

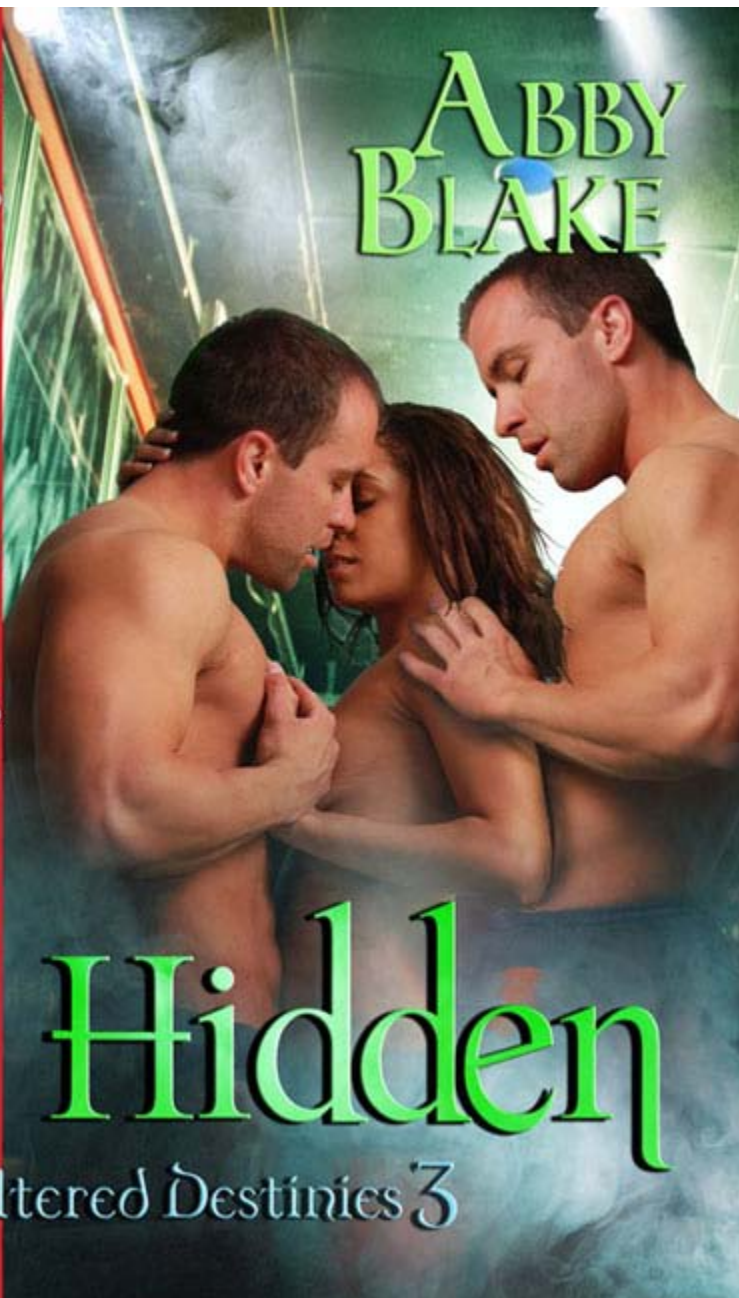
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Hidden

Altered Destinies 3



Altered Destinies 3

Hidden

Alana wakes to find herself handcuffed to an old bed in a hunting cabin in the middle of nowhere. After six years of being held against her will and subjected to horrifying experiments she's learned to deal with almost anything.

Gabe and Rafe, twin brothers working as special agents, have been given an unusual assignment. Locate and rescue a woman who was handcuffed to a bed three days ago. When they get there she is not only exhausted and injured but also completely pissed off and telekinetic.

Alana has spent many years using the only currency she had to make her life better in captivity—her body. But, despite the attraction and rampant arousal she can sense coming from both men, they both turn her down time and time again.

But Gabe and Rafe want more. Can they convince Alana they want her love as well as her body?

Note: Each book in the Altered Destinies series is a stand-alone and can be read out of sequence.

Genre: Ménage a Trois/Quatre, Paranormal, Romantic Suspense

Length: 22,725 words

HIDDEN

Altered Destinies 3

Abby Blake

MENAGE EVERLASTING



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A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK

IMPRINT: Ménage Everlasting

HIDDEN

Copyright © 2011 by Abby Blake

E-book ISBN: 1-61034-384-0

First E-book Publication: April 2011

Cover design by *Les Byerley*

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PUBLISHER

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DEDICATION

For Rusty

HIDDEN

Altered Destinies 3

ABBY BLAKE

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Prologue

Jason rubbed his eyes tiredly. Four months ago, he'd arrogantly promised the woman he knew as Dana Michaels, that when he needed her, he'd find her. Well, now that he urgently needed her help, he couldn't fucking find her. *So much for detective skills*, he thought in disgust.

Three nights ago he'd finally managed to get his sister out of the rogues' control and into a small cabin not far from here. He hadn't been able to explain to the frightened young woman who he was or what was happening without blowing his cover and putting them both in grave danger. He still had another sister to rescue, so he'd been forced to handcuff Alana to the bed while she was still unconscious and hope she would be okay until he could get someone to help.

He'd gotten more and more worried when he couldn't get back there to check on her. Last night, when he'd been focused on how to contact the blonde woman, he thought he'd felt her presence somehow. But she'd seemed to be in severe pain. He had no idea if his telepathic skills were finally kicking in, or whether he'd been hallucinating, but considering how worried he was for his sister, anything was possible.

"Jason," a female voice said in his head. He glanced around the medical ward, relieved to find himself alone.

"Dana?" he asked before he remembered this woman wasn't Dana.

"Holy cow, Jason. Dial it down," the woman said, gasping like she was in horrendous pain. He had no idea what she meant, but he tried to whisper inside his head rather than shout. Hopefully that would help.

"Is that better?" he asked in a very quiet telepathic voice.

"Yes," she replied, sounding like she'd run a marathon. "Jason, have you been trying to contact me?"

"Yes," he yelled telepathically, letting his fear for his sister's well-being leak through. He heard the woman's mental hiss of pain. "Yes." He struggled for calm, trying not to cause her more pain. "*I smuggled one of my sisters out of here three days ago, but I can't get back to the cabin. She really needs your help. Can you send someone to get her? Take her to safety?*"

The woman seemed to hesitate for a moment but then answered in a strong voice, "*Tell me where she is. We'll send the closest agents to go get her.*"

"Thanks," he said telepathically as relief spread through him slowly. "*Please keep Alana safe. Tell her I'll visit as soon as I can get Jenna out, too.*"

He gave the woman he'd met four months ago directions to the cabin and silently prayed he was trusting the right people.

Chapter One

Gabriel Anderson and his brother Rafael entered the alley on silent feet, knowing exactly where their target was hiding. The terrorist they'd been sent to apprehend was obviously not the brightest crayon in the box. Didn't he know that even an average empath would be able to pick up his whereabouts? Fear broadcasts very loudly. Why bother trying to hide when your pursuers were able to track your emotions?

Rafe shook his head, laughing quietly, not even bothering to speak telepathically.

"Do you think maybe we should let them keep this guy? He has to be the worst terrorist I've ever come across."

Laughing in agreement, Gabe approached the foul-smelling dumpster where the rogue was hiding. Despite their casualness, both men were on full alert, scanning the area for other rogues, making certain this guy really was the dickhead he seemed.

Gabe picked up a brick and slammed it hard against the dumpster. He laughed again as the rogue leapt up and scampered over the side like a startled rabbit. Rafe casually tripped the guy as he ran past, sending him sprawling face-first onto the concrete.

Gabe smiled a little as he walked over to the fallen man. They had the best job in the world, but some days it was just way too easy.

His phone rang as he pushed the now-handcuffed rogue into the backseat of the car. Rafe stepped forward to take over as Gabe answered, knowing already it was his supervisor, Caleb.

"Hi, Caleb, we've just picked him up. Should be back to head office in a couple hours."

“Change of plans. I’ve got an urgent assignment. I need you to pick up a woman who was smuggled out of a rogue base and hidden in a cabin. We believe she was handcuffed to a bed about three days ago, but we’re unsure of her condition.”

“Do we know who she is?” Gabe asked.

“We suspect she’s related to Theresa and Dana. Sandra was contacted by the man who helped her escape four months ago. He says he managed to rescue his sister, Alana. We really don’t know the informant well enough to trust him, so we’re not even sure Alana’s there. At this stage it’s quite possible it’s a trap, but we can’t risk a woman’s life on the assumption that he’s lying. I want you to proceed with extreme caution.” Caleb told them the location of the cabin, promising to send a satellite map directly to Gabe’s mobile.

“What do you want us to do with the rogue we just caught?” Gabe asked, bending over to peer into the backseat of his car. He laughed at his boss’s response, closed the phone with a brisk snap, and smiled at the nervous, handcuffed man sitting in the back of his car.

“Out,” he ordered the rogue, his tone vaguely threatening and very unfriendly.

The man nervously squirmed toward the door, fear coming off him in waves. He actually whimpered as Gabe reached in, snagging his elbow, and lifted him to his feet. Gabe swallowed back another laugh. Was this guy for real? How did a man this pathetic end up a member of a dangerous organization?

Gabe turned him, smoothly released the cuffs, and pushed the guy away. “Your lucky day, pal.” The rogue actually stood there, turning to look at them questioningly.

“Oh for fuck’s sake,” Rafe said, losing patience. He pulled his gun, aiming at the guy’s head. “Run or I’ll shoot you right now.”

The rogue took off, awkwardly running back into the dead end alley. Gabe and Rafe exchanged startled glances. Truly, leaving this guy in the rogues’ employ was going to be more damaging to them than hauling his butt back to The Agency. Shaking his head, Gabe got

into the driver's seat. Rafe quickly joined him, sliding into the passenger side.

"So, any ideas on how we should handle this assignment?" Rafe asked amiably, having already heard Caleb's instructions through his telepathic link to his brother.

"Considering she's likely related to Dana, I'd say carefully. Very, very carefully." Gabe grinned. *Hot damn! Finally, a challenge.*

* * * *

Alana pulled at the handcuff for the thousandth time, only managing to damage her wrist further. The black-purple swelling just made the metal bite deeper into her sensitive flesh. She'd been through some weird situations in the last few years, but this one took the cake. For some reason she was handcuffed to a bed in a cabin in the middle of nowhere, left to fend for herself, with only a cooler of food and a bucket. She assumed the bucket was so she could relieve herself. *Gee thanks*, she thought sarcastically.

She looked around the room, frustration filling every muscle. She'd been here for about three days and nights, and so far, she'd been unable to even loosen the handcuff. She hadn't even been able to damage the bed enough to release the other end, the solid oak frame holding fast against her assault.

Her head seemed clearer than it had in years, and she wondered just how long they'd kept her drugged at the facility. She'd spent the first day here with a blinding headache, barely able to move. Each day things got a little clearer, and today she'd been able to concentrate more easily. She'd realized this morning she could use her telekinesis for the first time in a really long time. It worked erratically, and took a lot more effort than she remembered, but at least she had some defense against anyone, or anything, that may find its way through the cabin's only door.

It was almost nightfall again, and she dreaded the pitch black that came with sunset in an area so remote. There had always been light at the facility, even in the middle of the night, so she found the complete lack of illumination very unnerving. She was also getting very sick of being alone. At least back in her cell she'd known there were other people around her. Here the only signs of life she could sense were the wild animals. And the bugs.

Fear threatened to overwhelm her as the light faded. She hated weakness of any kind, so she let her anger grow again. When she got out of here, she was going to do some serious damage to the ones who'd held her imprisoned for so long, and then she would track down her father and get some answers. Eighteen years he'd been a loving, caring, protective parent, and then on her birthday he'd opened the door to two men and stood back and watched as they hauled her away, never once seeming to care she was being taken against her will. Yep, when she found a way out of here, daddy dearest had a lot of explaining to do.

She'd worked herself into such a righteous fit of temper she almost missed the approach of two humans. Male, she surmised by their arrogant mind-set. For a moment, she considered trying to hide, the weak woman in her terrified at what might come next. But a moment later she stiffened her spine. Here was her chance for a little payback.

* * * *

Rafe and Gabe approached the cabin on stealthy feet, their senses on high alert, scanning the area for hidden dangers and locating their target in the cabin.

Rafe smiled, a low whistle escaping him.

"Wow that is one pissed off woman," he sent to Gabe telepathically.

He could just make out Gabe's broad smile in the gathering darkness.

"If she is one of Dana's sisters, this could be a lot of fun," Gabe replied. *"No doubt she knows we're here now."* He chuckled again. *"Can you feel her determination? Maybe we should pull back and let her rescue herself."*

Shaking his head as he grinned at his brother, Rafe moved up to the cabin, trying to peer through the dirty window. He managed to duck just as something smashed against the inside of the pane, cracking the glass.

"You get the fuck away from me," the woman screamed angrily. "Come any closer and you will regret the day you were fucking born."

"Oh, she is so related to Dana." Rafe chuckled. "Alana," he called in a friendly singsong voice. "Baby, we're the good guys. Come to rescue you."

She used a mouthful of expletives that had a very strange way of turning him on. If she was this wild when angry, how amazing would she be in the throes of orgasm? Rafe shook his head as his cock stirred. Hell, he was here to rescue her, not fantasize about her. *Get a grip*, he told himself savagely.

He glanced over to see Gabe watching him thoughtfully as another item hit the window, this time smashing through the glass. Rafe leapt out of the way, barely sidestepping the bigger shards as they flew outward. He felt a sharp sting across his right cheek, realizing almost instantly that a small sliver had nicked him just below his cheekbone.

"Okay, baby," he called to Alana. "Now I'm pissed."

He checked his dart gun. It would take only a few moments for the sedative to work as long as he could hit his target. He used hand signals to let his brother know his intentions. Quickly, he popped his head over the window frame to confirm her position, then rose again and loosed his dart at her chest. He had a moment to appreciate her

attempt to get out of the dart's line of fire before he flattened himself against the wall on the opposite side of the window.

He smiled as he again heard her unladylike string of curses.

The woman was wild.

Damn, he loved that.

