the small ass nestled against his cock.

"Not sure, really. I'd guess Henry Fletcher was behind it though. Palmer should be able to tell you when he wakes up."

Ezra stored the name for future reference. Richard continued to make small talk the rest of the drive. Ezra was grateful the man didn't always expect him to talk back. A thought occurred to him. "So, can I ask why you don't have a problem with Wyn's lifestyle?"

He watched as Richard's hands gripped the steering wheel. "I've been buried in the closet for several years now. When I was at OSU, it was different, but I had to drop out my junior year and help my dad with his ranch. People around here don't understand, and I'm not as brave as Palmer."

Ezra studied Richard for a few seconds. Yeah, he knew all about being in the closet. He'd done it for the first thirty years of his life. "You ever hear of a place called Cattle Valley?"

"No, can't say as I have."

Ezra grinned. It was always the same. Cattle Valley seemed to be a secret utopia, known only to a few. "It's in Wyoming. I've got a ranch there and Wyn owns a clothing store. You should look into it."

Richard nodded. "They pretty cool with your sexuality?"

Ezra chuckled. "Well, let's see. The sheriff is involved in a triad, and the mayor is off on vacation in Hawaii trying to get laid by every surfer he can find."

"Damn."

"Like I said, look into it. It's a nice community where you can be yourself."

As they turned onto a dirt and gravel road, Wyn started to stir. "Sorry," Richard said. "They haven't come through with the graters yet. The roads are pretty rutted from the spring rains."

Ezra watched as Wyn blinked several times before opening his eyes. For a moment, he felt the small man stiffen in his arms. "It's okay, settle down," Ezra soothed.

"Ezra?" Wyn placed a hand on Ezra's face. "You're stunning."

He felt his face heat at the compliment. It was much the same reaction he'd gotten from his ranch hands before he left. He'd almost forgotten he'd been quite the stud in his younger days. Once Nancy...Ezra cut the thought off there. No, this was about moving on. Twenty years of carrying the guilt over Nancy's death was long enough.

"I'm here now, Wyn. Gonna take care of you."

Wyn's hand moved from Ezra's face to the bandages covering his own.

He could see the worry in Wyn's eyes. Ezra shook his head. "You're still a damn fine looking man. The scar will add a bit of roughness to that pretty face. You may have to fight the men off when you get back home."

Wyn yawned as they pulled into a drive. "Is this your dad's place?" Ezra asked.

Looking out the window, Wyn nodded. "It's not fancy like yours."

"My house is just window dressing. Buyers tend to look at stuff like that. It's what's in the barns and behind the fences that count."

As the truck came to a stop, Ezra nodded to Richard. "I sure appreciate everything you've done. Stop by again and I'll treat you to dinner and a beer."

Richard smiled. "I'll take you up on that. Let me get your bag."

Carrying Wyn up the porch steps, Ezra moved to the side so Richard could open the door.

"It's locked," Wyn mumbled. "Key's were in the truck."

Richard dug into his pocket and produced the key ring. "I took them out before driving you to the hospital. You locked the door? No one around here does that."

"Too many things have been happening around here. Better safe than sorry."

Richard unlocked the door and placed Ezra's bag inside. He handed a white pharmacy sack to Ezra. "He's due for another pill in about two hours. I'm going to get back before grandpa has a fit."

"Can't have that," Wyn said. "Thanks, Richard."

"No problem." With one last wave, the tall cowboy got into his truck and drove off.

Ezra carried Wyn to the couch. "Do you need anything? Something to eat or some water?"

Wyn shook his head. "I just need to get out of this shirt."

Ezra studied the bloody shirt. "Let me get a pan of warm water and rinse the rest of the blood off." He helped Wyn out of his shirt, surprised to see the amount of lean muscle on the hairless chest hidden underneath.

His cock responded immediately. Embarrassed, Ezra walked towards what appeared to be the kitchen. Digging in the cupboards, he found a large stew pot and filled it with warm water. A drawer near the sink produced a dish cloth so he threw that into the pan and headed back into the living room.

"Towel?" he asked.

"Linen closet right outside the bathroom door." Wyn pointed towards the hallway.

After getting a faded green towel from the shelf, Ezra knelt in front of Wyn. Wringing out the cloth, he began wiping away the dried blood. He couldn't seem to get the picture of Wyn bleeding to death with his throat slashed out of his mind. "You were lucky, you know? Stronger men than you have been felled by a snapped wire."

He looked at Wyn's face and was a little surprised to see his eyes closed. He thought maybe his little man had fallen asleep until he noticed the growing bulge trapped behind Wyn's fly. Good, he wasn't the only one being affected by their close proximity.

"Feel good?" he asked.

"Mmm hmm, too good," Wyn answered and opened his eyes. "Why didn't you call after you kissed me on Christmas Eve?"

Ezra had been wondering when that perfect kiss would come up. He'd thought about nothing else since Wyn's call. "Guilt. You're the first person I've kissed in nearly twenty years."

Wyn's eyes went wide. "What?"

Ezra finished wiping Wyn's face and threw the cloth back into the pan. "I was married for nine years. Did you know that?"

Wyn shook his head, but didn't say anything.

"We were both pretty young.. I was ashamed of my desires, and tried to hide behind a marriage to a woman I could never really love. I went to a cattle convention in San Antonio and met a man. We spent the entire week together. When I got home, I knew I couldn't live the lie anymore. When I finally broke down and told Nancy the truth, she didn't take it well."

"Pissed?" Wyn asked.

Ezra shook his head. "Depressed. By that time, I'd bought a little ranch. I moved to the bunkhouse until she could find somewhere else to live."

He blinked several times, dispelling the threatening tears. He hadn't told anyone this story. It had been his hidden shame for years. "I got a call the next day. Nancy's sister found her, dead. She took a bunch of pills."

"Oh, oh damn." Wyn reached out and cupped Ezra's cheek. "I'm sorry."

Ezra nodded. "I sold the ranch and moved to a town I'd heard about in Wyoming. I knew I wasn't ready to get into a relationship, but I'd hoped someday..."

"And it took you twenty years?"

"I was taken with you the first day I stepped into your new store. You did something that day that hurt me. I'm used to people being intimidated by my size. It's been that way my entire life, but when you first laid eyes on me, you backed away. It hurt. I lashed back by calling you that name that you've never forgiven me for."

"Mr. Fancy Pants," Wyn nodded. "I remember. It hurt because it was so similar to what people from Pamona had taunted me with before I left town."

"I'm sorry. Anyway, I just kind of stepped back after that. I never found anyone else who I felt any sort of attraction to, and you seemed to hate me."

"I did," Wyn confessed. "I'm not saying I wasn't attracted to you, but yeah, you hurt me pretty good."

"Can we start over?"

"I think that would be a fine idea."

He stuck out his hand. "Hi, I'm Ezra James."

Wyn grasped Ezra's hand. "I'm Palmer Wynfield, but my friends call me Wyn."

Ezra was surprised when Wyn pulled him closer and kissed him. The kiss awakened a passion in him like he'd never known. He broke the kiss and pulled back enough to whisper. "I'm very pleased to meet you, Wyn."

Chapter Three

Ezra's stomach growled, and the moment was broken. "Have you just eaten a bear, or does that sound mean you're hungry?"

Smiling back, Ezra rubbed his flat stomach. "I haven't eaten in a while. Someone said they'd take me out when I got here."

Wyn's hand moved to Ezra's stomach. "I'd best feed you then."

Ezra covered Wyn's hand and brought it to his lips for a kiss. "I can find something on my own. You should probably rest."

With all that had happened in the last few minutes, Wyn had forgotten about his face. He hadn't looked at himself in the mirror yet, and he wasn't sure he wanted to. He'd never been vain when it came to his looks, but he knew from the amount of blood loss he had some big cuts.

Ezra leaned in and gave him yet another kiss, this one slower, deeper. "Are you hungry?" Ezra asked.

"Not for food," Wyn answered, surprised at his bold statement.

Ezra's thick black brows shot up. "In that case, I'll grab me a quick sandwich and be back before you know it." The big man ran his tongue over Wyn's lips before hurrying to the kitchen.

Standing, Wyn made it up the stairs to the bathroom. He had to know. No sense getting in over his head with Ezra if he was going to look like a freak. With his beard shorn, Ezra was breathtaking. He'd never known the man had such sexy dimples in his cheeks. He'd always lusted after Ezra's one predominant facial feature, the deepest blue eyes he'd ever seen. Yep, clean shaven, Ezra was way out of his league.

Looking in the mirror, Wyn took in his injuries. With all the gauze in place it was hard to tell how many stitches he'd actually received. Feeling the small bandage over the bridge of his nose, he determined only two or three. The jaw and cheek were a little harder.

He was trying to peel back the hospital dressing to take a peek, when Ezra's deep voice made him jump. "I don't think you're supposed to be doing that."

Wyn's hand went to his chest. "Shit, you scared me."

Ezra walked in to stand in front of him. He carefully reaffixed the surgical tape back into position. "Don't worry. I've already told you, you'll look hot with a couple of scars."

Wyn rolled his eyes. "Did you eat already?"

"Yeah. I just slapped some peanut butter on a couple pieces of bread." Ezra grinned. "I was in too big a hurry to taste it anyway. I have something else on my mind."

"Really?" Wyn asked. "Even though I look like the mummy man of Oklahoma?"

"I'm not looking at your bandages. I'm more focused on this," Ezra said and cupped Wyn's half-hard cock through his jeans. Ezra cleared his throat and took a step back. "I'm not sure you're up for much this evening, but I'd love the chance to hold you, if you'd let me."

Wyn melted into those blue eyes. "I'd like that."

"Let me get your bottle of pills and a glass of water, and I'll meet you in the bedroom."

Wyn nodded and watched Ezra walk from the tiny room. It was easy to admit to himself that he was afraid. After his experience with Brian Doles, he was still a bit leery.

With one last look in the mirror, he walked down the short hallway to his boyhood bedroom. He couldn't imagine sleeping in his dad's bed this soon after the funeral. As he undressed he surveyed the small full-sized bed.

He was still standing naked beside the bed, when Ezra set the glass and bottle of pills on the nightstand. Ezra slipped an arm around his waist and kissed the top of his head. "Something wrong?"

"I don't know," Wyn answered. "I don't think we'll fit in this bed, but there isn't anywhere else to go. I can't sleep in my dad's room."

Ezra kissed Wyn's shoulder. "Would you be opposed to bringing your dad's mattress out of the bedroom and down into the living room?"

"What'll we do with it during the day? What if someone comes over?"

Ezra chuckled. "I'll carry it back upstairs every morning if you're that worried, but have you had many visitors?"

"No," Wyn confessed. "Everyone pretty much stays away from me except when they're punching me in the jaw."

Ezra's arm tightened around his stomach. *Shit, he hadn't meant to bring that up again.*

"In the morning you need to tell me the names of the fellas who hurt you."

Wyn turned and wrapped his arms around Ezra. "They won't mess with me with you around. Let's just try and forget them."

Although the big man said nothing, Wyn had a feeling the subject was far from closed. Standing on his toes he tilted his head up for a kiss. He'd never been more aware of their height difference. The strain of stretching his neck, pulled at the stitches and he withdrew his mouth quickly.

"You hurt?" Ezra asked with concern in his eyes.

"Just pulls a bit," he downplayed.

Ezra broke away and turned down the bed. "For now, we'll make this work. I guess I'll just have to hold you a little closer."

Wyn slid in and Ezra handed him the water and a pill. "One?"

"Yes, please," Wyn answered taking the pill and washing it down.

Ezra started to undress, and Wyn couldn't help but to stare. The heavily muscled furry chest took his breath away. What would it feel like against his bare skin?

"So what kind of work still needs to be done?" Ezra asked. He sat on the bed and started pulling off his boots.

"Well, I still need to find a buyer for the horses...oh shit, I forgot about the horses." Wyn threw back the covers and started to get out of bed.

A large hand held him down. "I'll take care of it. I can't believe I didn't think about them. Damn, you've got me distracted." Ezra chuckled. "Are they in the barn?"

Wyn shook his head. "In the east pasture right off the barn. There are three of them and they should come right to you when you whistle."

Ezra nodded and put his boots back on. Wyn wanted to whimper as that heavenly chest was once again shielded from view.

Before he left the room, Ezra leaned over the bed and kissed Wyn. "Keep a spot warm for me."

Wyn cupped Ezra's cheek. "I'll never be able to repay you for this," he whispered.

"Yeah you will. I plan to take it out in kisses." Ezra grinned, showing off his dimples.

After he heard the front door close, Wyn sat up in bed and looked out the window towards the barn. He followed Ezra with his eyes, and wondered how things would play out between the two of them.

Would Ezra be a good lover? Yeah, he imagined so. Wyn wasn't about to kid himself. He knew the way a man fucked had nothing to do with his qualifications as a boyfriend.

He'd had several lovers over the years, and none of them were worth shit in the relationship department.

Maybe it was his fault? Did he expect too much? He'd grown up with tales from his dad about life with his mom when she was alive. Wyn barely remembered his mother. She'd died of cancer when he was only seven.

One thing he knew for certain. His dad had loved her with all his heart. He never even considered dating anyone else after her death. He knew it was idealistic, but Wyn wanted that kind of love.

He grinned as he watched the horses stop dead in their tracks when they got a good look at Ezra. "I know what you're thinking," he mumbled. He'd had the same reaction when he'd first set eyes on the man. It wasn't that he was scary. It was the size of him.

As Ezra disappeared into the barn with the horses, Wyn laid back down. He ran a hand over his cock. He wasn't exactly small in that department, but was he big enough to satisfy someone of Ezra's size?

He must've drifted off, because the next thing he knew, a cold body was pressed against his side. Opening his eyes, he smiled as much as the stitches would allow. "You're cold."

"Yep, why don't you warm me up," Ezra said.

Wyn started to turn to his side, but remembered his injured shoulder in time. "I'm on the wrong side of the bed. Hold on."

Without getting out from under the warm covers, Wyn crawled over the top of Ezra. Goosebumps broke out on his body as their cocks momentarily brushed. The soft moan from Ezra proved he wasn't unaffected by the contact, either.

Wyn rested on his side and faced Ezra. The big man pulled him closer. "I don't think you understand just how cold I am." He grinned.

Running his fingers through the thick mat of black chest hair, Wyn found and pinched a dark brown nipple. "With all this fur?"

Ezra turned to his side and pressed his hard cock against Wyn's. "I didn't say my chest was cold. Not everything on my body is covered in hair." He thrust playfully against Wyn.

"Hmmm, I suppose not," Wyn said, reaching down to wrap his hand around Ezra's erection. He nearly choked when he felt the size of Ezra's cock. *Shit. No way, no way in hell.*

Ezra moaned and began to grind against Wyn's touch.

"This could be a problem," Wyn finally admitted.

Shaking his head, Ezra closed the distance and kissed him. "No problem. We'll take it slow when the time comes."

Wyn's cock was enveloped in Ezra's large callused hand. "I'm not in your league in the size department," Wyn confessed biting his bottom lip.

Ezra's fingers rubbed against Wyn's balls. "Are you always this negative about your body? Because I gotta say, you feel damn good to me."

He shrugged his shoulder and winced at the bite of pain that followed. "Look at me. Why do you think I dress the way I do? Don't get me wrong. It's not that I think I'm an ogre or anything, but I try to do the best with what God gave me."

Scooting down, Ezra's tongue ran over Wyn's chest. "I can see I'm going to have to show you how sexy you are until you believe it." Ezra latched on to his pebbled nub and sucked.

Tired of talking, Wyn shut up and enjoyed the warmth of Ezra's mouth. Slowly working his way down Wyn's chest, Ezra licked the length of Wyn's cock.

Wyn's legs automatically parted, giving his lover all the room he needed. A groan escaped him as his cock was enveloped, Ezra paying special attention to the crown. "Oh, feel's good."

Ezra nodded and pulled off. "It's been many years since I've been intimate with anyone but myself. You'll have to tell me if I get too aggressive."

"No worries there," Wyn admitted.

One black brow rose in question. "You like it rough?"

Wyn grinned. "Not like beat-me-up rough, but fuck-me-against-the-wall rough, yeah."

Ezra groaned and swallowed Wyn's cock to the root. "Aahhh fuck," he howled in pleasure.

As the mouth licked and sucked, Wyn began to tremble. "Not going to last much longer," he panted.

A grunt was the only answer he received as Ezra swallowed him once again. Thrusting up, Wyn emptied his seed down his lover's throat.

Ezra went nuts, moaning his pleasure. The bed started to shake as Ezra began jerking his own cock.