Chapter Two

Gabe quickly moved to the doormat, finding the keys to both the front door and her handcuffs exactly where Caleb said they'd be. Before undoing the lock he scanned the room with his senses, making sure she was alone and that the little hellcat was truly unconscious.

He entered the room to find her slumped partially off the bed, her arm twisted painfully against the handcuff. Every protective male instinct in him rose up as he saw her badly bruised wrist. In this position she looked exhausted and defeated and way too vulnerable. Moving quickly he gently unlocked the cuff on her wrist, slowly easing the metal away from her swollen flesh. Rafe held her too thin frame cushioned against his body so she wouldn't slither all the way to the cold wooden floor. Carefully, Gabe lifted her onto the bed, laying her on her back so he could assess her injuries.

The dart had hit her left hip, and he gently pulled the little spike out of her flesh. Her wrist looked badly damaged, possibly broken. Her hair was matted and tangled, and dark circles bruised the underneath of her eyes. She wasn't quite as tall as Dana, but there was an obvious family resemblance, although in her vulnerable state she seemed thinner and more fragile than her sister ever had. She wore only a thin hospital gown, and she shivered even in sleep. Rafe quickly threw a blanket over her, tucking it around her tightly as he lifted her into his arms.

"We need to get her somewhere safe," Rafe said gruffly as he carried her through the door and back to their car.

Gabe tried to hide his thoughts from his brother. He looked at Alana, and then he looked at Rafe, sensing a major change in his

sibling. Rafe had never taken the role of protector, always preferring to be on point, leading, the one carrying the gun, not carrying the damsel in distress. Tonight he held Alana against him as though she were precious to him, not just another assignment. Gabe could feel Rafe's shift in priorities, in his emotions, and interestingly, he could also feel the same in himself. He shook his head hard. They needed to focus on their job, not fawn over a woman they had barely met and who would be absolutely wild when she woke up. They'd be lucky if this little spitfire didn't hand them their balls on a plate.

He smiled then. This assignment had just gotten a hell of a lot more interesting.

* * * *

"How's she doing, Rafe?" Gabe asked from the front seat. Rafe watched the injured woman still cradled in his arms.

"I hope she's going to wake up pretty soon. The sedative shouldn't have lasted this long," he said, his voice wavering slightly.

"We've got two cars tailing us, so it would probably be a good thing if she didn't wake up in a fury. We need to shake these guys before we can head back to the office. I've been watching them play tag team for about an hour now."

Rafe's head snapped up. How the hell had he missed that? He should've at least been aware of what went through his brother's mind. Instead, he'd been in the backseat oblivious to everything but the sleeping woman in his arms.

"Maybe you should try to wake her," Gabe said, looking in the rearview mirror at him. "You know, gently. Ease her into her surroundings."

Rafe glared at his brother. He could do gentle, he could overcome his dominant tendencies when the situation required it, he could...oh, who the fuck was he trying to convince? Gabe was the reasonable twin. Rafe was the demanding, overbearing pain in the ass. The fact

his attitude had woman falling at his feet hadn't gone unnoticed by either of them, and they had found many women willing to take them both to their beds.

His cock stirred at his train of thought. Man oh man, he needed to pull himself together. Fast.

"Rafe, wake her." Gabe's telepathic voice lanced through his thoughts. *"Wake her now!"*

"Baby," Rafe cooed quietly. "Time to wake up." He gave her a gentle shake, but she only moaned and burrowed closer to him. He stroked her lips with the calloused pads of his fingertips as she moaned again. She lifted her face into his palm, smiling as he cupped her cheek. Without opening her eyes, she lifted her lips to his, pressing her body against his thickening cock, moaning again into his mouth. She pushed her tongue past his startled expression, sliding across his teeth, stealing his breath.

He tried to move her away from him, but she pushed aside the blanket and straddled his lap, grabbing his face between her hands, deepening the kiss, pressing her pussy against his engorged cock.

* * * *

The pain woke her. As she grabbed his face, her wrist burned sharply, pulling her from the dream she'd been having. Startled to feel a real cock pressed against her, she pulled back to look at the man she'd been kissing only moments ago.

Anger roared up in her.

"Whoa," the guy said quickly, holding up his hands in surrender. "You were kissing me, baby. I was trying to stop you."

"Stop me?" she growled. "What? My kisses not good enough for you?"

The man gave her a knowing grin. "Oh, baby, no. You kiss like a dream." He looked like he would say more, but he heard a chuckle from the front seat and closed his mouth. Alana heard it, too, suddenly

very aware of their surroundings and the fact they were in a car traveling quite fast.

“Oh, shit!” She knew her unstable telekinetic ability wouldn’t help her at the moment. “Where are you taking me?” she demanded as she scrambled off the guy’s lap and into the seat belt on the other side of the car.

“To meet your mother,” goon number two answered from the front seat.

“Bullshit!” she said angrily. “My mother died in a car accident when I was just a toddler.”

“Is that what they told you?” the guy beside her asked, probably fake sympathy softening his voice. “Baby, they lied to you. You were genetically engineered from eggs stolen from your mother.”

“What the hell does that mean?” She didn’t even bother trying to hide her disbelief.

“It means you’re the result of selective genetic breeding. You were created in a laboratory.”

“What are you saying? That I’m not real? I’m not a real person?” she asked, her voice rising in feigned hysteria. There was no way she was going to swallow such a ridiculous story, but she carefully hid her smile. All she needed to do was keep this guy off balance until she could find a way to escape.

* * * *

“No, baby,” Rafe said in a soothing voice. “It just means your genetic mother is not the woman who gave birth to you. Trust me, you’re very real.” He tried not to groan as he adjusted his jeans around his still-hard arousal.

She smiled then, a cynical, knowing smile that spoke volumes about her sexual experiences. Her eyes lowered, her features softening as she reached over, gently laying her hand over his engorged dick.

“Oh, darling,” she said in a breathless voice, all trace of the outraged hellcat gone. “That looks painful. Would you like me to help you with it?”

Rafe could feel her cynicism, her intention to distract him so she could find a way to escape. Very carefully, he lifted her hand away from his cock and lifted it to his lips.

“Baby,” he purred. “I’ve no doubt you could help me a lot, but when we fuck each other it will be because we both need it, both want it.” He sucked the tip of her finger into his mouth, gently biting on the pad and then laving it with his tongue.

He felt her genuine arousal then, the sultry temptress gone.

“Soon,” he promised as he placed her hand back into her own lap.

* * * *

They continued to travel on the highway, her captors both intently monitoring the cars following them. Alana sat quietly in her seat trying to get a handle on the situation. Despite her lack of facts, she felt fairly certain these guys were genuine. She believed that they believed what they were telling her, she just didn’t know if it was the truth.

She’d spent her first eighteen years of life believing her mother died in a car accident and her father loved her. Well, her father’s love had been in question ever since he’d let them take her, so it wasn’t that much of a stretch to believe he’d lied about her mother.

“Hold on,” the driver ordered as he angled the car onto an off-ramp, taking the corner way too fast. “Time to bring these guys into the open.”

The car purred as he pushed the accelerator, gunning the engine as he tried to outrun their pursuers. She watched the cars behind them, noticing both of their supposed followers missed the exit ramp and continued as if they hadn’t actually been following.

“Damn,” the driver muttered. “Must’ve been more than two. Watch for the next car to exit.”

The other guy watched out the back window, his face showing his confusion. No other cars left the freeway. Nobody followed them. What the fuck?

“Something’s wrong, Gabe,” he said unnecessarily. Alana’s snort of laughter didn’t seem to help his mood.

“Great, I’ve been *rescued*,” she said sarcastically, using her fingers to indicate quotation marks, “by a couple of paranoid dipshits.”

Chapter Three

Rafe glanced her way, concern for her safety barely overriding his annoyance at her smartass attitude. They needed to get a handle on what was happening, needed to figure out their next move.

“Rafe,” Gabe said telepathically. “Could they be tracking her? Does she have a tracer?”

“Fuck, I hadn’t even considered that. Better find somewhere we can hole up for a while. She’s so not going to be happy about this,” Rafe replied as his hand unconsciously moved to protect his balls.

She sat in the corner of the car, smirking as she looked out the window. He could hear her thoughts as easily as he could hear his brother’s. As soon as the car stopped, she would make a run for it. He grinned, the challenge she presented tightening his muscles. No way was their little hellcat leaving without them.

* * * *

A couple of hours later, the driver pulled the car into the parking lot of a cheap motel. Alana’s body tensed, and she casually placed her hand on the door handle ready to make her escape. She wished she wore more clothes than just the thin hospital gown, but was determined to grab the blanket as she made her escape. The car was almost completely stopped. Now or never.

She took a deep breath and glanced briefly at the man beside her. At the same time she grabbed the handle and pushed hard against the door. *Ouch*. Damn door didn’t budge. She rubbed her shoulder irritably as a deep laugh rumbled behind her.

“Oh, baby,” her captor crooned. “Did I forget to warn you about the child lock?” Deep brown eyes sparkled at her in merriment. He slid across the seat toward her, his grin showing perfect white teeth and the hint of a dimple in his left cheek.

He lifted his hand to her face, gently dragging the back of his knuckles across her cheek. She closed her eyes against the tender touch so at odds with his cocky, self-assured attitude. Part of her wanted to sway toward him, seeking comfort in his strong arms and warm chest, but another part of her wanted to lash out, swinging at him, pummeling her frustration into that huge body, releasing all of her pent up anger from the last few years. She knew he probably didn’t deserve her hatred, but she was damn tired of being at the mercy of others.

Leaning hard against the door, she almost fell out onto the concrete when it opened behind her. Warm arms caught her, an identical pair of deep brown eyes looking at her. Just her luck she’d be abducted—she didn’t want to jinx it with the word “rescued”—by tall, dark, and handsome twin brothers.

“Come on, sweetheart,” the other man said. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

Annoyance reared again, and she rebelled in the only way she could at the moment. She plastered a smile on her face, winked, and drawled, “Oh, darling, I simply couldn’t do that.” She crossed her arms stubbornly, lifted her breasts higher, and forced a seductive chuckle. “At least not until I know your names.”

The man smiled with her. It was a relaxed happy smile that she hoped meant he underestimated her determination to escape. “I’m Gabe, and the guy beside you is my twin brother, Rafe.”

Gabe helped her to her feet, his strong arm around her waist anchoring her to his side. Rafe followed them, stopping quickly to retrieve a couple of duffel bags from the trunk of the car.

The motel room looked clean but old, the scarred furniture showing its years. The carpet looked freshly vacuumed but

threadbare, and the bed had a suspicious dip in the middle. Clearly, this motel was about as cheap as they came.

Alana looked around the room, awkwardly trying to untangle herself from the big man's arms, but to no avail. Gabe held her firmly against him as he explored the room. Nodding to his brother, he pulled her into the bathroom.

"Okay, Alana," he said as he released her, blocking the only exit with his huge body. "We can do this the easy way or the hard way."

She eyed him suspiciously, fear crowding her thought processes, unsure of his intentions. Despite her past experiences, she hadn't quite expected something like this—especially not from these two men. Tears threatened when she realized she'd somehow started to trust them. How could she be so scarred from experience, yet still so naïve?

"Oh, sweetheart," Gabe said softly, stepping forward to run his knuckles against her cheek in much the same way his brother had touched her in the car. "That's not what I meant."

He stepped back again, giving her space, showing her he was no threat.

"Baby," Rafe spoke from behind his brother. "We think maybe you've been tagged. The guys who were holding you may have put a tracer on you. We need to make sure we disable it before they come to get you back."

"A t-tracer?" she asked nervously, memories of her time in captivity rising up to choke her. She wasn't sure what these two were up to, but no way was she going back to the so-called medical facility where she'd been held captive.

"Where would it be?" she asked, looking from one brother to the other, her fear ratcheting higher with each passing moment.

"Could be anywhere, sweetheart," Gabe said softly, watching her closely.

Alana didn't think twice. She grabbed the hem of her hospital gown, lifted it over her head, and threw it to the ground. She heard

their gasps of surprise as she stood before them naked, but she no longer cared. If she was tagged, she wanted to be untagged. Right now!

“Find it,” she demanded, a sob escaping her chest. “Please find it.”

Both men moved into the tiny room, gentle hands reaching for her. Gabe pulled her into his arms, tucking her face against his chest as he ran his fingers up and down her back. His touch seemed soothing despite the fact he searched for tracers.

Rafe ran his hands over her scalp, gently massaging, his strong fingers moving over her neck and shoulders and then down her arms. They held her between them while Rafe traced his hands over her buttocks and down her legs, touching every part of her. From the corner of her eye, she saw him shake his head as he stood. Nothing.

Gabe turned her around and pressed her back against his chest as Rafe once again ran his hands over her. She bit back a groan. Being held tightly in one man’s arms as another stroked her body should’ve been terrifying for her, but all she could think about was the fire that burned low in her belly. Her nipples beaded tightly, and she prayed they wouldn’t notice. She realized a moment later, as a hard cock pressed against her ass, that luck was not on her side.

* * * *

Gabe felt her unreleased whimper and bit back a groan of his own as Rafe’s actions pushed Alana harder against his growing arousal. His cock pulsed against her ass, straining against his denim jeans and begging for release. He noticed Alana’s breathing hitch as he realized her arousal grew also. Silently, he prayed for Rafe to finish his search so he could step away from Alana’s luscious body before he did something to scare her.

Rafe stood slowly, his eyes never leaving her body, evidence of his arousal clearly outlined against his jeans.

“Sorry, baby,” he said. “Can’t find anything.”

It happened so fast Gabe almost failed to protect himself. Alana’s knee flashed up, connected with Rafe’s groin, and then she twisted in his arms and tried to do the same to him.

Rafe’s choked groans reached his ears at the same time he managed to subdue the hellcat writhing in his arms.

“Get the fuck off me,” she growled at him, her voice getting louder with every word.

The last thing they needed was someone hearing her angry cries and calling the police, so Gabe did the first thing that came to mind. He kissed her. She reacted angrily at first, biting his lips, his tongue, thrashing against him, but he held her firmly, gentling the kiss as he stroked her naked back.

He felt her start to relax into his embrace, felt her begin to actively participate, tangling her tongue around his, sighing into his mouth.

He heard his brother’s groans, less pained now, as he climbed back onto his feet.

“Thanks,” Rafe said sarcastically to Gabe as he limped from the room. “Next time you get to do the searching.”

Gabe chuckled against Alana’s mouth, gentled his kiss even further and finally lifted his head away from her. Passion-glazed eyes searched his face as the hard beads of her nipples pressed against his chest. A small smile curled her mouth just as her knee rose sharply against him.

He blocked it easily, having expected her violent reaction to his kiss.

What he hadn’t expected was her emotions turning his gut inside out. She’d been so frightened since they’d met her that he hadn’t truly appreciated how well she managed to hide it until she’d relaxed in his embrace and kissed him back. For a few moments he’d held the woman, the real person underneath the hellcat facade, and he’d felt himself falling for her.

He turned her away from him, holding her back against his front, a strong arm clamped around her middle, holding her still. His warm breath caressed her ear as he spoke to her.

“Are we calm yet?” he asked, unable to resist licking the sensitive skin behind her ear.

“No,” she whispered, writhing against him. “Let me go.”

“Promise you won’t try to maim me again, and I’ll think about it,” he said seriously.

“Darling,” she said, her tone turning seductive, “why would I want to damage that part of your anatomy I find most attractive?”

She slid her hand behind her, finding his rock-hard cock and squeezing it through his jeans.

“Oh, and such a large thing for me to admire,” she said, her voice taking on a small, breathless quality as she stroked him harder. “Oh, darling, that must hurt so much. Maybe I can help take away the pain.”

He knew what she was doing. His little hellcat was trying to manipulate him with sex, and even now, as she stroked him, he felt his ardor cooling. He held her against him as his cock softened. He almost chuckled at her surprise when she realized she wasn’t getting her way.

He let her turn in his arms, pressing against him, wriggling her slim, naked form against his front. After a few moments, she stopped, a small growl of frustration escaping her lips.

“What is it?” she said, her voice dripping venom now. “Impotent?”

He chuckled as he held her tighter, stilling her body with his big hands. “No, hellcat, I just prefer to make love with a willing woman. Not one who’s using sex to manipulate me.”

Again she growled in frustration, stomping her bare foot against the cold tiles in agitation. Another identical chuckle came from the bathroom door.

* * * *

“Oh, baby,” Rafe said, trying for sympathy but ruining it by laughing. “Looks like your escape plan failed.”

“Rafe,” his brother said out loud, as he silently reminded him his balls were probably in danger again. “Have you been able to contact head office?”

Getting back to business, Rafe answered his brother’s question, realizing he probably hadn’t been able to telepathically tune into his conversation because he’d had his hands full in here. “Yep. Caleb and Ethan are bringing Theresa to us. Hopefully she’ll be able to talk some sense into our little hellcat.”

“Theresa?” Gabe asked, confused. “I would’ve thought Dana was the better choice since she also attacked her rescuers.” He directed that last part at the woman in his arms.

“I thought so, too,” Rafe replied, “but I thought Caleb was going to burst an aneurysm when I suggested it.” He shrugged, unable to explain Caleb’s response.

“Who the fuck is Dana?” Alana growled. Rafe could feel the frustration still billowing through her.

“Dana and Theresa are twins and most likely your sisters,” Rafe said, eyeing her speculatively. “Dana’s a lot like you. Easy to anger, even harder to control, and when she really gets going, everything in the room starts flying around.”

“Scary.” Gabe chuckled. “Almost as scary as you, hellcat.” He nuzzled her neck, and Rafe wondered if his brother had forgotten why he held Alana against him. She stiffened in his arms.

“She throws things around with her hands?” He sensed her attempt to sound casual, but she failed miserably.

“No, baby,” Rafe said from the doorway. “She uses her mind to move the furniture and anything else she can see.”

“She’s telekinetic?” she asked, giving up on the attempt to hide her curiosity.

“Yep,” Gabe said happily. “Same as you.”

Alana’s eyes widened.

“W–what makes you think I’m t–telekinetic?” she asked, verbally stumbling over the words.

“Oh, geez,” Rafe said, rolling his eyes. “It might’ve been the fact that whenever you get angry, everything in the room starts to shake. Or the fact that it runs in your family. Or maybe we just figured it out every time you *thought* about how you can’t quite control your telekinesis like you used to.”

Chapter Four

She stood there, hiding her face against Gabe's warm body. *Damn. Damn. Damn.*

"Wait, you can read my mind?" she asked, the meaning of his words finally sinking in.

"Yep," Rafe replied arrogantly, "so better watch what runs through that devious brain, baby, because we're going to hear it all."

He smiled at her as she deliberately thought about dropping to her knees and taking his hard cock deep into her throat.

Gabe smacked her bare ass.

"Behave, hellcat," he admonished. "We need to find you some clothes before your sister gets here and rips us both a new one."

Rafe laughed as he left the room, returning moments later with a pair of track pants and a T-shirt.

"Put these on for now. Gabe will grab you some clothes when he goes out for some supplies."

She took them, eager now to place a barrier between herself and these men. She found she enjoyed their friendly banter way too much, and it wouldn't do anything good for her ultimate goal of escape. She also found herself very grateful they'd refused her offer to use her body for sex.

Maybe these two really were her guardian angels after all. *Uh-huh*, she thought, *and I'm the Queen of England*.

"Come on, hellcat. Let's go find your crown and my halo," Gabe said with a friendly smile.

Fucking telepaths! she thought as he chuckled.

* * * *

It seemed like they'd been stuck in this dump for days, but in reality it was probably closer to only a couple of hours. Gabe had gone out to get something for them to eat while Rafe stayed behind. He sat at the table, cleaning a couple of handguns, carefully checking and reloading them. He'd checked her wrist, cleaning the raw skin and soothing it with antibiotic cream, and then he carefully wrapped it in a thick bandage to hold it still. He said he didn't think it was broken, but with all the swelling it was a little hard to tell.

She'd tried not to melt into his arms under his tender ministrations, and she'd almost been sorry for the kneeing incident. Almost. She was pretty sure she'd missed the mark anyway, hitting him with a glancing blow rather than a full on strike. Judging by his recovery, she felt fairly confident no permanent damage had been done.

She glanced up to see him looking at her strangely. When she made eye contact, he smiled and then quickly looked away. Interesting, she thought. Where was the cocky asshole she'd known in the car? The man who sat in his place seemed almost normal. Well, normal in a well built, handsome protector sort of way.

He looked at her again, smiling with that gorgeous mouth and deep brown eyes.

Crap. Telepath, she thought, groaning inwardly.

"Don't worry, baby, I won't tell," he said with a laugh.

He'd threatened to tie her to the bed if she tried escaping again but hadn't needed to. Somehow, during the last few hours, she'd begun to trust the brothers, willing at least to see where they were taking her, curious about a mother and sisters she'd never known existed.

She glanced up again to see him watching her with that satisfied smirk back on his lips.

"Hey, just because I'm cooperating right now doesn't mean I won't castrate you if you're lying," she said in a sugary sweet voice.

Masculine laughter filled the air just as the front door opened. Gabe sauntered into the room carrying a mountain of Chinese takeout. As he walked past her cross-legged position on the bed, he dropped a bag filled with women's clothing and winked at her. Her eyes filled with moisture before she could stop them.

"Why don't you try some on, baby," Rafe suggested, "while we get dinner organized."

Suddenly feeling very vulnerable, Alana snatched the bag up and headed for the bathroom, slamming the door in her effort to escape their knowing looks.

She was a gooey mess over such stupid, little things today. She'd spent so much time as a captive she'd forgotten there were people around who actually cared about other people instead of just themselves.

Gabe and Rafe were just being decent human beings, not angels or saints. Just doing their jobs, really. She took a deep breath, held it a moment, and then expelled it quickly. Just. Doing. Their. Jobs. Okay, now that she'd settled that in her head, she needed to put on some clothes.

She looked into the bag, poking around at the different material she could see and eventually upending it onto the bathroom floor. Gabe had purchased two pairs of jeans, several shirts in varying styles, a sweater, a jacket, and underwear, socks and a pair of runners. All in her sizes. Amazed at the man's accuracy, she shook her head as she tried to figure out how she would actually get the clothes on. Her injured wrist made it very difficult for her to do anything requiring two hands, and she was still trying to figure out just how she would go about it when the bathroom door opened.

Gabe smiled at her as he leaned his shoulder against the doorjamb.

"Do you need a hand?" he asked in a soft, deep voice. There wasn't a hint of any dark desire, only a genuine offer to assist.

She began to refuse but realized the fruitlessness of her denials when it was obvious she needed help. Making eye contact, she

nodded shyly, genuinely confused by his and Rafe's kindness. Surely, helping her to dress was above and beyond the call of duty.

* * * *

Gabe smiled at her, hearing the words in her head, and couldn't resist pulling her into his arms for a quick embrace.

Releasing her before his cock could give away the fact that he actually liked dressing her, Gabe grabbed the hem of her T-shirt, helping to lift it over her head and easing it over her bandaged wrist. She turned toward the pile of clothes, grabbed one of the shirts, and tore the price tag away with her teeth.

"Ouch," Gabe said on a laugh. "Remind me to keep my favorite parts away from those choppers."

She laughed with him, grateful to realize he was just trying to lighten the mood, rather than hitting on her.

"No bra?" she asked, curiously, as she handed him the shirt she wanted to wear.

"Nope," he answered with a huge grin. "I figured it would be difficult to put it on one handed. And besides, I prefer your breasts just the way they are, beautiful and free."

She laughed a little at his teasing tone. He helped her get the shirt over her head and then undid the tie holding up her too-large track pants. They fell to the floor, pooling at her feet. She unwrapped a pair of panties, and Gabe held her steady as she managed to slip her legs into them.

He bent over the pile and grabbed a pair of jeans made from a soft, pale blue chambray.

"Elastic waist," he said, holding them up for her. "Not exactly the height of fashion, but I thought it might be a little easier than buttons or zips for now."

She looked like she was going to cry, and for a moment he misinterpreted her anguish.

“Hey, it’s okay,” he said, rubbing a soothing hand over her back. “I bought two pairs so you don’t have to wear the ugly ones.”

She reached up with her good hand and then pulled him down to kiss him gently.

“Thank you,” she said, tears once again filling her eyes. “Thank you for being so thoughtful.”

The emotions filling the room grabbed him, squeezing the air from his lungs. What this beautiful woman must’ve lived through he couldn’t imagine, but his heart pounded with his need to protect her. Nobody should be so starved of simple human kindness that they’d cry over his choice of clothes. He pulled her into his arms, pressing her against his heart, silently vowing never to let her be hurt again.

He glanced to the doorway, seeing and feeling the same emotions from Rafe. No one was going to get anywhere near her. They would both see to that.

* * * *

After dinner was eaten, Rafe lay on the bed and propped himself up on his elbow. He patted the spot in front of him and breathed a sigh of relief when Alana crawled onto the bed and cuddled up beside him. He drew lazy circles on her belly as he communicated with his brother telepathically.

“If she’s not tagged, then they’re tracking something else,” Gabe said.

“Agreed, but what?” Rafe replied.

“Okay, let’s think about this for a second,” Gabe began. *“She was only wearing the hospital gown, and I checked it thoroughly for tracers.”*

“And she doesn’t seem to have any subcutaneous transmitters either,” Rafe added. *“So, unless they’ve tagged her internally, she’s not what they’re tracking.”*

“Could it be us they’re tracking?” Gabe asked speculatively.

"Who would want to track us?" Rafe asked, feeling confused.

"Aww, shit." Gabe growled. "That fucking rogue. The stupid one we let go, do you think he was trying to get caught so he could tag us?"

"Makes about as much sense as everything else that's happened today." Rafe groaned. "But if they know where we are, why haven't they tried to take Alana back?"

"I don't know. Maybe they're after something or someone else and they expect us to lead them right to their goal."

* * * *

Alana startled a little as Rafe sat up. She'd been listening to their communication. At first she'd been confused by the voices in her head, and then she'd felt amazed that she seemed to be telepathic, too. But once she realized what they were talking about, her fear gripped her again. If their pursuers weren't after her, who were they after?

She also listened to their urgent phone call warning Caleb of their suspicions, and between the three of them, they'd decided to delay her meeting with Theresa in an effort to keep both women safe. As much as she could figure, her "maybe" sister was very talented and the people who'd held Alana prisoner wanted her sister instead, or maybe as well. She shivered as memories of her time in captivity crept over her.

Caleb told them to stay where they were until he could get agents in place to protect them. He wanted to try to bring their pursuers into the open and since they seemed content to sit and watch Alana, for the moment at least, they should be pretty safe. Once agents were in place, Gabe and Rafe had been told to travel north, stopping at various motels along the way. Each motel would have agents in place, ready to protect them and watching for their pursuers. Gabe had protested to his boss about using Alana as bait, but Caleb reassured

him over and over she would be safer this way and so would her sisters.

* * * *

Rafe felt her shiver, and heard the thoughts swirling through her head. He'd realized as he and Gabe conversed telepathically that she'd been listening in and found himself ridiculously proud that she'd discovered her talent. He'd tried to shake off the feeling, tried to put her back into the niche of the hellcat he'd first thought her to be, but he'd only been able to see the soft, vulnerable woman in his arms.

She shivered again, and he pulled her closer to him, spooning her back against his front.

"Sleep now, baby," he said quietly. "Gabe is going to take first watch."

He could feel her uncertainty but also sensed her need to be surrounded by his warmth and his strength. Alana took a deep breath and finally gave in to her need to be held securely by him or Gabe. He wasn't sure when she'd started trusting them, but she melted against him as her breathing slowed and relaxed, and then fell asleep quickly. Rafe got the sense she felt safe for the first time in a very long time.

Gabe walked over to the bed and smoothed a strand of hair that had fallen across her eyes. His brother just looked at Rafe as he held the woman who'd become very important to both of them in such a short time. Rafe could sense Gabe wondering how he could care so deeply for a woman he'd just met.