"Up here," Wyn moaned, still vibrating from the pleasure Ezra had given him.

Crawling back up until they were face to face, Ezra kissed him, sharing the flavour of Wyn's essence. "I need..." Ezra whispered.

"I know," Wyn said and wrapped both hands around Ezra's cock. He would have happily given Ezra the same treatment he'd just received, but he knew he couldn't open his mouth that wide with the stitches in place.

Using Ezra's pre-cum, Wyn began a steady rhythm up and down the length. Within seconds, Ezra began thrusting against him, talking sexy. "So good. I've waited for these hands for so long. Only you."

Wyn wondered if Ezra even knew what he was saying, he seemed so caught up in the moment. Ezra came with a howl Wyn felt rumble his chest, not to mention the windows. He continued to milk Ezra's cock until the last of the seed covered them both.

Ezra seemed drained after his orgasm. Without bothering to clean up, Ezra pulled Wyn into his arms and swiftly slipped into a soft snore.

Wyn grinned at the hold Ezra had on him even in apparent sleep. Yes, he could easily get used to this.

Chapter Four

Wyn couldn't stop looking at Ezra the following morning. They were eating bacon and scrambled eggs. It shouldn't have been a big deal, but there was something about the way Ezra ate that turned him on. Maybe it was the strong jaw twitching with every bite, or the way his thick chorded neck moved when he swallowed.

All Wyn knew was half-way through their meal, he had his hand under the table rubbing his cock through his designer jeans.

Ezra stopped eating and stared at him. "Are you jacking off?" His voice had gone deeper than normal and if Wyn wasn't imagining things, he heard a bit of a growl.

Deciding to torture his new lover, Wyn grinned. "Not jacking, just rubbing. My cock's hard and it's all your fault."

"Why? You think I'm sexy," Ezra teased, running his hands over his chest and pinching his own nipples.

"Stop it," Wyn laughed. "You're gonna make me cum in my jeans."

Ezra scooted his chair back and beckoned Wyn over. "And it would be a damn shame if those expensive jeans got all cummy."

Without thought, Wyn went over and straddled Ezra's lap. He wrapped his arms around the big man's neck and pressed their lips together. Ezra opened and Wyn delved inside. "Mmm, bacon."

Ezra chuckled. "You could've tasted the real thing had you eaten your breakfast."

Wyn sighed dramatically. "I guess I'll just have to suffer through a few more tastes of you." He kissed him again, pressing his cock against Ezra's firm stomach.

With a groan, Ezra pulled back. "Baby, I'd like nothing more than to take you back up those stairs and spend the day in bed, but we've got work to do. The quicker we finish up here, the faster we can both get back home."

For some reason the thought of going back to Cattle Valley didn't hold the same appeal it had a few days prior. Who could blame him really? His damn hair was almost grey, and he now had scars up the side of his bony face. In Pamona, the only competition he had to worry about was Richard. On the other hand, Cattle Valley was full of hot single men.

Ezra tilted Wyn's chin up. "Hey, what's gotten into you all of a sudden?"

"Nothing," Wyn said. "I guess I like having you all to myself."

"Other than work, you'll have me all to yourself back home, too. Believe me, I don't plan on letting you get away."

"Really?"

Shaking his head, Ezra sighed. "You and that low self esteem. Why the hell do you think I've waited so many years for you to get over your fear of me?" Ezra ran his hands down Wyn's back to squeeze his ass. "I don't want anyone but you."

Wyn's insides warmed. Maybe, just maybe, this one would work out. "Let's go take care of the horses. I still have to finish the fence, and make some calls. I've got to find an auction house for the livestock."

As they walked out towards the barn, Ezra turned to him. "I'll make you a deal. I'll fix the fence and you can call about the auctions."

Wyn stopped. "I can fix a damn fence, Ezra. I tightened the wire too much, that's all. Doesn't mean I'm incompetent."

Ezra grabbed Wyn under the arms and lifted him to eye level. "Don't go puttin' words in my mouth. I care about you. You brought me down here to help, now dammit, let me do that."

"You're right. Sorry," Wyn mumbled.

After giving him a kiss, Ezra set Wyn back on his feet. "Now, about these horses..."

* * * *

By two o'clock they'd gotten a lot done. Ezra was a little shocked at the condition of the ranch. He knew he was a bit of a perfectionist, but Wyn's dad seemed to think 'fixing it for now' was good enough.

He tightened the last bolt on the new hinge of the pasture gate and picked up his tools. "Wyn!" he yelled, not seeing his little man anywhere.

Wyn stepped out of the tractor shed, with grease smudges on his face. He was wiping his hands as he walked towards Ezra. "Yeah?"

"What're you doing? I thought you said you were gonna make some calls?"

"I did. Finished up there and thought I'd tinker with the tractor. It's not running right and I haven't found the problem."

Ezra bit the side of his cheek. The last thing Wyn needed was to get dirt in his wounds. He didn't feel like another argument, so he decided to divert Wyn instead. "How far away is your dad's pickup?"

Wyn pointed towards the west. "About a mile straight that way."

"If you give me the keys, I'll go get it and bring it back. I kinda fancy going into town for supper later."

Wyn continued to wipe the grease and oil from his hands. "Maybe we should go into Tulsa?"

Ezra grinned. He knew exactly what Wyn was doing. "The quicker the folks in town see you have backup, the better." He walked over and gave Wyn a quick kiss and held his hand out for the keys.

Rolling his eyes, Wyn handed them over.

"Thank you," Ezra bowed and dropped the keys into his jeans pocket.

Wyn turned and started heading back to the tractor shed. "Don't you think you should try to keep your stitches clean?" Ezra couldn't help asking.

Wyn's fingers went to the white bandages. "They're covered."

Blowing out an irritated breath, Ezra took off down the drive. "Stubborn man," he mumbled.

"I heard that!" Wyn yelled after him.

Ezra grinned, never breaking stride.

* * * *

Smiling, Wyn went back into the tractor shed and sat on an old wooden stool. He wouldn't tell Ezra, but he knew absolutely nothing about fixing farm machinery.

Pulling out his phone, he called Nate.

"Hello?"

"Hey, it's Wyn."

"Well, stranger, I guess since you didn't call me back, Ezra's there."

"Yeah. He's planning to go into town later and scare the locals."

Nate erupted in a full blown belly laugh. "God I wish I could see that. As a rule, I'm not afraid of much, but Ezra in a mood is enough to have me cowering in a corner."

Wyn nodded. "Yeah, I'm even worse than you. Knowing my luck, I'll be the one scared shitless when he starts his posturing for the locals."

"Actually, I'm glad you called. When do you think you'll be finished up there?"

"Hopefully by the end of the week if I can get the livestock off to auction and put the old place up for sale. Why?"

"Are you sitting down?" Nate asked.

"Spit it out, Nate."

"Gill and Kyle are getting married in three weeks. They told me to invite you since they didn't know the address there."

Wyn rubbed his jaw. "Well I'll be damned. Tell Kyle and Gill I'd love to come. I'll even try to get Ezra to put on a suit for the occasion."

"So it's like that is it? You and Ezra finally worked things out?"

"We're trying, but yeah." Wyn felt almost giddy telling his best friend about his new relationship. "It's nice."

Nate was silent for a few moments. "That's great, Wyn. You deserve a good guy in your life."

"Thanks."

"Well I have to teach a class so I'd better let you go. Call if you need anything. And don't worry about the store. I bought a new spring wardrobe out of that shipment Gavin just put up."

"Bless you. At least one of us is looking good. I've worn nothing but jeans since I've been here."

"Well do yourself a favour and dress like Wyn for dinner later. Even if the town won't appreciate it, I bet Ezra will."

"Good idea. I think I'll go in and start getting cleaned up."

"Take care, buddy," Nate said.

"You, too." Wyn hung up and threw the greasy rag on the tractor seat. "Later," he said to the old John Deer.

Digging out the key's, Ezra walked up to the truck he assumed was Wyn's.

"Don't take another step," a voice said from behind him.

Turning his head, Ezra looked over his shoulder at an old man holding a shotgun. His arms went up. "You must be Richard's granddad. I'm Ezra James. Came down from Wyoming to help Palmer Wynfield get his daddy's ranch ready for sale."

The man lowered his gun. "Didn't know that Wynfield boy had any friends who weren't queer. Maybe you can straighten him out while you're here. Lord knows his dad never could."

Ezra's hands fisted at his sides as he took a step forward. "Evidently you don't know Palmer Wynfield like I do. I know him as one of the finest men on this planet. A man who owns one of the best clothing stores in Wyoming. The same man who walked away from his very livelihood at a moment's notice to come to this god-forsaken town to take care of his father until his death."

He left the old man sputtering, his face screwed up like he'd eaten a bowl of lemons.

Ezra walked back towards the truck and opened the door. He was shocked at the amount of blood on the seat and steering wheel. He hadn't realized just how close Wyn had come to bleeding to death.

Getting in, Ezra started the truck and rolled down the window to address the old bigot once more. "If my parents hadn't raised me to respect the elderly, I'd probably be telling you to get your head out of your ass and look at people for who they are and not who they love. I might even be tempted to tell you you're not worth the cow shit on the bottom of Wyn's shoes. But I won't say that, you being elderly and all. Good day."

Ezra rolled up the window and pulled down the drive.

Chapter Five

Pulling up to the house, Ezra went straight to the kitchen and fixed a pan of hot, soapy water. Grabbing a rag, he took his supplies back out to the pickup. As he began wiping the blood from the cracked vinyl seat, he felt the threat of tears.

He wasn't sure why. Was he mad at the old man, or was it something deeper? The red-brown stains belonged to a man he held close to his heart. Maybe that was it? Could even the thought of something happening to Wyn cause this kind of reaction?

Shaking his head, Ezra rinsed the rag and continued his work. He hadn't cried since Nancy's funeral. Although he suspected the tears on that particular day were more out of a sense of guilt than love.

Ezra stopped. Love? Was he in love for the first time in his life? No, no way. He'd heard people talk about being in love. It usually happened over time, not within days.

Finishing up the truck, he sighed. He was in love, and it hadn't been days, but years of longing to hold Wyn that brought it on.

"What are you doing?" Wyn asked from the porch.

With a deep breath, Ezra picked up the pan and turned around. "Cleaning up a bit." Once he got a good look at his man, he whistled. "You look good enough to eat."

Wearing a pair of skin-tight jeans, white button-up shirt and chocolate brown leather vest, Wyn was every gay cowboy's dream.

Wyn looked down at his brown crocodile skin boots. "I didn't want to get too crazy. I figured if I wore one of my sweaters into town, there'd be a lynching. This is close enough to let me feel like my old self."

Ezra walked up the steps and kissed his love. He was careful to keep the pan of dirty water away from Wyn's clothing. "Give me fifteen minutes, and I'll be ready to leave."

Wyn looked down at the reddish brown water. "I could've cleaned that."

"Yeah, you could've, but it's done now." He gave Wyn one last peck before going into the house. "Just let me grab a shower and change my clothes."

"Can I watch?" Wyn asked with a grin.

"I have a feeling if you watched, we'd never get into town," Ezra said, pouring the dirty water down the drain.

He noticed Wyn had shaved and changed his bandages. "Next time, I'll help you with that," he said, pointing towards Wyn's face.

Wyn nodded. "They aren't as bad as I thought. I'll still have scars though."

After washing and drying his hands, Ezra took Wyn into his arms. "If you had any idea what those jeans are doing to me, you'd know not to worry about a couple of scars."

He lifted Wyn and set him on the counter. "Better," he said, closing in on Wyn's soft lips.

The kiss was everything he needed it to be. His revelation earlier had his head spinning, and as Wyn devoured his mouth, he felt centred.

Wyn wrapped his legs around Ezra's hips and pulled him closer. "Are you sure you want to eat at the café? We could stay right here and make a meal of each other."

Grinning, Ezra shook his head. "Are you using your body to try and persuade me not to go into town? You're shameful."

"Yeah, but is it working?" Wyn rubbed his cock against Ezra.

With a groan, Ezra took a step back. "It's working a little too well. Let's get this town introduction over so we can get on to more important things. Speaking of which, I didn't bring condoms or lube. Do we need to make a stop in town to pick up some supplies?"

Wyn's eyes went wide. "Uh, no. I mean, I don't have anything here, but I don't think it's a good idea to buy that stuff at Landry's."

"Why? Don't people in Oklahoma use condoms?"

"Yes, I assume so anyway, but they know I'm gay at Landry's. They'll know what we'll be doing."

Ezra cupped Wyn's cheek. "Are you ashamed for people to know we're a couple?"

"No, not ashamed. It's just that they'll know you're gay too."

"I've got news for you, baby. I'm not ashamed to be gay. Maybe it's different for me because no one's ever tried to pick on me for it, but I am who I am."

Wyn looked like he was considering Ezra's words carefully. "Okay."

"Good," Ezra kissed him. "I'll be back in ten minutes."

Grinning, Wyn looked at his watch. "I'll time you."

* * * *

When they walked into Jenny's Café, all eyes were on them. Wyn saw the looks of disgust aimed his way, seconds before jaws dropped as Ezra stepped in behind him. Wyn couldn't help but to give a satisfied smile.

The waitress tried to show them to a back table next to the kitchen door, but Ezra wasn't having it. "I'd like to sit by that window up front." He gave poor Maddie Wilson a look that dared her to refuse him.

Maddie was hesitant but gave them the table Ezra requested. As Ezra looked over the menu, Wyn couldn't help but hear the low murmurings in the café. It was obvious the town's people were intimidated by Ezra, but there seemed to be strength in numbers.

Soon the talk grew louder. Ezra waived the waitress over and they both ordered the daily special.

Ezra leaned in. "Are any of the folks here the ones responsible for jumping you?"

Wyn didn't need to look around. "Two, but I wouldn't do anything about it while all these people are around."

Scratching his beardless face, Ezra studied the room, giving each person a thorough going over. "Those two at the counter?"

"Yep," Wyn said, not bothering to turn around.

"Excuse me, baby. I think I need to change my order." Ezra rose and walked towards the counter.

Wyn held his breath, only daring to glance back after a few minutes when Ezra hadn't returned. He grinned at the fear in Henry's eyes as Ezra held the neck of his T-shirt in a fist. He couldn't hear what was being said, but he noticed Bert, Henry's accomplice, had backed away.

Ezra released Henry and walked back to the table. Out of the corner of his eye, Wyn watched as Henry and Bert beat a hasty retreat.

"What did you say to him?" Wyn asked.

The corner of Ezra's lip curled in a grin. "I'll never tell. Let's just say if Henry bothers you again, he'll be losing more than he bargained for."

"You're so bad," Wyn said with a smile.

"Oh, you have no idea." Ezra's eyes bore into him.

By the time their food arrived, more than half the café had cleared out. Ezra rubbed his foot subtly against Wyn's ankle. "I wish there was some place to have a beer and dance."

"There is. Back at the old Wynfield place."

Ezra gestured to Wyn's untouched food. "Eat up. We still have a stop to make at the drug store for condoms." Ezra said the last part loud enough for those around him to hear.

Wyn almost swallowed his tongue at the shocked faces. He happily picked up his fork and started in on the southern-style chicken fried steak. Ezra had been right. What did he care what these people thought. He'd be able to wash his hands of Pamona in no time.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. I talked to Richard earlier. He's going to help us load the cattle and horses for the sale." Wyn closed his eyes at the heavenly taste of the food.

Ezra was almost finished with his dinner. He took a drink of his water and nodded. "That's nice of him. Won't his grandfather object?"

Wyn shrugged. "I don't know. I think this is Richard's way of taking a stand."

"Good for him." Ezra finished up and pushed his plate away. "You sure you don't want to keep at least one of the horses? We could have it shipped back to the EZ Does It."

Wyn shook his head. It touched him that Ezra offered. It spoke volumes towards the big man's intentions of seeing him when they arrived home. "The horses don't hold any sentimental value for me. They're all fairly new purchases I think. There's only one thing I would like to take back besides pictures and stuff."

Ezra nodded and waited. Wyn rolled his eyes. "Well, even though I doubt I'll ever get it to run, I'd like to ship the bucket tractor back to Wyoming."

"The what?"

Wyn laughed. "Bucket tractor. It's what folks around here call an antique tractor that comes to you in pieces. Dad bought it at an auction years ago, but lost interest after I left. It was the one thing I enjoyed watching him do when I lived at home."

Remembering the nights spent watching his dad work held a lot of mixed feelings. "He never actually let me work on it, but I sat in the barn with him and we talked about other stuff. It's what I was messing with earlier. The tractor's only about half done, but I'd like to see it completed before it's sold."

Ezra reached across the table and covered Wyn's hand with his own. "I'd like to see it."

"Okay, but not right away. I have other plans for the rest of the evening." Wyn turned his hand over and gave Ezra's a squeeze before releasing it.

Picking up the bill, he gestured towards the cash register. "I'll take care of this. You can leave the tip."

When he reached the counter, he handed the bill to Maddie. "Good as usual," he commented.

"That your *boyfriend*?" She asked, handing him back his change. He could tell by the look on her face the thought disgusted her.

Wyn looked over his shoulder to Ezra. "Yeah. He's something, isn't he?" He winked at Maddie and walked back to the table.

The first thing he noticed was the tip. Ezra had left a sizeable one. Wyn looked back at Maddie and shook his head, picking up two dollars and handing them back to Ezra. "She doesn't deserve that much." Wyn made sure he said it loud enough for everyone to hear.

Ezra gave him a questioning look before sticking the money back in his pocket. "You ready?"

"Oh, yeah," Wyn said and grabbed Ezra's hand before leading the way out of the café.

* * * *

After tending to the horses, they went inside. Ezra was already hard just by watching Wyn groom the horses. Taking off his hat, Ezra walked over and found something on the radio while Wyn grabbed them a couple of beers.

"Good thing I like country music," he commented taking the beer.

Wyn took off his boots and socks before kneeling at Ezra's feet. "You need help with these?" Wyn asked, lifting Ezra's foot.

It was such a domestic scene, Ezra's heart warmed. "That would be nice, thank you."

After stripping Ezra's feet, Wyn stood and straddled his lap. "Thanks for what you did in town. It won't help matters, but I appreciated it all the same."

Ezra ran his hands down Wyn's spine to land on his ass. "I've dealt with plenty of bigots in my day." He rubbed Wyn's crack through the seam in his jeans.

"Right now I have more important things on my mind." He pressed against Wyn's hole.

Wyn jumped off Ezra's lap and unbuckled his jeans. Ezra grinned and Wyn shrugged. "No sense in playing hard to get." Wyn pushed his jeans and underwear down and off before removing his shirt.

Standing nude in front of him, Wyn was a wet dream. Ezra licked his lips and started on his own clothes. "Grab that sack."

As his clothes joined the pile on the floor, he watched Wyn walk across the room to retrieve the pharmacy bag. He gave his cock several strokes as Wyn sauntered back.

"Do you think we should go upstairs?" Wyn asked.

Ezra shook his head. "Later," he said spreading his legs further apart.

Wyn straddled his lap once again. "I thought we were going to dance?"

Ezra ran his cock up the cleft of Wyn's ass. "We are. You don't like my style?" he joked.

Wyn took over, moving back and forth as he bent to take Ezra's nipple into his mouth. "Oh, I like your style just fine," Wyn said working his way across the mass of hair to Ezra's other nipple.

Grabbing the bag from the cushion beside him, Ezra pulled out the small bottle of KY. It wasn't the best, but it would do. He uncapped the bottle and slicked his fingers. He knew it had been a while for Wyn and the last thing he wanted was to rush things.

Reaching between Wyn's legs, Ezra rimmed the tightly puckered hole. "Nice," he moaned.

"Mmm hmm," Wyn agreed. "More."

Pressing the pad of his finger against the hole, Ezra slowly pushed in. "Yes," Wyn groaned, and kissed him.

Ezra wrapped his free arm around Wyn and pulled him closer, as he pumped his finger in and out of the smaller man's body. Soon, he introduced another, and Wyn broke the kiss. "Good, oh shit, you feel good."

"Just wait until the fast dance starts." Ezra inserted a third finger, noticing the wince on Wyn's face. He started to remove it but Wyn shook his head.

"Leave it. Feels good." Wyn took over, fucking himself on Ezra's hand.

God, Wyn was sexy like this. "Get me ready."

Wyn picked up the box of condoms and dug one out. Maintaining eye contact, he ripped open the package. "Will it fit?" Wyn questioned, looking from the condom to Ezra's long thick cock.

"It'll fit," Ezra said with a grin. "You can't roll it down though. You'll have to cover the head and stretch it down my length."

After a few moments, Wyn finally secured the condom. "Lube me up," Ezra said. He was on the edge and he knew it. The heat of Wyn's body around his fingers was fantastic, but he wanted them replaced with his cock, and now.

Once lubed, he leaned forward and kissed his man. "You sure you're stretched enough?"

"Oh yeah," Wyn replied and stood.

With his feet on either side of Ezra's thighs, Wyn's cock was in the perfect position for a quick taste. Wasting no time, Ezra closed the distance and took the perfectly shaped head into his mouth, tasting the pre-cum on his tongue.

Wyn's taste along with the moans coming from the smaller man almost tipped Ezra over the edge. Pulling off, he looked up into Wyn's eyes. "Need in you."

"Good, I was feeling pretty empty," Wyn answered. He lowered his body until the well stretched hole was poised directly above Ezra's waiting cock. With a teasing smile, Wyn slowly impaled himself, groaning as he descended.

"Fuck, fuck," Ezra said over and over as Wyn's body enveloped him.

It took some time, but eventually Wyn was fully seated, balls resting on top of Ezra's. He ground his teeth as Wyn bottomed out and swivelled his hips.

"I don't think I've ever been so stretched," Wyn moaned. "I never thought I'd be able to take you. But it feels good, right?"

"Mmm hmm," Ezra agreed. The only real experience Ezra had with a man was twenty years ago. This? This was a lot better. Not only because Wyn was able to take his full length, but because his heart was involved for the first time in his life.

He gripped Wyn's hips, guiding him up and down the length of his cock. As much as he enjoyed this position, it wasn't enough. He wanted deeper, faster penetration.

With a loud growl, Ezra lifted Wyn off his cock and deposited him on the couch. "Sorry, need more of you," he panted as he knelt on the floor and repositioned Wyn.

Facing the back of the sofa, Wyn nodded. "Do it."

Before he entered Wyn again, Ezra bent and licked one ass cheek and then the other, ending with a tiny nip. Pushing inside Wyn's tight heat, he groaned. "Yes."

Placing his hands on Wyn's hips, Ezra pounded his cock as hard and fast as he could in and out.

One of Wyn's hands released its grip on the sofa back to wrap around his cock. "Good," Wyn said.

Ezra knew he was probably being too rough on Wyn's ass, but his lust was out of control for the first time in his life. All he could think about was getting deeper. He watched as his cock disappeared over and over at lightning speed.

A loud "Fuck!" from Wyn, signalled the other man's climax. Ezra felt his lover's body grip his cock, milking it. Ezra gave a grunt of ecstasy as he buried himself to the hilt, shooting his seed into the condom.

The orgasm lasted much longer than he was used to, as spurt after spurt shot from the end of his cock. By the time he was dry, he was also exhausted. Slumping over to cover Wyn's back, Ezra felt like he'd never regain his breath.

He wasn't sure how long they lay like that before the ringing phone brought him back to his senses. "Sorry," he said, uncovering Wyn.

Wyn scrambled over to the end table and picked up the cordless phone. "Hello?"

Ezra fell back to the floor and removed the condom. Giving it a quick tie, he laid it on the floor next to his hip. He felt completely sated and ready for a long nap.

The alarm in Wyn's voice finally got his attention. Opening his eyes, Ezra studied his lover. Something was definitely wrong. He sat up and reached for his jeans.

Wyn hung up and reached for his as well. "That was Richard. He was out checking his heifers when he heard one of dad's. Evidently she's having trouble delivering. Richard's on his way over with a come-along just in case."

Ezra nodded and pulled on his clothes. When they were both dressed, he pulled Wyn into his arms. "I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Hell no," Wyn said, shaking his head. "I may be sore later, but I'm fine now. As a matter of fact, it still feels like you're inside of me."

"You're my fantasy lover," Ezra said and kissed Wyn.

"No fantasy. I'm the real thing," Wyn answered.

"Yes you are." Ezra reluctantly pulled away and put on his hat. "Is Richard meeting us out front or in the pasture?"

"Out front." Wyn pulled on his boots.

With one last kiss, Ezra headed towards the door. "Let's do this. I still owe you a round of tenderness."

"I don't know, I kinda liked the rough side of you."

"Oh, there'll be plenty more of that, but you deserve both."

Chapter Six

By the time they got going, it had started to rain. Richard's battered truck pulled down the old dirt path that led to the pasture. After Ezra opened and closed the second gate, the rain began pouring from the cool night sky.

"It's gonna be a muddy mess," Richard commented, trying to steer around the deep potholes.

Ezra's hand gripped Wyn's thigh. "Why don't you stay in the truck? The last thing you need is an infection."

Wyn wasn't sure whether to be touched or pissed. "I can help," he finally said.

"I know you can, but if that momma needs more help than Richard and I can give her, I doubt there'll be much you can do." Ezra kissed his temple. "I promise, if we need you, I'll tell you."

Wyn watched as the wipers slapped the rain from the glass. He didn't really relish the thought of sitting in mud and cow shit anyway. Nodding, he leaned forward in the seat, trying to see the heifer in distress. "Whereabouts do you think she is?" he asked Richard.

"Should be up ahead another hundred yards or so," Richard answered.

As they slowed to a crawl, Ezra pulled his leather gloves out of his pockets and put them on.

Richard spotted the heifer first and pulled up beside it. Wyn could see she was definitely in a lot of pain. He turned to Ezra as the big man started to get out. "Do you suppose the calf's breech?"

"Most likely," Ezra said. He gave Wyn a quick kiss before closing the door. Richard got out next, and he was left alone in the cab.

He felt helpless watching as Ezra assessed the downed heifer. With the rain pounding against the truck's roof, he couldn't hear what they were talking about. He saw Ezra shake his head. That didn't look good. Ezra took off his jacket and started rolling up his sleeves as Richard walked back towards the truck.

Without opening the door, he reached in the back and pulled out the come-along. Richard was on his way back when Wyn couldn't take any more. He pulled down his dad's battered cowboy hat and stepped out into the pounding rain.

"What's going on?" he asked.

No one answered him, both men either too busy or unable to hear because of the storm. Standing next to the truck, Wyn watched as Ezra stuck his hands inside the heifer.

Wyn watched in awe as Ezra seemed to use all his strength to manoeuvre the calf still inside its mother. After ten minutes of working, Ezra dug his heels into the muddy soil and began to pull.

He heard Ezra's grunts and groans above the storm as he continued to try and free the calf. When at last the calf slipped free, Ezra and Richard both worked quickly to get it cleaned. Ezra took off his shirt and wiped the small animal's face as Richard worked on its body.

A few minutes later, Ezra stood and said something to Richard. Richard pointed to the truck. Ezra gave him a nod and walked towards Wyn. "What's going on?" he asked. "Is the calf going to be okay?"

"The calf will be fine," Ezra answered. "You need to get back inside." Ezra opened the door and fished behind the seat.

Wyn went to his side. "What's going on?"

"Get inside the goddamn truck, Wyn!" Ezra yelled, pulling out a gun.

Wyn shrunk back at the verbal attack. His arm automatically went up to shield the blow he knew was coming.

Ezra stopped in his tracks. Wyn had never seen that particular look on Ezra's face. It was somewhere between mad and sad. Ezra started to say something but shook his head and walked off, carrying the rifle.

Wyn was frozen to the spot. He couldn't believe he'd just done that. He knew Ezra would never strike him. Maybe he wasn't as over Brian Doles as he'd thought.

A gunshot ringing in his ears made him jump. He turned around in time to see Ezra pull the barrel of the rifle away from the dam's head.

Ezra handed the rifle to Richard and sat on the ground, pulling the calf into his arms. Wyn felt his eyes sting as he watched Ezra's shoulders shake as he rocked the newborn. *Was Ezra crying?*

Richard came back to the truck and lowered the tailgate. He motioned for Wyn to get in as he got into the cab.

He didn't know what to do. Should he do as Ezra had asked, or should he go to him and apologise for the way he'd acted?

Ezra stood, still cradling the calf in his arms and carried it to the truck bed. After depositing the calf in back, Ezra climbed in after it and lifted the baby into his arms once again. The look on his face told Wyn not to approach him yet.

Turning away, he got into the truck and shut the door. He said nothing as Richard manoeuvred the truck around the dead heifer and back onto the farm road. Wyn felt numb. How could he have screwed so much up in such a short time?

"Do you know if your dad has any colostrum in the freezer?" Richard asked.

"Uh..." Wyn shook his head and tried to clear his mind. "I think so, maybe. Hell, to be honest, I don't know."

"When we get back to the house, see if you can find some. If he doesn't have the real thing, he might have some supplements in the barn, I'll look for that."

"Is the calf going to make it?"

"I don't know. It's weak. We've got to get some food and colostrum inside it fast though."

"And the dam?"

Richard shook his head. "The damage had been done before we got there. She was pretty torn up inside." Richard shrugged. "It's sad, but it can happen with first time dams."

They pulled up to the barn and both hopped out. Wyn went to the back of the truck to help Ezra with the calf, but Richard was already there.

"I've got this. Why don't you see if you can find that colostrum. If you find some, put it in the microwave at sixty-percent power and stir every minute or so."

"If I find some, how much do I thaw?"

"Two quarts if you've got it. Put another two quarts out on the counter to thaw. If you don't have any and I can't find any out here, I'll go to Beahm's and see if they have any." Richard picked the calf up and carried it inside the dry barn.

Wyn was left alone with Ezra. "I'm sorry," he said, taking a step forward.

Ezra held up his hands, in a warning not to get too close. Wyn wasn't sure if it was because they were messy, or because Ezra was still angry with him.

"We'll talk later. Go on up to the house. If we don't get some nutrients into the calf, she won't make it through the night."

Wyn looked at Ezra for a few more moments, before turning to do as he was told. He no longer noticed the rain as it battered against his face, soaking the bandages.

* * * *

"I can't thank you enough for all your help," Ezra said shaking Richard's hand.

Richard shrugged. "That's what neighbours are for." Richard reached down to pet the wobbly calf. He looked towards the house and back at Ezra. "Why don't you go on inside. I'll get the next bottle into her and take off."

He wasn't sure if he was ready to face Wyn. "That's okay. I can feed him."

Richard took off his battered black hat and ran his fingers through his short brown hair. "I'm not sure what happened, but it won't get any better by putting off the inevitable."

Ezra shook his head. "Naw. I need a little more time to think things through. Why don't you come back for dinner and that beer I promised you the other day."

Richard set his hat back on his head. "Okay. I appreciate the invitation."

He watched Richard get into his pickup and pull down the drive. After giving the house one last glance, he shut the barn door.

He'd thought about Wyn's reaction to his anger a million times and it still hadn't gotten easier. He'd been trying to shield his lover from the gruesome task set before him, and he ended up yelling. That was bad enough, but to see the look of genuine fear on Wyn's face had pierced his heart like nothing else could.

When he was young, he didn't have many friends. For years he thought it was something inside of him that caused people to avoid him. Then one brave kid told him the truth. No one wanted to get close to 'the giant', and he was too. He'd always been a lot bigger than the other kids, but at the age of twelve he started growing even more.

Remembering the days of lying in his bed in agony as his body continued to grow, almost brought tears to his eyes. By the time Ezra started high school, he was six-foot-eight inches, and too uncoordinated to play sports. Instead, he'd spent his time in the gym lifting weights.

As he became an adult, life got a little easier. Even though he topped out at six-foot-ten-inches. He moved away from home and went to work on a ranch in Montana. The other ranch hands he worked with liked to tease him about being unable to find a horse big enough for 'Andre the Giant'. They also began to question his sexuality. That's when he knew he needed to get married.

A mixture of anger and regret caused Ezra to strike out, punching the barn door. He felt the blood dripping from his knuckles before he saw it. Pulling a handkerchief out of his back pocket, he wrapped his hand and sat on a bale of hay.

"I'm so sorry, Nancy," he whispered to the dusty rafters.

Nancy Lanham was such a shy, sweet girl when he'd met her. Heavier than most of the women in town, Nancy was an outsider like him. Maybe that's what drew them together.

They were married six months after their first date and for another nine years, he'd tried to forget his longings to be held in another man's arms. Then he'd gone to that damn convention in San Antonio. Ezra shook his head. He couldn't do this again. Nancy was gone and it was, and always would be, his fault.

His thoughts turned to Wyn. He was in love. He knew that for a fact, but what kind of relationship could they build if deep down inside, his lover was afraid of him?

"Ezra?"