"Me, too," Rafe said quietly as he closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

Chapter Five

She woke up snuggled in Gabe's arms. She was unsure when the brothers changed places over night, but she knew for certain that they had.

"Good morning, beautiful," Gabe said as he nuzzled her neck sleepily. She opened her eyes to see Rafe lying on his side in front of her. He smiled and leaned forward for a gentle kiss.

"I've ordered breakfast. Should be here in the next half hour or so. Would you like to have a shower first?" Rafe asked quietly.

She nodded her head, suddenly shy. She looked at her bandaged hand, realizing it would be difficult to shower without getting it wet.

"That's okay, baby. We can tie a plastic bag over it to keep it dry, or one of us could help you if you like," Gabe said as he ran his hand gently down her injured arm.

"I'd really like to wash my hair," Alana said with a grimace. "So, um, a little help would be good."

"No problem," Rafe said as he levered himself off the bed and held a hand out to help her up. He led her into the bathroom and carefully helped to remove her clothes and step under the warm spray of water. She held her injured arm up above her shoulder, noticing that her muscles no longer hurt as much as they did yesterday.

"Okay, baby, let's get your hair wet so we can shampoo." Turning awkwardly, Alana almost lost her footing trying to maneuver under the spray and keep her arm dry at the same time.

"Whoa," Rafe said as he stepped into the shower stall fully clothed. "The last thing we need is more injuries. Wrap your good arm around my waist, and I'll take care of your hair."

He wound one arm around her so her breasts were pressed against his now soggy shirt as his other arm slid over her hair, angling her head into the stream of water.

“Hold on to me a sec, baby, while I grab the shampoo.” He twisted a little, careful to hold her tight. Grabbing the shampoo, he tipped a generous amount into the hand still wound around her waist and then dropped the bottle onto the floor outside the shower. Swapping arms, he lathered her hair, as the sweet fragrance filled the room.

She closed her eyes as he gently massaged her head, and her nipples beaded against his wet T-shirt in reaction. She felt the hard swell of his cock pressing against her as he held her tight and rinsed the shampoo from her hair. She opened her eyes a little to watch his face, noticing again just how handsome he was with his dark eyes framed with long, thick eyelashes.

“Sorry, baby,” he said as he noticed her watching him, “but you are a beautiful woman, and if you keep thinking things like that, we might both do something we’ll likely regret.” He moved her hips away from his groin as he helped her to stand straighter. “Gabe will help you get dressed while I have a quick shower.”

* * * *

Gabe opened the shower stall door, and Rafe helped Alana step into his arms. Rafe quickly closed the screen, and Gabe grimaced in sympathy as he sensed his brother adjust the water temperature to very, very cold.

He wrapped the towel around Alana and used another to dry her hair, all the while very aware of his brother’s predicament—and his own. Gabe would be having a cold shower next if he didn’t get her dressed quickly.

Alana looked up at him, suddenly seeming younger and far more vulnerable, and he could do nothing but pull her into his arms and

hold her against him. Somehow this little hellcat had gotten under their skin, and they were both determined to protect her, even if that meant protecting her from themselves.

"You don't need to protect me," she said in a small voice, "not from you or Rafe."

They heard a quiet groan from the shower stall as Gabe relaxed his grip on her and smiled.

"There'll be plenty of time to discuss things after we make sure you're safe."

"When will the others get here?" she asked quietly, her fear edging into her voice again.

"They're already here," Gabe said in a low, quiet voice. He was probably being overly cautious, but in this room with the water running, even the best listening devices would have trouble discerning his words. "We'll be traveling north for a few hours, and we'll stop at another motel tonight. It will help our cover story if you pretend to be more injured than you are. It'll make stopping so soon seem more reasonable."

"Okay," she said, hesitating just a little. He could feel her fear still dominating her emotions, but her unexpected trust in them kept quickly pulling it back under control.

After making sure she ate a proper breakfast, Rafe had helped her out to the car, exaggerating her injuries for their audience. She now sat slumped in the backseat. They hadn't spoken aloud about anything important, all of them aware the tracer was most likely hidden in the car and possibly included a shortwave radio signal capable of transmitting their conversation.

"Rafe," she said aloud, following the instructions they'd given her before leaving the motel. "Would it be possible to stop for a while? I'm not feeling very well."

"Good girl," Gabe said telepathically, "*sounded very convincing.*" He turned in his seat, suddenly sensing her genuine

discomfort. Her face had gone very pale, and she breathed heavily like she really was about to be sick.

"Pull over, Rafe," he said out loud, concern for Alana lacing his voice.

Rafe quickly pulled the car over to the side of the highway, easing to a stop near a breakdown bay. Gabe hurriedly released his seat belt and leapt from the car, opened her door, and helped her to her feet.

"Deep breath," he instructed. "That's it, honey. Deep breath."

He held her around the waist concerned she would fall and damage her injured wrist even more. Sweat trickled down the side of her face, and she shook in his arms as she tried to control her breathing.

After a few moments, she took another deep breath and stood a little straighter.

"I'm okay, I think," she said shakily, leaning against him. "Probably just a little travel sickness."

Gabe nodded against the top of her head and then slowly turned her in his arms to see her face. She didn't look quite as pale as she had when they'd pulled over, and her breathing had slowed as well. He glanced up to see Rafe standing not far away, concern for her etched heavily on his face.

"We'll stop at the next motel, sweetheart," Gabe said, stroking his hand down her arm, unable to stop himself from touching her. "It's about ten minutes from here. Do you think you'll be okay until then?"

She nodded, swallowing hard.

"We'll stop again if you need to. Just say the word, okay?"

Gabe helped her walk to the car, and climbed into the backseat with her. He pulled her into his embrace as he secured her seat belt.

Rafe quickly moved the car back into the flow of traffic, heading for the exit to the next motel. By the time they reached the parking lot, Alana was again breathing heavily and looking a little green. She accepted Gabe's help as she climbed awkwardly from the backseat and walked to their room on wobbly legs.

* * * *

Rafe quickly made telepathic contact with Zane and Rick, the agents assigned to protect them at this motel, and filled them in on the current situation. Fortunately, he also learned that everything was under control.

“Get some rest,” Zane told him telepathically. “We’re on ‘til ten, and then Sandra and Pete take over for the night shift.”

“Thanks,” Rafe accepted quickly, happy to be able to relax for a while and look after Alana. He wanted to check her hand to make sure it wasn’t an infection making her so nauseous, and then he wanted to hold her in his arms as she slept.

He noticed the smile on Gabe’s face, realizing he was showing a far different side of himself than he usually did when presented with a night with a beautiful woman. He cared deeply enough for Alana that he was willing to ignore his own sexual frustration and just hold her, a fact that was not lost on his brother.

“Come here, baby,” Rafe said as he grasped Alana’s hand and gently pulled her toward the table in the far corner of the room. This room was far better than the last motel they’d stayed at. Much younger and in better condition, even the bed looked more comfortable.

Sitting at the table, Rafe began to unwrap her bandaged wrist as Gabe dropped the first aid kit next to him. The skin was still very raw and the bruise was deepening to a hideous purple-black, but the swelling looked reduced and there was no sign of infection. Breathing a little easier, Rafe smoothed antibiotic cream over her skin again and redressed her wrist using a fresh covering.

“Hungry?” he asked her as he fastened the bandage.

* * * *

“Yes,” she answered, surprising even herself. Considering how awful she’d felt in the car, she was amazed she had any appetite at all.

They ordered an early dinner from the restaurant attached to the motel, and then settled onto the bed to relax. Rafe pulled her into his arms to hold her while Gabe lay on the other side, seemingly content to watch television beside them.

She knew Gabe watched her as she tried to stop the tears from leaking down her face. He carefully leaned toward her and caught a single tear with his finger.

“What’s wrong, Alana?” he asked quietly. Rafe’s arm tightened around her as he pulled her more firmly against him.

“I’m sorry,” she said, her voice catching on a sob.

“Baby, what’s wrong? Please tell us,” Rafe asked, his deep voice rumbling against her back.

“I just...I never...oh, God, I’m so sorry.” Embarrassment heated her cheeks. She took a deep breath, trying to find the words to explain. “I’ve just never known anyone like you two.”

“What? Ruggedly handsome and charming?” Gabe asked, trying to keep an innocent expression on his face.

She laughed as he wanted her to, gulping back the sob rising in her chest.

“Well that, too,” she said, a small smile curving her lips. “I’ve just never known men who wanted to protect me but expected nothing in return. Not even my own father protected me when those men took me from my home. He just stood back and let them.” Another sob worked its way up her throat.

Gabe leaned forward and pressed a gentle kiss to her forehead as Rafe held her close.

“We will always protect you, Alana. Never doubt that, and soon you’ll meet your sisters and their partners, and you’ll realize most people are willing to protect you and expect nothing in return.”

Alana took a deep breath. She needed a distraction, something to stop the emotional avalanche that threatened her control.

“Tell me about my sisters, please,” she said, sounding very small even to her own ears.

“Well, Theresa is probably a little taller than you, but she’s got the same color hair and eyes. She’s very gifted. Her telekinetic skills are really impressive, and her accuracy is amazing. She’s also a talented empath and telepath. I believe she’s got some precognitive skills as well, but I’m not sure how strong they are,” Gabe told her.

“Empath? As in sensing others’ emotions?” she asked, a little confused.

“Yes,” Rafe confirmed, “and precognitive skills as in sensing the future, but only a few seconds, not days or years.”

“What good would that be?” she asked.

“I suppose it gives you a chance to change a single choice, maybe enough to avoid disaster.”

“So do either of you have precognitive skills?”

“No, sweetheart. We’re just average telepaths and empaths,” Gabe told her as he gently brushed the hair from her eyes.

“Empaths?” she squeaked. “So you can sense my emotions?”

“Yes,” Gabe confirmed quietly.

“So you know I want you both to make love to me,” she whispered.

“Yes,” Rafe answered behind her, “but we also know you feel you owe us for rescuing you, and we won’t make love to you for the wrong reasons.”

“So you don’t think I’m some kind of slut for wanting you both?” she asked, a hint of her hellcat personality seeping through even though she tried to rein it in.

“No,” Gabe said in a deep voice. He seemed to be suppressing the urge to laugh.

“Why is that funny?” she said indignantly as anger began to burn in her belly. She tried to extricate herself from Rafe’s arms.

“Because it seems it runs in your family,” Rafe said carefully, refusing to let her go.

“What runs in my family?” she growled, her temper starting to flare at their obtuse answers.

Grabbing her chin gently, Gabe lifted her face to his, making sure he had her full attention.

“Having multiple partners runs in your family.” He continued quickly when her eyes narrowed with annoyance again. “Theresa has two husbands, Caleb and Ethan, and your sister Dana has two husbands, Pete and John.”

Alana stopped wiggling, closing her eyes as his words sunk in.

“I don’t understand,” she said, tears once again threatening.

“Baby, a lot of empaths have more than one partner, especially the agents we work with. On the job, agents know everything about each other. It’s almost impossible not to when we’re mostly telepaths and empaths. I can sense Gabe’s emotions over quite a distance, and he can sense mine. If we throw yours into the mix, well, we’ve got a potentially interesting situation.”

“So are all of your work mates in multiple partner relationships?”

“No,” Gabe said with a smile. “It’s just not as unusual as you might think.”

A knock on the door had Gabe lifting himself off the bed.

“Dinner’s here. Let’s eat.”

* * * *

Four days! Four rotten, stinking, wonderful, irritating days! She was so frustrated.

For the last four nights, they’d held her in their arms, comforting her and keeping her safe, never pushing for anything other than a sweet kiss. Every time she’d tried to seduce them herself, one or both of them held her tight and kissed her thoroughly and then told her to go to sleep. Too many more nights like the last four and someone was going to get hurt.

She would've laughed at the irony. When she'd been seventeen her father had encouraged her into the arms of several different men around her own age. Flattered by their attentions, she'd happily given them her heart—and her body.

At least she'd been knowledgeable enough to insist they use condoms, but after a couple broke accidentally, she'd managed to get other contraception via a doctor's appointment set up by the school nurse. Even then, she'd been questioning her upbringing. She just hadn't realized it at the time. It wasn't until those same young men had turned out to be guards at the facility where she'd been held captive that she realized how naïve she'd really been.

Despite her experience she'd never really enjoyed sex, but now she had two men she longed to make love to and they both insisted she wait. They wanted her to meet her mother and sisters and make plans for her life before she gave her body to anyone else.

At first, she'd loved them all the more for their sincerity and honesty, but now, four days later, her frustration level was beyond her capacity to control, and quite frankly, she was beginning to lose it. Even her telekinetic ability was making itself known again. Everything in the room vibrated as she got more and more irritated at their kindness.

God, I really am a loon, she thought self-deprecatingly as she tried to relax. She'd stripped down to her T-shirt and underwear and was trying very hard to shield her thoughts the way Rafe and Gabe had taught her over the last few days. Much to her chagrin, they'd explained to her that very few people could shield their emotions. So, even though she seemed to be shielding her thoughts adequately, she was positive her intense frustration shone very clearly to them and probably to the agents several rooms over as well.

"Baby," Rafe crooned as he lay down beside her. "Roll onto your stomach so we can give you a massage. Maybe help you release some of that tension."

Willing to try just about anything to soothe her overwrought emotions, she rolled onto her stomach, lifted her arms onto the pillow, and lay her head down.

She felt the mattress dip as Gabe moved onto the bed beside her and Rafe moved to the end, grasping her foot in his hands. He rubbed gently at first and then gradually increased the pressure with his thumbs. Gabe began at her shoulders, soothing the aching muscles with his firm touch. Moving lower, he pushed his hands under her shirt as he increased the pressure.

Rafe worked the muscles in her calves and thighs, managing not to tickle the sensitive skin behind her knees. She groaned at the sensual pleasure coursing through her, sinking deeper into the mattress but at the same time feeling more energized than ever.

They both reached for her ass cheeks at the same time, kneading one each, lifting and molding the round globes. She sighed, as relaxation pulsed through her tired muscles.

“Turn over,” Gabe instructed in a gruff voice.

She turned over with their help, pleasantly surprised when Gabe lifted her shirt over her arms and Rafe pulled her panties down her legs and off her feet.