He turned to see Wyn silhouetted in the early morning light.

"I made breakfast," Wyn said.

He nodded. "I'll be in soon. I'm getting ready to feed Lucky one more bottle." He rose and went to the workbench. "We'll have to get more colostrum and milk. Richard said there's a dairy farm down the road that should have some you can buy."

After fixing the bottle, he walked back to Lucky. He didn't dare turn around and look at Wyn. He didn't think he could handle it, not yet.

He felt a hand land on his back and closed his eyes.

"I know I hurt you, and I wish I could take it back. It wasn't you that frightened me. Brian really did a number on me, and sometimes the memories overwhelm me."

"I'd never lay a hand on you out of anger. It's just not my way." Lucky finished the bottle and Ezra turned to face Wyn for the first time. "All my life people have been afraid of me. It hurt more than I can say when you shrunk back from me."

“It wasn’t you, I promise. It was the tone of voice. I suddenly saw Brian towering over me and reacted. Maybe I need to talk to someone.”

Dropping the bottle to the barn floor, he wrapped his arms around Wyn. “Maybe we both should,” he said, kissing the top of Wyn’s head.

Chapter Seven

Two days later, Wyn rented a couple of large cattle trucks from the auction house to load the stock. Richard was back to help and they appreciated the extra set of hands. Wyn sat atop his horse and looked over his shoulder at Ezra.

Their relationship seemed to be back on track, but they'd agreed to make appointments with Cattle Valley's only psychiatrist when they returned. Wyn knew Ben Zook as a customer, so he hoped it wouldn't become too awkward.

"Can you get the gate?" Richard asked, driving a wayward steer towards him.

"Sorry," Wyn said and reached down to open the gate to the holding pen. "Is that the last of them?"

"I think so," Richard replied.

Wyn closed the gate. "How about we break for lunch before loading them?"

"Sounds good to me," Ezra chuckled and rubbed his belly.

Wyn licked his lips. He wished it was his hand rubbing that furry washboard abdomen. Knowing they wouldn't need the horses for anything else, he dismounted and started to remove Brandy's saddle.

"We'll take care of the horses if you want to start on the food," Ezra said coming up behind him.

Wyn turned and received a kiss. "Sounds like a fair trade-off."

Ezra wrapped his arms around Wyn and pulled him closer. "I like seeing you like this, out here in the fresh air. Even though the store suits you, I think this does too."

"It's okay. I like to ride more than I like to work cattle though." Wyn took the opportunity to run his hand over Ezra's stomach. "I'd better go. You're making me hungry for things other than food."

Ezra's eyes flashed to Richard, who was busy unsaddling his own horse. He picked Wyn up off the ground and kissed him again. This time the kiss was deeper. Their tongues duelled until they both started to moan.

A chuckle from Richard finally broke them apart. "Later," Ezra said with promise in his eyes.

"Definitely," he whispered against Ezra's lips.

* * * *

Friday morning they were on their way to Pamona for hopefully the last time. "What time did you tell the realtor we'd be there?" Ezra asked.

Wyn looked at his watch and grinned. "Thirty minutes ago. We would've made it too if someone hadn't decided to jump into the shower with me."

Ezra smiled. "I can't help it if you look damn sexy wet." Ezra reached across the bench seat and ran his hand up Wyn's thigh.

Trapping his man's hand between his clenched thighs, Wyn shook his finger. "Now none of that. I can't have a serious meeting with a woody in my pants."

Chuckling, Ezra nodded. "You could, but it would turn into a different kind of meeting."

"Let's just get this over with. The faster the house and land go up for sale, the faster I'm out of here."

"And you're sure we don't need to go into Tulsa and rent a moving truck? There's a lot of stuff."

"I don't need any of the furniture. Other than a couple of boxes of personal things, it can all go to charity." Wyn put his hand on Ezra's. "Do you want anything out of the house?"

Ezra shrugged. "Let me think on it. It's in pretty good shape. I'll give Smokey a call and see if the bunkhouse needs anything new."

Wyn withdrew his hand and looked out the window. Smokey Sharp was Ezra's foreman and only real friend. He'd thought for years the two of them had something going, but Ezra assured him they were only friends. He still couldn't help feeling that twinge of jealousy whenever Smokey called, which was at least once a day.

He felt Ezra's hand land on the back of his neck, ruffling the short hair visible under his hat. "Are you always going to clam up when I mention Smokey?"

Wyn rolled his eyes. He knew it was stupid. He'd lectured himself over and over about not getting jealous. "Sorry," he mumbled.

"My relationship with Smokey isn't any different than yours with Nate. Should I be jealous of him?"

"No, but it's not like he would ever cheat on Ryan and Rio with someone like me."

He was startled when Ezra quickly slowed to a stop in the middle of the county road. Thankfully no one was behind them.

Ezra put the truck in park and pulled Wyn across the seat and into his arms. "Don't say things like that. I don't know what gave you such a low opinion of yourself, but in my eyes, you're damn near perfect." Ezra sealed his lips over Wyn's and thrust his tongue inside.

He relished the kiss for several seconds before pulling back. "Promise me I'm good enough to keep you from wandering, please?" he pleaded.

Ezra's eyes narrowed a bit. "What? You're the first man I've been with in twenty years. You think now that I've had a taste I'm gonna want to sample the rest of the display case?" He shook his head. "Don't you get it? I love you. I'm so goddamn in love with you that I ache."

Wyn felt his heart expand to near bursting. "I love you, too. That's why I'm so afraid of losing you."

"You won't. Of course we'll have a lot of logistics to work out once we get back home. I've gotten used to waking up with you curled around me."

"Yeah, I kind of like that part too." Wyn smiled and gave Ezra another quick kiss before breaking away. "You'd better get going before you get run over."

He didn't bother moving back to the passenger side. It felt right to sit next to the man he loved. If the town didn't like it, well screw them.

Ezra seemed pleased with Wyn's decision. He put the truck in gear and headed towards town.

* * * *

Stepping out of the realtor's office, they were met by a small group of men. Ezra automatically put himself between them and Wyn. "Can I help you?" he asked them.

One of the men stepped forward. It wasn't Henry but he could see him in the back of the group. This new guy looked quite a bit older, with short greying brown hair. "We just wanted to let you know, no one will buy that ranch you just put up."

"And why is that?" Ezra asked in a bored voice.

The guy looked behind him at the small group. "None of us want our hard earned money going to a fag."

Ezra crossed his arms. "Now that's just about the dumbest thing I've ever heard. If you'll excuse us, we're going to lunch at Jenny's."

He reached back for Wyn's hand and pushed his way through the centre of the gathered men. They hadn't planned to have lunch in town, but now there was no way they could keep him from it.

"Maybe we should go," Wyn said once they'd crossed the street.

"Nope. I've got a plan." Ezra ushered Wyn into the café and requested a table in the centre of the room.

They were both surprised when Richard walked over carrying a plate. "You guys mind if I join you?"

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Wyn asked, eyes scanning the rest of the diners.

Richard shrugged and set his plate down. "Doesn't really matter anymore. Everyone's already giving me the cold shoulder. Guess word got out that I've been over at your place a time or two. Narrow-minded assholes," Richard said a bit louder.

Damn, Ezra knew he liked Richard. "We'd love for you to join us. Sit back and enjoy the show."

Richard's brows rose. "What are you up to?"

"Nothing much. Just plan on making sure Wyn's ranch gets sold." He pulled out his cell phone and winked at Wyn while he waited for an answer on the other end.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Smokey," he greeted his friend. He made sure to talk loud enough for those around him to hear every word. "Remember when you told me you were looking for some land to buy? Well, it looks like Wyn isn't going to be able to sell his daddy's ranch after all. So I was thinking, maybe if we section out the land, you and a few of our other friends could move down. Hell, if we're going to be stuck here, we might as well have another five or six of our kind. This town will be gay-friendly before you know it."

"Uh, Ezra? Are you completely insane?" Smokey asked.

"Yep. Crazy in love. I know the townspeople act like they're disgusted but they just need to get used to seeing two men in love and kissing." Ezra stood enough to lean over the table and steal a quick kiss from Wyn.

Gasps sounded all around them. Richard began chuckling and soon the chuckles became a full belly laugh as he continued to eat his hamburger.

"You're scheming again, aren't you?" Smokey asked.

"Yep. You be sure and tell the other guys in the leather club we might have found a new home base."

"Leather club? Boy, you'd best get out of Oklahoma. I think your brain's being fried in that heat."

"Nope, I'm good. Had fantastic sex this morning. You know that Wyn. He's a regular wildcat in the sack."

"TMI, brother. I'm hanging up now."

Ezra heard the click on the other end of the line. "Okay, well talk to the boys and give me a call back." He closed his phone and stuck it back in his pocket.

Clapping his hands together, he rubbed vigorously. "So what's for lunch?"

* * * *

By the time they left the diner, Richard was holding his side. "I've never seen anything so funny in my life. I thought Mrs. Kirkpatrick was gonna throw up when you kissed Wyn."

Ezra grinned. "It was one of my best performances. That reminds me though. I need to call Smokey back."

"If he'll even talk to you after that," Wyn said rolling his eyes. "You really think that'll help sell the place?"

"Hell yeah." Ezra turned to Richard and pulled out his wallet. Fishing out one of his business cards for the EZ Does It, he handed it over. "If you ever get tired of living like this, you've got a job with me."

Richard took the card and read it carefully. "I might just take you up on that offer." Richard stuck the piece of paper in his pocket. "You two taking off soon?"

"Probably Monday. We're going to load the bucket tractor of dad's on the flatbed. That'll require at least another day of picking up all the pieces and stowing them back in their tubs."

"Do the two of you have plans for later this evening? I'd like to take you down to Tulsa and show you a good time before you leave. I've got a couple friends who own a dance club."

"Gay friendly?" Wyn asked.

"I hope so, since the two of them have been partners for years." Richard grinned.

Ezra looked down at Wyn. "Sounds fun to me. We still haven't gotten around to that dance I promised."

Wyn's face turned a pretty shade of red. "What I got was much better than a dance, but yeah, it sounds fun. They won't mind a couple of old geezers will they?"

"Hell no. You'll see a little bit of everything at Club Maverick. Saturday nights are one of their biggest too."

They continued to walk towards Richard's truck. "I'll pick you up around eight, or is that too late?"

Ezra wrapped an arm around Wyn's shoulders. "We'll just have to take an afternoon nap, of sorts," he chuckled.

Richard smiled and tipped his hat. "Enjoy yourselves. I'll be by around eight."

Chapter Eight

Wyn was shocked when he opened the front door. There stood Richard completely decked out in leather gear. "Is there something about this club you forgot to mention?"

Laughing, Richard shook his head. "Anything goes there. This is just what I prefer."

"And your grandfather didn't say anything when you left the house?" Wyn suddenly felt way over dressed in his designer jeans, boots, white shirt and brown leather vest.

"I don't stay in granddad's house when I'm in town. I bought an old camper I park out behind the barn." Richard looked around the living room. "Is Ezra about ready?"

"Yeah, he's out in the barn messing with Lucky. He said to give him a toot on the horn when we're ready to take off."

Richard shook his head. "I've never seen a grown man so crazy about a calf."

Wyn chuckled. "Tell me about it. It's going to take us twice as long to get home pulling the horse trailer. I told him it would probably be just as cheap to have Lucky shipped to Cattle Valley, but he won't hear of it. He says no one can take care of Lucky the way he can."

"That's all fine and dandy now, but what happens when Lucky grows into a fourteen or fifteen hundred pound bull?"

Wyn grabbed the keys from the table and locked the front door. "I'm sure if anyone can handle a pet that size, it would be Ezra."

They climbed into the pickup and drove towards the barn before sounding the horn. Several minutes later, Ezra came out and Wyn scooted to the middle.

"Hey," Ezra said getting in.

"How's Lucky?" Richard asked.

"Growing every hour, I think," joked Ezra.

Richard pulled out and headed towards Tulsa. "We'll be getting there a little early, but I wanted a chance to talk to the owners before they became too busy."

"Good guys?" Wyn asked.

"The best. I used to bartend for them. Still do when they have something special going on. The owners, Mark and Scott have become good friends over the years."

Wyn settled under Ezra's arm and got comfortable. He fingered the small bandages still on his face and neck.

"Stop it," Ezra said pulling Wyn's hand away from his face. "You look fine."

"Maybe I should've taken them completely off. I think they might draw more attention." The wound on his face was narrow but about three inches long.

Ezra tilted Wyn's head up to look down into his eyes. "You plan on doing a lot of flirting?"

"No, but I've been to gay bars before. There are a lot of hot young guys that like to troll for big daddies like you."

Ezra's head lowered and kissed him. "What would I do with a young stud? I can barely keep up with you in bed."

Richard cleared his throat. "Uh, hello? Guy who's not getting any sitting right here."

Wyn turned to Richard and smiled. "That has to be your choice. You're a damn good-looking guy."

"Unlucky in love, what can I say?"

The ride to Tulsa passed quickly, as they settled in to an easy conversation. Pulling up in front of a free-standing black painted building with red trim, Ezra looked at Richard. "At least we found a place to park."

"Yeah, like I said, we're early. Club Maverick doesn't really get jumping until around ten-thirty or so."

They locked up the truck and headed towards the entrance. Ezra opened the big red steel door and was greeted by a man of his own size, sitting on a stool. Wyn would bet it wasn't often he came across someone as big as he was.

"Hey, Tiny," Richard said from behind Ezra.

The big guy smiled. "Richie! 'Bout time you showed your face in here. Mark and Scott thought you might've dropped off the edge of the planet."

"Close. I've been up in Pamona helping granddad." Richard motioned to his right.

"These are my friends, Wyn and Ezra. I promised to show them a good time. So be nice."

Tiny looked shocked. "I'm always nice."

"Mmmhmm. Until someone pisses you off." Richard grinned at Tiny.

Shrugging, Tiny held up his hands. "What can I say, I'm human."

Tiny pointed towards the bar. "Scott's sitting over there. Why don't you go say hi."

"We will," Richard said and clapped Tiny on the shoulder. "Good to see you again."

Richard ushered them towards the bar. On the way over, Ezra pointed out the mirrored cowboy boots hanging over the dance floor.

"Cool," Wyn said.

"Yeah," Richard agreed, "they've also got a mirrored saddle they swap it with."

Ezra chuckled and shook his head. "Why don't we have a place like this in Cattle Valley? Don't get me wrong, Brewster's is a nice place, but I can't believe we don't have a real place to dance."

Wyn looked up at Ezra. "New business venture?"

Ezra shrugged and rubbed his chin. "I don't know. Maybe."

They arrived at the bar and ordered their drinks before moving over to an older gentleman.

"Hey," the man Wyn assumed to be Scott said. He stood and wrapped his arms around Richard. "It's good to see you."

Scott looked around Richard. "Did you bring us some new customers?"

"Yep," Richard said, stepping to the side.

"I'd like you to meet my new friends, Ezra and Wyn. Guys, this is Scott."

Wyn reached out and shook Scott's hand. "Great place you have here." Wyn thought Scott looked a little younger than he was, with a full head of sandy brown hair.

Scott looked around the room at the twenty-five or so people. "We like it. We've come to think of our customers as family."

Wyn smiled at the pride evident in Scott's voice and posture. He liked the man already and they'd just met. He gestured towards Ezra. "I have a feeling this big guy might try to pick your brain later about the bar business."

Scott nodded and looked at Ezra. "Grab yourself a drink and pull up a stool. I'm always happy to talk about one of my favourite passions."

Ezra looked back at Wyn. "You mind?"

"Not at all. I'm going to order a wine and challenge Richard to a game of pool."

Richard's eyebrow rose. "You're a pool player?"

Wyn shrugged. "I'm not a shark or anything, but I can certainly hold my own."

"Five bucks?" Richard asked, digging money out of his pocket.

"You're on."

* * * *

Fifteen dollars down, Wyn finally conceded that Richard was a much better player. He looked over and spotted Ezra still in deep conversation with Scott and another man.

"Is that Mark?" he asked Richard.

"Yeah. Come on, I'll introduce you to the man that started calling me Richie." Richard rolled his eyes and put his stick back on the rack.

"Sorry, but you don't seem like a Richie to me."

"It was hard to get used to at first, but I'm cool with it."

Richard stepped up to the table the threesome now occupied. "Mark, I'd like you to meet Wyn."

Mark stood and immediately picked Wyn up in a hearty bear hug. Wyn was a little shocked to say the least.

As Ezra began to growl, Scott chuckled. "That's his way. He's a very touchy feely kind of guy. He doesn't mean anything inappropriate by it."

The big six-foot, bald man put Wyn back on his feet. "Sorry." Mark turned to Ezra. "I wasn't poaching, swear."

Seemingly embarrassed by his reaction, Ezra smiled. "No, I'm sorry. I tend to get a little territorial where Wyn's concerned."

Ezra pulled Wyn into his lap and wrapped an arm around him. Wyn was just fine with that. He enjoyed knowing Ezra was jealous of the good-looking bar owner. "So, did you learn everything about the bar business you needed?" Wyn asked, trying to lighten the mood.

Ezra nodded and kissed him. "I learned that I need to talk to the city council and ask about zoning. I'll also need a good manager," Ezra said and looked at Richard.

Richard's brows rose. "Me?"

Ezra nodded his head. "Scott and Mark both agree you have the skills for the job. If I can get something off the ground, would you be interested in moving to Cattle Valley to manage it for us?"

Wyn looked at Ezra. "Us?"

Ezra blushed and gave him another quick kiss. "I guess it's something we need to discuss, huh?"

"Uh, yeah," Wyn said with an exaggerated nod.

Richard laughed and took the empty chair. "If you build a club, I will come." He laughed.

Wyn felt the rising erection under his butt. "Dance?" he asked Ezra. He wanted to feel the hard ridge of his man's arousal from the front.

"Thought you'd never ask."

Ezra lifted Wyn from his lap and grinned at the others. "We'll be back. Eventually."

Wyn started towards the dance floor, with Ezra's strong hand on the small of his back. He couldn't help notice the looks they were both getting, him from the other big burly bears in the room and Ezra from the cute twink.

The DJ, Ron he thought Richard said his name was, started a slow country ballad. He turned and Ezra pulled him into a tight embrace. "Perfect," Ezra said.

Resting his head on Ezra's broad chest, Wyn moved to the music. He grinned as he felt the press of Ezra's cock against his lower abdomen. He looked up and winked. "With that thing in your pants you'd better make sure not to dance with anyone but me."

Ezra smiled and squeezed Wyn's ass. "You're the only person able to get me this hard."

He moved back and forth several times, delighting at Ezra's rough groans. His own cock was just as hard, but it was Ezra he enjoyed torturing.

"Are you looking for trouble?" Ezra growled, squeezing Wyn's ass harder.

"Nope. Just enjoying myself." Wyn pressed his own erection against Ezra's thigh.

"Can you feel me?" he asked.

Ezra answered by insinuating his muscular thigh between Wyn's legs. It gave his cock the added pressure it needed. Wyn found himself riding Ezra's thigh. "Damn."

He felt sweat bead on his forehead with the overwhelming desire to come. His balls drew up as he started to shake.

Ezra chuckled. "See? It's not so fun now, is it?"

"I think I need to use the restroom." Wyn extricated himself from Ezra's thigh and made a beeline for the men's room. He barely managed to get his cock out of his jeans and give himself a couple of strokes before he came.

"Shit," he shouted to the ceiling as his sensitive cock continued to throb.

It wasn't until he started to come down that he looked around. There was a big solitary figure just inside the door with his arms crossed over his chest.

Wyn grinned and reached for a paper towel to clean himself up. "Sorry," he said to Ezra. "I didn't mean to ruin our dance."

Ezra strode forward and ran a hand over Wyn's cock before stuffing it back into his briefs. "Don't apologise. I like that I'm able to make you lose control. Besides, that was sexy as fuck."

Wyn glanced down at the bulge still present behind Ezra's fly. "You need me to help with that?"

"Later. I like a little torture. Keeps me on my toes."

* * * *

As the night wore on, Ezra began to really like the guys in Tulsa.. It was nice to have people look him in the eye when he talked. Even back home a lot of people seemed afraid of him. That got him thinking. Maybe it wasn't the people back home that were different?

He poked Wyn in the side and waited for him to finish his conversation with Mark. "What?" Wyn asked nuzzling against his side.

"Am I different here?" Ezra asked.

"Different? What do you mean, sweetheart?"

"No one seems to be afraid of me here. Why?"

Wyn grinned and got out of his chair to straddle Ezra's lap. "Because you aren't scary here. You're smiling, talking, you know, basically being friendly. I think the loss of the mountain-man beard could also have something to do with it."

Ezra's brows drew together. He knew he'd always kept to himself, but he never considered himself an unfriendly person. "I guess I need to work on that, huh?"

Wyn leaned in and ran his tongue over Ezra's bottom lip. "I'll help you. You're a wonderful man. It's about time Cattle Valley knew it."

He opened his mouth and sucked Wyn's tongue inside. The kiss was deep and loud as they both moaned. "Are you about ready to go?"

"Yep. We just need to find Richard."

Ezra looked around the room. "Scott, have you seen Richard?"

Scott shook his head. "Have you?" he asked Mark.

"Nope," Mark said.

"I saw him go outside earlier with some guy, but I thought he'd be back by now," Wyn added.

Mark seemed to bristle and stood, looking towards the door. "What did this guy look like?"

Wyn shrugged. "I'm not sure. I only saw him from the back. I know he was bald and had on a leather jacket with chains all over it."

Mark started towards the door. Wyn looked at Scott. "What's wrong?"

Scott stood and started to follow Mark. "Sounds like Richie's ex, Daddy Paul. He's bad news but Richie can't seem to stay away from him."

Wyn was almost dumped to the floor when Ezra stood. "Sorry, baby," Ezra said, catching him before he fell.

"Go," Wyn said.

Ezra hurried to catch up with Mark who was talking to Tiny. He turned when he heard Ezra approach. "Tiny didn't see Paul, but he was on a break earlier."

Ezra turned back to Wyn. "Stay inside."

Wyn nodded and Ezra followed Tiny and Mark out to the parking lot. They didn't immediately see anyone. Tiny motioned to the other side of the parking lot. "You two go that way."

They split up and started searching. "So what's the story on this ex of Richard's?" Ezra asked.

Mark shrugged. "They were together for about three years. We tried to tell Richie early on that Paul wasn't good for him. Richie became a different person there for awhile. It seemed he loved Paul more than he loved himself."

"Is that such a bad thing?" Ezra asked thinking of the depth of his love for Wyn.

"Not when you have a healthy relationship. That wasn't the case with Richie and Paul. He used to beat Richie pretty regularly. Paul's a player and a mean drunk. I stopped by one time and Richie was shining Paul's boots so he could go out on a date."

Mark looked Ezra in the eyes. "With someone else."

Ezra's brows rose. That didn't sound like the Richard he knew. "So what finally broke them up?"

Mark stopped walking and put his hands on his hips. Looking down at the asphalt, he shook his head. "I did. I couldn't watch my friend go through it again. I told him either dump Paul, or I wouldn't hang around with him anymore."

Mark looked back up at Ezra. "It was one of the hardest things I've ever done. I love Richie like a brother, but I've no doubt that Paul would've eventually beaten him to death."

Ezra knew how he felt when he found out Brian Doles had been beating Wyn. "You did the right thing," he said putting a hand on Mark's shoulder.

"Over here," Tiny yelled across the parking lot.

They took off at a run to the side of the club. Tiny was bent over Richard talking on the phone. He looked up at Ezra and Mark and shook his head. Covering the mouthpiece, he whispered. "The ambulance is on its way."

Ezra stepped around Tiny to kneel beside Richard's head. He felt his stomach roll at the condition his friend was left in by a man who had supposedly once loved him. He quickly unsnapped and took off his shirt and held it to the mass of cuts on Richard's chest and abdomen.

He pointed towards the wound on his friend's leg. "Put pressure on that," he told Mark.

Mark immediately took off his shirt and held it to the stab wound on Richard's thigh. Richard seemed to float in and out of consciousness until the ambulance arrived. The loud sirens brought out a flood of people from the club, including Scott and Wyn. They were all asked to step back as the medical technicians worked to get an IV in Richard.

With Wyn safely tucked under his arm, Ezra watched as they loaded his friend into the back. With its lights flashing and siren blaring, the ambulance pulled out of the parking lot. Ezra turned to Scott. "Can we get a ride to the hospital? I don't think the cops are going to hand over Richard's truck keys."

"Sure," Scott said, running his hands through his hair. "I'm gonna shut down the bar, send everyone home and then we'll be ready."

Scott shook his head. "I can't believe this. Nothing like this has ever happened here."

Mark must've heard the distress in his partner's voice. He left Tiny and the policeman to walk over and wrap his arms around Scott. "It isn't the bar, babe, it's Paul. Tiny told me he's been in a couple of times looking for Richie."

Scott buried his face in Mark's neck. "We need to get to the hospital."

“Yeah. I’ve already asked Tiny to have the bartenders help him close up. I’m finished with the police for now, so we’re free to go.”

“Ezra and Wyn need a ride.”

“Sure,” Mark said and placed a kiss on Scott’s forehead. “Richie’ll be okay.”

Chapter Nine

"So, how's your friend?" Nate asked, lounging on one of the display cases.

"Richard will be better once he gets through the trial. That ex of his really did a number on his mind as well as his body," Wyn said, stocking new merchandise.

"Well, if anyone would know what he's going through, it would probably be you."

"Yeah. That's part of the problem. Part of me feels bad for cutting out of there before the trial." He and Ezra had stayed in Oklahoma an extra week until they knew for sure Richard would be okay, but he still felt guilty.

"Richard promised Ezra he'd move to Cattle Valley once he was on his feet and finished with all the court stuff." Wyn picked up the empty box and carried it to the back as Nate followed.

"You two still plan to build a dance club? I hear Jim Brewster's trying to block it with the council."

Sighing, he sat down on a chair in the storeroom. At first Ezra had wanted the club so the two of them could own something together, but now it had become more about giving Richard a purpose.

It wasn't that Wyn wasn't interested in owning a club, but since they'd been back in town, he felt Ezra slipping away from him.

Smokey always managed to come up with something that required Ezra's attention on the ranch. The few times Wyn had gone out to the EZ Does It, Smokey had seemed to make a point of letting him know he wasn't welcome.

Wyn tried on several occasions to bring it up with Ezra, but his lover would chuckle and tell him he was being overly sensitive.

"Wyn? You still with me?" Nate asked.

His head came up and he blinked a couple of times. "Sorry, just thinking."

"Something wrong?"

"No, not really. I don't think Smokey likes me dating Ezra."

"What? Smokey's one of the nicest guys in town. You must be..."

Wyn held up his hand cutting Nate off. "Please don't tell me I'm oversensitive or paranoid. I know when someone doesn't like me."

"Ooh, I seem to have hit on a sore spot. What's Smokey doing?"

He sighed. "That's just it. He hasn't done anything tangible that I can go to Ezra with. It's just the looks he gives me, and half the time when I call the house, and Smokey answers, he doesn't give Ezra my messages."

Nate put a hand on Wyn's shoulder. "Maybe he doesn't like you coming between him and his best friend."

Wyn nodded. "Or maybe he wants Ezra for himself?"

* * * *

"Hey, babe," Ezra said into the phone.

"Hi," Wyn answered.

"I won't be able to come into town until late. I'm expecting a delivery of another bull sometime this evening. I thought you might come out and eat supper with me and the boys."

When there was no answer right away, Ezra gripped the phone a little tighter. "Wyn? Is there something going on?" His lover had been very distant the last week or so.

"No. Um, I'll be out to the ranch after I close up the store."

Ezra hated the sad tone he detected coming from Wyn. "I love you."

"I love you, too. I'll see you in a couple of hours."

"Okay, babe. See you then." Ezra hung up the phone and looked around his office. Maybe he should just forget the damn bull and have Smokey inspect it.

A knock at the door brought his head up. "Come in."

His best friend and foreman opened the door. "Hey, you have anything else you want the hands to take care of before they head out?"

"Head out? Where's everyone going?"

"It's Taco Night at Brewster's." Smokey said nudging up his tan cowboy hat.

"Traitors," Ezra mumbled. Damn that James Brewster. He'd always liked the guy until he started such a fuss over Ezra's plans to build a dance club.

"No, send them on their way. Wyn's coming over for dinner. I guess I'll just find us some leftovers."

"I'm sure I can whip something up," Smokey said.

"Naw, I think you should go out with the hands. Wyn and I will manage." If he didn't know his friend any better he'd almost swear Smokey looked pissed.

"Something wrong?"

"Nope," Smokey said before walking out.

Ezra went to the office window and watched his friend walk towards the barn. "What the hell did I do now?" It seemed everyone was mad at him lately.

* * * *

Wyn finished closing out the register and was turning off the store lights, when he heard the front door open and close. "Is that you, Nate?"

Without waiting for an answer, he quickly went into his office and grabbed the wrapped package of sports shirts that had come in for Nate. Carrying them through to the store, he hollered. "I've got your clothes right here."

He stopped dead in his tracks when he saw Smokey leaning on the glass checkout counter. "Something I can help you with?"

Smokey's eyes narrowed just a bit. Wyn swallowed and took a step back, setting the package on the floor. "Smokey?"

"You're going to destroy everything Ezra's worked for.. A ranch is only as good as the relationships that are forged in hard work and camaraderie."

"What are you talking about? I leave Ezra to his business all day. Are you saying that my seeing him at night is going to destroy the ranch?"

"That's exactly what I'm saying. Before you showed up, Ezra ate every meal with us. It was the time of day we discussed issues concerning the EZ Does It. Maybe it sounds stupid, but the hands felt Ezra cared."

"And they don't now," Wyn guessed.

"Hell, outside of work, we don't see him anymore. All the cowboys know is that he leaves in the evenings to spend his time with someone of a higher class than they are."

Smokey stood and took a step towards Wyn. "It needs to stop."

Wyn took another step back. "I'll talk to Ezra about it."

Smokey took three steps forward and was in Wyn's face. "Why do you need to run to Ezra? You're a man dammit. Start acting like one for a change and do what's best for Ezra, and that means staying away from him."

The front door opened and Ryan stepped inside. "Nate said you had something for me to pick up." Ryan stopped when he saw the scene in front of him.

"Wyn? Is everything all right?"

Wyn looked into Smokey's eyes. At one time he'd considered Smokey friendly, but there was nothing friendly about the way he was being stared at.

Smokey turned and tipped his hat to Ryan. "I'm done here, Sheriff."

Wyn watched as Smokey walked towards the door. With his hand on the handle, Smokey turned back to Wyn. "Think about what I've said."

After he left, Wyn felt frozen to his spot. Ryan came over and put a hand on his shoulder. "You okay? You're shaking."

Ryan gestured towards the door. "What was that all about?"

Wyn looked at Ryan. "To be honest, I'm not really sure. I think I was just warned to stay away from Ezra."

He bent down and picked up the package. "Here are Nate's shirts."

"Forget the shirts," Ryan said, tossing the package on the counter. "Why would Smokey tell you to stay away from Ezra? That doesn't sound like him."

What the hell was the deal with Smokey and the people of Cattle Valley? They seemed to think the man was a saint. Wyn had dealt with another man the town once revered and he'd learned there was no such thing in Cattle Valley. Men were men, some good, some not so good.

Wyn started to walk away, but Ryan held firm to his shoulder. "Talk to me. Not as a Sheriff but a friend."

"Smokey said that Ezra's ranch would be in trouble if he didn't start paying more attention to the cowboys and less attention to me."

Wyn turned to brace his hands on the counter. "I happen to think Smokey's jealous. I'm not sure if it's merely his friendship with Ezra that he's afraid of losing, or something more."

"That's bullshit. All of it. Don't let Smokey ruin what you have with Ezra. Talk to your man and let him know what's going on."

Wyn shook his head. "I won't break up a friendship. I'll deal with Smokey in my own way."

"You're shaking like a leaf. Smokey's got a good fifty pounds on you."

He turned to Ryan and grinned. "Maybe I need a few more lessons from Nate before I travel down that road."

* * * *

By the time Wyn locked up and drove out to the ranch, it was nearly eight. He spotted Ezra standing beside a holding pen next to the barn and walked that way. "Hey," he said as he approached the broad back.

Ezra turned and looked him up and down. "Where've you been? The store closed ninety minutes ago."

Something in Ezra's tone put Wyn on edge. "What? Am I being kept track of now? I got here as soon as I could."

"If I'd have known you wouldn't be out in time for dinner, I would've gone into town with Smokey and the hands."

Wyn's spine stiffened as his hands balled into fists. He'd had about all he was going to take for one day. He turned on his heels and started walking back to his car. "Maybe you should've eaten with the cowboys. Better yet, see if Smokey feels like warming your bed this evening," he hollered over his shoulder.

"What the hell's gotten into you?" Ezra yelled as Wyn opened his car door.