“We’re going to show you what it’s like to be made love to by men who care about you. Is that okay, baby?” Rafe asked, uncertainty written on his face.

She nodded, managing a breathy little “yes” as Rafe leaned over to kiss her gently. His mouth rubbed softly against hers, his tongue darting out to run along her lower lip and then pressing into her mouth, exploring the dark recess.

She sighed again as he deepened the kiss, aware that Gabe’s hands were still massaging her lower legs, tickling her knees and urging her thighs apart. Rafe lifted his head, closely watching the expression on her face as he lowered his hand to her breast, circled the nipple with his finger, and then plucked at the beaded little nub.

Gabe leaned over her, tilting her face for a kiss, his tongue plunging into her mouth.

“So beautiful,” he said with a soft groan, as he moved his hand to pluck at the tightly coiled nipple of her other breast. Alana lifted off the bed, pushing harder into their hands, silently begging for their possession. She felt Rafe move down the bed as Gabe lowered his head and sucked a nipple into his mouth, flicking the sensitized bud with his tongue.

She groaned again, more loudly this time, liquid heat flooding through her veins as she felt Rafe spread her legs wider, his hands traveling up the inside of her thighs to stroke the sensitive flesh where her leg joined her body.

She tilted her hips, expecting him to thrust his hard cock deep into her body. What she got instead had her lifting off the bed in ecstasy. Rafe’s tongue laved her pussy lips, gently sucking them into his mouth, spreading her cream and setting off a delicious tingling in her womb. His tongue moved higher, finding her clit and flicking it gently as he pushed a single finger deep into her core.

Alana’s body seemed to move of its own accord, undulating against the mattress as Rafe’s tongue wound her desire tighter. Panting with the intense sensations, she pulled Gabe up to her mouth and kissed him almost violently, dragging her arms around him as her body seemed to fly apart, heat rippling through her muscles as her orgasm neared.

She gasped, arching her spine, her legs shaking, her pussy throbbing as Rafe thrust his finger into her harder, faster, deeper. Everything tingled, pins and needles of sensation prickling her skin a moment before her orgasm exploded through her.

Gabe swallowed her scream, soothing her with his hands as he gentled the kiss, and finally pulled back to look into her eyes. She smiled at him, amazed at how they’d managed to give her more pleasure in just a few moments than any other man she’d ever known.

Replete and exhausted, she smiled happily at Rafe as he watched her from his position between her legs.

Gabe lowered his mouth to her ear. "My turn," he whispered, then slid lower on the bed. Rafe trailed kisses up her belly, stopping to suck her hard nipples into his mouth, reigniting the flames that had just consumed her.

She felt Gabe's tongue against her pussy and almost flew off the bed when he thrust it into her already sensitized flesh. Over and over he penetrated her, his tongue demanding her response, his fingers rubbing her clit. She gasped as heat blasted through her veins, and her body shook violently. Rafe held her tight, whispering words of encouragement as she exploded, her flesh quivering, her thoughts a tangled mess, her breathing ragged as liquid heat flooded every muscle.

Slowly she floated back to earth as Gabe rested his face against her belly and trailed his fingers gently over her sensitive flesh. Rafe lifted himself up and kissed her tenderly.

"You are amazing," he said with a smile.

He lifted her into a sitting position, and Gabe helped him to put her T-shirt back on. Rafe found her underwear and tried to thread them over her feet, but she pulled back, bewildered by their actions.

"Don't you want me?" she asked, hurt lacing her voice.

"Oh, baby, I want you more than you can imagine," Rafe said, pressing her hand against the evidence of his arousal. "But tonight was for you."

"Why? Why would you make me come if you had no intention of fucking me?" she asked, her crude words trying to hide her emotions, afraid their answer might make her cry.

"Because no one else ever has," Gabe replied

Tears blurred her vision as she looked over to Rafe. He nodded his agreement.

"Baby, we just wanted you to know what your body is capable of and to show you that you are worth so much more to us than just a

warm body and a quick fuck,” he said, softening his words with a smile.

He pulled her into his arms, stroking her spine, letting her cry.

“I think I’m falling for you both,” she said quietly, her eyes drifting closed.

“Don’t worry, baby, we’ll be here to catch you.”

Chapter Six

“Caleb, I don’t like the way things are going. It’s been more than a week,” Rafe growled into the phone. He’d walked several blocks from the motel until he’d found a public phone that hadn’t been vandalized, the whole time his anxiety level ratcheting ever higher. He wasn’t a precog, owned no skills whatsoever when it came to predicting the future, but his gut kept telling him something was very wrong.

“I tend to agree with you,” Caleb said. “I hoped we could flush them into the open by now. We still have no idea what they’re waiting for.”

“Dana,” Rafe said firmly. “My bet is they want Dana because she has Theresa’s DNA, but her skills are less developed, and she’d therefore be less dangerous and far more controllable.”

“There’s a good chance you’re right, but I can’t put Dana in harm’s way. She’s not an agent, and, well, there are some personal things she’s dealing with at the moment,” Caleb answered carefully.

“Well, what about a decoy?” Rafe asked, a plan formulating in his head. “Could you send Theresa with Pete and Sandra? Make it look like she’s Dana?”

He heard Caleb’s groan.

“You know my wife will hound me until I let her do this now,” he said grudgingly.

“That’s a yes.” Theresa’s voice floated down the line, Rafe realizing belatedly he must’ve been on speakerphone.

“Okay,” Caleb conceded. “I’ll get Sandra and Pete to meet Theresa at the airport. They’ll meet you at the next motel. Understand

this though, agent,” he said, a clear warning in his tone, “Ethan and I won’t be far away.”

He heard Theresa’s harrumph and imagined her eyes rolling as clearly as if he was in the same room. He suppressed a chuckle, understanding exactly why Caleb didn’t want his wife in danger.

“Thanks, Caleb,” he said instead, genuine relief washing through him.

* * * *

Alana watched Rafe from the bed where she lay snuggled against Gabe. Rafe nodded to his brother, and then telepathically relayed the outcome of his discussion with Caleb, explaining the plan to both of them.

“I’m going to have a shower,” he finally said out loud, moving toward the bathroom as he stripped his shirt over his head.

Alana wriggled off the bed, growling as Gabe grabbed her arm to stop her progress.

“Where are you off to?” he asked, smiling. It was obvious he already knew the answer.

She leaned forward, kissing him deeply, thrusting her tongue into his mouth.

“Please?” she asked him as she tried to pull her arm from his grip.

Gabe chuckled as he released her.

“Go,” he said. “I’ll be here when you need me.”

She smiled happily, feeling pleased Gabe no longer fought his attraction to her. Rafe, however, was going to be a little more difficult to convince. Somehow, the silly man had put her on a pedestal and refused to touch her in any intimate fashion since the night they’d stroked her body into blissful orgasm.

Well, beginning right now, she was climbing off the stupid pedestal and into his lap.

Opening the door quietly, she lifted her T-shirt over her head and undid her jeans, lowering them and her underwear to the floor. She pushed aside the curtain to the shower, slowly revealing Rafe's toned body, the water rolling over his bronzed skin as he let the water fall over his face. She admired the view for a moment, lowering her eyes to the erection bobbing in front of him.

"Thinking of me?" she asked quietly.

Rafe smiled at the sound of her voice, quickly wiping the water from his face.

"Baby," he asked quietly. "Is everything okay?"

"No," she answered, stepping into the shower, "but I know how you can fix it."

He pulled her into his arms, pushing them both under the stream of warm water.

"Alana, please tell me you're sure this is what you want. That you're here because you care for me, not because you feel you owe me something."

Alana sighed in relief, determined to lay her heart on the line, knowing both Rafe and Gabe would take good care of it.

"I think I love you," she said, watching him closely as she lowered herself to the shower floor and knelt in front of his erection.

"I know I love you," he said quickly, sucking in a tortured breath as she grasped his engorged flesh in her fist and flicked her tongue over the mushroom shaped head. He leaned back against the tiles as she sucked his cock deep into her mouth. She worked her fist up and down his length, squeezing gently and laving him with her tongue.

* * * *

She was driving him to the edge, his dominant tendencies rising to the fore. Desperation rode him as he gripped her head with both hands, holding her captive as he pushed his cock deeper into her

mouth. He held her still, giving her time to adjust. She struggled against his invasion.

“It’s okay, baby.” He kept his voice quiet and spoke in what he hoped was a reassuring tone. “I won’t hurt you. Breathe through your nose and swallow.” God, he hoped she could adjust to his length and suck him the way he needed. His breath caught in his throat as she managed to follow his instructions. She relaxed her throat muscles and swallowed, allowing him to slide in deeper. He held her head to him, easing his cock in and out of her gorgeous mouth.

“Oh, God, baby,” he ground out between breaths. “You are so fucking perfect.”

She locked her knees, steadying herself with her hands against his taut thighs, allowing him to pump into her mouth, harder, faster, his need growing with every stroke.

“I’m going to come, baby,” he said breathlessly. “Can you swallow me?” She nodded her head as best she could with his cock still in her mouth. He groaned, pumping deep into her luscious throat, almost losing control as she let him thrust harder and harder, silently demanding more. He groaned, his orgasm too close, too wild to deny. He eased out a little, damn near whimpering as he finally erupted. She moaned her approval, licking his cock lovingly as she sucked him clean.

He held her head against his groin for a breathless moment as he tried to keep himself upright.

“Come here,” he said to her, pulling her gently onto her feet and up to his mouth. He kissed her reverently, running his hands over her spine as he held her tightly.

* * * *

Gabe opened the shower curtain, reached in, and pulled her from Rafe’s embrace. He dried her with a towel, then carried her from the bathroom and, carefully, placed her in the middle of the bed.

Her lips were red and swollen from being wrapped around Rafe's thick cock. Her eyes were glazed with arousal, and her nipples pulled even tighter as he watched them. He stripped off his own clothes, and she held her arms open for him as he lowered himself onto the bed. He eased her legs open wider as he settled himself between them. His thick cock nudged her dripping mound.

"I want to go slow, honey, but I don't think I can. I want you too much," he confessed in a tight voice.

"Don't make me wait," she begged, wrapping her arms around him, pulling him toward her pussy.

"Stop," he said through tightly clenched teeth. "Condom." He lifted off her just as Rafe threw a box of condoms onto the bed. Quickly tearing it open, Gabe pressed one into Alana's hand, smiling when she got to her knees and ripped open the little packet.

Gabe felt close to the edge, nearly losing it as Alana slowly rolled the condom into place.

"Now, honey," he groaned as he pushed her onto her back, covered her quickly, and pressed into her hot, tight pussy. He eased in gently, trying not to hurt her, grinding his teeth against his need to make her his, hard and fast. He released the breath he didn't realize he was holding as he began to slowly pump into her.

* * * *

Every muscle in her body screamed at his unhurried pace. She lifted her hips, meeting his thrusts, wrapping her legs around him as she tried to increase his speed. She growled her frustration a moment before Rafe's warm hand smoothed up her stomach and plucked at her tightly beaded nipples.

Gabe lifted her bent knees, opening her wider, penetrating her deeper, beginning to pound into her faster. Her breath caught as every nerve ending tensed, gripping her in ecstatic thrall. Rafe's hand slid to her clit, rubbing rhythmically, pushing her arousal higher, winding

her tighter and finally, finally throwing her over the edge into heavenly rapture.

She screamed her release as Gabe pounded into her pussy, tenderness and finesse forgotten as he rode her orgasm and began his own, grunting as his cock pulsed inside her.

Gabe collapsed onto her, his bulk surrounding her, pressing her into the bed, and she held him tightly as Rafe kissed her lips reverently.

"I love you," Gabe said, lifting his weight off her and easing his softening cock out of her pussy.

"I love you both," she said happily, turning to lie against Rafe as Gabe disposed of the condom. He returned moments later, curled against her back, and draped a heavy arm possessively over her belly. Sated and happy, she slept.

* * * *

Theresa entered the motel room with her sister's blistering attack still ringing in her ears. Yes, she'd said over and over. Yes, she'd make sure Pete and Sandra stayed safe. Yes, she'd get them home quickly. Yes, she would keep this conversation a secret. Seriously, she thought, having a sister who could yell at you over long distances was definitely not an advantage. She smiled as she felt Ethan's soft chuckle in her head.

"*Quiet, you,*" she admonished.

Theresa looked at the thin woman and the two men who hovered protectively behind her. She'd only known Rafe and Gabe a short while, but she'd bet dollars to donuts Alana was the first woman to affect them this way. She smiled, pleased her younger sister had found the same sort of love she'd found herself.

* * * *

“Alana, I’d like to introduce you to your sister, Dana,” Rafe said out loud. Alana already knew this woman was Theresa, having had it explained to her last night by telepathy, but it was still thrilling to meet one of the women who were most likely her sisters. The physical resemblance was remarkable. Theresa was a little taller, but they were both similar in the shape of their face, their eyes and nose, and their coloring. Theresa had bleached her hair so she looked like Dana, but other than that, the family resemblance was quite astounding. Alana wondered quietly if maybe they also shared the same father.

“Hi, Dana,” she said out loud, her eyes betraying her emotions.

“*Heads up,*” they all heard Ethan’s warning. “*Several armed men moving your way. We’re moving to intercept. Theresa, you and Alana get into the bathroom now. Stay down until I tell you to move. Do you understand?*”

Alana felt Theresa’s wish to defy him, but noticed she did exactly as he ordered, dragging her into the bathroom and locking the door. She pushed Alana into the shower stall, shuffling in behind her, hunkering down between Alana and the door.

“*Done,*” she said telepathically to her husbands and Alana.

“*Thanks, babe,*” Ethan said, his love for Theresa leaking into his words, the emotion almost too intimate for Alana to hear.

She glanced at Theresa, who was smiling at her expression.

“*Gabe and Rafe love you the same way,*” she said silently.

Alana smiled, trying to hide her fear, almost overwhelmed by her need to be with them.

“*They’re well-trained professionals,*” Theresa soothed. “*They need you safe so they can concentrate on their job.*”

“*Thanks,*” Alana said telepathically, briefly hugging the woman she hoped really was her sister.

Fighting nausea yet again, it seemed to Alana they stayed in this cramped little space forever, but just when she felt she would scream in frustration, she heard Ethan’s strong confident voice in her head.

“*All clear, ladies. Stay where you are. We’re coming to get you.*”

“Come on,” Theresa said, grabbing Alana’s hand. “No sense in following all of their bossy orders.”

Theresa winked at her as she opened the bathroom door and stepped into the motel room. She squeaked in surprise as a large bear of a man grabbed her in a strong hug, swatting her backside as she laughed.

“How did I know you’d disobey me this time?” he asked, grinning widely.

“Because you love me and my independent thinking,” she replied sassily.

Another man walked into the room, pulled Theresa away from the huge man and into his arms. He kissed her passionately as he mumbled words that sounded like “I missed you.”

Alana took a sideways step, looking around the happy trio, searching for the men in her life.

“They’re just finishing up,” the big man said, noticing her anxious movements. “They’ll be here in a moment.”

“Is everyone okay?” Theresa asked. “Are Sandra and Pete okay?”

“Yes, babe,” he said, pulling Theresa back into his arms. “How about you stop worrying about Dana for a moment and introduce me to Alana.”

“Sorry,” Theresa said, a blush creeping up her cheeks. “Alana, this is my husband Ethan, and the handsome fellow behind me is my husband Caleb.” Caleb grinned at her “handsome” comment, clearly relieved to see his wife safe and sassy.

“We’ll be there in just a moment, baby,” Rafe called telepathically. *“We’re heading back to the room now.”*

He’d barely finished the sentence when he stepped into the room. Almost melting with relief, Alana moved across the carpet, literally throwing herself into his arms, wrapping her legs around his big body.

“Wow, if I’d known you’d react like this, I’d go arrest thugs more often,” he joked quietly. Gabe dropped a tender kiss on the back of

her neck, his arm gently squeezing her side as he walked past them to report to his supervisors.

“We’ve got seven rogues in custody,” he advised. “Pete and Sandra are searching the area to the south of the motel, and Rick and Zane are checking the north. The rest of the agents are transporting the prisoners to the nearest holding facility.”

“Well done,” Caleb acknowledged. “Head home and take a few days off. I’m sure Theresa is keen to introduce Alana to her mother and sister.”

Chapter Seven

Alana's head was spinning. She'd just met her sister Dana for the first time, and unlike Theresa, Dana was neither welcoming nor friendly. She'd verbally ripped into Theresa the moment they'd walked in the door, yelling at her for a dozen little things and completely ignoring Alana's presence.

Her tantrum had been quite impressive to watch, but what really caught her attention was the fact that Theresa just stood there waiting for Dana to calm down, neither defending herself nor fighting back. When Dana had finally quieted, Theresa grabbed her for a brief hug, mumbled something Alana couldn't quite hear, and then stood back to introduce her.

Both women, her sisters for sure now that the DNA tests had been done, had then continued as if Dana hadn't just had a complete and utter meltdown. Overall, it had been a very interesting afternoon.

As she approached the front door of Rafe and Gabe's house, she was again gripped by anxiety.

"Are you sure you're all right with me staying here?" Alana asked Gabe for the millionth time. He and Rafe were giving her a roof over her head, and despite being thrilled they wanted her with them, she was, quite frankly, annoyed at being so helpless and having so few choices available to her. She didn't want to be a burden to them. She just hadn't quite figured out how she would accomplish it. She'd never actually been responsible for herself, having lived on her father's estate until she turned eighteen, and then of course being held prisoner had taken away all of her choices.

At twenty-four, she'd never held a job, never driven a car, never lived on her own, hadn't even done a load of laundry if the truth be told. Yep, she was a great catch, she thought derisively, glancing at the men either side of her to make sure the block she'd built in her mind was adequately protecting her thoughts.

Gabe pulled her into his arms, holding her around the waist so he could see her face as their lower bodies pressed closer.

"Welcome home," he said to her, leaning forward to capture her mouth with his own. She felt his cock pressing against her belly and whimpered softly as Rafe pressed his hard body against her back. He dropped sweet kisses on the exposed flesh of her neck and collar bone and shoulders.

"Yes, baby, welcome home," he said impatiently. "Bedrooms are this way."

She felt Gabe grin against her mouth.

"He's the impatient twin," Gabe said, managing to keep a serious tone to his voice.

Alana laughed, pushing aside her worries, for now, preferring to concentrate on the eagerness of her lovers.

Growling low in his throat, Rafe pulled her from Gabe's arms and swung her into his own, carrying her down the hallway to a bedroom. He put her back on her feet near a huge bed, stepped back, and folded his arms across his chest.

"Clothes off now," he said in a low, sensual voice, his excitement obvious in his dark eyes and the tautness of his body. Gabe lounged in the doorway, grinning widely.

"Oh, he's also the bossy twin, too."

She giggled until Rafe lunged forward, grabbed her by the waist, and flipped her over his knee. His hand massaged her bottom through her jeans.

"Last chance, clothes off now or I'll spank this pretty ass."

He lifted her back to her feet, then stepped back to watch. She smiled, finally realizing he needed to claim her in their home.

Somehow, it was more intimate, more special, than a couple of sweaty sessions in a cheap motel. This was a serious step in their relationship, and she could understand Rafe's impatience. She was eager to show them that making love to them was more than just sex to her, too.

She lifted her arms, undoing the buttons slowly, watching both of her lovers' faces as she revealed her body to them. Thanks to eating more regularly, and the removal of whatever medication her captors had been feeding her, she'd managed to put on some weight. She'd added a little padding to her hips, thighs, and bottom, and her breasts had plumped somewhat, making her less angular and more feminine than she'd felt in years.

She noticed she wasn't the only one to appreciate the extra pounds. Judging by the painful-looking erections pressing against their jeans, she felt pretty sure her men liked how she looked now, too.

She let the shirt drop to the floor as she toed her shoes off and undid the buttons to her jeans. She heard two different groans when she leaned forward to push the pants down her legs, giving them both a good view of her breasts as they overflowed the bra she wore.

Standing again, she moved her arms around to her back so she could undo the restrictive garment and let it drop to the floor.

"You are so beautiful," Gabe said reverently, taking a step toward her.

Rafe's arm shot out, barring his way.

"Take off your underwear and then sit on the edge of the bed," he instructed through gritted teeth.

She didn't even consider disobeying his orders. She was too overwhelmed with her need for them.

As soon as she sat down, Rafe moved to the foot of the bed, knelt between her legs and pushed her knees apart. He pressed a single finger into her dripping pussy.

“Lie down,” he told her. Gabe eased her backwards onto the bed, and then lowered his face to hers. She moaned as Gabe’s tongue thrust into her mouth in the same lazy rhythm as Rafe finger-fucked her pussy. Gabe pulled her arms over her head, pressing them into the bed, holding her trapped. He plundered her mouth as Rafe pushed her legs open wider.

She jolted, lifting her hips at the first touch of Rafe’s warm tongue on her slit. He sucked on the swollen lips of her pussy, pressing his finger into her harder, moving faster. His tongue brushed her clit as he pushed another and then another finger into her dripping pussy.

Her body coiled tighter, straining with wild arousal, her muscles beginning to pulse. She moaned, her excitement growing. Rafe flicked her clit harder, then pushed a finger into her ass. She gasped, writhing against the mattress as the unexpected pleasure stole her breath.

“Baby, I need to fuck this sweet ass.” Her passion wound even higher at Rafe’s raw words. Gabe latched on to her nipple, sucking hard, biting gently, worshiping her other breast with his hand. She gasped as Rafe began thrusting his finger into her back passage over and over. He still sucked her clit into his mouth, still flicked the swollen flesh with his tongue.

Her back arched, every muscle pulling tight as her orgasm drew nearer. Barely breathing, she shook all over, moaning as heat finally exploded in her belly. Her pussy pulsed. Her ass sucked at Rafe’s finger, drawing it more deeply into her body. She moaned as liquid heat pulsed through her veins, and she eventually relaxed, exhausted, against the mattress.

“Oh, baby, you are fucking incredible.” Rafe groaned then flicked her clit with his tongue one last time. “On your hands and knees,” he ordered. Gabe helped her to roll over and steadied her as she lifted into position. She squirmed a little, nervous about what was going to happen but eager to give her heart and her body to the men she loved.

“Hold still,” he said through clenched teeth. He smacked her bottom when she continued to wriggle, but she stilled in shock when she felt a cold dollop of lubricant pressed into her ass. Rafe used two fingers to spread it into the opening, and she gasped at the unexpected pleasure she felt from the slight pain. She smiled when she heard him squeeze more onto his hand and spread the lube on his cock.

“Relax baby,” he said, rubbing a soothing hand over her ass cheeks. He pressed the head of his cock against her dark hole, holding her steady with one hand. A sob escaped her at the intense sting, the pressure felt weird and uncomfortable, and fear wound insidiously through her brain. Desperate to please her men, she pressed back against Rafe, and she gasped when she felt him pull away.

“No,” she cried, panicked by his quick withdrawal.

“It’s okay, sweetheart,” Gabe whispered in her ear. “He’s just making sure we don’t hurt you. Relax, breathe out.”

She breathed a little easier when Rafe wrapped his strong arms around her waist, lifted her off the bed and draped her over a padded footlocker. He pulled her knees into place, his large hand holding her down. Her breasts pressed into the cool leather cover and her face hung over the other edge.

She breathed out just as Gabe had told her, consciously trying to relax her muscles, wanting to please them, needing to give Rafe and Gabe the part of her body that had never been touched by another man.

Gabe rubbed his cock against the seam of her lips, urging her to open her mouth. Eagerly, she sucked his engorged flesh deep into her throat, managing to swallow just like they’d taught her.

“That’s it, baby,” Rafe crooned as he pushed the head of his cock against her dark hole once more. She pushed back and finally felt her muscles relax as he pressed into her ass. She hummed her excitement against Gabe’s cock, making him groan as he shuttled in and out of her mouth. He moved faster as her pleasure grew.

So involved in sucking Gabe's gorgeous length, she barely noticed the burning sting from Rafe's invasion. Carefully, he began rocking into her body. Liquid fire burning through her veins, heat pooling in her womb, as need gripped her once more.

Rafe groaned, pushed in and out of her ass several times. But then both her men slowly withdrew. She whimpered her sense of loss, but Rafe kissed the back of her neck softly.

"Straddle Gabe," he told her then lifted her back onto the bed and over his brother's erection. She pressed down, groaning as she took Gabe's hard cock into her pussy. Rafe put a hand between her shoulder blades and pushed her down onto Gabe's chest, lifting her ass into the air once again.

Gabe's strong arms wrapped around her, holding her trapped, holding her still. He kissed the top of her head as Rafe pressed his cock against her ass once more. She eagerly pressed back.

"Careful, baby," he ordered in a low voice, crushing her harder against Gabe. "Just let me get inside."

Slowly, he pushed all of the way into her ass, holding still as she adjusted to the feeling of holding them both in her body. Her ass burned, her pussy throbbed, but even the slight pain couldn't stop her need from spiraling out of control. She whimpered, wriggling, trying to get them to move harder, faster, to fuck her the way she needed. They held her still, resisting her demands, kissing her everywhere until she finally relaxed.

"Good girl," Rafe said, before they began to move. Gabe slid out slowly. As he began to push back in, Rafe pulled out, alternating the rhythm so that she was always full, always had a cock inside her.

She panted, nearly overwhelmed by the incredible sensations. Then they increased their pace. Both thrusting into her harder, more forcefully, more desperately. She felt Rafe swell in her ass, heard his groan as he exploded. He ground against her ass, pushing her clit hard against Gabe's groin. She moaned as sensations raced between her trapped clit and her burning ass. Her body shook wildly. She

screamed as her release exploded through her, every muscle shaking violently as her orgasm went on and on and on.

She gasped, even more turned on by the fact that both men held her hips still as she came, carefully protecting her from getting hurt. When her orgasm finally eased and liquid heat suffused her, Rafe pulled his cock gently from her ass. Gabe kissed her savagely, grabbed her by the hips, flipped them on the bed, and rammed his cock deeper into her pussy. He lifted her legs over his arms, increasing his penetration, pressing harder, thrusting deeper.

Rafe snaked his hand between them flicking her clit, gently twisting and teasing the swollen nub as her breath jammed in her lungs. He kissed her hard, swallowing her cries as another mind-blowing release burst through her. Liquid fire traveled her veins, every molecule in her body going into meltdown. Gabe groaned loudly, fucking her harder, deeper, faster as he followed her into ecstasy.

Finally, he rolled so that she lay draped over his big body, panting and sweating, and completely exhausted. Rafe sat beside them, lazily covering her neck and back with kisses.

“Come on, baby,” he said as he eventually helped her up. “Let’s get you into a warm bath.”

Gabe kissed her as he sat up.

“I love you,” he said, his fingers gently caressing her face.

“I love you, too,” she told him. Every cell in her body acknowledged the truth of that statement. They weren’t meaningless words, not to her, and not to these two amazing men. Rafe wrapped her arms around his neck and lifted her into his embrace.

“Baby, you know I love you,” he said, grinning as he carried her into the bathroom.

“I know,” she said, a huge smile on her face, “and you know I know I love you, too.”

Rafe rolled his eyes at her silliness.

“Bath and then food,” he said seriously. “Low sugar levels are making you loopy.”

He kissed her, gently, so at odds with his usual aggressive possession.

“I love you,” he said again.

* * * *

A week later, Alana leaned over the toilet bowl, the nausea once again holding her in its thrall. Both of her men were out on an assignment, and quite frankly, she was glad to be able to deal with this on her own. A nasty suspicion had been growing in the back of her mind, and she felt pretty sure she wasn't going to like the answer.

She'd thought of contacting Theresa but knew she was also an agent, and even if not actually on assignment, she was probably very busy.

Alana briefly considered calling her genetic mother, Lydia, but realized the unfairness of burdening a woman who had already been through so much. Everyone marveled at how Lydia could still be sane after everything that had happened to her, and Alana held no wish to make things worse.