Wyn looked back at the man he loved. He felt a lump form in his throat as an ache spread across his chest. "Open your eyes, Ezra."

He got in and slammed his door before tearing out of the drive. He'd be damned if he'd let another man try to dictate to him. He looked at the clock on the dashboard and picked up the phone.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Nate. I need your help."

* * * *

At ten o'clock, Ezra gave up trying to get Wyn on the phone and headed into town. He still wasn't sure what was going on, but Wyn meant too much to him to let it drop. The crack about Smokey had him wondering though. Did Wyn think he had something going with his foreman? He'd told Wyn they were just friends, but maybe his lover didn't buy it.

Sure he'd seen Smokey checking him out a time or two over the years, but he assumed his friend had hit a dry spell and was curious.

He pulled into Wyn's driveway and noticed the house appeared dark. Surely Wyn wasn't already in bed? He got out and rang the doorbell.

After five minutes, he turned back and got into his truck. Maybe Wyn's crack about opening his eyes had more meaning than he'd originally thought. Could Wyn have been talking about himself?

A growl erupted as he put the truck in gear. If he had to search the entire town, he'd find out what his man was up to. Wyn was his, and there was no way he'd let someone else take him away.

He drove up Joshua Boulevard first since it was the nearest major street. After about ten minutes, he slammed on his breaks when he spotted Wyn's luxury sedan parked at The Gym.

There was only one other vehicle in the parking lot and Ezra didn't have a clue as to whom it might belong. All he knew was that Wyn wasn't into working out, especially at ten-thirty at night.

Backing up, he pulled into the lot and parked beside the stranger's black SUV. Getting out, he went to the front door. The closed sign was up in the window and the doors were locked.

Walking around the building, he spotted a light shining through the window of one of the back rooms. Ezra took a deep breath and approached the window.

What he saw shocked him. There was his man standing toe to toe with some bodybuilder. Wyn had his shirt and belt off and the two appeared to be laughing. Ezra couldn't help but notice the flush on Wyn's pale skin or the mussed hair.

His immediate reaction was to put his fist through the window, but common sense prevailed. Nope, he'd just wait outside. He knew if he talked to Wyn at that moment, he'd say something he'd regret. As for the other dude? He'd be history.

Ezra strode back to the front of the building and parked himself against the hood of Wyn's car. He crossed his arms and waited. One way or another, things with his lover would be settled before morning.

Chapter Ten

"I can't thank you enough for doing this, Mario. I know you probably had better things to do than teach an old man new tricks." Wyn pulled his shirt on. He stuffed his belt in the pocket of his dress pants.

"No problem. I didn't have much going on this evening anyway. At least you learned a couple of new skills." Mario picked up a towel and wiped the sweat from his face.

"Yeah, I just hope they work in a real life situation." Smokey's face came to mind. Wyn hadn't learned anything fancy from Mario, but he had been taught several ways to bring a bigger man to his knees.

"They will as long as you stay calm and remember them."

Mario shut off the training room light and ushered Wyn through the dark gym to the front door. "If you decide you want to continue the training, let me know. I have several regular spots open for one on one lessons."

They reached the parking lot, and Wyn turned towards his car. He was shocked as hell to find Ezra leaning on his hood. "Ezra? What are you doing here?"

Ezra stood to his full height and rubbed his chin. "Now, you see, I was just about to ask you the same thing." He gestured towards Mario. "Who's your new friend?"

Wyn didn't like the looks Ezra was aiming Mario's way. "Just that, a friend. Mario was working on some self defence moves with me."

"Oh, is that what they call it these days?"

Wyn felt his blood pressure shoot up at the innuendo. He closed his eyes and took a couple of soothing breaths. When he looked back at Ezra, it was with fire in his eyes. "Yeah, that's what they call it when one man needs to learn how to defend himself against a jealous foreman."

Ezra had the decency to look shocked. "What are you saying? Did Smokey say something to you?"

Wyn turned to Mario. "Thanks for the lesson. I'll let you know if I need anything else."

Mario seemed hesitant to leave Wyn with a man of Ezra's size. "It's okay," Wyn said. "This grouch is my boyfriend. He won't hurt me."

With a nod, Mario continued walking to his SUV. After he drove off, Wyn turned back to Ezra. He was surprised to see a softer look on Ezra's chiselled face.

Ezra patted the hood next to him. "Pull up a chair and let's talk."

Putting his hands in his pockets, Wyn walked towards the car. He felt the belt rubbing against his knuckles and sighed. He realised he would have probably come to the same conclusion if the shoe were on the other foot.

Instead of sitting on the hood, he stood in front of Ezra and leaned his forehead against the hard wall of his lover's chest. "I asked Nate if he had time to show me a few more self defence moves. He was busy, but said he'd give Mario a call since he knew he'd still be here. That's all we were doing, promise."

Ezra's arms wrapped around Wyn and he felt a kiss to the top of his head. "What's going on? You seem so distant lately."

Wyn hugged Ezra and shook his head. "You won't believe me."

Ezra lifted Wyn's chin up. "Try me."

"Smokey. I've tried to tell you he's been acting weird around me. But he came into the store earlier and warned me off you."

He felt Ezra's muscles tense up. "What do you mean, warned you off? What did he say?"

Wyn shrugged. "Just stuff about you losing touch with the ranch hands and how that would put the EZ Does It in jeopardy. And he told me that I needed to stay away from you."

He shook his head. "It wasn't so much what he said, but the way he said it. By the time Ryan walked into the store, Smokey had me pretty worried that he would do something to me."

"You know I'll never let anyone else hurt you, babe." Ezra's lips closed over his. Relief flooded him, and Wyn opened to Ezra's questing tongue. The kiss grew deeper and before he knew it, he was trying to climb his way up Ezra's body.

All he knew was he needed to be closer. He wrapped his legs around Ezra's waist and ground himself against the solid length in Ezra's jeans. "Need you," he panted, still humping against his man.

Ezra stood and carried him to the dark side of The Gym, away from the street. "Strip," Ezra growled as he set Wyn back on his feet.

Within seconds, Wyn was naked from the waist down and Ezra's jeans were around his knees.. Ezra turned Wyn to face the wall. "Need to taste you," Ezra moaned as he got down on his knees behind Wyn.

Wyn spread his legs as he felt the first swipe of Ezra's tongue across his hole. "Shit," he moaned as he rested his head against the cedar shingled building. The wet tongue licked and probed as Ezra buried his face in Wyn's ass.

Those big fingers began to stretch and play with his puckered skin, leaving him begging to be filled. Ezra withdrew, and turned Wyn around. "Love you."

Ezra picked him up and impaled him on the long thick cock he'd come to love. Wyn's back slammed against the wall as Ezra began to ride him hard. He'd never been so glad to be only half undressed as his shirt rubbed against the rough siding.

Ezra fucked him like a man possessed and Wyn loved every second of it. The cock battering his hole belonged to the love of his life and that's all that mattered. He hung on to Ezra's shoulders and enjoyed the ride, only releasing his hold to grab his own cock.

As his balls drew up tight, he reached down with his free hand and pushed Ezra's shirt up. "Gonna come all over you, sweetheart," he groaned.

"Yeah, paint me, babe," Ezra said in a rough voice.

The next time that thick cock pegged his gland, Wyn erupted, spraying his cum in white rivulets all over Ezra's stomach.

Ezra gripped his ass tighter and buried himself deep inside Wyn's body. With an all over body shake, Ezra emptied his seed inside of Wyn.

They slid to the ground with Wyn still wrapped around Ezra. "I love you," Wyn declared right before kissing Ezra. This was so much better than fighting, although his shirt probably wouldn't agree.

"You realise we just ruined a two-hundred dollar shirt," Wyn panted, breaking the kiss.

Ezra gave a grunt. "I'll buy you a new one."

"No need. I have a display case full of them." He ran his tongue up the side of Ezra's face. "Is that the rough ride you promised? Because if so, I could get used to it."

Ezra fell back onto the soft grass and brought Wyn with him. "I'm getting too old. I think you nearly killed me," Ezra said, tucking Wyn's head under his chin.

"As much as I'd like to take a nap right here, I don't think the police will think it's an appropriate spot. Let's go back to my house."

"Mmm hmm," Ezra mumbled, but made no move to get up.

Wyn reluctantly pulled away and searched on the ground for his clothes. After dressing, he helped Ezra pull up his jeans. "Come on, big guy. I've got a king size bed just waiting for you."

With Wyn's help, Ezra finally made it to his feet. "Will you drive?" Ezra asked.

"Sure, I'll bring you back in the morning for your truck."

As he helped Ezra into the passenger seat, he stopped and gave him a kiss. "I don't want to fight with you ever again."

Ezra pulled him closer. "I'm sure we'll fight, all couples do. The thing we need to remember is to be open and honest about what we're fighting about."

Wyn nodded and went around to the driver's side. Ezra ran a finger down the scar on Wyn's face. "I'll get things settled with Smokey. He won't bother you again."

Wyn caught Ezra's hand and brought it to his lips. "I hate to come between you and your best friend."

"You're my best friend," Ezra replied. "You're my everything."

* * * *

After arriving home the next morning, Ezra went into his office and called the barn.

"Jax," the ranch hand on the other end answered.

"Hey, I need you to find Smokey and send him to my office."

"Will do, he's out messing with the new bull."

"Tell him to stop whatever he's doing and get in here. Thanks, Jax."

Ezra hung up the phone and paced the floor in front of the window. He'd been unable to sleep even with Wyn wrapped around him. Hoping like hell it was all a misunderstanding, he went to the kitchen for a cup of coffee.

As he was pouring some of the thick brew into his favourite mug, the phone rang. "EZ Does It," he answered.

"It's Ryan."

"Hey, Sheriff. Wyn said you helped him out, I appreciate it."

"So he told you," Ryan sounded relieved.

"Not the particulars, but he said Smokey told him to stay away from me." He stood in front of the window and watched as Smokey strode towards the house.

"I just wanted to make sure. I haven't seen Wyn that upset since the whole Doles debacle."

Ezra eyed his old friend and took a sip of his coffee. "I'll take care of it."

"Talk to you later. If Wyn has any more problems, it'll become an official police matter."

"Thanks, we'll let you know." Ezra hung up as the front door opened and closed. He walked through the kitchen into the living room.

"My office, now," he said passing Smokey in the foyer.

When they entered the office, Smokey took a seat in one of the comfortable leather chairs in front of the desk. "Is there something you need to tell me?" he asked Smokey.

Smokey took off his hat and ran his chocolate brown fingers over the short nap of his hair. "No, not that I can think of. The new bull looks good."

Ezra took a drink of his coffee and set the mug down. Crossing his arms, he leaned on the door frame. "Wyn said you came by his store."

He noticed the way Smokey shifted his weight in the chair. "Stopped in for a minute. Thought I might buy some new jeans."

"You didn't say anything to him about staying away from me?"

His friend's nostrils flared as he stood up and turned to face Ezra. "That sissy-man go crying to you?"

Ezra walked forward until he had Smokey pinned against the desk. Bending down to get right in Smokey's face, he narrowed his eyes. It took all the willpower he had not to flatten Smokey, friend or not.

"Don't you ever refer to Wyn like that again. You got me?"

"Sure. I'm sorry if he misunderstood the reason for my visit. It was strictly innocent I can assure you."

"Wyn said you told him if he stuck around I'd lose the ranch."

Smokey puffed his chest out. "I'm not sorry for what I said to him. You've spent more time with him and dealing with that club shit than you have on your own spread."

Ezra's hands balled into fists. "What I do or don't do is my own damn business. If you don't like the way I'm running things, pack up and move on. And if you ever so much as look cross-eyed at Wyn, I'll have your ass for breakfast."

Smokey's face fell as he put his hands on Ezra's chest. At first Ezra thought Smokey would try to push him away, but instead, his foreman kissed him. Shocked, Ezra pulled back. "What the fuck was that about?"

Smokey grabbed him again and began running his tongue up Ezra's neck. "I love you. I have for years, but I thought you still weren't over your wife's death. I've hung back in the shadows waiting. The next thing I know, you're running off to Oklahoma to take up with someone like Wyn. He won't fit in here, Ezra. He'll make you miserable."

Ezra struggled with his friend for a few seconds, eventually getting away from him. He turned away and strode towards the window. "I'm sorry if I hurt you. I didn't have any idea you felt that way about me. I think it would be best if you looked for another job. I'll give you a couple of months pay and you can have the ranch truck you've always driven."

"You can't mean that," Smokey said coming up behind him. "You're going to fire me on Wyn's say so? I didn't do anything wrong."

Shaking his head, Ezra braced his arms on the window frame. "I just got off the phone with the sheriff. You want to try again to deny what you did?"

"Okay, yeah, I did it. I wanted him out of your life. I've been with you since you started this ranch. You're just gonna toss me out because you've found a tight ass to play with?"

Ezra turned around and picked Smokey up by the neck and slammed him into the wall. "Forget the fucking truck. You've got exactly one hour to get your shit and find your own goddamn way off my property. And if you ever see me again, you'd better run the other way, because next time, I won't let you walk away."

He released Smokey and left the office without a backward glance. He had a lot of apologising to do to Wyn. How could he have been so blind?

Walking out to the barn, he found Jax. "If you can get Smokey off this ranch in the next hour, his position and cabin are yours." He left Jax slack jawed as he got into his pickup and headed towards town, and his meeting with the mayor.

"Fuck," he growled, slamming his fist against the dash. In his present mood, it might not be a good time to talk to Quade. Perhaps he should stop by the store first and start on that apologising.

Chapter Eleven

"Well, this is a pleasant surprise," Wyn said as Ezra stepped into the store.

Wyn came out from around the counter to give Ezra a much needed hug. Ezra held his man tighter and kissed his forehead. "I needed to see you," Ezra said.

Pulling back enough to look up, Wyn's brows rose. "What happened?"

"You were right about Smokey. I had to fire him." The thought of ending his long time friendship still made him sick to his stomach.

"Oh, Ezra," Wyn said and kissed his neck. "I'm so sorry."

Ezra shook his head. "Me, too. Maybe someday we'll be able to patch things up."

"Why aren't you at city hall? I thought you had a meeting with Quade this morning," Wyn asked, running his hands over Ezra's pecs.

Bending down, Ezra gave his man a deep kiss. "I thought I needed to calm down first."

Wyn looked around the store, before running his hand over the bulge in Ezra's jeans. "So, this is calm?" Wyn asked in a teasing tone.

"No, but holding you always has that effect on me."

"Pity there isn't time to do anything about it. Rain cheque?" Wyn asked giving Ezra's cock one last squeeze.

"Definitely," he answered, giving Wyn another kiss before pulling away. "I'll stop by after you close the store and we'll go back to your place."

Wyn looked at him for a moment before shaking his head. "If you fired Smokey, I think you should spend some time with the ranch hands. I'll come by and let myself in. You take your time and put your men at ease."

Damn he loved this man. "How did you get so smart?" Ezra chuckled.

Shrugging, Wyn sobered. "Smokey may have had his own motivations for the things he said, but they weren't totally without merit."

Ezra reached out and cupped Wyn's cheek. "I love you."

Wyn nodded. "I know."

* * * *

Deciding to walk to city hall, Ezra turned right out of the store. He stopped before he went any further and rubbed his chin. Maybe it would help Quade's mood if he brought him something to sweeten his pallet.

Turning around, Ezra waived to Wyn as he passed back by the window. He opened the door to Brynn's Bakery.

Kyle wheeled in from the back all smiles. "Hi, Ezra. Does your visit mean you forgive me for the cookie bouquet on Valentine's Day?"

He wouldn't tell Kyle, but that mean trick had helped him realise how much he wanted Wyn for himself. "Yeah, truce," he grinned. "Wyn and I are planning to attend your wedding this weekend. Can't be mad at a guy who is so in love."

Kyle blushed and Ezra gave him a friendly smile.

"I'm going over for a meeting with Quade. What would you suggest to sweeten him up?"

Kyle's brows rose. "Oh, a bribe, perfect." Kyle looked at the display case. "If it's Quade, you can't go wrong with a cinnamon roll." He winked. "Between you and me, I think the man is addicted."

"Perfect. I'll take two."

Kyle folded a pastry box and placed two over-sized cinnamon rolls inside with an extra container of frosting. He closed the box and pulled out a small sack, slipping two peanut butter cookies inside. "No sense not sweetening up Carol a bit, too."

"Ahh, smart man." Ezra nodded. He paid for the rolls, but Kyle refused payment for the cookies. After thanking him, he headed towards the city hall.