So, it looked like her only choice at the moment was Dana. She admitted silently she was a little awed by the woman. Not frightened so much, just very impressed with her passion and her strength of personality.

Deciding that arriving on the woman's doorstep was probably preferable to giving her a chance to turn her down over the phone, Alana called for a taxi. She knew Gabe and Rafe would probably be furious with her for leaving by herself, but, well, just at this moment, she couldn't see a way around it.

Forty-five minutes later she knocked on Dana's front door just as the woman opened it.

Dana simply looked at her, saying nothing, waiting for an explanation. Alana shuffled nervously from foot to foot, suddenly unsure whether this had been the right choice after all.

Suddenly, Dana's eyes widened, and she pulled her into the house, closing the door quickly behind her.

"Are you sure it's not Gabe and Rafe's baby?" she asked, cutting right to the heart of the matter. Alana knew her face betrayed her dismay at how easily her sister could read her thoughts. She'd managed to hide her suspicions from her guys for several days now, but it seemed that her sister's skills far surpassed her own.

"I don't think so," she said miserably. "I've been feeling nauseous for quite some time."

Dana left the room, but Alana remained where she was, unsure what she should do. Fortunately, Dana returned quickly, a small package in her hands.

"First things first," she said, waving the package in the air. "Let's make sure we have something to worry about."

She pressed the pregnancy test into Alana's hand and shooed her in the direction of the bathroom. Hurriedly, Alana did as instructed, glad to be finally doing something. The worry of the last few days was beginning to wear on her, and even though the coward in her wanted to hide and pretend nothing was wrong, the woman in her needed answers.

The stupid little stick gave her the wrong fucking answer.

She was pregnant.

Dana held her while she cried, rocking her gently as Alana tried desperately to figure out what to do next. Her love for Gabe and Rafe swelled in her chest, gripping her painfully as she realized she would need to tell them about her mysterious pregnancy, and then somehow find a way to go on without them. Surely saddling them with a baby she wasn't even sure was hers, and knew for a fact wasn't theirs, would be a cruel injustice to them all. It would quickly erode the fledgling love they had for her.

God, she hated her captors more now than she had when she was a prisoner. Why had they done this to her? Was the child conceived by artificial insemination or in a laboratory test tube? Was it her baby or some other woman's egg implanted into her? She had too many questions and no way to find out the answers.

Fucking assholes.

She had several scars on her lower abdomen from what looked to be keyhole surgeries, but no idea when or how or why they'd been done.

She knew so little about her time as a prisoner that she'd gratefully moved on with her life, pretending for the most part that the last six years hadn't happened. This pregnancy robbed her of that comforting ignorance and left her needing answers.

"Shhh..." Dana soothed as a smile curved her face just a little. "Settle down before you break my furniture."

Startled, Alana looked around the room, belatedly realizing every knickknack and piece of furniture in the room was vibrating, pulsing with her anger.

"Guess you and I are more alike than we thought," Dana said kindly. "Sandra will be home soon. We'll see if she can contact our brother Jason and find out if he knows what happened before he got you out."

Confusion flickered momentarily through Alana's brain, and then slowly everything clicked into place.

"The guy who handcuffed me to the bed in the middle of nowhere is my brother?" she asked incredulously.

"Yep," Dana confirmed, "and he nearly killed Sandra the first time he contacted her telepathically."

"Well, I guess we both have a gripe with him then. Damn, I'm going to kick his ass from here to Sunday. What the hell was he thinking leaving me in the middle of nowhere?"

Dana grinned, apparently happy to see Alana's anger override her feelings of hopelessness.

"I've already filled Sandra in on what's happening. As always, she's eager to help any way she can. Damn woman helps everyone, regardless of personal danger, and it's been the point of many discussions."

The door opened as Sandra walked into the house. She made a beeline for Dana, laying her hand over the small mound of Dana's belly.

"How's junior been today?" she asked. "Are you over morning sickness yet, luv?"

"I think so," Dana smiled indulgently, watching Alana's face as realization hit her.

"I think maybe I should get going," Alana stammered. "I...um...have stuff to do."

"Sit," Sandra told her in a tone that brooked no argument. "Running won't solve anything. We need to try to contact Jason and see if he knows what's going on. I know you want answers, and well, he's probably the place to start."

"But what if he's not what he seems?" Alana asked as terror slid up her spine and into her already overwrought brain. "What if he's the exact person we should be running from? They planted a tracer on Gabe's car so they knew where I was the whole time. What if he's the one who did this to me?" Alana's voice rose in sound and pitch as terror gripped her and she paced across the room.

It wasn't until she realized Sandra was watching Dana carefully control the furniture and knickknacks that Alana realized her hysteria might bring them crashing down upon them. Sandra smiled at her kindly. "Alana, sit down," she told her again as she wrapped an arm around her and guided her to the lounge. "I know Jason is one of the good guys. I know that for a fact. Trust me on this one, okay?"

Swallowing hard, Alana sat on the lounge beside her sister and nodded to Sandra. Dana pulled her hand into her own, seeming to relax a little now that the furniture had stopped rattling.

"I just need to grab a couple of things, and I'll try to contact Jason," Sandra said as she left the room. Alana's confusion was probably written on her face.

"She knows I won't let her contact Jason without having a strong sedative on hand. The first time he tried to contact her he damn well nearly killed her. He's a really strong telepath, probably stronger than Theresa, yet he has no control over his ability."

"Oh," Alana said softly, trying to grasp the thought that telepathy could be dangerous.

"Okay," Sandra said as she handed a small syringe to Dana. "Give me a chance though," she admonished. "Don't go sedating me at the first sign of trouble."

Dana smiled at her again, rolling her eyes for effect.

"Okay, I'll wait until the second sign of trouble."

Sandra laughed as she sat next to Dana.

"Well, let's do this."

She closed her eyes and immediately, sweat popped out on her forehead, her breathing became labored, and her skin paled to a milky white. She held her hand up to Dana signaling for her to wait. Only a moment had gone by, but Alana already wished she hadn't needed Sandra to do this for her. The poor woman looked like she'd just run a marathon.

Then as suddenly as it started, it stopped. Sandra opened her eyes and smiled at Dana as she took the syringe from her hand.

"I'm okay, luv," she said reassuringly.

"You don't look okay," Alana said, the words falling from her mouth before she could call them back.

"Not you, too." Sandra laughed breathlessly. "I'm going to put this sedative away before one of you decides to give it to me anyway." She lifted herself from the lounge, obviously locking her knees as she stood. Carefully, she walked across the room and returned the sedative to a suitcase she'd left open on the side board

table. She managed to get back to the lounge with only the slightest wobble in her legs.

Alana squirmed in her seat, impatient now to learn what Jason had said.

"I'm sorry, Alana. He didn't know they'd already done the procedure. He'd been trying to get you out of there for over a year, but they must've implanted the embryo while he was recovering from his bullet wound."

"Bullet wound?" Alana said, the information coming too fast for her to make sense of it all. "Who shot him?"

Dana laughed and wrapped her arm around Sandra's shoulder.

"I did," Sandra said. "He helped me escape and needed to keep his cover, so he asked me to shoot him, so...well, I did." She shrugged. "But, he's okay," she added, quickly seeing Alana's concern.

"Okay," Alana said, feeling even more confused. "When?" She shook her head, feeling nauseous again. "How pregnant am I?"

"We think maybe about ten weeks, but we're not sure. Jason was taken off the program while he was having trouble with his leg. He said they changed your medication about two and a half months ago, so he's pretty sure they would've implanted after that, not before. Remember, their goal is the birth of a healthy baby, so they wouldn't have taken unnecessary risks."

"Is it my baby?" she asked, realizing that that must be the most ridiculous question for a pregnant woman to be asking, but here she was asking it nonetheless.

"He's not sure," Sandra said, pulling Alana's hand into her own, "but he's going to try and find out. He'll contact me as soon as he can."

"Please don't tell Rafe or Gabe," she asked, suddenly very frightened. She could feel her new world collapsing around her, and she desperately wanted to hold on to the two men she loved for as long as she could.

“Alana, I don’t think that’s a good idea,” Dana said quietly. “They love you. They’ll help you through this.”

“Dana, how can I ask them to? They’ve already given me everything. How can I ask them for more? How can I ask them to love me while I carry another man’s child?” Alana dropped her head into her hands, an incredible sadness swelling through her. She’d held heaven in her grasp for such a short time, but the pain of losing it made her wish she’d never been rescued.

She was vaguely aware of her sister wrapping her arms around her and rocking her gently as she cried herself into exhaustion. Oblivion finally claimed her, and she went gratefully.

Chapter Eight

“She’s been asleep for hours,” Dana said angrily. “Get a doctor over here now, Theresa.” She slammed the phone down, enjoying the loud clunk. It was so much more satisfying hanging up on someone by telephone than it was trying to disconnect a telepathic link.

Sandra had called Caleb and Ethan, reported what happened and requested their assistance. Dana and Sandra had tried to take Alana to see one of the doctors at The Agency, but she’d pitched a complete fit, terrified Gabe and Rafe would see her and wonder why. It had taken both Dana’s and Sandra’s considerable telekinetic talents to control the furniture that time, so they had no wish to upset the woman further.

Fifteen minutes later, Theresa arrived with a doctor in tow. He was an older man, probably early sixties, with kind eyes and a warm smile.

“This is Dr. Thompson,” Theresa said as she introduced him to Dana.

“Hey, Doc.” Sandra waved from across the room. “Long time no see,” she said, grinning.

“Yes, good to see you in one piece, Sandra,” he said knowingly. Dana caught the subtext, determined to confront Sandra on just how many injuries she’d managed on the job. Judging by the simple fact that she seemed to know all of the doctors at The Agency, Dana guessed quite a few. She pushed her concerns aside for the moment though and concentrated on helping her sister.

“Alana,” she said quietly, trying to wake her without startling her. She ran a hand over Alana’s reddened face. The woman’s eyes were

puffy and swollen, the lashes still wet with tears. “Honey, we need you to wake up so the doctor can talk to you.”

Slowly, Alana’s eyes opened. They looked so red and sore that Dana’s eyes watered in sympathy, and she felt even a greater need to protect the young woman. Alana looked around the room like she wasn’t quite sure where she was but sat up quickly when she saw the doctor. She cringed against the lounge. Clearly, doctors were not high on her list of people to trust.

“Honey, this is Dr. Thompson. Sandra and Pete have known him for years. You can trust him,” she reassured her as she brushed the younger woman’s hair away from her eyes.

* * * *

Alana sat up, watching the man warily as she quickly glanced around the room at the other women. Theresa and Sandra stood in the doorway, clearly giving her space so that she wouldn’t feel so crowded.

She felt a strange calm washing over her, and it took a moment to realize the feeling was being projected by the doctor and not coming from within. Alana wanted to deny the emotion, rage against the peace she neither wanted nor felt she deserved, but a very small frightened part of her accepted the help. If she could control her emotions, maybe she could find a way out of her current predicament.

“Theresa tells me you don’t want to come into my office, so we’ll do a few blood tests and maybe a pelvic exam today, and then we’ll talk about what to do next.”

* * * *

“*Something’s wrong,*” Rafe said telepathically, a niggling feeling gripping him, raising his anxiety levels.

“*I know,*” Gabe replied. “*I feel it, too.*”

They'd been tracking the same damn rogue they'd picked up several weeks ago before they'd met Alana, the same asshole that had dropped a tracer in the crease between the seat and backrest of the back seat of their car. It had taken a team of techs and a myriad assortment of gadgets to find the smallest damn tracer any of them had ever seen.

Something pulled at Rafe's thoughts. His concern for Alana was never far from his mind, but today, for some reason, it was screaming a warning to his subconscious, pulling his attention away from the task at hand. Damn it. He needed to focus. This was the sort of shit that got agents killed, yet he still couldn't shed his worry and concentrate.

"Gabe," he said, no longer able to control his emotions. "*We need to check in with Alana.*"

"Agreed."

Gabe started the engine, both of them abandoning their mission as they followed their instincts and headed for home.

"Call her," Gabe barked out loud.

Rafe grabbed his cell phone, quickly dialing home. The phone rang six, seven, eight times, and then the answering machine clicked on. He listened to the message impatiently and as soon as the beep sounded, started calling for her.

"Baby, pick up the phone. We need to talk to you. Alana, please talk to us. We need to hear your voice." Each word that came out of his mouth required more effort to sound calm. She should've been home. Something was definitely not right.

He slammed the cell phone closed, then glanced at Gabe and saw his own fear reflected in his brother's features. They were at least two hours away from home and damned if they weren't going to try to get there faster. What he wouldn't give for some precog abilities right about now.

He opened the phone again, dialing Caleb's office number. It rang four times before he heard Caleb's familiar voice.

“Caleb, it’s Rafe. Could you get someone to head over to our place and check on Alana. She’s not answering the phone.”

“Absolutely, I’ll get Theresa onto it right now,” he said, probably mentally contacting his wife as he said it. “Oh, she’s with Alana at Dana’s house.” He sounded confused.

“Is Alana all right?” Rafe asked, his nerves practically screaming.

“Rafe, you and Gabe head back to the office. There are things we need to discuss.”

“What the fuck does that mean, Caleb?” he yelled through the phone, uncaring that he spoke to his direct supervisor. “Is Alana okay or not?”

“She’s with Theresa and Dana,” he said cautiously. “They’ll keep her safe until you can get there, but, Rafe, she asked we don’t get you and Gabe involved.”

“Caleb?” he said, crushing fear and impotent anger crowding his chest, making the word a plea for understanding.

“She’s okay, Rafe,” he said quietly. “We’ll keep her safe until you can get here.”

The next two hours were the longest of Rafe’s life.

* * * *

The doctor had taken some blood and done a pelvic exam and then spoken to her about the unusual circumstances of her pregnancy. He’d offered her some choices she hadn’t actually considered, but somehow having them said out loud made them less palatable than before. Regardless of how she became pregnant, she could feel the tiny life inside her. Now that she knew for certain that she was pregnant she’d realized that she could sense the child with her empathic abilities. Feelings of serenity and warmth emanated from the tiny little person nestled in her body, and somehow it helped her to focus more clearly.

Even if the child wasn't from her egg, it was somehow still her child.

Alana hugged her slightly rounded stomach, wrapping her arms over the small bulge. Somehow, in the last thirty minutes or so, her priorities had shifted, and her child's future was far more important than her own. The doctor suggested that she was most likely about ten weeks pregnant but had assured her the blood tests would be a better indicator and she should consider an ultrasound in the next few days.

After the doctor left, she stayed in the bed, grateful for a little space. She could still feel Dana, Sandra, and Theresa in the living area, but for now she wanted to just be alone to sort out her tangled emotions.

She was almost asleep, but she felt them before she heard the pounding on the door.

"Baby," Rafe called telepathically to her. *"Talk to us please. Tell us what's going on."*

She could feel his confusion and his worry. Gabe was with him, the emotions emanating from him, just as raw, just as painful.

"Oh God," she thought helplessly, *"I never wanted to hurt either of them, but how can I expect them to accept me and this baby?"*

"We're having a baby?" Gabe asked quietly in her mind.

"No," she replied as tears streamed down her face. She couldn't face either of them. She couldn't look at them and see their love for her die, or worse waiver, as they tried to do the noble thing.

Rafe and Gabe fell quiet—both physically and telepathically—and a moment later Dana walked into the room.

"They're here," she said unnecessarily. "They want to talk to you."

"I can't," Alana said as the tears started again and a sense of hopelessness crushed her spirit.

Dana turned to leave the room, uncharacteristic indecision written on her face as she turned back to Alana. "I will send them away this time," she said in a low, deliberate tone of voice, "because you need

the chance to think, but understand me when I say I will not let you hide in here forever. Whatever happens, you need to face it head-on, not hide like some cowering, pathetic child.”

She spun on her heel and left the room, closing the door firmly behind her.

Alana heard Gabe and Rafe arguing with Dana and Theresa, as they demanded access to her. She didn’t hear her sisters’ replies, but after about twenty minutes, they both left, Gabe’s parting shot still ringing in her head.

“We’ll be back.”

Chapter Nine

“Well, Mr. Giles, you’re a hard man to find.”

Rafe slid into the backseat of the car, his gun pressed aggressively into the back of the man’s head. Gabe stepped over to the driver’s side door, opened it, and gave the man a menacing look.

“Move over,” he ordered as the older man whimpered pathetically.

Gabe could feel every emotion and hear every thought that ran through the older man’s head as Duncan Giles fumbled with his seat belt, trying to follow their instructions while his mind turned to mush. Blind panic had him cowering against the door and squeezing his eyes tightly closed.

“We have some questions for you,” Rafe growled from the backseat as Gabe turned the car on and eased into the traffic, “about Alana.”

“I don’t know where she is, I swear. I had nothing to do with her escape,” he babbled through tears. The man was a pathetic soggy mess, and Gabe found himself questioning their current course of action.

Duncan Giles obviously believed they were from the rogue organization, come to extract payback for whatever they thought he’d done. It would seem this blubbing fool was the number one suspect in the escape of his daughter. Gabe almost laughed out loud at the thought.

Deciding, for the moment, to play this to their advantage, Gabe kept in telepathic contact with his brother as Rafe began asking questions.

“Why was she so strong willed? Why didn’t you break her spirit before handing her over?”

“What?” Alana’s father asked bewildered. “Nobody told me to break her spirit. You told me to raise her as my own and to keep her safe. You killed my wife just to prove your point. God, I did everything you told me to. I even let the men you sent seduce her and try to impregnate her when she turned seventeen. You promised me you’d keep her safe.” Duncan Giles continued to babble, the words running into each other as his frustration grew, and his sense of helplessness filled the car. “You promised me she would be treated fairly, yet now you accuse me of freeing her from your institution. I don’t even know where she was being held.” He sobbed again. “I don’t even know if she’s still alive.”

Gabe couldn’t sense any artifice in this man’s words. He was honestly telling them everything he knew, the emotions those of a man who had nothing else to lose.

Rafe put his gun away, nodding to Gabe as he turned the car back toward The Agency. First, they’d make sure the man wasn’t tagged with a tracer, and then they’d get to the bottom of whatever the hell was going on.

* * * *

The door flew open with a loud crash as Dana in all her glorious fury stalked into the room. The woman had forced her to eat, both for her own health and the baby’s, but had made it very clear she was getting damn sick of playing nursemaid.

“Get up,” she said impatiently. “You have visitors.”

Alana opened her mind, sensing both Rafe and Gabe and her father. Her father? Rolling off the bed quickly, she didn’t bother with shoes as she followed Dana into the living room.

“What the hell is this?” she began, glaring hard at Gabe and then Rafe. “Why the fuck would you bring that man here? You have no

idea what he's put me through. I thought you said you'd protect me, not deliver the devil to my fucking door."

Alana ranted a few more sentences and then perched on the edge of one of the armchairs. She crossed her arms, both an aggressive and defensive gesture as she waited for an explanation. Gabe and Rafe just watched her, apparently waiting for her father to explain his presence. When it became apparent that the man she'd called Dad for eighteen years wouldn't or couldn't say anything, she turned her glare on Gabe.

"Alana, we bought him here so he could explain. He's almost as much a victim here as you are."

That caught her attention.

Pinning the man with a dark stare, Alana stood and watched him carefully as she spewed forth all the horrific things that had happened to her over the past six years. Her father visibly paled under the onslaught.

"...and now I'm pregnant with a child that I'm not even sure is mine and with a man that I haven't even met or fucked." She glared at her father, savage satisfaction coursing through her at his sickly pallor. "So, Daddy dearest, tell me how you are the victim here. Regale me with your tale of woe."

* * * *

Rafe stood, annoyed at Alana's close-minded attitude, but thrilled to see the hellcat back. He'd missed the fire, the spark that was Alana, and had worried over her defeated attitude for the last few days. And well, quite frankly, he was really in the mood for a good shouting match. Just as he was about to open his mouth, Gabe placed a steadying hand on his arm.

"Alana, honey, we know you've had a difficult time, but if you just listen to what Duncan has to say, maybe you can find a little compassion for the man who raised you. He really does love you, he

just wasn't able to protect you or your birth mother, Caroline, from the rogues."

"My birth mother?" she asked, a million questions skittering through her brain.

"Yes, baby, Caroline's car accident wasn't an accident at all. She refused to allow them to use you for experiments, so they killed her and told your father if he didn't cooperate, they'd kill him, too, and take you into their custody," Rafe filled in.

"Is that so?" she asked, her voice laced with sarcasm and maybe a little bit of guilt. "Then maybe you could explain to the men who love me why you encouraged me into bed with a number of different men from the moment I turned seventeen."

Rafe didn't miss the way she'd phrased that sentence. She may have given up on her hopes for their combined future, but subconsciously she realized they would always love her, regardless of what happened.

Her father squirmed uncomfortably, clearing his throat several times before he could speak.

"I was trying to protect you," he said, cringing again as she rolled her eyes. "They told me if you fell pregnant to one of the men they sent, they would take the baby and leave you alone."

Alana's mouth hung open as her knees gave out. Rafe caught her as she crumpled and pulled her into his comforting embrace.

"Why would you think I'd want that?" she mumbled against Rafe's shoulder. "Don't you think I would love my baby at least as much as you love me? Daddy, how could you make such a stupid choice?" Her voice caught in her throat, as she turned into Rafe's chest, seeking his warmth and his security.

"I'm sorry," Duncan said over and over. "I didn't think I had any choice at all. When you didn't get pregnant, they came and took you. They told me they'd return you as soon as you'd had a baby, and then they'd leave us alone." His hand shook as he pushed it across his watery eyes. "I just wanted it to be over. I've spent the last six years

praying that you were all right. I'd almost given up hope. When they told me you'd escaped I wanted to try to find you, but I was worried that I was being watched. These agents found the tracer the others had tagged me with. No one knows I'm here now." Duncan moved closer to see her face, seeming to make a last desperate bid for her understanding. "Please forgive me, Alana. I'm so sorry I couldn't protect you, but I never gave up hope of finding a way out for you."

Every empath in the room could feel the man's grief. He'd tried. He'd done the best he could under impossible circumstances. They could all feel his anguish and his loss.

"I forgive you, Dad," she said quietly. "I'm sorry, too. I should've given you the benefit of the doubt."

She held her father's hand as they both cried. Rafe could feel Alana's emotions as she felt the loss of the woman who'd given birth to her more keenly now that she knew the woman had died trying to protect her. She also understood Duncan had tried his best, and for that Rafe was grateful. Her father may not have made the best decisions over the years but at least he'd loved her enough to keep trying. Faced with such impossible choices Rafe wasn't sure if he would've fared any better.

* * * *

Somehow, through all the grief and upheaval of the afternoon, Alana had fallen asleep in Rafe's arms. He held her close, pressing her against him, vowing never to let her go, no matter what happened in the future.

Caleb, Ethan, Pete and Sandra had all arrived in the last half hour or so and the room was starting to feel very crowded, yet through it all Alana still slept. Gabe ran his hand down her face, gently stroking the puffy skin under her eyes.

"Take her home," Caleb suggested silently.

"She doesn't want us," Rafe explained telepathically, grief tightening his chest, making it hard for him to breathe.

"Of course she does," Dana interrupted. *"Even if she doesn't realize it right now. Take her home. Talk to her. Convince her she belongs with you."*

Gabe and Rafe stood, keen to leave now the decision had been made.

"Oh, and boys," Dana said sweetly. *"Hurt her, and you answer to me."*

"Yes, ma'am," they both replied, knowing full well that it was not an idle threat.

* * * *

Alana woke cuddled up to Rafe's hard body and spooned against Gabe. For the tiniest fraction of a second she felt content, happy to find herself between the two men she loved, and then reality intruded and she remembered everything that happened over the past few days.

She tried to lift herself away from them, feeling unworthy of their love, but four strong arms held her in place.

"Baby, talk to us," Rafe growled. "Tell us what's going on. Why would you push us away?" He sounded angry and hurt and she stilled a moment trying to get her bearings. They knew everything, yet somehow they were still here, still holding her safe in their arms.

"I don't understand," she said, shaking her head. She knew they knew about the unusual circumstances of her pregnancy, and her violent outburst at her father had surely filled in any blanks they may have had about the type of person she was, so why were they still here?

"We want to know why you don't trust us enough. Why you don't believe in our love enough to fight for our future together. Why would you give up on us so easily? We thought you meant it when you said

you loved us,” Gabe explained, his arm tightening around her as he said it.

“I did mean it,” she blurted, shocked they would think her so shallow.

“So you did mean it when you said it, but you don’t love us now,” Rafe tried to clarify.

“Yes...No...Oh, hell, I mean, yes, I loved you then, and I still love you now. I always will, but this baby changes things.”

“How?” Gabe asked softly.

“Surely you don’t want to love a woman who’s carrying another man’s child,” she said in a sad voice.

“Alana, nobody even knows if this is your child, but you love him or her anyway, don’t you?” Rafe said as he stroked her hair. “Baby, we love you, every part of you and we’ll love your baby as if he or she were our own.”

“She,” Alana said.

“She what?” Rafe asked, confused.

“She’s a girl.”

“You know that? How? Isn’t it too early to tell on an ultrasound?”

“I know she’s a girl because I can feel her. She’s content and warm and, at this moment, very, very hungry.” Alana wriggled again, trying to lever herself into a sitting position. “I’m sorry,” she said to both of them. “I should’ve trusted your love. Please forgive me.”

“Oh, God, baby, I love you so much, and I already love our daughter,” Rafe said, pulling her back into his arms. “Promise me you’ll always talk things out with us. Please don’t ever leave us again.”

“I promise,” she said as she kissed him tenderly. She held her men close, silently promising her little girl that the four of them would be a family together.

She smiled at the contentment she could feel emanating from the child she carried. It was probably just fanciful thinking, but she could almost believe her child agreed with her choice of partners.

Suddenly, she realized that despite the upheaval of the last six years, she'd somehow managed the impossible—she loved and was loved in return, they had a beautiful baby girl on the way, and her future shone brighter than she'd ever dreamed possible.

Epilogue

Six months later

“Hello, Kayla Rose, I’m your Daddy,” Gabe whispered as he held the tiny pink infant in his arms. Alana had just endured fifteen hours of full-on labor, and it was an experience he doubted he would ever forget. She spent almost thirteen hours of that yelling at anyone who came near her. Hell, if he’d ever thought the hellcat was mellowed by impending motherhood he’d been very thoroughly disabused of that silly notion. The woman was hell on wheels, and he loved her more every day.

He glanced over at Rafe busily wiping Alana’s brow, smoothing her hair back as he told her how beautiful she looked. Gabe almost laughed at the expression on Alana’s face and reckoned if she had the strength, Rafe’s balls would be lodged somewhere near his throat for quite some time.

He shook his head at his brother. Rafe had always been dominant and demanding, yet somehow this woman had softened his rough exterior and found his gooey centre. Gabe would’ve been confused by his brother’s fawning behavior if he hadn’t known how frightened Rafe had been all through her labor, and how much of his behavior was due to sheer relief that Alana was okay. There was no doubt Rafe loved his wife or that his wife loved him.

Then Alana looked over at Gabe, smiling for the first time in what felt like weeks.

“Bring her here,” she said softly. Gabe stepped closer and lowered their precious bundle into her arms.

* * * *

“Hello, Kayla Rose. I’m your mommy, and these two big guys are your daddies. We’re all going to love you and protect you forever. Okay, darling?”

“*Okay, Mommy,*” a tiny little voice said in their heads.

Startled, all three of them stared at the child in her arms.

“Did I just imagine that?” Gabe asked slowly.

“Not unless I imagined it, too,” Rafe said, stunned.

“Looks like we’re going to have our hands full with you, young lady. Sleep now,” Alana whispered. She glanced at her guys, flanking her and Kayla on either side. They were the loves of her life, and she couldn’t imagine anyone better to help her raise their little girl.

THE END

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Abby Blake prefers to read or write romance over just about everything else—except maybe chocolate. Most days she can be found hurrying to do what needs to be done so that she can curl up with her laptop and her latest bunch of heroes.

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