Stepping into the Mayor's wing, he held the small bag of cookies out to Quade's assistant, Carol. "Kyle said you liked peanut butter."

Carol took the bag and peeked inside. "Kyle's trying to make me fat," she said, pulling a cookie out and biting down on it. "But oh man is it worth it!"

Ezra pointed to the closed door. "Is he busy? I know I'm a little late, but I brought a peace offering."

"Hell, you could shoot his dog and he'd forgive you as long as you brought Kyle's cinnamon rolls to the funeral," Carol laughed.

Laughing, Ezra knocked on the frosted glass door.

"Come in," Quade called.

Ezra entered, brandishing the bakery box in front of him. "Am I too late?"

Quade's eyes were glued to the box. "Nope, have a seat and give me that box. I can't get over how different you look. I saw you in town the other day and thought Cattle Valley had a new resident at first." The mayor winked. "Your size is what gave you away."

After passing over the bribe, Ezra took a chair in front of Quade's desk. He studied the mayor as he dumped more frosting on the rolls. Quade didn't seem like a mayor. Ezra knew he was a smart man and good with the public, but Quade always seemed distracted.

"How was Hawaii?" He asked to get the ball rolling.

Quade stopped mid-bite and rolled his eyes. "Oh God, don't remind me. I met the sweetest little surfer. Damn, that man was hot. I almost resigned my position over the phone and became an official beach bum."

He knew Quade was trying to make light of it, but Ezra could see the pain in his eyes as he talked about the man he'd spent his vacation with. "There's always next year," Ezra said.

As soon as the words were out, Quade's face fell. Shit, he should have kept his big mouth shut. "Sorry," he mumbled.

"That's okay." Quade took another bite of his roll. "I'm sure Kai will have moved on by the time I get back there. He's too perfect not to have a hundred guys surrounding him on any given day."

"So ask him to come here," Ezra said.

"Why would he willingly leave the beauty of Hawaii to live in Wyoming? Naw, it's better that I just try to get him out of my mind."

Quade finished up the first roll and rubbed his stomach. "Now, down to business."

Standing, Quade went over to a closet and pulled out a cardboard tube. He tapped the tube against his leg for a few seconds before walking over to the conference table in the corner of the room. "There's something I want to show you."

Ezra stood and strode to the table as Quade rolled out a set of blueprints. "The city had these drawn up a couple of years ago. We've held off on proceeding with the plan, but I think it's time."

Leaning his hands on the table, Ezra studied the papers in front of him. "A hotel? In Cattle Valley?"

"Yep. We have the Apple Valley B&B, but we're hoping to attract some more tourists. Surely there are folks out there who'd love to spend their vacation in an open and friendly

town like ours. Then there's Rodeo Days to think about. Every year we lose money when people have to leave town and head to Sheridan to stay the night."

"So, where's this hotel going to be built and what does it have to do with me?" Ezra asked.

"James Brewster has the town convinced a dance club would violate the city sound ordinance. I've tried to find a way around it, but I'm afraid he's right. But this hotel," Quade pointed to the plans, "won't be in the city limits. We have a rather large piece of property that is basically going unused."

Quade looked at Ezra and smiled. "And? Are you going to tell me where this land is?" Ezra asked, getting frustrated.

"Overlook Mountain."

Ezra thought of the mountain rising at the edge of Cattle Valley.. He looked back down at the blue prints. "A ski lodge? That's brilliant."

"I happen to think so," Quade said and buffed his nails on his shirt.

"So, once again, what does this have to do with me?"

Quade flipped through a few of the rolled drawings and put a different one on top of the stack. "See this area right here? We were trying to figure out what to do with it. We could invite another restaurant in, but the lodge already has the main dining facility so it's kind of pointless. A dance club, however, would be perfect."

Ezra tried to picture a club in the rustic looking lodge. Yeah, he could definitely see the success in it. Without a word, he reached over and pulled Quade into a bear hug. "I knew there was a reason we made you mayor."

He released Quade and looked at the plans again. "When do you plan to start construction?"

Quade cleared his throat. "Officially, we have to have a town meeting about it, but unofficially, I've already made several calls. It looks like we can start as soon as it's voted on."

"Now, is the city building paying for it, or an individual?"

"The town trust is having it built. We've already been in contact with someone who's interested in a long-term lease for the building and the land."

"Will Wyn and I be leasing the club space from the trust or this individual?"

"You'll have to lease it from Guy, but I've already talked to him and he's all for it," Quade answered.

"Guy?"

Quade covered his face with his hand. "Sorry, that slipped out. Between us, Guy Hoisington is the man who approached us several years ago with the idea."

"The Olympic downhill gold medallist? Why would he want to live in Cattle Valley?"

Quade gave Ezra a slight grin. Shit. "Guy's gay?" Ezra asked, shocked.

Putting his finger to his lips, Quade grinned. "Shhh, you didn't hear that from me. Guy's looking for a place to be himself and retire from competition."

Ezra chuckled. Guy was only in his early thirties, must be tough to be able to retire so young. "It all looks really good, Quade. I'll have to talk it over with Wyn and get back to you. When do you plan to hold the town meeting?"

"Word is going out in the bulletin this week. The meeting is set for the week after."

Ezra nodded and glanced back down at the plans. It would probably be a huge money making opportunity. He wondered how Richard would enjoy living on the side of a mountain. Coming from Tulsa, he imagined it would be quite an adjustment.

"I'll get back to you in the next couple of days, but my instincts tell me to grab on and hold tight."

Quade started rolling up the plans. "I think your instincts are dead on."

Chapter Twelve

As Ezra took his normal seat at the ranch hands dinner table, he had the distinct impression everyone was worried. "Relax," he said, biting off a chunk off his dinner roll.

Jax cleared his throat and looked around the table. "Um, is Smokey gone for good? Because we've got a lot of work on our plates and we'll need another hand."

Ezra swallowed and took a drink of his tea. He didn't like discussing his personal life, but he'd known these three men for years, well, except Neil who was his newest hand. "Yeah, I think Smokey's gone for good."

He set his fork down and leaned his arms on the table. "Smokey said and did some things to Wyn that I couldn't tolerate. You all need to understand that Wyn's a part of my life now, and he's to be treated with respect."

The hands looked back and forth between each other. "What?" Ezra asked.

One of his youngest hands, Neil bit his bottom lip. "We know what Smokey did and we know why. We should've come to you, but were afraid to betray him."

Ezra reached across the table and thumped Neil on the shoulder. "Don't worry. What went on with Smokey was between me, him and Wyn."

Neil went stiff as a board at Ezra's touch. "Okay," Neil said, but Ezra could hear the tension in his voice.

Glancing at Jax, Ezra's brows rose in question. Jax shrugged his shoulders. "Neil? Are you afraid of me?"

"No, sir. I'll admit you were more intimidating when you had your beard, but you've never been anything but nice to me."

"Then why are you suddenly wound up tighter than a top?"

"Just not used to being touched, sir," Neil answered.

"Call me Ezra, please." He soothed Neil's shoulder for a second more before removing his hand.

Picking up his fork, Ezra dove in to the rest of his dinner. Between bites he talked back and forth with Jax on what needed to be done around the ranch. "Go ahead and put an ad in the paper for another hand."

Jax wiped his mouth on a napkin. "Well, if you'll let me, I already have someone in mind. There's a friend of my baby brother's that's in need of a job on a gay-friendly ranch. Logan needs to leave Montana as much as I did. I haven't seen him in about eight years, but he practically grew up at my folk's ranch."

"Does he know the business?" Ezra asked, finishing up his steak.

"Yeah. Logan may be a little wild from what I hear, but he was practically raised on the back of a horse. He helped us out during round-up every spring. He's an expert at branding and he's been working as a farrier for the last couple of years. He learned the trade from his Uncle Bob when his parents kicked him out of the house."

Damn, the kid sounded like a wet dream to a rancher. "Hire him."

* * * *

Ezra stayed after dinner to help clean up and play a couple of rounds of poker. He knew Wyn was up at the house, but he thought the cowboys needed him to reconnect.

Letting himself in the house, he found Wyn asleep on the couch. He hadn't meant to stay out so late, but he knew Wyn wouldn't be angry. Kneeling beside the couch, he studied his lover. His eyes went to the scars on Wyn's neck and cheek.

Maybe Smokey had been right. Even though Wyn had grown up on a ranch, he obviously didn't want to live on one. Why else would he have built that big fancy house in town?

Wyn's eyelids opened as Ezra ran a knuckle down the side of his man's face. "Hey," Ezra said, leaning down to give Wyn a kiss.

"Sorry I'm so late. Did you eat?"

"Yeah, I took Gavin out to dinner at Canoe."

Ezra had only met Wyn's employee on a couple of occasions and really knew nothing about him. He guessed that was something else that needed to change. They both should get to know each other's friends. "Next time you take him out, let me know and I'll go with you."

Wyn grinned. "Jealous?"

"No, not at all. I was just thinking it's time we got to know each other's friends."

Leaning up on his elbow, Wyn gave him a kiss. "Thanks, but I don't know if I'd consider Gavin a friend. He's even prissier than I am. He's an excellent employee though, which is why I made him store manager this evening."

"You what?"

"Yep. I decided it was time to take a small step back from the everyday running of the store. I've worked hard my whole life, and now I'm financially able to kick back and enjoy myself."

Wyn squirmed around a few seconds, looking like a boy afraid of telling his dad something. Oh, he knew that look.

"Babe, is there something else you want to tell me?"

He turned Wyn's face to look him in the eyes. "What's wrong?"

"You'll probably think it's stupid, but will we make it?"

"What do you mean will we make it? Are you asking if this love between us is solid?"

"Yeah. I feel like I'm at a crossroads. I just need to know if you think we're headed in the same direction that I do."

Ezra groaned and sealed their lips together. His heart felt like it would burst with the amount of love it contained. Delving his tongue in deep, he tried his best to communicate his feelings.

After several long moments, he broke the kiss. "I don't want to ever spend another day without you. Is that the answer you were looking for?"

Wyn smiled. "Yeah, that'll do." Wyn picked at Ezra's snap-front shirt. "I want to sell my house and move out here."

Whoa. That was totally the opposite of what he'd been thinking only minutes earlier. "You can't sell your house. You love that place. I can always move into town with you."

"The house is just a house. Yeah, it's nice, but it's not what I need to be happy. I can get that right here with you, if you'll have me?"

Ezra stretched out on top of Wyn. "I'd give anything to have you here, babe, you know that. Are you sure you won't mind driving into town every day?"

Wyn shook his head. "I won't have to. I plan to work a couple of mornings a week. I gave Gavin the go ahead to hire someone part time to help him out."

"Wow, you've really been busy."

Wyn chuckled and thrust up against Ezra. "We're not getting any younger. Besides, if we do this club thing, it'll take up even more of our time."

Ezra reached down and unzipped his jeans, before going to work on Wyn's dress slacks. The feel of their cocks, skin to skin was enough to have him moan as he kissed his man again. "I talked to Richard earlier. He'll be ready to move up by the end of summer to take over the club duties. Won't be much to do yet except oversee how our dollars are being spent, but it'll free us up and give him something to do."

Wyn squirmed under him and tore open Ezra's shirt. "Can we talk about this later?" Wyn asked, pinching Ezra's nipples.

Ezra grunted his reply and started a hard fast rub against Wyn's cock. As much as he wanted inside his lover, it would have to wait. He could already feel his balls draw up as Wyn sucked a bruise on his neck. "Gonna," he panted.

He hoped like hell Wyn didn't have on another of his expensive shirts as his cum jetted from his cock. Gasping, Wyn dug his fingers into Ezra's back as he fell over the edge.

Collapsing to the side as much as he could, Ezra's eyes drooped. "We're a couple of horny old farts, you know that?"

"Hmmm," Wyn agreed before they both dropped off to sleep.

* * * *

Saturday morning, Wyn helped Ezra with his tie. "You look so handsome," he said.

"I look ridiculous," Ezra griped. "People are going to fall over in a dead faint when they see me coming."

Wyn stepped back and surveyed his work. The grey suit he'd specially ordered fit Ezra perfectly. The white shirt and blue tie completed the outfit with class. He doubted that anyone had ever seen his man looking so damn hot.

He fingered Ezra's hair, noticing it was starting to get long again. Ezra must've taken his touching as a sign of disapproval.

"Sorry, I was going to get it cut, but the weekend snuck up on me."

Wyn shook his head. "You don't need it cut. I like it."

He grabbed a handful and pulled Ezra's head down for a kiss. "See, better than reins."

Ezra slapped Wyn's ass and chuckled. "You can ride me all you want, but don't compare me to a horse."

Laughing, Wyn ran his hand over the front of Ezra's suit pants. He felt Ezra's cock growing harder the more he played. "Stallion. Is that better?" Although Ezra's cock could probably beat a lot of horses Wyn had known. And it was all his, every last inch.

He got so carried away he started to unzip Ezra's pants.

"Wyn? Didn't you say this wedding was at two?"

With an exaggerated sigh, Wyn looked at the bedside clock. "Damn."

Ezra stepped back and kissed him. "Later it's all yours."

Wyn narrowed his eyes and covered Ezra's cock once more. "I've got news for you, it's already all mine."

"That it is," Ezra agreed. "So which gazebo is the wedding at?" Ezra stepped to the dresser and retrieved his wallet.

"The big one in the park." Wyn took one last look at Ezra's ass before checking his appearance once more in the mirror. "Ready?"

"Yep, as long as you don't sit too close to me on the drive over. I'd hate to have to remain in the truck during the wedding because of a hard on."

"Well then we'd better take my car. A bench seat is just too tempting." He picked up his keys and turned back to Ezra.

"Yeah, but if you can be good for the ride to town, you can ride me all the way home if we're in the truck."

Damn, he hadn't thought of that. An image of him impaling himself on Ezra's thick cock came to mind. Yum, there were all kinds of detours they could make. "Okay, deal," he said, running his hand across the front of his fly. Now Ezra wasn't the only one with an erection.

Laughing, Ezra passed him to walk out the door. He reached back and subtly brushed his hand over Wyn's cock. "Stop it," Wyn shouted. "If I can't play, neither can you."

"Spoil sport."

Chapter Thirteen

Ezra looked around at all the people in attendance at Kyle and Gill's commitment ceremony. "Damn, this is more like a town meeting than a wedding," he whispered in Wyn's ear.

Wyn glanced around and smiled. "Yeah, it's nice isn't it?"

"If you say so," he grumbled to himself and tried to loosen his tie without Wyn noticing.

Taking his hand, Wyn made a beeline for Nate, Rio and Ryan. Ezra stood back as Wyn embraced each man like he hadn't seen them in months. Nate commented on Wyn's suit and the two were off on a lively conversation about "The New Spring Line", whatever the hell that meant.

He looked at Rio and grinned. Seemed he wasn't the only one lost in the conversation. "How's the hay looking this year?" Rio finally asked him.

"Looking good. Should be ready to cut in about three weeks. Are you interested in buying some?"

"Probably. I'll have to talk to the boss and see what he thinks," Rio winked and gestured to Nate.

Yeah, Ezra had absolutely no doubt Nate ran that household. It was quite amusing to see a man of Rio's size and strength and Ryan's badass persona being ruled by someone of such diminutive stature. Still, by the look on Ryan and Rio's faces when they watched Nate it seemed to work for them.

Ezra wondered if he got the same look in his eyes when he watched Wyn. Probably. He watched over Wyn's shoulder as the Doctors Singer and Brown walked towards them. There was another man walking behind the pair that Ezra figured must be the new physical therapist Wyn had mentioned.

He was a bit surprised at how young the guy appeared. What shocked him even more was the unhappy vibes coming from all three of them as they shook hands with the rest of the small group.

Wyn turned back and put an arm around Ezra's waist. "Matt, this is my better and bigger half, Ezra James. Ezra, this is Matt Jefferies."

"Nice to meet you, Matt," Ezra said, shaking the guys hand.

"And you as well," Matt replied.

"I heard you've been thinking of renting Kyle's apartment? Well, have I got a deal for you. I'm looking to sell my house, but the buyer won't be able to make the sale until the end of summer. I thought maybe you'd be interested in it for a couple of months until you find something more permanent," Wyn said to Matt.

Ezra watched as both doctors stiffened and looked at Matt. Putting his head down, Matt looked like he'd rather be anywhere than where he was.

"Yeah, uh, can I get back to you on that?" Matt asked.

Wyn must have finally picked up on the tension. "Sure, just let me know and I can meet you at the house sometime to show you around."

"You find a better offer. Wyn's house is gorgeous," Nate said unaware of the undercurrents travelling between the three men.

Matt nodded. "I've been by it, you're right, Nate, it's a beautiful place."

Ezra sighed in relief as the music started up in the background, signalling people to take their seats. "Shall we?" he asked gesturing to the gazebo.

"Talk to you guys at the reception," Wyn said as Ezra led him away.

As soon as they were out of earshot, Ezra leaned in. "Am I the only one or..."

"No," Wyn said cutting him off. "There's definitely something odd going on between Matt and the Doctors."

They found a spot towards the back and settled in. Ezra threaded his fingers through Wyn's and brought his hand up for a kiss. "Love you," he mouthed.

Wyn smiled and melted Ezra's heart all over again. Yeah, there was that look he'd thought about earlier. He caught Nate looking at him out of the corner of his eye. The smile on Nate's face said it all.

Here they were, a pair of older men, who'd truly fallen in love for the first time in their lives.

"Oh my God," Wyn whispered as he pulled Ezra to his feet.

Ezra's eyes lit on Gill. Standing proud at the end of the aisle, the giant ex-football player wiped a tear from his eye as Kyle stood beside him. Ezra looked down at Wyn. "When did Kyle learn...?"

"I don't know, but it's wonderful," Wyn answered.

Ezra wrapped his arms around Wyn as he watched their two friends slowly walk down the aisle. He could see the determination in Kyle's face to walk beside his partner all the way down. Gill looked more proud than any man had a right to, but yeah, Gill definitely had the right to feel proud of his man.

Matt caught Ezra's eye as Kyle and Gill stood in front of Reverend Sharp. He was hovering off to the side, presumably in case Kyle needed his chair. That wasn't what had captured Ezra's attention however. Matt looked off somehow, like he was watching the couple without really seeing them.

Casey called for everyone to take a seat. Ezra released his hold on Wyn and did just that. He knew he should've been listening to the ceremony, but something about the way Matt stood there caused the hair on the back of his neck to stand on end.

He looked around for Doctors Brown and Singer. "Matt needs help," he whispered to Wyn.

"Huh?" Wyn asked, distracted by the ceremony.

He was about to stand, to go find Isaac or Sam when the two men appeared at either side of Matt and inconspicuously led him away. Ezra watched as they walked Matt to the parking lot and put him in the back of Sam's car. He noticed Isaac got in the back with him. The car pulled out of the parking lot just as Gill and Kyle kissed.

Applause broke out and everyone stood. Ezra stood with them and clapped his hands. "Where did Matt go?" Wyn asked. "I think Kyle's in need of his chair."

Ezra motioned to a young man who wheeled Kyle's chair to the gazebo. "Who's that?"

"Kevin, Kyle's brother." Wyn turned and looked up at Ezra. "So where did Matt go?"

"Isaac and Sam took him home I think."

"Was he sick?"

"No, I don't think so, but something's definitely going on with him."

Wyn gave Ezra a hug. "That's too bad. He's going to miss a hell of a reception."

As soon as they arrived at the reception hall, Wyn disappeared with Nate to start cutting the cake. With his hands in his pockets, Ezra walked around the new addition. He'd done a bit of work on the addition after the small fire and was happy to see it complete.

His eyes automatically went to the spot where he'd kissed Wyn for the first time. It was Christmas Eve and Nate had had mistletoe strung up everywhere. He smiled to himself, he knew after one taste of Wyn's lips he'd never want another man. The problem had been saying goodbye to the guilt over Nancy's death.

Man, that seemed like ages ago. He looked over at a laughing Wyn. Every time he laid eyes on his man, he couldn't believe he'd gotten so lucky.

"Hey, big guy, what's that smile about?" a woman asked from beside him.

Ezra looked down at Naomi. "Hey, squirt." Naomi Rivers was cute as a button and as feisty as a cougar. She'd been coming to the EZ Does It for several years just to ride his horses. He didn't mind, it gave the horses something to do other than work, and he saw the way a city gal like Naomi took to it so readily.

"So, you didn't answer my question," Naomi prompted.

Ezra pointed across the room to Wyn. "That's all the reason I need anymore."

"Why, Ezra James, you're in love," the redhead teased.

"That I am, Ms. Rivers." He narrowed his eyes and put on his mean face. "Why, you got a problem with that?"

Naomi laughed and held up her hands in surrender. "Nope, no problem at all. Love looks good on you."

"Feels good on me too," he said with a grin.

He caught sight of Wyn waving at him from across the room. "If you'll excuse me, the object of my affection is calling."

Naomi looked over at Wyn and waved. "Go. Anything to keep that smile on your face."

Ezra growled at her for old times' sake. He didn't want the people of Cattle Valley thinking he'd turned into a complete lovesick fool, even though that was exactly what he was. He stuck his hands back in his pockets and headed over to Wyn.

"Hey, babe, what's up?" he asked giving Wyn a kiss.

Wyn pulled him by the sleeve away from the cake table. "Ryan needs to talk to you. It's about Smokey."

Ezra's hands automatically balled into fists. "What's he done now?"

Wyn tried to soothe him by petting his chest. "Calm down. Ryan got a call from Brewster. Seems Smokey's taken up permanent residence at his bar and won't leave."

"Not my problem," Ezra said.

"You're right, it's not, but no matter what Smokey's done to you or me, he was your best friend for a long time. If Ryan goes over to Brewster's he'll arrest Smokey and put him in jail. Is that what you really want?"

Ezra looked down into Wyn's concerned face. "He said a lot of things about you. Why do you care what happens to him?"

"If I remember correctly, we said a lot of bad things about and to each other for years. No matter what I said though, I've always cared about you in my own way. Maybe Smokey fell into the same pit. I doubt seriously if he meant what he said. I was just the person who stood in the way of what he wanted."

Ezra bent and gave Wyn a deep kiss, not caring who was around or if it was appropriate in such a public setting. "You amaze me," he whispered against Wyn's lips. "I love you more every day."

"Good, because you aren't getting rid of me in this lifetime."

"Just the way I want it, babe." He looked around the crowded room. "Okay, where's Ryan?"

"Outside, talking on the phone." Wyn gave him another hug. "Go take care of things. I'll still be here."

"You'd better be. If I remember correctly you made a few promises about the ride home." With one last kiss, Ezra excused himself and went to find Ryan.

Chapter Fourteen

Walking into Brewster's, Ezra narrowed his gaze at the man slumped over at the end of the bar. He nodded his head to Kitty, the waitress, and made his way over to his old friend. He had to keep reminding himself that Smokey had been his best friend and foreman for years.

Taking a seat, he leaned his forearms on the bar. "Do you have some place to stay?" he asked, not looking at Smokey.

Smokey's head lifted off his arms and turned to look at Ezra. "What are you doing here?"

"Ryan asked me to try and keep you out of jail."

"Maybe that's where I belong."

Ezra had never seen his old friend so down. While part of him sympathised, another part was still angry for the betrayal. Most people probably wouldn't think of it that way, but that's exactly how he felt, betrayed. Smokey had seen him weighed down by guilt for years. So closed off he couldn't allow himself to love again.

Wyn had changed all that, and if anything, he'd hoped his old friend would have been happy for him. "Where are you staying? I'll take you home."

"Don't really have anywhere. I spent the last few nights sleeping in Elliott Sims' garage apartment, but he told me not to come unless I was sober."

"You can't blame the guy. He's got a young boy in the house to think about."

Ezra rubbed his chin, still unable to break the habit. "If I take you out to the ranch, you can sleep in the bunkhouse for a few days."

He put his hand on Smokey's shoulder. "You need to move on though, whether in Cattle Valley or somewhere else."

"Why are you doing this?" Smokey asked.

"Because Wyn asked me to."

"Wyn? Why would he care what happens to me?"

"Because he's a hell of a man. Something you didn't bother to find out before spouting off about him." Ezra felt his blood pressure begin to rise again.

"Let's get you out of here. We'll stop by Elliott's and get your clothes. In the morning you can sober up and decide what it is you want to do."

"Can I have my job back?"

"Nope, sorry, but I've already given the position to Jax. We've hired a new hand to replace him in his old job. I'll give you a formal letter of reference though and make a few calls if you'd like. The truck is yours as well. You earned it."

"Thanks, Ezra."

"Consider it payback for the years of loyalty you showed me and the ranch."

"Will you ever forgive me?" Smokey asked, as Ezra helped him from the stool.

"I don't know, maybe, but if I do it will be in large part because of Wyn." Ezra waved to Kitty as they left. He walked his ex-friend out to his truck and loaded him up.

By the time he climbed into the driver's seat, Smokey was crying. Ezra rolled his eyes. God he hated maudlin drunks. "Come on now, pull yourself together."

Smokey wiped at his eyes and shook his head. "I'm sorry. It's just that I've loved you for so long I don't know what to do with myself. I swear I'll never feel this way again."

Reaching across the seat, Ezra patted Smokey on the back a few times. "You'll find someone, and when you do, you'll realise you never really loved me at all."

"How can you say that?" Smokey asked beginning to sob again.

"Because when you truly love someone it's almost all-consuming. We've been together everyday working side by side, eating meals together. In all the years we've done that, I never had an inkling that you loved me. The real thing you just can't hide like that. You'll see. Give it time."

Looking towards the direction of the church, he decided to take Smokey out to the ranch before coming back for Wyn. Nothing in the world would keep him from enjoying the ride home with the man he loved.

* * * *

Ezra honked the horn in front of the bunkhouse and the cowboys came pouring out. He got out of the truck and met Jax by the hood. "I've got Smokey. He's drunk and homeless it appears. See if you and the hands can't sober him up a bit before you pour him into bed."

Jax looked from Smokey back to Ezra. "Is he staying?"

"Nope. You've earned the foreman job. I won't take it away. I told Smokey he could bunk out here with the guys until he found a place to live and a job. I'm going to call a friend of mine and see if he has anything available for Smokey. Just do me a favour and keep him away from the bottle."

"Yes, Boss."

He watched as Neil and Brent helped Smokey into the house. Ezra got the two big duffle bags out of the truck bed and handed them to Jax. "He's hurting," Ezra said gesturing to Smokey, "so treat him with respect."

Jax nodded and carried the bags into the bunkhouse. Ezra waited until the door closed before getting in his truck and heading back to town.

By the time he arrived there were only a few cars in the parking lot. He hoped like hell Wyn wasn't upset with him. He'd called on the drive over to Elliott's and told him what his plans were, but that was nearly an hour and a half ago.

Parking the truck, he went inside the reception hall. Ryan, Rio and Hal were stacking chairs, while Casey, Nate and Wyn swept and took down decorations. Wyn was on a ladder, taking down fairy lights from the perimeter of the room.

Ezra couldn't help himself. He reached up and grabbed a handful of Wyn's sweet ass. Jumping, Wyn almost fell from the ladder. Luckily Ezra was ready for it and quickly helped Wyn retain his balance.

Wyn turned around with his hand over his heart. "You nearly gave me a heart attack."

"Sorry, babe. It was just right there looking so damn pretty I couldn't resist."

Wyn handed him a string of lights. "Would you do me a favour and put these in that box over on the table? I only have one more string and I'll be ready to go."

Ezra took the bundle of lights and put them in the box indicated. From his side view of Wyn, Ezra spotted the hard ridge of his lover's erection pushing against the zipper of his dress slacks. He grinned. Scared or not, Wyn hadn't been unaffected by Ezra's little pinch earlier.

Wyn climbed down from the ladder and started to move it to the next position on the wall. Ezra hurried forward and took it from him. "Let me do this. I feel like I should be doing something to help, but it looks like you guys have almost finished."

Wyn put his hand on Ezra's biceps and squeezed. "There's only one thing I love more than a strong man."

"Oh really, and what is that?" Ezra asked moving the ladder and securing it against the wall.

"When that strong man is you." Wyn ran his hand down to brush across the front of Ezra's pants.

"Careful, that's a loaded weapon that's fixing to go off at any second."

With a wink, Wyn climbed the ladder. "Give me three minutes." Wyn quickly unhooked the next section of lights and handed them down to Ezra.

After one more ladder move, the last of the lights were down and in the big box with the rest of the church's decorations. Wyn turned to survey the room. "Okay. I think if I can get you to put the ladder in the storage closet we can go."

Ezra stored the ladder and walked towards the group of friends gathered by the door. He wrapped an arm around Wyn and kissed his temple. "Ready?"

"Yep," Wyn said and leaned against him. "See you all later."

Ezra gave the group a nod and led Wyn out to the truck. "Do I dare ask?" Wyn asked getting in through the driver's side.

"Later," Ezra said and climbed in after Wyn. "Right now my main priority is getting you out of town and your clothes."

"Ooh, sounds like an adventure," Wyn said and ran his hand up Ezra's thigh to cup his cock.

"Oh it will be," Ezra assured him, spreading his legs a little. Taking a left out of the parking lot, he drove as fast as the speed limit allowed. Once they were out of town, Ezra pulled to the side of the road.

"Off." He gestured at Wyn's clothes as he unzipped his slacks and pulled them and his underwear down to mid-thigh.

Wyn quickly toed off his dress shoes and socks. He looked at Ezra. "Shirt on?"

Ezra shook his head, and unbuttoned his own shirt. "I want to feel your tight little body against mine. I've looked forward to this all day."

He finished opening his shirt but left it on just in case they happened upon one of the town's deputies. After shrugging off the rest of his clothes, Wyn knelt on the seat. Ezra watched that delicious cock bob in front of him.

Wrapping his hands around his lover's hips, Ezra pulled Wyn forward and devoured the beautiful cock. Wyn's fingers tangled in his hair as Ezra sucked him in deeper.

"Oh, that's nice," Wyn moaned, thrusting in and out of Ezra's mouth.

Separating the cheeks in his hands, Ezra pressed a finger against Wyn's hole. "Yes," Wyn said and pushed down on Ezra's finger, slipping the entire length inside him.

Ezra wasted no time adding a second finger, as he tasted Wyn's pre-cum on his tongue. Pulling off Wyn's cock, he pointed towards the glove box. "Get me the lube, I need in."

Wyn retrieved the small tube and squirted a dollop into his hand. After lubing Ezra's cock, Wyn reached behind him and used the remainder of the slick on himself.

"Damn that's hot," Ezra groaned.

He pulled Wyn onto his lap and tilted the steering wheel up. "Get yourself comfortable. I plan on staying inside you the rest of the way home, and I might be tempted to take a detour, or two." He grinned and gave Wyn a kiss, as his lover slowly impaled himself.

"Yeah, that's it," Ezra said once Wyn was fully seated.

He put the truck into gear and turned right on the bumpiest dirt road in the entire county. As Wyn bounced up and down on his lap, Ezra tried his best to keep the truck on the road, despite all the potholes.

"Should've done this before," Wyn panted riding over a particularly rough patch.

"Oh, I'll never drive down this stretch again without thinking about my cock up your ass." He wanted to wrap his hand around Wyn's cock that was painting white dew kisses on his abdomen, but the road wouldn't allow it.

"Jack yourself off," he groaned, hitting another pothole. He glanced down and watched as Wyn fisted his cock in one hand and his balls in the other.

When his lover came, spraying Ezra with seed, he couldn't take it anymore and slammed on the brakes. Gripping Wyn's hips, Ezra thrust up and ground his pelvis against Wyn's ass and came. His cock continued to throb as burst after burst of thick white cum shot up into his lover.

When he was milked dry, Ezra pulled Wyn's head in for a kiss. As his tongue tangled with Wyn's, he felt totally replete. "I love you," he said in between sloppy kisses.

"Mmm hmm," Wyn replied, sucking on Ezra's tongue.

A set of headlights appeared up ahead, and Ezra held Wyn to him with one hand while using the other to put the truck into gear.

"Should I move?" Wyn asked.

“Don’t you dare. As rough as this road is, I’ll be hard again by the time we reach home.”

“What if it’s a deputy?” Wyn asked, laying his head on Ezra’s shoulder.

“Don’t worry, babe. All they’ll see is a truck with tinted windows driving down its own side of the road.”

As the headlights grew brighter and passed them, Wyn seemed to melt further against Ezra’s bare chest. He actually had no doubts that whoever was in the passing car had seen Wyn’s nude back, but hell, it was Cattle Valley. The people around town were used to seeing public displays of affection, even if they were of the naked variety.

About the Author

An avid reader for years, one day Carol Lynne decided to write her own brand of erotic romance. Carol juggles between being a full-time mother and a full-time writer. These days, you can usually find Carol either cleaning jelly out of the carpet or nestled in her favourite chair writing steamy love scenes.

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